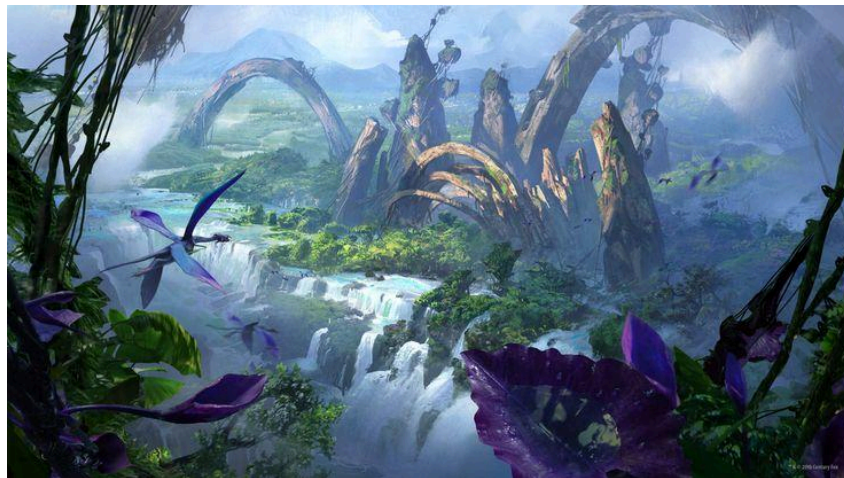New York University Abu Dhabi

CLASSIFIED

MIDTERM PAPER

CREATING: AVATAR AND THE POWER OF
CINEMATOGRAPHY

DARKO SKULIKJ
Creating, June 2024

As an aspiring Interactive Media and Film and New Media Students I have always been interested in the power of technology as well as the pure power of cinematography. Now, you would wonder, what do those two have in common?
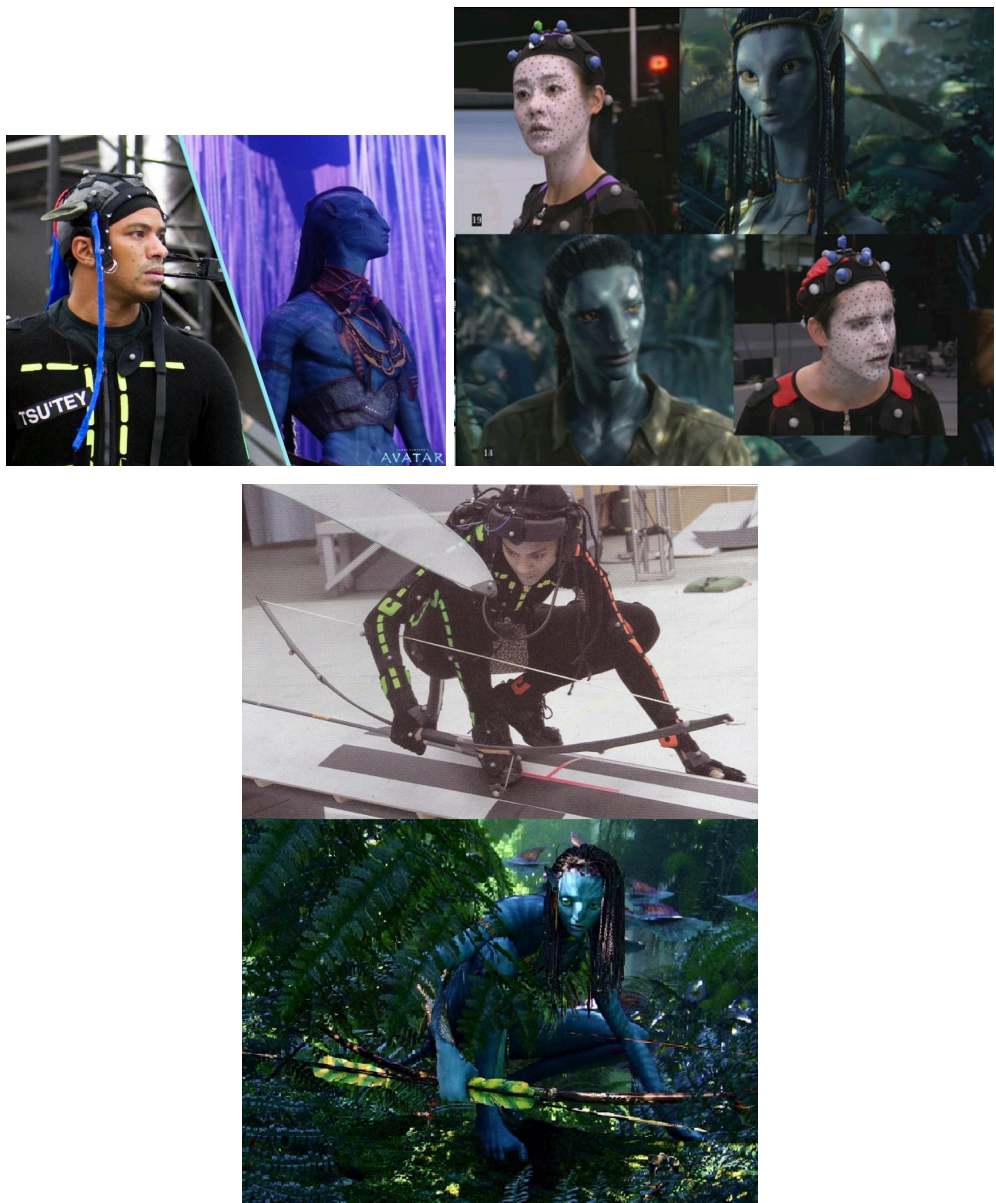
In order to answer this question I'm going to go far back when the first AVATAR movie was released - 2009. I have always been a movie freak - I absolutely love watching movies (and making them). In 2009 I was only 5 years old and what I saw on that big screen in the cinema completely defined movies for me. Even viewing the work that has gone through to make that movie happen still blows me away. Like imagine, creating this whole magical world called Pandora, a world that does not exist, a world so colorful and magical. Words can not describe how it looks, so let me show you some pictures:

The wildest thing is this world does not even exist, people just imagined it and just said, okay, let's go to work, and worked 15 years to create this, yes you heard me right, 15 YEARS. Of course this project had James Cameron on board, one of the best directors to ever exist. He states that the reason for this long

time under development is that the technology for creating his
vision was not available in the 1990s and he did not want to
settle for anything less than his vision. This is a valuable
lesson in life, always prioritize quality in everything that you
do, push yourself to do your best and the results will always
come through.

The technology behind this movie was revolutionary and
completely changed the movie world. Let me show you some
pictures from behind the scenes and how normal human faces were
transformed into these 8 feet tall blue creatures, completely
expressing their emotions and movements.

This revolutionary technology is still used today. But wait, Cameron decided to take it to another level and made AVATAR 2: The way of Water - a movie where 90% of the scenes include water, and it's all cgi. The man found a way to make CGI Water the best has ever looked. Look at this:

This time Cameron used similar tracking technology for the whole body but everything was actually filmed underwater. Like Imagine the training and the challenges the actors had to overcome to not hold their breath for that long time but also act in those circumstances.

Overall I feel like this movie is not talked enough and the trace James Cameron left on Avatar and the cinematography world is invaluable.

At the same time, these movies really move me on a deep level. They combine my childhood and adulthood. From a little kid to a grown up, I have always adored the world of Pandora and all the characters inside of it. From the little glowy plants to the big rhinos, the ways of the Avatars and their story and history, these movies will forever be one of my favorites. I am going to be honest I really almost cried while watching the last one, purely because it brought back so so so many memories and made me feel like a kid again.