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End game

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END GAME

2012 has long been the subject of myths and speculation because it appeared to be the year in which the world was supposed to be destroyed, according to some scholars of the Mayan calendar. So far this year has not seen a global cataclysm but, as **SUMMER CAO** reports, it has inspired a hit movie and a popular HKDI show.

IN THE HOLLYWOOD DISASTER MOVIE 2012, Christian values, Mayan mythology and scientific theories about global warming were woven together to form a high concept drama that revealed a planet in the grip of an apocalyptic disaster. The film became a box office hit as it aroused excitement, fear and controversy around the globe.

Inspired by the movie, and trying to surpass its wild make-believe plot, graduates from the HKDI's Higher Diploma programme in Creative Media and Entertainment Technology (CMET) collaborated with the finest creative minds in the Department of Multimedia and Internet Technology (MIT) of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (Lee Wai Lee) to create a multimedia entertainment extravaganza.

The joint CMET/MIT show employed cutting edge technologies including laser animation, projection systems, computer controlled lighting and moving sound technology that creates the sensation of movement, to explore the infinite possibilities of 2012 and the prospects we may face in the future. It provided audiences with a unique experience in a fantasy environment.

"The myths surrounding 2012 actually represent quite an open topic, and the apocalyptic vision is only one of the most popular interpretations," says Steve Leung, a lecturer from the Department of Multimedia and Internet Technology. "The ambiguity of 2012 provides a very diversified source of creativity, which proves the theme is a good inspiration for students. The graduation works bring us so many surprises: diverse

interpretations of 2012, technical achievements, and creative use of entertainment technology."

To create the show's programme students were divided into groups of six to eight people to develop different themes and aspects of 2012, with each group specialising in theatre lighting, sound systems, acoustics, stage visuals and special effects.

One group presented a show segment called *Truth*, which stayed close to the Mayan prediction that December 21st, 2012 will be the end of the world. *Truth* employed video projection, lighting and audio effects to interpret Mayan prophecy and lead audiences to consider whether selfish and irresponsible human activity is, potentially, the true cause of civilisation's doom.

A segment called *Lolly Land* explored a more optimistic and romantic prospect from the perspective of children, seeing 2012 as the beginning of a new world, a colourful place full of lollipops, a concept designed to make audiences happy as they recapture the feelings of a childlike heart.

Agape used lights and sounds to give shape to the mysterious concept of divine love, the love that the Bible says "passes all understanding." *Agape* told the story of a girl recalling somebody who had given her unconditional, self-sacrificing and thoughtful love, emphasising the importance of receiving and giving love in life.

While most of the segments used the inspiration of 2012 to cast an eye on the future, *Two, Only One True* took audiences back to 300 BC and the Era of the Warring States. The segment was inspired by the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi who posed a question about the relationship between reality and illusion when he asked, "Was the butterfly in my



LEFT TWO, ONLY ONE TRUE DEPICTING ZHUANGZI'S PHILOSOPHICAL DILEMMA; ABOVE: A GIRL REMINISCING ABOUT THE PAST IN AGAPE; BELOW OVER 60 GUESTS ENJOYED THE SHOW; BELOW RIGHT TOP: TRUTH INTERPRETING THE MAYAN DOOMSDAY PROPHECY; BELOW RIGHT BOTTOM: HKDI STUDENTS PREPARING TECHNOLOGY FOR THE SHOW



dream when I was sleeping? Or was I in the butterfly's dream?"

In *Two, Only One True* gorgeous lighting, sound, laser effects and multi-screen projections, show a butterfly flying through space. The creature was supposed to lead the audience to experience Zhuangzi's confusion, by asking whether they were flying with the butterfly or had become the butterfly. The butterfly also alluded to the youngsters' struggles with the gap between reality and dreams.

"The Chinese painting style and project mapping technique brought Zhuangzi's imaginative perspective on reality to life," said Leung. "We hope our graduates can bring new ideas and innovative applications to entertainment technology, which is the key to the further economic development of the entertainment industry." ☺

