International Animation Festival to hold fall retrospective today

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The Shaw Center for the Arts is getting animated.

The center will host a Fall Retrospective presented by the Red Stick International Animation Festival starting at 1:30 p.m. today, featuring a technology fair, game expo, lectures and screening of films from past festivals.

This is the first Fall Retrospective for the 7-year-old festival, said Stephen Beck, festival director, AVATAR initiative director and School of Music faculty member.

The full-fledged Animation Festival is put on every year by the University's Center for Computation and Technology and is usually a week-long affair. The 2012 fest will be held in June.

The retrospective will kick off today with samples of recent Electronic Arts video games, a showcase of projects from the University's Arts, Visualization, Advanced Technologies and Research program and demonstrations of the Center for Computation and Technology's latest research in visualization, mobile applications, music interaction and computation.

Beck said AVATAR is a digital media research program on campus that tests the latest technology from mobile devices to 3-D glasses.

At 3:30 p.m., animation industry professionals from companies such as EA and Pixel Magic will present lectures targeted toward students about how to break into the field and find success.

After the informational sessions there will be a showing of the best films from the past six years of the festival. It will also mark the establishment of the Louisiana Animation Hall of Excellence and honor the first inductee, William Joyce.

According to the animation festival's website, the Louisiana Animation Hall of Excellence was created "to honor outstanding achievement in animation, visual effects and digital media by Louisiana citizens."

Beck said it's important to recognize homegrown talent in the animation industry.

The festival, birthed in 2005, is the oldest film festival in downtown Baton Rouge, Beck said.

"It's grown to be not just about technology, not just about creativity, but really about supporting the creative and technology culture in Baton Rouge and in the state," he said.

Though the crowd varies annually, Beck said festival attendance is usually in the thousands, and he's expecting a full house of about 300 for the screening in the Manship Theatre.

The lectures or daytime events are free, but tickets are required for the film screening. Tickets are available at the ManshipTheatre box office for \$6.50.

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