BADC 2023

21007 Visual Effects

HALLOWEEN ENDS

“MAIN TITLES”

THE BRIEF

Create a unique but referential version of the iconic Halloween opening title sequence that symbolically concludes the franchise.

Halloween Ends not only serves as the third installment of the latest trilogy but also signifies the end of the entire franchise… for the moment.

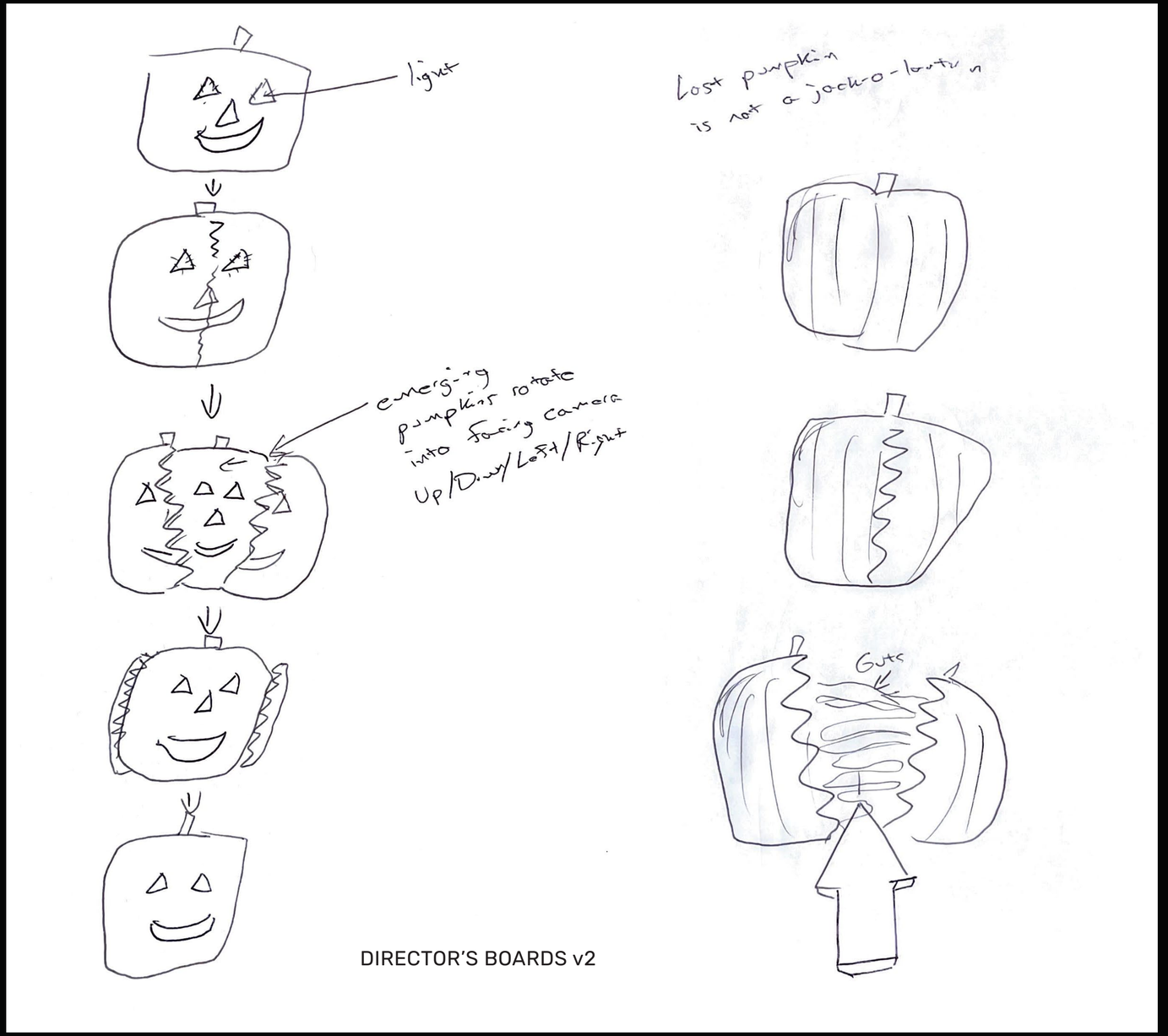
Director David Gordon Green aimed to elevate the stakes and conclude the series with a powerful statement. This vision was also reflected in the film's opening title sequence.

Initially, Green planned to feature four jack-o'-lanterns, each representing one of the four main characters.

However, the concept evolved to include additional jack-o'-lanterns carved in the likeness of those featured in past Halloween films.

The splitting of each jack-o'-lantern to reveal the next symbolises the emergence of a new evil, similar to how each film in the franchise introduced a new form of evil, whether it be Michael Myers' return or a new entity taking his place.

The last "faceless" pumpkin represents the unknown evil of this film. It splits to reveal an unexpected combination of pumpkin innards and bloody human sinew.



DIRECTOR'S BOARDS v2

THE PROCESS

1. Previsualisation of camera move and timing of splitting pumpkins

2. Pumpkin modelling

3. Look development and texturing

4. Split simulation

5. Guts simulation

6. Light and render

7. Compositing

8. 1982 typeface recreation

1. Previsualisation - Solving The Puzzle

This sequence was a collaboration with director David Gordon Green. He had a preliminary concept of each pumpkin containing “guts” that, as they split, would spill out revealing the next pumpkin sitting behind. To have the iconic appearance of a jack-o’-lantern, each would also be illuminated by an inner candle.

We set out to see if this was possible, but our early tests proved that trying to combine a lit candle and guts within each pumpkin wasn’t practical.

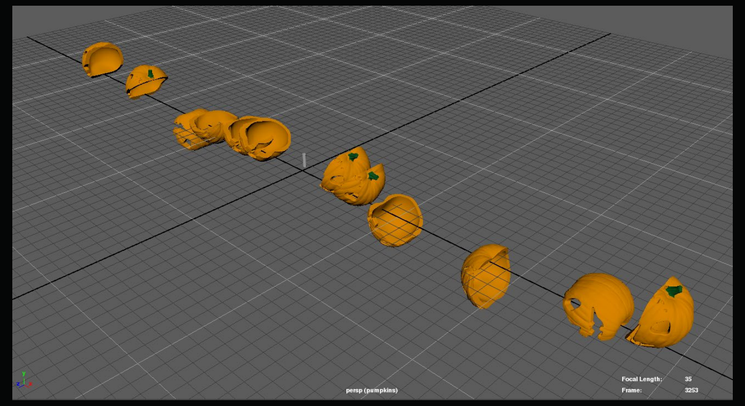
If the candle illuminates in the inside of the jack-o’-lantern, wouldn’t the guts be visible through the cutout eyes, nose and mouth, obstructing the light from the candle and ruining the illusion?

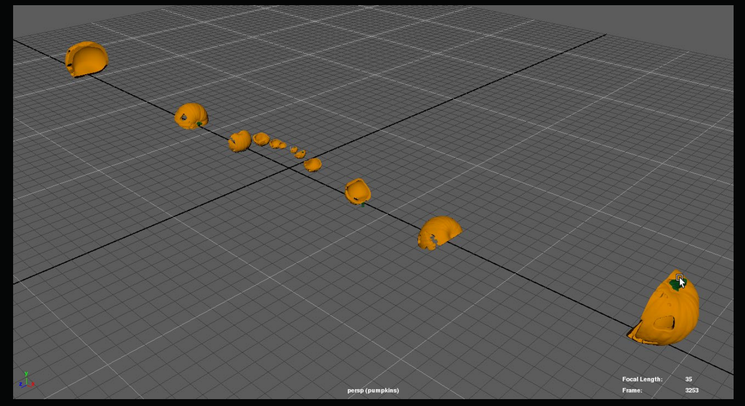
This discovery led to the revised concept 2 (see director’s boards on page 2) with the pumpkins nested inside each other like Russian Matryoshka dolls.

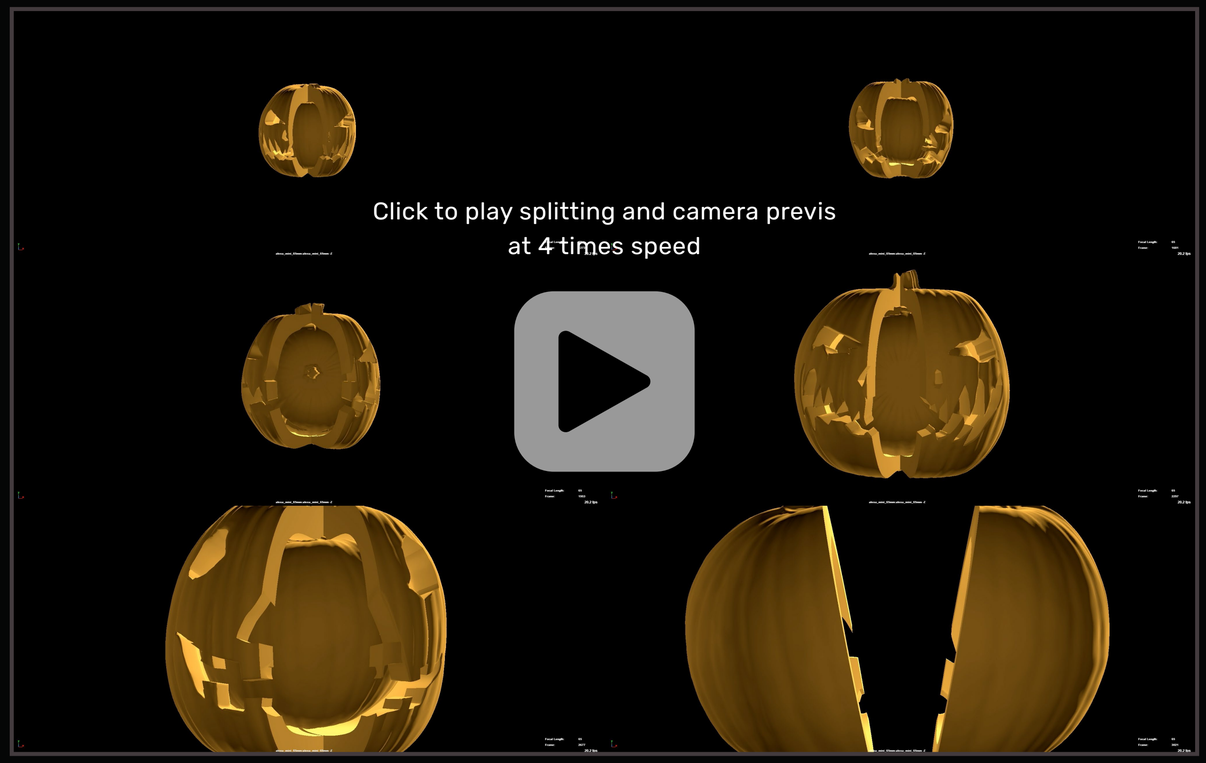
To ensure our timing matched the allocated opening sequence length, we blocked out the camera and timings of the splitting pumpkins.

Since each pumpkin would be a unique shape to match those from previous films, we faced the challenge of snugly fitting each pumpkin inside the previous one.

Furthermore, each successive jack-o’-lantern would be animated to “grow” inside the previous one. It would extinguish the inner light just before causing the outer pumpkin to split, creating technical difficulties that would need to be resolved prior to initiating final split simulations.







2. Pumpkin Modelling

The splitting pumpkins are CG replicas of jack-o'-lanterns from six of the 13 Halloween films. The initial plan was to film real pumpkins splitting, however, as the concept evolved it became apparent the most effective approach would be to create a full CG sequence to allow for greater control over the lanterns and their insides.

To ensure we stayed true to the jack-o'-lanterns from previous films, we referenced carved replicas and began by modelling their shapes and faces to match.

Reference jack-o'-lanterns

3D models

3. Look Development

After initial modelling, more detailed irregularities such as bumps and damage were sculpted into the 3D model. At this stage we also tested the optimum thickness of the outer skin and the inner flesh to establish what would look most realistic when splitting open. The inner nested pumpkin shape and size had to be taken into account so the geometry didn't intersect with the outer pumpkin as it "forced" its way out.

Sculpted 3D model

Carved reference

Sculpted 3D model

Carved reference

Sculpted 3D model

Carved reference

Click to play
sculpt vs reference
comparisons

At the texturing stage we degraded the outer surface with decay, mould spots and bruises.

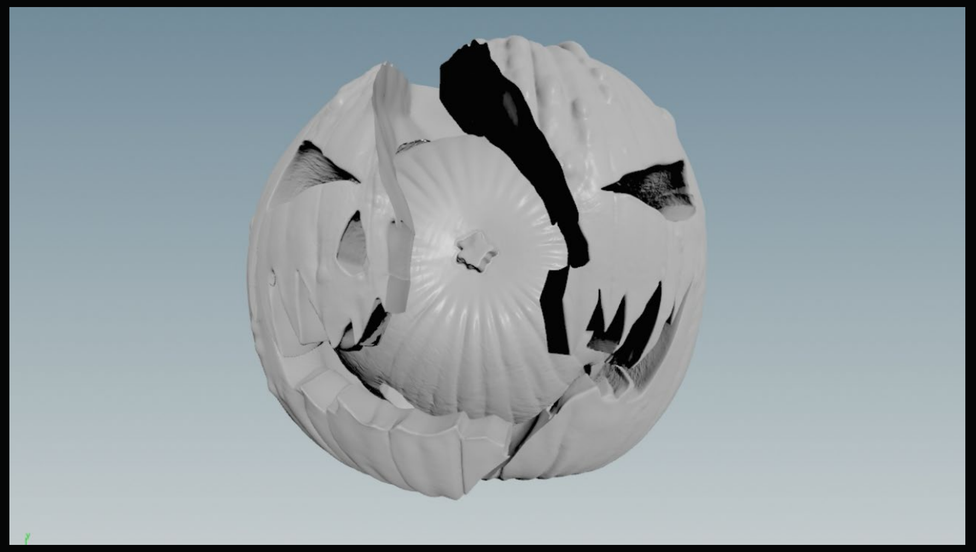
Click to play rotating view

Early visual of concept v1
featuring guts in every pumpkin

Click to play rotating view

4. Split Simulation

The pumpkins needed to split in a realistic way but still be “art directable” as each split pattern needed to be unique.

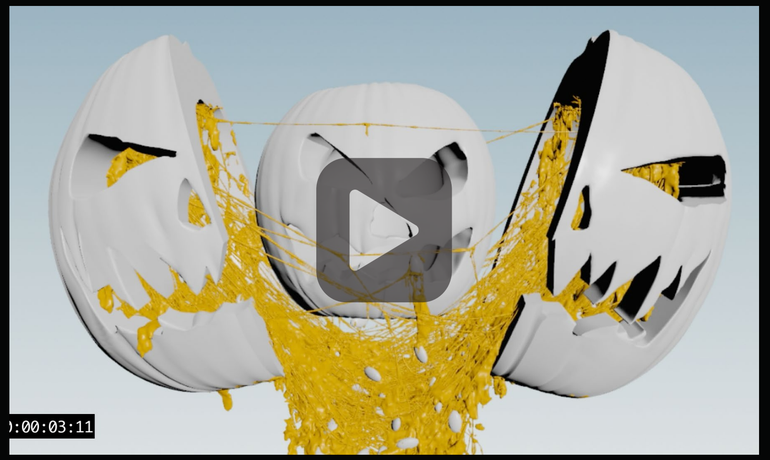


Click to play preliminary split test

Click to play split montage

5. Guts Simulation

The look of a human and pumpkin innards combo is subjective and required numerous tests to establish a suitable balance of both. The variable elements included pumpkin flesh, pumpkin seeds, human tendons and the amount of moisture as pumpkin innards are quite dry. The glistening moisture and gooiness gave it a more human quality.



v1 concept guts sim test

v2 concept guts sim test

7. Compositing

During the final compositing stage, flickering candle tests were done to determine how intense the light should be - supernatural intense glow or more realistic with inner pumpkin detail.

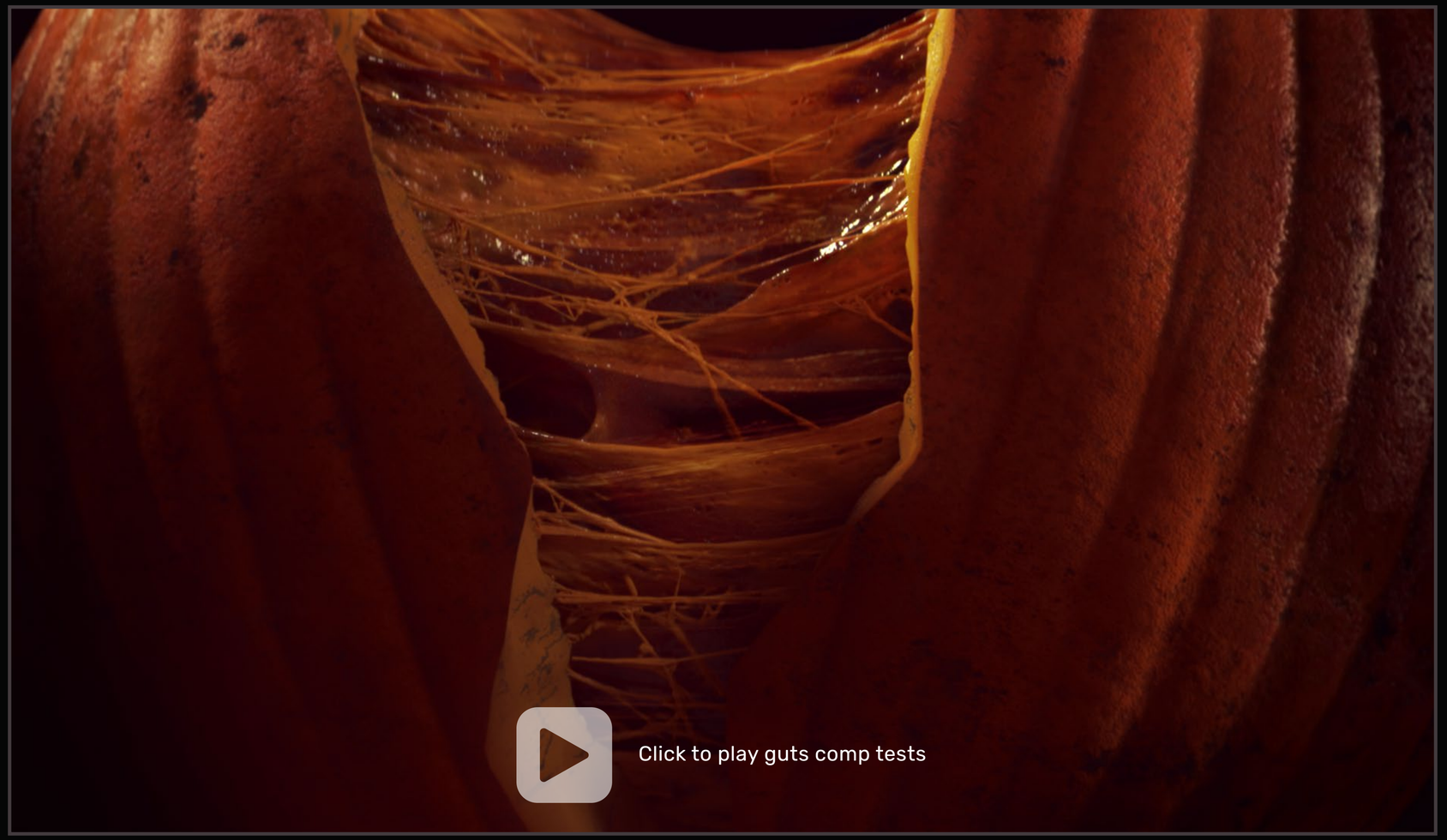
We referenced the title sequences from both the original 1978 Halloween and 2021 Halloween Kills. Our candle light could be unique provided it wasn't too far removed from the franchise style.

Halloween (1978)

Halloween Kills (2021)

Click to play

Exploration of intense god-rays.
These were reduced in the final comp.


Click to play guts comp tests

8. 1982 Typeface Recreation

The title sequences of the first two films in David Gordon Green's Halloween trilogy, *Halloween* (2018) and *Halloween Kills* (2021) have paid homage to the first two Halloween films, *Halloween* (1978) and *Halloween II* (1981) by using the same bold orange font.

This third film *Halloween Ends* is no exception. The director asked us to match the blue typeface used in the opening sequence of the third 1982 film *Halloween III: Season Of The Witch*, even though it is completely different to the previous two.

However, the 1982 typeface doesn't exist as a font so we recreated it as a fully installable, typeable font to match the original exactly.

We also replicated the optical glow, chromatic abherration and film float.

All of this careful crafting was not only to pay tribute to *Halloween III: Season Of The Witch* but also to remind viewers that the third film in both trilogies diverge from the expected.

Deviation from the norm can ruffle people's feathers, especially fans with lofty expectations, but as *Halloween III: Season Of The Witch* showed us, sometimes that's the best way to shake things up.

Halloween III: Season Of The Witch typeface

Recreated typeface: SeasonOfTheWitch.otf

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

HALLOWEEN ENDS

Click to view final title sequence

JAMIE LEE CURTIS
as
LAURIE

WILL PATTON
as
FRANK

OMAR J. DORSEY
as SHERIFF BARKER

MICHAEL BARBIERI
as TERRY

music by

JOHN CARPENTER

CODY CARPENTER

DANIEL DAVIES

edited by

TIM ALVERSON, ACE

executive producers
JOHN CARPENTER
JAMIE LEE CURTIS

produced by
MALEK AKKAD, p.g.a.
JASON BLUM
BILL BLOCK

based on characters created by
JOHN CARPENTER
and
DEBRA HILL