

ASK THE ARTISTS: ERIC C&C



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Eric C&C is one of two companies in South Korea who operate Ventuz, catering to the many needs of a highly sophisticated technology market. We met with Poly Kim, Leb Bae and Geon Lee of Eric C&C to talk about the uniqueness of the Korean market and the importance of good mentors.

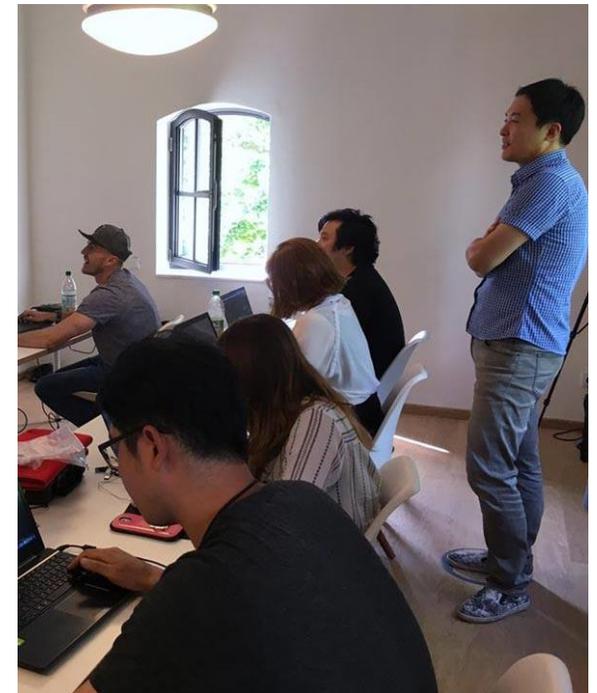
Ventuz:
Tell us about Eric C&C and how you started.

Poly:
Leb, Geon and I have been friends ever since high school, so for almost 20 years. They both became involved in music. Leb worked as a stage director for a long time, scripted shows, managed lighting and such, while Geon actually majored in music but then got involved in video production and post production. They got together to create shows, events and presentations and became some of the first people to operate Ventuz in South Korea. Which wasn't easy, because the software and the user manual were only available in English. That is

actually how I became involved in the company, to translate everything into Korean.

Ventuz:
Sounds like you had a rather rough start with Ventuz.

Poly:
The language certainly was a problem in the beginning. Leb and Geon didn't understand some features that would have made their work a lot easier. Like the interfacing feature, which allows you to easily duplicate elements you have already created once. They didn't know this feature existed and did the same steps again and again, which cost a lot of time.



My translations helped, but the real breakthrough came with trainings. In 2008 we had our first professional training with the agency Rayd, and ever since we have tried to keep in close contact with a number of Ventuz agencies all over the world. When we have a question about the software or about how to approach a project, there is nobody in South Korea whom we could ask. It is necessary for us to get as much education and advice as possible. All the people I made contact with were great in their capacity. Each of them had their own strengths and their own experiences, and they were willing to share that with us. We are very grateful for the opportunity to learn from such amazing artists.

Ventuz:

How has Eric C&C evolved since the early days?

Poly:

We are now a company of twenty people. We have eight Ventuz operators, a handful of designers, a few hardware specialists and our sales department. Not only do we create content, we also lend hardware and we serve as reseller for a few products from Germany.



Ventuz:
What areas of the market are you concentrating on at Eric C&C?

Poly:
We are specialized in events and exhibitions. Our very first project was an interactive game for children. Our work can be found in museums, at trade shows, in showrooms and the like. The market is quite diverse; many companies want to add new technologies to their facilities.

Ventuz:
Interactivity is quite widespread in South Korea, isn't it?

Poly:
Yes, it is a big thing and very common. Which is a challenge for us, because we have to make sure that our installations meet peoples' expectations. My son has been using interactive devices since he was three or four years old. When something doesn't work like he wants it to, he throws it away. And I mean literally

throws it across the room. So we understand that our solutions have to be 100% intuitive and reliable, and we are trying to achieve this with every new project.

Ventuz:
Does the affinity for technology show in the projects that your customers ask you to realize for them?

Poly:
Well, we have had some interesting inquiries. Right now we are trying to figure out how to stream 160 GB worth of video into Ventuz and mix it with real-time content. We are still trying to find the right hardware for this project, so a lot of testing is in our future. Many customers also ask us for mapping projects, media tables and virtual reality. Head-mounted displays or HMD are a very big thing in South Korea at the moment, virtual reality and mixed reality are important topics in the industry. But for mixed reality, we are still waiting for the right device. The data glasses that are available haven't gotten good reviews.



Ventuz:
In another interview one artist said that data glasses could be the end of hardware, because nobody will need displays anymore. What are your thoughts on this?

Poly:
I'm not sure. I think both HMD and display walls will be important. Mixed reality is a very personal experience that cannot be shared easily. Public media in the form of large installations will remain essential for corporate communication and marketing, especially in large public spaces. Of course, the goal is to connect the two areas and create holistic experiences which allow people to interact with the public installations through their personal devices. But it's still a long way to that point.

Ventuz:
How does Ventuz help you in this world of ever greater and more extravagant projects?

Poly:
There are many agencies in South Korea who work in our industry, and their work is really great. But the vast majority of them uses other software tools. Ventuz allows us to set

ourselves apart. One big thing is the real-time nature of the software. Clients have huge expectations but only limited budgets and timeframes. With Ventuz we can work faster and respond quickly to changing situations. Especially when it comes to adjustments in the design. Clients in South Korea are very specific in this area.

Ventuz:
Why is that?

Poly:
In South Korea, we have very strict structures of hierarchy. When the project is complex and other companies are involved, then the designs must go through a very long process of approval with many levels, as everyone has to confirm with their boss. That way, a lot of changes can go into a design. Plus, we live in a very wired country and many people have seen amazing things on the internet. Oftentimes our clients have very sophisticated ideas about style, and personal taste always plays a big role. So sometimes a lot of different influences go into a design. We will happily make any adjustment and try to combine the customer's comments with our ideas about usability and

the initial concept. Our own creativity is an important asset for us, so we are working hard to develop it more and more. The many contacts to other Ventuz agencies helps us with that, we learn so much from seeing the way they approach customers and projects. It takes a keen sense of technology and audiences to turn a good idea into a great application. Think of Pokémon Go. A few years back a company in South Korea used the same concept for a game, but graphics and gameplay weren't as thought-through, so it was no success. Our creativity is vital for the success of a project, and we are constantly learning more about how to create good looking and intuitive applications. Ventuz certainly helps us with that.

Ventuz:
What can you tell me about design trends that you find interesting?

Poly:
The designers at Eric C&C have been telling me that audiences are becoming tired of the overly electronic, polished, glossy designs of the last years. Instead, designs are becoming simpler and styles are going backward into the analog times.

Ventuz:
What is in the future for Eric C&C?

Poly:
We are very interested to enter into the broadcast market. In my view it is the supreme discipline of real-time graphics, because it is highly sensitive, much more so than corporate presentations. We do have a few contacts and will try to get our foot in the door. It would be an amazing challenge for us to maybe create content for news and election shows.

Ventuz:
Would that be a dream project for you? Election graphics?

Poly:
Certainly. But we are also very excited about all the events and presentations we have been able to do. We just finished a project for Audi, which was a great honor. In the end, it is important to approach every project with a sense of humility in order to deliver good work. We value all of our clients and believe that every project is a chance for us to learn more about our markets and our work.





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