CorelDRAW® makes animated life easy for The Gorilla

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> **Miguel "Gorilla" Lopez**
> *GORILLA Enterprises*

Name:
Miguel "Gorilla" Lopez

Occupation/Profession:
Animator, cartoonist,

Company:
Gorilla Enterprises

Location:
Los Angeles, California

Miguel "Gorilla" Lopez is an experienced artist, cartoonist and animator, who has worked on primetime shows like *The Simpsons*, *The Family Guy* and the current Warner Bros. hit *The Xiaolin Showdown*. "I use CorelDRAW for everything I do," says Gorilla. "We're just a two-person operation, but we have outpaced shops with four or five people, simply because we're using CorelDRAW. It's so incredibly fast and user-friendly. It's perfect for what we do!"

His birth certificate might say Miguel A. Lopez, but everybody, including his mother, calls him Gorilla.

"When I was a kid I used to love this TV Tome cartoon called Magilla Gorilla, and since my name was Miguel A., the other kids used to tease me, calling me Magilla the Gorilla. For some reason the name stuck, and now it's just who I am: Gorilla."

His company is, naturally, called Gorilla Enterprises and his Web site features plenty of animated cartoon primates.

Even as a young boy, Gorilla showed a remarkable talent for drawing characters and cartoons. He was introduced to drawing on a computer when his father-in-law showed him CorelDRAW 3 in 1990.

"I loved it instantly and in a few weeks I had learned to master pretty much all the features.

In 1992 I started my own T-shirt company, Huango Wear, and I knew immediately how I could use CorelDRAW to design the artwork for my t-shirts. It has worked like a charm and we now have distributors in US, Mexico, Canada, Australia and Japan."

As he started working as a designer and layout artist, Gorilla kept using CorelDRAW to get things done faster than his colleagues.

"A lot of people used QuarkXPress for their layouts and Adobe® Illustrator® or Macromedia® Freehand® for their artwork, but I told them CorelDRAW does everything in one package. The company I worked for created ads for the Yellow Pages, and I showed them how easy it was to use CorelDRAW for the entire process."

His family lived in Los Angeles, and as an aspiring artist and cartoonist, LA certainly is a good place to be if you want to find interesting work. But you have to be both talented and assertive to be successful. In 1998, Gorilla created a promotional flyer in CorelDRAW, showcasing his fluid drawing skills, and simply walked into the big offices at Fox Studios.

"I thought I'd just go in and shake a few trees to see what might fall out," laughs Miguel "Gorilla" Lopez.

What fell out was a job as Character Layout

"My main career is clearly focused on illustration and animation. And with CorelDRAW in my toolbox, I feel invincible."

Artist on Fox TV's primetime hit *The Simpsons*. Since then, Gorilla has also worked as a Character Designer on Fox TV's *The Family Guy* and several other animated TV series from DIC Entertainment, Hyperion, Saban, etc.

Currently, Gorilla and his business partner Megan, are working on the Warner Bros. animated show *Xiaolin Showdown* – a mystical comedy that follows Omi, a gifted monk-in-training from the Xiaolin Temple to destinations around the world with partners Kimiko, Raimundo, and Clay to find and protect sacred ancient objects that hold the key to mystical superpowers.

Gorilla explains how he uses CorelDRAW in his workflow: "For a typical episode we get rough pencil drawings from the company that we copy by hand with ink on high quality paper. Once the black-and-white ink drawings have been completed, we scan them into the computer. It's easy to create vector illustrations from these drawings by using CorelTRACE, and for additional fine-tuning we bring the files into CorelDRAW. For 2D-animated shows, it's very important to make sure that the line quality is the same in all the scenes. So we adjust these lines, close a few gaps, and make sure things are symmetrical before we add color. Essentially, we clean things up before the images are ready to be animated."

Gorilla has tried using tablets for his illustration work, but as he explains: "I'm a big guy and I like to use my entire arm when I'm drawing, so I'll stick to using a mouse. Works for me."

The two-person team that is Gorilla Enterprises has even managed to use CorelDRAW as a highly innovative animation tool. For the animation sequences, Gorilla and

Megan simply add new pages to the DRAW document they're working on and by clicking on Next Page they can flip the pages to see the movements, just like you flip the pages in a book.

Gorilla groups and un-groups the various parts of his characters to make a quick animation possible.

"If you have a character in one scene and the only thing moving is his arm, it's so simple to copy the whole character to a new page in the same document, ungroup the curves, select the arm, click once to select it, and once again to prepare it for rotation. I move the rotation point to the shoulder, rotate the arm and save the file. The best thing is that I use the Select tool for everything. No trips to the toolbox to rotate an arm a few degrees. This feature alone saves me a ton of time in every project. I love it!"

The animated gorilla on his homepage was created entirely in DRAW. It's one CorelDRAW document with 19 pages and it's enough to do the basic pose, a beating chest animation and a stretchy yawn.

As his nickname suggests, Miguel "Gorilla" Lopez is a big man. At 6" 1' and close to 350 pounds, this ex-college football player has taken advantage of working in the epicenter of the movie-making world. He's played a bouncer in several movies, and also in the popular TV-show *King of Queens*.

"Yeah, I heard a rumor about my shadow once killing a small dog," he says with a big laugh. "But my main career is clearly focused on illustration and animation. And with CorelDRAW in my toolbox, I feel invincible."