

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**JIM HENSON'S CREATURE SHOP™ TAKES “PRIDE” IN LATEST VISUAL EFFECTS WORK**

***PRIDE*, featuring talking lions, premieres June 21, 2004 on A&E Network**

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HOLLYWOOD, June 17, 2004 – The Jim Henson Company has partnered with A&E Network and BBC in the making of ***PRIDE***, an exceptional two-hour television drama shot on location in Africa and chronicling the adventures of two lion cubs. Brought on board by John Downer Productions, creators of the film, Jim Henson's Creature Shop™ has created remarkably true to life animation transforming real lions into speaking characters voiced by Kate Winslet, Helen Mirren and others. The result of these visual effects is a pride of talking lions with seamlessly integrated computer generated (CG) animation.

To meet this challenge, the Creature Shop relied on the creative ability and technical skill that have been characteristic of The Jim Henson Company for nearly 50 years. Working on more than 250 shots in the film, the Creature Shop's London studio first built advanced computer generated models to closely match the faces of the lions. Next, muzzles were replaced with CG animated lip-sync and entire faces were transformed, creating recognizable human characteristics for the pride of lions. These unique visual effects were achieved without the set preparation that is typically required, given that the set was the lions' natural, wild habitat in Tanzania and South Africa.

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“The pairing of our advanced CG animation with John Downer’s work reinforces the seemingly never-ending range of possibilities for animation and story-telling in the digital age,” said Pete Coogan, Managing Director of Jim Henson’s Creature Shop. “I’m very proud of our team’s work on this extraordinary film. **PRIDE** is a great example of the groundbreaking programming that can result from partnerships like ours with A&E and BBC.”

**PRIDE**, created and directed by John Downer and produced by Christopher Hall, is a co-production of A&E Network and BBC, in association with ProSieben and John Downer Productions. The film features the voices of Kate Winslet, Helen Mirren, John Hurt, Robbie Coltrane, Sean Bean, Martin Freeman and many others. The World Premiere of **PRIDE** will air on A&E on June 21, 2004. Check local listings for additional show times, or log on to [www.aande.com](http://www.aande.com).

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Jim Henson's Creature Shop™ provides performed digital visual effects, animatronic creatures, animation and soft puppets to the international film, television and advertising industries. Based in Los Angeles and New York with satellite shop capabilities internationally, the Shop is known for designing and building some of the world's best-known characters including Elmo from "Sesame Street," Miss Piggy from "The Muppet Show," the Baby from "Dinosaurs," Rygel from "Farscape," and the Skeksis from "The Dark Crystal." Other credits include "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," "Are We There Yet?," "Five Children and It," the critically acclaimed television series "Farscape," "The English Patient," "101 Dalmatians," and "Cats and Dogs."

A recipient of more than 9 Emmy Awards for its outstanding work building puppets for "Sesame Street," the Shop also received an Academy Award for its visual effects work on the film "Babe." Other awards include a Scientific and Engineering Academy Award for the Henson Performance Control System, a powerful custom-based interface for puppeteers as well as the Computer Graphics World Innovation Award and the prestigious Computerworld Honors 21st Century Achievement Award, which recognizes innovative applications of technology that benefit society. Both computer awards were given to the Shop for its work in developing the Henson Digital Puppetry Studio, a patented control system technology that enables puppeteers to physically perform computer generated (CG) characters in real time.

Jim Henson's Creature Shop is currently in production on "Sid the Science Kid," a 40 episode animated preschool series to air on PBS in the fall of 2008 featuring Henson Digital Puppetry Studio technology and Season 38 of "Sesame Street" for Sesame Workshop.