



# Spectrum Cinema

Italian director Paolo Santagostino tells Paul Drury all about his Jet Set Willy film

**P**aolo Santagostino, a video editing teacher at the Civic School Of Cinema Luchino Visconti in Milan, Italy, has produced a beautiful animated film about Matthew Smith using the *Jet Set Willy* game engine. It will premiere in Manchester on 4 May at the Play Expo show and both Paolo and Matthew will be in attendance for a post-screening Q&A.

## We assume you have a soft spot for *Jet Set Willy*?

It was the first game I fell in love with. It was 1984, I was 11 years old and my older brother Carlos brought the game home. We were both *Manic Miner* fans, of course, but what we loved most about *Jet Set Willy* was the freedom. You could choose your own way to clean the rooms or forget the cleaning mission and just explore. We start drawing maps and it was just incredibly exciting.

## When did you decide to make a film about the game?

In 2008 I discovered the '*Spectrum Diamond*' documentary on YouTube and was very impressed by it. I did a lot of research into Matthew's story. In 2014, I bought a smartphone version of *Jet Set Willy* and had the idea of making a 'living map' with all the monsters walking in it and this transformed into an animated documentary about Matthew. It took over three years to make and if you



» Matthew Smith was still a teenager when he first started making computer games.

put all the hours together, I spent something like nine months of eight-hour days working on it.

## What sort of feedback have you had so far?

Chris Cannon, one of the lead voices you can hear in my film and who worked with Matthew at Bug-Byte Software, told me that he particularly liked how the map zooms out as it really gives an idea of the scale of the game, something that playing it, or even mapping it on paper, fails to do justice to. In general, all the JSW fans [have been] very impressed by the film, but I really wanted to make something that can 'talk' to people who don't know anything about the game or Matthew.

## What are your hopes for the premiere of the film in Manchester later this year?

I want to invite all the people who are working hard to keep the JSW



» Willy, 48K About A Legend tells Matthew's Smith story by ingenious use of the *Jet Set Willy* game engine



» There was definitely a boat-like feel to the architecture of the mansion.



» Mad chefs and swirling hacksaws – Willy's mansion is full of oddities.

community alive and give them the opportunity to meet Matthew in person... and enjoy my film at the same time! Lots of people not only still play the game but also use the different JSW editors to make 'mods' – beautiful, complete new games. We will be showcasing the best [at Play Expo] and people can vote for their favourite. Matthew not only wrote the book on how a platform game should be, he also created a 'format', a 'Willy-World', that everybody can [use] to create their fantasy. This makes him a living 8-bit legend.

## How do you feel about finally getting to meet Matthew Smith?

I'm a bit nervous, as you can probably understand. I'm curious to know

what a typical Matthew Smith day is like, what he is doing, if he still plays games... but most of all I hope he is happy right now, after all the shit he went through. I know that the young Matthew drew the first pictures for *Manic Miner* in Italy and I'm proud that the adventures of Miner Willy in some way started in my country. I will ask him about that holiday in Italy, if he still remembers... and I'm not going to ask him when he will finally release *Attack Of The Mutant Zombie Flesh Eating Chickens From Mars!* ✨

**Play Expo takes place 4 May and 5 May 2019 at Manchester Central Exhibition Complex. See [playexpomanchester.com](http://playexpomanchester.com) for tickets and more information.**