Reflux from Inverse Ink

Reflux is the latest offering in the "interactive" comic book market. Billed as the "worlds first live action graphics novel", Reflux combines the world of comic book art with live action video footage.

Reflux is based on a cyber world where humans can jack into their computers through a port in the back of their necks. Our hero, Flux, has a special trick up his sleeve, he's the only person that can change his avatar, how he looks to everyone else, at will. This makes him a fantastic hacker, and almost impossible to track. While inverse, jacked in, Flux uses a combat technique known as Fu-ware. Through Fu-ware the different avatars inverse can fight each other.

This is where the live action video comes in. The folks at Inverse Ink went to good old Hong Kong and licensed video footage from a fantastically campy kung-fu movie. They stripped the dialogue and added their own twist to it make it fit the story. Hey, if Carl Macek can rewrite dialogue during translation, so can they. I about hit the floor the first time the video clip ran. I was stunned that anybody would find a use for these old kung-fu movies besides late night cable.

I can honestly say that this is the best cd comic I have seen so far. Unfortunately that's not all that hard to do. Almost every other cd comic has been abysmal. Reflux however does manage to bring some life to this style of comic. What starts out as another excursion into click mania, soon turns into a hunt for animation. Each "panel" in the book contains some type of motion. Many of them have objects within them move around or wiggle, but the real fun is when you hit a panel that is attached to live action. These video clips really save this graphic novel. Without them it's just another piece of eye candy.

There is even some built in replay value to Reflux. You can choose to watch the graphic novel from three different points of view. You can run through the story as Flux, Flux's computer, or the "mysterious evil dude". While the video clips remain the same, it does bring out some new dialogue and an entertaining way to keep watching the cd.

I was really surprised by the thought that went into this cd graphic novel. After such horrid attempts like the Ultraverse series from CD-Romix, Reflux is a pleasant surprise. Some of the video is out of focus, and even off center from the screen, and there are a few bugs in the graphic novel where things that should be erased aren't, but for about twenty bucks, Reflux makes a nice afternoon diversion, whether the series will take off at that price is another matter altogether.

Steve Gerencser

rating		**system requirements**
graphics	84	486 33
sound	80	8 meg ram
interface	73	2x cd-rom
fun factor	78	win 3.1
		svga
overall	78	sound card