

[Autos](#) [Careers](#) [Classifieds](#) [Homes](#)

Transformed on screen

Last Updated: August 8, 2010 1:57am

Calgarian Holly Raczynski is bruised

everywhere but her ego.

After all, despite months of being bashed and battered, she's still the stunt double of one of the world's sexiest women.

"It was pretty funny. There were a lot of jokes," she says, recalling when Olivia Wilde topped Maxim's Hottest 100 list in 2009. Funny because during that same period Raczynski and Wilde were virtually indistinguishable, poured into matching neon-illuminated costumes, outfitted in identical jet-black wigs. Raczynski's job: Perform all the fights, falls and close calls deemed too dangerous for the actress during production of the mega-budget sequel Tron: Legacy.

As she puts it, "Any time she's taking a beating in the movie, it's me."

For 30-year-old Raczynski, the road from Tisdale, Saskatchewan, where she was born, to Calgary, where she moved to in 1998, to the Vancouver set of one of 2010's most heavily-hyped movies, was no more twisted than your average sprained ankle.

Having practiced gymnastics since she was two years old — her father was her coach — she began to study martial arts after she moved to Alberta. She started training and eventually teaching with the Provincial Martial Arts Association. For years, she competed professionally, garnering a world title in 2006.

Around the same time, she began to pursue stunt work.

Her first gig was slightly more complicated than being hit over the head with a sack of hammers. But only slightly.

"I had to fall down stairs head-first," she says.

That initial job was a made-for-TV movie shot in Calgary called Hush.

Her perseverance paid off when she auditioned for the superhero epic Watchmen, which filmed in Vancouver in 2008. She didn't get the job she wanted— "I was in way over my head," she says now, laughing — but she did land smaller stunt work on the project. From there, she attracted the attention of 87eleven, a Los Angeles-based stunt group that's worked on such productions as The Matrix and Fight Club.

"I went in to do an audition for them and they were impressed with my skills, but I had no acting ability. I'd never done it.

"They'd be like, 'OK, pretend to take a hit.' And I was like, 'Pretend? If you just hit me it would be easier.' But that's not the way it works ... Film fighting is a lot different from real fighting."

More small-screen work followed, including a stint on Smallville in which she had to perform a spinning hook kick in stilettos and an evening gown. Then the call for Tron: Legacy came. "They needed someone who had a gymnastic and martial arts background, was 5-ft.-8 and was exactly my weight. I fit it perfect."

Even if she was too young to remember the original 1982 CG trail-blazer.

Once on the set, she and the rest of the stunt team rehearsed for a month, during which she mapped out fight sequences and trained with stylized weapons including a light disc and a

sword. Then she began collaborating with Wilde, best recognized from TV's House.

"I worked a lot with her, going through the choreography and making it fit her ... She was great to work with. And that was one of her first action movies and she was very, very eager and quick to learn. Without naming names, she was better than some of the guys as far as that stuff went — as far as consistency and getting it right; she was really good that way. And super nice to work with."

She speaks just as highly of both rising star Garrett Hedlund and screen lion Jeff Bridges, who reprises his role as a programmer transported into cyberspace.

"He's very nice man," she says, adding the Oscar-winning veteran is "interesting to talk to because he's so experienced, but there's no ego."

The battery-powered Tron costumes were decidedly more difficult.

"They would literally have to dress me because the wardrobes were so complex. You couldn't get into them on your own. The lighting in the suits is like the lighting in cell phones. You know when your numbers light up? That's the same technology they use to light these suits."

More than a year later, Raczynski, who continues to live in Calgary, is eagerly awaiting the sequel's release in December.

"So much of it, I don't even know what it's going to look like because there was so much blue screen ... But it was a great experience.

"I loved every minute of it."

kevin.williamson@sunmedia.ca

Copyright © 2010 Calgary Sun All Rights Reserved