

Special Visual Effects

assignment 5

Matte painting

For this assignment you will create a short (5-10 second) shot combining live action video with a digital matte painting.

SUMMARY

due Tuesday April 1st at the beginning of class

A best quality, 720x480, DV NTSC, 29.97 fps digital movie file
5-10 seconds in length

DETAILS

You are to conceive of and produce a matte painting shot, with at least half of the final frame being painted. By "painting" I mean what we've read about in Rickitt, namely, a digital composite of multiple photographed (or painted) 2D elements.

Your shot should be as photorealistic as you can manage.

Your matte painting must be *constructed*, that is, it can't be just a single photograph of a real place or thing. This construction can of course take a number of forms: multiple photographic elements, retouching/rubber stamping from a single element, even a painting if you're so inclined and talented.

Some things to consider:

- I recommend taking the comments from the reading to heart, namely, plan your shot in detail. Make sketches, figure out what will be live action and what will be painted.
- When you shoot the live action, snap digital photos to use in the matte painting later on.
- Position the live action element in an AfterEffects composite where you imagined it to be, then export a frame of the comp to Photoshop.
- Make a layer in Photoshop where you track the lines of perspective and other cues ("delineation"). Go ahead and use the drawing tools for this! If a separate layer, these guides can be turned on and off when necessary.
- Remember the keys to successful matte paintings (from Rickitt): the "Pyramid of Believability," good lighting, properly matched scale/perspective.
- A small camera move applied to the final composite in AfterEffects may help sell your shot better.
- Video has its own "grain" - try to come up with a way to simulate this grain in your painting.
- Your matte painting will sell better if there is some form of subtle motion. Remember the "poked holes" tricks used in Ben Hur, or that it's valid to composite other live action elements over your painting (smoke, etc).

There are a lot of inspirational sources online. Google for "matte paintings" and look around.

<http://www.matteworld.com/>

<http://www.urbanpacification.com/index2.html>

<http://www.hatchfx.com/pages/mattePaintings/mainFrame.htm>