

FX Part 2

WITH JIM SOTO



Visual effects (or vfx) can make or break a movie. The 21st Century ushered forth a new form of filmmaking that forever changed the way movies are made. Continued progress in cinematic technology has allowed filmmakers to produce films that gave new meaning to the phrase "movie magic."





Most vfx requires compositing. Compositing is one of the most prevalent techniques in the visual arts – but what is compositing? Compositing is a post-production process or technique of combining visual elements from separate sources into single images.

WHEN TO COMPOSITE?



Compositing is used to create the illusion of a cohesive image that extends past the actual image reality.



It can be used when there's a need to:

- Create multiple depictions of one actor in a scene, such as in Legend.
- Place different backgrounds behind a character, such as in Justice League.
- Add a new element into an extant image, such as in Jurassic World.

No matter what it's used to depict, compositing allows multiple visual worlds to merge into one.

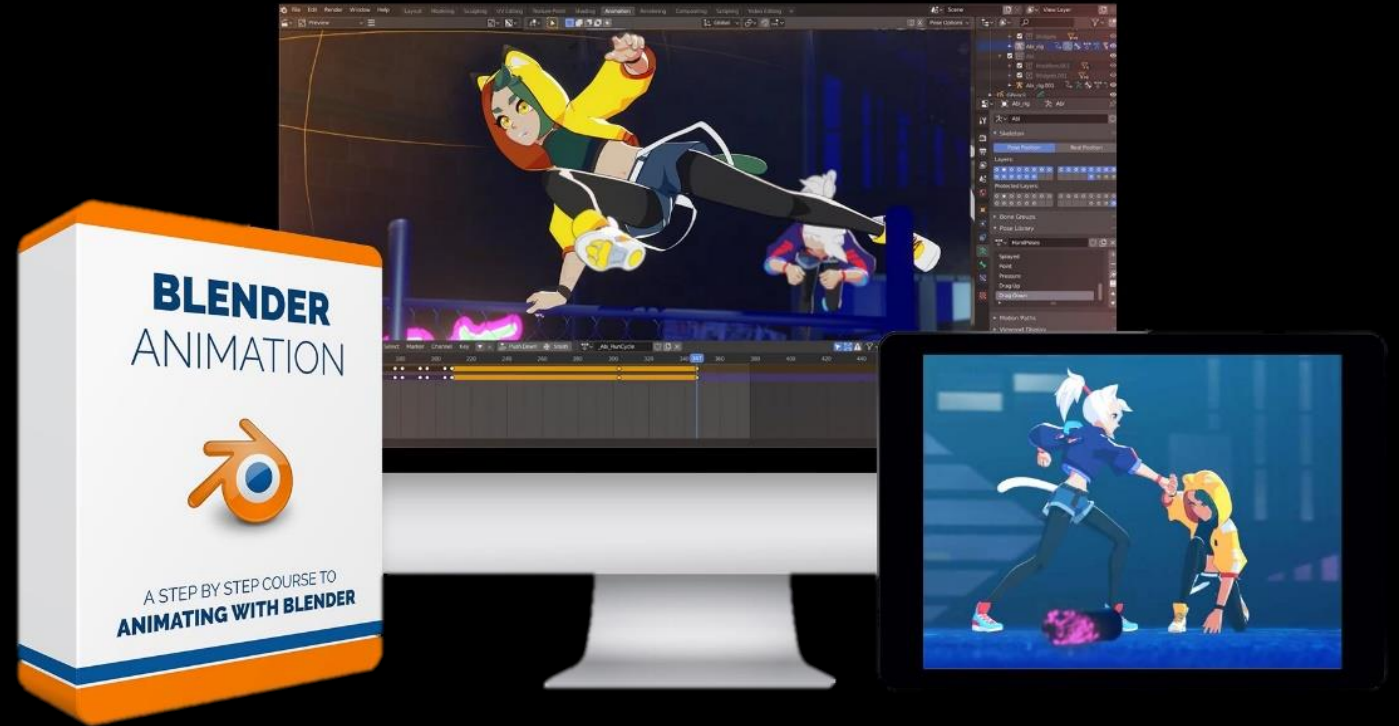
WHAT CAN YOU USE?



There are many VFX tools you can use. Very popular compositing and effect software would include: Adobe After Effects, DaVinci Resolve, HitFilm, Blender, Nuke, Shotcut, Capcut, Mocha and others.

Free VFX compositors available for you can found in the internet that can be downloaded or used in the internet include (click any link):

- [HitFilm Express](#)
- [Blender](#)
- [Capcut](#)
- [DaVinci Resolve](#)
- [Runway](#) (online)
- [Shotcut](#)



TYPES OF VFX IN FILM



Fremen warriors ride giant sandworms to battle in Dune, Part 2 (2024).

There are many aspects to the vfx process but they can all be organized into three main types: Compositing, CGI, and motion capture. Each of these either takes place after principal photography or simultaneously in a dedicated and controlled studio (e.g., a mocap studio).

COMPOSITING

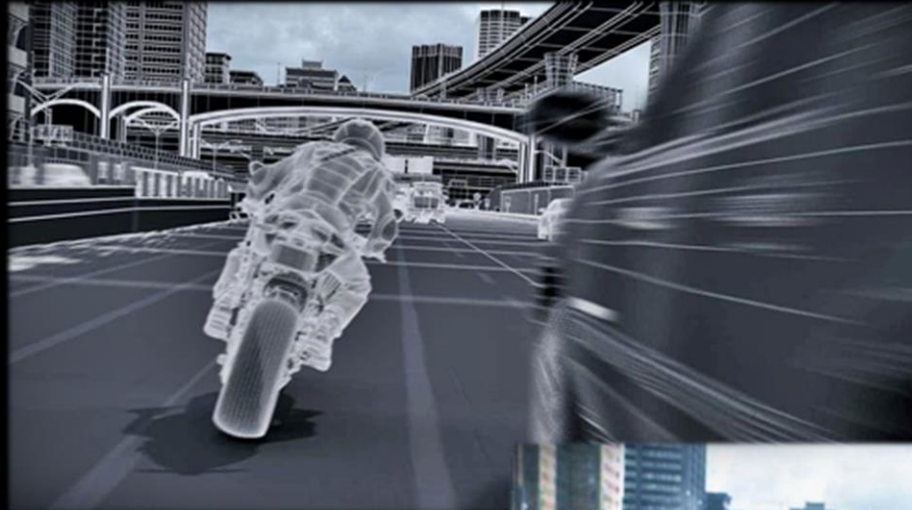


CLICK
HERE

Compositing consists of combining multiple images into a single image. One example of this can be to use **double exposure** to create a surreal feeling for your images and another is better-known compositing technique: **chroma keying** which involves using a green screen (or blue screen). The simplest definition is that a solid background color is replaced with a new background image.

COMPUTER GENERATED IMAGE (CGI)

CGI is imagery made completely within computers and other types of visual FX use them to enhance or combine live action footage. The easiest example to choose is CG animation, which has been dominated by Pixar for the past three decades.



MOTION CAPTURE

What is mocap and how is it distinguished from other types of VFX? It is the technology of capturing an actor's motion and physical performance to make a CGI character. Mocap tracks various types of motion such as facial expressions and body movements. Mocap can be used in animated films, but is most popular in creating CGI characters live-action movies.



Thru mo-cap, actor Andy Serkis became Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2000-2003).



Creatively, mo-cap is seen as an evolution of **rotoscoping**, the technique of tracing over motion pictures to create realistic animated motion.

For Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, actor's movements were recorded so that artists could sketch over the footage to create realistic, animated movement. Today, mocap is a common tool for many films.



EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

New trends have been recently been impacting the VFX world. Some include:

- Deepfake
- Ray Tracing
- StageCraft or LED display walls
- Cloud integration





Visual effects is a very competitive market worldwide. There are a lot of vfx companies and all of them eager to get work so competition alone does not allow any company to have huge mark-ups.



The amount of work for visual effects companies fluctuates widely. At the end, on a yearly basis most vfx companies make razor thin profits or may be further in debt. Many have gone out of business. Some of the ones still operating do so because they have the backing of a large corporation or wealthy individuals. Some are able to survive because they are in a country or area with tax incentives.



There's good work done all around the world and price is not the only factor studios look at but the vfx industry would be much different if there were no tax incentives. If vfx were really such a profit center studios would be running out the door to buy or create their own vfx companies.

Let us see now a documentary about the current state of the vfx industry titled Life After Pi.



WHEN FX GO BAD



Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania's (2023) bad vfx were universally panned by audiences and critics.

Entering the VFX industry can be fulfilling for those passionate about visual effects. However, the industry has faced challenges, such as pandemics, outsourcing and competition. VFX have been steadily improving over the years, but the demand for them has drastically exceeded capacity. Things that took months are now expected in days or hours. Films have 10x the number of vfx they used to. Quality has suffered.

VFX artists have suffered more! COVID- 19, and overworked/underpaid vfx artists have lead to a decline of good vfx. Unionization and better salaries would help vfx workers. Informing Studio executives and directors on how long it takes for quality vfx to be done would also improve their quality, as the workers wouldn't be forced to meet ridiculous deadlines. Better coverage from the media would not only inform audiences about abuses but also pressure the studios to enact change.



Following a backlash from fans, producers changed Sonic the Hedgehog's (2019) appearance for it's "ugliness".

RESHOOT

1. What is compositing? CGI? Motion tracking?
2. When should you use compositing?
3. What is rotoscoping?
4. What emerging technologies are impacting the VFX industry?
5. What is the important problem VFX companies around the world are facing? Explain.
6. What important changes can be made to help fix the VFX industry?



Next:

SOUND FX

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