

Ron Bowman

Demo Reel Breakdown

Project 1: Coronation Street 50th Anniversary Episode

Hardware/OS Used: Windows XP
Software Used: Photoshop, Cinema 4D
My Contribution to Project: I created matte paintings (2D, 2.5D and 3D)
Production Time: 4 months

Coronation Street Overview:

Having done a great deal of work on Doctor Who, I was thrilled to be able to work on yet another long running iconic British show that's close to many peoples' hearts. It's highly unusual for Coronation Street to employ visual effects, but the tram crash scene absolutely required it, allowing me the chance to make a rare contribution to Coronation Street.

Shot 1: Aerial view of Weatherfield

This shot essentially gave me the opportunity to design Weatherfield as it appears outside the limited area of the legendary set. I first designed the layout, then modeled, textured and lit nearly all the elements in the shot. Only the train platform and cars were modeled by another artist (though I projected the train tracks on the top of the platform). I then projected 2D enhancements throughout the shot. All in all it took 6 weeks to create this shot and several variations (which required separate 2D projections).

Shots 2 and 3: Coronation Street tram crash

These are two typical examples of the many dmp enhancements I made to numerous shots throughout the show. I was responsible for all dmp work applied to the plates of the shots.

Project 2: Clash of the Titans

Hardware/OS Used: Linux system; Macintosh, OS X
Software Used: Photoshop CS4, Maya, Shake
My Contribution to Project: I created matte paintings (stills and 2.5D)
Production Time: 6 months (July 2009 to December 2009)
periodically interrupted by other projects

Clash of the Titans Overview:

Clash of the Titans was a very exciting and challenging project. It required a lot of difficult 2.5D projection and sharpened my skills in that area

Shot 4: Petrification by Medusa (2.5D shot)

I was responsible for all the dmp work on this shot. I worked very closely with comp to make this challenging shot work. I had to create a photorealistic stone version of the actor that matched him as closely as possible while plausibly reading as a physical statue. The hair and beard were particularly challenging in that regard.

Shot 5: Background architecture in Medusa's lair (2.5D shot)

The primary goal in this 2.5D projection shot was to marry the actual stone background on the set with the set extension envisioned by the director. I was entirely responsible for the dmp for this shot.

Shots 6 and 7: Cliffs on the Ocean (2.5D shots)

I created a large number of matte paintings of cliffs for this segment of the film in order to achieve the director's vision for the terrain. Some, such as shot 6, required very complex projection to match extensive camera movement, which created a great deal of parallax to deal with. I typically started out with a shot that had less terrain than the director desired, along with some simple geometry that indicated where the new terrain was to go and which gave me a surface to project my matte painting.

Project 3: Primeval – Series 3 and 4

Hardware/OS Used: Linux system; Windows XP
Software Used: Photoshop, Cinema 4D, Nuke
My Contribution to Project: I created matte paintings (2D, 2.5D and 3D)
Production Time: Ongoing – I've worked on two seasons

Shot 8: Victorian London

I created 3 views of Victorian London for an episode of Primeval. The first two shots are essentially day and night versions of the same view, which is nearly all dmp except for one small area of action plate. I used rough 3D models for the distant buildings, then created the closer buildings in 2D. The shot with the houses of Westminster is entirely dmp. I was responsible for all the dmp in these shots and they took me a combined 4.5 weeks.

Shot 9: The “New Dawn” Machine

I designed the New Dawn machine based on a rough general shape I was to follow. Once the design was approved I modeled, textured and lit it, then projected 2D enhancements. This shot took about 2 weeks.

Shot 10: Blast in road

This is a typical example of many shots I've created for Primeval. It was entirely 2D and took about 4 days.

Project 4: Doctor Who – Series 5 and 6

Hardware/OS Used: Windows XP
Software Used: Photoshop, Cinema 4D, Nuke
My Contribution to Project: I created matte paintings (2D, 2.5D and 3D)
Production Time: Ongoing – I've worked on two seasons

Doctor Who Overview:

When I learned that a matte painting position was open at The Mill to work on Doctor Who I jumped at the opportunity. I feel fortunate to be able to contribute to such an iconic and legendary British institution. Due to the very nature of the show, Doctor Who has enabled me to work on an unusually wide variety of images and has enabled me to be very creative.

Shot 11: The Doctor's summons via crop circle

I was responsible for all dmp in this shot. I had to create three images with three different levels of detail for this shot. The first one was a close-up and simply extended the plate and married it to the subsequent shots. The second showed a mid-distance version of a section of the corn field and the third completed the entire corn field.

Shot 12: Space station hangar (3D and 2D shot)

I designed and created all 2D and 3D elements of this shot with the exception of the space ship, which was modeled by another artist. This shot is primarily 3D. I first designed the environment, then modeled and textured it using Cinema 4D. I then finished it by projecting 2D enhancements.

Shot 13: Alien topiary

I was once again allowed a great deal of leeway to design the topiary in this shot based on a very loose description by the director, which made it a particularly fun shot to work on. Once some designs were approved I created the dmp on about 20 layers and projected it onto 3D cards.

Shot 14: Live Chess pit set extension (3D and 2D shot)

This is a typical example of many set extensions I've created over the past two years of work on Doctor Who. The scaffolding was created in 3D, then 2D elements were added. I created all dmp for this shot.

Shot 15: Medieval Venice cityscape

For this shot I was given the massive task of recreating the city of Venice in the 1400s within the space of 14 days (tight deadlines for television). They wanted a vintage, sepia postcard look to the city rather than strict photorealism. I created everything in the shot from scratch – all the architecture and ground as well as the sky. The one solid constraint was that the church in the center of the image had to look exactly like the actual church in Croatia where filming for the episode took place. I started with a perspective grid, then used photomontage and painting. I didn't use any 3D elements for this shot, figuring that that would take too long in this particular case.

Shot 16: Medieval Venice along a canal

For this shot I added dmp to footage of a Croatian town in which the shot was filmed in order to make it look like Venice in the 1400s and to remove undesirable elements. I created everything above the waterline. The moving water and boats were subsequently added in comp.

Project 5: Where the Wild Things Are

Hardware/OS Used:	Linux system; Macintosh, OS X
Software Used:	Photoshop, Maya, Shake
My Contribution to Project:	I created matte paintings (stills and 2.5D)
Production Time:	8 months (December 2008 to July 2009)

Where the Wild Things Are Overview:

This was the first of several live-action films I'd worked on. I was the only matte painter on the film for several months until two others were added to as the workload increased near the end. I was fortunate to be able to work on a nice variety of shots for this film.

Shot 17: Approaching the island of the Wild Things

For this shot I created the actual island from scratch based on a general shape that the art director gave me. There was no actual island in the original footage. Because of the fact that the shot was a daylight shot, I actually painted the island in full daylight so that the compositors could grade it into a night shot along with the original plate. However, I had the extra challenge of giving it a very vertical lighting to match the lighting it would have with the moonlight and lightning strikes.

Shot 18: Fort interior

The set for this shot didn't extend very high up, so I was called upon to do a set extension. The challenge with this shot was that the lighting for the spotlights heavily bled into the set, which would not happen if the set were actually fully formed. As such I had to negate the effects of the lighting well into the actual set and estimate what the light levels would be for the top of the set that I added.

Shots 19 and 20: Fort interior set extensions

There were many shots for which there was a limited fort interior set. As such I completed the set as a matte painting. The background in shot 13 was used for over 10 different shots that took place in approximately the same location. Shot 15 was started by another matte painter, then recreated by me based on an updated brief. I recreated all the surfaces of the fort to change the texture of the straw and altered the lighting. The background for shot 8 was also used for a number of similar shots.

Shot 21: Ira's tree house

This structure would have been quite difficult to make safe for actors to use, so they decided to create it in matte painting instead. The actor was positioned at the proper height using a crane and I created the treehouse based on photos of concept models.

Shot 22: Creature enhancement

The mouth of the Wild Things costume wasn't able to realistically stretch like a real mouth would, so they had me paint in a section to make it behave more realistically. Teeth were also added.

Project 6: Sherlock

Hardware/OS Used: Windows XP
Software Used: Photoshop CS4, Maya 8.5, Bodypaint
My Contribution to Project: I created textures
Production Time: 2 months, interrupted by other projects

Sherlock Overview:

I was shocked to discover that the Sherlock team at The Mill was nominated for an Emmy Award for visual effects in 2011. I was one of five artists that worked on it and I was given a nomination certificate.

Shot 23: Explosion at Baker Street

This is a representative sample of several matte paintings I created for Sherlock. This shot is entirely 2D. All dmp was created by me and it took about a week.

Shot 24: Set modification

This is another representative sample of the kinds of enhancements I had to make throughout the three episodes I worked on. This shot is also entirely 2D. All dmp was created by me and it took about three days.

Project 7: Merlin – Series 3 and 4

Hardware/OS Used: Linux system; Macintosh, OS X
Software Used: Photoshop CS4, Maya 8.5, Bodypaint
My Contribution to Project: I created textures
Production Time: Ongoing – I've worked on two seasons

Shot 25: Mausoleum tower

I first designed this mausoleum tower based on a rough spec from the director. I then modeled and textured it in Cinema 4D. The special case with this shot was that it was going to be demolished using a purpose-built software package. As a result, I had to not only superficially model the building, but I had to make sure that it was modeled in such a way that the walls had thickness and detail inside them. This made it much more time consuming, but it made for a very convincing demolition. I was responsible for the dmp and creation of the building, but the demolition was carried out by other artists.

Shot 26: Merlin Throne Room

This was a relatively straightforward shot that nevertheless allowed me to design a cathedral interior. I fleshed out the design, then created the dmp. I divided the plate into two sections, then bridged the gap. Comp added the flickering firelight. This shot took about a week.

Shot 27: Merlin library set extension

This is a representative sample of several set extensions I created for Merlin. This shot is entirely 2D. All dmp was created by me and it took about a four days.

Project 8: Avatar

Hardware/OS Used: Linux system; Macintosh, OS X
Software Used: Photoshop CS4, Maya 8.5, Bodypaint
My Contribution to Project: I created textures
Production Time: 2 months (July 2009 to August 2009)

Avatar Overview:

When I found out that Framestore was involved with Avatar I was hoping to be able to contribute something to it. I was very fortunate to have been asked to help out on textures for a couple of months. I created a large number of textures for a wide variety of objects as well as several body doubles, of which I've placed just a few examples in this reel.

For each texture I created a color, bump, displacement, and specular map. Some textures also required more specialized maps. I worked in tandem with lighting to refine the textures based on their feedback and needs. I learned a great deal of advanced texturing techniques from this project.

Shot 28: Hard body textures for props

These objects, particularly the guard tower and gun mount, were very visible and approached the camera very closely in some shots. As such I took great pains to carefully craft their textures to extremely high standards. I created the color, bump, displacement, and specular maps for these objects as well as multiple additional maps for enhanced detail.

I should note that these objects are used in a large number of shots. To keep this reel brief, I found a shot that conveniently contains all three items. I then show the items in more detail with turnarounds.

Shot 29: Digital doubles

I created several digital doubles for Avatar. Once modeled and textured, they were animated with motion capture data and used to fill shots with additional people. Each character had 8 to 12 high-resolution textures (8K) distributed throughout their bodies. The faces were the most time-consuming and challenging part of the process. They had to be very convincing in order to make the shots work. I used Bodypaint extensively for these textures, as well as Photoshop. I created all of the textures for each of the body doubles I worked on.

Project 9: The Tale of Despereaux

Hardware/OS Used: Linux system; Macintosh, OS X
Software Used: Photoshop CS4, Maya 8.5, C4D Bodypaint , Shake
My Contribution to Project: I created matte paintings (stills and 2.5D) and textures
Production Time: 14 months (November 2007 to December 2009)

The Tale of Despereaux Overview:

I moved to London and got hired at Framestore in order to work on The Tale of Despereaux as a matte painter. Over the 14 months I spent on the film I worked on over 100 shots, both large and small. I've included a few representative major shots on my demo reel and have only included one or two minor shots where the painting was particularly interesting or challenging.

Shot 30: Library scene (2.5D shot)

The establishing pan-shot of the Castle's library was most challenging shot in the film for the matte painting department, as well as the most visible. As the camera pans from top to bottom, the painting persists on the screen for a full 10 seconds. I was excited to have it handed to me.

At the outset I was given some basic 3D geometry indicating where everything was generally to go. I was then given a pretty wide latitude to design many elements of the library as I wished, based on previously designed elements within the castle. I decided to do the whole painting in one overscan projection, which made it necessary to paint a distorted image as I moved from the center. Quite a challenge! However, that approach also solved several other problems, so I went with it. The shot took me just over two weeks from start to finish. Note that the shot is edited to take less time in the reel.

Shot 31: Giant books in the library (2.5D shots)

I worked on a series of shots in which Despereaux interacts with giant books (relative to his size) in the castle's library. I arranged the page graphics, projected them onto the books in Framestore's proprietary 2.5D software, rendered the resulting scenes from Maya, then painted over the render and re-projected the final matte paintings back onto the geometry so that it could be animated.

Shot 32: Mig's farm (2.5D)

I created several similar backgrounds for the "Mig's Farm" set. I started with some basic 3D geometry and a rough colour key. I had a bit of a struggle coming up with just the right look for the thatched roof, having tried several approaches before coming up with something our art director agreed was just right.

Several of the shots were 2.5D projections, which required me to output several layers, then project them onto cards arranged at various distances from the camera based on trial and error to determine what looked good.

Shot 33: The castle dungeon

I painted this scene based on a sketch from the concept department and some basic 3D geometry. It's another shot where I had a lot of latitude to design many details as I wished.

Shot 34: Views of the kingdom of Dor from castle ledge

For the first shot I created town in the town buildings in the foreground based on a rough colour key. The background was created by another artist. For the second image I created town in the background on the left of the image and enhanced the the render of the castle wall and ledge, which comprises the rest of the image, adding detail and wear and tear.