

Cinesite creates visual effects for Generation Kill

Cinesite has earned an Emmy award for Outstanding Visual Effects for its work on the seven episode mini-series *Generation Kill* which has aired on HBO in the US and is currently showing on Channel Four in the UK. Cinesite created around 450 visual effects shots for the series. *Generation Kill* is a gritty dramatization of Rolling Stone journalist Evan Wright's experience as an embedded reporter with the US Marine Corps during the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The series was directed by Susanna White and Simon Cellan Jones. Visual Effects Supervisor for HBO was Adam McInnes and for Cinesite Dave Sewell and Stuart Partridge. Cinesite's CG Supervisor was Stephane Paris. It was shot on Kodak 16mm film using KODAK VISION2 200T 7217 and KODAK VISION2 500T 7218 stocks.

The production went to great efforts to achieve realism in every respect, filming as much action in camera as possible and using authentic military vehicles and equipment wherever possible. Cinesite worked closely with production Military Adviser Eric Kocher to enhance shots where this was not possible and to recreate the epic scale of battle digitally, on a massive scale.

Cinesite's work included the creation of convoys of photorealistic CGI military vehicles, missiles, burning oil fires, CGI attack aircraft, the destruction of Iraqi cities as the Allies advance and realistically portraying the colossal resources of the American army.

Fourteen types of CGI vehicle were created in all, each requiring modeling using accurate imagery and technical data, then complex texturing and animation. Procedural systems were written to create automatic vibration and suspension for the vehicles to give a realistic impression of vehicle weight and movement when driving over hills or bumpy ground.

To add further realism, tyre tracks from vehicles traversing dusty and impressionable desert ground were added. Even the dust kicked up by the wheels of the numerous vehicles was recreated digitally.

Several key visual effects shots show the scale of US military resources. A sequence in the first episode shows the American base Camp Matilda. In one wide establishing shot, the environment is a 3-D matte painting, CGI tents have been created and replicated into the distance, and CGI vehicles and soldiers have been added.

Another sequence, in episode two, shows the Allies advancing their Humvee towards Iraq in a massive convoy of vehicles. The Humvee travels across an overhead road bridge and we see the soldiers' view of a wide "superhighway", with a multitude of CGI light armoured vehicles, tanks, Humvees and supply trucks. This sequence of four shots was immensely challenging: even the environment was digitally created.

Cinesite, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Eastman Kodak Company, is one of the most successful visual effects facilities in the world. Its work on New Line Cinema's production *The Golden Compass* gained both an Oscar and BAFTA for visual effects. It has recently been awarded a contract for visual effects on the latest installment in the highly successful Chronicles of Narnia series, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.

The company has also worked on all films in the Harry Potter series, creating both visual effects and physical models. Its massive and intricately detailed Hogwarts School models have become a highly-acclaimed feature of the successful series. HBO and Cinesite have a long and successful history of working together on visual effects, with productions such as the mini-series *Rome* and *Band of Brothers*.