

## Mistika Case Study

### Identity FX relied on Mistika to create engaging Stereo 3D grandeur in Sir Ridley Scott's spectacular Sci-Fi film *Prometheus*

*"We achieved incredible results on Prometheus with Mistika's powerful stereoscopic 3D optimisation tools. Mistika is a powerful system for a project of this magnitude and helped us realize a fantastic outcome."*

**Leo Vezzali, Co-Founder & Stereoscopic Supervisor, Identity FX**

**North Hollywood, California, U.S., 10 July 2012** – Identity FX chose SGO's advanced Mistika technology for the majority of its stereoscopic work, to create spellbinding 3D in the intriguing science fiction film, *Prometheus*, directed by award-winning Sir Ridley Scott. Identity FX and Mistika teamed up to deliver the finest technical creativity and sheer innovative ingenuity to the high profile project.

#### **MISTIKA BRINGS OPTIMISATION OF THE THIRD KIND TO PROMETHEUS AT IDENTITY FX**

The film depended on superior visual effects and CG for the on-set pre-visualisation of the external space visuals. A combination of Stereo 3D cinematography, CGI and new tools and workflows were initiated to realise the story. To meet the Stereo 3D post production challenges, Ridley Scott's team entrusted Identity FX and its Mistika system, with 2K and Stereo 3D real-time capabilities, to deliver first-rate results. Visual Effects Supervisor, Richard Stammers and VFX Producer, Allen Maris, supervised over ten post companies for *Prometheus*, which included Identity FX, who made a significant contribution to the stereo optimisation on the film. Identity FX was responsible for all of the native stereo 3D correction for almost half of the film, which involved geometry and colour alignment. Leo Vezzali, Co-Founder and Stereoscopic Supervisor at Identity FX, predominantly used Mistika for his work, alongside the film's Stereo Supervisor, Sean Santiago, to complete the optimisation.

#### **MISTIKA'S REAL-TIME STEREO 3D CAPABILITIES HAVE A DEEP IMPACT**

*Prometheus* contained approximately 1,300 digital effect shots. The work achieved by Identity FX included 49 minutes of the film completed at their North Hollywood facility on the Mistika. The main focus of the 3D optimisation for the film was to remove any impediments that might have worked against the illusion of depth. Leo Vezzali explains: "Using Mistika's advanced stereoscopic capabilities, we were able to address any issues that might have occurred in the native stereo capture, enabling the director to maximize the 3D medium by optimising it to support the narrative."

## **MISTIKA WAS A VITAL TOOL IN THE PROCESS**

Leo also identified shots that contained excessive noise, leading him to request the original R3D files to test a Debayer pass in Mistika. "I would have to say that the large number of brightness/flare disparities were quite challenging to deal with, as were the steadicam shots." Leo expands further: "Zoom and exposure mismatches were really the most prevalent challenges that we encountered. In many cases, the difference in exposure, lead to a soft focus issue in one eye, which can cause eye fatigue over the course of a scene. To solve these issues we employed extensive use of masks and power windows to mitigate the disparities."

Leo continues: "Mistika was a vital tool in the process. Most of the time, I would provide a colour balanced version of the shot to our compositors – taking advantage of Mistika's real time colour alignment capability - so that they could focus on the additional geometry needs of a shot. For the more problematic geometric misalignments, the team at Identity FX worked repetitiously, running multiple colour or alignment passes as needed, which helped to resolve inconsistencies in the depth and disparity map generation. Leo adds: "We achieved incredible results on *Prometheus* with Mistika's powerful stereoscopic 3D optimisation tools. Mistika is a powerful system for a project of this magnitude and helped us realize a fantastic outcome."

## **MISTIKA'S ROBUST COMPOSITING USED IN C-SECTION SCENE TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM EFFECT**

One particularly challenging scene for the Identity FX team was Dr. Shaw's horrifying C-section in the medical-pod. "There were many long hallway shots in and out of the med-pod, that had shaky camera movements and massive lighting shifts." Leo began: "These required a ton of key frames, and involved more of a compositing approach to correct the shots than I had anticipated initially. I basically had to "roto-isolate" elements of the shots, so that I could apply very specific parameters, and then composite them back together in Mistika. The most difficult shot required twelve composite layers to correct. Mistika's compositing tools are very fast and robust, and the tracker is extremely solid, all of which made my life a lot easier."

## **TRANSPARENT FILE MANAGEMENT, QC IN THE SAME TIMELINE & CONTINUOUS TOGGING**

Juan Carlos Ertze, CTO at Identity FX, and Mistika Specialist in the Pipeline division of the company, elaborates further on the file management, toggling and QC capabilities for the mammoth project: "Having to deal with over 140,000 files with associated meta-data, specific naming convention for deliverables (usually different from ingest) and time-code (frame numbers) to be maintained, is never an easy task. Mistika gave us the chance to deal with different versions of the same shot, with different previews for each version, smooth integration of external layers for paint or roto jobs, scooping with LUTs, and everything into the very same timeline, in real time and with a clear and real trace to the original ingested file. File management became transparent and compatible through the entire pipeline, without any data reduplication, and having the ability of QCing within the same timeline where the optimisation was carried on, without having to render proxies or intermediates, therefore saving storage space and valuable machine time."

Juan adds: "A big difference was the client's QC sessions, with an environment in full resolution and real time performance. Toggling between before and after, re-framed or original framing, LUT or original colour space, colour alignment or not, vertical geometry alignment or Vertical+Horizontal, really makes a difference for the Stereo Supervisor's decisions and requests. One of the most interesting features was the ability to preview the scene with a temporary convergence point for a more comfortable preview, and continuously toggle this on or off. Several display modes of analysis tools could be previewed to understand the peculiarities of a particular shot."

### **FILMING 3D AT SHEPPERTON, AT ACTIVE VOLCANOES AND POWERFUL WATERFALLS IN ICELAND**

Production for the technology development and creatures for the film commenced back in April 2010, while principle photography began in March 2011. After Cinematographer, Darius Wolski persuaded Ridley Scott to film in Stereo 3D, it was shot entirely using 3D cameras on an estimated \$130 million budget. 3ality Technica provided some of the rigs and equipment to facilitate the process and train the crew. The production team used five 3ality Technica Atom 3D rigs, four of which were configured with RED EPIC 3D cameras set-up for use on camera dollies and tripods, which were continuously in use during filming. The fifth rig employed EPIC cameras for steadicam use, which was only used when required. On-location filming took place in Scotland's Isle of Skye; England's Shepperton Studios; the base of Iceland's active Hekla volcano and the Dettifoss waterfall; and Spain's Ciudad de la Luz audiovisual complex in Alicante. Exterior scenes of the alien world were also captured in Iceland. Approximately 250 people worked on the shoot in Spain, generating over €1 million to the local economy. Filming also took place in the Wadi Rum valley in Jordan. Green screens were avoided as much as possible in production, with the CGI presence later added in post.

### **THE PLOT THICKENS**

*Prometheus* was produced as a separate story, preceding *Alien*, but not directly connected to it. Written by Jon Spaihts and Damon Lindelof, the film is set in the late 21st century, and focuses on the crew of a spaceship named *Prometheus*. A star map, discovered among remnants from earth's ancient civilizations, was then followed in a space quest to find man's origins, only to discover a sinister threat to humanity's very existence. The film stars Noomi Rapace, Michael Fassbender, Guy Pearce, Idris Elba, Logan Marshall-Green and Charlize Theron. Nominated for three Academy Awards for Directing, as well as two Golden Globe and two BAFTA Awards, Sir Ridley Scott's best-known films include *Alien* (1979), held up as one of the greatest science fiction films ever made; sci-fi classic *Blade Runner* (1982), best picture Oscar-winner *Gladiator* (2000), *Hannibal* (2001) and *American Gangster* (2007). The film's title stems from Greek mythological figure and Titan, Prometheus, son of Iapetus and Themis. His brothers include Atlas, Epimetheus, and Menoetius. Many ancients believed the myth that he actually created and aided humans.

## CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR PROMETHEUS

*Prometheus* has received supportive reviews that praise its visual aesthetics. *USA Today* says: "The special effects in *Prometheus* may be the most dazzling of any film this year, and not since *Avatar* has 3D technology been put to such vividly mesmerizing use." The *Digital Journal* states that "*Prometheus* revives the 'Alien' franchise with larger special effects and a new story connection". According to *The Hollywood Reporter's* Todd McCarthy, the film's visuals were "vivid, stunning and magnificent on a technical level." Sam Adams, writing for *Los Angeles Times*, applauded the movie with a reminder that it is, ultimately, a horror film, "gnawing at subconscious terrors even as your conscious mind attempts to bat it away."

David Scott Van Woert, Co-Founder and COO of Identity FX explains, "Over the past two years, we spent quite some time evaluating various systems for use on 3D projects. None came close to the robust stereoscopic toolset that Mistika offers. We installed our Mistika in October 2011, and it hasn't stopped working since. We find it to be the most efficient and powerful stereoscopic finishing platform available."

Geoff Mills, SGO's Director of Global Sales & Operations enthuses: "*Prometheus* is yet another great example of how Mistika is being used to produce the highest quality stereo 3D images. But importantly, it also enabled the stereographer to use Mistika's real-time performance to make creative decisions during client attended on-line sessions, something which was done extensively to wonderful effect in the making of this movie." Geoff adds: "Of course we are delighted that SGO technology has been used on another high profile project, confirming once again that Mistika ensures the very best stereo 3D experience."

The première of *Prometheus* took place on 31<sup>st</sup> May this year, at the Empire Cinema in Leicester Square in London and was released on 1<sup>st</sup> June in the UK, and on 8<sup>th</sup> June in North America. It was simultaneously released in IMAX theatres and in 3D, and is encoded for D-Box motion seats that provide physical feedback to the viewer during the film. As of 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012, the film has earned \$46,073,959 million worldwide and is a blockbuster success.

Images are available from the official film website at: [www.prometheus-movie.com/gallery/](http://www.prometheus-movie.com/gallery/)

## SOME OF THE MAIN CREDITS

Directed by Ridley Scott

Produced by Ridley Scott, David Giler, Walter Hill

Written by Jon Spaihts, Damon Lindelof

Starring Noomi Rapace, Michael Fassbender, Guy Pearce, Idris Elba, Logan Marshall-Green, Charlize Theron

Music by Marc Streitenfeld

Cinematography Dariusz Wolski

Editing by Pietro Scalia

Studio Scott Free Productions

Brandywine Productions

Distributed by 20th Century Fox

Post Production Facility Identity FX, Inc., North Hollywood

Stereo 3D post production system SGO's Mistika

## FOR PRESS USE ONLY

### About Identity FX

Identity FX, Inc. is a full-service Visual Effects and Stereoscopic 3D facility located in Los Angeles. Established in 2004, Identity FX has more than one-hundred visual effects and stereoscopic credits to its name, and counts all of the major US Studios and several cable networks as clients. Identity FX also has extensive experience in broadcast, including work on commercials for Nike, McDonalds and Google, titles and graphics for America's Next Top Model, and trailers for Fox, Lions Gate, Universal, Warner Brothers, Walden Media, MGM, Fox Searchlight, and Paramount Classics. The supervising producers are David Scott Van Woert and Leo Vezzali. For more information on Identity FX, please visit [www.identityfx.com](http://www.identityfx.com).

### About SGO

With Head Quarters based in Madrid, SGO is an established leading European developer of high-end solutions including its flagship DI and Stereo 3D system Mistika, and on-set application Mistika Live, for the post production and broadcast industries. A global company, SGO continues to expand with offices and reseller partners across the world. [www.sgo.es](http://www.sgo.es)

### SGO's PR & Marketing Contacts

Carole Cox (PR Manager), Tel: +44 781 747 3508, [ccox@sgo.es](mailto:ccox@sgo.es) / [carole@radiancepr.com](mailto:carole@radiancepr.com) and  
Sofia Pensado (Marketing Manager), Tel: +34 915 427 976, [spensado@sgo.es](mailto:spensado@sgo.es)

Images are available from the official film website at: [www.prometheus-movie.com/gallery/](http://www.prometheus-movie.com/gallery/)