

Sway Creates Virtual Environment for New Nissan Spot

Top Effects and Design Studio Showcases Ground-Breaking VFX Techniques

October 21, 2007 - 02:10

Synonymous with the revolutionary style and sleek appearance of Nissan's Crossover SUV, SWAY studio infuses life and illusion in the newest Nissan Rogue commercial entitled "Seamless," currently airing on Spanish-speaking broadcast channels nationwide. SWAY's renowned visual effects team integrated live action, motion control and photoreal computer graphics (CG) techniques to create a virtual environment full of unimaginable visual deceptions.

The :30 spot creates the illusion of the Nissan Rogue on a real studio set, surrounded by virtual projection screens displaying the environment through which the car is traveling. The strong CG imagery in "Seamless" allows the viewer to journey in and out of this illusion by creating the impression that the car is actually traveling through a real live environment.

"This commercial required intense planning and pre-visualization," noted SWAY Visual Effects Supervisor, Wayne England. "An elaborate single shot camera move required many motion control passes to account for the spot's complex and ambitious nature, but once combined with our photorealistic CG methodologies and compositing, the project gained a great deal of dynamic and compelling motion."

A precise CG replication of the vehicle's exterior was seamlessly integrated with a live action interior, which required intense 3D tracking and compositing techniques. This combined with flawless compositing of all motion control passes, allowed the characters inside the car to appear and change as the camera moved throughout the shot.

Because the car could not physically move within the visible soundstage setting, the ground beneath the Rogue required a large amount of CG effort for which careful reference photography and high dynamic range (HDR) images were taken. Through texturing and modeling details, the car appears to roll on a large conveyor belt, while simultaneously driving on a realistic road. To further create the Rogue's apparent motion, SWAY captured live-action high-definition footage using a specially configured three camera rig that collectively captured a 150 degree field of view. The footage was then stabilized, re-timed and projected onto virtual screens which appeared to surround the Rogue. This required considerable synchronization inside the 3D scene, so that the content of the screens would appear in exact alignment with the 3D elements within the shot.

During the live-action shooting process, SWAY additionally captured HDR images of sky environments, and after careful editing, used them as the primary CG lighting source for the entire spot.

SWAY utilized a variety of off-the-shelf hardware and software to complete the Nissan spot. The most

prominently used tools were NVIDIA Quadro professional graphics boards, NUKE and After Effects for compositing and LightWave for pre-visualization animation. Autodesk's 3ds Max 9 was used as the primary 3D package while PF Track was used for 3D tracking.

More Information at: www.swaystudio.com - Image and Video Courtesy of Nissan US and SWAY