

Jeff Foster
VFX veteran



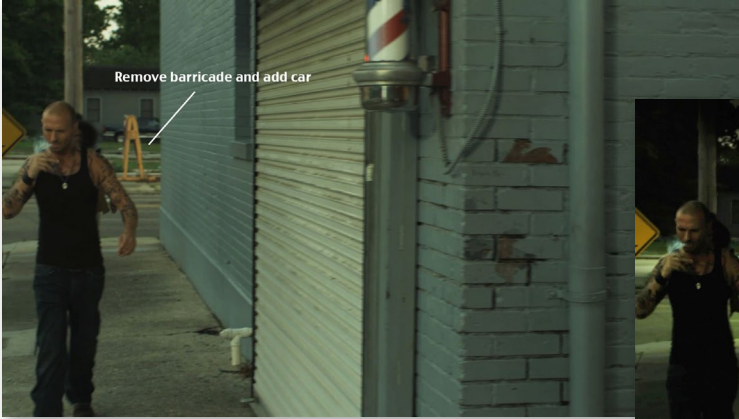
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Leading effects and motion graphics artist breaks new ground, more efficiently, with integrated Adobe® Creative Suite® 5.5 Production Premium software

Explosions, car chases, love scenes, fights to the death on a moving train—the movies that motion graphics and visual effects (VFX) artist Jeff Foster of *PixelPainter.com* works on are filled with such dramatic moments. Over the course of his 20-year career, Foster has completed thousands of shots—from full-throttle action to painterly and artistic—including those created most recently for feature films such as *The Courier* and *Blood Out* with Kris Kelley, VFX director, and Jason Hewitt, producer and director, of production company Films In Motion. No matter what the work, Foster relies on Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Production Premium software to create cinematic-quality motion graphics on tight timelines.

"Clients often ask for the impossible. A few months ago, I needed to create 13 VFX shots in five days. The footage was captured at three o'clock in the afternoon on a sunny day yet I needed to make everything look as if it was shot at night and match the existing nighttime shots," Foster recalls. "With the powerful features and integration among Adobe's video tools, in five days I accomplished all but one particularly challenging shot. The studio gave me an extra day to complete it since they were so pleased with the results I was able to achieve."

Foster uses Adobe Photoshop CS5 Extended to paint out unwanted background items and seamlessly integrates Photoshop layers with comps in Adobe After Effects CS5.5.



Challenges

- Coalesce and edit a wide variety of tapeless camera and HD formats
- Create multiple shots or dozens of frames in just days
- Work on exceedingly complex rotoscoping jobs
- Save time and effort in moving among software applications

Solutions

- Leverage integration among components of Adobe Creative Suite CS5.5 Production Premium
- Work seamlessly between After Effects CS5.5 and Photoshop CS5 Extended to create visual effects
- Use Adobe Premiere Pro CS5.5 to edit projects
- Clean up tape-recorded audio using Adobe Audition CS5.5

Benefits

- Saved time and met seemingly impossible deadlines leveraging Adobe Premiere Pro CS5.5 support for a variety of native camera formats
- Worked smarter and faster with tools such as the Roto Brush and Warp Stabilizer, shaving days off each project
- Surpassed quality expectations on complex shots
- Saved time and maintained creative flow

Industry veteran, all Adobe workflow

Foster is well known as a TV and movie graphics veteran, trainer, and author of multiple DVDs and written guides, such as *The Green Screen Handbook* (published by Sybex/Wiley). His creative endeavors began in the 1970s, when he airbrushed cars and painted murals on vans and trucks.

For his first career, he was a mechanical draftsman, before the advent of personal computers. When he bought his first computer in 1990, he began combining his painting and drafting skills with the digital world of imaging, illustration, motion graphics, and visual effects. He began learning software—Adobe After Effects® and Photoshop®—on his own. "I made my way into VFX through curiosity and persistence, and, as a self-taught artist, I appreciate the intuitiveness of Adobe software," he says. "Once I learned one program, it was easy to learn the others due to the consistency of commands, tools, interfaces, and shortcuts among programs."

When he was approached in the mid-1990s to work on previs for a film, he jumped at the chance. Today, Foster caters to clients such as Tribune Broadcasting, Deluxe Digital, Nestlé, FOX Television, Spike TV, Discovery/TLC, Universal Studios, Lionsgate Films, and Disney. He also is a 2010 Telly Award recipient for his "Docmercial" video productions.

Tapeless workflow saves time

Whether he's working on personal projects such as his short documentary film, *Women of Age*, or one of many feature films with high-profile actors, Foster uses the full range of tools in Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Production Premium. For *Women of Age*, a movie about an artist in California and the women she has interviewed and painted—all 70 and older—Adobe software was essential. The project required meshing tape-recorded audio with HD footage of interviews, shot on many different types of cameras. Foster made extensive use of Adobe Audition® CS5.5 for audio clean-up and he took advantage of the flexibility of Adobe Premiere® Pro CS5.5 to cut together various camera formats.

For his own work, Foster typically shoots with Sony XDCAM EX3 cameras. Clients provide footage in an array of formats, including RED R3D, Panasonic P2 HDX, and multiple DSLR formats. As a first step, he brings footage into Adobe Premiere Pro CS5.5 to organize it and combine multiple tapeless formats. With Adobe Premiere Pro CS5.5, he never worries about the time sink and hassle of converting footage, and he can place any format onto the timeline without a hiccup.

Whether he's turning daytime shots into nighttime shots or fine-tuning effects such as explosions, Foster relies on Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Production Premium software.



"The Roto Brush tool in Adobe After Effects CS5.5 is mind-blowing. A matte that previously would have taken days to create can now be completed in hours."

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"Adobe Premiere Pro CS5.5 is an incredible solution that saves hours in creating rough cuts of projects right from the start," says Foster. "I have abandoned other video editors—including Final Cut Pro—because the Adobe Premiere Pro CS5.5 tapeless workflow is much smarter, faster, and more integrated."

Creating realistic backgrounds and locales

Once projects are roughed out, Foster starts using Adobe Photoshop CS5 Extended to paint out unwanted background items, construct realistic composites and locales, and generate motion titles that grab attention. He also uses Photoshop when projects require frame-by-frame animations that mimic real motion, integrating Photoshop layers with comps in Adobe After Effects CS5.5.

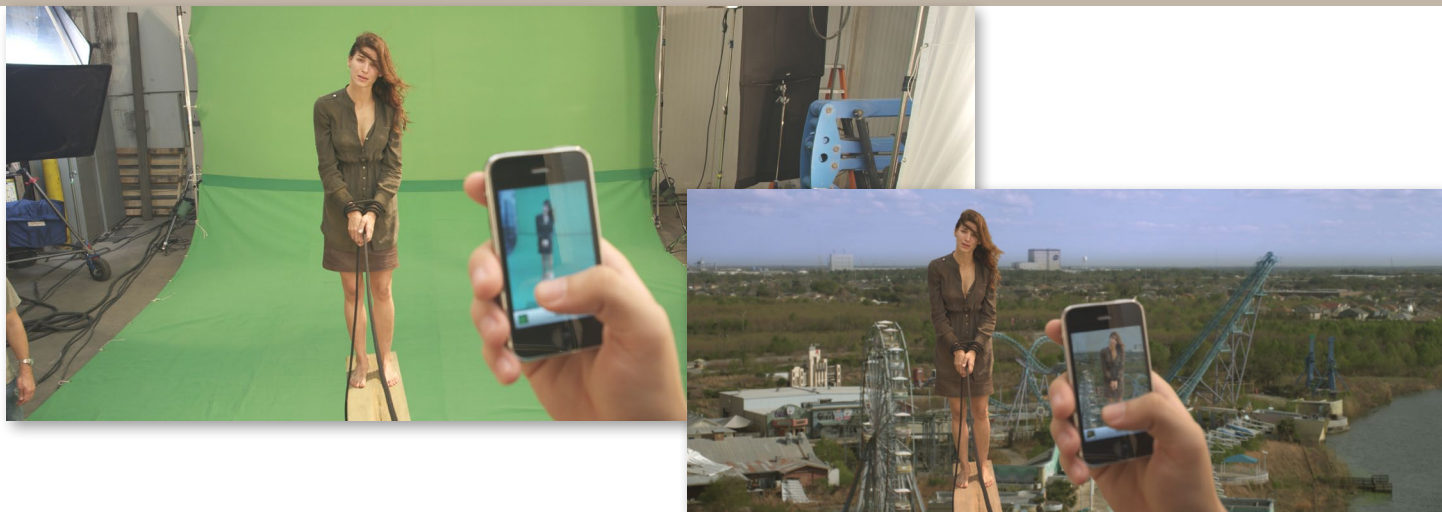
His video production workflow pivots on Adobe After Effects CS5.5, his mainstay tool for compositing, rotoscoping, roto-painting, motion tracking and match-moving, applying 3D animation to 2D images, and producing realistic effects such as noise, clouds, and smoke. As the demands increase and timelines decrease, Foster says After Effects CS5.5 helps make the workflow easier, with tools that automate mundane, repetitive tasks, so that Foster can focus on maximizing creativity.

Making fast work of complex shots

For the Lions Gate movie *Blood Out*, featuring stars such as Val Kilmer and Luke Goss, Foster had just five days to complete more than 900 frames of compositing. The footage was shot on handheld cameras and required extreme levels of stabilization, tracking, and rotoscoping. Foster was working with 4K RED footage, and says After Effects was able to handle the large files with ease.

"I threw every trick in the After Effects book at this project, from Warp Stabilizer to Smart Motion Blur," says Foster. "When I show before-and-after shots of the sequence to other professional compositors, they are amazed that I was able to pull this off in such a short amount of time with all the stabilization and compositing that was required."

Foster used Warp Stabilizer, Smart Motion Blur, and the Roto Brush in Adobe After Effects CS5.5 to transform green screen shots into realistic scenes on an extremely tight production schedule.



"Nothing beats the tight synergy of CS5.5 Production Premium software for editing and creating professional-level effects."

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Toolkit

Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Production Premium. Components used include:

- Adobe After Effects CS5.5
- Adobe Audition CS5.5
- Adobe Photoshop CS5 Extended
- Adobe Premiere Pro CS5.5

Platform: Mac

When he receives a frantic call for help on shots—not an unusual occurrence—the Roto Brush tool in After Effects CS5.5 helps him meet daunting deadlines while maintaining exceptional quality. For a dramatic roller coaster shot in *The Courier* (Arclight Films), Foster had to quickly extract a girl and two villains from the scene and then roto scope hair, clothing, and other subtleties—a difficult task considering the shot was taken with wind blowing on the actors on a handheld RED camera. The Roto Brush feature gave Foster a surprisingly accurate outline and an immediate place to start finessing. "The Roto Brush tool in Adobe After Effects CS5.5 is mind-blowing. A matte that previously would have taken days to create can now be completed in hours," he says.

For Foster, the tools in Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Production Premium are so integrated that he says it often feels as if he's using a single software program. "Nothing beats the tight synergy of CS5.5 Production Premium software for editing and creating professional-level effects," says Foster. "Adobe video software has become an extension of my creativity that I almost never think about which tool or feature I'm using any more."

For more information

www.adobe.com/products/creativesuite/production



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