

Kenneth is an artist living in Denmark and has worked in Television for years doing promos, title sequences, colorgrading, and VFX work. Three years ago he quit his staff position and started freelancing, focusing on visual effects for film and TV series.



Q: Can you tell me what made you decide to become a VFX artist?

I have a passion for movies and a seed was planted years ago when I saw movies like The Last Starfighter and Tron. I am drawn to impossible shots that you have to break down to solve. A shot is like a Christmas present. When you open it, you might find a fast easy solution or it might take you hours to find the right way to do it.

Q. How long have you been working with Fusion as an artist? Where did you learn your compositing skills, and how did you first get started using Fusion?

Coming from broadcast design I started in Aftereffects but when layer based compositing became a limitation I moved to Fusion. As a freelancer, I have to be able to composite in several applications. I jump between Fusion, Aftereffects, and Nuke.

I have been working with a lot of great Fusion artists at Ghost VFX and Gimmick VFX, here in Copenhagen. They have taught me a lot but I have also picked up techniques from fxphd.com where a lot of great vfx people hang out.

Q: What are some of your favourite tools in Fusion?

Particles and the Colorgrade node.

Q: How long have you been working on Red Dwarf and The Wild Swans?

Both jobs where intense.

Red Dwarf -Back to Earth was two months with pre and post production. This was my first globally distributed job with artists spread all over world. We used a web application called Shotrunner to manage the production as it was spread over several time zones. VFX supervisor Mike Seymour had briefed me on the look of the Dimension Cutter (worm hole) but they didn't know how to do it in CG. During principal photography at Shepperton Studios in London, I send him tests and animatics to show director Doug Naylor and the actors.



The Wild Swans was 900 effect shots, 800 chroma key shots, and 65 shots with 3D swans, so all three Fusion artists had our hands, and heads, full.

Q: You recently helped in the completion of the film The Wild Swans, for the Queen of Denmark, H.M. Margrethe II, in association with Gimmick VFX. What was it like to work on such a special project? How did Fusion help you achieve the outstanding results?

The comps where made up of several greenscreen elements and a flat background of the room or building. To give the shot more depth we sometimes made it into a 3D comp or sliced the background into several elements and played with depth blur.

In other shots, we build up particle layers of fog or rain. One tool that made a huge difference was the Primatte Keyer. I did a lot of keying where the lead actress Alisa stands, with her long fine curly hair in the wind. Primatte was able to pull a key and keep the fine hair detail.



Generation was good for timeline playback, you could get a feel for the flow and match the colors between shots. For grouping similar shot together, I used Generation's version function where the shots are stacked on top of each other. It's not built for this but it works.

Q: I understand that the Queen of Denmark was astounded and awed by the results achieved by the team at Gimmick VFX. That must make you very proud. Congratulations.

Thanks

Q: What trends do you see emerging in Visual Effects? How do you see the role of the VFX artist changing, and where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Trends - producers are not afraid of vfx anymore and don't have to go to a vfx house for help. Sometimes it can be done with an artist on a laptop computer. With the new digital formats, test comps can be done on set.

I see 3D and compositing melting together. Today artists can do textures and lighting and often the 3D guy has made a precomp, the line between the two departments is softening.

In ten years I hope to do more consulting and on-set supervision, trying to fix as many problems as possible before they hit post.