

Fix it in Prep

How Academy Award winning director, Mike van Diem, avoided any unwanted “surprises” on his latest film.



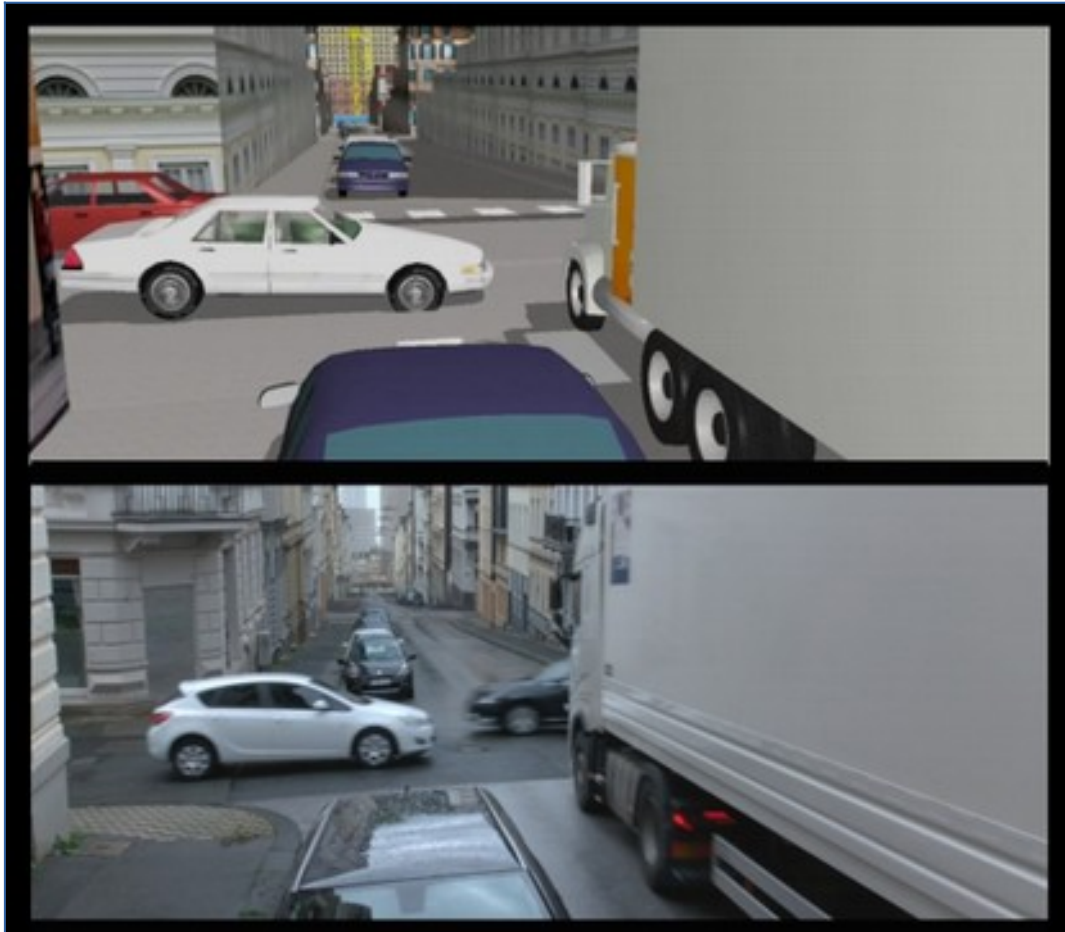
After my experience using FrameForge on many commercials, I was keen to use the program during pre-production for my latest feature film, THE SURPRISE.

One of the most complex, challenging and certainly the most expensive sequence in the film involved a fast runaway truck coming down a steep city hill, dodging traffic while passing eleven street crossings. The sequence needed to be shot in just two days on a hill in Wuppertal, Germany that presented the desired architecture and steepness but offered only two crossings. This meant we had to extend the hill with a serious amount of CGI and I needed to keep ‘surprises’ on the set to the absolute minimum.



In order to be able to responsibly budget the great number of VFX shots looking up or down the hill, I decided to build the entire city set with all 11 crossings including a huge building pit at the bottom of the hill in SketchUp Pro. I broke up the set in four segments, imported them in FrameForge where I ‘glued’ them back together again as one big set.

Without any noticeable program slowdown, FrameForge enabled me to create a full, shot by shot, very precise moving storyboard of the entire sequence, giving all departments involved not only the exact info they needed, but also the confidence that the sequence could be tackled with limited money and time.



It all worked like a charm, we wrapped the sequence on time, and you can see how exact the previs was in this comparison between the FrameForge boards and the actual frames.

But more than just solving a huge number of potential technical problems for us, FrameForge also allowed me to really explore every scene I used it on in ways I never could have without it. By being able to move the camera around on my virtual “locations,” it always inspired me to push past my initial ideas for shots to find even more effective ones.

Thanks for a great program,

Mike van Diem
Academy Award® winning director

Visual Effects by Filmmore Amsterdam – Brussels – Luxembourg www.filmmore.eu

And by the way, remember that poster this case study started with? That was not the real one, but was instead setup in about 5 minutes in FrameForge. Here's the real one in comparison. Surprise!



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