

### **Course outline: Digital Effects**

The MA in Digital Effects is a specialisation within the broader MA in Film and Television.

The course represents a steady progression, beginning with the basic technology and skills and ending with the responsibility for finishing effects or finishing the post production on a range of graduation film, television and games projects. At each stage additional skills are added through specific workshops to provide a comprehensive education that is of great value in understanding and communicating with other industry professionals.

Using the latest equipment and technology, or their initiative to find a creative solution, students work on a variety of NFTS productions, as well as departmental exercises and cross disciplinary workshops.

By the end of the course each student will have evidence of work in:

- An awareness of Special Visual Effects content creation
- 2D and/or 3D and/or Colour work across multiple NFTS student productions
- Creation of Graduation Showreels
- Specific examples of individually specialist work in the creation of Effects content and/or Grading/Onlining in particular focus areas

The first year of the course is focused on teaching the range of advanced craft skills and the underpinning learning and education required for students to develop the mastery they need to progress their creative potential and deep learning.

The second year allows students to continue this development and demonstrate their creativity through practice. It ensures the students become independent learners often generating their own self-set briefs or working with teams of students on projects.

Throughout the course, students engage in cross specialisation workshops and projects to deepen their understanding of the film making process. Many first year projects and graduation projects involve a range of Visual Effects and/or Physical effects. An example of second year activity is the Animation Graduation films that involve the Digital Effects students who supervise and manage the finishing of the films, as well as the effects work – often helping with the animation pipeline from scripting stage right through to delivery.

## Year One

**Workshop 1: The Common Agenda (Springboard)** – This series of lectures, presentations, demonstrations, seminars, masterclasses and practical exercises are common to all the MA specialisations and are designed to illustrate what is involved in the work of each of them and how this expertise fits into the jigsaw of production.

**Workshop 2: The Fundamentals** Introductory Workshop – This is an essential introduction to pixels, bit depths, formats and all manner of useful technical information that often blocks progress early in the learning process.

**Workshop 3: Introduction to VFX - 3D CGI – Maya** – This workshop is a major undertaking for the DFX students and features an intensive block of CGI tuition that aims to introduce the students immediately to the practical and theoretical techniques involved in creating high quality 3D imagery.

**Workshop 4: Introduction to VFX - 2D/3D Compositing – NUKE** – Running alongside the CG tuition, this workshop aims to introduce the Students immediately to the practical and theoretical techniques involved in Digital Compositing, whilst also starting to develop an understanding of the breakdown and construction of film and broadcast sourced digital image material.

**Module 1: Take One Painting – Maya/Nuke** – Take One painting is a cross-specialisation exercise in three distinct parts that allows for a collaborative approach to be taken on a practical film project for the first time on the DFX course.

**Module 2: Motion Capture and Models/Miniatures, with Virtual Production & Motion Control** This innovative module is designed to offer students the further opportunity to really discover where their natural abilities lie and by developing their knowledge and deepening their understanding of CG animation and technical direction.

At this point in the MA programme, the DFX students start learning the topics in their chosen area of outcome - **CG, Compositing** or **Colour**.

Please note that the module/workshop descriptions for the individual outcomes are clearly marked “**For VFX**”, meaning for students that wish to specialise in CG or Compositing, or “**For Colour**”, meaning for students wishing to specialise in colour and finishing.

### **Module 3: For VFX - Prosthetics aka “Gorefest”**

This module is introduced and outlined in Year One and represents the first major practical exercise in Year Two. The students work as a full VFX team and will produce a (very) short film to showcase their newly acquired prosthetic skills. This production will be digitally filmed on a specifically designed and built set on the NFTS Main stage.

### **Workshop 5: For Colour – Start to Finish**

As the DFX department takes responsibility for delivering every major film and television project at the NFTS, the online editing aspects of the course provide the students with an essential skillset for finishing films and television programmes.

**Workshop 6: *For Colour* - Introduction to Colour Grading** The concepts and techniques of colour grading are covered in some depth by the tutors during the numerous online editing tutorials.

**Workshop 7: *For Colour* – Black and White Emulation** – This short exercise explores the techniques associated with black and white emulation.

**NB**

**Depending on the demands placed on the grading and online suites by the Graduation Portfolio, Workshops 5, 6 and 7 may have to be rearranged to take place at the beginning of the Second Year.**

## **Year Two**

**Workshop 1: *For Colour* - Online Editing Flame (Optional)** Another stage of tuition of online editing skills and techniques is designed to include an alternative cutting edge online editing environment, the Autodesk Flame system.

**Workshop 2: *For VFX* - 2D/3D Compositing – NUKE recap** The tutor will take the students through a recap of the main 2D and 3D compositing techniques using the Nuke application.

**Workshop 3: *For Colour* - Colour Theory and Grading Techniques**

**Workshop 4: *For Colour* - Online Editing/Finishing – AVID** The second year Online Editing tuition consists of intense advanced tuition across the main disciplines. The focus is on finishing within the AVID editing application.

**Workshop 5: *For Colour* – Digital Film Project**

This workshop aims to cover the 'business end' of final Post Production - mastering and delivering projects.

**Graduation Film and TV Productions and Games Portfolio** – All through the 2nd year students have the opportunity to work together on amazing film and TV productions and Games. Each of the directors from the directing departments: Documentary, Television, Science & Natural History, Fiction, Games and Animation and their team usually comprising one member of each of the other departments (Producing, Production Design, Cinematography etc.) are given a budget and access to the all the NFTS resources to make a single film or TV project or Game to display their newly acquired skills. If the project requires DFX help, VFX students will team up with each of the directors and create VFX or help with Game assets. Colour students will have the chance to grade and finish a variety of films and/or TV shows.