



rhinofx.tv

RHINOFX DOES VFX FOR DREAMWORKS & DAVID KOEPP'S *GHOST TOWN*



rhinofx recently completed extensive effects work on **Dreamworks' *Ghost Town***, as the sole VFX creator for the supernatural romantic comedy. The film, released September 19, is written and directed by **David Koepf**, best known for lending his award-winning writing talents to action blockbusters *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, *Spiderman*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Mission: Impossible*. In

the story, a surly dentist (Ricky Gervais, creator of *The Office*) dies for seven minutes in a colonoscopy gone awry, and awakens with the unwelcome ability to see and help ghosts. The rhinofx team's role expanded as the film went through development, with VFX Supervisor **Arman Matin** and Compositing Supervisor **Jim Rider** leading over 50 effects shots, including a very intricate opening scene and introducing an entirely new 3D collision modeling approach to simulate ghosts moving through buildings, buses, and even people.



While Koepf's work includes several action-packed visual spectacles, *Ghost Town*, filmed in NYC incorporates cool and understated VFX not usually found in comedies, making the supernatural storyline life-like and believable. The rhinofx team spent a month on set to supervise and help construct the effects-heavy paranormal scenarios. The film opens with a high-angle, moving boom shot showing NYC's 5th Avenue

normally overflowing with people and cars. To complete the extremely intricate scene, Rhino used 3D tracking, modeling and photogrammetry to recreate the scene in 3D, removing all traffic and people, completely reconstructing an empty cityscape.

Elsewhere, 3D photogrammetry was also used to transform a standard locked off time lapse shot into a moving "helicopter" shot over Central Park. 3D tracking, modeling, lighting and animation were also used to create the innovative "passthrough" effect which allowed ghost to pass through anything and everything.





rhinofx.tv

To produce the complex *passthroughs*, the team created a 3D virtual world and physically collided them in the CG environment. VFX Supervisor Arman Matin explains, “The 3D tracking process allowed us to extract three-dimensional measurements from the 2D footage. For each *passthrough*, we filmed both actors using a motion control camera. The “ghost” actors were shot on greenscreen, with the motion control camera ensuring that the two camera moves could be seamlessly blended. The scene would then be tracked in 3D using visual information derived from the footage. We would then model the scene in 3D, creating a physically correct intersection—even complete with proper lighting and shadow interaction. Elements from 3D would then be passed onto Jim in Flame to finalize the composite.” A similar process and approach was used for when ghost actors pass through inanimate objects such as walls and buses.

Arman and Compositing Supervisor Jim Rider worked closely to complete the project. Jim elaborates, “The project’s intricate effects and heavy compositing allowed us to really take advantage of our broad production experience. Leveraging my background in live action and motion control and Arman’s extensive history with the CG world, we were able to make seamless transitions between actual footage and Computer Generated Imagery.” The team worked in Autodesk’s Flame to complete the heavy compositing needed to integrate the CG elements and live action.

Commenting on the project, rhinofx COO/EP Camille Geier notes, “Film is such a dynamic medium, demanding an extremely high quality of work, and entailing great challenges. It was a very involved process, with rough comps and several iterations to really nail the shots. Ultimately, we were able to create a series of complex shots that aren’t overt or flashy, but use innovative elements that really add to the storyline.” Arman also adds, “The entire project was completed in an environment of tremendous collaboration and creativity, even beyond our team. From the very beginning, David appreciated our ideas and really understood our approach. We worked together to make every shot happen and developed a great creative relationship that allowed us to work freely to deliver the best visual solutions.” The team also worked extensively with Cinematographer Fred Murphy, brainstorming the set up and execution of each VFX shot.

The company completed the project out of their Connecticut studio, dedicated to large-scale feature film ventures. With significant growth and expanded production capabilities, a long line of film projects and fully-linked studios in both Connecticut and New York, rhinofx has solidified its feature film business as a leading east coast solution.

Creds:

VFX/Animation: rhinofx

VFX Supervisor: Arman Matin



rhinofx.tv

Compositing/Plate Supervisor: Jim Rider
COO/EP: Camille Geier
Producer: Cara Buckley
Production Executive: Karin Levinson
Lead TD/Timelapse Plate Supervisor: Bogdan Mihajlovic
Timelapse Flame Compositor(s): David W. Reynolds, Ronen Sharabani
Flame Compositor(s): Yoshiko Hirati, Brad Scott
Lighting TD: Jasmine Katatikarn
Dynamics TD: Ivan Guerrero
Animators: Sean Curran, Goran Ognjanovic
Match Mover: Chris Hill
Modeler: Piotr Glabinski
3D Matte Painter: Bora Jurisic
Timelapse VFX Still Photographer: Yaron Eini
Head of IT: Paul Tsung
Flame Assistant: Barry Furlano
Production Coordinator: Gerta Xhelo

About Compositing Supervisor Jim Rider:

Jim Rider is an industry veteran with over fifteen years of visual effects experience in a wide range of capacities, adding significant talent and depth to the rhinofx feature film division. His credits across VFX include extensive motion control, miniature cinematography, compositing, animation, Flame, and digital effects. Rider joined the rhino team in 2007 to combine his talents in production and post-production in both the commercial and feature arenas. Jim recently contributed his expertise to rhinofx feature projects including *The Nanny Diaries* and the recently completed *Ghost Town* for which he completed over 60 VFX shots as Plate Supervisor and Lead Compositor. He is currently working on *Last of the Ninth*, a pilot for HBO and Dimension Films' *Soul Men*. Prior to joining rhinofx, Jim contributed to films such as on *Across the Universe*, *Grace is Gone*, *Evan Almighty* and worked in both production and post-production at Big Film Design (NY) on projects such as *The Interpreter*, *Everything is Illuminated*, *Because of Winn Dixie* and HBO's *Angels in America*, which earned him an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Main Title Design.

About VFX Supervisor Arman Matin:

Arman Matin's unique visual style stems from his background in Architecture, Computer Arts, and Still Photography. He is able use this experience to create powerful visual stories across photo-realistic CG, Photo Grammetry, and Complex Compositing. Arman has developed an impressive body of directorial work in both film and broadcast while at rhinofx. His recent credits include a highly complex and innovative opening sequence for Revolution Studios' thriller, *Perfect Stranger*, The Weinstein Company's *The Nanny Diaries*, DreamWorks' *Ghost Town*, an animated spot for Singulair, and Fidelity's effects-heavy, psychedelic *Lava Lamp* and *Flower* campaign targeting baby boomers. In addition, his work on Northwest Airlines *Transformations* received an Honorable Mention at Animation Magazine's Anicom Awards. He also helmed spots for brands such as Lugz, Panasonic, and GMC, during which he had the opportunity to combine live action with high-end visual effects.

About rhinofx:

Since its launch in 2000, rhinofx has created award-winning visual effects, design, and animation for commercials, VFX for feature films, episodic television, webisodic mini-series, and videogame cinematics. The company's principals and artists have also led the industry's exploration into the boundless potential of branded digital content. By cultivating extensive relationships with key brands, advertising agencies, and film/TV studios, rhinofx utilizes its creative directors and artists to develop and execute powerful branded entertainment to build both identity and awareness. The company's principals include: CD/Director Vico Sharabani, CD/Director Harry Dorrington, CD/Director Arman Matin, CD/Director Natasha Saenko, COO/EP Camille Geier, CEO North America Zviah Eldar, and Managing Director Rick Wagonheim.



For additional information, please contact: xtrainfo@trustcollective.com