

Using the VDS Synapse plug-ins at Toronto's The Studio Upstairs

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First off, some background. Synapse is VDS' proprietary plug-in product designed to support After Effects plug-ins within the Quantel user interface. VDS now offers six distinctive plug-in packages for Synapse, called Neuron Bundles, each offering an array of dramatic effects.

Now, read on. Synapse is a key element at The Studio Upstairs, one of Toronto's leading post production facilities. Upstairs used the plug-ins with its iQ to complete special effects for The Discovery Channel's "Bullet Time". The two-hour HD special features things that transpire in a split-second, including shooting bullets. There were many challenging aspects to the project including high-speed filming, freeze frames over moving pictures and endless blur effects.



Producer/Director, Barry Davis, hired Upstairs to create and develop effects within scenes that were shot at 12,000 frames per second with the ultra high-speed Millisecond camera. Many of the scenes required time stretching and warping where RE:Visions' Twixter (Synapse Neurons II) was the obvious choice. Visual Effects Artist, Dale Codling, comments, "Without Twixter the repair work, required by the unique camera, would not be possible."

The project also required Boris Continuum Complete (Synapse Neurons I) for detailed, natural-looking blur effects. Certain background and foreground items required directional blur, and motion blur to compensate for the time stretch and to correct strobing that was caused by speeding up a slow-motion shot. BCC also assisted in the grain matching where still frames were tracked into moving backgrounds.

Codling adds, "Synapse overcomes the problems of transferring files in and out. This project would have had to go off-platform without it."



"It has been a pleasure working with Upstairs," comments D.R. Worthington, Director of Marketing and Product Development at VDS. "Dale Codling is a brilliant Visual Effects Artist and is always pushing the limits of our products. Upstairs has also been beta testing the highly anticipated and soon to be released Synapse Neurons 6, (GenArts Sapphire Plug-ins) so we are standing by for more incredible effects."

All new Quantel generationQ products ship with trial versions of Synapse and Neurons bundles already installed. Synapse is compatible with the entire generationQ product range, making it a very attractive option for any Quantel customer interested in expanding their system's capabilities.

"VDS has given Quantel users access to more plug-ins than are available on probably any other high-end graphics or editing platform out there," adds Quantel Product Manager, Tony Bellamy. "The plug-ins bring enormous effects power to the generationQ toolset, and VDS keeps adding more to the range, including some fantastic text plug-ins specially for our version 2.0 software release. VDS has really understood the Quantel environment and is one of the most responsive and proactive development partners we have," Bellamy concludes.