



The VFX Supervisor Masterclass

The role of a VFX supervisor is unique – it requires not only deep knowledge of VFX and a sharp creative and technical eye, but also a thorough understanding of filmmaking, strong communication and leadership skills, and the ability to collaborate successfully with filmmakers, crews and VFX teams. A VFX supervisor is a creative lead, a manager, an advisor and a bridge between the worlds of on-set filmmaking and visual effects.

My goal when creating this course was not only to cover technical and creative aspects of the job, but also to shed light on the decision-making process and the factors that affect it – artistic, financial and logistical. VFX supervision is not a linear process, and there are no buttons to press, so I approached this course as a mentorship – I share as much as I can from my own experiences as a supervisor on over 40 film and TV titles.

Throughout this course I use examples from projects I've worked on like Marty Supreme, Hereditary, The Trial of the Chicago 7, Uncut Gems, The Lost City of Z and more. Most of the modules also end with a case study where I focus on a single shot or sequence and discuss its creation process from concept through the set to post.

The course includes 27 video classes divided into 6 modules. The first 3 modules focus on essential knowledge like supervision models, the VFX pipeline, analyzing camera moves, common VFX shots and the role of AI within the pipeline.

The next 3 modules are each dedicated to one of the 3 phases of VFX supervision: preproduction, on-set and postproduction. They cover a wide range of topics and include both theoretical discussions and extensive practical advice.

Whether you are a VFX artist, CG lead, comp supervisor, wrangler or 2nd unit director, this course will give you the tools, knowledge and confidence to step up into a VFX supervisor position.

ERAN DINUR
COURSE INSTRUCTOR



Module 1: General Topics

1.1: Introduction to the Course

We start by examining the different aspects of the role of the VFX supervisor – as a creative lead, a manager, an advisor and a bridge between the worlds of on-set filmmaking and VFX. We then go through the structure of the course and the goal of each module. Finally, we discuss how the individual student’s professional background shapes their learning path through the course.

1.2: VFX Supervision Models

A production supervisor operates in a different environment than a vendor supervisor and may need to protect a different set of interests. In this class we look at four common models for VFX supervision, discuss their advantages and disadvantages, and explain how the supervisor can operate successfully within each model.

1.3: The Core VFX Team

Good collaboration with the core VFX team is key for successful VFX supervision. In this class we review the roles of the VFX producer, data wrangler, VFX editor and VFX coordinator, and discuss mutual support within the core team. We also examine the “solo” model and see how a supervisor can incorporate essential aspects of these roles in smaller-budget productions.

Module 2: The VFX Pipeline

2.1: The VFX Pipeline

Understanding the entire VFX pipeline, and what each task involves, is important for every VFX supervisor. But knowing how the work flows between tasks, which tasks have dependencies on other tasks, and how this flow affects budget and schedule is even more important. In this class we look at the VFX pipeline from these perspectives, examining flows, interdependencies and timelines.

2.2: AI in VFX

We go back through the VFX pipeline, but this time check how AI can support and augment each of the different tasks from tracking and modeling to matte painting and comp, and how AI tools reshape the process. We also explore the advantages of general AI orchestrators like ComfyUI and Griptape, as well as task-specific tools like SwitchLight, Skybox AI and Polycam.



Module 3: Essential Strategies

3.1: Camera Motion

The movement of the camera is a core aspect of every shot's planning, budget and timeline. The difference between a locked-off camera, a pan and a dolly can have a substantial effect on a shot's complexity and pricing. In this class we analyze parallax and perspective shift in various camera moves, as well as the VFX area and its distance from the camera. We then establish an effective practice to assess the complexity of a shot and decide on a correct approach (2D, 3D or 2.5D projections).

3.2: Roto or Green Screen?

One of the most common decisions a VFX supervisor needs to make is whether to use green/blue screens or rely on rotoscoping. There are advantages and disadvantages to each method, and we discuss key factors that can help make the right choice for each case.

3.3: Bread & Butter VFX

Some types of VFX are ubiquitous – they are used in practically every film or TV project. We take a look at paint outs and cleanup, screen inserts and set extensions, and formulate a solid methodology – what to put on screens and when, how to keep these shots as simple and cheap as possible.

3.4: Crowd Augmentation

Crowd augmentation is another type of common VFX, but one that presents its own set of challenges that can be tackled using several different techniques. We look at examples from *Marty Supreme* and *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, and discuss the pros and cons of crowd tiling, sprites and CG crowd, as well as photogrammetry and volumetric scanning. We also look at AI-generated crowd sprites.

3.5: Module 3 Case Study

A walkthrough of the opening shot of the film *Hereditary*, where the camera slowly pushes in on a room inside a dollhouse, until the room becomes a live scene. This required cutting out pieces of the scene footage and projecting them onto geometry to create a seamless stitch.



Module 4: Preproduction

4.1: Introduction to Preproduction

An overview of the preproduction phase, looking at the main goals to be achieved during this phase: VFX shot list and methodology, prelim VFX budget, creative and stylistic preferences, locations review, previz and initial vendor selection. We also talk about successful approaches to meetings, discussions and planning.

4.2: Collaborating with the Key Filmmakers

The filmmakers you are most likely to collaborate with in preproduction are the director, producer(s), line producer, first AD, DP, production designer, art director and stunt coordinator. Understanding their roles and their needs is important, and successful collaboration also helps you achieve the goals of preproduction by gaining a wider perspective across departments.

4.3: The Bidding Process

While the bulk of the bidding process is handled by the VFX producer, the VFX supervisor's assessment of shot complexity and methodology is a crucial piece in the process. We lay out the fundamental principles of bidding and budgeting and learn how to apply the pipeline knowledge gained in Module 2 to come up with accurate estimates.

4.4: Previsualizations and Mockups

Previs and mockups play a crucial role in preproduction. They are not only important for creative development and design, but they are also used to plan complex shots and to help with logistical and financial planning ahead of the shooting phase. Examples of previs and mockups from films like *The Lost City of Z* and *Marty Supreme* help shed light on their purpose and use during preproduction.

4.5: Module 4 Case Study

The title sequence of *Uncut Gems* serves as a good example of a creative preproduction process that involved a substantial research and visual development phase – coming up with a fantasy environment that's in stark contrast to the harsh reality of the film.



Module 5: On Set

5.1: Schedules and Call Sheets

Detailed schedules, one-liners and call sheets contain much-needed (and often crucial) information for the VFX team – if you know where to look for it. We learn how to quickly read through these documents to get to the essential stuff.

5.2: The VFX Supervisor's Survival Toolkit

Sometimes, the success of the on-set phase for a VFX supervisor lies in the small, mundane details. This class is a collection of helpful tips: What to wear, what to bring, how to organize your stuff, how to ensure optimal monitoring, where to be, which briefings shouldn't be missed, how to engage with the crew, and how to make quick decisions under pressure.

5.3: The Wrangler's Kit

We unpack the entire kit of a data wrangler to see its contents, then discuss the function of each tool. We then go over proper techniques for shooting spherical HDRIs. Finally, we look at workarounds for a solo supervisor working without a wrangler – like using 360 cameras.

5.4: The Camera Report

The most important document your wrangler produces on set is the camera report. We deep-dive into an example camera report clarifying each item and seeing how it contributes to the VFX process. Then we identify the most crucial items, the required bare minimum, for those times when you work in solo mode.

5.5: Green Screens

Fast, good-looking keying needs well-lit and properly set up green/blue screens. In this class we observe how specific decisions on the set, such as the color of the tracking markers, or the lighting on the screen, can affect the compositor's work. How do we give the artists the best possible green screen shots? What to avoid at all costs?

5.6: Extra Elements

This class covers the extra footage that's under the VFX supervisor's responsibility: Lens grids and SFX elements. We discuss the logistics of a grid capture session and the correct way to set up the camera and work through primes and zooms. We then go over essential techniques for shooting shot-specific and generic effects, breaking frame, choice of background, and taking into consideration how various effects are composited.

5.7: Module 5 Case Study

The Piranha attack scene from The Lost City of Z serves as an example of a challenging tracking problem during an underwater shoot in extremely murky water – and a window into the thought process and decision making on the set.



Module 6: Postproduction

6.1: The Post Process

An overview of the postproduction process – spotting sessions, pull requests, delivery, color spaces, LUT packages, naming conventions, lab and VFX spec sheets.

6.2: Deliverables

We discuss how in-progress deliverables such as mockups, style frames and playblasts are used to drive the creative approval process. We also look at managing shots in Flow Production Tracking (ShotGrid), using temps effectively, and handling creative meetings while presenting WIP versions to the director and editor.

6.3: Reviewing Tools

Good VFX supervisors should not only focus on the creative aspect and the visual impact. They need to be able to flag even the most minute integration mismatch or technical error. That ability requires effective techniques for reviewing. In this class we'll cover such techniques, using applications like RV, Resolve and Nuke.

6.4: Feedback and Notes

Consistent, efficient, respectful communication between the supervisor and the vendor is key to the success of the VFX postproduction process. In this class we focus on effective techniques for providing clear, unambiguous feedback and directing the VFX process with a positive, thoughtful and pragmatic approach.

6.5: Module 6 Case Study

This case study presents the crane dare scene from the movie Nerve. It's a walkthrough that takes us through all stages of production, from preproduction planning and problem solving through on-set execution to the VFX postproduction work.