X-Men First Class
Effects Highlights

X-Men First Class contained more than one thousand visual effects / special effects shots, which translated into approximately 45 minutes of screen time.

Characters:

We had 13 X-Men characters in "X-Men First Class" and each had to have their own unique visual manifestation. These visuals needed to be true to the Marvel Comics version of the character and it had to relate to the powers as seen in earlier X-Men movies. Rather than describe them all, here are a couple of examples of how the visual effects for our X-Men characters were achieved.

Our interpretation of Sebastian Shaw is a perfect example of how we developed each of the characters in X-Men First Class. We needed to see Shaw absorb energy. We settled on distorting (Shaw) Kevin Bacon's image. Kevin performed the scene with his interpretation of the expressions and body language he felt was appropriate for the character. We modeled Kevin in CG, using that model we added the distortion and the webbing and transition as one feature distorted and linked to a new feature. We then mapped elements of our live Kevin back onto the form and composited him into the scene.



Emma Frost was difficult because she needed to look like she was made of diamond but still be able to move and show emotion. Again the performance was all driven by January Jones (Emma), we "rotomated" her live action. January was modeled in CG and facets were applied to the continuous surface. The scale and shape of her facets took into consideration how flexible that particular body part needed to be, how much contour it had to show. Emma's face was comprised of very small facets to facilitate detailed facial expression, while her legs and arms were comprised of larger elongated facets based on muscle shape and definition. The color, reflectivity, refractivity and the sharpness of the edges of the facets all contributed to the diamond quality of Emma Frost. Get it wrong and you get Plastic girl or Glass girl.



Mechanical Effects:

One of the featured mechanical effects sequences were the destruction of Shaw's operating room at Auschwitz. Chris Corbould's team rigged the room with wires to pull objects and breakaway dressing. The sensation of flight for the characters in the X-Jet required a set rigged in a rotator, allowing multiple 360 degree rotations. The chain tearing its way through the interior companionway of Shaw's yacht was all practical special effects.

Environments, vehicles and effects:

CGI was used to extend and then destroy the octagonal mirror room in Shaw's sub and the round interior room at the government X-Men facility. CGI vehicles include The X-Jet, the Caspartina yacht with its accessory submarine, the Soviet missile merchant ship, Red Square's Mayday parade, two complete naval fleets and a host of missiles. On a Georgia beach small pieces of the Sub, the X-Jet wreckage, the sand and the waterline were extended and modified to become the Cuban beach for our Climax.



