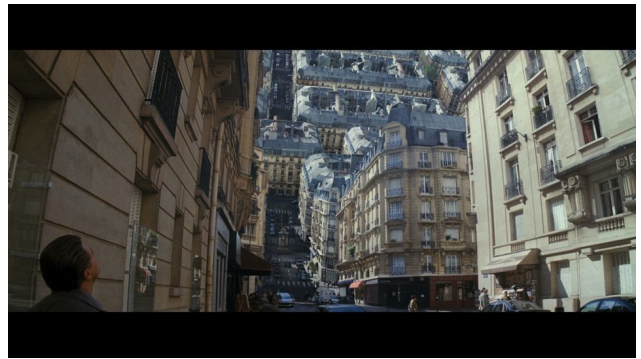


Inception Special Visual Effects, Supporting Statement

Despite Inception being a film about dreams it was important to director Christopher Nolan that even the most surreal imagery be presented with the clarity of total photorealism and that as much as possible should be accomplished in-camera. All digital VFX work proceeded from the photography, grounding it in reality.

Paris Cafe Destruction

SFX created safe smoke-and-flash-free explosions with nitrogen cannons on the Paris location that surrounded the cast. High-speed elements were digitally retimed giving a heavy underwater resistance. Exploding CG debris - masonry, glass - created progressive atomisation of the environment.



Folding Paris

An extensive two-week documentation of the location produced a detailed photorealistic model of four city blocks. Animatics of the folding action were used to cue the cast and Wally Pfister's camera. Digital street life and animated lighting setups maintained continuity with the plates.

Mirror Bridge

A large mirror door was shot handheld on location. Practical reflections were matchmoved, capturing the mirror's distortions. Weeks of roscope work isolated the cast and a full-CG environment replaced crew reflections.



Snow Fortress

SFX rigged the Fortress location set for a full-scale battle under continual blizzard conditions. Working from lidar and surveys VFX created a detailed digital model which played in set extensions and standalone establishers. A 1/6 scale Fortress miniature was built and rigged for a hydraulically-driven pyrotechnic collapse for the final destruction shots.

Shifting/Zero Gravity

SFX built a 100ft long revolving hotel corridor set complete with a camera track built into the floor. Along with a 60x40ft revolving hotel room the set was used for the shifting gravity fight scene with Joseph Gordon-Levitt which was achieved entirely in-camera without any digital work.

Zero gravity was created with wire stunts on a vertical corridor set. VFX erased rigs and added floating CG objects to complete the illusion. Digital head replacements of Cillian Murphy and Ken Watanabe disguised stunt performers in one shot.

Several bespoke mechanical rigs used on the horizontal sets linked with the wire work which was then extended into the elevator shaft sequence.

A nitrogen cannon launched the elevator car at 100mph along rails running the full length of the set. VFX supplied digital flames and set extensions.



Freefall Van

A driverless van was launched by nitrogen cannon from a raised bridge section and filmed with high speed cameras from multiple angles. VFX added debris and damage and created river surface rain effects along with a full-CG slow motion downpour.

Limbo City

The cast were shot in the surf with a greenscreen box placed in the water for wave interaction against the CG buildings. Glacier shapes and architecture were combined in custom software to create the crumbling cityscape. Physics simulations added collapsing buildings and huge splashes.

A Moroccan housing development became the basis for the street scenes with most of the plate being replaced digitally in ground level and aerial views.

The centre of Limbo was a combination of digital environment work and location photography.

