



POWER TO THE CREATORS

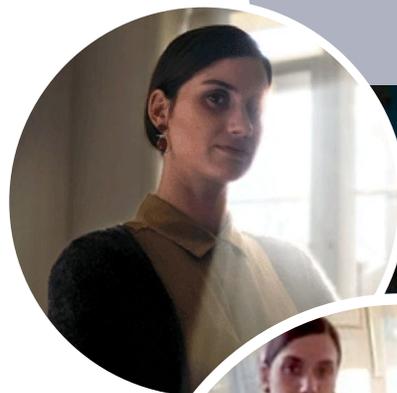
SCRATCH VR Suite: The color grading and finishing of 3D “Ewa” by Colorist Virgil Kastrup

Expertise and advanced, reasonably priced VR tools open VR world to wide range of creative professionals in numerous markets

Post-production pro **Virgil Kastrup** was the colorist for “Ewa”, Makropol’s (www.makropol.dk) latest venture into the world of Virtual Reality (VR) and 3D, which made its debut at the Cannes Film Festival 2016. According to Kastrup, it was a whirlwind project — an eight minute pilot with one day for him to do the color grading, versioning, and finishing.

Concept: She is Ewa, and you become her, as she becomes herself. Through the eyes of Ewa, you will access a world you have never seen before. You will be born as Ewa, you will grow up as Ewa, and as Ewa, you will fight to free yourself. “Out Of Body” is a crucial chapter of Ewa’s life.

In a recent discussion about the post of “Ewa,” Kastrup talked about the challenges of the VR and 3D project, and how he handled the color grading and finishing within the one-day deadline.



Q: What was your overriding challenge?

A: The time constraints – one day to try out looks, color grade in VR and 3D, create versions for reviews, then finish in VR and 3D, and ensure the look and final result met the vision and satisfaction of Makropol’s director, Johan Jensen.

Q: How was the pilot shot?

A: Four GoPro cameras (two stereo pairs) were mounted on a helmet-rig the actress wore on her head. This created the immersive view into Ewa’s life, so that the viewer is “entering” the scenes as Ewa. When the DP removed the helmet from her head, an out-of-body experience was created. The viewer is seeing the world through the eyes of a young girl.

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Q: What material were you working with?

A: Makropol sent me the final stitched imagery, ProRes 4k x 4k pixels. Because the content was one long shot in eight minutes there was no need to edit or conform.

Q: What VR challenges did you face?

A: In viewing the “Ewa” pilot, the viewer is immersed in the VR experience without it being 360. To achieve a 360 aspect was a little tricky because the imagery was limited to 180 degrees, so I had to find a way to blank the rear part of the sphere on which the image was projected. I tested and tried out different solutions, then went with making a back gradient so the image fades away from the viewer.

Q: What tool suite did you use for color grading and finishing?

A: I had a Beta copy of Assimilate’s SCRATCH VR Suite. I’ve been using SCRATCH for 2D and other projects for years, so the learning curve for the VR Suite was virtually zero. The VR suite offers the same caliber of tools and fluid workflow as SCRATCH, but they’re geared to work in the VR/360 space. They’re intuitive and very easy to use, which gave me a confidence boost for testing looks and achieving a quality result.

Q: How did you handle the VR?

A: The biggest challenge was that the look had to work everywhere within the VR scene. For example, if you’re looking from the dining room into the living room, and the light was different, it had to be manipulated without affecting either room. The SCRATCH 3D tools really simplify the 3D process – literally with a click of a button, you can set up the 3D/stereo functions.

Q: Did you use a headset?

A: I did the color grading and finishing all on the monitor view. For my reviews and the client sessions, we used the Oculus Rift. Our goal was to ensure the content was viewed as a completely immersive experience, rather than just watching another video.

Q: What impact did this project have on your view about VR?

A: A project like this – an eight-minute test pilot – doesn’t warrant the use of the expensive professional-grade cameras, yet a filmmaker can still achieve a quality VR result on a restricted budget. By using professional color grading and finishing tools – in this case the SCRATCH VR Suite – many issues can be overcome, such as compression, lighting, hot spots, and more. The colorist has the ability to add his/her creative expertise to craft the look and feel, as well as the subtle effects, that go into producing a quality video or feature. This combination of expertise and the right tools opens the world of VR to a wide range of creative professionals in numerous markets.

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