CG Spectrum VFX Open Day Q&A

Watch the full video replay on our website:
www.cgspectrum.com/webinars/vfx-open-day

I'd like to hear about the process for animating very high poly models and compositing with render layers etc.	Hey there, this is probably a bit too in depth for today's forum, but feel free to drop into the live streams if you want to ask more technical questions.
What's the expectation for new students? How familiar should we be with programs, workflows, etc.?	For our intro courses (Introduction to Houdini & Introduction to Nuke) you do not need prior experience. We will teach you the fundamentals. This also applies to our Foundations of VFX course. We will be addressing this question live as well here today :)
How close/much do 3D modelers work with VFX compositors and/or video editors?	While some 3D artists do a bit of everything, you'll often specialize in one area at a larger studio. Check out our career pathways page for the different 3D modeling jobs and how they intersect at times with VFX compositors: https://www.cgspectrum.com/career-pathways/3d-modeling
I'm very interested in the courses of CG Spectrum, will there be more Open days for the other courses?	Hi there! Yes, we will be hosting more open days for our different study areas in the near future :) We also hosted a general open day that is available to watch on replay here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nfnAKj6bKQ I highly recommend checking it out to meet mentors from all our different study areas!
What will the average week look like at CG spectrum? I am a part time college student wand want to be able to balance this and my college classes	It varies depending on the course you are interested in. However, here is what an average week looks like: We have pre-recorded lectures and supportive materials for you to review at the beginning of each week. You are given an assignment and meet your mentor for a live session (roughly an hour) each week where your mentor reviews your work, provides you with feedback and tips to improve your workflow to help you reach industry standards. The weekly live session is also recorded for you to review at your convenience. You then have the rest of the week to revise your work and submit it for a final video critique. Within the week the mentors are there to support you if anything is holding you up and are to reply within 24 hours. Additionally, we use a chat program called Slack for you to network and meet fellow students (from all different courses). All our mentors also use Slack and we have general channels where you can ask a question and a mentor will be able to help.
What's the minimum age required needed to start a course?	Hi! The minimum age required to enroll is 16 years old with parental or guardian consent.
Is a degree just as powerful as a true bachelor's? Should I do this after college or jump right in?	Great question! We have a very realistic approach when it comes to the games and film industry, and we have learned that studios are not concerned with qualifications and whether students have a Degree or Diploma from an accredited institution. At the end of the day, all they are concerned about is the applicant's portfolio. Supervisors only have about 10-15 seconds to review each job application, as they're on such tight deadlines and don't bother looking at a resume unless the portfolio is very impressive. Therefore students could spend thousands on a Degree, but if the quality of their work is average and sub-par, they simply won't get a job. Therefore all of our courses are designed to be portfolio based and exclude the unnecessary 'units and subjects' that studios don't care about. It comes down to whether the student would personally prefer to have a Degree, however in terms of employment, it won't make a difference when applying for a job in the industry.
How flexible are the weekly webinars for the smaller groups? Is it easy to manage alongside full or part time work?	There is 1 live Q&A a week, and we provide the day/time of that class to enrolled students closer to the intake start date. The reason for this is that we have students enrolling throughout the month and we try to cater to everyone's time zones. We're always considerate of students' locations and make sure the weekly Q&A session is within an appropriate 9am-9pm period, however, we are unable to cater to everyone's work hours as well. So if a student can't attend due to other commitments, they'll need to consider the 1on1 option. There are two major differences between a small group and 1on1 mentoring. The first is that the mentor is able to tailor the course to suit your personal goals and skill set. If you want to focus on a particular area more than another then the mentor has the flexibility to do that. The second difference is that the Q&A times are far more flexible and you can schedule them to suit your needs. Also, if you're 1on1 with the mentor, they can spend the entire hour with just you.
I have checked out the enrollment requirements, do you not need to send a copy/scan of your diploma while enrolling? Or does that get asked later after the application?	You do not need to send us a copy of your diploma during the admissions process. However, if you are applying for the Houdini FX Diploma or the Nuke Compositing Diploma, we require a portfolio submission if the student wishes to skip their respective intro courses
Are you a non-profit or trying to be?	We are a private college.
After taking the intro course to Houdini, when does the next full course start?	Hey, it can start whenever you are ready, if you want to just roll straight into the Advanced course you can do that, or you take a break and join up later. New classes start up monthly.

Is it permitted to enroll in a course in advance if you plan to start one in more than 6+ months?	Yes, we can enroll you for a course in advance if you wish. Please send us an email to admissions@cgspectrum.com and let us know your situation :)
What is the job placement rate for your graduates?	There are many factors that affect employment opportunities when you graduate, such as your location, which studios are hiring, the quality of your work etc. We've had students find jobs before graduating, but also some students who have freelanced before working in a studio. We also have a Career Development Manager that provides students with advice and tips on how to approach the industry and point them in the right direction.
What computer is best for this?	It truly depends on the pathway you choose. Each software has its own specific system hardware requirements. Easiest way to know is look up the specific software and see what it's minimum system requirements might be.
What are the requirements for applying? As in, is there something that can get the student rejected for this online college?	It depends on the course you are applying for. We have different prerequesites for each course but we also offer introductory courses that are suitable for beginners, so we do not reject those students.
If I apply for the Foundations of VFX Diploma program, do I need to choose between Animation Foundations (Stream A) and 3D Modeling Foundations (Stream B) at the beginning? What if I do not know which one I'm more interested or better at?	Hi there, great question! You do not need to choose as you will be learning both streams :)
Is it possible to be a professional VFX artist without learning coding?	Absolutely! As compositors, it's good to know a little bit of python / script writing, but many compositors do not code / program at all, and do a fantastic job as senior compositors!
I'm about to finish my intro course and was wondering what are the next steps I should take? As well as when should students look for internships?	Hi there, which intro course did you take? Once you finish that, you should be ready to enroll in the Diploma course. Email us at admissions@cgspectrum.com and we can guide you through the process! To support each student in their journey, we offer both a live group class to discuss common issues and topics with students and alumni, along with the option for 1-on-1 career guidance with the Career Development Manager to pinpoint solutions which are more specific to their personal situation. I encourage you to schedule a call with Maxine to help figure out the part about internships :)
During the intro VFX Course, do you get to learn and use Blender?	Hi! In the Foundations of VFX course you will be working with Maya, Substance painter, and Unreal Engine.
Do I need to have strong drawing skills to be accepted into the intro to concept art and illustration Course?	We do expect a general understanding of how to draw and paint and at least workable knowledge of Photoshop. While we do guide students through some of the tools and functions of photoshop the core of the time we spend in the lesson and classes tends to be geared toward learning how to approach the creation of concept art. This means that the program might not be geared towards individuals that require more practice in the fundamentals of simple drawing and painting principles. Students can prepare themselves with a free concept art tutorial we have here: https://www.cgspectrum.com/resources/free-concept-art-tutorials
What would be the pros/cons to using Maya's Bifrost (or nfluids) vs Houdini?	I can't really speak for the pros, the major con is that it isn't widely used in the industry. Perhaps one of the pros is that if you are a maya generalist you don't have to leave to create FX. But for serious FX work, Houdini is the go-to tool.
What are they payment methods?	We accept payment via bank transfer or PayPal (3.9% surcharge fee applies).
Do I need any knowledge on 3D animation to be able to join any of your courses?	It is helpful but not necessary. Our Foundations of VFX course is suitable for beginners and you will gain a solid foundation in 3D modeling, animation, and VFX.
I have very little experience in Photoshop. Can I use procreate?	We work with Photoshop for our Concept Art & Digital Illustration courses. Software is included in the cost of your tuition. As mentioned, you can use our free Photoshop tutorial to prepare. Also, see the link below for the concept art equipment guide: https://www.cgspectrum.com/blog/concept-art-course-software-equipment-guide
If I want to have a chance to work in the industry doing VFX, what would be the best route to take? Will the 3+9 Houdini course be enough to get me on that route?	Hey there. Our course will give you the skills you need to get a job. It does come down to how much you put into it as well. But our students who put the work in, produce a good portfolio, do get jobs straight out of the course.
Do we need to purchase software licenses?	Great question! No, the software is included in the cost of your tuition. After students enroll, they will receive further instructions from our operations team on how to acquire the license(s) required for your course, closer to the start date.

Is there any student who has already get a job after the certification phase of the pathway, whether Houdini or Nuke ? I want to know that because the fees of the whole pathway are really high for me and if I can get a job after a certification it will help me to finance the following of the course.	Yes, we do have students that get jobs straight out of school, it is not uncommon, but it does require you to really push yourself to create an awesome portfolio. Of course we help you with that but as with anything you will get out what you put in.
If you follow the Foundations of VFX Diploma, do you learn the intro to Houdini FX and the intro to Nuke compositing? Or just one of them?	Hi, the curriculum is set out so that students learn Intro to Houdini. However, if you request during the admissions process, we can make a note so that you can take the Intro to Nuke path instead.
If I took the 1 on 1 course for the into to concept art would the mentor that I would have teach me the basic of photoshop and fundamentals of drawing? I've only been taking my art seriously for about a year so I'm still learning.	Hi, one of the prerequisites to enroll in the Intro to concept art course is basic drawing skills. Our mentors will not be teaching the fundamentals of drawing but rather the creation of concept art. If you are unsure, send us some of your work at admissions@cgspectrum.com and we will have one of our mentors review it.
I have prior and decent knowledge about photoshop (which I'm guessing is the main program that will be used for Concept art). I have been doing digital art for about 6 years, will it still be recommended to do the intro course? What will be most focused on in that course?	Hi there, yes we use Photoshop for our concept art & digital illustration courses. We have the full curriculum/weekly breakdown for each course online (https://www.cgspectrum.com/courses/introduction-to-concept-art-and-illustration#curriculum) . Are you looking to pursue a career in concept art or digital illlustration? You can send us a link to your portfolio for further assessment - admissions@cgspectrum.com
Or should I focus on only Houdini and Nuke?	VFX for Film and games, we don't really use Aftereffects or Premiere, it's not bad to know a bit of editing software though. Houdini and Nuke are definitely the go to softwares, as an FX artist you would be required to know both. As a compositor you would only be required to know Nuke. Sean might have more info for compositing specifically.
I noticed Nuke has .fbx import options. What would the reason for importing models vs importing fully-rendered exr image sequences?	Depends on what is needed for the shot. Nuke has a full 3d side built in, which is why you can import models. For example, many times we'll bring in 3d scenes to rebuild as 3d projections inside of Nuke. On the other side, working with full-rendered image sequences, are where you are layering various assets together to create your final rendered imagery. So if you rebuilt that 3d modelled scene using 3d projections in Nuke 3d, then you'd pull that in as a 2d layer to composite in with the rest of the layers (such as exr sequences).
Are grads hired as contractors or full time? What is the ballpark salary one can expect to command?	It can vary depending on the role or studio. Salary can also vary from country to country. Check out the career guide that will be emailed out after the webinar, it has more information about various roles and potential salaries etc.
Does Nuke have full 3d renders (Arnold, Vray, Redshift etc)?	To a point, yes. But you traditionally wouldn't use Nuke to render (for example) a 3d animated character. Ideally that comes from the Lighting department within a studio. That said, there are some incredible things one can achieve within Nuke 3d!
How can I set up a meeting with the career development manager to discuss what course to take?	Hi! Our Admissions team can help you out with deciding what course to take, and they'll guide you on everything you need to know about getting started. Get in touch at admissions@cgspectrum.com to set up a meeting! Maxine, our Career Development Manager (and today's host!) is a great resource for CGS students once you're enrolled ☺
At least how many years of experience in 3D modeling do I need to have a strong enough portfolio for the advanced 3D modeling diploma ?	An entry requirement for the 9-month Advanced Diploma we'll require a folio that demonstrates the students have had experience or education in 3D Modeling before: Have worked in Maya Have worked in Zbrush Have worked in substance painter Have modeled a humanoid character have modeled an entire environment

Some points that will help students feel less overwhelmed if they learn before the A3DMD: Human anatomy and musculature (not covered in 3DMD but super important) Solid box modeling skills Solid uv mapping skills Solid knowledge of 3D geometry: points, edges, vertices, uvs, faces, and surface normals. An intermediate knowledge of lighting and rendering An intermediate knowledge of texturing and materials An introductory knowledge of the working of houdini (very beginner level)

Please send us a link to your portfolio so that we can do an assessment - admissions@cgspectrum.com |
| Are there comp situations where composited work needs to be recomposited to incorporate more | Comp can build into multiple layers throughout the course of a shot. You may start with 3 layers and by the end have 30. It's really dependent on the shot, but you don't always get all layers at |

layers (background, foreground) or is it all done at once and left to render for days/weeks when ready?	once. Comp render times vary, but as long as you precomp, you can get the shot out in a matter of minutes.
Is this work remote?	Hi! All of our courses are offered and taught online
Sorry I meant is the real world work done remotely?	It all depends! Some students find work remotely if the company is hiring that way, some students become freelancers, and others work in a studio.
What computer specs do you recommend to start the program?	It depends on what direction you choose. Each software has different hardware specifications. Check the software manufacturers website to see what their listed minimum system requirements might be. And of course, we are happy to offer guidance if desired!
What specific computer requirements do we need? (Ex: Graphics Card & Storage)	Houdini is a demanding software but it's possible to go through the course on a decent laptop! SideFX for Houdini has minimum requirements on their website. 32GB ram minimum is a good place to be. Houdini is not particularly GPU intensive, it's more about processor.
How many enrollment sections do you have through the year?	We have new courses starting every single month! The cut off is the 25th of each month, and you can start as early as the beginning of the next month! :)
Is it possible to pay and study from Chile?	Absolutely! As an online college, we welcome students from all over the world :)
Personally, which study options are the best: Small Class or 1-on-1?	Both options have their perks, it depends on each students' situation. There are two major differences between a small group and 1on1 mentoring. The first is that the mentor is able to tailor the course to suit your personal goals and skill set. If you want to focus on a particular area more than another then the mentor has the flexibility to do that. The second difference is that the Q&A times are far more flexible and you can schedule them to suit your needs. Also, if you're 1on1 with the mentor, they can spend the entire hour with just you.
After you graduate with a diploma from CG Spectrum, will you need to move countries for better jobs? And will CG Spectrum OR the company help with that? (FYI I'm located in Belgium, so I'm not so sure if there are even any decent jobs here for Illustration in the gaming business)	There are many factors that affect employment opportunities when you graduate, such as your location, which studios are hiring, the quality of your work etc. We've had students find jobs before graduating, but also some students who have freelanced before working in a studio. We also have a Career Development Manager that provides students with advice and tips on how to approach the industry and point them in the right direction. However, it goes without saying that they're not a job provider.