

roscoworld

Rosco Sydney provided backdrops for "George of the Jungle 2". A custom drop was produced in Australia from a file prepared in the U.S., and a rental drop was also shipped out from Hollywood.

Two large rental backdrops from Rosco's Hollywood office were shipped to Shepperton Studios near London for the feature "Johnny English". While in the country, they were also used for a television commercial, shot on the same set after the feature wrapped.

Rosco Digital Imaging in San Diego, California, is busy assembling an archive of existing images not available in the rental catalog. Images include photography from jobs prior to the rental buyback program, and also many extra photographs taken during shoots for other projects.

Student Rental Program

Many designers and cameramen recall their first contact with Rosco as having taken place in the classroom. Representatives spend many hours each year visiting students to talk about filters and other products. Additionally, Rosco offers reduced prices on gels, diffusions and other products for film students.

Five years ago, a new service was introduced, the student backdrop rental program. For the first time, students were able to use professional quality backdrops in their productions without destroying their budgets. Since then, over one hundred student films have taken advantage of this program, from schools such as AFI, Chapman, Loyola, UCLA and USC.

Requirements for 2003 student rentals are fairly simple: student I.D., a certificate of insurance, a Visa or Mastercard imprint, and a big enough truck to carry the drop. The price? Just **\$75 per week** for a backing of any size. Call Diane Ricci at Rosco at 1-800-522-1180 x229 for further details

RECENT PROJECTS

Out of Time (Feature)

PD: Paul Peters

Art: Gary Kosko

DP: Theo van de Sande

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PD: Aaron Osborne

DP: Jon Peters

Gigli (Feature)

PD: Gary Fruttkoff

Art: Sue Chan

DP: Robert Elswit

Daddy Day Care (Feature)

PD: Garreth Stover

Art: Chris Cornwell

DP: Steven Poster

Dragnet (TV)

PD: Bill Arnold

Art: Tim Kirkpatrick

DP: Bing Sokolsky

American Dreams (TV)

PD: Phil Toolin

DP: Brian Reynolds

Raising Helen (Feature)

PD: Steve Jordan

Art: Bill Hiney

DP: Chuck Minsky

**Call Phil Greenstreet at the Rosco Hollywood office for more information.
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ROSCO Backdrops

A DIVISION OF ROSCO LABORATORIES INC.

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2003

Big and Biggerer!



Girls Club



The Wire

Huge Roscolite Backings Aren't Just For Movies Anymore

The last twelve months have seen Rosco delivering not one but two very large backings for television shows, one on the West Coast and one on the East.

The first was for the David E. Kelly production "Girls Club", and featured a 19'6" by 362'0" backing, along with four smaller pieces. The imagery was shot in San Francisco by Phil Greenstreet of Rosco Laboratories, using an array of five locked off Fuji GX617 cameras. Although the shot was taken from a hotel roof some distance from the City Center, 180mm lenses were used to draw the skyline closer in. The visibility of the landmark Transamerica building was enhanced using a shot from a different location.

The second backing was even bigger – a 23'6" by 408'0" behemoth created for HBO's "The Wire" in Baltimore. This shoot was even more complicated, using a total of six fixed cameras plus one "floater" to capture the view from the office building location used in the show's first season.

Both projects utilized Rosco's 2001 Academy Technical Achievement Award-winning day/night backdrops. Quite aside from the cost, the sheer impracticality of stashing almost ten thousand feet of plastic on stage when changing from day to night prohibited the use of traditional translights.

At the other end of the size spectrum, Rosco has been busy producing backdrops for newsrooms in the U.S. and overseas, and also made day/night drops as small as 4' x 5'.

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We Can Fix That!

(although we'd rather not have to...)

Digital and Scenic Enhancements to Rosco Backdrops

It is widely known that Rosco backdrops are produced by a multi-stage process: shot on film, scanned to a digital file, painted onto vinyl by a computer, and finally hung in a studio. However, it is less well known that it is in fact possible to adjust the appearance of these backings at virtually every stage of the process, even after painting is complete.

Here is a brief overview of some visual alterations that can be made to a Rosco backdrop. Please bear in mind, however, just because something can be done, doesn't mean that it should be. While Rosco tries to maintain a policy of no nasty price increases, this doesn't always apply to directorial whims.

1) The Shoot

Rosco Photographers use a lot of film and spend a long time on location shooting it. They capture as many different times of day as possible, which sometimes means getting up before dawn and shooting until full darkness has fallen. Even on a cloudless, sunny day, a good pre-dawn shot can be used to give the appearance of gray and overcast conditions.

They also always try to cover more angles than have been requested, just in case. If it's not needed to cover an increase in the size of the backing, then it will be useful later in the growing Rosco Image Archive.

2) Digital Retouching

Removing errant birds, dogs, aircraft, cars, and foreground trees from images are all pretty common fixes performed on backdrop images. But Rosco can take digital retouching much further than this if needed.

Sunny days have been created from shots during rainfall, spring scenes from photographs taken in an ice storm, and snow added to Los Angeles neighborhoods. Trees have been defoliated, refoliated, and even exfoliated (if that's the right word for changing their bark).

Upon occasion, Toronto has become New York, New York has become Chicago, Chicago has been pushed thirty five years into the future, and San Francisco sixty years into the past.

3) Scenic Work

After painting, Rosco Backdrops can still be altered. Fall trees have been tinted back to summer, snow patches turned to mud, and the color temperature of windows in buildings adjusted.

On two separate shows (though both, strangely, are starring Ben Affleck), twenty foot square sections of image have been patched into drops already hanging on stage. The first was used to re-work a dark building which was reading as a black blob on camera, the second to replace a large boring tree with something more interesting.

Rental backdrops have been connected and blended together, even in some cases when they were totally separate images. Large drops have also been subdivided to accommodate the requirements of individual shows, and then sometimes reconnected again for the next user.

Without a doubt, the most gut-wrenching scenic work has been the removal of the World Trade Center from some rental stock.

4) Studio Effects

In recent years, we have seen a renewed interest in the use of theatrical effects in motion pictures and television. On NBC's backdrops for their Sydney Olympics coverage, Jeremy Conway and Steve Brill projected waves and clouds, imparting movement to the scene. Blinking lights, moving lights, and even rear projection of moving images into windows, have also been used at one time or another to perk up a backing.

Vittorio Storraro used sun and moon projections to great effect in the Argentine feature "Tango", and also made full use of the day/night backdrop to create a full twenty-four hour cycle on his Roscolite (though not quite in real time).

Contact Joel Svendsen at Rosco Hollywood or Mike Jones at Rosco New York for suggestions on how to achieve light texturing or projection effects. In addition to a huge range of patterns, they can also assist in the creation of unique custom components to meet specific requirements.

5) Post Production

And if all else fails...fix it in post. But not just for color corrections, or to remove that pesky Condor shadow. On "Changing Lanes", pigeons were digitally added into the background to provide an extra spark of life to the view of Manhattan.

Backing To The Future



Image by Rosco Laboratories and Zoic

NYPD 2069

To create backings depicting a futuristic New York for the new Steven Bochco show "NYPD 2069", Production Designer Paul Eads turned to Rosco Backdrops.

Three sets required backings. A police precinct in 2003, the same precinct sixty-six years later, and a 2069 apartment. For the precinct, Paul and Art Director Matt Jacobs selected two images from the Rosco image archive. These were married together and a new sky added, creating an image file 23' x 170' from which the precinct 2003 view was obtained.

The file was then passed to Andrew Orloff of Zoic, the Visual Effects Supervisor. Zoic added New York's future buildings (including the new World Trade Center) and an overhead monorail-type transportation system.

The completed 2069 image was then returned to Rosco.

Zoic also provided day and night files for the apartment set, which Rosco combined into a day/night file, tweaked again for color and contrast.

Upon Paul's approval, all the files were sent for painting. Overall, turnaround for the Precinct 2003 drop was about two weeks, with the 2069 images taking a little longer.

Although Rosco has worked with digital matte images from other companies before, and has also rendered or re-sculpted many panoramas in house, this project represented the most involved cooperative project to date.

Armed with lessons learned from "NYPD 2069", Rosco next engaged in a similar project for the feature "I-Robot", working with English matte artist Charles Darby to create a futuristic view of Chicago.



Image by Rosco Laboratories and Zoic