BADC 2022 ENTRY
21007 Visual Effects

THE WITCHER

“SEASON 2 - 3D DOOH”

THE BRIEF

Design and animate an experiential video for the international launch of the Netflix series 'The Witcher' Season 2 utilising five unique digital billboards at Parc Paragon in Bangkok, Thailand. The sequence should convey the chaos and carnage of the series.

DESIGN TOUCHPOINTS

While the overall creative was focused around real-world elements such as the storefront and the office block, it was crucial to have a strong branding presence right from the start of the piece.

The key artwork and the trailer were prominently displayed from the start of the 30 second piece, with each screen resolving in a different key artwork once the Myriapod had finished wreaking havoc on that particular screen.

We used elements from the key artwork (such as snow particles and animating the highlight moving across the sword) to keep these elements alive and interesting while the creature was on other screens. This ensured that the branding was clearly visible from any viewpoint around the location.

The Myriapod creature itself was a key design touchpoint, as it was included in other aspects of the global campaign.

It was chosen as the core focus of the Thailand concept because it was an impactful way to bring the world of the Witcher into our own and was a treat for die-hard fans of the show who may have glimpsed the creature in the series 2 trailer.

Another Easter Egg for fans of the show was the name of the fictional storefront on the Motion Block screen - Rivia est. 1160 (Geralt's birth place and year).

THE PROCESS

1. Concept a sequence that takes advantage of real-world position of the five screens and their proximity to each other.

2. Create storyboards and animatic for timing.

3. Building the Parc Paragon in Unreal Engine to determine the ideal viewing position and review in real-world scale with the Vive 360 headset.

4. Create screens in Maya and position cameras.

5. Mapping screens in 3D and create a 2D compositing setup in AfterEffects.

6. Test setups on actual screens on location.

7. Myriapod look development and rigging.

8. Design, model, texture architectural elements.

9. Animation.

10. Fabric tears and glass cracking simulations.

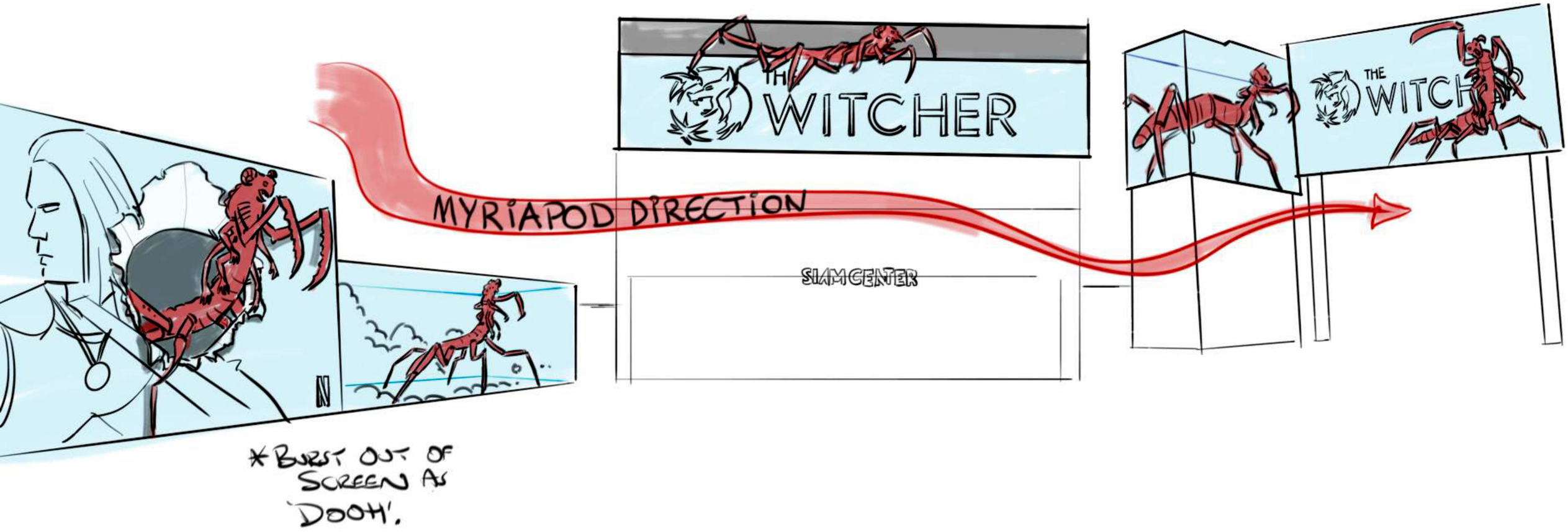
11. Motion graphics of key artwork, logos and screen glitches.

12. Final screen tests on location.

13 Light and render.

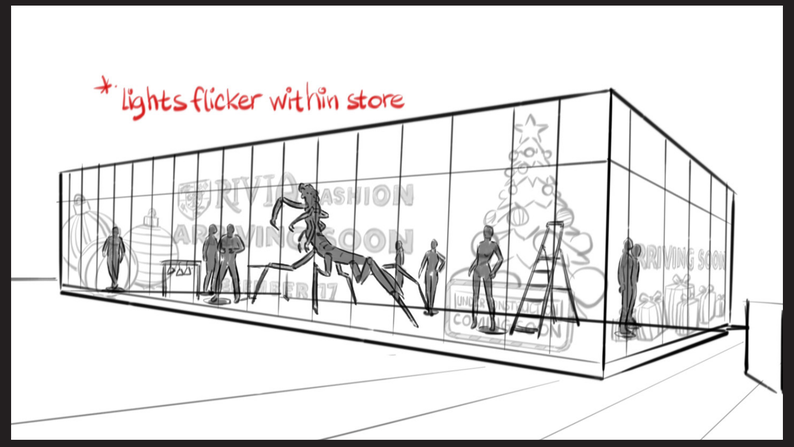
14. Final composite of all elements across all screens.

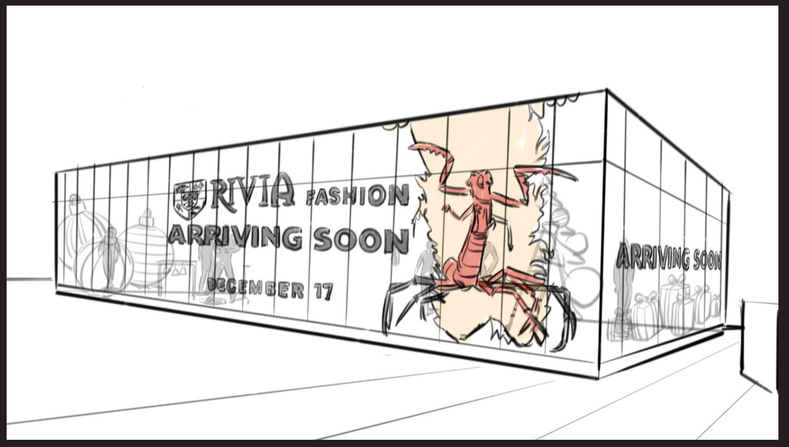
CONCEPT The creature links the screens by breaking through the first, jumping from one to the next, and ends by burrowing into the last.

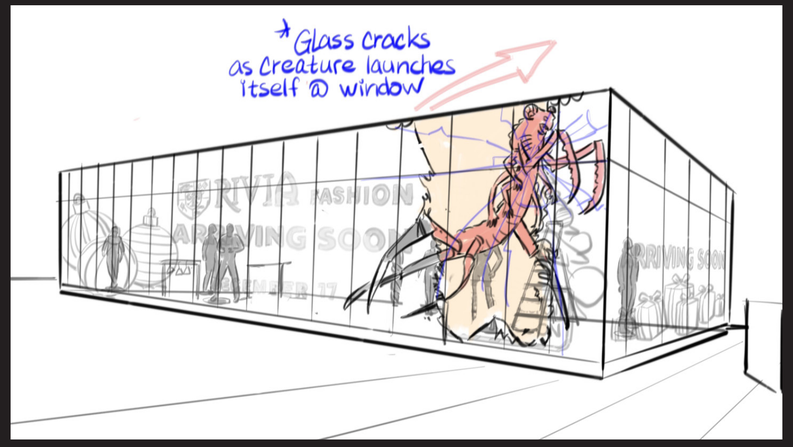


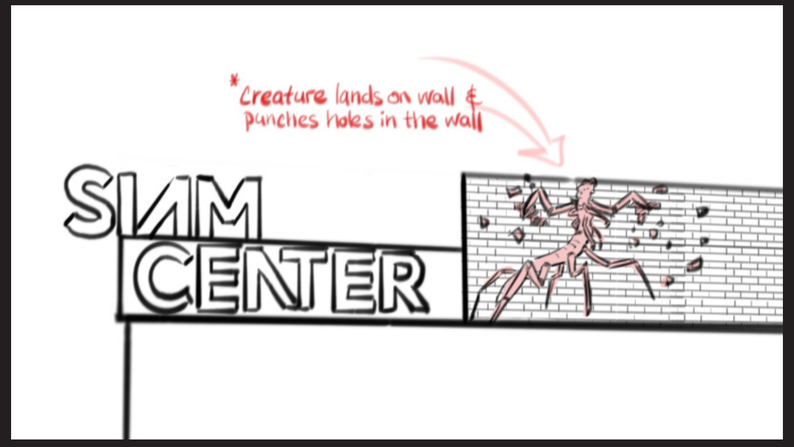
STORYBOARDS AND ANIMATIC

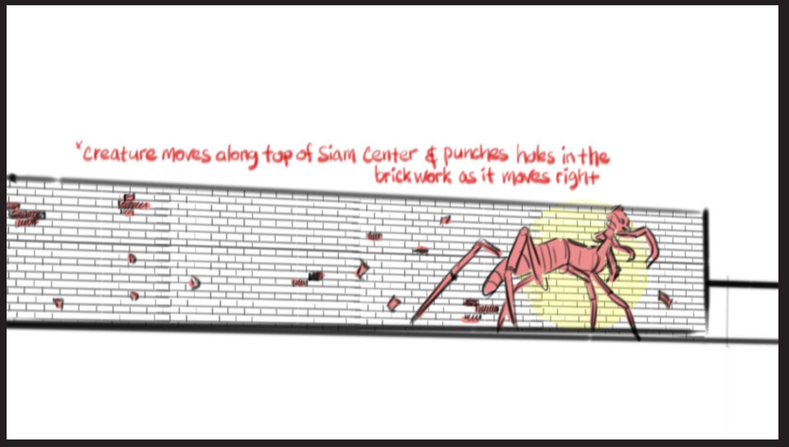
CLICK TO VIEW ANIMATIC





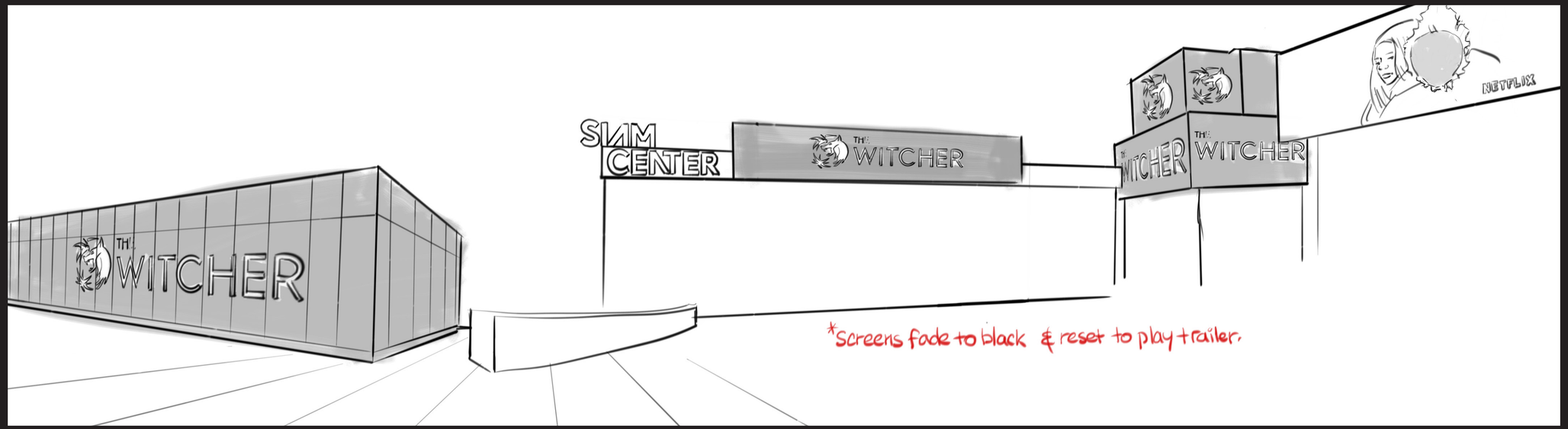




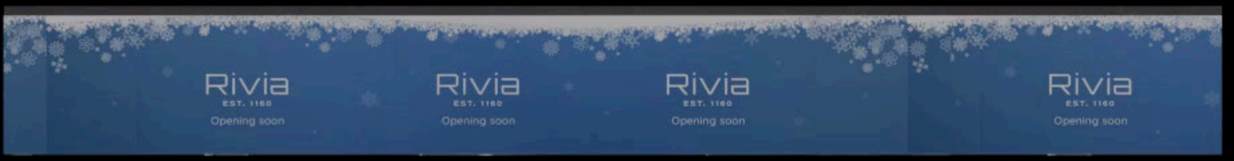


*Creature leaps onto apartment -
- Silhouette people in windows screaming as the creature breaks some debris from building as it moves towards billboard.
Y IS A BEAST

THE
HER
SEASON 2
COMING
EMBER 17
DECEMBER 17
*Creature tears hole in billboard & dissappears within.

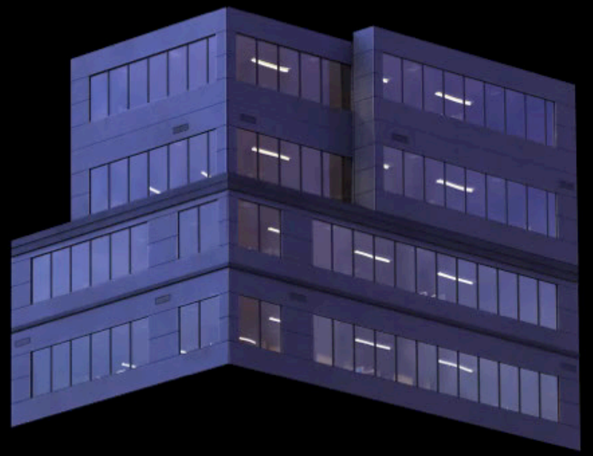

SIAM CENTER
THE WITCHER
THE WITCHER
THE WITCHER
THE WITCHER
NETFLIX
*Screens fade to black & reset to play trailer.

THE MOTION BLOCK



THE ROOFTOP

THE OFFICE BLOCK



THE BILLBOARD

PLANNING THE NARRATIVE

The central theme of this piece was creating a sense of The Witcher world breaking into our own. To achieve this, we wanted to ensure the initial screens looked like they could be either ordinary billboards or part of the architecture of the Square, so that the audience would be surprised once the creature broke free.

The Myriapod's journey from screen to screen was mapped out very carefully to ensure we had something interesting happening on every screen, while avoiding any technical problem areas around corners and avoiding the actor's faces in the key artwork.

THE MOTION BLOCK

The first screen (the Motion Block) is at ground-level. We took advantage of this for the big reveal of the Myriapod. It was designed to look like a new store under construction that the Myriapod rampages through. This sets up the narrative of the Myriapod causing chaos in the shopping centre and creating an opportunity for dramatic shadows and smashing glass.

THE ROOFTOP

We created a thick metal border around the Rooftop screen to give it a sense of depth.

This was a crucial part of creating the illusion that the Myriapod was in our world, because we could animate parts of the creature to move on top of this border so that it looked like it moved beyond the boundary of the screen content.

For this screen, we chose to use branding elements and play the trailer to drive audience awareness and engagement, while helping to create the sense that it was just a regular digital billboard that the creature smashes as it crawls on top.

To amplify this, we used a glitching effect, as well as adding sparks as the creature lands on the screen panels. The whole screen glitches to white to ensure the Myriapod was clearly visible from a distance.

THE OFFICE BLOCK

Replicating the architecture on the Office Block screen was particularly challenging. This screen consists of six individual screens that are different sizes and shapes, which affected how the CG building would look once displayed.

Due to COVID, we couldn't travel to the Square in Thailand to see the screens in-person and to take HDR images, so we were relying on pictures found online and a local location scout.

The material on the building appears brighter or darker depending on the time of day, so one of the main challenges was creating content that could be viewed at any time of the day or night. We tested a few different lighting setups and landed on a late afternoon light, as this seemed to be the most neutral.

We used the buildings surrounding the Square for reference and modelled in details of the brickwork, vents and shutters so it looked like an natural extension of building below the screens.

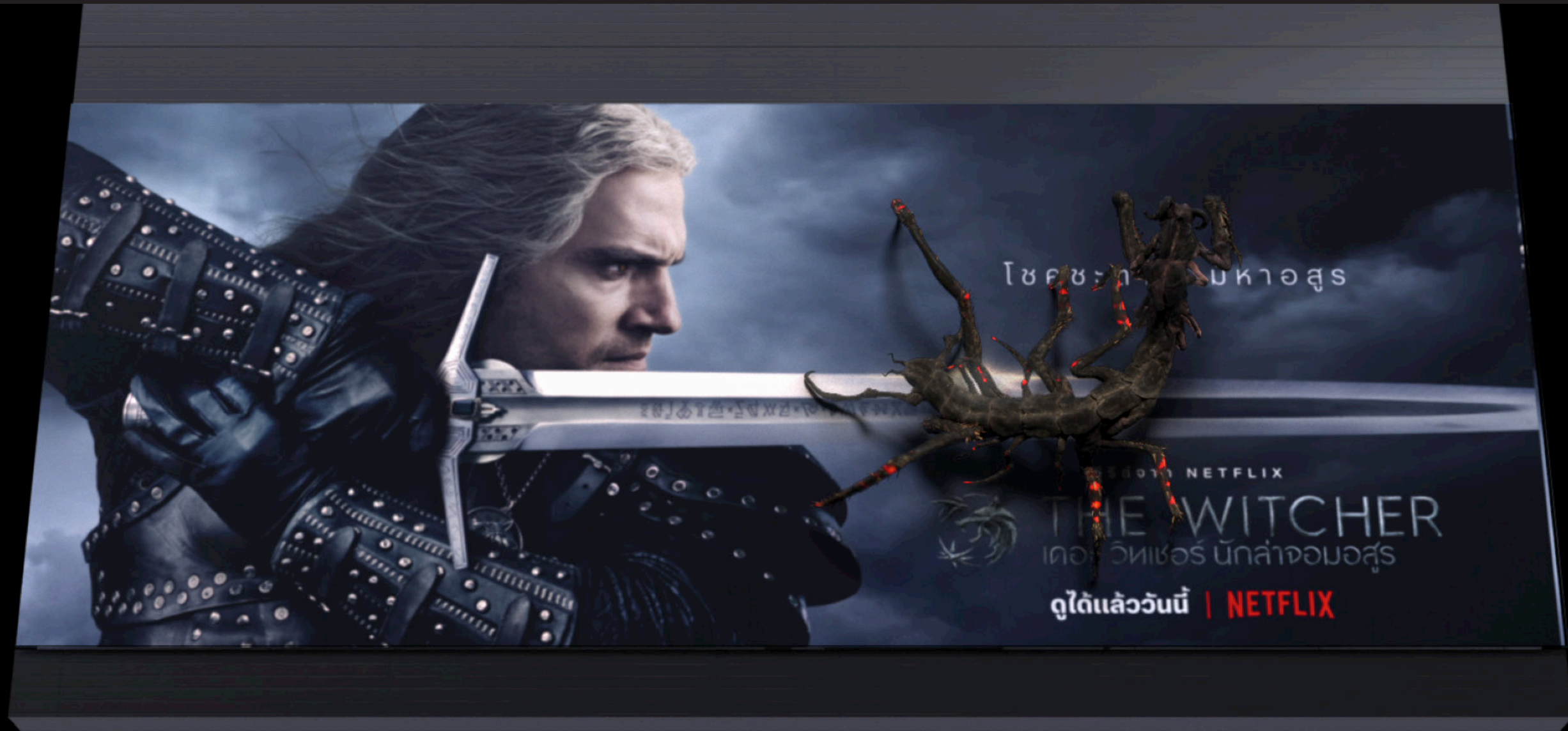
To enhance the realism, we added people reacting to the Myriapod landing on the windows, as well as cracked glass, dust and debris as the creature moves around the building.

Executing the 3D effect on these corner screens is reliant on the viewer standing in a very particular location, so they are seeing the animation from a certain perspective.

However, we were very conscious that all of the screens are visible from many different angles (including the train station above the Square), so wanted to ensure that all other content was effective from any angle.

THE BILLBOARD

The final screen was designed with a thicker metal edge, so that the creature could crawl out and over the top of the key artwork. It tears through the artwork and crawls back inside.



VR TESTING

We built a rudimentary but geographically accurate version of the Parc Paragon in Unreal Engine to determine the ideal viewing position, especially for the Office Block.

This also gave us a better understanding of the distances the Myriapod would leap.

CLICK TO VIEW VR TEST

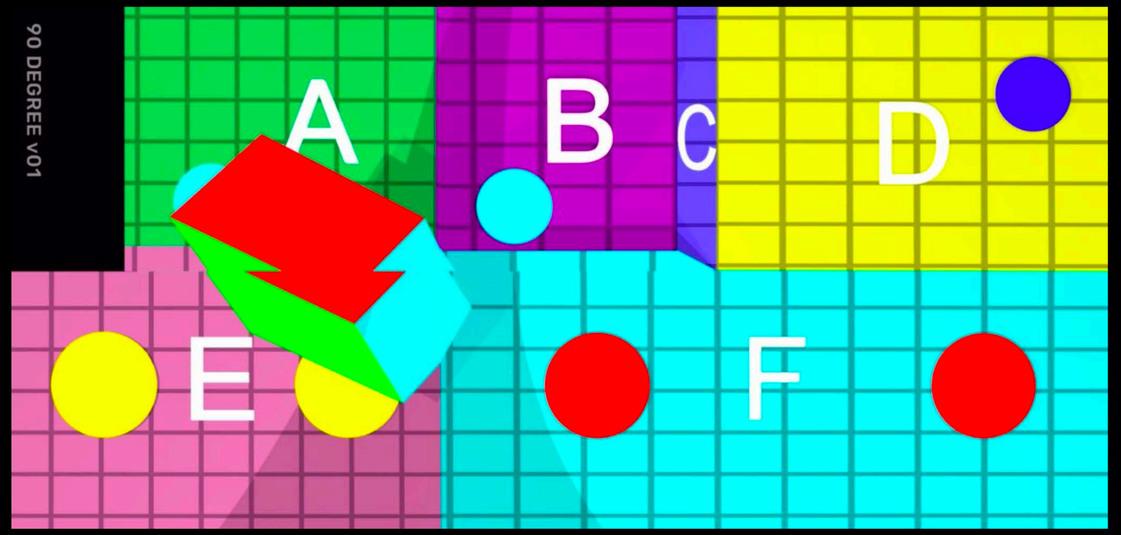
MAPPING AND UNWRAPPING THE SCREENS

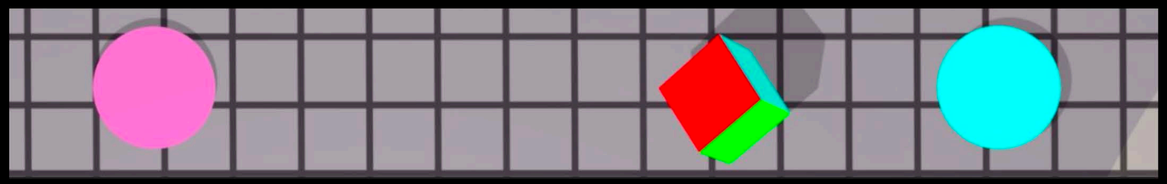
Once the optimum viewing position was established, all screens were built to scale in 3D software Maya and a 3D camera was placed.

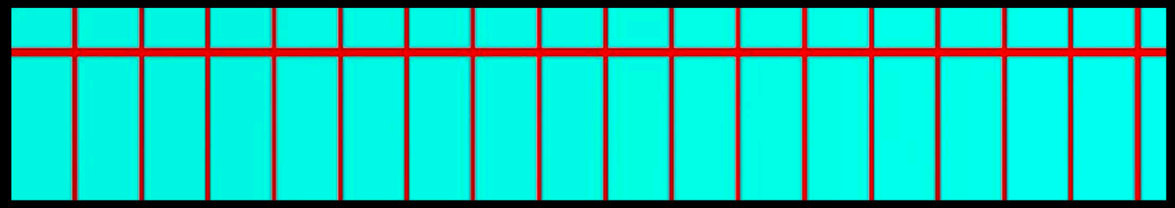
The 90° office block was the most important to map and unwrap because it consists of six separate screens perpendicular to each other. The alignment of the viewing angle was crucial to accommodate the perspective changes as the creature scurries from screen to screen and around the corner.

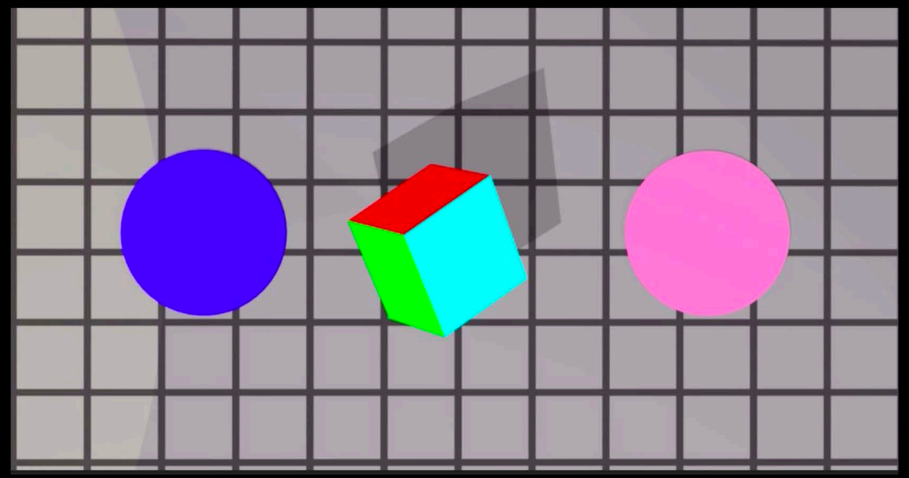
The creature would be animated in 3D, rendered from the optimum viewing position, then warped flat in 2D for final compositing in preparation for playback on the six screens on location.

SCREEN MAPPING TEST ON LOCATION









MYRIAPOD LOOK DEVELOPMENT

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN The Motion Block with and without privacy fabric, and final approved artwork..

BEAUTY RENDER WITH FABRIC

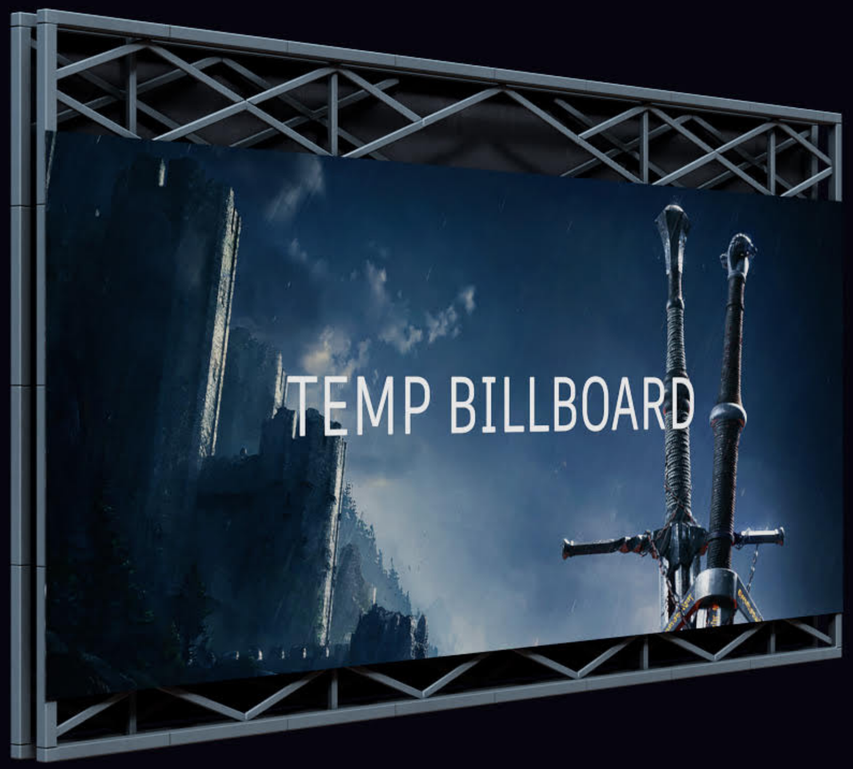
BEAUTY RENDER WITHOUT FABRIC

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

An early proposed office block design and the final approved version.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Proposed billboard structure design.

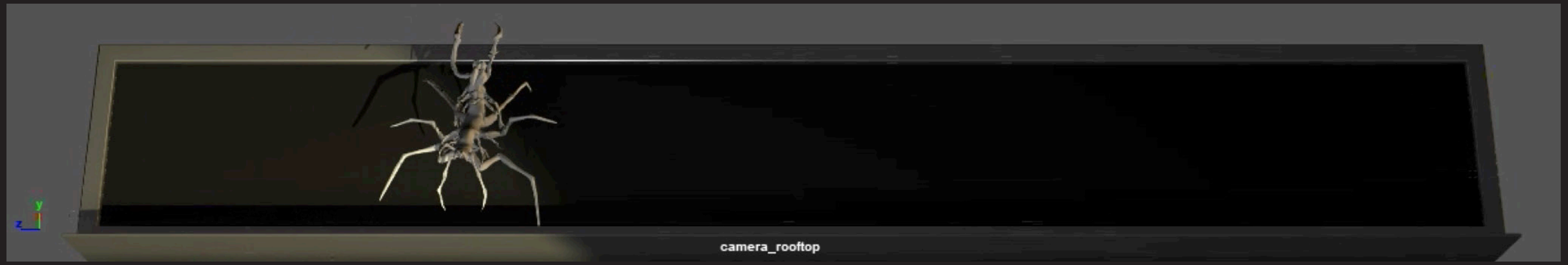


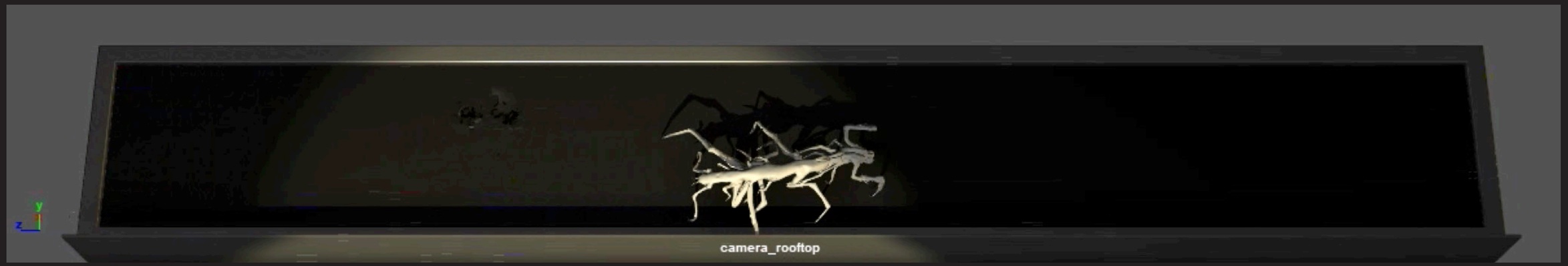
MOTION BLOCK ANIMATION

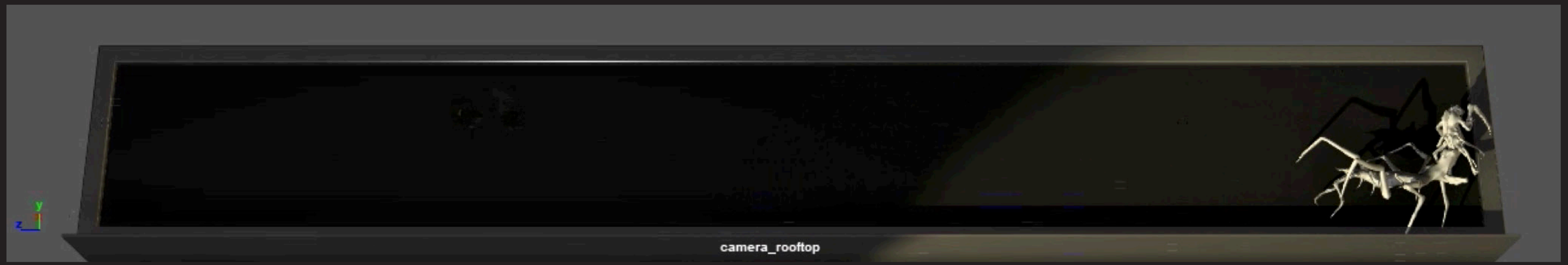
CLICK TO VIEW ANIMATION

ROOFTOP ANIMATION

CLICK TO VIEW ANIMATION

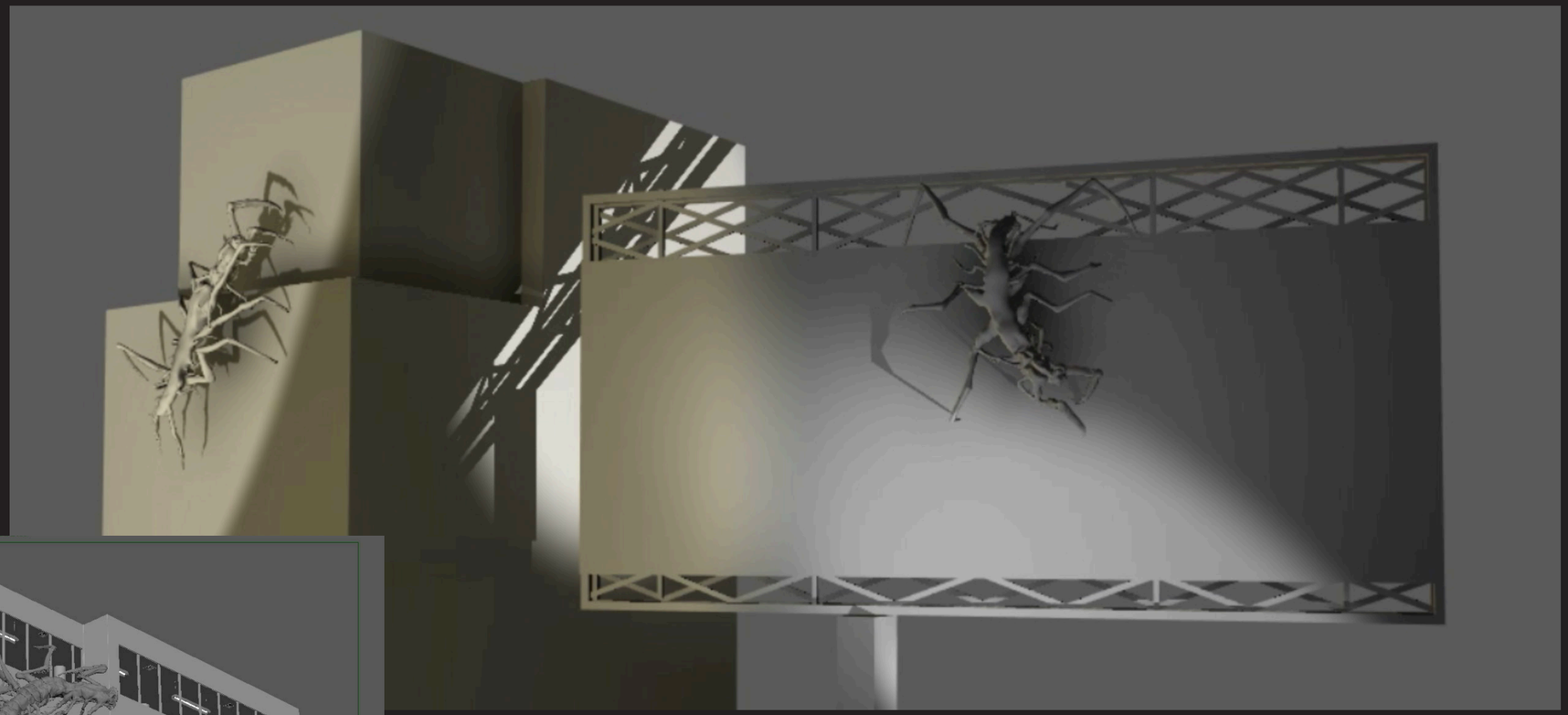






OFFICE BLOCK AND BILLBOARD ANIMATION

CLICK TO VIEW ANIMATION



CLICK TO VIEW ALL FINAL SCREENS

CLICK TO VIEW
DESIGN PROCESS
AND VFX BREAKDOWN