



MSG SPHERE

KING KONG | A PROOF OF CONCEPT

Treatment by Gawain Liddard

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IN 2021 SPHERE WILL GRAB THE WORLD'S
ATTENTION - KONG WILL KEEP IT

Hello,

Thank you once again for inviting us into the process. Projects like this are what get us up in the morning and keep us awake at night, imagining all the possibilities. The MSG SPHERE combines our shared love of cinema, live events, and visual technology. As the most awarded content production facility in the world over the past ten years, we also feel like we are the only ones who can solve the complex puzzle of SPHERE. That supreme confidence comes from an agile global team of creatives and technologists which have tackled similar projects and challenges with amazing results.

We know that the venue can host visual spectacles that will echo across the globe and quickly become known

as the greatest show on earth. But, to get there, and to honestly redefine entertainment, we first have to develop the proper technical tools and post-production workflow to allow every SPHERE project to run smoothly and to truly shine. In a sense that is our mission statement for this Proof of Concept.

To provide you with a robust catalog of learnings in literally every aspect of production for all subsequent content and experiences to follow. But, most importantly, our approach will be led by an indomitable creative vision of what SPHERE can be and that passion for artistry is what drives us to forge true innovation.



WHAT THIS PROPOSAL IS

With our collective imagination running wild, our world-renowned team of artists, technologists, and producers are literally exploding with ideas. However, in order to properly execute the most grandiose concepts, we first must discover what SPHERE is capable of and how we can best and most efficiently achieve a premium level of content time and time again.

In a succinct timeframe, our goal is to conduct a full test of SPHERE's content creation pipeline and best practices for delivery. This includes testing creative ideas with new production and post-

production tools to the logistical technicalities of filming vast content with industry luminaries.

By creating our one-minute Proof of Concept outlined in this document, we will reimagine a classic, epic story that is universally loved, and one we believe will allow SPHERE to flex all of its might. To demonstrate how to usher in the new era of entertainment — we'll recreate the closing moments of KING KONG.

PLAY EXAMPLE EDIT



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WHY KONG?

For one KONG is BIG, he's a global symbol of strength and power, but also one of human connection. KONG is not simply a show, the world of KONG is an entire universe, and the way he sees our world and navigates it, is like no other universally loved character. The story of KONG is also rooted firmly in New York City, just like the enduring legacy of MSG.

Filmmakers have been creating moods on the screen for over a century, but the techniques and angles that work on a flat rectangular surface will not ring true in SPHERE. The exhilaration of the action scenes must be met with the profound emotion as Ann Darrow says goodbye to her uncompromising protector.

Discovering the perfect recipe for capturing that moment is just as crucial as making epic VFX.

The climax of KING KONG also lets us explore a multitude of cinematic language. There is, of course, the epic battle on top of the Empire State Building, but aside from that action, there's also emotional nuance. These emotional performances are balanced between the giant VFX driven KONG and the very human heroine, Ann Darrow. With two performance extremes to work with, we'll learn how to capture and retain the beauty and performance ability of a star actress, and combine that seamlessly with BIG, complex VFX work.



A BIGGER VISION

While this proposal is focused on creating a spectacular minute of test content for the screen and discovering the best way to do so, we fully understand that SPHERE is so much more.

To create an exhaustive PROOF OF CONCEPT, we have to think of this as a fully fledged SPHERE production. We see the potential for KING KONG to be that grand opening show that will grab the world's attention, and a fully rounded immersive approach to entertainment starts well before the audience even enters the venue.

Envisioning the full-scale scenario of KONG, the audience would leave the nightlife of Vegas behind as they approach SPHERE, becoming submerged in an MSG crafted universe.

This sensory immersion goes from the ticket design to ticket takers, the red carpet, and carbon arc spotlights lining the entrance. We want to captivate our audience and make them feel like they are going to see the REAL KING KONG on display by MSG and not a show.

This will resonate globally beyond any other performance as a unique experience that can only happen through the magical history and future of MSG.

Beyond the exterior set dressing and casted theatre crew, we'd also utilize the exterior screens of SPHERE to a profound effect. Featuring a vast structure that - in this fantasy world scenario - SPHERE is a venue built specifically to house the REAL KING KONG. SPHERE becomes the enclosure for the giant beast as we show glimpses of a life-sized KONG through opaque glass and tease the real show that awaits inside.

Amplifying the fantasy on the inside of SPHERE, the all-encompassing inner screen is set to look like a vast replica of Radio City Music Hall's stunning Art Deco interior. Enveloping guests with an awe-inspiring visual from the moment they step inside; there will never be a blank, unused screen.



To utilize the stage and live performance aspect of SPHERE, we start by integrating a theatre scene with all the glitz and glamour of a true Vegas spectacle. This is also indelibly true of the original KONG story. In our SPHERE version, we'd feature colossal virtual curtains that part on the screen to reveal KING KONG in chains behind real-life dancers.

Live stage actors interact with the biggest, and first-ever life-sized version of KONG. As he breaks free from his chains, we transition to entirely on-screen footage for a vivid ride. The action plays out in stunning detail as KONG tears down a virtual theater around us,

engaging the power of every haptic and sensory conduit SPHERE offers. This is the ultimate ride as we follow the KING on a rampage from the site of The Garden through the streets of 1930's New York, smashing through the original Penn Station.

This unbelievable multimedia experience evolves. Shifting from the thrills and excitement of a ride to the grandeur, power, and emotion of an immersive cinematic experience as we climb the EMPIRE STATE for the final showdown. This climactic scene, high above the New York skyline, is what we will explore in this first PROOF OF CONCEPT phase.



*It was beauty
killed the beast.*

PROOF OF CONCEPT METHODOLOGY: EMPIRE STATE BUILDING SCENE

To fully understand just how amazing Sphere can be, we have to start at square one, THE INTERIOR SCREEN, and we have to be willing to go all in. It would be a waste of time and resources to try and piecemeal the assets and tests together. Our initial one-minute screen test (what we are proposing here) must have the utmost level of production value and rigour, so the entire process is worth it. Again, this Proof Of Concept will act as a touchstone for all events and bespoke SPHERE content to follow.

The best way to look at the POC is to break it down into distinct - executable sections.

1. PRE-PRODUCTION AND PLANNING

During this phase, we will create a CG 3D previsualization of the chosen edit and rework it to play perfectly in SPHERE. As we build this, we will also create a review system to check our creative work in VR and review with you, the client. This bespoke VR app will give us an identical viewing angle as if we are inside SPHERE. While in this virtual environment we can look at the screen from different seating positions in the auditorium and assess our creative choice in context.

This will also be a technical previsualization which will inform how we plan the live-action shoot, including early camera/lens tests tied to research on how we achieve the best possible clarity and resolution. It's critical we work with a DOP like Bill Pope or Emmanuel Lubeski. Their resumes speak for themselves, but along with that, we have deep personal and professional connections to them. And, even though highly accomplished they love technology and developing new techniques for mediums that live on the visual frontier.

During this step, we'll also lock in the rest of our key filming crew and cast our hero actress for Ann Darrow to be featured in the live-action shoot. And, start a preliminary Intellectual Property check.



2. LIVE-ACTION SHOOT

Based on the previsualization and our technical research on the best clarity/resolution for SPHERE content, we will then take several days to shoot the scene with our hero actress. Our filming set will be a replica of the top of the Empire State Building surrounded by green-screen. During this setup, we will also film more than what we featured in our hero previz. Even though we've performed a series of tests to this point, it's critical that with a world-class production crew at our disposal, we try different options for key shots to see what setups are the most effective and how each affects the complexity of filming, the quality of the final product, and creative control.

We will also use onset VR tools, providing a live view of what we're filming as if in SPHERE.



3. POST-PRODUCTION AND DELIVERABLES

To fully understand and complete the process we will take the footage back into editorial and experiment with different cuts. As the edit is refined it will be pushed through a full postviz (post-visualization) process at approximately 4k resolution with CG environments, animated KING KONG, and composites of live-action footage for the full minute, so we can creatively understand what worked and what didn't.

We will also technically test and compare the shooting methods used to determine what lenses and cameras provided the most clarity and quality for each scenario as well as how they fit into a post-production pipeline. This process will further allow us to consider the best final image format to store footage for SPHERE and how we retain the necessary clarity through an entire production in the most effective way.

Finally, we will select THREE key shots from the edit; a wide, mid-shot, and close-up. These three shots will then be pushed to a higher quality and resolution akin to the final delivery specifications for SPHERE. This will give everyone involved a complete understanding of the challenges and solutions needed for a full-scale production. It will also create a stunning example to showcase the pure magic SPHERE can deliver.



3. POST-PRODUCTION AND DELIVERABLES

CONT.

Producing a PROOF OF CONCEPT is a complex process, and we want to be extremely clear in what we are delivering in this phase. The logistical components that makeup Pre-Production and Planning are widely understood and our previsualization film will show the blocking of what we plan to shoot in rudimentary CG. Filming the Live-Action portion is also clear, but the final postviz and test VFX we'll produce in Post-Production can be confusing-- especially when we're defining a new media format.

To help create a clear picture of what we at The Mill consider POC quality and finish we've included an edit from a previous project. Created with an agile, multidisciplinary team in just a matter of weeks, we built everything digitally, including the characters. The style it evokes and mood it creates is something we are very proud of, yet it's missing a more refined quality we would consider FULLY POLISHED VFX and POST. We are both artists and perfectionists.

For KING KONG, we will staff a similar, nimble POC ethos to create a breathtaking and emotionally engaging edit that has all the impact of a final film, but only lacks the minute, delicate details of final VFX and POST.



[PLAY POC EXAMPLE](#)

PROOF OF CONCEPT | SCHEDULE

1/28/19

3/21/19

WEEK 1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

PREPRODUCTION & TECHNICAL
DEVELOPMENT

LIVE ACTION
SHOOT

POST-PRODUCTION

COMP

COLOR

DELIVERY

PROOF OF CONCEPT | BUDGET & DELIVERABLES

PRODUCTION COST PACKAGES

PREVISUALIZATION PACKAGE	96,000 USD
TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE	45,000 USD
LIVE ACTION PACKAGE	300,000 USD
POST-PRODUCTION PACKAGE	277,365 USD
TOTAL	718,365 USD

*SIGN-OFF NEEDED BY 12/21/2018 TO ALLOW RESOURCING THROUGHOUT Q1 2019

DELIVERABLES

PRE-PRODUCTION PACKAGE: Full previsualization of 1min KING KONG edit reformulated to work in SPHERE, technical documentation on proposed camera & lenses (including technical examples) report on resolution/clarity & format for SPHERE. Preliminary Intellectual Property check.

TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE: VR Build allowing review of previsualization content in CG SPHERE environment with creative tools.

LIVE ACTION SHOOT: 2 days shoot

POST-PRODUCTION PACKAGE: Final 1min edit of KING KONG finished at 4k postviz quality. 3 Hero shots (wide, mid and close up) finished at a greater resolution tested for SPHERE and a higher quality of VFX finish. All media in custom developed format for SPHERE. Final report and findings of full production pipeline.



FROM POC TO PREMIERE

Now we have a clear understanding of the Proof of Concept, what stages do we see beyond that taking us to the grand opening night? A launch that sets KING KONG off with the combine excitement of Avatar the movie, Wicked the show and Space Mountain the ride.

1. DEVELOPMENT: Develop script and full creative planning. Lock in full Intellectual Property rights. Layout production overview.

2. PRE-PRODUCTION: Full production plan incorporating screen and live stage elements. All creative designs completed in detail, including material for exterior screen and show strategy. Final bids and schedule locked in.

3. PRODUCTION: All technical planning and systems created for shoot. Locations locked, talent and core crew join production. Final preparation for shoot.

4. PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY: Live action shoot over several weeks. On set editorial and visualization to assure all elements are captured.

5. STAGE SHOW PRODUCTION: Full stage production starts. On-boarding talent and early rehearsals.

6. POST-PRODUCTION: Edit and layout are locked. Full post production and VFX of on screen content. Sound design and integration begin.

7. SHOW INTEGRATION: Screen content and live stage production are merged. Sound design is complete. Final creative and technical adjustments are made to install the production at SPHERE. Early test screenings and full media package is rolled out.

8. MARKETING AND LAUNCH: Early press and influencer screenings. Exterior screen comes to life. Full marketing launch.

PREMIERE EVENT - 2021



ENTERTAINMENT HAS COME A LONG WAY
LET'S TAKE THE NEXT LEAP

IN SUMMARY

While this is a complex endeavor, we are more than confident and comfortable taking it on from both a technological and creative standpoint.

We are beyond thrilled by the potential of this project. It checks all the boxes that we as a company of creatives and explores of technology are looking for. Our Proof Of Concept will set the groundwork for all experiences to come, and prove that MSG SPHERE is the next evolution in entertainment.

Let's get going!

Yours,

Gawain & The Mill Team

A D D E N D U M



WHO WE ARE: **THE MILL**

For over two decades The Mill has been a community of diverse individuals with all manner of talents and backgrounds. What we share in common is a passion for the work.

Always pushing the art of visual storytelling at boundaries technology.

[PLAY ANTHEM REEL](#)

[SEE OUR TECH](#)



EXAMPLE PROJECT: **GOOGLE | HELP**

The Mill collaborated with Google ATAP, Bullitt and Director Justin Lin on the latest Google Spotlight Story 'HELP', their first immersive, live action film. Winning many awards including two Gold Cannes Lions.

[PLAY THE PROJECT](#)

[SEE HOW WE MADE IT](#)



EXAMPLE PROJECT: **SSE | MAYA**

Collaborating with Adam&EveDDB and Academy director Frederic Planchon, The Mill's VFX team created a 100% CG orangutan, seamlessly composited into a live action environment for renewable energy company SSE. Winning three VES (Visual Effects Society) awards.

[PLAY THE PROJECT](#)

[SEE HOW WE MADE IT](#)



T H A N K Y O U !

LONDON

11-14 Windmill Street
London, W1T 2JG
T: +44 20 7287 4041

NEW YORK

451 Broadway 4th/5th/6th Floor
New York, NY 10013
T: +1 212 337 3210

LOS ANGELES

3233 S. La Cienega Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA, 90016
T: +1 310 566 3111

CHICAGO

1000 West Fulton Market, Suite 250
Chicago, IL, 60607
T: +1 312 605 8900