Martin Hill tells the Daily how he set the stage with the visually arresting opening scene.

By Kevin P. Sullivan

An Engineer in "Prometheus"

Photo:

This article contains "Prometheus" spoilers.

Ridley Scott's " Prometheus " begins with some of the film's most arresting images. A hairless, pale-skinned Engineer stands atop a waterfall. He drinks a liquid that we may never learn more about, disintegrates and, in turn, creates all of life on Earth.

The visuals set the stage for the rest of the film and show Scott's use of 3-D simultaneously, and now, new videos from the Daily explore the effects work that went into making that shot and the Prometheus' crash with the Engineer ship.

Visual effects supervisor Martin Hill from WETA Digital goes into great detail during his interview about the opening sequence, the creation of life. Not only was the team challenged with creating an impressive visual, but one that succinctly told a complex story.

"Because we had such a short amount of time to tell the story of the DNA getting infected, breaking apart, and then re-forming and recombining to show Earth DNA, we had to make the designs of the different DNA quite graphical, quite illustrative of what they were," Hill said.

After some time, the sequence shifts to the microscopic level, traveling inside the veins of the Engineer. For those sequences, Scott instructed the visual effects team to emphasize the destruction being done.

"The Engineer's DNA, we thought, 'This needs to be quite sinister, but we know it's going to get infected, and the infection has to look more messed up than the Engineer's DNA,' " Hill said. "We used quite a light color palette for Engineer's DNA, and then the infection comes on and it's very melted looking. Ridley actually said to us, 'It has to feel like war in there. The DNA is just being torn apart.' "

The actual scene of genetic destruction came together from computer-generated elements, but the inspiration for the look came from a very real-life source of inspiration.

"We try to use as much reality as possible, so we were looking at all different kinds of reference, so eventually we settled on fish bones, actual decayed fish spines, to represent the structure of the DNA," Hill said. "For the infection that rolls across the infected DNA, what we did was carve actual blocks of silicone with the vein structures in there and pumped black ink and oils and all kinds of different materials through those, filmed them, and used the motion of those as the basis for all of our effects for the veins and the effect coursing through his body."

Check out everything we've got on "Prometheus."

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