

Infiniti – Factory Test
Treatment 3
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Influence of sound

Looking at some other contemporary luxury car commercials, they all seem very much in the now, even the ones that have been given a futuristic edge. In our case however, we need the sounds and images to be more than just futuristic. They need to look timeless. In visual terms 2001 has that quality whereas 2010 with Helen Mirren looks like it was attempting the future but managed a future circa 1985. On closer inspection I think this is also down to the sound design. Therefore, as a stimulus I've been spending an extended amount of time in darkened rooms with sound designers. I think that finding appropriate soundscapes will evoke the Infiniti mood much more than any reference image can. What does the factory sound like inside the showroom AND out on the track?

In general I think that the lack of human interaction within the films allows a need for an extra presence within the audio. You'll note the breathing within Robot Road, and I'd like to continue this theme. A faint sense of tribal noises against the digital futuristic sounds will add a heart to the films.

We've isolated some audio clips that we think are interesting. We'll bring these along to the meeting.

A few words from our Sound Designers

"We feel the essence of the soundtrack/design is 'Organic Timeless Futurism' Using Analogue modulators to reveal the spectrographic visual vision.

At times very complex and subliminal. A rich sound mix, with each film reflecting and reminding the audience of the others.

Some very beefy engine sounds, top fuel dragsters roaring off, maybe processed beyond recognition, but still grunty and machine like.

Acoustic atmospheres, imagined sounds, stretching glass, pressure waves of diamonds forming. Quantum tunings. The sound of space. Atoms smashing in slow motion. Doppler effects treated through a Doepfer analogue modulator.

It should, where appropriate, lean towards the organic, connecting strongly with human experience, merging the rich visual imagery with innate human aural perceptions of the imagined environment. The listener becomes the viewer becomes the listener."

Planet Infiniti

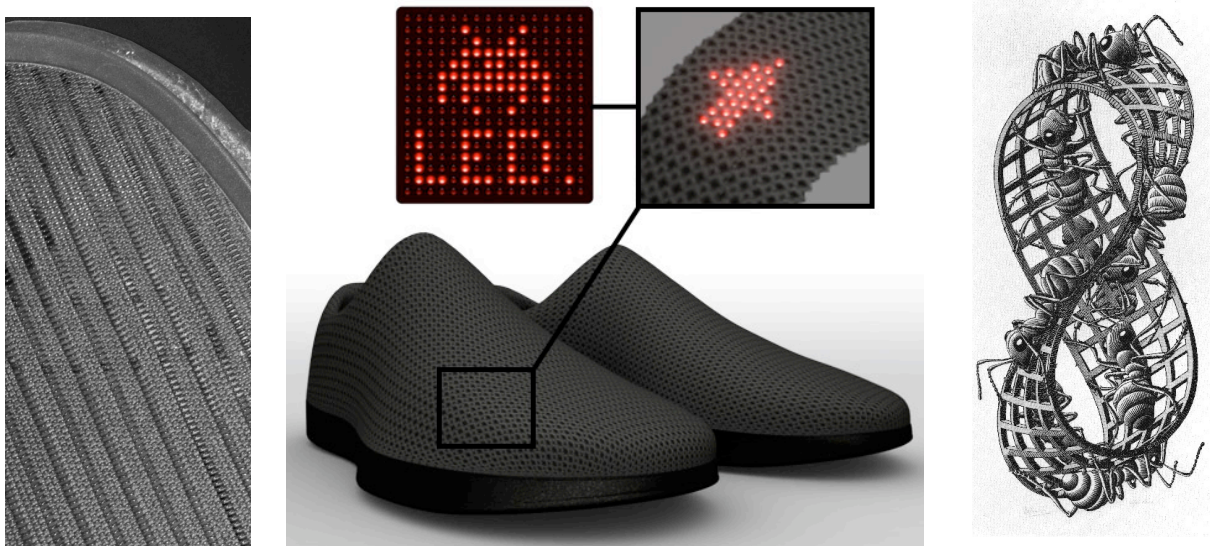
In earlier treatments we briefly mentioned the films overlapping, with the track layouts intertwining so the viewer glimpses other tracks in the background. This led us to think more about how the tracks and the factory exist in physical space. An idea came to us via a Nintendo Wii game called 'Mario Galaxies'. Rather than levels being based on flat paths, the levels are set on small planets, ranging in size from the width of a basketball court to several city blocks. While playing the game you are always aware of the curvature of the planet and the

strange localised gravity. The sets are so small that the buildings are deformed to the curvature of the individual globes, with various sections of the levels interweaving. We'd like to give Tino Schaedler, our concept artist, the brief of basing the factory on a similar world, with a scale reference being something like the 'Death Star' from 'Star Wars'. The Infiniti might just be a section of this bustling planet, but for now we'd design the architectural details as if the whole planet was built for testing the cars and is made of hundreds of ambiguous tracks.

With this in mind, take a look at the previz on the supplementary DVD. We've positioned our 'moebius strip' floating above a section of 'Planet Infiniti'. There are no cameras placed yet (POV's, close ups etc) - this is more to show you conceptually how the strip can operate. Of course, it also needs pushing in terms of art direction, but we really like where it's headed.

Revised Treatments

Infiniti G COUPE - THE MOEBIUS STRIP - (revised)



The G Coupe is lifted away from the showroom on a thin hoist. Its tyres are set into rollers, so that even while attached to the hoist it starts to rev the engine, spinning the tyres as it does so. The hoist moves the car into a dark chamber, an airlock.

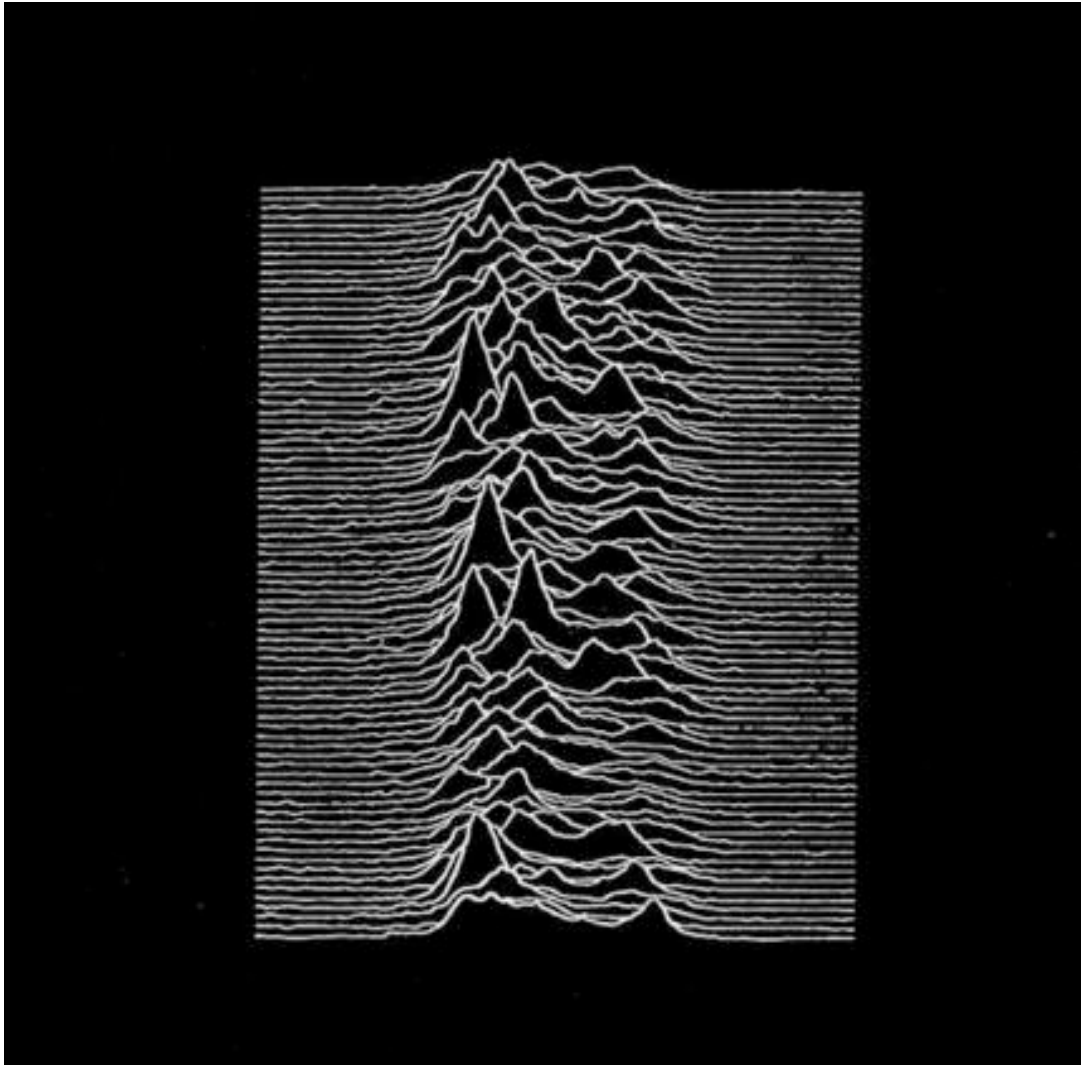
From a viewport hovering over planet Infiniti we see the airlock open, and the hoist pushes the car out into space. We follow the hoist on its telescopic arm toward a shape that floats in geostationary orbit. The shape is a grey thin

circular track, resembling Saturn's rings. As the car is lowered nearer and nearer, it's revving to top speed. The smoke pluming out between the tyres and the rollers changes shape as it drifts away from the planets gravity, forming cigarette-like tendrils of smoke. As the telescopic arm touches the track surface, the rollers lock, and the Coupe lunges out at top speed. The surface it drives on is a high-tech fibre, at first glance resembling the webbing on an Aeron chair. As COUPE takes the corners, thrusters embedded in the track activate. The track shifts and contorts into a tilted shape more like a velodrome. As the tyres move over the surface, they leave behind a wake of bluey-green phosphorescence. As well as this we see that red symbols and status displays appear on the track, updating based on the cars performance. Its as if the track is an elongated plasma screen.

As the car takes a dangerous corner, we see hazard markings on the road. Up ahead the track detaches from itself, twisting as it does so. The car just clears the new gap, as the strip continues to twist.

We see the track from underneath, recognizing the blue-green wake of the tyres. But a moment later the car appears again, this time driving upside down, on the reverse side. Another angle, the same thing happens.

By adding the twist, the track has turned itself into a moebius strip, a surface with only one side. The car increases speed, the trails and digital readouts become faster and more indistinct, until the car becomes a motion blur whizzing around its impossible surroundings. Fade back to showroom.



Infiniti FX – ROBOT ROAD (revised)

The white FX violently drops from its plush surroundings into a lower level of the factory. It is then raced backwards into the distance, spots of light racing over the curves of the car, the sound of wind pockets, we fly past cog-like machinery all set in abstract rows. It slows to a stop, and then is winched up into a new environment.

As if appearing from nowhere the FX is lifted into an endless space. In a composition echoing Lawrence of Arabia, we see the FX in the foreground looking out onto a bizarre and vast landscape, the showroom now a pinhead in the far distance. The ground is a mottled black and white surface, an embedded grid-structure creating moiré patterns over the subtle curvature and organic imperfections. Lines of dust shimmy over the surface like sand over dunes. It the most serene of landscapes, but it has a feel of threat, something not to be trusted.

The front tyres leave the safety of its plinth and touch the alien surface. The ground gives a little - it's spongy. In close up we can see the entire surface is made from something similar to bicycle chain, but scaled 4 times larger. The chain links themselves are white, complimenting the FX, but they are tarnished with oil, age and the elements. Line upon line of chain extend for miles in all directions. The flex of the chains allows some give to the tyres and the lubrication of the chains make the environment silent - apart from the purring of the idling engine.

The car slowly proceeds forward while in the middle distance a bump appears in the path of the FX, similar to a speed bump. Like an industrial version of the executive pin-cushion toy, the chains are raised from beneath by huge machinery. As the car drives over the bump we hear BUM BUM. A second bump appears, larger this time. In the gaps between the chains we glimpse at the technology beneath, cogs and machinery forming this second, more intense bump. BUM BUM ...did we hear a heartbeat?

More shapes emerge, bumps now becoming spikes, revealing that the shapes are visual representations of audio. Starting to reference shapes from the classic Joy Division 'Unknown Pleasures' cover, they begin to look threatening. We can now very clearly hear the rhythm of a heartbeat, regular and slightly agitated. As the FX drives over these shapes, the 4 wheel drive capability of the car becomes paramount.

Suddenly the shapes stop, allowing us to see a new formation up ahead, this time made of smoother but higher inclines. They oscillate left and right, forcing the FX to bank left, right, left, right, like it's riding sand dunes. The sounds are more like that of breathing, higher breathing in to the right of the track (treble) and the lower exhales are to the left (bass). Fear is heard within the breathing and is reflected as minute oscillations within the chain. Why the fast heart beat? Why the fear? In the reflection of the windscreen we see the sky disappear and the horizon line lift as the road ahead consumes our view.

A huge sound pulse, a tidal wave of sound is looming in the distance. Like a tidal wave it appears to move slowly, although implicitly we know it's huge and surging towards the car at terrific speed. Smaller, faster ripples, initial tremors, reach the car first. The car is thrown and shaken to the core. As the car hits the base of the wave we hear white noise, fierce, organic and gaining volume as the surface now becomes like rocky terrain. The FX gains speed as it climbs the wave, the surface getting rapidly both smoother and steeper, the noise shifting to something more like a storm. The FX suspension is being stretched to the limit. The sound peaks, the car hits the crest of the wave and flies out of shot into silence.

Back on the ground, we wait, and wait, then BANG, the FX lands safely, as we see the audio wave roll on behind it. The FX, unscathed, drives back to the factory as the wave crashes and dissolves.