



CASE STUDY

ShortCut LED Stage Uses Disguise for Kayak Commercial

In a hyper-connected society where a multitude of second-hand experiences often shape our understanding of the world, first-hand experiences put life into perspective. A new commercial for travel search engine Kayak, which was shot with the Disguise virtual production workflow, encourages viewers to travel and see life for themselves.



Summary

Kayak's 'Think This' online ad campaign from Danish agency &Co. / NoA and production company Honeytrap, was shot on the Nordisk Film ShortCut LED stage in Copenhagen. The spot's concept required photorealistic as well as abstract and immersive locations to be shot in a single day with a limited timeframe reserved for post-production.

The ShortCut LED stage, the world's first full 360° LED stage, helped ensure photorealistic lighting and an immersive feel. Additionally, the stage's Virtual Art Department assisted in the creative deliveries for a true one-stop solution for the shoot, all together making it a project that would have been impossible with traditional filming techniques and without ICVFX.



The challenge

The project required the ShortCut LED stage to deliver photorealistic content and lighting, motion graphics mapped to specific screen areas, motion capture, Unreal Engine content with camera tracking, content-mapped dolly screens, a 4K plate extension and 12K video plate collection with ShortCut's own 360° film camera. Also, as the camera panned to the ceiling and rotated full circle, the content perspective needed to be corrected for seamless in-camera footage.

Mads Buus, one of three Virtual Production Supervisors at the ShortCut LED stage, notes that delivering so many different types of content, ensuring easy and fast playback on the shoot day, and meeting an overall tight schedule, was a bit concerning in the beginning. Very strict project control and efficient prep time were critical to the outcome.

The ShortCut LED stage had a ready-set system so it could easily switch between eight different pre-lit locations encompassing still images, 12K video plates, a sequenced Unreal project with camera tracking, extended 4K plates and an additional dolly screen. But the entirety of the virtual production pushed what the stage had done before.



The challenge

In terms of content, the Unreal portion was the most challenging for the stage. An iPhone recording from Director Ian Isak served as a motion reference, which was captured via Rokoko, cleaned up in Maya, then auto-rigged in Reallusion where the mocap data was directly re-targeted to the 3D model in Unreal.

Because the 3D model needed to frame bigger than what was possible on the main screen, the upper part was displayed on the LED ceiling with seamless perspective correction and colour adjustments.



The solution

The ShortCut LED stage chose the Disguise VP workflow to facilitate the complex project, deploying four Disguise VX 2 media servers (with an additional unit on hand for backup), four RX II render nodes running RenderStream and a Fabric network switch.

Buus believes that the amount of content and the technical diversity of the spot would have been hard to manage without the Disguise workflow. It serves as a “hub” where the stage can gather, set up and organise everything needed for a given project and make it easy to play back content.

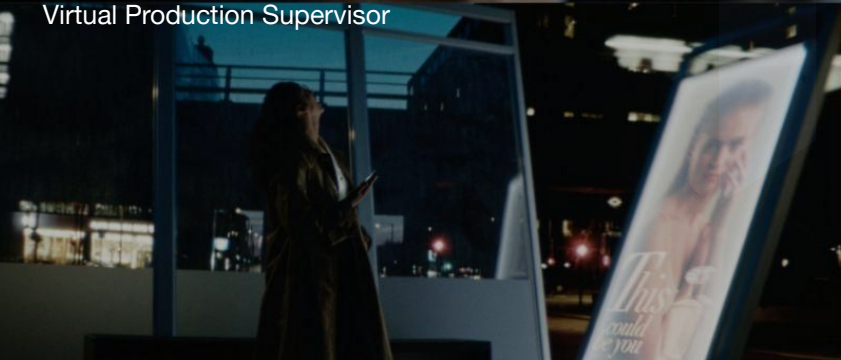
For any virtual production to succeed, he also advocates including the workflow very early in the creative process and having tight communication with the director and DP throughout the process. Being able to test continuously and as early as possible is also important. For the Kayak spot, Ian Isak and DP Jonas Blond were very invested in the process, had a good technical understanding and involved the ShortCut stage early on, he reports.



SHORTCUT LED STAGE:

“The Disguise system integrations and clear project overview are a unique combination which empowers us to be more creative, dynamic and faster than we could have been with other solutions.”

Mads Buus
Virtual Production Supervisor



SHORTCUT
LED STAGE

Results

Kayak's commercial has been a YouTube hit from its first month of release, very successfully delivering its message of the joy of first-hand travel experiences with the help of virtual production.

The ShortCut stage solved the technical complexities posed by the commercial and fulfilled the spot's creative content deliveries. As a result, the client was very happy with the outcome and how it has performed. Just as important, the process was creative, productive and made for good spirits on the ShortCut side.

[Watch it here](#)



1 month 1 million

from initial meetings to
shoot day

YouTube views one month
after release

Disguise equipment used



VX 2

Building on the strength of the VX 4, the VX 2 gives you the freedom to build out your technical capacity depending on the size of your production.



RX II

With RX II, you have the power to create photorealistic, high quality real-time graphics, displayed directly on your screens and virtual sets.

Find out more [→](#)



Fabric

Fabric is a pre-configured network switch that seamlessly connects Disguise servers - streaming 4K content without latency or dropped frames.

Find out more [→](#)

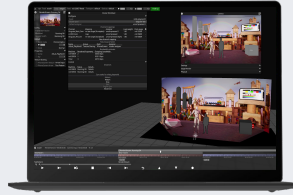
Disguise equipment used



Designer

Designer is the ultimate software to visualise, design, and sequence projects at every stage, from concept all the way through to delivery.

Find out more →



RenderStream

RenderStream is an open-source data transfer protocol supporting Designer's integration with third-party render engines including Unreal Engine, Notch, TouchDesigner and Unity.

Find out more →

In partnership with

Client: Kayak

Virtual Production: [ShortCut LED Stage](#)

Virtual Production Supervisor: Mads Buus

Unreal Developer: Rasmus Møller

Stage Manager: Allan Gram

Agency: &Co./ NoA

External production company: Honeytrap

Director: Ian Isak

Executive producer: Malene Dyhring

SHORTCUT
LED STAGE



Get in touch

Curious to know more about us?
Want to master our production toolkit?
Need support on your project?

Our team will be happy to speak to you,
whatever your query.

Get in touch

Get Started