

# review

**JumpBacks, Video Traxx,  
Director's Toolkit  
from Digital Juice**  
by Patrick Lichty

## Tool/Stock Media

Reviewing a set of stock media may seem a bit odd for a magazine located rather far from industry. However, as there are many artists who appropriate industrial imagery -- such as media tacticians, video artists, interventionists, etc. -- there is a certain rationale behind making these sorts of products visible to the new media art population. Not to mention that these products are an expression and part of digital culture.

*JumpBacks*, *Video Traxx* and the *Director's Toolkit* are series of royalty-free stock video and stock imagery for media producers. All of these media collections are supplied on DVD-R at broadcast quality respectively (HD versions are now available of some collections), and represent large selections of themed and abstract media that I have seen numerous times now on syndicated video segues, trailers, and bumpers.

The problem with describing these products is their sheer volume and diversity. Each of the Director's Toolkits contains 55 GB of information, including backgrounds, lower third animations for titling, overlays, and static images for creating visual ID. Conversely, there are 20 volumes of abstract *JumpBacks* backgrounds, and a number of *Video Traxx* collections, constituting one of the larger collections of media available for quick video production.

The only complaint I might have about the collections is more akin to an embarrassment of riches. Due to the fact that each of the collections resides on several DVDs, they can be somewhat difficult to navigate. There is a cataloguing program that comes with the collections, but flipping DVDs can get a little tedious. I have the same trouble with my 9-CD 3D model collection, so it really isn't meant as an aspersion to Digital Juice, it's merely that broadcast-quality video takes a great deal of storage room.

In addition, the collections, like just about any set of stock, have a distinctive style. Therefore, those who are on tight deadlines and use the stock without further editing and development risk to appear cliché. The result could be an unwanted "infomercial-esque" style, unless you're aiming for a cheesy, saturated style like artists such as Davy Force (aka The Video Sheriff). Fortunately, the media (especially in the *Director's Toolkits*) layer extremely well, and anyone with access to Combustion or After Effects can put

together some excellent effects very quickly.

At a price of around \$250 and up for the collections, and whole sets for under \$1500, Digital Juice's media sets can be a little expensive for individual artists (without a fellowship or grant support), but are quite affordable for small to medium-size production houses, or institutions offering broadcast production classes. From a video / media artist's perspective, Digital Juice's products are ideal for quickly coopting an industrial or regional broadcast production style in the vein of Force, EBN, and others. And with a little work, you can even bastardize the graphics to give them a filmic, underground look for your back-alley broadcasts.

Digital Juice has created a solid niche in the area of stock video and background music. Their selection is quite large, and while they have a trademark style in some respects, their media still reflects certain aspects of televised culture that can be very useful to media artists and -- with one of the Toolkits -- can be modified to reflect different visual styles. Although these packages are clearly aimed at a media-producers' market, Digital Juice's stock media products represent a fairly affordable way for media artists to become doppelgangers of the big guys.

