

Using our ShotGrid pipeline

General guides on using our ShotGrid pipeline.

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ShotGrid - Pipeline - Start here!

If you're new to the Netherlands Filmacademy and new to the VFX industry in general you might be wondering a few things:

- What is ShotGrid and why are the third and fourth years mentioning it so much?
- Everybody keeps using the word *pipeline*, but what does that even mean??
- How do *ShotGrid* and *pipeline* relate to each other?

What is ShotGrid?

ShotGrid is a product owned by Autodesk that makes the whole process of VFX production much more streamlined. It's a combination of planning tools, review tools and software integrations that makes working on large projects much easier. In your first and second year at the Filmacademy you likely won't need it, as it only becomes truly useful on larger projects. The planning and review tools are available on our ShotGrid website: nfa.shotgunstudio.com. The software integrations are available when you launch programs through the ShotGrid launcher (see [this page](#)).

ShotGrid was recently renamed to Flow Production Tracking. Nobody calls it that. It used to be called Shotgun, so some people might still call it that.

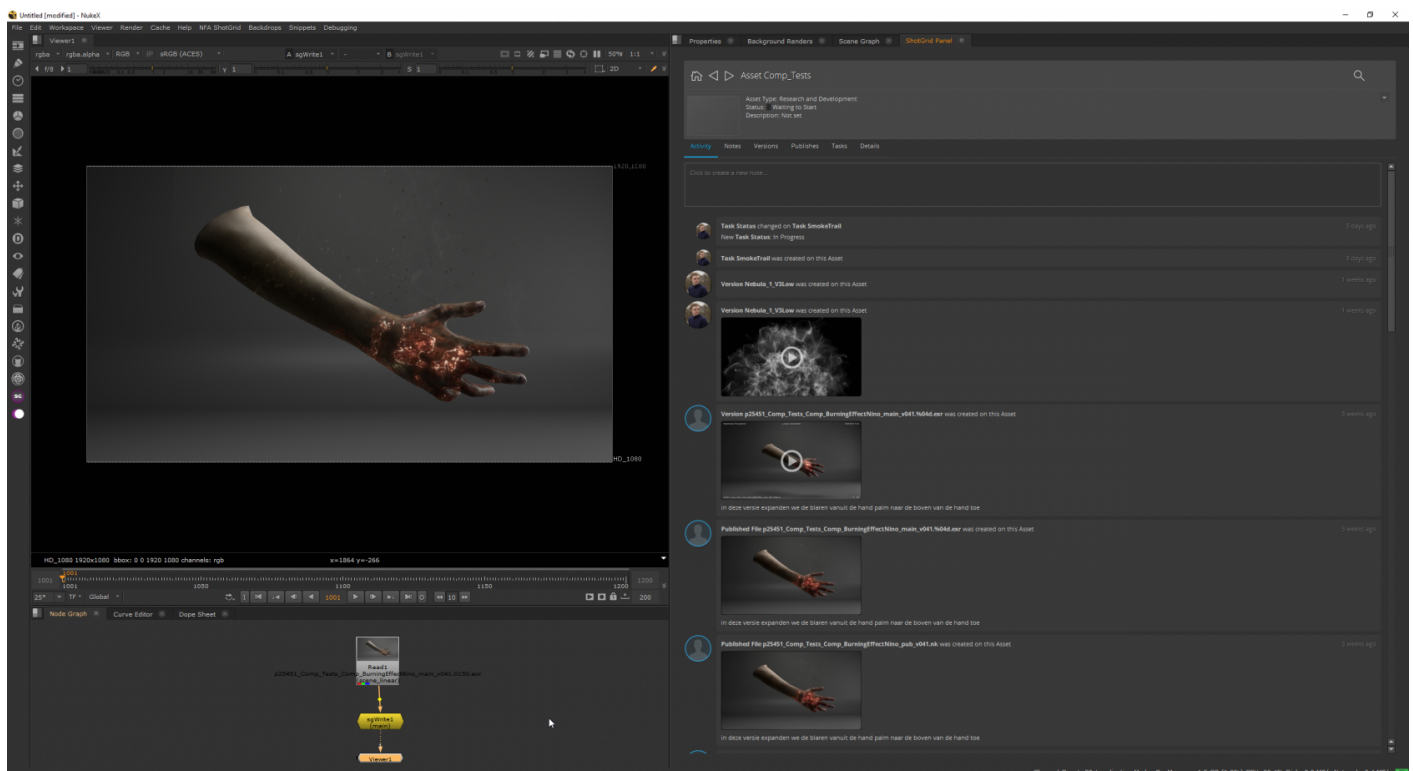
What's a pipeline?

Pipeline is a word you'll hear a lot in this industry. You can think of it like a workflow; how does one thing flow into another thing during the VFX creation process? You've made a model in Maya, how does it end up in Substance? How do the textures get assigned and how does the shaded model end up in your render? It's a confusing word because it's used for both big and small workflows, a *rigging pipeline* refers to all the steps in the rigging process, a *compositing pipeline* will most likely refer to just the steps taken in Nuke. When talking about a *studio pipeline* we mean the combination of all of these smaller workflows that form the complete picture of how we get from zero to our final VFX shots.

ShotGrid pipeline?

ShotGrid provides a platform that studios can use to automate a lot of pipeline steps. This platform is available inside software such as Nuke and Houdini when you launch them using the special ShotGrid launcher. When we talk about our *ShotGrid pipeline*, we talk about how all our software and their integrations using this platform work together with the review tools and planning tools on the website to provide one streamlined VFX creation experience.

On a smaller project things like exporting some Maya animations, setting up file paths for some renders, sending a preview MP4 to your director, planning artists in an Excel sheet, etc, can all be done manually and it wouldn't be much work. But once the shots starts entering the dozens it quickly becomes an organizational nightmare to keep track of all these files, export settings, artist planning etc. Our pipeline takes care of all of these tedious things so artists can just focus on their creative work. A good pipeline makes the whole production process go way smoother and allows artists to focus on just the creative work.



Core concepts: Publishing and loading

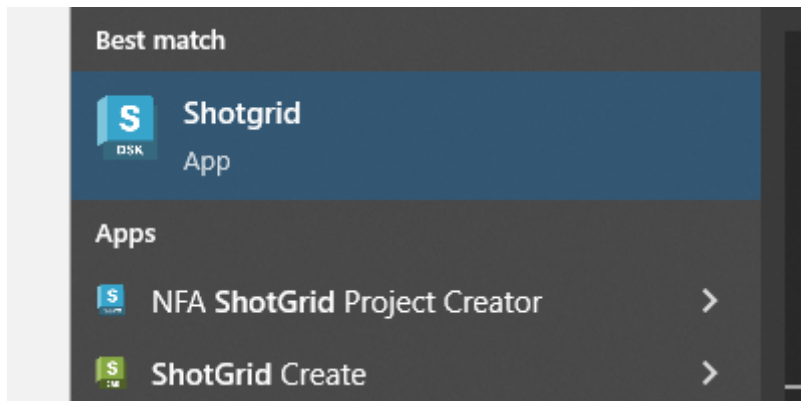
The two most import concepts in any pipeline are publishing and loading. Aka exporting things from one software and importing them into another software. Think of getting animations from Maya to Houdini, getting renders from Houdini to Nuke and getting final frames from Nuke to our editors. These things happen so often during the VFX creation process that we have them fully automated in all our software. Instead of going to the export menu in Maya, you'll go to the ShotGrid publish menu, and instead of filling in a file path, you'll just fill in a name and a description. The pipeline handles the rest, so then in Houdini instead of creating a node and filling in a file path, you just open the ShotGrid loader and click the load button. Files loaded through our pipeline can also be automatically updated, so when someone publishes a new version of their animation it's super easy to just press update in Houdini and have the latest version in your scene.

Check out the documentation for each specific software to see how publishing and loading works in practice.

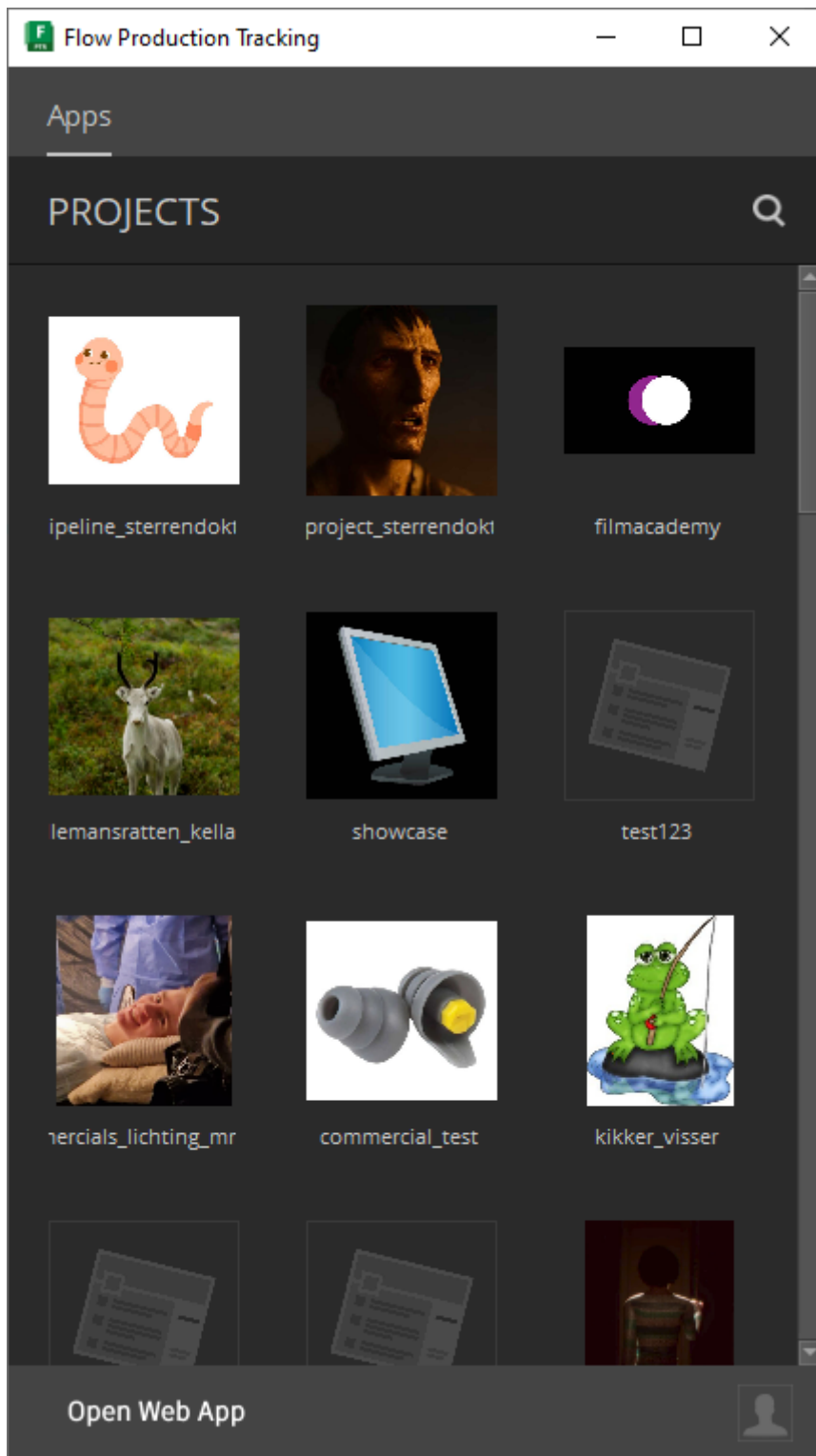
Continue reading the pages in this book to learn more about using our ShotGrid pipeline!

ShotGrid - Pipeline - Opening software

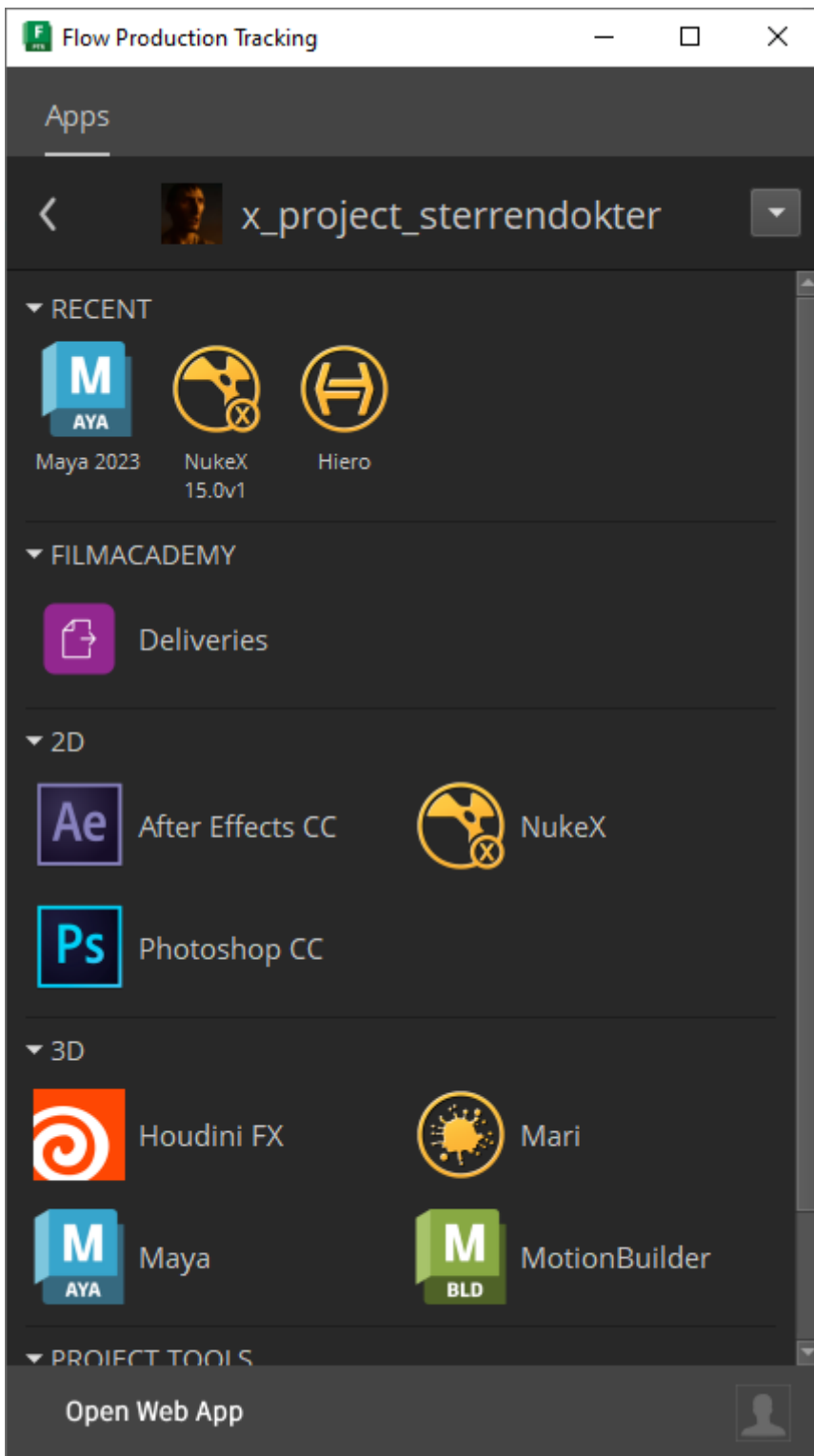
When working in our ShotGrid pipeline you should always launch software using the ShotGrid launcher. You can find it in the Windows start menu by searching for "Shotgrid":



When you open it up you'll be asked to log in, once you've done that you'll be greeted with a window that shows all the projects you've been assigned to:



You can open a project by clicking on it. This will show all the software you can use for that project:



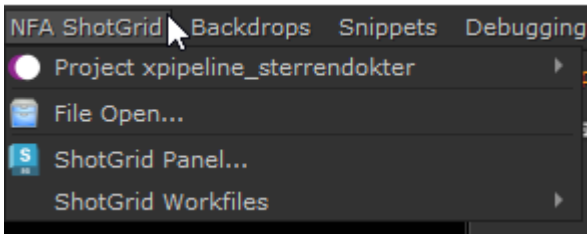
Click on the software to open it up. This will launch that software in a special environment where all our ShotGrid tools will be available.

You only have to click on a software once. If you click twice you'll open the software twice.

ShotGrid - Pipeline- File management

This page shows examples in Nuke, but the same workflows apply to all software you can launch using the ShotGrid launcher.

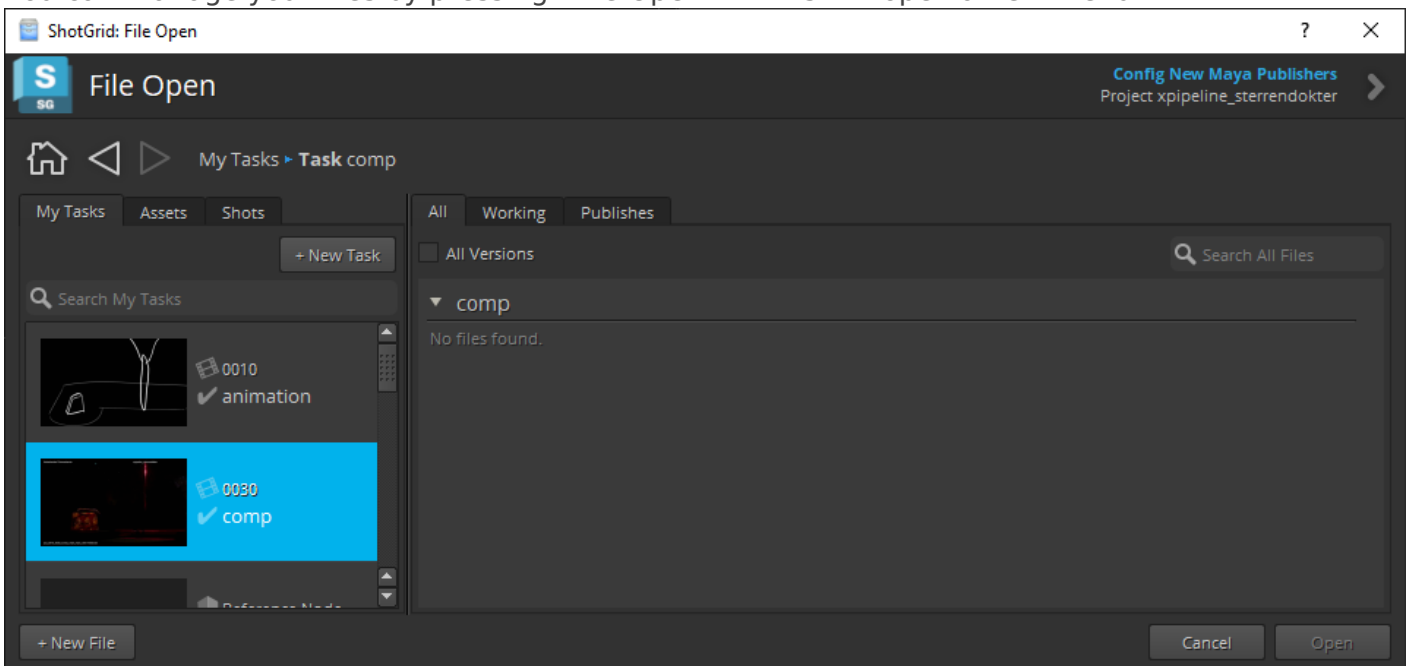
A new menu bar item titled "ShotGrid" appears when you open software using the ShotGrid launcher. This is the menu you'll use for pretty much all file related stuff.



At first this menu will be largely empty, this is because you haven't opened or created a file using the ShotGrid tools yet.

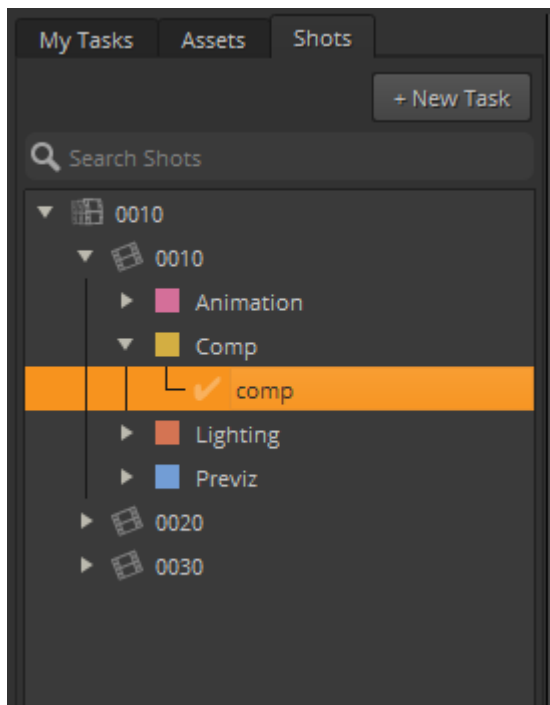
Creating/opening files

You can manage your files by pressing "File Open...". This will open a new menu:



On the left you'll find the tasks you are currently assigned to. This makes it easy to get started right away, just select the task and press "+ New File" in the bottom left corner. You can also manually browse to a task if you're not assigned to one. Click on the Assets or Shots tabs and select a task there.

Can't find the tasks you're supposed to work on in the *My Tasks* section? Ask your supervisor to properly assign you to your tasks and make sure they set the task status to *in progress*.



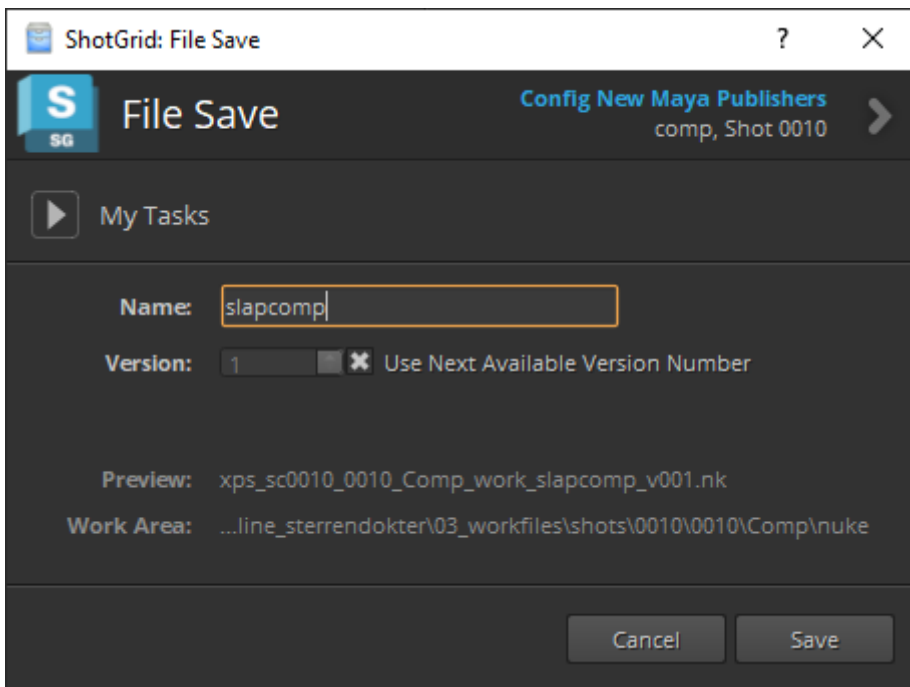
You can only create a new file when you select a *task*. A task has the little checkmark grey checkmark next to it. The "+ New File" button will be greyed out when you have a *step* selected, which are the items with the colored boxes next to them.

You can open files you've previously saved using the same interface.

Saving files

Do not save files using the regular saving tools of the software you're using! When working in our ShotGrid pipeline you *always* use the ShotGrid tools instead.

You should save your file right away after creating it. You can do this with the "File Save..." button which has appeared under the ShotGrid menu item. This will open a new menu:

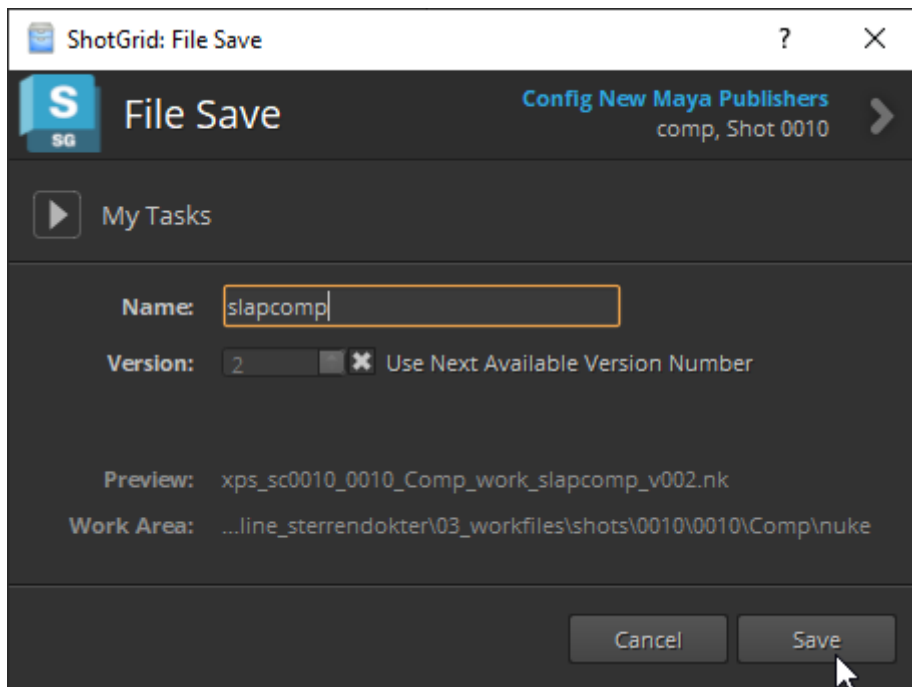


You only have to fill in a name and press save, as file paths are handled automatically. Feel free to leave the name on "main" if it's the main file for that task, but do give it a more descriptive name if it's not. After this your file is now saved in a special location, so the ShotGrid tools will be able to find it in the future. Once this is setup you can save your files just regularly using ctrl+s, however sometimes you'll have to go up a version when you save...

Versioning files

You should up the version of your file when example when you've made some big changes but still want to keep previous iterations. You can do this by simply pressing "File Save...", you'll see the version go up by one, after which you can press save.

Again, do not use the default "version up" shortcuts or buttons in the software you're using. Use the ShotGrid tools instead.

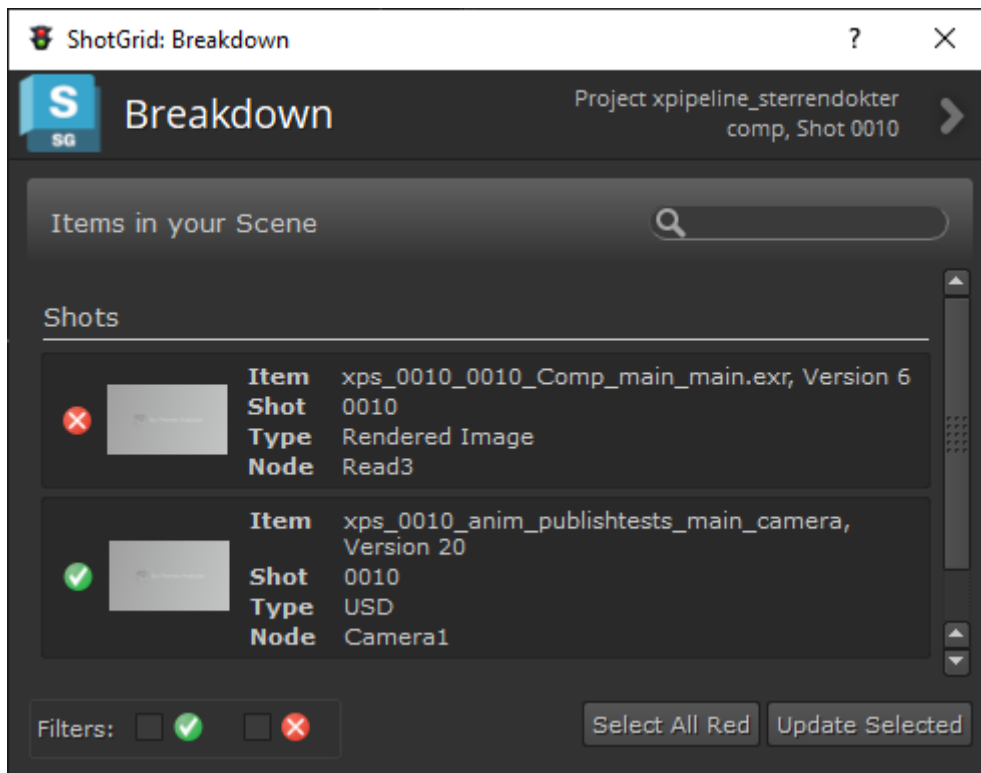


You can also press the little triangle next to "My Tasks" to save your file on another task.

File management tools largely unchanged from ShotGrid base implementation.

ShotGrid - Pipeline - Version control

We use the version control tool (also called Breakdown) to update loaded files to their latest version whenever new publishes are available. You can open it by going to the ShotGrid menu in your software and clicking on *Version Control*.



Outdated files will have a red cross next to them and up-to-date files a green check. You can select all outdated files by clicking "Select All Red" and update them by pressing "Update Selected".

Version control tools largely unchanged from ShotGrid base implementation.