



Copyright Warner Brothers Pictures

NVIDIA Quadro provides a touch of magic

What looks impressive on the cinema screen involves hard work behind the scenes. For the highly talented graphics artists at Baseblack, having the right graphics solution is vital. By using NVIDIA Quadro professional graphics solutions with Workstation Specialists workstations, Baseblack has improved productivity and prepared for a demanding future.

London-based visual effects studio Baseblack has worked on many well-known films including **Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (parts I and II)**, **Never Let Me Go** and **Paul**. Specialising in visual effects (VFX) and computer generated imagery (CGI), the fast-growing company employs over 40 people.

Before investing in new systems with NVIDIA Quadro graphics solutions, Baseblack used industry standard PCs from major vendors.

Not specifically designed to suit high-end VFX or CGI work, they were a compromise between processing power and cost. A new approach was called for.

"There were problems with our hardware reaching its end of life. The old machines were quite loud and hot too, making them unpleasant to work with," says Paul Nendick, Chief Technology Officer with Baseblack.

"We make technology choices optimised around making the most of the user's time which means speed, reliability and compatibility. It means giving our artists the best tools available."

To meet this business goal, Baseblack carefully considered the growing hardware demands of its work. The business required fast, powerful 3D graphics workstations which were well supported and offered a good return on investment. Mr Nendick quickly found that some mainstream PC suppliers were *"not responsive to our particular needs."*





Copyright Warner Brothers Pictures

In-house trials proved that NVIDIA-powered workstations from Workstation Specialists offered the optimum price-performance for programs such as Autodesk Maya for 3D animation and The Foundry's Nuke for compositing. Mr Nendick's reason for choosing NVIDIA technology is simple: if you are spending thousands of pounds on software, trying to cut costs with inferior graphics cards is a false economy if you want your highly-paid artists to achieve full productivity.

"One of the big selling points for us was the build quality on the Workstation Specialists graphics workstations - it's among the very best," says Mr Nendick. "NVIDIA is also above debate in this industry. I remain deeply impressed with Workstation Specialists' intimate knowledge of how everything fits together."

In 2010, Workstation Specialists equipped the whole of Baseblack with powerful WSX and WS1610 3D graphics workstations with NVIDIA Quadro graphics cards. The Linux operating system (Ubuntu) was installed on site along with a host of software tools including Autodesk Maya, The Foundry's Nuke, Side

Effects Software's Houdini, Tweak Software's RV and The Pixel Farm's PFMATCHIT.

The new workstations quickly provided a useful productivity boost for the company's talented artists. They use different software tools for their jobs as required, a clever multi-skilled approach that's the secret behind winning business from the major film studios.



"It puts more responsibility on the artists' shoulders but also enables them to do more. We wanted to give them the power and flexibility they need to solve problems," says Mr Nendick.

NVIDIA Quadro graphics solutions can deliver up to five times faster 3D performance over previous generations. The extra speed allows Baseblack's artists to work at a comfortable pace while helping improve productivity across

increasingly complex projects. Quadro is also certified by Autodesk and other leading software vendors.

"The main advantage we get with NVIDIA is stability. Autodesk Maya is an enormously complex piece of software. NVIDIA Quadro is built to the high specification that such technology demands."

There are always requirements for more impressive imagery to attract cinema-goers. While new generation graphics software meets the technical challenges, its use puts increasing pressure on graphics hardware with every successive release. Thanks to the new NVIDIA-powered workstations, Baseblack's artists are always ready to respond.

"We are absolutely confident that we have the hardware platform to take advantage of the software renaissance happening in our industry," says Mr Nendick.