NVIDIA Quadro Powers All Five Academy Award Nominees for Best Visual Effects

"Alice in Wonderland," "Inception," "Iron Man 2," "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1," and "Hereafter" Nominated for VFX Oscar

SANTA CLARA, CA -- This year the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences expanded the Best Visual Effects category to five nominated films, and it was another clean sweep for films that relied on NVIDIA® technology -- all Oscar nominees in this category were created by studios using NVIDIA® Quadro® professional graphics solutions.

Double Negative (DNeg) created visual effects for several of this year's nominated films including "Inception," "Iron Man 2," and "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1." Central to DNeg's effects workflow is their proprietary fluid simulation system, known as "Squirt," a component of which was recently rewritten to leverage the NVIDIA CUDA™ parallel computing architecture and Quadro graphics processing units (GPUs).

"Moving our fluid solver onto the GPU allows our artists to get back the results of their simulations much faster," said Dan Bailey, lead GPU developer, DNeg. "Fluid simulations are now sent to a specialized GPU farm, giving artists more time to iterate and ramp up the complexity of a shot to achieve a more believable result for the big screen."

"Iron Man 2" features spectacular visual effects work, much of which was delivered by Industrial Light & Magic (ILM). "Working with NVIDIA Quadro, we're able to work faster and iterate more frequently, which hugely benefits our artists, and ultimately the quality of our project work on films like 'Iron Man 2,'" notes Ben Snow, ILM visual effects supervisor. ILM works closely with NVIDIA on GPU development to accelerate both effects creation and rendering pipelines.

Scanline VFX utilized its proprietary simulation software, called "Flowline," to create natural phenomena, such as the spectacular tsunami recreation in "Hereafter." Scanline is now writing its next generation of "Flowline" as a CUDA architecture-based, GPU-optimized application.

"Scanline VFX is an R&D-centric effects company that is always looking to push technologies to the limit," said Stephan Trojansky, president of Scanline VFX LA. "We are investing heavily into implementing various forms of GPU acceleration into our pipeline, and are starting to see speed improvements of more than 10 times as we integrate more of these components into our workflow."

Sony Pictures Imageworks (SPI) completed the majority of the visual effects work on "Alice in Wonderland," creating 1,700 shots in total. Effects accelerated by NVIDIA GPUs include the mist and lightning emitted by Jabberwocky the dragon, the appearing and disappearing effects of the Cheshire Cat, and the dust and destruction caused by the hot-tempered Bandersnatch.

"Our work is all about storytelling, and so we need tools that make it easier for our artists to tell their tales," said Magnus Wrenninge, senior technical director, SPI. "With NVIDIA Quadro graphics delivering performance levels up to 100 times faster than other systems, we can achieve the director's creative vision -- and that's our ultimate goal."

The winner will be announced at the 83rd annual Academy Award ceremony on Sunday, February 27, 2011.

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