



Disney General Entertainment Content and Disney Television Studios Unveil the Infinity on Disney Stage 1

In a move to leverage the use of leading virtual production technology into episodic television production, Disney General Entertainment Content and Disney Television Studios have partnered with Industrial Light & Magic to convert the historic Stage 1 on the Disney Lot into a best-in-class virtual production facility using ILM's StageCraft toolset. They are already shooting television productions on this virtual stage. Dubbed The Infinity on Disney Stage 1 and situated on the same stage where sequences of Walt Disney's groundbreaking *Fantasia* were filmed, the new facility is composed of 700 state-of-the-art LED panels. When combined, they create a 1,600 square foot LED canvas—including doors—or approximately 16,000 cubic feet on the main Volume, plus 800 square feet of doors.

“Thanks to the leadership of Peter Rice and Dana Walden, we are committing a stage on our lot to a permanent virtual StageCraft production installation,” said Disney Television Studios production executive John Ziffren and technology executive Alex Grimwade, who spearheaded the effort. “This stage will serve as an extraordinary

resource for creatives both inside and outside The Walt Disney Company, bringing this groundbreaking technology—often used in feature films and effects-laden series—to episodic television production. Whether it’s shooting routine driving shots, creating worlds that only exist in the imaginations of our creators, or traveling our casts and crews to both well-known and remote locations around the world without anyone having to get on a plane, the possibilities are game-changing. Our partnership with Industrial Light & Magic, with their end-to-end virtual production platform, StageCraft, ensures the most advanced production technology available today. It’s a huge step forward for our television operations, and we’re excited to have this tremendous resource for our creative partners as well as other industry producers.”

Chris Bannister, ILM’s StageCraft executive producer, added, “We are so excited to partner with the Disney Television Studios team on this project. ILM’s StageCraft brings about the production-hardened technology as well as experts in virtual production to help make creative visions a reality. By partnering with Disney Television Studios, we are connecting with a whole new group of creatives and producers. We are excited to show how virtual production can help a wide range of productions from simple process shots to complex in-camera digital environments.”

The stage has already hosted a high-profile upcoming television series, the Hulu Original series *How I Met Your Father* from 20th Television, which premieres early next year. Showrunners Isaac Aptaker and Elizabeth Berger had conceived a pivotal sequence for an episode of the show set in New York City, in which their lead character walks the Brooklyn Bridge with her friends. Rather than flying series star Hilary Duff and her castmates across the country and braving the logistical obstacles of the elements, location shooting and permits, ambient noise and other complications, series director and executive producer Pamela Fryman was able to shoot her stars on the virtual stage—capturing a render of them walking the iconic location which will look completely authentic to viewers.

“Thanks to Disney’s new Infinity Stage, I was able to spend the day in Burbank shooting a scene on the Brooklyn Bridge,” said Fryman. “The logistics and price tag of shooting on location (even when there’s not a pandemic) would have made this scene impossible, but thanks to this

new technology, the scene is in the can! A huge thank you to everyone involved who welcomed us with open arms and made the entire experience so much fun and a huge success.”

In addition to its future use for the hundreds of Walt Disney Company television productions each year, the Infinity on Stage 1 is also available for rental to other studios and production entities. The facility will also be used as a training platform for production craftspeople to learn more about the possibilities unleashed by virtual production technology.