



Announcement July 26, 2021

**DARK BAY Virtual Production Stage opened:
Starting signal for virtual film production at the renowned
Studio Babelsberg**

One of Europe's largest, permanently installed LED studios for virtual film productions has officially opened: DARK BAY Virtual Production Stage.



©Alex Forge/Netflix

With technical support from market-leading partners in camera and lighting technology (ARRI and FABER AV) as well as from the VFX industry (FRAMESTORE), an innovative high-end studio for virtual film production was built on the lot of the prestigious Studio Babelsberg AG. On the 180.5-foot-circumference and 23-foot-high LED wall, which consists of a total of 1470 state-of-the-art ROE RUBY 2.3 LED panels, 2D and 3D worlds of all kinds can be realised. The modular LED ceiling, enhanced by ARRI Skypanels, and



DARK BAY GmbH
August-Bebel-Str. 26-53, D-14482 Potsdam
District Court Potsdam, Register No.: 34480 P, Managing Directors: Jantje Friese, Baran bo Odar, Philipp Klausning, Christina Caspers-Römer
www.dark-bay.com
info@dark-bay.com



the adjustable LED gate support any scenic set-up with interactive lighting and corresponding reflections. Where previously green screens and a complex post-production process were required, digital backgrounds can now be created in advance as a 3D world and displayed on the LED wall for filming. Powered by the Unreal© Engine, virtual environments are interactively played on the LED wall in real time and computer-generated, three-dimensional worlds immerse talent and production crew, capturing dynamic visual effects in-camera.

Industry first: Revolving Stage & Rain Rig

DARK BAY's revolving stage is unique in the world: Almost the entire interior of the volume consists of a motor-driven turntable with a diameter of 69 feet, which allows filming of real sets from different angles. This removes the common physical limitations of shooting in an LED volume and can reduce or remove time needed for a set rebuild. Complete sets can be rotated 360° in just three minutes, and entrances and exits can be simulated through a trapdoor built into the stage.

As a second innovation in the field of virtual film production, the DARK BAY has seven permanently installed sprinkler nozzles for a rain rig, which allow rain effects to be displayed true-to-life on 3230 square feet.

The virtual studio is controlled via the 'Brain Bar', which provides eight high-performance workstations. For real-time tracking of the camera movement, DARK BAY uses state-of-the-art systems from VICON Motion Systems and TrackMen GmbH. With the support of the ARRI Solutions Group, the film technology company ARRI was responsible for the technical coordination of the installation and all components.

The studio is operated by DARK BAY GmbH, founded in 2020 by the production company DARK WAYS GmbH, together with Studio Babelsberg AG. It was supported by funding from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Energy of the State of Brandenburg (MWAE). The investment was made possible by a long-term booking commitment from Netflix.





At the same time, the infrastructure remains open for bookings of the volume by all filmmakers, independent of Netflix.

At the gates of Berlin, at one of the leading film and media locations in Europe, with a comprehensive infrastructure of studios, outdoor sets and recognised set construction specialists, DARK BAY offers optimal conditions for virtual film productions.

Attractive funding opportunities in the Berlin-Brandenburg region

Feature film and high-end TV productions shooting at DARK BAY could have up to 25% of their production costs federally subsidized.

Beyond this, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg offers an additional 20% subsidy for digital film productions. This places the DARK BAY Virtual Production Studio in a region that has some of the highest funding rates in the world for production and digital effects.

Since May 2021, the complete first season of the new Netflix mystery series *1899* – developed by the successful showrunner duo Jantje Friese and Baran bo Odar (DARK) – is in production at DARK BAY.

Jantje Friese, Baran bo Odar & Philipp Klausing, Producers and Managing Directors DARK WAYS and DARK BAY:

"Virtual production offers filmmakers endless possibilities to redefine creative spaces and to move in real and fictional worlds without restrictions. In addition to artistic aspects, calculative security and plannability of the virtual environment are decisive for production, not only in today's times. We are convinced that this technology will have a lasting influence on filming and post-production and will establish itself permanently on the market as an innovative form of production."

Charlie Wuebcken, CEO Studio Babelsberg:

"DARK BAY is another forward-looking highlight in Babelsberg, a place which has stood for change and innovation, for exchange and cooperation for more than 100 years. With DARK BAY, we continue to write the history of





film production: traditional film craftsmen become digital artists here, different specialists work together in new and inspiring ways."

Markus Zeiler, Executive Board member ARRI:

"In the future, art and technology will merge in the DARK BAY. For productions of the highest quality, state-of-the-art hardware was combined with engineering services to create an innovative overall system in close coordination with the client and business partners. To make this lighthouse project possible, all ARRI business units - Camera Systems, Lighting and Rental - worked together intensively under the project management and coordination of the ARRI Solutions Group."

Tim Webber, Oscar-winning VFX Supervisor and Framestore's Chief Creative Officer:

"Having worked with LED Walls for over 10 years it's exciting to see how sophisticated the technology has become, and what a potent storytelling tool it can be. What makes this particular project so fascinating is the sheer amount of technically challenging photoreal content we've had to create - not just environments, but also incredibly complex real-time FX simulation. It's immensely satisfying to be working on this ambitious project at every stage, from providing concept work, designing the optimum physical screen layout and virtual-scouting the shots through to creating photoreal content in real-time and ensuring the images get onto screens and into the camera exactly as intended.

Being able to work at pace, with incredible fidelity, and with flexible tools for the production designers, cinematographers and directors on set, makes this a real gamechanger."

For more information on DARK BAY or booking requests please feel free to contact us via info@dark-bay.com.

press contact: Türkiz Talay (she/her)
t.talay@dark-bay.com

