

RED/SCRATCH Workflow Puts Hong Place Vision at Forefront of Digital Cinema in China

Riding high on the wave of digital cinema, Hong Place Vision is the biggest rental company of RED Digital Cinema cameras in Beijing, and has built a post production studio to meet the demand for the rapidly rising number of digital film and TV productions in China. At the hub of their data workflow and DI tool suite is ASSIMILATE's SCRATCH® Digital Finishing Solution. Chief Technician Yang Liu discusses their state-of-the-art digital workflow, one of their latest film projects, "Zou Shan Ren," as well as their business model of offering high-quality, cost-effective digital tools to filmmakers, TV producers, and broadcasters throughout China.

According to Yang Liu at Hong Place Vision (www.yingshiqicai.com), more and more cinematographers and film directors in China are choosing to shoot projects with digital cameras, and most often RED is their camera of choice. Crews using film to shoot commercials or MTV videos are rarely seen in the studio, with 60-to-70 percent using RED or other digital cameras. For the post production projects at their facility, 99 percent are RED R3D file-based.

Liu notes, "Digital Cinema is revolutionizing the filmmaking industry worldwide, and it is very apparent here in Beijing and throughout China, where the entertainment markets are exploding. In just the last year, over 70 production crews have rented our RED ONE™ cameras, and we believe this number will dramatically rise in the near future. Symbiotic digital tools

like the RED camera and the PC-based SCRATCH DI tool suite are definitely a driving factor in this growth. Together, they offer a highly efficient, powerful, real-time, and cost-effective methodology for filmmaking, while enabling quality results comparable to 35mm film.

An example of the digital cinema technology taking hold is use of the RED ONE camera by established directors. Changwei Gu, a fifth-generation director, has rented two of our RED ONE cameras for the DP to shoot

Scene from *Zou Shan Ren* (2010); image courtesy of Hong Place Vision

his new feature film *Mo Shu Wai Zhuan*, starring actress Ziyi Zhang. Before shooting, we did a test on SCRATCH with the famous DP, Christopher Doyle.”



Colorist Ming Lu; Image courtesy of Hong Place Vision

The Digital Workflow

The digital workflow for the feature film *Zou Shan Ren* (2010), by Director Jia Xiao Tie and DP Yu Xiao Qun, is a good example of digital cinema today. Liu explains, “Yu Xiao Qun used the RED ONE 4K camera for the shoot. We copied all the footage to our RAID system, used Final Cut Pro for the editing, and uploaded the EDL to our SCRATCH system. We have SCRATCH loaded on an optimized PC workstation that includes the RED Rocket card to hyper-accelerate processing functions.

Our colorist Ming Lu did all the color grading and finishing in SCRATCH - in real-time - which is a huge benefit. To see the film take shape and instantly react to subtle or dramatic changes is exciting, and from a practical standpoint, it's a tremendous time savings - no time is spent rendering massive files. The output was to Black Magic 8-bit HD resolution QuickTime files. We then rebuilt a new timeline for titling and audio.

A key advantage of SCRATCH is easy output to DPX, MOV, and Tiff files at any resolution, and its easy interface to other

software we use in the studio. Again, this offers considerable savings in time and money, and gives us a streamlined workflow that greatly reduces any hassles.”

Why SCRATCH

“SCRATCH is like a short cut to the top of the mountain,” says Liu. “Our post artists are working in real-time and within a streamlined data workflow, which makes for very high productivity and more time for creativity. This gives us a competitive advantage because we can be responsive to the tight deadlines and budget constraints of our clients, while achieving high-quality results.”

Liu adds, “SCRATCH can be used for other formats, including film and ARRIRAW, and is the bridge to other software and platforms. It also offers the ideal workflow and DI tool suite for the native REDCODE footage. We're using SCRATCH v5.1,

which includes the new RED Color Science that easily reads the RED ONE camera 30.5.0 firmware. Again, this gives us huge time savings and is one of our favorite SCRATCH features.”

“Another favorite feature is the SCRATCH output node,” says Liu. “From one master or template, we can output to several formats, such as a Digital Cinema Package (DCP), film, or HD.”

Digital Cinema Expertise

“The common elements for our RED/SCRATCH approach to digital cinema are time and cost savings, high productivity and creativity, and high-quality output to a range of formats,” says Liu. “This approach has great appeal to the filmmaking and TV production markets in China today.”

Liu adds, “We also share our knowledge and experience with directors and DPs about correct camera settings, exposure, as well as other tips to get the most out of their RED shoot and footage. This makes for positive working relationships, which is good for their business and ours.”

“SCRATCH IS LIKE
A SHORT CUT
TO THE TOP OF
THE MOUNTAIN”

Director Jia Xiao Tie's *Zou Shan Ren* (2010); DP Yu Xiao Qun; SCRATCH Scaffolds used for color grading and finishing; image courtesy of Hong Place Vision

