



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

40% of Our Work Is No Longer Stills

What actually changed in architectural visualisation, measured on our own project mix rather than an industry survey — and what it does to your budget.

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One number, from our own order book

Trend pieces in this industry are usually written from other trend pieces. This one is written from what clients have actually commissioned from us, which makes it narrower and more useful: it is one studio's project mix, not a market.

More than 40% of what is commissioned from us now includes animation, a 360 tour, VR or panoramas — instead of stills, or alongside them. That share keeps rising. It is the single biggest shift we have seen.

DIM KUZMENKO, FOUNDER, MAVERICK FRAME STUDIO

What that means if you commission

Your competitors are increasingly showing movement, and a set of stills next to a walkthrough reads as the older option even when the stills are better. Budget the format decision deliberately rather than discovering it at the pitch.

What it does not mean

That stills are finished. A printed board, a portal listing, a brochure spread and a planning submission are all still images. Motion is being added to the top of the deliverable list, not replacing what was under it.



Maverick Frame production render.

SHIFT 01

Real-time changed the economics, not the quality ceiling

The most misread development of the last few years. Real-time engines did not replace production rendering. They replaced the *cost* of motion, which is a different and much bigger deal.

01	Where the saving is	Animation, overwhelmingly. Work that took roughly a week to render in a production renderer can come back in minutes through a real-time engine. That is what moved a minute of animation from a special-occasion purchase to a normal line item.
02	Where it is not	The model. It still has to be built, and built properly, before any engine can do anything with it. The modelling half of the job did not get faster.
03	Our own split	The model is built and rendered in 3ds Max because it gives the better result; real-time carries the animation and the economics. Two layers, two tools, deliberately.
04	What the race settled	For architectural work the real-time question is largely decided — D5 is our default, and almost nobody in archviz is still reaching for a game engine for this. That consolidation is itself the news.

The practical consequence for your budget

If you are being quoted for stills and considering animation as a separate later project, ask for both together. The model is the shared cost, and commissioning motion six months after the stills means paying to rebuild what already existed — or discovering that it no longer does.

SHIFT 02

Where AI actually landed, and where it did not

No blanket claim here, because the honest answer is that the saving is highly task-dependent. Three places it is real, two where the marketing is ahead of the tool.

Real

- **Where nature carries the frame.** Greenery, water, planting — this is where our biggest wins are, by a clear margin.
- **Concept and mood.** Fast options at the stage where nothing is decided yet.
- **Material and surface studies.** AI is genuinely good at surfaces.

Not yet

- **Making the model.** It cannot. This is the claim to be most sceptical of.
- **Reading construction drawings.** Tools promising a finished render from a drawing set read them badly.
- **Bare urban blocks.** Tight context, no landscape to lean on — the widest gap between AI output and a modelled render.

The pattern underneath both lists

AI got very good at the parts of an image that tolerate invention, and has not moved on the parts that must be true. Which is exactly why it has become a useful assistant at the front of the process and has not become the thing that produces what you hand over at the end.



Maverick Frame production render. Greenery, water and rock — the conditions where AI assistance pays off most.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Four decisions worth making deliberately

01 Decide the format list before the first quote

Stills, animation, 360, VR, interactive. The model is the shared cost across all of them, so deciding the full list up front is materially cheaper than adding formats later. This is the single highest-value item on this page.

02 Ask what is modelled and what is generated

For anything that will be counted, measured, submitted or sold from, you want geometry behind the image. For mood and concept, you do not need to care. Knowing which you are getting is the point.

03 Budget for the model as an asset, not a cost

If there will be a phase two — and in development work there usually is — the terms on which the model survives decide the price of that phase. See our guide on what you actually own.

04 Stop treating motion as a luxury line

It was one, for a long time, and the pricing memory has outlived the production reality. If you have not re-quoted animation in two or three years, the number you are carrying in your head is probably wrong.

A caveat we would rather state than hide

Everything above comes from one studio's project mix. It is first-party and specific, which is its value, and it is not a market survey, which is its limit. Read it as a strong signal about where commissioning behaviour is going, not as a measured industry share.

WORKING WITH A STUDIO

Cost, and how to brief it

Two things people ask us before anything else. Both answers are short.

COMMISSIONED WORK	FREELANCER	STUDIO
Single exterior still	\$100 – 300	\$250 – 600
Single interior still	\$120 – 350	\$300 – 700
Package, 5–8 views	\$600 – 1,500	\$1,500 – 4,000
Animation, per minute	\$1,000 – 3,000	\$3,000 – 8,000

Market ranges we are willing to publish. Turnaround and revision-round figures are deliberately not in this table: ours vary too much by project type to state as a benchmark, and an invented number here would be worse than none.

How to brief it — shorter is better

This is the opposite of what most people assume. Four things:

- What you need — **how many images, and of what**
- The plans and elevations, as they are
- A few reference images for mood and light
- One clear line on what the images are *for*

Inflating a small job into a fifty-page specification backfires: taken literally it comes out ugly, and it misleads the people doing the work. Tell them the intent and let the team that does this daily handle the detail.

The mistake that costs the most

The biggest failure we see is not choosing the wrong vendor. It is **timing**. People start looking only after the first supplier has already failed and the deadline is on fire, then choose in a panic.

Line up and vet rendering partners **before** you need one. One, ideally a few, briefed and ready to take work. It costs an afternoon now and saves a project later.

10+

YEARS RENDERING
VISUAL STORYTELLING

350+

BRANDS & AGENCIES
EMPOWERED GLOBALLY

95%

CLIENT
SATISFACTION RATE

40%+

OF OUR COMMISSIONS NOW
INCLUDE MOTION OR 360

When the image has to hold up, **talk to us**

We are a CGI studio: architectural and product rendering, 3D modelling, animation, 360 tours and VR. Ten years, 350+ brands and agencies, and the kind of work that still looks right when somebody counts the windows.

Send us the plans and a line on what the images are for. You get a scope and a price, and no obligation to use either.

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maverickframe.com/contacts

SEE THE WORK

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Maverick Frame production render. · Cost ranges are market ranges as of 2026 and are not a quotation.