



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

# Hiring a CGI Studio in the Netherlands

Why Dutch schemes give the camera no room, how water and brick get read closely, how far the context model really has to run, and how to use blunt feedback well.

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# No slack on the plot line

In most markets an exterior is made by stepping back until the building looks good. Here there is frequently nowhere to step back to. The building meets the pavement, the neighbour, or the water, and the street is exactly as wide as it is. Density is not a stylistic preference in Dutch work; it is the condition every image has to survive.

## The camera cannot reverse

So the lens gets wider, and a wide lens bends a canal street into something nobody recognises. Agree the focal length, not just the viewpoint. Ask what the human equivalent would be.

## The neighbours are your image

Adjoining facades occupy as much of the frame as your building. Modelled as grey blocks they sink the whole picture, however good the new work is.

## Eye level or nothing

A drone view hides the problem and answers no question anyone has. In a dense street the honest camera is at about 1.6 metres, standing where a person would stand.

There is a budget consequence and it is worth saying plainly: in a tight Dutch scheme, a substantial share of the modelling hours go into buildings that are not yours. That is not padding. It is the only way the new building sits in a street rather than floating in one.



Maverick Frame production render.

## STEP 01

# Water and brick are read closely

Two materials carry most Dutch schemes, and both are the kind of thing a local eye checks without meaning to. Neither is hard. Both are routinely got wrong by studios who have only ever rendered a swimming pool and a texture called brick\_04.

## Water, when it is a canal and not a pond

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>It has a built edge</b>              | Quay wall, sheet pile, timber, or a reed bank with a defined toe. The edge condition is half of what makes the water read as Dutch. A soft sandy fade is the tell that somebody used a beach preset. |
| <b>It takes its colour from the sky</b> | Dark, sometimes green, occasionally almost black, and it changes with the weather in the rest of the frame. Turquoise is a pool.                                                                     |
| <b>The ripple has a scale</b>           | It must match the width of the water and agree with whatever the wind is doing to the trees and flags. Uniform ripple across a wide channel looks like fabric.                                       |
| <b>The level matters</b>                | Water height relative to the quay is something people here read instantly. Ask where it came from — it should come from your drawings, not from taste.                                               |
| <b>It reflects the far bank</b>         | Which means the far bank has to be modelled even when it is out of shot. Budget for it, or accept a mirror full of nothing.                                                                          |

## Brick, which is the default language

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bond and module</b>             | Course height, perpend, and how the bond turns a corner or meets a window head. The irregular wild bond used widely here is a system, not a random scatter, and it does not survive being faked. |
| <b>Tiling is visible</b>           | One photograph repeated across a facade repeats at exactly the distance people look at facades. Ask how the brick is built, not which texture was used.                                          |
| <b>One brick is many colours</b>   | A Dutch elevation is a spread of tones across a delivery, not a single flat colour. A perfectly even wall is the fastest way to make new work look printed.                                      |
| <b>Mortar does more than brick</b> | Joint colour and profile — recessed, flush, raked — change the read of the whole elevation. Specify it. It is one line and it is decisive.                                                       |

If you send one thing beyond the drawings, send a photograph of the actual brick and the actual mortar, in flat light, square on, with something for scale.



STEP 02

# How far out does the model have to go?

The land is flat, so the sightlines are long and nothing interrupts them. In a hilly or high-rise city the backdrop solves itself, because something blocks the view. Here nothing does, and the context model runs further than almost anybody budgets for. It is the first line cut from a quote and the one that hurts most.

| DISTANCE BAND           | WHAT HAS TO EXIST                                                                     | LEVEL OF DETAIL                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adjoining, 0–20 m       | Neighbouring facades, pavement, kerb, bin stores, bike parking, street furniture.     | Properly modelled. It is in focus and it is in the foreground.                                    |
| The block, 20–100 m     | Buildings opposite and along the street, in correct massing with real facade rhythm.  | Real materials and real openings. No placeholder grey anywhere a person can see.                  |
| Middle, 100–500 m       | Roofscape and silhouette — gables, chimneys, a church tower, a crane, the next block. | Simplified geometry, correct outline. This band is what makes the depth.                          |
| Horizon, beyond         | Turbines, a water tower, a bridge, glasshouse light on the sky at dusk.               | Almost none, but not nothing. A flat horizon is never empty, and an empty one reads as desert.    |
| Ground and water levels | Quay levels, dyke lines, the fall across the site.                                    | From survey. Flat country is not the same as level ground, and the difference shows at the edges. |

CONTEXT EXTENT — AGREE IT IN WRITING BEFORE THE QUOTE IS FIXED

|                                                                       |                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ADJOINING BUILDINGS MODELLED TO                                       | HORIZON ELEMENTS INCLUDED    |
| STREET BLOCK EXTENT, IN METRES                                        | GROUND AND WATER LEVELS FROM |
| MIDDLE-DISTANCE SOURCE                                                | TREES: SPECIES, SIZE, SEASON |
| WHO SUPPLIES THE HEIGHT DATA AND TOPOGRAPHIC BASE, AND IN WHAT FORMAT |                              |

Ask your architect whether they can hand over the national height data and topographic base they already work from. It is often sitting in the project folder, and it converts the middle distance from an estimate into a measurement.



## STEP 03

# Direct feedback is an advantage

Dutch clients say what they think without wrapping it first. If you are used to a market where criticism arrives padded, the first review can land hard. It is not rudeness and it is not a problem. It is the most useful input a studio can receive, and it shortens the job — provided it arrives as one consolidated round rather than as fourteen separate messages.

## Why it helps

Nobody has to decode anything. “The brick is wrong and the sky is too dramatic” can be acted on in an hour. A polite paragraph that means the same thing usually costs a round and a half to decipher.

## Where it still goes wrong

Not bluntness — volume. Six people each being admirably direct, separately, on different versions, with two of them contradicting each other. The studio then picks a side, and whichever side it picks is wrong.

## One comment round, done properly

### 01 One person owns the comment file

Everybody sends to them. Nobody sends to the studio. This single rule removes most of what people blame on offshore working.

### 02 Resolve contradictions on your side

If the client wants the sky moodier and the architect wants it neutral, settle it before the message goes out. It is a two-minute conversation internally and a wasted round externally.

### 03 Mark up on the image, numbered, with the version name

Not in prose. A numbered overlay can be worked through and ticked off; a paragraph cannot.

### 04 Separate wrong from prefer

**Wrong** is a factual error against the drawings — a missing bay, the wrong bond, the water at the wrong level. **Prefer** is taste. Both are legitimate. They cost very different amounts and a studio needs to know which it is looking at.

### 05 State what is approved

Explicitly, by name. Silence is not approval, and the space between them is where scope quietly grows.

### 06 Hold geometry comments for the geometry stage

A window moved before lighting is a small change. The same window moved after materials and light are signed off is the image again.

Put one sentence in the first email: **we will send one consolidated set of comments per round, from one named person, marked up on the image.** Studios price a project they can plan, and that sentence is what makes it plannable.

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



MAVERICK  
FRAME  
STUDIO

# 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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SEE THE WORK

[maverickframe.com/gallery](https://maverickframe.com/gallery)

WRITTEN BY

**Dim Kuzmenko**

Co-Founder



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

