

PRESENTED JOINTLY BY UCLA SCHOOL OF THEATER, FILM AND TELEVISION, USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS AND FRENCH NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

STORYTELLING & TECHNOLOGY

TRANSFORMING
HOLLYWOOD **11**

DECEMBER 1, 2023

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SCHEDULE OF **Events** DECEMBER 1, 2023

(All times shown are Pacific Standard Time.)

Opening Remarks

10:00 a.m.–10:20 a.m.

DENISE MANN,
Co-Director

*Professor, Cinema & Media
Studies, UCLA School of
Theater, Film and Television*

MICHAEL RENOV,
Co-Director

*Professor of Cinema & Media
Studies and Vice Dean,
Academic Affairs, USC School
of Cinematic Arts*

Panel One

**INNOVATION IN
CONTENT STRATEGY**

10:30 a.m.–11:50 a.m.

Moderator/Co-Director:
VIOLAINE ROUSSEL

*Professor, University of Paris
VIII; Visiting Scholar, UCLA
School of Theater, Film and
Television*

Panel Two

**VIRTUAL,
AUGMENTED,
AND
ARTIFICIAL
CREATIVITY**

12:00 p.m.–1:20 p.m.

Moderator/Co-Director:
DENISE MANN

*Professor, Cinema & Media
Studies, UCLA School of
Theater, Film and Television*

Panel Three

**OTHER VISIONS/
OTHER REALITIES**

1:30 p.m.–2:50 p.m.

Moderator:

STEVE F. ANDERSON,

*Professor of Digital Media,
UCLA School of Theater, Film
and Television*

**TRANSFORMING
HOLLYWOOD 11**



Opening Remarks

TRANSFORMING HOLLYWOOD 11: STORYTELLING AND TECHNOLOGY

Welcome to “Storytelling and Technology” the 11th edition of the Transforming Hollywood conference, an annual summit in which communication and media studies scholars join media industry professionals, creators, producers, talent, and executives to engage in panel discussions regarding the future of online entertainment. Comprising a partnership between the USC School of Cinematic Arts and the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, sponsored by the Andrew J. Kuehn Foundation, in collaboration with the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), this year’s Transforming Hollywood conference focuses on various dimensions of the relationship between technology and storytelling in the age of digital distribution ecosystems given the reliance on data, algorithmic recommendation systems, virtual production technologies, and generative artificial intelligence. The recent strikes in Hollywood have brought some of these issues surrounding the transformation in creative processes to the fore. We will discuss the scope of these upheavals with some of the industry experts at the heart of these changes, and with internationally recognized scholars working on these issues. Panel one, “Innovation in Content Strategy,” examines what happens at the critical moment when projects are selected to become films or shows. Content definition strategies have been profoundly transformed by the use of data and technology. Far from being just a business issue, the new, technologically-equipped ways of assessing what should be produced or acquired have a direct creative impact. Our

panelists will shed light on what goes on behind the scenes in this area, which the public doesn’t usually get to hear about. Panel two, “Virtual, Augmented, and Artificial Creativity,” considers the positive and negative impact of four different categories of digital technologies on creative labor practices. This includes generative artificial intelligence (AI); virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and extended reality (XR), to support community-based mobile gameplay and online shopping experiences—sometimes dubbed The Metaverse; and the ongoing impact of on-set virtual production technologies, such as ILM’s Stagecraft and its dedicated soundstage The Volume, which was used to deliver *Mandalorian* (2019-present) as part of the high-profile launch of Disney+. Panel three, “Other Visions / Other Realities” brings together artists, curators, theorists and entrepreneurs to discuss rapidly emerging developments in the field of generative AI as it is being used by creative artists. The prevailing discourse of generative AI argues it represents the decline of human forms of creativity; instead, this panel focuses on the historical legacy of image creation using synthetic technologies. Time will tell whether the media industry’s increased reliance on algorithmic software programs, mixed reality technologies, and game engine virtual production tactics designed to keep consumers inside digital ecosystems will enhance or erase human forms of creativity as they redefine the way we live, work, and socialize.

— Denise Mann and Michael Renov



INNOVATION IN CONTENT STRATEGY

Moderator

VIOLAINE ROUSSEL
*Professor of Sociology,
University of Paris VIII,
Visiting Scholar, UCLA*

PANEL ONE will examine the use of data and computational tools in early stages of defining what will be produced or acquired for streaming. These tools can be used to help determine which stories to tell, which talents to hire, which genres to favor, which financing and distribution means to prefer. They are also used to price projects and artists. Panelists will discuss the implications of the importance of algorithmic models in these decision-making processes, upstream of the production of the films or shows themselves. At this pivotal moment for creative choices, what should be the place of technology vs. that of intuition, taste and aesthetic judgment, or talent relations that have until now distinguished the good producer or creative executive? How does the use of digital and algorithmic tools really shape content choices and strategies? Under what conditions can technology enhance creativity and help quality work come to life? These questions divide film and television professionals as much as they preoccupy industry scholars. Our panelists will draw on their experience as seasoned practitioners and their intimate knowledge of this world to shed light on the tensions and relationships that exist behind the scenes between data-driven decision-making and the protection of artistry and creative labor.

Panelists

LIESL COPLAND
*Executive Vice President, Content Strategy,
Participant*

TODD HOFFMAN
CEO, Storied Media Group

JOHN S. COUCH
Head of Galvanize Studios

J.D. CONNOR
Associate Professor of Cinematic Arts, USC

VIOLAINE ROUSSEL (Moderator)



Violaine Roussel is Professor of Sociology at the University of Paris VIII, member of the CRESPPA Research Center in Paris, and Visiting Scholar at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. Her recent books include *Representing Talent: Hollywood Agents and the Making of Movies* (2017, University of Chicago Press), *Brokerage and Production in the American and French Entertainment Industries* (2015, Lexington Books, with Denise Bielby), and *Art et Contestation aux États-Unis* (2019, PUF). She is currently working on a new book about data specialists in Hollywood.

J.D. CONNOR (Panelist)



Professor Connor holds the Alma and Alfred Hitchcock Chair in American Cinema. He is the author of *Hollywood Math and Aftermath: The Economic Image and the Digital Recession*, *The Studios after the Studios: Neoclassical Hollywood, 1970–2010*, and is currently working on *The Image of the Social*. He received his PhD in from the Humanities Center at Johns Hopkins University. He currently writes the City of Industry column for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. He is a founding member of Post•45, a collective of scholars of American literature and culture. His website is johnconnorlikeintheterminator.com.

JOHN S. COUCH (Panelist)



John S. Couch is currently the Founder of [Galvanize Studios](http://GalvanizeStudios.com), whose clients include cutting-edge AI company Verses.ai and Amazon Prime Video. He's the former Chief Experience Officer of Blockchain Creative Labs (a Fox company) and former Vice President, Product Design for [Hulu](http://Hulu.com) where he led the successful redesign of the Hulu Experience (across mobile, living room and web) which coincided with the launch of "The Handmaid's Tale," the company's breakout hit. Now he is leading the design of the future of next generation storytelling in emerging platforms and formats (AI, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, short form content and mixed reality).

LIESL COPLAND (Panelist)



As EVP, Content Strategy, Liesl Copland oversees Participant's global sales efforts and works in tandem with the company's content teams throughout development and production, advising on optimal strategic options and partner strategy for all of Participant's projects. Having worked at powerhouses including WME, Netflix and Endeavor Content, Copland's expertise in the rapidly changing media landscape allows her to bring her market focus to Participant's high-quality film and television output. She ensures that the company's impact-focused slate meets the demands of the marketplace and finds the widest possible audience. Before joining Participant, Copland was a Partner and EVP at Endeavor Content where she ran the Non-Scripted Advisory practice, overseeing feature documentaries and premium nonfiction series and providing strategic advice to the studio's growing production partners.

TODD HOFFMAN (Panelist)



Todd Hoffman is a 30-year veteran of studio and independent filmmaking, and film and television agenting. After an active independent film producing career, Todd began a successful career as a literary agent at ICM, which included running their Media Rights Group. In 2013, he founded Storied Media Group (SMG), now the largest independent broker of intellectual property in Hollywood. SMG reps over 50 publishers worldwide across journalism, podcasts, fiction, graphic novels and video games. At SMG, Todd's productions include *The Mule* (WB), *Modern Love* (Amazon), *Insatiable* (Netflix), *APB* (Fox), as well as more than 50 hours of programming for Discovery, for which he won an Emmy.



VIRTUAL, AUGMENTED, AND ARTIFICIAL CREATIVITY

Moderator

DENISE MANN

*Professor, Cinema & Media Studies,
UCLA School of Theater, Film
and Television*

PANEL TWO

examines four digital technologies and their varied impacts on entrepreneurs and creators, who remain split on whether these tools represent a boon or a threat to their livelihoods. First, we'll examine generative AI, which became the watchword of 2023 when developers released ChatGPT Open AI as a means to aggregate digital assets from the internet without artists' permission. Milan-based tech startup Impssbl sees generative AI as a way for both brand marketers and independent production companies to enhance creativity by streamlining production workflows. Second, we'll examine virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and extended reality (XR) as a means to enhance rather than supplant human-made forms of artistry and engagement. Niantic's Pokémon GO is one of the world's most popular, community-building mobile games that uses AR technology to encourage players to get moving, make friends, and engage with historic sites, artistic works, and retailers in their neighborhoods. Third, we'll consider whether Web3 or the Metaverse—3D virtual worlds that enable online social interaction—represent the future of online media and entertainment in conversation with Paris-based tech start-up Willkins Avenue AR, a company that produces artistically-satisfying, highly-embedded, collaborative, online shopping experiences on behalf of major fashion and beauty brands such as Lancôme, L'Oréal, Hermès, and Tissot. Fourth, we'll examine the phenomenon of on-set virtual production technologies that deliver high-production values and visual effects as seen in Disney+'s *Mandalorian* in conversation with the founder of tech startup ARwall, which provides affordable versions of this technology on behalf of independent artists and filmmakers.

Panelists

KIM ADAMS

*Director of Art and Production, Pokemon Go,
Niantic, San Francisco*

RENE AMADOR

CEO, ARwall, Los Angeles

ALESSANDRO BOTTEON

Co-founder and CEO, Impssbl, Rome/Los Angeles

THIBAUT MATHIEU

Founder and CEO, Wilkins Avenue AR, Paris

DENISE MANN (Moderator)



Denise Mann is a Professor in UCLA's Cinema and Media Studies; PI of Havas-funded Digital Incubator & Think Tank (DIT); researcher in the Paris-based Transforming Entertainment in the Digital Era (TREND); and co-founding director of Transforming Hollywood with

USC Professor Henry Jenkins. She is the author of *Hollywood Independents: The Postwar Talent Takeover*; and co-editor of *Wired TV: Laboring Over an Interactive Future*. She serves on the editorial board of *Media Industries Journal* (2014-present); and delivered lectures at Tokyo International Film Festival; Shanghai International Film Festival; Communication University of China; Shanghai University; Sorbonne University; and Institut National de L'Audiovisuel (INA).

KIM ADAMS (Panelist)



Kim Adams brings 25 years of experience spanning entertainment, software, tech, and hardware industries, including as the Co-Founder and former COO of Adventure Lab, and her current position as the Director of Art and Production for Pokémon Go at Niantic. Kim has also led teams at Facebook, Oculus Story Studio, and Google Spotlight Stories, where she produced early VR narrative content. During her Pixar tenure, she produced 13 short films for the beloved Toy Story and Cars franchises. Kim's diverse roles in visual effects include contributions to films like *Apocalypto* and Oscar-nominated work on *Master and Commander*. A member of The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, The Television Academy, The Producers Guild of America, and Women in Animation, Kim received an MFA from the prestigious Producer's Program at UCLA.

RENE AMADOR (Panelist)



Since 2016, Rene Amador has been the Co-Founder & CEO of ARwall, the pioneering XR virtual production (VP) team that has supported over 120 deployments of In-Camera Effects, both for permanent LED XR soundstages and movies directly. Under Rene's leadership, ARwall has won multiple patents covering the very popular In-Camera Effects invention and did Emmy-winning work for Disney's *Muppets Haunted Mansion*, for which Rene served as Virtual Production Supervisor. Prior to ARwall, Rene directed 350 commercials, short films, and pilots; worked at 16 tech startups including 4 he co-founded; and ran a digital agency for major tech brands for 8 years.

ALESSANDRO BOTTEON (Panelist)



Alessandro is a creative entrepreneur working between tech, venture capital and media, originally from Italy. After working for media and tech companies, he joined Google in Ireland where he headed the AGT team for the Italian market, focused on accelerating startups, scale-ups and venture capital firms. He then opened a private equity firm in Milan, that purchases and resells fashion companies. His latest venture is Impssbl, a US and European venture capital that doesn't invest in companies, but rather in intellectual property rights ranging from novels to mangas, from podcasts to films. The firm adopts proprietary AI models to identify trends in IPs and to support the supercharging of both the production and the investment arms.

THIBAUT MATHIEU (Panelist)



Thibault Mathieu is the founder and CEO of Wilkins Avenue AR, a leading studio specializing in premium Augmented Reality (AR) experiences for retail & entertainment. At the intersection of creativity and technology, he's elevated the company to partner with luxury and tech titans like L'Oréal, Meta and Snap. Under his leadership, Wilkins Avenue AR has delivered groundbreaking AR projects such as the revolutionary spatial computing experience for Lancôme's flagship store, and "Out There", the largest Location-Based AR experience debuted at Comic Con Paris. Prior to founding Wilkins Avenue AR, he served as Head of Creative Innovation, VR & AR at Webedia Group, a global digital giant in media and entertainment. A UCLA Producers Program alumnus, he resides in Paris, France with his wife and two children.



OTHER VISIONS/ OTHER REALITIES

PANEL THREE

“Other Visions / Other Realities” brings together artists, curators, theorists, and entrepreneurs to discuss rapidly emerging developments in the field of generative AI. Focusing on alternatives to the prevailing discourse of generative AI as marking the end of human agency, control, and creativity, this panel situates image synthesis technologies in a historical, critical, and creative context. Avoiding simplistic binaries, while still engaging issues of ethics and industrial impact, panelists will explore the boundaries between human and other intelligences, reality and post-reality, as well as the implications of these technologies for the future of the cinematic arts. What potential futures for image culture might emerge if we reconceive the relationship between human and machine intelligences? Could generative AI produce new ways not only of envisioning the world but also of seeing it? What forms of collaboration and creativity are possible if we reconceive the boundaries between human and technological image making? Other Visions / Other Realities will engage the most pressing issues, potentials, and concerns related to generative AI, offering practical as well as philosophical strategies for advancing conversations and moving toward a future that is ethically grounded, creatively inspiring, and socially relevant.

Moderator

STEVE ANDERSON

*Professor of Digital Media,
UCLA School of Theater, Film and
Television*

Panelists

RACHEL JOY VICTOR

FBRC.ai: Technologist/Entrepreneur/Organizer

MASHINKA HAKOPIAN

*Associate Professor in Technology and Social
Justice at ArtCenter College of Design*

JESSE DAMIANI

Senior Curator, Nxt Museum

HOLLY WILLIS

*USC Professor and Co-director, Center for
Generative AI and Culture*

STEVE ANDERSON (Moderator)



Steve F. Anderson is a Professor of Digital Media in the School of Theater, Film and Television and the department of Design Media Arts at UCLA. He is the author of *Technologies of Vision: The War Between Data and Images* (2017) and *Technologies*

of History: Visual Media and the Eccentricity of the Past (2011).

Previously, he taught for 15 years in the USC School of Cinematic Arts, where he was the founding director of the Ph.D. program in Media Arts + Practice and a faculty member in Interactive Media & Games. Anderson received a Ph.D. in film, literature and culture from USC and an M.F.A. in film and video from CalArts.

RACHEL JOY VICTOR (Panelist)



Rachel Joy Victor, a designer, strategist, and world-builder, pioneers immersive experiences at the crossroads of XR, AI, and web3 technologies. As the co-founder of FBRC.AI, she contributes to the future of content creation and consumption through AI tools. Rachel's versatile design portfolio spans multi-platform narratives, immersive experiences, tools, platforms, and urban spaces. Her background

in computational neuroscience and spatial economics shapes a data-informed approach, fostering emergent experiences at the intersection of world simulation and cognitive architectures. With clients including Disney, HBO, and Niantic, Rachel's impact extends to global corporations, where she leads executive education sessions. Renowned as an expert in design for emerging tech, she has shared insights at reputed events, including the Infinity Festival, Future of Film Fest, NAB Show, and Games for Change.

MASHINKA HAKOPIAN (Panelist)



Mashinka Firunts Hakopian is an Associate Professor in Technology and Social Justice at ArtCenterCollege of Design. She was a 2021 visiting Mellon Professor of the Practice at Occidental College. There, she co-curated the exhibition "Encoding Futures: Critical Imaginaries of AI" with Meldia Yesayan at OxyArts, which traveled to the Ford Foundation Gallery in 2023 under the title,

"What Models Make Worlds." She is the guest co-editor of the Spring 2023 Art Papers special issue on AI, with Sarah Higgins. Her writing and commentary have appeared in Los Angeles Review of Books, AI & Society, Brooklyn Rail, Performance Research Journal, Art in America, and Archetypes with Meghan Markle. Her book, *The Institute for Other Intelligences*, was released by X Artists' Books in 2022.

JESSE DAMIANI (Panelist)



Jesse Damiani is a curator, writer, and advisor in new media art and emerging technologies. He is Senior Curator at Nxt Museum, Arts & Culture Advisor for Protocol Labs, and Adjunct Assistant Professor in USC's Media Arts + Practice program. Damiani is the author of *I Create Like the Word: Poetry in the Age of Machine Intelligence* (Black Ocean, 2024), and recent writing appears in *Architectural Design*, NBC News, and *WIRED*. An Affiliate of the metaLAB at Harvard and Institute for the Future, Damiani lives in Los Angeles, CA, where he runs the *Reality Studies* newsletter and *Urgent Futures* Podcast.

HOLLY WILLIS (Panelist)



Holly Willis is Co-director of USC's Center for Generative AI and Culture and Chair of the Media Arts + Practice Division in USC's School of Cinematic Arts, where she teaches classes on digital media, post-cinema, and feminist film. She is the author of *Fast Forward: The Future(s) of the Cinematic Arts*, *New Digital Cinema: Reinventing the Moving Image*, and *Björk Digital*; she is also the editor of *The New Ecology of Things*, a collection of essays about ubiquitous computing, and *David O. Russell: Interviews*. She is also the co-founder of *Filmmaker Magazine* dedicated to independent film; she served as editor of *RES Magazine* and co-curator of RESFEST, a festival of experimental media, for several years; and she writes frequently for diverse publications about experimental film, video and new media, while also exploring experimental nonfiction and poetry. Her work has appeared in publications such as *Film Comment*, *Afterimage*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Variety*, *River Teeth* and *carte blanche*.

WE ARE GRATEFUL

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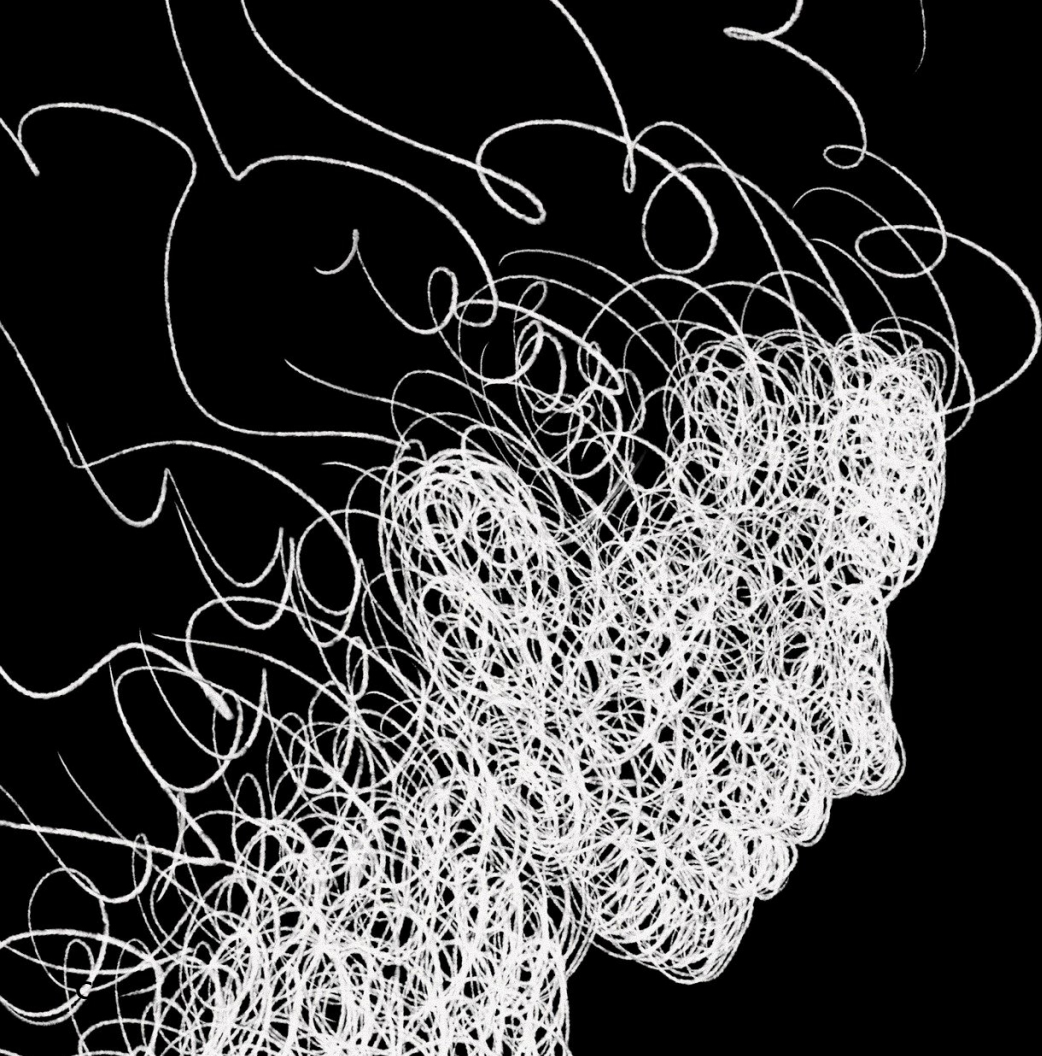
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Founding Co-Directors: Professors Denise Mann and Henry Jenkins
Current Co-Directors: Professors Denise Mann, Violaine Roussel, and Michael Renov
Producers: Denise Mann and Violaine Roussel
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