

Participants



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Minh Do

machinecinema.ai



Minh Do is the co-founder of Machine Cinema, a collective advancing AI-powered creative collaboration, and Fantastic Day, where he leverages AI-driven workflows through its Daydream studio to craft experimental films and innovative commercial projects. Drawing from his diverse background as a former VC, journalist, touring musician, and teacher, he brings a unique perspective to AI filmmaking that balances technical innovation with philosophical inquiry and authentic human storytelling.



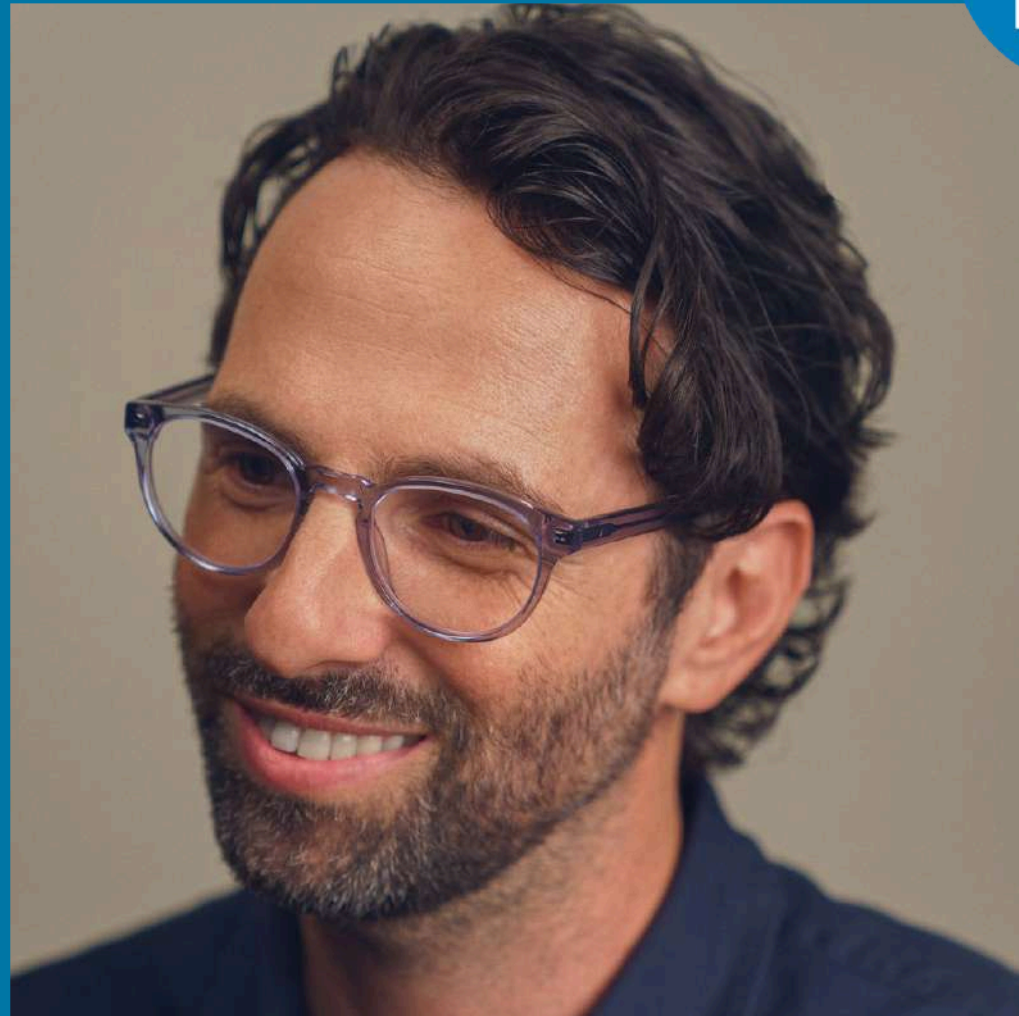
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Fred Grinstein

machinecinema.ai



Fred Grinstein is the co-founder of Machine Cinema, a see collective and community resource bringing together AI-curious creatives and builders through Gen Jam events, workshops, and summits, while also serving as a podcaster and instructor for AI filmmaking education platform Curious Refuge. Before his current focus on bridging AI and creative technologies, he built an extensive career in premium media as Head of Non-Fiction Programming at Anonymous Content, VP of Development at Viceland, and Senior Director of Programming at A&E, where he shepherded numerous acclaimed documentary series and unscripted hits across major networks and streaming platforms.



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Reid Hoffman



Reid AI is an experimental digital twin of Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn, Inflection AI, and Manas AI. Reid AI was created to explore the potential of AI avatars in enhancing human thought and expression. Reid Hoffman (the human) embarked on this project to see how interacting with a digital version of himself could inspire new ways of thinking and connecting ideas. The avatar, developed with technology from Hey Gen for visuals and ElevenLabs for voice cloning, uses a custom chatbot to formulate responses. This chatbot draws from Hoffman's extensive body of work, including his books, speeches, articles, and podcasts from the last 20 years, allowing Reid AI to integrate and reference Hoffman's past ideas.

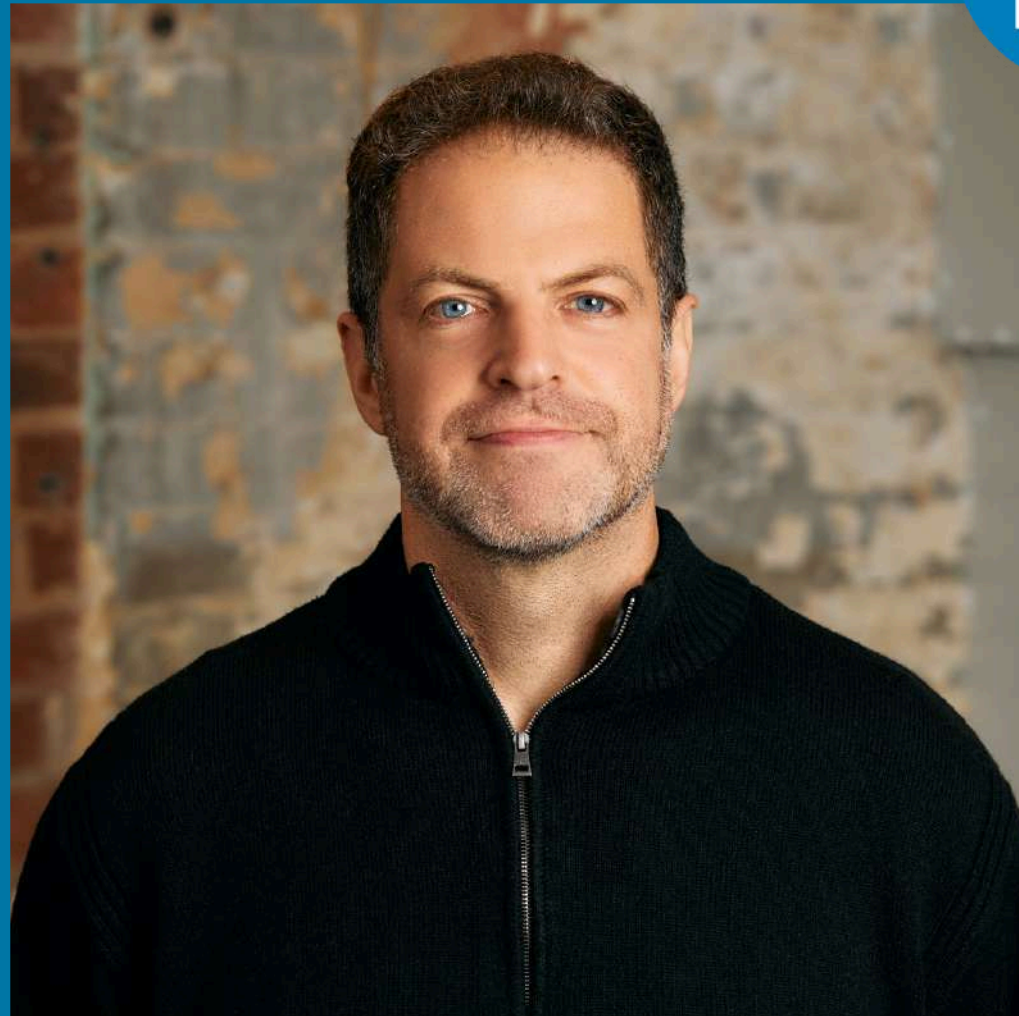
While there are potentially harmful uses of deep fakes or digital twins, Reid AI is a carefully monitored, responsible digital twin. Its purpose is to act as a reflective tool, offering insights into one's thoughts and personality in a positive way. Reid AI also demonstrates how digital twins can extend human capabilities, such as speaking languages we cannot. Hoffman believes that thoughtfully developed AI avatars can make content more dynamic and accessible, despite potential discomfort. Reid AI is fluent in over 175 languages, proficient in over 600 programming languages, and enjoys long strolls through databases.



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Ben Relles



Ben Relles has spent his career creating breakthrough ideas and formats at the intersection of video and technology. Ben currently works with Reid Hoffman across his venture investment portfolio, with a focus on leveraging AI in the creative process. This includes their collaboration creating Reid AI, a digital twin trained on Reid's lifetime of content.

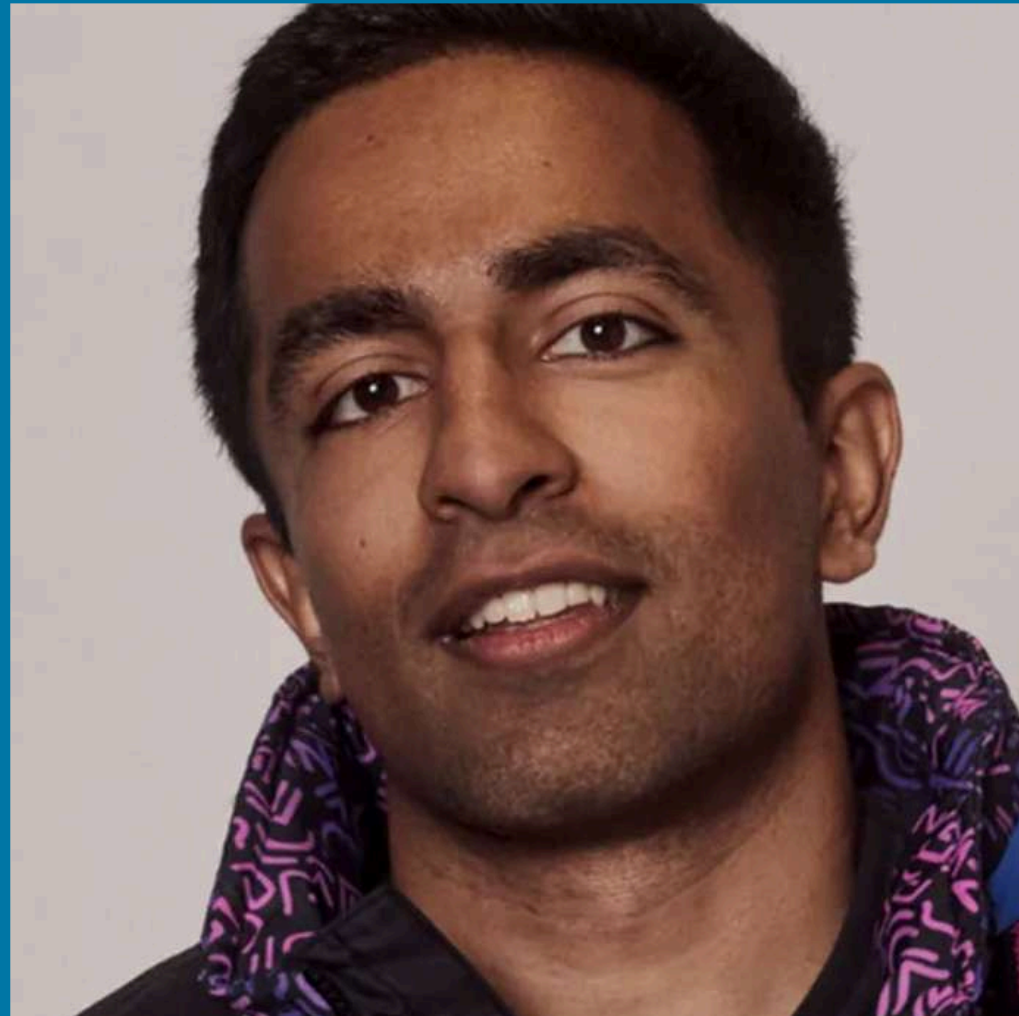
Prior to this role, Ben spent a decade at YouTube as its Head of Innovation as well as Head of Unscripted Programming for YouTube Originals, collaborating with the platform's most inventive creators and channels. Ben developed his YouTube chops as a creator, founding the Key of Awesome comedy channel (3 billion views) and co-founding Vsauce (4 billion views). Ben is also the founder of Good to Vote, a non-partisan voter registration campaign. Launched in 2020, in partnership with HeadCount.org, Good to Vote partners with music artists and creators, and has registered over 300,000 new voters to date. Ben is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, and the Wharton School of Business.



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Parth Patil



Parth Patil is a creative technologist and AI specialist working in the Office of Reid Hoffman. With over a decade of experience in technology startups, Patil focuses on leveraging generative AI to drive innovation and creativity. He has been instrumental in developing AI-driven projects, including the Reid AI digital twin experiment, which replicates Hoffman's thinking and cadence using custom GPT models trained on his extensive body of work.



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Thaïsa Yamamura



With over 15 years of experience in the consumer electronics industry, I have gained a wealth of knowledge and expertise working internationally across Latin America, the US, and Japan. Currently, I serve as the Head of XR Business Development and Partner Marketing for the Americas at Sony.

Throughout my career, I have been deeply involved in strategic partnerships, business development, and client management. I am a skilled partner marketing manager with a proven track record of successfully launching products and developing effective marketing campaigns. Additionally, my experience in competitive analysis, budgeting, and sales forecasting has helped me to make sound business decisions.

I have also been involved in content development and project management, ensuring that projects are completed on time, within budget, and to the highest possible standards.

I am passionate about driving business growth and exceeding expectations through effective marketing strategies, partnership development, and project management.



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Daisy Berns



Daisy Berns is a marketing professional with a diverse international background, having been born in Amsterdam and raised across Portugal, India, South America, Nepal, and North America. She has established herself in the Los Angeles and Bay Area regions. Berns founded LBE News, a portal dedicated to the Location-Based Virtual Reality (LBVR) community, aiming to connect industry players and highlight their achievements. At Upload VR, she managed and mentored 70 VR/AR startups, significantly contributing to the growth of the VR/AR community by securing \$700,000 in investments and overseeing various educational initiatives and events. Her tenure at HTC Vive involved outlining and implementing a new business model for Viveport Arcade and managing content acquisition for Viveport and Viveport Arcade. Additionally, as Director of Construction at Fabernovel, she led a \$500,000 renovation project for PARISOMA, San Francisco's first co-working space, and managed 134 international startups. Berns' global upbringing has equipped her with the ability to adapt to various social settings and languages, enriching her professional endeavors.



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Libor Cevelik



Libor Cevelik is a highly successful, creative, and passionate producer and director with diverse experience that spans live television shows, films, music videos, corporate videos, commercials, feature films, and documentaries. His work encompasses various genres, including entertainment, music, digital, and streaming content. Libor is a dedicated and business-savvy individual who excels in leading projects from concept and pre-production through to production and post-production. He possesses a remarkable ability to guide and direct talent, producers, and crew members, ensuring the consistent and timely delivery of programs and content that effectively engage audiences and foster community connections.



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Sam Fares



Samuel Wilson Fares is a Senior Manager at Sony's Digital Media Production Center in Los Angeles, California. With over 24 years of experience, he has held various roles at Sony Electronics, including Product Manager, Sales Support Engineer, and Software Training Specialist. Fares earned his Bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and holds an A+ Certification from Madison Area Technical College.

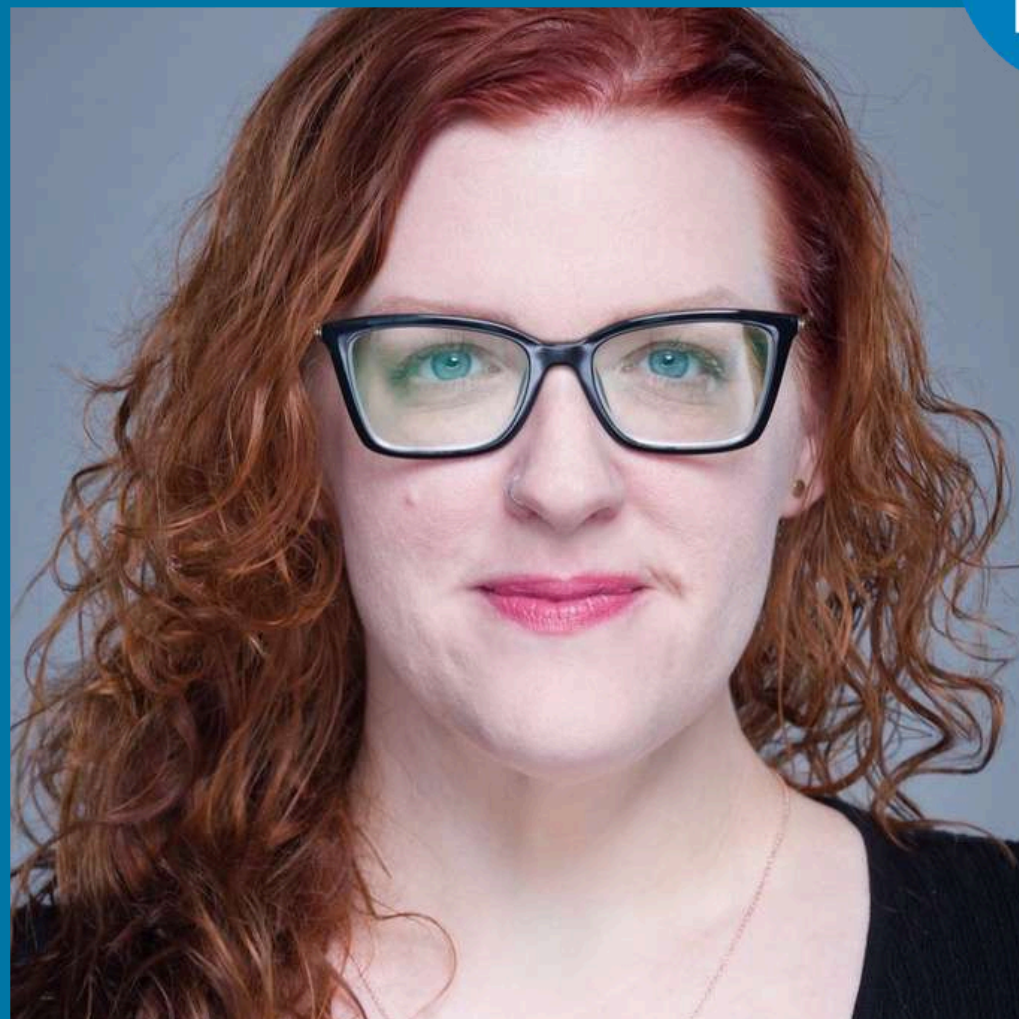


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Kylee Peña



Kylee Peña is a media technology polymath with a passion for blending creativity and technology, utilizing her deep sense of user empathy and robust technical knowledge to create innovative solutions. Currently a member of the Adobe video team in Los Angeles, she is eager to engage in conversations about Premiere Pro. In 2023, she completed her Master's in Integrated Design, Business, and Technology at USC and holds certifications as a Project Management Professional (PMP), Certified Scrum Master (CSM), and Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt. Her career highlights include developing and leading a program management team for Production Innovation at Netflix and contributing to acclaimed projects such as "Scorpion," "Jane the Virgin," and "Star Trek Discovery."

An active participant in the industry, she serves on the Science and Technology Peer Group with the Television Academy and holds leadership roles with The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE), where she will assume the position of Hollywood Region Governor for 2024-2025. In 2023, she was elected to the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council, advocating for local issues and public participation in city governance. As a strong advocate for mentorship and inclusion, particularly for those underrepresented in the media and entertainment industry, she is also part of the team that introduced the first generative AI feature to Premiere Pro and has contributed to award-winning projects recognized by the HPA Awards, NAB, and the Webby Awards.

Her accolades include being named a Top 40 Under 40 Woman in Junior League in 2024 and receiving recognition as a TVN Woman to Watch in Technology. She has also made her mark as a speaker at prominent industry events and has published work in various professional journals. With a commitment to continuous learning and a knack for remixing ideas, she strives to foster fresh perspectives at the intersection of product, technology, and storytelling.



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Van Bedient



As Adobe's Senior Business Development Manager for ProVideo, Van leads Adobe's efforts in Hollywood and has been instrumental in advancing Adobe's video tools in professional market segments. Van has a strong background in post-production having begun his career as a Music & Sound Effects Editor and Audio Mixer for numerous hit shows and commercials. Prior to joining Adobe, Van served in roles at HP, Grass Valley, and Avid. He was deeply involved in the pioneering of collaborative and optimized workflows for film and television and has been credited in several feature film productions. Highlights include Lucasfilm for his efforts on Star Wars and acknowledgements for his work with top directors such as Clint Eastwood, James Cameron, and Michael Bay.



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Jonathan Carrera



Jonathan Carrera serves as a Senior Strategic Development Manager at Adobe, specializing in video production tools like Adobe Premiere Pro. He frequently conducts training sessions, such as the one hosted by the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Academic Technologies, where he showcased Premiere Pro's latest features. In addition to his training roles, Carrera actively supports educational initiatives. Notably, during the 2021 Creativity Marathon, he awarded each member of the global winning team a one-year subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud, recognizing their innovative filmmaking efforts.



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Ed Ulbrich



Ed Ulbrich is the Chief Content Officer & President of Production at Metaphysic, Inc., the industry leader in developing AI technologies and machine learning research that creates immersive photorealistic content across film, tv, music, advertising, live entertainment and more.

Ed is also the former CEO of James Cameron's Digital Domain, former global President of Method Studios, award winning producer, and pioneer in virtual human performances and advanced visual effects. He has over 25+ years in the visual effects (VFX) and film, TV, and advertising production industries and has led global teams of up to 2,000 employees spanning four countries and managed P&L operations with nine-figure budgets.

Ed has executive produced visual effects for some of the biggest blockbuster movies in history including Top Gun: Maverick, Aquaman, Avengers: Infinity Wars, Black Panther, Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 2, Suicide Squad, and many more; and executive produced the Academy Award®-winning visual effects for The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, What Dreams May Come, and Titanic. Ed produced the epic sci-fi film Ender's Game (Lionsgate - 2013) starring Harrison Ford, Sir Ben Kingsley, and Viola Davis and spearheaded the groundbreaking Tupac Shakur "Hologram" with Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg. He has created visual effects in music videos for The Rolling Stones, Michael Jackson, Eminem, Justin Timberlake, Lady Gaga, and many more; and over 500 commercials.



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BUZZ HAYS



Buzz Hays | Global Lead for Entertainment Industry Solutions at Google Cloud

Buzz Hays is the Global Lead for Entertainment Industry Solutions at Google Cloud. He is an expert in technology solutions for media and entertainment. His expertise extends into media production, post-production, archive modernization as well as advanced imaging production and technology in visual effects (VFX), Generative AI, immersive technologies (AR/VR/XR), high frame rate, high dynamic range, and stereoscopic platforms for film, television, and gaming.

Buzz is a leader in the entertainment industry and is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), and currently serves as a member of the Science and Technology Council for AMPAS. As an entertainment industry leader, he spearheaded Sony Corporation's worldwide 3D effort in research & development for film, television and gaming, and he created Sony's 3D Technology Center. While at Sony, he produced and consulted on numerous VFX / 3D live-action and animated productions with major film and music artists including, Baz Luhrmann, Martin Scorsese, Ang Lee, Ridley Scott, Barry Sonnenfeld, Will Smith, Taylor Swift and Kenny Chesney. He produced VFX and stereoscopic 3D films for Disney, Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros. and The Weinstein Company.

Buzz began his career at Lucasfilm as Director of Engineering where he led the research and development efforts under George Lucas at the THX Division. He continues to consult on developing next generation image and sound technologies. Buzz has lectured on the subjects of advanced imaging, visual effects, and 3D, has trained over 3,000 cinematographers, directors and producers in new entertainment technologies. He is the Chairman of the Advanced Imaging Society, and is a member of industry professional organizations including, the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE), Sports Video Broadcasting Group (SVG), and the Hollywood Professional Association (HPA).



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Zander Thiele

setl.ai



A hardware product development leader with a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from UCLA, Zander's roles have spanned in-house and advisory capacities in both startup and established corporate environments. He built the hardware program management team for Bird Scooters, which managed design and development of 10+ vehicle programs with \$M - \$MM budgets and has experience building and leading globally-distributed teams.

As a choral singer, classical pianist, casual percussionist, and former competitive swing dancer, Zander considers music and the arts to be a powerful source of centering, well-being, and awe. Recognizing the overwhelming volume of stresses and sources of burnout in professional and personal life, Zander is passionate about channeling music and the arts to help.



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Sarah Thiele

setl.ai



With over 20 years in the entertainment arts; composer, producer, recording artist, and live performer Sarah Thiele is also a classically-trained pianist. Sarah's songwriting, production, and musical artist work has been featured on networks including NBC, ABC, CBS, USA, MTV, CW, WB, Netflix, FX, Youtube TV, The UFC, and more. Sarah has provided coaching to artists on national competitions the Voice, American Idol, and X-Factor.

As a friend, a community member, and a mother, Sarah considers the well-being of those around her to be a top priority. As a performer, Sarah has long been attuned to the impact that music has on those who experience it. She regards the evolution of spatial audio and immersive technology at large to be an opportunity to seriously magnify the positive impacts of original music on humanity.



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Carolyn Giardina



THR's Tech Editor Carolyn Giardina is an award-winning journalist, author and adjunct professor at Chapman University's Dodge College of Film & Media Arts. Carolyn leads Behind the Screen coverage of the creative arts including cinematography, editing, animation, sound and VFX, as well as entertainment technology. This ranges from the tools and techniques for production and post, to immersive media and theatrical exhibition. Carolyn's been honored with American Cinema Editors' Robert Wise Award, the International Cinematographers Guild's Technicolor William A. Fraker Award and the Advanced Imaging Society's Distinguished Leadership Lumiere Award.



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Beth Dewey



Beth Dewey is an LA-based filmmaker and film production instructor at Loyola Marymount's School of Film and Television, where she integrates AI technology into the classroom. She is currently directing My Demon, a fiction short on self-discovery through anger, and Big Safari Adventure, a non-fiction travel show promoting eco-tourism—both showcasing storytelling versatility and innovation with the use of AI tools in filmmaking.



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Madeline Warren



A veteran motion picture executive and educator, Madeline Warren has developed and supervised production of many major studio films, including Academy Award winner L.A. Confidential. In 2007, she began teaching film at Chapman University's Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, which led to an appointment as the Founding Associate Dean and Director of Chapman University Singapore (2008-2010), a global campus with a mission to train Singaporean filmmakers in international co-production. There, she initiated the new academic major in Creative Producing, achieved WASC certification in the first year, and created a Hollywood internship program for Singaporean students. Now a Trustee Professor of Film at Chapman University, she teaches courses in Creative Producing and created the Producer/Screenwriter Workshop, an Interterm course in which Creative Producers and Screenwriting majors collaborate on script development. She has written the instructor's manual to accompany a new filmmaking textbook, Filmmaking in Action; advises other universities on curriculum development and global education; and is developing a screenplay for international co-production in China.



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Holly Willis



Holly Willis is the Chair of the Media Arts + Practice Division in USC's School of Cinematic Arts and Co-Director of AI for Media & Storytelling (AIMS), a practice-based studio under the auspices of USC's new Center for Generative AI and Society. She teaches classes on digital media, post-cinema and feminist film, and is the author of Fast Forward: The Future(s) of the Cinematic Arts and New Digital Cinema: Reinventing the Moving Image, as well as Björk Digital. 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 recently co-curated Flux Festival, a showcase of emerging cinema forms.



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Randi Atkins

IMDb



Randi Atkins is a film editor and educator with a passion for storytelling through editing. As a First Assistant Editor, she has worked on acclaimed documentaries, episodic series, and feature films, including *The Keepers* (Netflix), *Brockmire* (IFC), *The Starling* (Netflix), and *Brittany Runs a Marathon* (Amazon). Most recently, she served as both First Assistant Editor and VFX Editor on *EXPATS* (Amazon). A Film Independent Project Involve Editing Fellow, her work has been showcased at top festivals, earning her Best Editing at the St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase. She is a faculty member at the American Film Institute, where she developed a masterclass on Assistant Editing and post-production success.



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Erlan Nyssanov



Erlan Nyssanov began their work experience in 2018 as an Investment Banking Analyst at Evercore. Erlan worked in this role until 2020 when they transitioned to Amazon Web Services (AWS) as a Startup Business Development member. Erlan's most recent position is at United Talent Agency, where they started in 2022 and currently holds the position of Web3 Technology BD & Innovations.



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Kate Lonczak



Kate Lonczak is an agent in the Digital Strategy department at WME with a focus on emerging areas of the creator business. Kate has been instrumental in developing new business models and practical use cases across all areas of emerging tech, such as blockchain/web3 and AI, in addition to supporting WME's Digital group across video games and the creator economy.



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Jonathan Rodrigues



At Creative Artists Agency (CAA), Jonathan Rodrigues plays a pivotal role in assisting clients as they navigate the rapidly evolving landscape of Emerging Technologies, including Web3, Blockchain, and AI, with a particular focus on music. He leverages his Bachelor's degree in Ethics, History, and Public Policy from Carnegie Mellon University, along with his expertise in smart devices, business negotiation, and operations, to identify and secure opportunities for artists, creators, and innovators in the decentralized web.

Before joining CAA as a Talent Agent in January 2023, he gained valuable experience as a Web3 / Music Professional and a Music Touring Assistant within the same agency. These roles provided him with critical insights into the music industry and the emerging technologies that are reshaping it. His passion lies in connecting talent with audiences, empowering creativity and innovation, and advancing the ethical and social impact of Web3 and music.

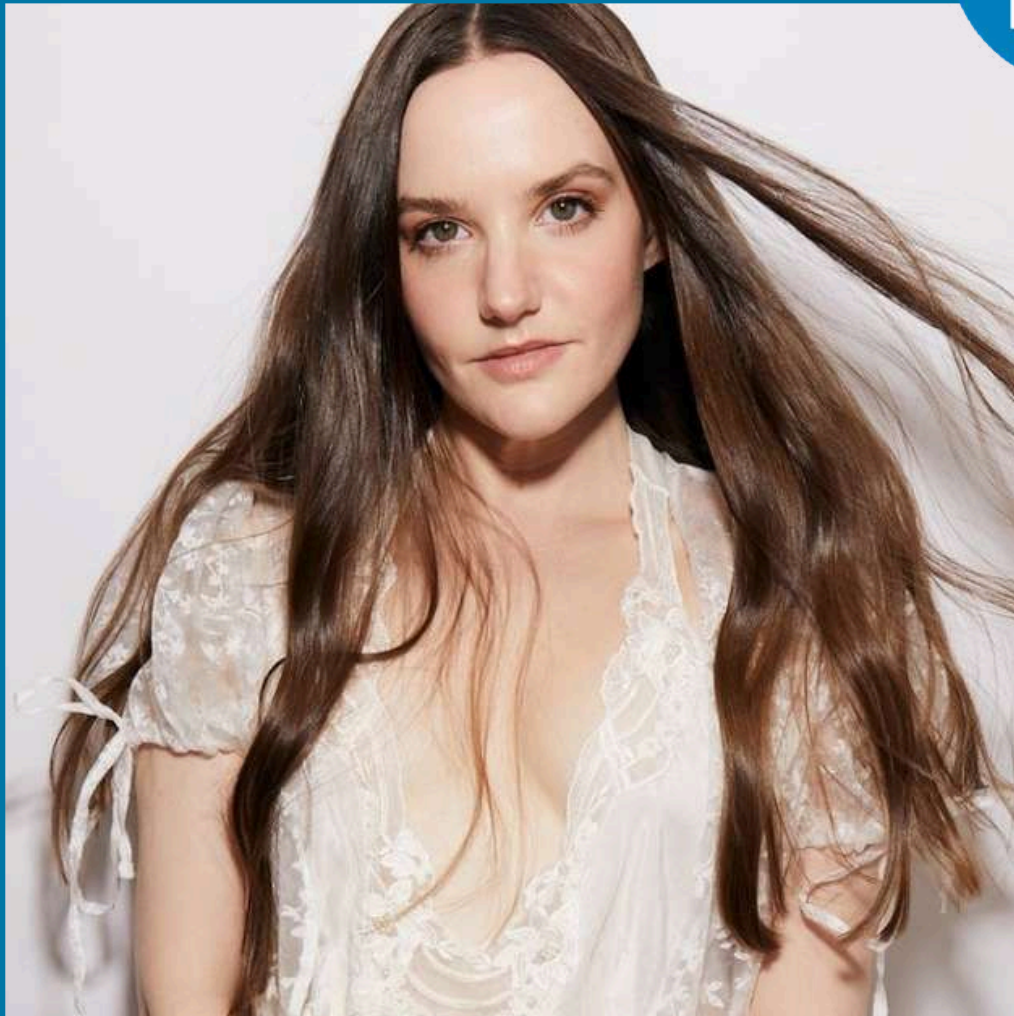


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Jagger Waters

[YouTube.com/CuriousRefuge](https://www.youtube.com/curiousrefuge)



As an early adopter of AI in creative workflows, I've developed intuitive knowledge about current AI tools and their practical application for both creative and business strategy. Recently, I spoke at the TV Academy's Emerging Media Programming Peer Group about using AI in pre production. I am the founder of WorkFLOW, a community of female & nonbinary creatives aiming to stay educated about emergent technology and its impact on our industries.

I've consulted and participated in alpha testing for a number of start-ups integrating AI. I love providing developers with constructive and productive feedback about their products.

I am a writer and producer in Los Angeles with 12 years of experience creating narrative storytelling across all platforms, from original content development in film, TV, live events, AI, and VR/XR to social media campaigns and scripted podcasts.

I spent my childhood behind the scenes at local broadcast news stations, with my parents who worked in newsrooms all around the United States. As a kid, I witnessed the corporate buyout of small-market television stations firsthand and saw how journalism transformed as on-camera talent was pressured to adopt social media and other emerging tech. These personal influences, combined with my professional experience, have helped me redefine my identity as an entertainer in the face of rapid technological change, and embrace the ways AI can enhance my work as a storyteller and producer today.

2024 Champion of Curious Refuge's Generative AI eSports Tournament 🏆

Winning Team at Cinema Synthetica's 48 Hour Generative AI Filmmaking Challenge 🏆



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Shelby Ward

[YouTube.com/CuriousRefuge](https://www.youtube.com/curiousrefuge)



Shelby Ward is the Co-Founder of Curious Refuge, the world's first online home for AI storytellers. With a deep passion for art, innovation, and supporting artists on their journeys, she has dedicated her career to education and the arts. Her experience spans a range of emerging mediums, including animation, motion design, and VFX, and now extends into the dynamic realm of AI.

Curious Refuge serves as a safe haven for learning and growth, where curiosity and play are at the forefront of their mission. She believes in fostering an environment that encourages individuals to push their creative boundaries while ensuring a supportive and kind atmosphere for all.



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Caleb Ward

[YouTube.com/CuriousRefuge](https://www.youtube.com/curiousrefuge)



Caleb Ward is a passionate advocate for creativity and inspiration, dedicated to helping individuals around the globe. With a wealth of experience, he has developed courses, tutorials, articles, books, products, and resources specifically designed for creative minds. Throughout his career, Caleb has focused on assisting and training artists, gaining recognition particularly for his contributions to the field of artificial intelligence. His work has been highlighted in major news publications, documentaries, channels, and podcasts, where he frequently discusses the empowering potential of AI for independent artists and emphasizes that technology can assist rather than replace talented storytellers.

Caleb's extensive career in the online art world has allowed him to collaborate with remarkable individuals and organizations. His writing and tutorials can be found on notable platforms such as Vimeo's Blog, NoFilmSchool, PremiumBeat, Shutterstock, Rocketstock, and School of Motion. To date, he has authored over 800 articles and tutorials that cater to animation, filmmaking, and content creation communities. Additionally, he has overseen the production of thousands of articles and content pieces, further solidifying his impact in the industry.

In collaboration with leading educators in the fields of VFX, motion design, and filmmaking, Caleb has taken on leadership roles to train the next generation of creative artists. He has had the privilege of supporting artists from diverse backgrounds, ranging from those in Oscar-winning VFX studios to everyday creators eager to acquire new skills.

Currently, Caleb serves as the CEO of Curious Refuge, the world's first online home for AI storytellers. He envisions Curious Refuge as a valuable source of inspiration for storytellers around the world, fostering creativity and innovation in the digital age.



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Josh Wallace Kerrigan



Josh Wallace Kerrigan is a filmmaker originally from Wichita Falls, Texas. His early work was regularly featured on Funny or Die and also aired on Comedy Central. In 2019, Josh made his feature film debut with the satirical horror Keeping Company (Director/Co-writer)-- which is now available on Paramount Plus. More recently, his horror short Lurk premiered at SXSW 2025 and the videos he makes under his banner Neural Viz have now garnered millions of views online.



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Dave Clark



Dave Clark is an award-winning filmmaker at the forefront of integrating Generative AI into film, TV, and advertising. He is currently the Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer at Promise. Recognized as a leading voice for his ability to seamlessly blend nuanced storytelling with cutting-edge technology, he has become one of the most sought-after artists, with top filmmakers and storytellers worldwide turning to him for guidance on this transformative technology.

Clark recently amassed millions of views for his groundbreaking AI directing work, including his short film “Battalion,” which focused on the only Black unit to arrive on Omaha Beach in Normandy during World War 2. It quickly captured the attention of Hollywood, with many top directors reaching out to learn more about the technology behind it. Dave also garnered widespread acclaim when he released the world’s first hybrid narrative genre short, “Another,” combining live-action and GenAI. It was screened during his keynote presentation at Cannes Next in 2024.

Over his career, Dave has also been a successful brand marketer and commercial director – creating films, immersive engagements, and brand spots for companies like Coca-Cola, Snapchat, Hewlett Packard, Warner Bros., and Intel.

Dave has spoken about the future of filmmaking at prestigious events around the globe (including the Berlinale, MIT, Indiewire, Picture This Conference, and the Cannes Film Festival). He resides in Southern California with his wife and children.



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Lyndon J Barrois

IMDb



Lyndon J Barrois, Sr Los Angeles, CA Artist, Animation Director, Filmmaker An AMPAS VFX Executive Branch member, Lyndon boasts a long career in art and animation. His film credits include The Matrix Trilogy, Happy Feet, and The Thing, where he directed pivotal character animation sequences in those features and many others. He currently wins accolades for his unique gum wrapper sculptures and stop-motion animations of contemporary and historic figures and events, whose portrait and Sportrait films are produced entirely on iPhones. He's been heavily involved in the worlds of VR, AR, VP, and most recently the AI space as an OpenAi Sora artist, while exploring similar generative ai platforms. Within the art world, his work has been featured in major institutions like the Pérez Art Museum Miami, the MOCA Los Angeles, the Massachusetts MOCA, The Hammer, the SFMOMA in San Francisco, and most recently added to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's permanent collection, and the SR Foundation in Seoul, Korea. His subject matters range from gender inclusion and excellence in the FIFA World Cup and Olympics, America's Covid-19 crisis, to past racial uprisings & achievements, and current political or social climates. A New Orleans native and HBCU graduate of Xavier University of Louisiana, Lyndon serves on the boards of The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, California Institute of the Arts (his MFA Alma mater), YA/YA (Young Aspirations/Young Artists), Inc., the Academy Museum's Inclusion Advisory Committee, the Smithsonian's Regents Advancement Committee, and a member of the Black Trustees Alliance, fostering programs and supporting exhibitions.



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Paul Trillo



Paul Trillo is a multi-disciplinary artist, writer, and director who challenges both his own curiosity and illusion with his experimental, conceptual, and highly technical films. His diverse body of work spans various genres and formats, and he is constantly pushing the boundaries of what's possible in filmmaking. Whether he's creating practical effects with his hands, building the first mobile bullet time rig with phones, choreographing aerial smoke shows using drones, or creating fully AI-animated commercials, Paul's work is always original, innovative, and highly technical.

With a background in experimental film from California College of The Arts, Paul infuses his narrative work with a sense of play and curiosity, always exploring new ways to tell stories and engage audiences. His recent work has explored the future of AI filmmaking and the ethical and artistic implications of using these tools. His viral visual effects experiments have changed the way these tools are used, inspiring others to explore the possibilities of this exciting new field.

Paul's work has earned him 19 Vimeo Staff Picks and has been featured in wide range of media outlets, including The New York Times, Rolling Stone, Vice, The Atlantic, The New Yorker, FastCo, Gizmodo, Ad Age, GQ, MIT Review, and Scientific American, among others. He has been recognized as one of D&AD's Next Directors and has won several awards, including "The One Show's One to Watch" and "30 Under 30 Film Festival's Director to Watch." Paul has participated as a speaker and judge in a variety of festivals and conferences including NAB, NVIDIA GTC, SXSW, TED, Infinity Fest, Northside Festival, Runway AI Film Festival, and the ADC Awards.



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Sydney Bright



Sydney Bright is a powerhouse in the animation industry, blending creative vision with strategic leadership. She launched her career at Bento Box Entertainment, spending nearly a decade managing in-house design and animation teams on hit series like Brickleberry (Comedy Central), The Awesomes (Hulu), and the multi-E Emmy-winning Bob's Burgers (FOX). Rising from production to Creative Executive, she played a pivotal role in selling over a dozen original series to major platforms, including Apple, Netflix, FOX, Comedy Central, TBS, and MTV—helping bring fresh, diverse voices to the screen.

As Director of Animation Development and In-House Producer at Seriously Digital Entertainment, Sydney spearheaded the adaptation of Best Fiends, expanding the beloved IP into animated shorts and long-form content. Since 2018, she has also shared her expertise as a respected Animation Professor at Loyola Marymount University's School of Film and Television.

Now, as Head of Global Animation at Wattpad Webtoon Studios, Sydney is at the forefront of adapting the next generation of storytelling from Wattpad and WEBTOON into compelling TV series and feature films. A passionate Latina storyteller and champion for diversity, she is dedicated to elevating new voices and bringing bold, innovative animation to audiences worldwide.

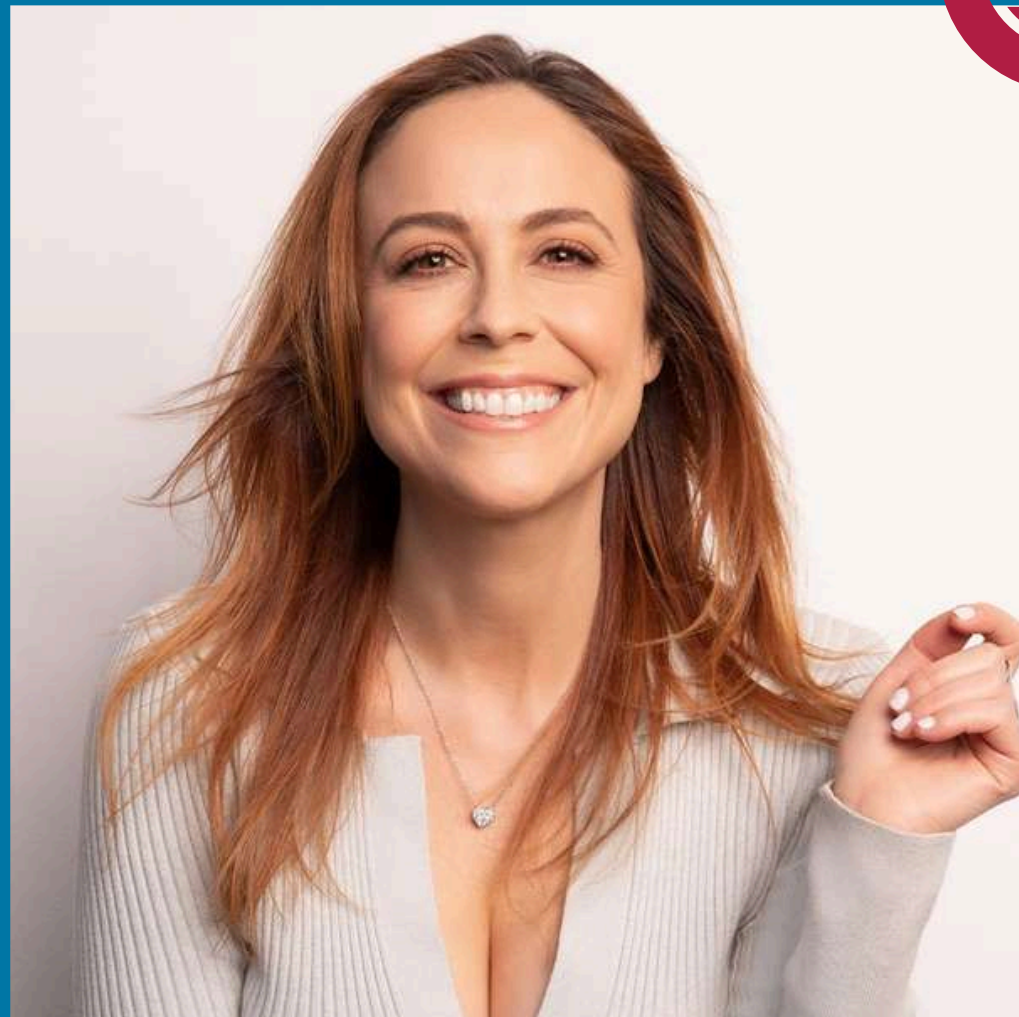


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Shira Lazar



Shira Lazar is an Emmy-nominated digital culture expert, keynote speaker, and mental health advocate with over 1 million followers across platforms. As the founder of What's Trending, a pioneering digital news brand with 3+ million followers, she has been shaping the creator economy and social media trends for two decades. Shira has shared her expertise on stages like SXSW, VeeCon, CES and NAB. She was named one of Fast Company's Most Influential Women in Technology, honored on Variety's Women of Impact list, and featured on NFTNow's NFT100 Most Influential list.

In 2020, Shira co-founded Peace Inside Live, a well-being organization, dedicated to crafting bespoke programs for forward-thinking companies and teams. She is also the co-author of *The JOMO Journal: A Daily Practice for the Joy of Missing Out*. This work led to the launch of Creators 4 Mental Health, an initiative focused on bringing mental health tools to the creator economy through events and community programming.

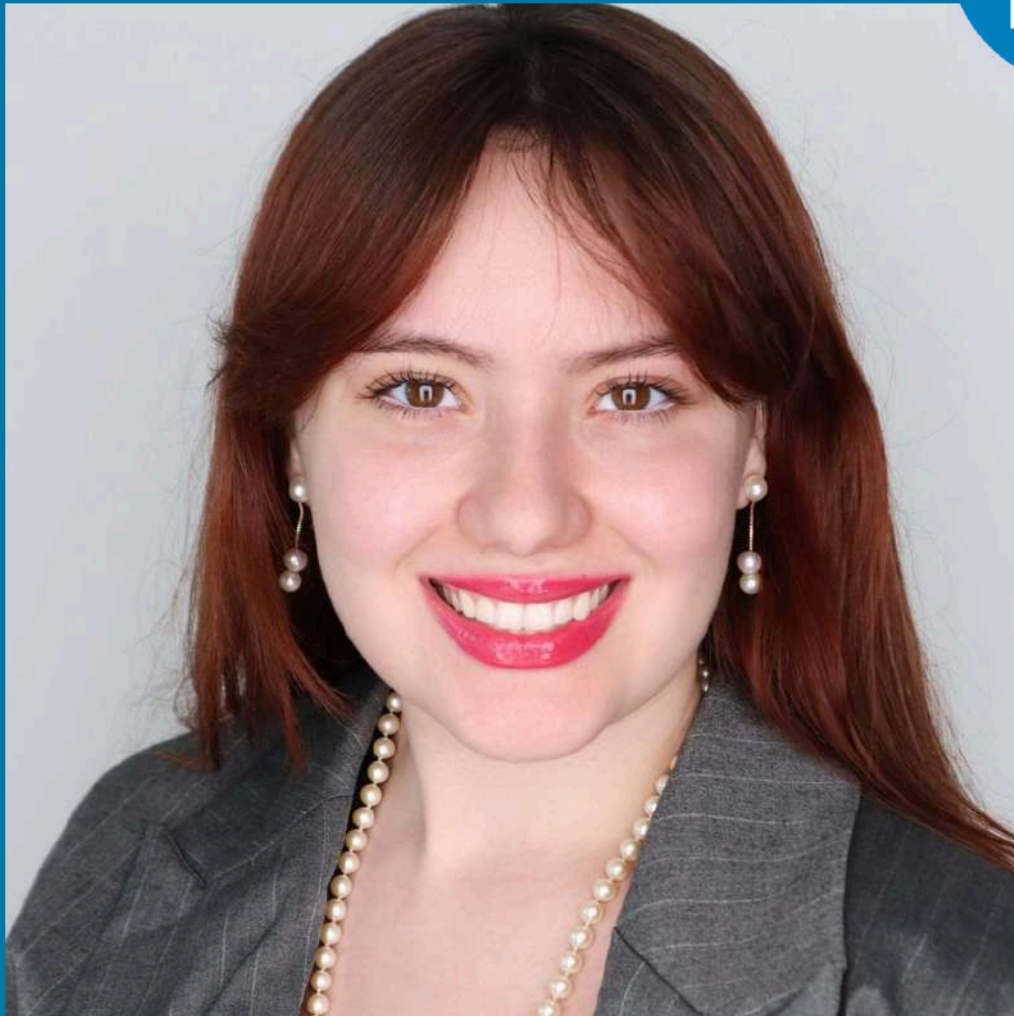
Building her own brands has led her to also advise and consult with companies looking to make an impact through emerging tech. She shares her insights in AI and the creator economy in her weekly newsletter, *The Alpha*.



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Kaylee Young



Kaylee Young is a writer and actress passionate about storytelling that explores suffering, belonging, and the complexities of the human condition. She is currently co-writing Technicolor Yawn, a sci-fi adult animated pilot, while pursuing a degree in Screenwriting at Loyola Marymount University, where she will graduate in May 2026.

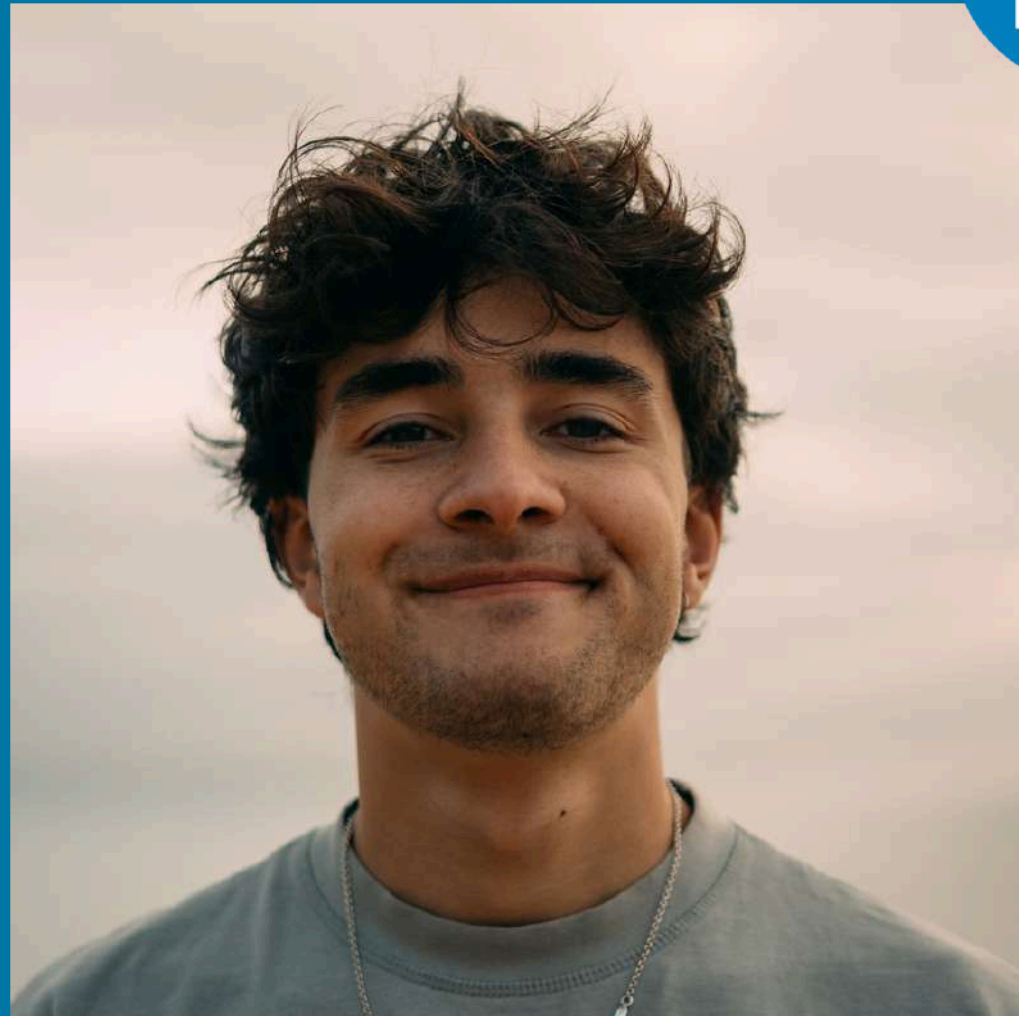


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Federico Velez



I'm a cinematographer and editor from Medellín, Colombia, working within the marketing and narrative world. Passionate about exploring the future of storytelling, and how AI is pushing the boundaries of storytelling.



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Katie Luo



Katie Luo is a multimedia artist and filmmaker exploring the intimacies between humans and technology, focusing on surveillance and interpersonal relationships. Katie is passionate about space-making and new media technologies, using these tools to question and examine our understanding of connection and presence in increasingly mediated environments.

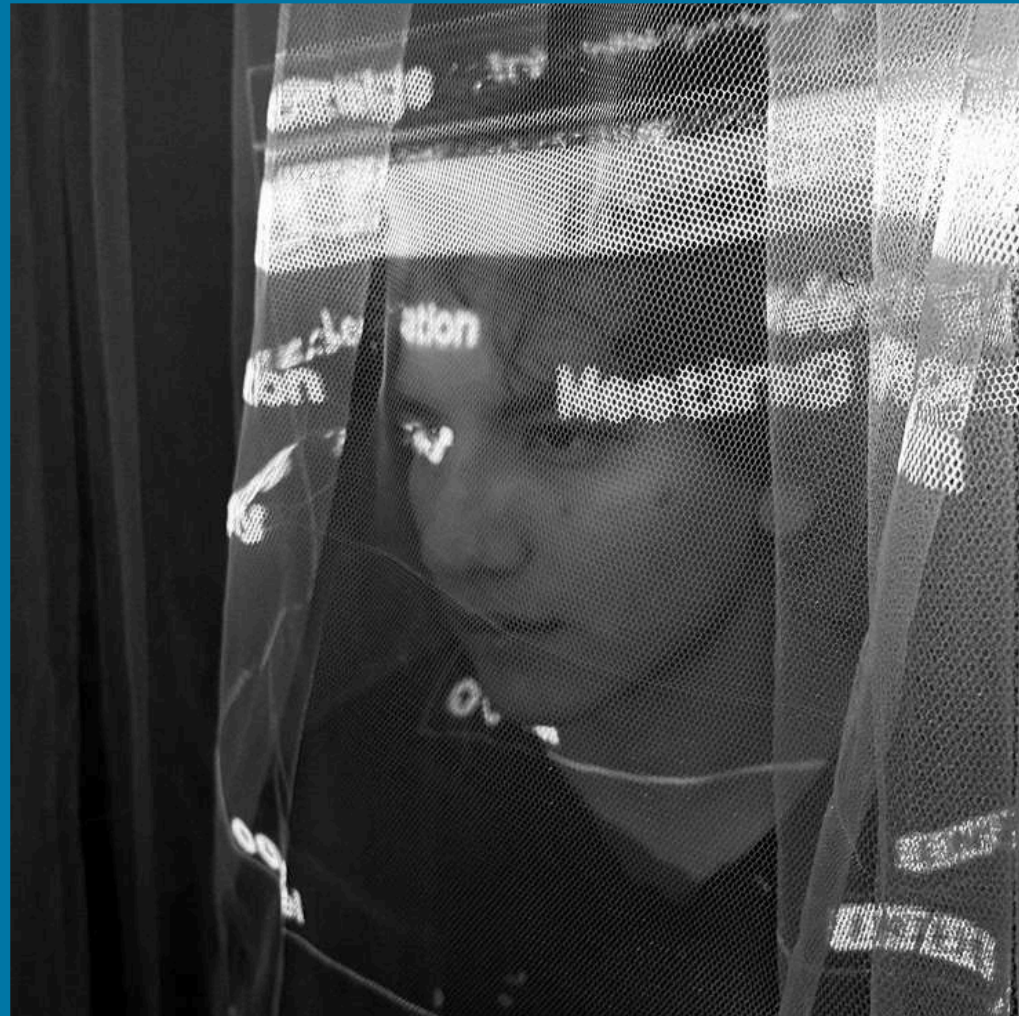


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Johans Saldana Guadalupe



Johans is a transmedia artist and researcher whose practice explores the intersection of the digital, physical, and metaphysical through technology, while open-sourcing his documentation to foster communal innovation and dialogue. His work interrogates humanity's evolving relationship with nature and technology, the fluidity of time, and the nature of self-exploration, inviting audiences to discover meaning and beauty in unexpected places.



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Matt Gelzer



Matt Gelzer is an All-in-One Machine making the Great Films of Tomorrow.

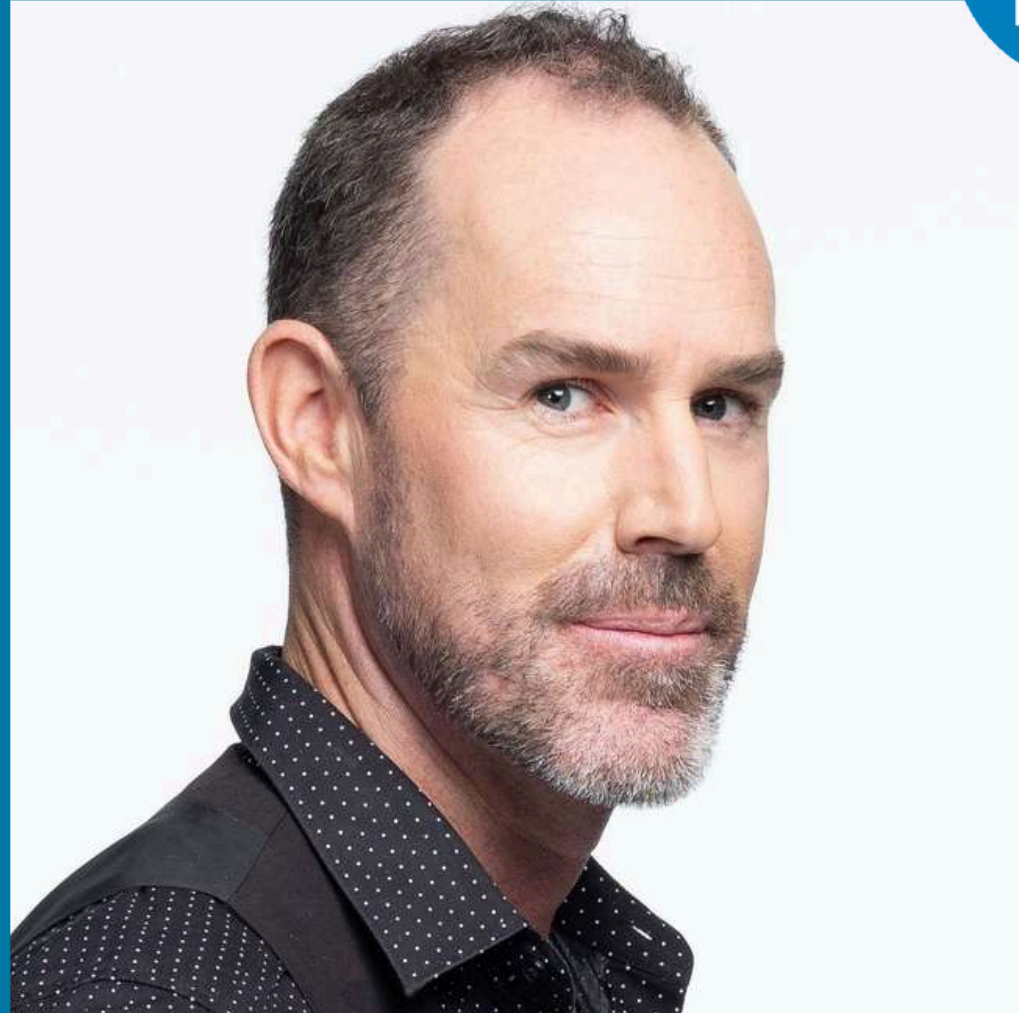


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Justin Trevor Winters



Justin Trevor Winters is the Director of The Innovators Film Festival and a full-time faculty member in the School of Film and Television at Loyola Marymount University. As part of LMU's Ignite Innovation Program, he serves as a writer, futurist, and chair of the LMU AI Alliance, championing the intersection of storytelling and technology.

Justin is also the co-founder and CEO of Verified Labs, an AI transformation company that helps talent, brands, and IP owners thrive in the immersive web. His clients include the Estates of Ernest Hemingway, Steve McQueen, and Triumph Motorcycles.



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