

# MEDIA STUDIOS



MEDIA STUDIO  
DESCRIPTIONS, SEM 1 2024

# ART AND IMPACT

## DOCUMENTARY STORYTELLING AND IMPACT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



### KEY QUOTE

*"Resistance and change often begin in art"*

–Ursula Le Guin

### STUDIO PROMPT

How can documentary storytelling shape and imagine more socially and ecologically just futures and create positive social change?

This studio offers an overview of documentary storytelling and distribution for social impact. In this studio, you will learn how, alongside targeted impact strategies for partnerships and distribution, documentaries can generate social change. Some of the skills and topics covered will include:

- Understanding and developing social impact documentaries
- Storytelling skills
- How to use an independent documentary project as a tool for change
- How to develop and deliver a successful impact campaign alongside a documentary film
- Duty of care and the ethical responsibilities filmmaking teams have to their subjects
- Identifying, researching and mapping possible impact areas

- Pathways to finance, the philanthropic sector and impact partnerships
- Campaign implementation and outreach
- Documentary distribution and locating audiences

Some of the key questions considered in the course will include:

- How can we understand what kind of impact is possible with a documentary film? Are there certain kinds of films or topics which are more likely to create impact?
- What social causes are you passionate about and how could they translate into a documentary and impact campaign? What is the issue landscape like (current events, public discourse, policy debates, etc.)? What do campaigners working in this issue landscape need?

### STUDIO LEADER BIO

Lucie McMahon is a film practitioner based in Melbourne. Lucie is currently undertaking a master by research at RMIT University, where she also lectures and tutors in cinema and media studies. Lucie's creative practice research looks at queer documentary and queer history in Melbourne. Lucie also works as a freelance producer on a variety of film projects. Most recently she has completed her first Screen Australia-funded feature documentary *Things Will Be Different*.

# BEYOND A JOKE, BEYOND A GENRE

## INVESTIGATING AND CREATING COMEDY MEDIA



*How To with John Wilson* (HBO/Blow Out Productions, 2020)

### KEY QUOTE

*"Comedy is a varied phenomenon, both in the range of forms it encompasses — from the joke to the sit-com — and in the range of defining conventions it can involve."*

— Stephen Neale and Frank Krutnik

*"Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you fall into an open sewer and die."*

— Mel Brooks

### STUDIO PROMPT

How can we creatively think of comedy as a mode within (and beyond) genre, form, and media?

What is comedy? For thousands of years, thinkers and theorists from Aristotle to Freud have wrestled with the question of what makes us laugh, and why. How can the same word describe a gardener getting sprayed with a hose (*L'Arroseur arrosé*, 1895), Michaela Cole fictionalising her assault (*I May Destroy You*, 2020), and a skibidi toilet (*Skibidi Toilet*, 2023)?

students will develop creative artifacts that explore comedy in and across media of their choosing. These experiments will get us thinking about how comedy can operate as a genre or mode in its own right, but also how it can be hybridized, and how the comic event can be embedded in sometimes surprising locations in "non-comedy" genres like drama and documentary.

In this studio, we will investigate the anatomy of comedy, with topics to include theories of humor, the comic frame, jokes, irony, parody, black comedy, anti-comedy, and post-comedy. Each week, we will watch and listen to all sorts of fun(ny) things. Alongside these investigations,

### STUDIO LEADER BIO

Bradley Dixon teaches and researches in media and cinema studies at RMIT, with an interest in comedy practice, persona, and performance. He is currently nearing completion of a PhD exploring parafictional persona, or comedians playing themselves in fiction. He is not particularly funny.

# INSTINCT AND INTENTION

## THE ESSENTIALS OF SCREEN EDITING



*Tiny Darlings* (2022, Dir. Sebastian Bertoli)

### KEY QUOTE

*"You have to cut with your gut."*

— Dede Allen (Editor: *Serpico*, *The Breakfast Club*)

*"The editor has a key and it opens endless creative doors. It is by opening these doors that you invariably find a new solution to a problem."*

— Jill Bilcock (Romeo + Juliet, Road to Perdition)

### STUDIO PROMPT

How can the simple action of cutting images together be one of the most profound techniques in modern storytelling?

The history of screen editing is inexorably interwoven with the development and growth of the medium of cinema itself. Editing is storytelling with a razor. In this studio we will be exploring screen editing as a storytelling tool through iterative activities both in, and outside, of our workshops. We will be examining editing from both philosophical and process-driven perspectives. The goal of our explorations will be to cultivate the students' instincts through practice and provocation.

We will be investigating comprehensive systems and processes, through a deep and thorough understanding of the practicalities of editing preparation. Only from a

secure foundation built on rigorous preliminary work, can a screen editor allow their instincts to truly flow freely. Throughout the semester, we will work through different processes and styles used in scripted, improvised, documentary, genre and commercial content.

Students will learn to shape footage in service of The Story, to edit intentionally and intuitively. They will learn to reshape and refine their editing work, responding to external feedback and to their own reflection on their work. Towards the end of the course, students will build a series of edited works that will serve as a portfolio of the work undertaken throughout the semester.

### STUDIO LEADER BIO

Sebastian Bertoli is a director, editor and actor. As a screen editor he edits both commercial and narrative screen content. He is about to commence editing feature film *Disconnected*. The first narrative work he edited, award-winning short *Blue* (2017), has had over 4 million views on YouTube. He has directed a dozen shorts across genres as diverse as erotic thriller, absurdist comedy and psychological horror. As an actor he has appeared on screen in productions from HBO, DreamWorks, Bad Robot, Warner Bros Television and ABC. He has just wrapped principal photography on feature film *We Will Never Die*, his directorial debut. Sebastian holds a 2017 Masters (Film & Television) from the Victorian College of the Arts. [www.sebastianbertoli.com](http://www.sebastianbertoli.com) / [www.panopticoncollective.com](http://www.panopticoncollective.com)

# THE PLOT THICKENS

## MINING THE MECHANICS OF SCREEN STORYTELLING



(Adobe education license – standard image)

### KEY QUOTE

*'Plot wants to conceal what Story simply goes ahead to show'*

— Jane Vandenburg

### STUDIO PROMPTS

- What is plot?
- How is it constructed?
- Why does 'plot' dominate discourses of screenwriting practice?

In this studio you will delve into the intricacies of plot in screenwriting craft, and learn tools and techniques for creating your own narrative designs. You will learn to distinguish between story, plot and narrative while building a vocabulary to express those ideas. Through developing your own stories over the course of the studio, you will get to know your plot twists from your plot holes, your coincidences from your causal connections, and your loose ends from your lost threads.

This studio offers an introduction to the writing of development documents – synopses and treatments – through which you will create and refine your original plot. Through refining these elements of screenwriting practice, you will test the specific relationship between plot and genre, and the role of narrative tropes.

Throughout, we will question the primacy of plot over other storytelling considerations (theme, character, world) while experimenting with the places where these elements overlap. We will interrogate claims to 'basic' plots and 'universal' stories, reviewing the canon of screenwriting manuals and road-testing their claims.

As a result of taking this studio, you will be able to identify plot points, craft plot sequences, and avoid narrative cliché. You might leave inspired to create complicated plot-driven stories, or to lose the plot altogether. Either way, you'll be equipped with the tools to annoy everyone watching a screen story in your vicinity.

### STUDIO LEADER BIO

Stayci Taylor (Senior Lecturer) is a screenwriting practitioner and researcher. In 2022 she was named national leader in field (film) in The Australian annual research awards. She is the co-editor of four books, including two on the topic of script development. Prior to completing her PhD in screenwriting, Stayci was a writer for broadcast TV in New Zealand.

# READY CAMERA ONE

## MULTI-CAMERA PRODUCTION



(RMIT TV Studio A | Ruth Richards, 2023)

### KEY QUOTE

*“In the early days the studio was television. It was a guarantor of distance vision (the literal meaning of ‘tele-vision’), and of the extraordinary fact that those people on that tiny black and white screen were actually speaking these very words at this very moment, from many miles away”*

— Patricia Holland, *The New Television Handbook*, Routledge, 2017, p. 136

### STUDIO PROMPT

What are the creative possibilities and challenges of multi-camera production, and what are the uses and possibilities of multi-camera production within and outside of the traditional studio space?

From classic sit-coms to contemporary talk shows, multi-camera production is a persisting mode of television production today that often extends beyond the traditional three camera set-up. A significant proportion of television, from sports coverage, news, special events, variety/late-night, reality and talk programs continue to make use of the multi-camera production format.

Through reading, viewing, discussion and practice, this studio will explore the creative possibilities and challenges of multi-camera production in a studio environment. Through a combination of ‘live to tape’ and non-live production exercises, you will investigate the different ways in which the multi-camera studio can be used. You will gain an understanding of studio production workflows and technology, developing your skills and experience

through project work. You will also learn how to work within a large, networked collaborative environment, working in both small teams and large production crews. Drawing on key ideas from within television studies, you will also explore the histories of television broadcast and contemplate the future(s) of television (multi-camera and otherwise) in a post-network and post-broadcast era.

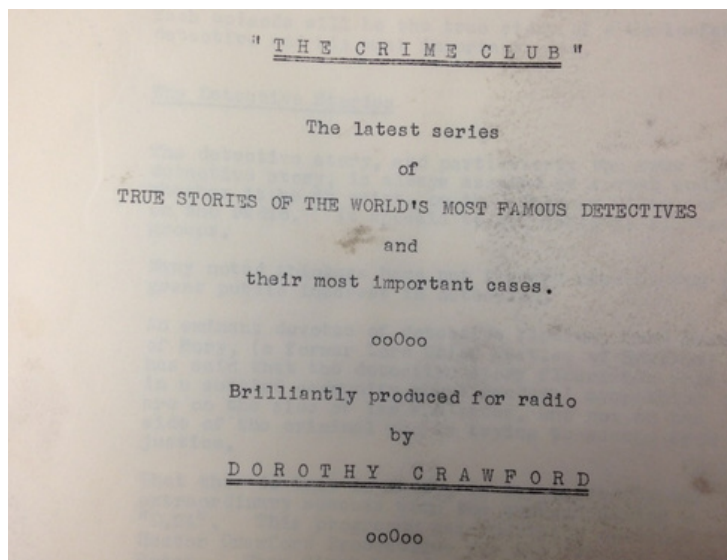
There will be a range of smaller projects produced in the studio that explore different possibilities and forms of multi-camera production such as news, talk shows, sit-coms and game shows. We will explore the ways in which television is adapting to new and emerging media contexts in the streaming era, and how we can adapt the multi-camera production mode to suit these contexts.

### STUDIO LEADER BIO

Dr Ruth Richards completed her PhD in Media and Communication at RMIT University in 2019. Her thesis explored the intersections of feminist theory and animation by examining the materiality of animated bodies. Her research interests include feminist animation, women in late night television, and the shared histories of film and animation. Ruth has published on animation and memory, gender in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, and the animated horror of violent clowns. She was the 2022/23 AFIRC Research Fellow for her project on histories of Australian Women in Animation. Ruth has a background in multi-camera production through community broadcasting and has taught studios in live media, comedy news, and in collaboration with ABC Fact Check and the ARC Centre for Automated Decision-Making and Society.

# REIMAGINING CRIME CLUB

## VIDEO EXPERIMENTS IN AUSTRALIAN TRUE CRIME



(AFI Research Collection. (2013). Crawford's Crime Television. AFI Research Collection.

### KEY QUOTE

*"The trick is, as always, to know the audience. If it is aimed at the original audience, get the nostalgia right so that they don't disown it. If the aim is to sell it to the next generation, focus on the essence of the idea and ensure that the underlying story is still compelling enough to resonate with them."*

— Peplow, N. (2015, April 7). Repurposing old formats for modern audiences: Risks and rewards. The Guardian.

### STUDIO PROMPT

How can the Crawford's Collection at the AFI Research Collection be creatively reimaged for contemporary audiences?

True Crime is an enduringly popular genre which luringly fascinates and disgusts audiences through its unique combination of nonfiction, the grotesque, and suspense. Whilst modern True Crime might be associated with podcasts and streaming services, the genre has a rich media history. In an Australian context, between 1945 and 1956, Crawford Productions was a major producer of Radio plays based on real crimes, which were marketed to both local and international audiences. One such series, *The Crime Club*, was a series of Radio plays produced by Dorothy Crawford in 1953, where each episode was promoted as 'the true story of a world-famous detective and his most important case' (Crawford Collection, AFI Research Collection). Luckily for us, the Australian Film Institute Research at RMIT has an extensive collection of *The Crime Club* scripts alongside stills, ephemera, promotional items and background research from

Crawford Productions. In Reimagining Crime Club you will work closely with the Crawford Collection at the AFI Research Collection to both research Australia's True Crime past and reimagine it for contemporary audiences.

This studio will begin with a series of sketch works which experiment with how we can use sound design and cinematography, to creatively interpret radio scripts and photographic artefacts into video-based works. You will then expand this into a major project which uses an episode of *The Crime Club* to prompt a video piece for contemporary True Crime audiences. In Reimagining Crime Club you will have fun exploring and creatively reworking real Australian crimes by digging through *The Crime Club* scripts at the AFI Research Collection, and provides an exciting opportunity to collaborate effectively within a professional partnership.

### STUDIO LEADER BIO

Hannah is a teacher, researcher and media practitioner interested in how noticing can be used to engage with the world ecologically. Her films combine the everyday, travel, landscape and environment to create ecologically conscious media. Hannah teaches conceptual studios and Cinema Studies in the School of Media & Communication at RMIT, and has been doing so for the past eight years. She has multiple articles published in the *Studies in Documentary Film* journal and her most recent short film, *Surface Levels* (2023), was commissioned by the Mobile Innovation Network Association (MINA) in collaboration with Australian Environments on Screen.

# ROOM WITH A VIEW

## BROADCAST RADIO AS A COLLABORATIVE SPACE AND ENDURING AUDIO MEDIUM



Adobe Stock Images

### KEY QUOTE

*"Radio's present era is marked by a transformative new materiality, as digital platforms finally overcome the ephemerality that once made radio so hard to capture and assess as a cultural form; a new mobility, as radio moves across devices and into new spaces; and by a new globalism, as digital accessibility unleashes radio and extends it well beyond its former local and national boundaries. Radio has not only survived but revived, both as a creative medium and as a shared cultural experience."*

— Hilmes 2013

### STUDIO PROMPT

What is the role of radio in a globalised media environment that is dominated by screens? What forms and formats does modern radio take? And how can we produce compelling content for both "live" broadcast or streaming radio and on-demand listening?

For years now, critics have predicted the death of radio as a medium. However, despite these dire predictions not only has radio endured, it continues to matter deeply to the almost 3 billion people around the world who tune into it weekly. In Australia, community radio plays an important role in cultural life, providing a voice for communities that are not adequately serviced by other broadcasting sectors. Skills learned doing community radio are also readily transferrable to newer audio forms such as podcasting.

In this studio, run in partnership with Triple R FM, you will learn the skills required to produce live-to-air and pre-recorded radio, as well as consider the role of radio in the wider media landscape in Australia and globally. Working

in teams out of the Triple R radio studios, you will produce an "as-live" pre-recorded radio show that will broadcast in an early morning timeslot on Triple R FM. Each team will also produce a crafted radio feature targeted to the Triple R audience. You'll also be asked to reflect upon questions around the social, cultural and political role of radio by examining concepts such as voice, representation, listening and accessibility – particularly in relation to community radio.

Students taking Room With A View must be able to attend the 3RRR radio studios in East Brunswick for panel training, practice sessions, and to record their radio shows.

### STUDIO LEADER BIO

Heather Jarvis is a radio & podcast producer, journalist, PhD candidate and lecturer in Media Studies at RMIT. In her extensive career at the ABC and also in community radio, Heather produced and presented programs spanning from music and magazine-style shows through to current affairs and sport. Her radio documentary work has been shortlisted for both the Amnesty International Australia Media Awards and the United Nations Media Awards.

# SOCIAL VIDEO ENSHITTIFICATION

NAVIGATING THE B.S. OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.



Image: Enshittification just keeps happening, <https://thehustle.co/enshittification-just-keeps-happening-2/>

## KEY QUOTE

*"This is enshittification: Surpluses are first directed to users; then, once they're locked in, surpluses go to suppliers; then once they're locked in, the surplus is handed to shareholders and the platform becomes a useless pile of shit."*

— Corey Doctorow, 'The 'Enshittification' of TikTok.' Wired, 23 Jan. 2023.

## STUDIO PROMPT

What critical skills do you need to develop to become a professional social videographer?

Studio participants will explore the critical skills videographers need to learn to create quality content, understand audiences, handle complex storytelling, avoid sensationalism, consider ethical implications, build credibility and adapt to constant technical change. These critical skills are developed through hands-on making, closely examining social video practices, and engaging with relevant theory and commentary via texts, podcasts, and online videos.

Projects will include completing social video content for a real-world scenario. In this studio, you will learn the process of making content in detail. These making

processes include pre-production testing, video and audio recording, media asset preparation, resizing video frames, text graphics, colour grading, audio techniques, subtitling, making publication thumbnails, exporting and more.

A key aim will be to share real-world video production experiences that include planning, project work, learning software, working with clients, and the many things that go together in critical practice.

## STUDIO LEADER BIO

Dr. Seth Keen is a Lecturer and Internship Coordinator in the RMIT Media Program. Seth has decades of experience in Screen Production and is committed to industry connections and the career development of students. He is passionate about helping people and organisations realise their capabilities to use images to tell stories and share knowledge using broadcast, mobile and interactive media technologies. His current work focuses on digital innovation and co-designing fit-for-purpose photo and video-sharing software that supports action on climate change. You can see his television, short film, experimental video and interactive media projects at [Seth Keen's LinkedIn](#).

# THE MEDIA STUDIOS FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE

PUTTING ON A SHOW OF SHOWS... AND HOW!



Manifesto installation view, Holland Festival, Amsterdam, June 2017. Photo © Ada Nieuwendijk.

## KEY QUOTE

*"The greatness of a culture can be found in its festivals"*

— Siddharth Katragadda

## STUDIO PROMPT

Is there an 'art' to showing art?... and just how 'festive' are festivals, anyway?

Students will work collaboratively to stage the combined RMIT Media Studios' end-of-semester showings as a new festival of media works spanning two-to-three days and/or nights.

This studio represents an evolution of "The Festival Experience" studio in which students worked collaboratively to stage a film festival in miniature. Here, the end game is more expansive but the core challenges remain: students will mount (conceptualise, curate, promote, fundraise for, install, stage-manage and document) a complex event which will present them with umpteen object lessons in creative, multidisciplinary teamwork and complex media cultural problem solving.

In a dynamic environment, students will gain real-world experience in festival concept development, event management, liaising with venues and partners, various forms of media production, communications and marketing. The nature of film festivals and other big cultural events will be explored conceptually, with students getting steeped in all that constitutes a "festival experience".

Any festival is a consuming undertaking. This studio will prime students for a festive future. Participants will be assisted to forge industry networks and will blog about their experiences as an audience member, and as a producer, of festival experiences.

## STUDIO LEADER BIO

Cerise Howard is the Aotearoa New Zealand-born Program Director of the Melbourne Queer Film Festival and a co-curator of the Melbourne Cinémathèque. She was the Artistic Director of the Czech and Slovak Film Festival of Australia from 2013 to 2018 and a co-founder of Tilde – Melbourne Trans & Gender Diverse Film Festival. A widely-published commentator on intersections of screen media, gender, sexuality and other matters, she is a regular broadcaster on 3RRR and plays bass for The HOMOsapiens, a Melbourne punk, performance art, queer rock band.

# THE SCENE IN CINEMA

## STUDIES IN CAMERA COVERAGE



IMAGE – Il deserto rosso (The Red Desert, 1964) Dir. Michelangelo Antonioni

### KEY QUOTE

*“Through segmentation, the script or the written assemblage of visual ideas ceases to be literature and becomes cinema.”*

— Luis Bunuel, “Decoupage, or Cinematic Segmentation”, Essay 1928

### STUDIO PROMPT

“How is a drama scene constructed; and what are the theoretical traditions, functional imperatives, and expressive possibilities associated with the terms, “coverage” and “decoupage”?”

The term “coverage” has, at the very least, two distinct meanings, each with significantly divergent connotations. The first relates to the practice of capturing a dramatic scene as scripted: “Is the scene covered?”; “Do we have sufficient coverage?” This usage alludes to functionality and industrial efficiency, and is closely associated with the notion of the supremacy of a script, or “text as blueprint”. The other (often parallel) meaning is more to do with the expressive potential, and uniquely cinematic application and effects of the process of segmentation.

This studio will investigate coverage / scene construction / decoupage in narrative film production from both a theoretical perspective, and a highly practical one. Outcomes have the potential to contribute to a specific dimension in film appreciation and future academic research, together with a better-informed approach to the problems of practical, creative filmmaking.

### STUDIO LEADER BIO

Robin Plunkett is a cinematographer. He has worked in all capacities in camera departments for more than 35 years. He also has experience as a producer, director (of non-fiction) and editor. For the last several years, he has been teaching elements of cinematography, and film production in general, at the VCA and RMIT.

# TRUTH BE TOLD

## NONFICTION MEDIA PRODUCTION IN A POST-TRUTH WORLD

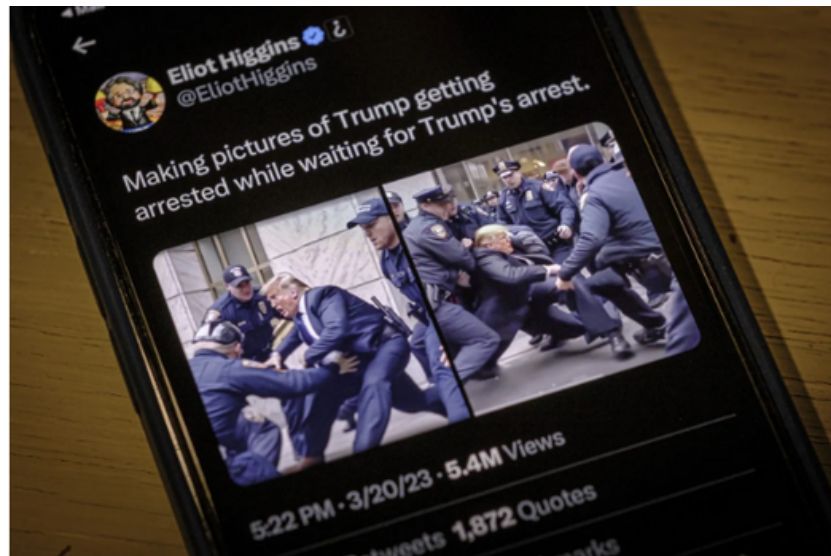


IMAGE CREDIT: J. DAVID AKE—AP IMAGES

### KEY QUOTE

*Post-truth amounts to a form of ideological supremacy, whereby its practitioners are trying to compel someone to believe in something whether there is good evidence for it or not.*

— McIntyre, Lee C. *Post-Truth*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2018.

### STUDIO PROMPT

What threats are posed by misinformation? How might documentary be a useful tool to explore (and explain) these threats?

We live in an unsettling time. Traditional news is often biased, lies go viral (and unchecked) on social media, and AI creates sound and vision of events that never happened. With all this false and misleading information on the rise, RMIT FactLab is a research hub building awareness of the real-world harm that misinformation can cause.

In *Truth be Told*, students will consider how short documentaries might be a useful tool to explore (and explain) misinformation. The first half of the semester

finds students meeting with the team at RMIT FactLab, and engaging in screenings, discussions and reflective tasks. Students will also evaluate and improve their own media production skills in a series of instructor-led technical exercises. In the second half of semester, students will work in small groups to devise, pitch and produce a major work germinated by the activities of RMIT FactLab. Unless otherwise negotiated, this major work will be submitted as a high-definition documentary of 4–5 minutes duration.

### STUDIO LEADER BIO

Rohan Spong is a writer, director and cinematographer whose feature length films *ALL THE WAY THROUGH EVENING* (2012) and *WINTER AT WESTBETH* (2016) have been released in cinemas (Australia, New Zealand & US), been broadcast on television (ABC, SBS, FOXTEL, 7PLUS, and PBS/WORLD), acquired by streaming services (Binge, DocPlay) and selected by numerous film festivals (including MIFF, Sydney Film Festival, DOCNYC). His work has also been programmed at cultural institutions including ACMI, MONA, Boston Museum of Art, Lincoln Center (NYC) and the US Library of Congress.

# TOGETHER IN ELECTRIC DREAMS

NEW ADVENTURES IN HUMAN COLLABORATION (WITH AI)



Still from 'Quadra Luminaries' (2023) TJ, Sam, Noel, Zoe, Grace and Holly, RMIT Media students

## KEY QUOTE

*"The application of GenAI to TV and film production is fundamentally about 'syntheticization,' replacing physical and labor-intensive elements of the production process — sets, locations, vehicles, lighting, cameras, costumes, make-up and people, both in front and behind the camera — with synthetic elements, made by a computer. This is much more efficient, but it requires a tradeoff with quality control. Each pixel created by a computer delegates some human oversight and judgment to AI."*

— Shapiro (2023) "Is GenAI a Sustaining or Disruptive Innovation in Hollywood? Progressive Syntheticization vs. Progressive Control"

## STUDIO PROMPT

How can we emphasise the strengths of human collaboration when learning about AI-assisted media? What even is "generative AI" and its capabilities for making video, sound and text? What are the ethical, social, and philosophical implications of generative AI?

It's 2027: a lone child creates a viral short film by prompting with AI tools on their smartphone. The script, all actor performances, environments and soundtrack are AI-generated. Hollywood is scared. Back to 2024: as media scholars, how can we become well-versed with current generative AI tools while making use of one of the greatest aspects of media making ever: human collaboration?

In our studio, we will brainstorm ideas through discussion and engage in script readings, acting, and improvisation. We will listen to and discuss sound-art, music and conduct field recordings and sound experiments with AI. We will film real-world scenes with actors (including ourselves) and process the footage with AI tools. We will

critique each other's work, offering encouragement, praise, but also ideas for improvement. We will attend screenings, shows and art galleries, exploring how media can foster community and dialogue about important issues of today. AI will get a seat at the table but will not dominate.

We will explore media history, ethics and philosophy to help us make sense of the changing nature of media production and society's consumption of AI-generated media. End of semester major projects may take the form of a short film, live performance, music video, interactive installation, a chatbot or a form never seen before.

## STUDIO LEADER BIO

Alan Nguyen is an international-award-winning writer and director. He writes for TV and streaming (Disney+, Apple TV, NBCU, ABC, SBS), live performance (Melbourne Theatre Company, Arts House) and works with new emerging technologies such as VR, AR and AI (Australia Council for the Arts, EyeJack). He is a Lecturer in media at RMIT. [alannguyen.net](http://alannguyen.net)

## STUDIO COLLABORATOR BIO

Joel Stern is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the School of Media and Communication at RMIT, and an Associate Editor at Disclaimer journal. With a background in experimental music, Stern's work — spanning research, curation, and art — focuses on practices of sound and listening and how these shape our contemporary worlds. His current work focuses on 'machine listening' and the relationship between sound and the politics of automation and AI. From 2013–2022 he was the Artistic Director of sonic art organisation Liquid Architecture. [machinelisting.exposed/curriculum/](http://machinelisting.exposed/curriculum/)

# VISUAL BLUEPRINT

## ART OF FILM SYMMETRY: CREATING AESTHETIC PERFECTION THROUGH MICRO CINEMA



Timothée Chalamet and Lyna Khoudri in *The French Dispatch* (2021, Dir. Wes Anderson)

### KEY QUOTE

*"The plots of Kubrick's adaptations are often constituted by tableaux vivants. The features of classical Hollywood narrative are implicitly sacrificed in the name of the auteur's style: the scenes are linked through stylistic choices that create an aesthetically superb diegetic world."*

— Elisa Pezzotta, *Stanley Kubrick: Adapting the Sublime*, 2013

### STUDIO PROMPT

How might focusing on visualizing your story, not merely as a textual narrative, but as a blueprint for a visual medium, provide tangible filmmaking tips and techniques?

Understanding the visual narrative approach of auteurs like Stanley Kubrick or Wes Anderson, offers more than just an appreciation of their distinctive style—it also provides tangible tips and techniques that aspiring filmmakers can incorporate into their own films such as the importance of visualizing your story, writing a screenplay, and seeing your script not merely as a textual narrative, but as a blueprint for a visual medium. Consider how the scenes will look, how the characters will appear, and how the settings can enhance the storyline. Much like Anderson's meticulously detailed descriptions and aesthetic, eye-pleasing shots in *"The Grand Budapest Hotel"* (2014) and *"The French Dispatch"* (2021), using vivid and precise visual language can help create a clear vision of the final product.

This studio will embrace the 'show, don't tell' principle; a tip gleaned from Anderson's work. It's easy to rely on dialogue and exposition to convey information, but utilizing visuals can often be more effective and engaging and encourages that we look for opportunities to visually communicate character traits, plot points, and emotions. Visual storytelling often makes the narrative more dynamic and immersive.

Enabled by exploration of traditional cinema and a range of cloud software and apps, this studio will provide a comprehensive overview of the development of visually compelling micro-short filmmaking, the techniques used to produce cinematic short video content and the industry opportunities for filmmaking and film production. Micro-short Films are most commonly live action narratives using fiction storytelling, just condensed. However, the format is also suitable for documentary, animation, music videos, experimental films, and more. The only real requirement is that they tell a full story arc or deliver a concept within a tiny timeframe.

This course will be a comprehensive orientation to this field, delving into a wide range of theories and histories of visual storytelling, while grounding students in an introduction to contemporary tools and techniques. In this studio, students will create film, video and audio work that will potentially include an exploration of media applications and approaches such as colour theory, one-point perspective, film symmetry, the golden curve, chroma keying, LUTs and plugins as well as traditional filmmaking & Foley techniques. The class will be a blend of discourse, discussion, and practical experimentation.

### STUDIO LEADER BIO

Cat Lew is a Video Artist, Sound Designer, Audio Engineer and Educator. She has a diverse creative practice, having produced video art and sound design for Melbourne Fringe Festival, West Projection Festival, Incinerator Gallery, Mesma Studio, Cinema Viscera, City of Melbourne and City of Maribyrnong. Her large-scale collaborative audio-visual work was recently part of an art exhibition for Creative Brimbank. She currently teaches digital media, film & sound editing and design at VU Polytechnic, the Australian Centre for the Moving Image and RMIT.