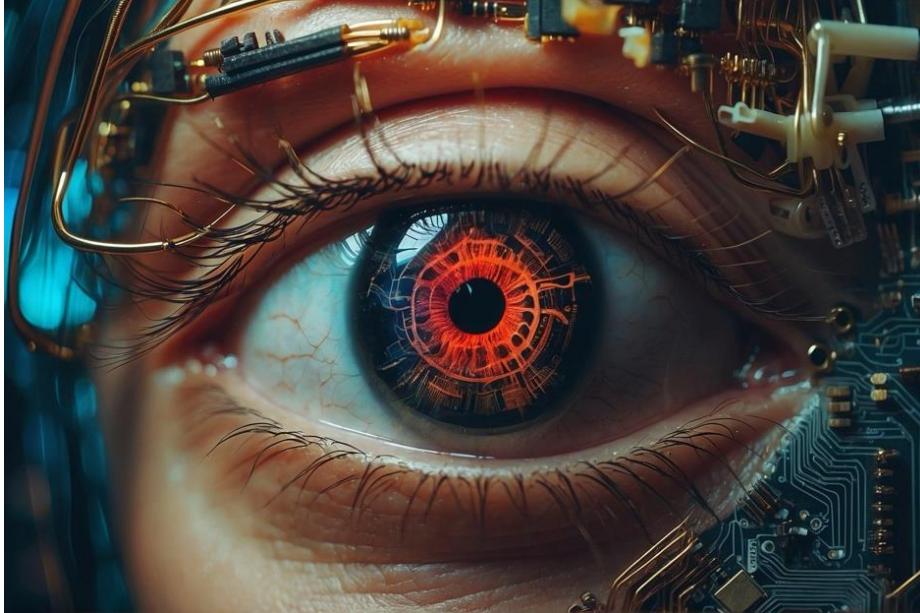


MEDIA STUDIO DESCRIPTIONS

SEMESTER 2, 2024

AUGMENTING CREATIVITY

Generative AI and Everyday Media Practice



Generated using Leonardo.Ai from the prompt

"human eye closeup augmented with wired implant circuit board"

KEY QUOTES

"[W]e stand on the precipice of a new era where AI is not just a tool but a powerful ally, fine-tuned and optimized to enhance our work in the most meaningful ways."

-Leo S. Lo (2023), 'The Art and Science of Prompt Engineering: A New Literacy in the Information Age', *Internet Reference Services Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 203–210.

"[T]he problem with the current AI bubble [is] that so much of its success requires us to tolerate and applaud half-finished tools that only sort of, kind of do the things they're meant to do, nodding approvingly and saying "great job!" like we're talking to a child rather than a startup with \$13 billion in funding with a CEO that has the backing of *fucking Microsoft*."

-Ed Zitron (13 May 2024), 'Expectations Versus Reality', *Ed Zitron's Where's Your Ed At*, viewed 15 May 2024, <<https://www.wheresyoured.at/expectations-versus-reality/>>.

STUDIO QUESTION

How can we leverage generative artificial intelligence to augment creative workflows in ethical and sustainable ways?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

From automating the boring stuff to inspiring new methods and modes of concept development and content generation, generative artificial intelligence (genAI) has – in a very short span of time and for better or worse – dug its claws into the creative industries.

This studio explores, tests, and activates generative AI tools in various media contexts. You will use generative AI technology in your making, your writing, and your project management. In addition, you will gain insights into the current state of AI technology and its industry, from hybrid media art practices and grassroots, open-source tools, all the way up to Big Tech mega-conglomerates and their quest for artificial general intelligence. You will combine these insights with your own research to communicate to a wider audience in various ways.

You will develop your own genAI-inflected workflows, and implement these in the conception and production of your own creative works. The studio will develop your media-making skills across various forms and formats, and advance the criticality and quality of your reflective writing.

This studio is partnered with Leonardo.Ai, an Australian technology company building AI tools for storytellers and creatives. You will also be hearing from and working with industry and academic guests from Canva and the ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society.

In this studio you will:

- discover some foundational concepts in computer science, AI and software development
- test genAI tools and workflows, evaluating them in the production of your own media work/s
- understand media theory and concepts at intermediate level
- develop intermediate-level skills in media-making, research, writing, and critical reflection

STUDIO LEADER

Daniel Binns is a tinkerer-theorist exploring creative technologies' impact on storytelling and media cultures. A leading scholar on digital creativity and media practices, Daniel has published on Netflix documentary style, drones and game engines in filmmaking, and the evolution of media genres including the war film and superhero media; his two monographs to date are *The Hollywood War Film* (2017) and *Material Media-Making in the Digital Age* (2021). Daniel's creative practice background includes screenwriting, directing, and producing for Seven Network, TV2, Fox Sports and National Geographic, and his work has featured in over 20 international festivals and streaming platforms.

DECODING AI, AUTOMATING SOCIETIES

Understanding automation and AI
in everyday life



KEY QUOTES

“AI and ADM systems, technologies and devices do not and cannot exist independently or autonomously from human thought, embodiment and action. They are always inextricable from humans; they are entangled within social relationships, cultural contexts and human-made infrastructures and institutions”

-Pink et.al. (eds) (2022), *Everyday Automation: Experiencing and Anticipating Emerging Technologies*,
Routledge, New York.

STUDIO QUESTION

What are the uses and challenges of automated decision-making (ADM) and AI systems in the ways they intersect with our everyday lives?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

The word 'automation' conjures up images of giant machines or production lines, but automated decision-making (or ADM), of which AI is often an integral part, has long been a ubiquitous aspect of our everyday lives in ways both subtle and profound. AI and ADM now play roles in many aspects of society, including but not limited to health, transport, social services and our news and media.

In this partnered studio with the ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making + Society, you will explore the impact of AI and ADM on the everyday. As we unpack what AI and ADM in the everyday entails, you will develop projects that demystify this for others. We will ask questions such as, 'What are the productive uses of automated decision-making and AI and what are the ethical implications of these uses?' and 'How has AI and automation been represented in media and popular culture, and how accurate are these representations?'

You will have the opportunity to hear from leading academics in the field as you develop and investigate your own research questions. Projects include the development of short video essays that engage with an area of research of the Centre for Excellence, translating and communicating your own research as well as key findings and projects from the ARC Centre. As a result of taking this studio, you will develop and strengthen your understanding of how we use and talk about AI in our daily lives. You will also know how to create engaging video projects that communicate key ideas to a wider audience.

STUDIO LEADER

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.

DIRECTING PERFORMANCE

Investigating screen acting performance as a core component



Tiny Darlings (2022, Dir. Sebastian Bertoli)

KEY QUOTE

"Storytelling is, plain and simple, a performing art."

-Mackendrick, A. On Filmmaking: An Introduction To The Craft Of The Director, 2004

STUDIO QUESTIONS

How do you draw out profound and nuanced performances from actors as a director? How can you build collaborative relationships on set, working together to breathe life into the characters in your story?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

This studio offers a journey of discovery for directors in understanding character, communicating with actors and eliciting rich, nuanced performances from them. It will be a cultivated space where we will explore the imaginative, unexpected, and connected work of performance and your role and responsibilities as a director in this space.

Techniques under investigation will include script analysis, improvisation and character backstory. In this studio you will gain insight into the processes of auditioning, rehearsal and performance.

Often in the filmmaking process there can be a myopic, and often reductive, focus solely on the technical aspects - at the cost of story and performance. In this studio we will be studying the journey of collaborating with actors to bring the stories you direct to life. Throughout the semester you will experiment, research, practice and discover processes utilised in directing performance.

Undertaking a series of experiments and investigations, studio members will broaden and deepen their understanding of directing performance through active and experiential learning strategies both in front and behind the camera.

In the last third of the semester you will initiate your own series of film projects, undertaking practical implementation of strategies we have explored to that point. Working both in and out of class you will develop a common language, cultivating robust and synergetic relationships with your actors, breathing life into characters and inspiring truly memorable performances.

STUDIO LEADER

Sebastian is an award-winning filmmaker, editor and actor. He has worked worldwide as an actor, appearing in large-scale productions from HBO, DreamWorks, Playtone, Bad Robot, Warner Bros Television, Fremantle Media, ABC and SBS.

Sebastian has a keen interest in various modalities, creative and technical styles. He has directed a feature film, a dozen shorts and web episodes, exploring both naturalistic and stylised genre work. His background as an actor informs his keen focus on story and character, digging deep for the beating human heart at the core of the story.

Currently, he is in postproduction for feature film "We Will Never Die", which he is directing, co-editing and plays a supporting role in.

www.sebastianbertoli.com / www.panopticoncollective.com

DOCUMENTARY PATHWAYS

Documentary Storytelling and Distribution



Trinh T. Minh-ha on set of 'A Tale of Love' (1995)

KEY QUOTE

"Resistance and change often begin in art"

-Ursula Le Guin

STUDIO QUESTION

What are the formulas for successful documentary pitches and possible pathways to funding and audiences?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

This studio offers an overview of documentary storytelling, pitching and distribution. In this studio, you will learn how to write and pitch a successful documentary proposal to industry standard, including the production of an electronic press kit and proof of concept teaser.

Some of the skills and topics covered will include:

- Understanding and developing documentaries with a particular focus on social impact documentaries
- Identifying, researching and mapping possible projects
- Storytelling skills
- How to develop and deliver a successful impact campaign alongside a documentary film
- Duty of care and the ethical responsibilities do filmmaking teams have to their subjects
- Pathways to finance, the philanthropic sector and partnerships
- Campaign implementation and outreach
- Documentary distribution and locating audiences

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

- What are the techniques and approaches that will make your project stand out in the industry?
- What does the process of project development and distribution involve for documentary filmmakers?
-

STUDIO LEADER

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*.

INVISIBLE ENVIRONMENTS

Experiments in Eco-Media



Image source: *Surface Levels* (Hannah Brasier, 2023)

KEY QUOTE

Attuning...invokes a particular sensitivity — receptive and curious, careful and attentive. A deliberately hesitant engagement with other entities; from quivering butterfly wings to earth-shattering volcanoes. A kind of "ecological intimacy".

-Kuzmanovic, M., & Gaffney, N. (2019). Dust & Shadow Reader #2: Attunement. FoAM - Earth.

STUDIO QUESTIONS

How can we create ecologically conscious media?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

We feel dangerously close yet physically distanced from what's happening in the environment. Media coverage evokes a simultaneous understanding of the seriousness of climate change and failure to act. In a recent ABC podcast media-makers considered facts inaccessible and story too subjective in capturing the complexity of climate change. What experimental approaches to nonfiction production will allow us to capture these shifting environments as a sensory experience for audiences? In *Invisible Environments* you will craft sensory media works which aim to "feel, perceive, detect, apprehend [and] grasp with the senses" the environments around us (Demos et al., 2021, p. 149).

Through practices of noticing curiously, you will create media which sense environments intimately. In the first half of the semester, you will make weekly sketches which experiment with how various digital tools, modes of making and media forms can attend to the vibrant, precarious, entangled, damaged, and dynamic qualities of the world. For your major assessment, in the second half of the semester, you will develop a compelling experimental, documentary or interactive nonfiction project which through its appreciation of an environment, elicits hope in the face of climate crisis. You will leave *Invisible Environments* with the conceptual and technical skills necessary to craft ecologically conscious media.

STUDIO LEADER

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 recent short film, *Surface Levels* (2023) screened at ACMI as part of the Australian Environments on Screen commission, see: <https://australianenvironmentsonscreen.org/surface-levels/>

MEMORY SCREEN:

Inhabiting Histories of Old and New Media Art



Image: Media Burn by ANTFARM, 1975

SEARCH TERMS

'Art History', 'Transmission', 'Media Art', 'Poor Images', 'Video Art', 'Networked Body', 'Lens Based Media', 'Old and New Media', 'Time Based Art', 'Re-performance and Reenactment',

STUDIO QUESTIONS

By looking at the history of Media Art how can we develop new and creative concepts that extend and enhance our creative choices as media makers? Don't reinvent the wheel, the pencil, the television or any old media for that matter; see the past in detail to create new media works that have well-rounded and historically grounded origins. What are the similarities and differences between old and new media? How can exploration of the historical legacy of media art inform our creative choices today? Where do the crossovers lie between historical Video Art, Streaming Performance, Collage, Appropriation and the tools and practices of today?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

Applying a historical interpretation to media of the 20th and 21st centuries, this studio will deliver a smash-and-grab re-telling of the development of Old and New Media. Zooming from early experimental movements like DaDa and Surrealism, to the new 'anti-monumental' artistic forms offered by Fluxus and Performance Art, and teleporting through to Streaming Performances and Post-Internet Art, this studio will be a nosebleed time-warp through artistic avant-gardes that have shaped our understanding of the world through the screen, body and hand. By applying a historical perspective to the creation of new works, this studio offers students fresh ground to create their own works informed by the deep historical legacies of earlier times.

We will attend exhibitions, screenings and talks where relevant and students can deliver final outcomes that may be short films, video art, mediated performances or exhibitions.

STUDIO LEADER

Emile Zile is an artist, filmmaker and performer.

Utilising the overlooked remnants of network culture to create his performances, films and exhibitions, his work engages with the boundaries of language to explore contemporary digital selfhood. In 2019 he undertook full time practice-based doctoral research at Digital Ethnography Research Centre, RMIT. Developing major public artistic outcomes during the course of his study, his research elaborated on the role of gesture and non-verbal communication within social media platforms and their relationship to the the first wave of lens-based Contemporary video art. He was awarded his PhD in 2023.

Recent exhibitions, screenings and performances of his have included QUAI10 Belgium, NGV Triennale, LIMA Amsterdam and Artshouse Melbourne. His work is profiled in *Australiana to Zeitgeist: an A to Z of Australian Contemporary Art 2017* published by Thames and Hudson and is included in *Routledge Companion to Mobile Media Art 2020*.

<http://www.emilezile.com>

PERFORMING FUTURES

Speculative thinking, creative performances



image: still from performance 'Half Life' by Cloud Eye Control

KEY QUOTES

“Whenever we try to envision a world without war, without violence, without prisons, without capitalism, we are engaging in speculative fiction”

-Walidah Imarisha, 2015, *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*

“[E]ngagement with the future is an encounter with a non-tangible and invisible world that nevertheless has real and material consequences”

-Adam & Groves, 2007, *Future matters: Action, knowledge, ethics*

STUDIO QUESTIONS

How can creative activities, such as live performance, help us imagine, visualise and embody hopeful futures? Can creative activities help artist-participants and audiences build resilience and adapt to challenges we might encounter in the future? How can media be used in novel and innovative ways in the context of live performance?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

We will explore various practices, theories and frameworks that explore notions of the future: speculative fiction, speculative design and futures studies.

We will explore the relationship between speculative fiction of various forms (e.g. sci-fi books and movies) and our present realities — noting that, in some cases, fiction has predicted, or even influenced reality.

We will experiment with various techniques that seek to explore the future: forecasting, experiential futures, future artifacts and future-focused social simulations.

We will evaluate and analyse contemporary predictions about various aspects of the future: the environment, technology, relationships, work, fashion and food.

We will examine approaches and techniques of integrating media in theatre, dance, live music and live-art. We will study examples of live performance that use media in innovative ways. We will conduct technical experiments of our own.

We will touch on various traditions that feed into live performance: writing for stage, acting, movement and dance.

Studio participants will work in groups to realise live performances that depict possible futures.

STUDIO LEADERS

Alan Nguyen is a lecturer, researcher and international-award-winning writer, director, artist and designer. He writes for TV and streaming (Apple TV, Disney+, NBCU, ABC, SBS), live performance (Melbourne Theatre Company, Arts House) and develops and works with emerging technologies such as AI, VR and AR (Creative Australia, EyeJack). Examples of his work at:

alannquyen.net

Dr Sam Mcgilp is a new media artist and researcher based on Wurundjeri country in Naarm. He works with emerging technologies to create new dramaturgies of live performance, working collaboratively with Harrison Hall, Alisdair Macindoe, NAXS Future (Taiwan), Lu Yang (China), and Kazuhiko Hiwa and Makoto Uemura (Japan). Since 2022, Sam's artistic work has been presented at Arts House, Sydney Opera House, ACMI, Zerospace New York, Asia Culture Centre Gwangju, The Substation, MIFF and Digital Art Centre

<https://www.sammcgilp.com/>

REAL PEOPLE, REEL LIVES

Interview-based documentary production



WINTER AT WESTBETH (2016, dir. Rohan Spong)

KEY QUOTE

"I start interviewing people and then slowly but surely, a movie insinuates itself."

– Errol Morris, *AVClub*, 2008.

STUDIO QUESTION

What technical concerns and ethical issues arise when we interview people about their lives?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

In *REAL PEOPLE, REEL LIVES*, students will engage in a variety of activities (including class discussion, media production, and reflective writing) that consider the use of interview in documentary film.

In the first half of the semester, students will reflect on the (very different) approaches to interview taken by Errol Morris and Molly Dineen, before developing a code of conduct for their own filming of human participants. Practical classes will assist students in evaluating and honing their media production skills.

The second half of the semester finds students working in small groups to devise, pitch and produce a major nonfiction work with interview at its core. It is encouraged that this major work is a short documentary of 5 minutes duration but there is also scope to create a print or transmedia artefact. This major work can be about *any* subject.

Documentaries produced in previous semesters of this studio have found their way to SBS, ACMI, Melbourne Queer Film Festival, Multicultural Film Festival and St Kilda Film Festival.

STUDIO LEADER

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

You can read more about his work at www.rohanspong.com.

SHOCK! A NEW HORROR!

Exploring horror film through a contemporary lens



Jordan Peele's 'Get Out' (Source: <https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/2/24/14698632/get-out-review-jordan-peepe>)

KEY QUOTE

'Just because it's a horror film doesn't mean it can't be deep.'

—Jennifer Kent

Australian Screen in the 2000s, edited by Mark David Ryan, and Ben Goldsmith, Springer International Publishing AG, 2018

STUDIO QUESTION

What is 'post-horror' and is it really a new genre? How do horror films historically explore deeper themes and meanings, and how has this shifted in modern horror films to give voice to underrepresented stories and characters, and push the style, structures, and tropes of horror films to new territory?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

From Jennifer Kent's *The Babadook*, to Jordan Peele's *Get Out*, Ari Aster's *Hereditary*, and Robert Egger's *The Witch*, is a new style of horror emerging? Some terms being explored for these modern horrors are 'art horror', 'elevated horror', or 'post-horror'. The commonality of these films can include: an 'arthouse style' that depart from more 'commercial' representations of horror, a focus on rich emotional character journeys, and a direct or metaphorical exploration of deeper themes, often where the horror speaks to current cultural and/or socio-political issues.

But is this in fact a new lens of horror, or a reframing of traditional horror cinema? We will take a journey through modern 'post-horror' films, all the way back to horror classics such as Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, the bold stylings of Italian 'Giallo' horror such as Dario Argento's *Suspiria*, and 1920s silent film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, to unpack ways in which the traditions of the horror genre informs this new 'post-horror' movement. We'll then use this research to construct our own 'post-horror' short film ideas, that bear relevance to our own current contexts, and continue to subvert the genre both stylistically and thematically.

In this studio, you will first research and explore traditional and 'post-horror' cinema. From this exploration you'll write your own post-horror short film, and then following a pitch of everyone's projects, form groups to turn the chosen scripts into new and exciting post-horror films!

STUDIO LEADER

Tim Marshall is an award-winning writer/director. In 2013, his short film *Gorilla* won the Iris Prize, the world's largest LGBTQIA+ short film prize. His short film *Followers*, screened in competition at Sundance, SXSW, and as part of the Accelerator program at MIFF 2015.

Tim's first feature, queer psychological horror, *In the Room Where He Waits* is releasing mid 2024, after its world premiere at Mardi Gras Film Festival 2024, where it was one of Variety's Top 5 Picks for the Festival

As a screenwriter, Tim has learned from the very best script consultants including Andrew Ellard (writer, *IT Crowd*, *Red Dwarf*), and Lynne Vincent McCarthy (script editor, *The Babadook*).

Tim was selected for Screen Australia's inaugural *Talent USA* program in 2027, and the *Film Independent Directing Lab* in 2018, which included mentorship from Barry Jenkins (*Moonlight*), and Chloe Zhao (*Nomadland*).

You can check out his work at www.tdmfilm.com

THINKING WITH PICTURES

The Personal Essay Film



KEY QUOTES

"... one way to think about the essay film is as a meeting ground for documentary, avant-garde and art film impulses"

-Paul Arthur 2003

"Straddling fiction and nonfiction, news reports and confessional autobiography, documentaries and experimental film, they are, first, practices that undo and redo film form, visual perspectives, public geographies, temporal organizations, and notions of truth and judgment within the complexity of experience"

-Timothy Corrigan 2011

STUDIO QUESTION

The essay film is a hybrid form that falls between different genres of filmmaking. How can we work with this flexible form to make innovative, personal films that speak about the world, and our place in it?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

In this studio, you will each make a short personal essay film. The essay film has been used to explore everything from major political and social justice issues, to small scale, intimate films that engage with filmmakers' personal histories. It's a form that is hard to pin down – it's usually non-fiction, but not necessarily a documentary. It can contain fictional elements, or it can seem more like an experimental film. It can contain different forms and styles in the one film, and combine them together in complex and compelling ways. Crucially, it's a form that values experimentation, playfulness, and the use of the filmmaker's personal voice. A key marker of the form is "an overtly personal, in-depth, thought-provoking reflection". (Laura Rascaroli (2009)

This studio brings together watching films, analysis, critical reflection, reading, writing, and practical filmmaking. Together we will develop your own five minute essay film, which you will make in the second half of the semester.

STUDIO LEADER

Liz Burke is an award winning documentary maker and film producer. Her documentary work has covered topics, such as climate change, capital punishment, and disability activism. Her work includes *Just Punishment* (2006) for ABC-TV, *The First Wave* (2008) for Engage Media, *Missing in the Land of Gods* (2012), nominated for Best Australian Documentary at the Sydney Film Festival, and Best International Documentary at the International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam, *Helen Garner's Monkey Grip* (2014), for ABC-TV, and *Defiant Lives* (2017) for ABC-TV.

She has recently completed a practice led Ph.D. about the interactive film as a form of the personal essay film, which included the production of *Aliens Among Us: a Film about People and their Dogs* (2021). She is also the co-editor of *Constructions of the Real: Intersections of Documentary-based Film Practice and Theory* (2023) published by Intellect.

WEIRD FEELINGS

Experimenting with Media Art



Generative image responding to the prompt 'Media students experimenting with digital media'" – DeepAI, Milsom

KEY QUOTE

"Digital technologies have provoked a litany of uncertainties"

– Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli

STUDIO QUESTION

How can experimental practices express the strange, ambiguous and uncertain sensations of digital media?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

This studio is about the strange sensations of digital media. As the internet and the everyday bleed into each other, humans and machines collide. An algorithm tracks your every move, your ghost inside a screen. As the real and the unreal intertwine, weird feelings arise. In this studio we will trace weird feelings like the uncanny, the eerie and the surreal through a variety of cinematic and artistic forms. We will make media that explores the uncertain feelings of the digital through experimentation.

We often associate experimentation with negative feelings: a failed test or an unfinished draft. On the other hand, experimentation is innovative, pushing our thinking and making in new and unexpected directions. How do artists that make hybrid, marginal and expanded forms of media break from tradition and play with new forms? We will watch and analyse art that experiments with form, medium, technology and style, and learn how to translate an idea, a hunch or an inkling to practice.

We don't always know what to say, think, make or feel, about the increasingly digital aspects of contemporary life. Steven Levy suggests a "hacker ethos" of "taking things apart, seeing how they work, and using this knowledge to create new and even more interesting things" is key to understanding new media technology. In this studio you will try things out to see what happens, developing skills for producing and analysing experimental media art.

STUDIO LEADER

Stephanie Milsom is a research-practitioner interested in how autobiographical media feels. Her interdisciplinary research practice uses diarist making to explore the sensations of internet metadata. Steph teaches into the Media program at RMIT University, where she is also completing her PhD. Her research has featured locally and internationally at Digital Intimacies, NonfictionNOW and The Association for Internet Researchers.

ZEPHYR

#video #melbourne #creatives

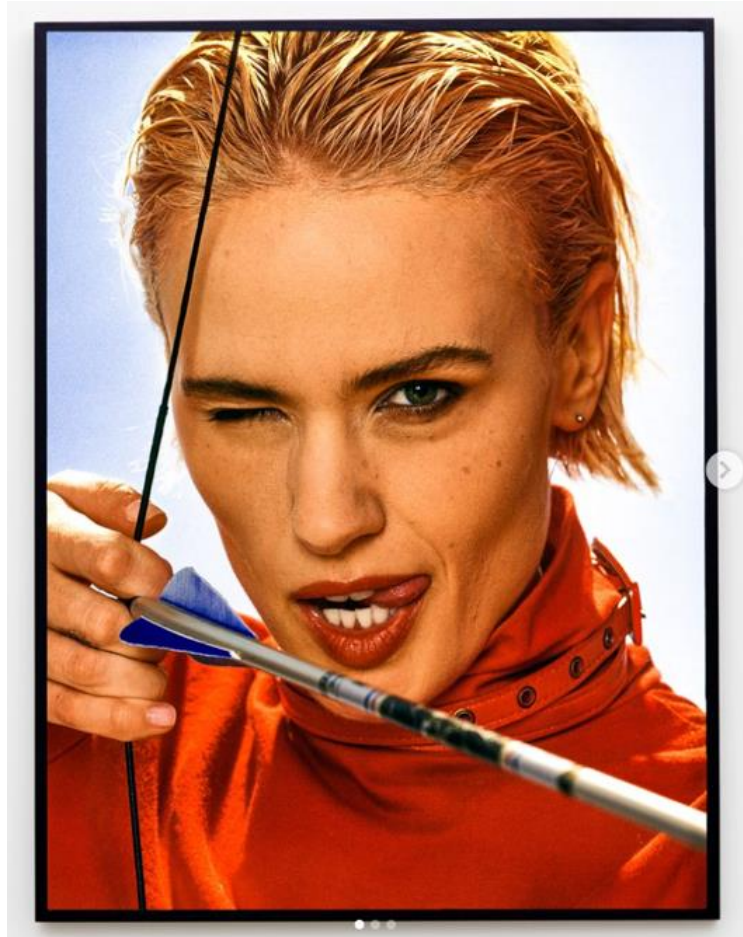


Image: Neon Parc, *The Doom Buggies*, [screenshot], Darren Sylvester photo
https://www.instagram.com/p/C3dwpSYo0HW/?hl=en&img_index=3

STUDIO PROMPT

How can video authentically portray the depth and complexity of creative processes and practices?

KEY QUOTE

"Their narratives led the structure of each film, with associated visuals and performance footage to show ideas."

Turner L (2010) *TateShots: Exploring Connections Between Music & Art*, *The Quietus: Culture Countered*,
<https://thequietus.com/culture/art/nicola-probert-tateshots-series-the-fall-cosey-fanni-tutti-billy-childish/>

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

In this collaborative studio, participants will have the opportunity to develop and produce a social video docuseries. These intimate portraits will spotlight various Melbourne creatives' artistic philosophies, practices, and works, from the well-known to the emerging, across multiple disciplines, such as visual art, writing, poetry, music, dance, filmmaking, architecture, and more.

Inspiration for this studio is drawn from the acclaimed artist interview series TateShots, published on YouTube and Instagram. The videos will be structured in each episode with two core elements: relaxed one-on-one A Roll conversation held in creatives' studios, performance spaces, or other environments suited to their practices and constructed B Roll imagery that depicts the materials, methods, textures, and works of each profiled creative in an evocative way.

In this studio, you'll gain experience in researching and identifying engaging creator participants, conducting pre-interviews, developing interview questions, designing AV kits, conducting tests and planning the recording, logging rushes and constructing interview-driven edits, digging deep in Premiere, and evolving and iterating the post-production for your portfolios and potential publication, including horizontal and vertical video versions.

STUDIO LEADER

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. You can see his documentaries, short films, experimental videos, interactive media and software development projects at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sethkeen/>.

PHANTOM CINEMA

“Unmade” movies, cinema histories, the ephemerality of moviegoing and 100 years of the Capitol Theatre



Image of the Capitol Theatre, 1924

KEY QUOTES

“The cinema is an invention without a future.”

(statement widely attributed to cinema pioneer Louis Lumière and quoted by Jean-Luc Godard in *Le mépris/Contempt*, 1963)

“[T]he best cinema that has ever been built or is ever likely to be built.”

(statement about the Capitol Theatre from celebrated mid-20th century Melbourne architect, Robin Boyd)

STUDIO QUESTION

How can we use histories of particular cinemas (specifically the Capitol Theatre), lost, unmade, partly imagined, non-existent and incomplete “films”, ideas about the “death of cinema”, and our own and others’ ephemeral practices of filmgoing and film watching to create and inspire new works and responses across a range of media forms?

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

How can we document or represent the many histories of cinema? The evocative term “phantom cinema” suggests many different possibilities, from those films that were planned and never made to the cinemas themselves that no longer exist (or that continue to survive in revitalised or partial forms like the 100-year-old Capitol Theatre). In some respects, the history of those films that were never made, the cinemas that no longer survive, the movies that only exist inside other movies (say the films partly imagined in a film like Quentin Tarantino’s *Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood*), the ephemeral practices of movie watching and going, and the works made by filmmakers and photographers such as Guy Maddin, Tsai Ming-Liang and Cindy Sherman that respond to this “loss”, are larger, richer, more evocative and, in some cases, more important than what survives. These spaces (for example, cinemas that have been repurposed or abandoned) and artefacts (for example, scripts for films that were never made) also provide creative opportunities for writers, curators, and media makers to imagine and work with these lost, unmade or ephemerally conceived projects. These histories and realities also feed into the discourses around the “death of cinema” that have once again taken centre stage in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of streaming, highlighting profound, seemingly unprecedented changes in technology, audience habits, and artistic practice.

This studio will examine this notion of “phantom cinema” through an exploration of a range of different media and approaches – from video essays and documentaries on particular spaces and places to curated exhibitions, events and screenings. It will explore the ways in which media makers, writers, and curators have responded to these counter-histories by imagining and representing “stills” for movies that don’t exist (see the work of Cindy Sherman), exploring the physical archaeology of the cinema space itself, recording soundtracks for not-quite existing movies (see the work of Brian Eno and many others), consciously reshaping and diversifying the canon, proffering bold alternate histories (see, for example, Ryan Murphy and Ian Brennan’s *Hollywood*), remixing, and completing unfinished works in the style (or not) of their original creators. A key aspect of this studio will be an interrogation and opening up of this generally unexplored field to incorporate a range of potential responses, helping address issues of authorship, diversity, and who has been sanctioned to create work at particular points in time. In this regard, it is important to note that the notion of “unmade”, “unseen” or “phantom” media also allows us to imagine and reincorporate other(ed) possibilities, representations, and practices. It will use the Capitol Theatre – and the opportunities afforded by its 100th anniversary – as the key site to explore and imagine these alternative, official and hidden histories as well as ideas around the “death” of cinema.

This studio will work closely with several key resources and partners at RMIT including the Capitol Theatre (which will celebrate its 100th anniversary in November this year), RMIT Culture (who program and control particular assets for the Capitol), and the AFI Research Collection @ RMIT (which holds materials on some “unmade” films, the history of cinema in Melbourne, and many other things), as well as the Melbourne International Film Festival. It aims to produce work that will celebrate, research, document and creatively explore the 100th anniversary of the Capitol Theatre through a range of approaches and projects. It will also draw upon the rich cinema and media heritage of Melbourne, exploring old and new, conventional and unconventional places in which films have been shown. In so doing, it will provide a creative opportunity to explore, renew, rethink, remix, and reimagine these historical and contemporary artefacts, cultures, and approaches through research-led practice.

STUDIO LEADER

Adrian Danks is a cinephile, teacher, editor, curator, award-winning critic, and essayist. He is co-curator of the Melbourne Cinémathèque and was an editor of *Senses of Cinema* between 2000 and 2014. He is author of the edited collections *A Companion to Robert Altman* (Wiley, 2015) and *American-Australian Cinema* (Palgrave, 2018, with Steve Gaunson), and the recent monograph, *Australian International Pictures: Transnational Connections* (with Con Verevis, Edinburgh UP, 2023). He has published hundreds of essays and book chapters on cinema, and has served on the selection committees, curatorial boards, and judging panels of organisations like the Melbourne International Film Festival, ATOM, AACTA, ACMI, Experimenta, the Indonesian Film Festival, ReelDance and the Big West Festival.