

# **MEDIA STUDIO DESCRIPTIONS**

**SEMESTER 1, 2025**

**Please read through all studio descriptions and this [Studio Descriptions & Info for sem 1, 2025 blog post](#) carefully before preferencing in myTimetable.**

# BEYOND A JOKE, BEYOND A GENRE

Investigating and Creating Comedy Media



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

## KEY QUOTES

"A friend once asked me what comedy was. That floored me. What is comedy? I don't know! Does anybody?"

— Stan Laurel, quoted in Neil Grant, *Laurel & Hardy: Quote Unquote* (Bristol: Parragon, 1994), 10.

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

— Mel Brooks, quoted in Elliott Oring, *Joking Asides: The Theory, Analysis, and Aesthetics of Humor* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2016), 75.

## STUDIO QUESTION

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

## **STUDIO DESCRIPTION**

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

In this studio we will investigate the anatomy of comedy, with possible topics to include theories of humour, the comic frame, jokes, parody, satire, black comedy, anti-comedy, and post-comedy, and each week we will watch and listen to all sorts of fun(ny) things. Alongside these investigations, students will develop creative artefacts 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 hybridised, and how the comic event can be embedded in sometimes surprising locations in "non-comedy" genres and forms like drama, documentary, social media, and news.

## **STUDIO LEADER**

Bradley J. Dixon teaches and researches in media and cinema studies at RMIT, with a particular interest in comedy practice, persona, and performance. He recently completed a PhD investigating parafictional persona in comedy, or comedians playing "themselves" in fictional television, film, web series, and social media performance. He is not particularly funny.

# CONSTRAINTS AS CREATIVE FUEL

How can limitations serve as stimulus for  
inspiration and innovation?



Odette (2024), dir. Sebastian Bertoli

## KEY QUOTES

"The less you have, the more you can do with your imagination." - Chloé Zhao

"Get used to the bear behind you." - Werner Herzog

## STUDIO DESCRIPTION

This studio will delve into the world of constraint-based media making. In this studio, we will explore how limitation can serve as catalyst for expanding creative potential. By working within specific parameters, we will explore ways to think creatively and push beyond traditional boundaries.

Through practical exercises, we will embrace restrictions and discover ways to be resourceful and creative in our problem-solving. As we navigate this studio, we will challenge our assumptions about what is possible within a given set of limitations, developing skills to think creatively under pressure and to innovate by necessity.

We will not only experiment with a variety of limitations and constraints, but also with a variety of audiovisual media forms: video works incorporating both visual and audio elements, audio works and purely visual works. The one enduring requirement is that all these works have an intentional narrative focus within the work itself.

In the first half of the course, creative constraints will be stipulated as we experiment with different limitations and how they challenge us to think laterally and innovatively about media making. In the second half of the course, projects will be student-led, with small groups defining and refining their own choice of constraints, in the form of short narrative works.

Throughout the course, students will have the opportunity to reflect on their creative process, exploring how they approach challenges and overcome obstacles, as well investigating their own creative process.

## **STUDIO LEADER**

Sebastian Bertoli is a freelance creative. He works as a director, actor and sessional tutor. He is a 2017 Masters (Film & Television) graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts.

Over the last decade, he has directed over a dozen shorts and web episodes, exploring both naturalistic and stylised genre work. He is passionate about female-driven work, stories that explore themes of death, rebirth and redemption.

"Tiny Darlings" (2022), a Giallo-inspired horror short he directed, was awarded Best Fantasy at Hybrid Genre Australia, experimental horror short "Carved Into Flesh" (2019) was awarded Best Male Director, Best Cinematography and Best Editor at Aphelion Film Festival, and psychedelic road trip short "The Happiest Of My Life" (2015), awarded Best Ozploitation Short Film at the American Grindhouse Film Festival.

Music video directing credits includes clips for Ru Paul's Drag Race Down Under finalist Karen From Finance, Forest Collective and Die Roten Punkte.

In 2019 he was selected for the Directors Immersive program at CinefestOZ to pitch sci-fi feature "She Now Romeo", written by Jeni Bezuidenhout, to an industry panel.

Last year Sebastian wrapped principal photography on feature film "We Will Never Die", which he is directing and editing. The film is currently in post production.

[www.sebastianbertoli.com](http://www.sebastianbertoli.com)

[www.panopticoncollective.com](http://www.panopticoncollective.com)

# EXPLORING AUDIO NARRATIVES

Playing with audio fiction, nonfiction, and  
anything beyond/between



Jad Abumrad from *Radiolab*, performing a live show. (source: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/nov/16/radiolabs-jad-abumrad-on-podcastings-uncertain-future-supply-is-outstripping-demand>)

## KEY QUOTES

“Podcasts can move past the theoretical separation of body and mind, and become the theatre *in* the body.”

-Farokh Soltani, “Inner Ears and Distant Worlds: Podcast Dramaturgy and the Theatre of the Mind” in *Podcasting: New Aural Cultures and Digital Media*, Springer International Publishing AG, 2018, p. 206.

## STUDIO QUESTION

“What are the unique strengths of audio-only storytelling, and how can we use these strengths to create affective, impactful, and cinematic audio stories?”

## **STUDIO DESCRIPTION**

Podcasts and audio narratives are an accessible, powerful, and broad-reaching platform for telling your stories. Whether you have interests in documentaries and journalism (*Serial* 2014), fiction and screenwriting (*Homecoming* 2016), or simply reading your father's unpublished amateur erotic fiction to the world (*My Dad Wrote a Porno* 2015), podcasts can be, and most likely have been, successfully used to bring similar stories to a global audience.

But how are audio stories made? What makes audio stories good? How could your audio narratives be made, and be good? And once they're made, and 'good', where can they be published?

This studio will take you through the craft and context of audio narratives. It will provide you the time, space, and support to experiment with and create your own audio narratives (in fiction, nonfiction, and/or anything experimental, beyond and between) through small, weekly sketches and a major project in the second half of semester. It will teach you to critically listen to and analyse existing audio work to discover the unique traits that make audio a powerful medium for storytelling, and to consider how you can use those traits in your own work. It will also familiarise you with the industry context and conditions that narrative audio/podcasting currently occupies to guide you through where your work could go, in this semester and beyond!

## **STUDIO LEADER**

Eugene Yang is a writer, journalist, educator, and audio-maker based in Wurundjeri Country, interested in diasporic experience, de-assimilation, and how to cook the best spam fried rice.

Eugene has produced audio stories ABC Radio Pacific and *All the Best*, and worked as a Producer and Editorial Director at Litmus Media. His written work has been published nationally and locally in places like the ABC, SBS, The Feed, *Peril*, and *The Suburban Review*. He lectures and tutors at RMIT and has taught travel writing, journalism, and media literacy with online travel publication *Astray* in Tokyo, Lutruwita/Tasmania, and Minjerrabah/Stradbroke Island.

Eugene is currently thinking, playing with, and talking to himself about how to write and create ethically in a media industry steeped in colonial culture and discourse.

# FROM CONCEPT TO CUT

## A Short Film Studio



### KEY QUOTES

The intention was to shoot short films that can exist as shorts independently, but when I put them all together, there are things that echo through them like the dialogue repeats; the situation is always the same, the way they're shot is very simple and the same.

Jim Jarmusch

I think it's a mistake for young filmmakers to just buy digital equipment and shoot a feature. Make short films first, make your mistakes and learn from them.

Jason Reitman

### STUDIO QUESTION

How do you transform an initial concept into a fully realized short film, from idea to final cut?



## **STUDIO DESCRIPTION**

Are you ready to bring your film ideas to life? In this hands-on, collaborative studio, you'll experience the whole creative journey of making a short film — from the spark of an idea to its debut on screen.

Together, we'll explore every step of creating a short film, starting with brainstorming exciting ideas suitable for the short film medium. Once we have a captivating concept, we'll dive into writing our short treatment, learning how to structure our stories and find themes that connect with our audience.

As we move forward, we will pitch our projects to the class to form our filmmaking groups. At this stage, we choose our roles based on our interests and skills, whether that's directing, scriptwriting, editing, performing, cinematography, or any other area of filmmaking. Everyone's input is valuable! In our groups, we'll create action plans to bring our scripts to life and design storyboards to map out the style of our films.

We will have workshops in which we learn about the art of storytelling, which not only helps us write great scripts but also improves our communication skills. We'll master essential cinematography skills, learning the perfect moments to frame our shots and move the camera for maximum impact. We'll explore the magic of editing with techniques like the invisible cut and poetic montage, sharpening our ability to weave together stunning visuals. We'll discuss costumes, colour palettes, make-up, and other filmmaking skills to be equipped for our filmmaking journey. In our journey into distribution, we will also develop an understanding of media markets and engage with the broader media ecosystem. Throughout our workshops, we will draw on the great films of history to inspire us, exploring film history and film theory along the way.

Whether you're looking to find your creative voice, get comfortable with the production process, or add an awesome short film to your portfolio, this studio is here to challenge, inspire, and support you every step of the way. Your film adventure is just around the corner!

## **STUDIO LEADER**

Hamid Taheri is an award-winning screenwriter and filmmaker with fourteen years of experience. His name appears in several aired TV shows and short and feature films. His films have travelled the world through film festivals, from the U.S. to Australia. His debut feature, *The Lower Ground*, was released in 2024 and is available on Amazon! He teaches Screenwriting, Cinema, and Media at RMIT and the University of Melbourne. He is studying Iranian cinema in the last year of his PhD at RMIT.

# GOLDEN AGE CINEMA

## Exploring modern classics for the big & small screen



Bryan Cranston and Aaron Paul in *Breaking Bad* (2011, Dir. Vince Gilligan), Sophie Turner in *Game of Thrones* (2011, Dir. David Benioff and D.B. Weiss), James Gandolfini in *The Sopranos* (1999, Dir. David Chase), Michael K. Williams in *The Wire* (2006, Dir. Joe Chappelle), Jon Hamm in *Madmen* (2010, Dir. Mathew Wiener)

### KEY QUOTE

"TV functioned almost as a trainer for film - spurring the big-screen medium to great heights to distinguish itself. While TV threatened at various times to swallow up film's audience and it certainly produced some impressive, groundbreaking work, on the whole it was never a true creative threat to the film medium" - Richard Rushfield, *Hollywood Golden Ages*, 2024

### STUDIO QUESTION

How might focusing on the impressive, groundbreaking work created during the golden age of film and television, provide solid filmmaking skills and techniques?

### STUDIO DESCRIPTION

The four great Golden Ages of Hollywood began with its inception in the 1930s, and was an audacious industrial answer to cultural and financial challenges. In the 1970s, it was a genuine revolution against a decaying system. The 1990s heralds Cinema's most recent Golden Age and notably contains a large variety of genres and a veritable cornucopia of quirky, engaging independent films breaking into the mainstream. The final Golden Age of Hollywood (prestige TV), started as a niche alternative, then gained so much traction that it facilitated building an entirely new industry. The Golden Age of Television (also known as Peak TV or Prestige TV) is a period widely regarded for its extraordinary number of high quality internationally acclaimed TV shows. The contemporary period is generally identified as beginning in 1999 with *The Sopranos* (Chase, 1999).

The new Golden Age brought creator-driven tragic anti-heroic dramas of the 2000s and 2010s. Understanding the visual narrative characteristics that the Golden Age entails such as the representation of complicated characters who may be morally ambiguous or antiheroes with questionable behaviour, complex plots, hyper-serialized storytelling, diverse points of view and playful explorations of modern-day issues, offers more than just an appreciation of this distinctive era—it also provides credible tips and techniques that aspiring film makers can incorporate into their own films such as the importance of crafting your story, writing a screenplay, and viewing your screenplay as a means to creating a self-contained story. From a creative standpoint, TV shows offer unparalleled opportunities for storytelling. The longer format allows for deeper character development, more intricate plotlines, and a richer exploration of themes. Writers and directors can experiment with different narrative styles and pacing, which is often constrained in the extended format of movies.

This studio will embrace the notion of how exploring peak filmmaking can provide techniques for creating elite entertainment and exciting visual narratives. 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 prestige filmmaking, the techniques used to produce short cinematic video content and the industry opportunities for filmmaking and film production. Prestige dramas typically embrace narrative complexity, merging serialized storylines, episodic plots, and innovative techniques such as temporal play or twists. However, the format is also suitable for documentary, animation, music videos, experimental films, and more. The only real requirement is that they communicate a well-developed story arc or deliver a concept within a condensed timeframe.

This course will be a comprehensive orientation to this field, delving into a wide range of theories and histories of golden era prestige 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 the art of framing, colour theory, 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.

# < hypermedia\_3000 >

weird tales from the unwired wilderness



Christian Marclay, 2007-08, *Untitled (Halo and Two Mix Tapes)*. Cyanotype. White Cube.

## KEY QUOTES

As we embrace a technology's gifts, we usually fail to consider what they ask from us in return—the subtle, hardly noticeable payments we make in exchange for their marvelous service.

Michael Harris, *The End of Absence* (2014), Penguin.

Why has the pleasure of slowness disappeared? Ah, where have they gone, the amblers of yesteryear? Where have they gone, those loafing heroes of folk song, those vagabonds who roam from one mill to another and bed down under the stars?

Milan Kundera, *Slowness: A Novel* (1996, trans. Linda Asher), HarperPerennial.

## STUDIO QUESTION

What story experiences can we unearth at the boundary between meatspace and the digital?

## STUDIO DESCRIPTION

In the era of generative AI, high-definition streaming, and platform-driven content, ***hypermedia\_3000*** takes a deliberate step back to explore what happens when we venture beyond the digital frontier. This studio investigates how purposefully limiting our technological palette, as well as embracing physical craft and mindful making, can lead to more thoughtful, sustainable, and innovative stories and media practice. Through hands-on exploration of forgotten media forms and pre-digital practices, you'll learn to craft strange and wonderful narrative experiences that bridge the wired and unwired worlds.

We'll examine our relationship and history with technology and media, and how different media forms shape our perception and memories. You'll consider your own media habits and experiment with alternative temporal rhythms, learning how the relentless pace of digital culture both enables and constrains creative practice.

Then, we look at craft, authenticity, and materiality. When everything is content, and everyone is a creator, what is the value of professional media skills? While exploring these themes, we'll play with traditional media forms like live radio drama and printmaking, looking at how imperfection, skill, and physical presence might enrich our storytelling practice, whether digital or analog.

You will create story experiences that traverse the boundaries between digital and physical realms, engaging audiences across multiple spaces and senses. You might work with locative or mixed media, live performance and streaming, documentary media on craft and authenticity, or handcrafted story artefacts. Your work will blend traditional craft and place-based media with thoughtful uses of technology, creating worlds that feel both strange and familiar: stories that could only emerge from the margins between the wired and unwired worlds.

## STUDIO LEADER

Daniel Binns is a tinkerer-theorist exploring technology's impact on storytelling and media cultures. A leading scholar on digital creativity and media transformation, Daniel has published on Netflix documentary style, drones, game engines, 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). His current research explores informal ecosystems of AI development, and the materiality of generative AI media. Alongside his theoretical work, Daniel has directed and produced network TV, and his film works have featured in over 20 festivals and streaming platforms.

# LONG LIVE AUSTRALIAN CINEMA

How can we create Australian films that  
Australians want to see?



'COLLAGE OF AUSTRALIAN FILMS' - <https://www.refinery29.com/en-au/australian-movies>

FILMS FEATURED CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT (1994), THE CASTLE (1997), RABBIT PROOF FENCE (2002), AUSTRALIA (2008), MURIEL'S WEDDING (1994), THE DRESSMAKER (2015).

## KEY QUOTES

"Australians have this inbuilt aversion to seeing Australian films. They hardly ever get excited about their own [movies]. We only tend to love things once everyone else confirms they're good ... Australian creatives have always had to go overseas to get recognition. I hope one day we can make a film or work of art and Australians can think it's good regardless of what the rest of the world thinks." - Jennifer Kent (director of *The Babadook*) (quoted in Ryan, MD, & Goldsmith, B (eds) 2018, *Australian Screen in The 2000s*, Springer International Publishing AG, Cham. Pg.123)

## STUDIO QUESTION

Why don't Australian audiences watch Australian films and how might we change this? Could the Australian feature filmmaking landscape benefit from any changes for better 'success', from the stories we explore to the way we release them?

## STUDIO DESCRIPTION

What was the last Australian film you saw? Where did you watch it? How did you find out about it?

Why don't Australian audiences seek to watch Australian films?

In *'Long Live Australian Cinema'* we will do a deep dive on Australian feature films (with a focus on films released in cinemas). Through research and case studies on Australian films from our past including classics like *'Priscilla Queen of the Desert'* and *'Crocodile Dundee'*, to contemporary classics such as *'The Babadook'*, *'Samson and Delilah'*, *'The Dry'*, and *'Talk to Me'* we examine the changing face of Australian feature film storytelling, the influences behind what is being made, the patterns of certain content (such as themes or genre), and the roadblocks to Australian audiences championing Australian content.

Our research will see us forming bold ideas on how the landscape for Australian feature film distribution, marketing and release might change for the better, as well as delving into the idea of 'the future' of Australian narratives in film through a collaborative short-form creative project.

## STUDIO LEADER

Timothy Despina Marshall

[www.tdmfilm.com](http://www.tdmfilm.com)

In 2013, Timothy's short film *Gorilla* won the Iris Prize in the UK, the world's largest LGBTQIA+ short film prize, awarding him £25K to make his next short film. The outcome of this, *Followers*, had its world premiere in competition at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival followed by a screening in competition at SXSW 2015, and as part of the Accelerator program at the 2015 Melbourne International Film Festival.

Timothy's first feature film as writer/director/producer, queer horror *In The Room Where He Waits* released in 2024 to critical acclaim including a [5-star review in ScreenHub](#). The film also earned Timothy a nomination for Best Director (Film Budget under \$1.5M) at the Australian Director's Guild Awards. The film stars award-winning queer actor Daniel Monks, and is produced by award-winning QLD producer Bec Dakin, with executive producers Dan Lake and Kurt Royan from Orange Entertainment Co (ABC's *White Fever*, *Retrograde*).

# MAKING MEMORY AND PLACE: MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

What is the role of Melbourne International Film Festival in building community and culture?



'Palais Theatre' - <https://miff.com.au/miff-archive/festival-files/on-screen-and-in-the-cinema>

## KEY QUOTES

*"Culture is not only beneficial to cities; in a deeper sense, it's what cities are for. A city without poets, painters and photographers is sterile." - Rebecca Solnit*

***MIFF** is an Australian **cultural** icon which has had an essential role in putting **Melbourne** on the national and international **cultural** map. It has also been a key player in building a sense of community and connectedness in **Melbourne** (MIFF, website)*

## STUDIO QUESTION

How do Melbourne International Film Festival and RMIT's The Capitol contribute to arts based placemaking and construct community and connectedness within Melbourne?



## STUDIO DESCRIPTION

In this Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) partnered studio students will produce short media and audio pieces that interview MIFF audiences and volunteers. The media pieces will ask audiences about their experiences at MIFF, including their responses to particular films and public events at MIFF. The interviews should investigate the role of film festivals in community and culture by addressing the below themes;

- MIFF, cinephilia and cinematic taste
- engagement with place and cinema at The Capitol
- MIFF and Melbourne cinephile communities
- intersection between local and global cinema at MIFF
- audience engagement and Australian cinema
- post covid film festival practices
- MIFF, place and nostalgia

The media artifacts will be guided by MIFF representatives who will brief students and view artifacts for feedback throughout their progression.

## STUDIO LEADER

Lucie McMahon (she/her) is a film practitioner based in Melbourne. Lucie is currently working at The Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC) and undertaking a PhD at RMIT University, where she also lectures and tutors in cinema and media studies. Lucie's research looks at queer documentary and queer history in Melbourne. Lucie also works as a freelance producer. Notable projects include *Things Will Be Different* (Lucie McMahon, 2024) which was developed through AIDC's Leading Light Initiative, supported by Screen Australia and released in cinemas across Australia. *Jeanette is the Dog* (Pat Mooney, 2019) which screened at Melbourne International Film Festival and No Budge Film Festival and *Mercury* (Alena Lodkina, 2019) which was developed for Prototype Art TV. Lucie has produced commercials for Readings and Swartz Media with *COCO* and *MAXIMILIAN*. Lucie also worked as the distribution coordinator with *Arena Media* on the release of *Because We Have Each Other* and *Petrol*.

# READY CAMERA ONE

## Multi-camera production



Ruth Richards 2023 (RMIT TV Studio A)

### KEY QUOTES

"Studio work, with its direct address to the audience and its impression of intimacy and spontaneity, remains at the heart of the television experience, ranging from election coverage, to celebrity chat on the sofa, to audience sitcoms, and game shows of all sorts..."

-Patricia Holland, *The New Television Handbook*, Routledge, 2017, p.137.

### STUDIO QUESTION

What are the creative possibilities and challenges of multi-camera production and what is the role of this mode of production in the contemporary screen media landscape?

## STUDIO DESCRIPTION

From classic sit-coms to contemporary talk shows to event television, multi-camera has remained an enduring mode of television production. A significant if taken-for-granted proportion of television today, such as sports coverage, news broadcast, variety, late-night, game and talk shows are made possible via this mode of production.

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 learn how to navigate the multi-camera environment, gaining an understanding of studio production workflows and technologies. You will gain studio experience on a series of smaller projects that emulate news, chat shows, and game show production, working towards an end of semester production developed and shaped by you and your peers.

You will also gain an understanding of the **collaborative nature** multi-camera production, working within both small teams and on a larger-scale production. Drawing on key ideas from within television studies, you will reflect on your production experience, situating it against the histories of television broadcast and television genres, while contemplating the future(s) of television in the streaming era.

## STUDIO LEADER

Dr Ruth Richards completed her PhD in Media and Communication at RMIT University in 2019. Her thesis explored the intersections of animation and feminist theory of the body. Her research interests include feminist animation, histories of women in animation, memory studies, and women in late night television. She has published on representations of gender in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and was the 2022/23 recipient of the Australian Film Institute Research Collection Fellowship for her project on the histories of Australian Women in Animation. Ruth has a background in multi-camera production through community broadcasting, has previously taught studios on comedy news and regularly teaches into live media production.

# RECOLLECTING, RETHINKING, REMAKING

Adapting TV with the ASRC



Image credit: The Sullivans. (n.d.). Crew and Cast photos [Photograph]. Retrieved December 16, 2024, from <http://www.crawfordproductions.tv/crew-gallerya.html>

## KEY QUOTES

“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. <https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/2015/apr/07/risk-reward-remake-old-content-new-audience>

## STUDIO QUESTION

How can Australia’s television past be creatively reimagined to resonate with contemporary audiences?

## STUDIO DESCRIPTION

Crawford Productions was a cornerstone of Australian television, shaping genres and captivating audiences with iconic series like the gritty crime procedural *Homicide* (1964-1977), the heartfelt family saga *The Sullivans* (1976-1983), Australia's first soap *Skyways* (1979-1981), and the coming-of-age drama *The Henderson Kids* (1985-1987). These shows reflected Australia's cultural shifts and defined key television genres that continue to resonate today. In *Recollecting, Rethinking, Remaking*, you will engage with the Crawford Collection at the Australian Screen Research Collection (ASRC, formally AFI-RC)—a treasure trove of scripts, stills, promotional materials, and production research—to explore how Australia's television past can be creatively adapted for contemporary audiences.

In this studio you will begin with a series of sketch works which experiment with how you can use diverse media forms and technologies to creatively adapt artefacts from the Crawford Collection. You will then expand this into a collaborative major project which uses an episode script from *Skyways*, *Homicide*, *The Henderson Kids* or *The Sullivans* to prompt a media piece for contemporary audiences. Through this process you will apply adaptation theory, make media in a range of genres, consider the history of Australian television genres, and contemplate the importance of resonance with audiences when adapting texts from the past.

In this studio you will have fun exploring and creatively adapting genre television into exciting new forms, by digging through a wealth of inspirational artefacts in the ASRC. You will leave *Recollecting, Rethinking, Remaking* with the conceptual, collaborative and technical skills necessary to work productively with a professional partnership, in creatively responding to a rich part of Australia's television history.

## 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 within and co-coordinates the Media Studio and Cinema Studies in the School of Media & Communication at RMIT and has been doing so for the past nine years. She has multiple articles published in *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. You can view the film here: <https://australianenvironmentsonscreen.org/surface-levels/>

# 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 QUESTION

What is the role of radio as a connection to community?

In this globalised media environment dominated by screens and audio platforms that provide podcasts in every genre, why does radio still matter and what role can it play in constructing and speaking to a community of listeners? How can we produce compelling content for both “live” broadcast or streaming radio and on-demand listening?

## **STUDIO DESCRIPTION**

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.

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 broadcasting on community radio are also readily transferrable to newer audio forms such as podcasting.

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**

Jacinta Parsons has been working in radio broadcast for nearly 20 years. She is a current broadcaster on ABC Radio Melbourne, co-hosting the Friday Revue with Brian Nankervis and hosting Saturday Morning breakfast. Before the ABC she was a volunteer broadcaster on Triple R FM for eight years and hosted a number of programs including Detour and Breakfasters. While broadcasting at Triple R, she also worked as the Live to Air Broadcast Coordinator and as the Music Programming assistant. During her time at ABC, Jacinta has hosted the Breakfast program and the Afternoon Program on ABC Radio Melbourne and worked with the Double J/Triple J music team as the Music Director for Local Radio. She has hosted programs across Radio National including Life Matters. She is also the author of a couple of books.

Most importantly, Jacinta began her life as a radio broadcaster at RMIT’s SYN Fm (then known as SRA) with a radio gameshow called ‘Schmakety Shmeud’.

# 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 QUOTES

“The greatness of a culture can be found in its festivals”

- Siddharth Katragadda

## STUDIO QUESTION

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



## **STUDIO DESCRIPTION**

Students will work collaboratively to stage the combined RMIT Media Studios' end-of-semester showings as a festival of new media works spanning two-to-three days and/or nights. Last year's inaugural studio spawned the "And Scene Festival", held at The Capitol and in City Campus Buildings 10, 12 and 14. Whither the festival produced by the class of 2025...?

This studio represents an evolution of "The Festival Experience" studio (2019-2023) 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 (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.

Along the way, students will be steeped in all that constitutes a "festival experience", focusing initially on film festivals before opening out onto a broader survey of media curation and exhibition practices.

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**

Hailing from Aotearoa New Zealand, Cerise Howard was appointed Program Director of the Melbourne Queer Film Festival in 2023 and has been a co-curator of the Melbourne Cinémathèque since 2018. 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 studio leader at RMIT since 2019, she is a widely-published commentator on intersections of screen media, gender, sexuality and other matters, a regular broadcaster on 3RRR and plays bass for The HOMOsapiens, a Melbourne punk, performance art, queer rock band.

# THE WRITER'S ROOM

## GENRE TWIST



BARRY (HBO)

### KEY QUOTES

"The shape of all stories: the enduring pattern of how someone is found by being lost. All tales, then, are at some level a journey into the woods to find the missing part of us, to retrieve it and make ourselves whole. Storytelling is as simple - and complex - as that. That's the pattern. That's how we tell stories."

- John Yorke

### STUDIO QUESTION

Television storytelling has foundational story structures that it follows. Can the same bones of a story, (character, goal, conflict, stakes), be translated into different genre shows (comedy, horror, sci-fi)?

## **STUDIO DESCRIPTION**

The TV writer's room is a wonderful place for play, collaboration, ideas and eureka moments. Fuelled by the creativity and energy of diverse minds, backgrounds and ideologies. Ideas tumble from a cat's hair to a fully formed hairball getting spewed back out to form something tangible for "the board" around character, plot or theme. Ideas sticking and falling away. When you enter the room on a Monday morning no-one can predict where you will end up by Friday afternoon.

In this studio we will all collaborate in a simulated writer's room. In the first few weeks, we will go through the foundations of TV structure. Then week by week, together as a group, in our simulated writer's room, idea's will be pitched and put forward, tumbled and congealed. To form the founding bones of our TV narrative. Will our protagonist be a Las Vegas undercover cop snuffing out a crime ring or a struggling single Mum trying to keep her outback pub afloat?

Our story and show will unfold over several weeks. Once we have the key foundations of our "story DNA" - character, goal, conflict, stakes, we will then break out into small groups divided by genre. Comedy, horror, sci-fi, thriller etc. In those smaller groups these bones of the group narrative and story will be fleshed out into something that is intended to thrill, create laughs, shock, or provoke dystopian fear.

For example; will our undercover Las Vegas cop be an ex-lion tamer from the circus who hilariously mishaps his way through his mission, or a brooding man with a scared past and a vendetta to quench.

At the end of the semester each group will then pitch and present their show to class. Where will our bones of story and narrative take us through the magical layering of genre? And will the theme and meaning of the stories still be the same?

## **STUDIO LEADER**

Lucy Coleman is an award-winning screenwriter and director. Her TV series EXPOSURE (creator and sole-writer) premiered on STAN in 2024 and is nominated for seven AACTA Awards. Her debut feature (writer & director) HOT MESS (now on Amazon Prime) was nominated for Best Indie Feature Film at the 2020 AACTA Awards and Best Direction at the Australian Directors Guild Awards. Her short film LEAN IN (writer & director) has won many awards across the globe in 2024, with Lucy nominated as Best Director at the ADG Awards. The short is now in development as a TV series.

Lucy teaches Screenwriting and Filmmaking at Collarts and RMIT.

# TOGETHER IN ELECTRIC DREAMS

AI, Love & Collaboration



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

## KEY QUOTES

"Despite the profusion of AI and machine learning in the texture of our intimate and private lives, there has been relatively little scholarly research on the topic."

-Anthony Elliot (2022).

## STUDIO QUESTIONS

How can we emphasise the strengths of human collaboration when producing media with AI tools? More broadly: How is AI affecting human relationships?

## **STUDIO DESCRIPTION**

In 'Together in Electric Dreams', we will explore the frontiers of AI and human interactions with a focus on media creation: filmmaking, music production, and scriptwriting. As another central theme, we will investigate and speculate on AI's potential to influence human personal relationships.

In our studio, we will draw from various collaborative methodologies such as: TV writers rooms, drama workshops and music group jam sessions. 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 our processes.

Film and TV case studies will be used as sites for discussion regarding AI and relationships. We will look at works such as 'Her' (2013) 'Electric Dreams' (1984) and 'Deep Fake Love' (2023).

Studio leaders Alan and Joel will be sharing progress from their industry film, 'Hot or Bot', a reality dating show featuring AI and human contestants, filming during semester 1.

End of semester major projects may take the form of a short films, live performances, music videos, interactive installations, chatbots or forms never seen before.

## **STUDIO LEADERS**

Alan Nguyen is an international-award-winning filmmaker, artist and designer. 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 AI and XR (EyeJack, National Museums Liverpool). Alan is passionate about interdisciplinary projects and the use of storytelling and new technologies to promote well-being, education and social connection. He is a Lecturer in Media at RMIT.

[www.alannguyen.net](http://www.alannguyen.net)

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.

<https://machinelisting.exposed/curriculum/>

# ZEPHYR

## Melbourne's Next-gen Creatives



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

### KEY QUOTE

*"Good interviewing comes from really listening - to what people mean as well as to what they say or don't say."*

Michael Rabiger. (2014). *Directing the Documentary, 5th Edition*. Focal Press.

### STUDIO QUESTION

How can video authentically portray evocative insights into young creatives' worlds, practices, and challenges?

## **STUDIO DESCRIPTION**

In this collaborative studio, participants will create episodes for a social video docuseries profiling Melbourne's diverse creative community. These intimate portraits will spotlight various young practitioners' philosophies, practices, and works, from the well-known to the emerging, across multiple disciplines, including visual art, writing, poetry, music, dance, filmmaking, architecture, and more.

Drawing inspiration from i-D Magazine's creative profiles and the Art in the Twenty-First Century (Art21) series on social media, each episode will be structured around two core elements: unscripted, documentary-style conversations filmed in creatives' studios or site-specific locations paired with constructed imagery that evocatively depicts the materials, methods, and works of each profiled creative.

Throughout the studio, students will develop professional skills in research and talent scouting, conduct pre-interviews and location recces, master interview techniques, and work with the Sony FX3 Cinema Line camera system. In post-production, participants will focus on crafting compelling interview-driven narratives using Adobe Premiere, creating portfolio pieces that may be considered for public distribution across social media platforms.

## **BIO OF 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/>.