



Chat Room 20



Production Industry Outlook 28



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June/July 2023

# SHOOT®



## THE ROAD TO EMMY



Series Part 6, Page 4



From Top Left clockwise, scenes from *A Small Light*, *The White Lotus*, *George & Tammy*, *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story*, *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*, *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*.



Cinematographers & Cameras 24



Cannes Lions Preview 12



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By Robert Goldrich

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### Civic Duty

Jury duty is defined as a civic responsibility. And judging by what Cannes Lions judges have to say, that axiom applies to not just our legal system but also to industry awards shows, particularly the one taking place this month in the south of France.

For example, Jean Lin, chief culture officer of Dentsu Group Inc., is the president of this year's Sustainable

Development Goals (SDG) Cannes Lions jury. In SHOOT's preview of this year's Cannes Lions, she reflected on the importance of the competition in general and then specifically the SDG proceedings.

"Judging at Cannes has always been a rich learning experience and time for reflection for me personally," shared Lin. "Listening to the perspectives from diverse talent in the room informs the jury's viewpoint and helps put our own

perspectives into context. It is also a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to help set the tone and define the category for the industry—any piece of work that we award carries a key message and significance. We as jurors learn so much from the debate to clarify what is important...Creating a safe environment for debate and dialogue with a common

goal is critical to achieve successful jury outcomes. This is the microcosm that represents our society—in order to create the sustainable development of our society, we need everyone to work together and join a productive conversation."

Lin added, "More than ever, we need creativity and innovation to shift consumer behavior to embrace sustainable lifestyles, and to shape society in a way that businesses thrive from greener prod-

ucts, services, and business models. The significance for the SDG Lions is to recognize and advocate the actions, creativity, and ideas that make the world we live in kinder and more sustainable, create systemic changes and impact at scale."

The sense of purpose attached to judging at Cannes is profound for Lin—and for that matter, each judge or jury president

"When a mind is stretched by a new idea, it never returns to its original position."

whom SHOOT reached out to for our Lions Preview coverage—which appears in this June-July PDF edition. Experiencing stellar work means the world to Tahaab Rais, group chief strategy officer at Publicis Groupe, MENAT, and a Creative Effectiveness Lions judge. Rais summed up his feelings succinctly, sharing, "Ralph Waldo Emerson spoke about this truth that when a mind is stretched by a new idea, it never returns to its original position."

By Robert Goldrich

## POV



Sisa Bueno

### Documentary Lab

Uncovering and providing opportunities for new talent has been a SHOOT staple in terms of its news coverage, our ongoing ScreenWork focus which includes The Best Work You May Never See gallery, and of course our annual New Directors Showcase at the DCA Theatre in NYC.

In that spirit, we try to raise awareness of initiatives cut from the same cloth, prioritizing the creation of opportunities for deserving talent. One such program comes out of Film Independent, the non-profit arts organization that produces the Spirit Awards, which recently unveiled the seven filmmakers and six projects selected for its 12th annual Documentary Lab. The Lab is an intensive program designed for filmmakers currently in postproduction on their feature-length documentary films and provides creative

feedback. The program advances the careers of its Fellows by introducing them to film professionals who can advise on both the craft and business of documentary filmmaking.

During the Lab, filmmakers will work with lead creative mentors Chris Shellen (*Mickey: The Story of a Mouse*, *Marwencol*) and Ivete Lucas (*Naked Gardens*, *Pahokee*), and editing mentors Bo Mehrad (*The Punk Singer*, *Call Me Miss Cleo*) and Amy Foote (*Hail Satan?*, *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*). Additionally, Fellows will be introduced to advisors and guest speakers.

The 2023 Documentary Lab projects and Fellows are: Director Alina Simone and producer Kirstine Barfod for *Black Snow*; director Chris Coats for *Flamingo Camp*; director/producer/cinematographer Sisa Bueno for *For Venida, For Kalief*; director Gabriela Diaz Arp for *Matino*; director Amanda Erickson for *She*

*Cried That Day*; and director Adina Luo for *You Have the Floor*.

"Documentary filmmakers remain at the forefront of innovative cinema, telling real stories with urgency and accessibility," said Daniel Cardone, manager of non-fiction programs for Film Independent. "Our selections for the 2023 Film Independent Documentary Lab emphatically demonstrate this, tackling important cultural issues and events with compassion and limitless creativity."

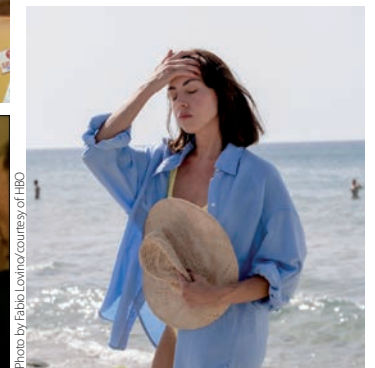
Notable past Documentary Lab-supported projects include Academy Award-nominated films *Ascension* by Jessica Kingdon; *Minding the Gap* from Bing Liu and Diane Quon; Sara Dosa and Shane Boris' *Seer and the Unseen*; Sarita Khurana and Smriti Mundhra's *A Suitable Girl*; Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown's *United Skates*; and Kit Vincent and Ed Owles' *Red Herring*, which recently premiered at the True/False film festival.

# Director, DP, Editor, Designer POVs

Insights into  
*George & Tammy*,  
*Weird: The Al  
Yankovic Story*,  
*A Small Light*,  
*The White Lotus*,  
*Dahmer*, *The Rings  
of Power*

By Robert Goldrich,

The Road To Emmy, Part 6



From top left, clockwise: Jessica Chastain (l) and Michael Shannon in *George & Tammy*; Daniel Radcliffe in *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story*; Bel Powley in *A Small Light*; Aubrey Plaza in *The White Lotus*; Evan Peters in *Dahmer--Monster*; The Jeffrey Dahmer Story; Morfydd Clark in *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*; *George & Tammy* director/EP John Hillcoat.

*George & Tammy* (Showtime) is already on the Emmy season radar with Jessica Chastain winning the SAG Award for her portrayal of Tammy Wynette. The limited series chronicles the country music power couple, Wynette and George Jones (played by Michael Shannon), who had a tumultuous romance and 30-plus chart-topping country songs between them. Big hits for Wynette and Jones included, respectively, “Stand by Your Man” and “He Stopped Loving Her Today.”

While he was drawn to what he described as “the tragic love story” and the cast headlined by Chastain and Shannon, director John Hillcoat—accomplished in features—still had reservations about taking on an assignment which entailed all the episodes of a limited TV series as well as serving as an exec producer. He had a one-off gig with an episode of *Black Mirror* but has generally found TV as lacking the cinematic feel he coveted.

“Television still has an over reliance on dialogue,” contended Hillcoat, paraphrasing Alfred Hitchcock’s observation

that “dialogue should be a sound among other sounds, something that comes out of the mouths of people whose eyes tell the story in visual tones.” Hillcoat felt that such “cinematic language” is decidedly different from the emphasis of TV where writers and producers traditionally run the proceedings.

Hillcoat ultimately decided to make his first deep dive into TV, knowing full well that Chastain and Shannon were expert at nuanced, expressive performances. Hillcoat was fascinated by Wynette and Jones. The former grew up listening to Jones. “She was obsessed with him,” related Hillcoat. “She wanted to go to Nashville to be a big star. She wanted to get to George—and she did. George was the opposite. He had an amazing gift, a powerful emotional voice just like Tammy. But George shunned success and fame. He ideally wanted to just be a gas station attendant, to be in the background of life, to not be in the spotlight. The differences between them were profound. When they got together, they ultimately couldn’t overcome

those differences, their own issues and baggage. Still they became so enmeshed in each other’s lives, part of a fascinating world—where fans became swept up in this vortex of fame and success—and the addictions that go with it,” including the addiction to get number-one songs, let alone other physical dependencies.

Hillcoat is no stranger to the music world. He has a music video lineage, including a collaborative bond with Nick Cave. Originally teenage friends, the two have worked on a dozen-plus projects together—Hillcoat directing some of Cave’s music videos and Cave writing, composing and performing for many of Hillcoat’s most well-known films. Cave for instance wrote the screenplay for Hillcoat’s feature, *The Proposition*. Also on the music front, Hillcoat teamed with Jennifer Lebeau to direct the documentary *Bob Dylan: Odds and Ends*.

Hillcoat was additionally enthused over the prospect of working with Igor Martynov, the prime cinematographer on

*Continued on page 6*

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## Directorial Perspectives On George & Tammy and Weird

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*George & Tammy*, Hillcoat was favorably impressed with Martinovic's body of high caliber TV work, including *The Night Of* and *Outsider*, which, assessed the direc-

performances.

Another part of the visual language impacted the music and vocal performances. Hillcoat said that the start of the series was very much "like a heightened

for Wieden+Kennedy and later helming a Super Bowl spot for Coca-Cola. Hillcoat too has stirringly meshed the feature and branding sectors with *Corazón*, a 48-minute film about organ donation for Montefiore hospital. *Corazón* depicts the real-life story of Elena Ramirez (portrayed by Ana de Armas), a young Dominican prostitute living in Santo Domingo who is selling her body to provide for her family—only Ramirez's body is failing her. She has a bad heart. Elena meets Dr. Mario Garcia, who gives her a fighting chance to live via a mechanical heart surgery that he and his colleagues can only perform at Montefiore in the Bronx.

A story of chance, hope, courage, friendship, love and generosity, *Corazón* won the Cannes Lions Health & Wellness Grand Prix as well as an Entertainment Gold Lion in 2018. But more than the Cannes plaudits, Hillcoat remains

It all started some 10-plus years ago when Appel came up with the idea for a Funny or Die spoof trailer for a "Weird AI" Yankovic biopic. Appel thought he would play off the seemingly inherent biopic dynamic which played fast and loose with the facts—particularly when the subject of the biopic is long deceased. He thought it would be a hoot to do a trailer for such a biopic focused on a person still alive and kicking, namely Yankovic. Adding to the appeal was the irony of creating a parody trailer promoting a fake parody biopic of a guy who did parodies of hit songs.

However, Appel didn't know Yankovic so he asked comedian Patton Oswalt to reach out to him. Appel had worked with Oswalt on a prior video and knew he was a friend of Yankovic.

The response from Yankovic was positive and immediate. Before he knew it, Appel was at a coffee shop with Yankovic,



Jessica Chastain as Tammy Wynette in *George & Tammy*

tor, "leaned into cinematic language more than other shows."

Hillcoat approached *George & Tammy* much as he would a feature, tapping into his vast picture library to share images with Martinovic to help pinpoint a visual direction that would reflect Wynette and Jones' emotional journey together. Hillcoat first wanted to attain "a very intimate experiential quality" so that viewers would feel that they are behind closed doors and up close and personal with the protagonists. In turn, he wanted to juxtapose that with an outside perception of these characters—from a distance akin to an audience POV, the way fans looked at famous celebrities in the past through photography, film and TV, listening to their voices on radio.

The director additionally looked to deploy reflections via mirrors and windows, lending an impressionistic view. He further envisioned fragments of these reflections as helping to convey an emotional state. Hillcoat noted that the fragments could at times connote Wynette and Jones being trapped-by their addictions, the trappings of fame as their private and public lives started to clash. Hillcoat and Martinovic used shadows, silhouettes, shot through doorways and windows to frame the subjects to get that kind of entrapped feeling which escalated as their lives went on and their fame grew. These visual motifs complemented the actors'

documentary" with the audience and musicians "almost on top of each other." For the Grand Old Opry radio show, the fans were up on the edges of the stage. There was a real interaction, an exhilarating cross-pollination where the musicians are singing to their fans about experiences. "That mirrored the effect of speaking to an audience who really shared the kind of struggles that these musicians were going through. It was at a time when country music spoke to a kind of poverty, an underclass of people struggling with alcohol, domestic violence and other issues at that time in America. Back then there was a great emotional connection. The country stars came from poverty. They had the same kind of experiences that their audiences had."

Then by the end of the series, those audiences are "abstracted silhouettes in the distance," said Hillcoat, as the success of Jones and Wynette grew. "They played stadiums toward the end of their careers and the abstracted characters [watching them] had an almost threatening quality. We expressed visually the dynamic journey [of Wynette and Jones] that shaped their characters."

In addition to the aforementioned *The Proposition*, Hillcoat's feature filmography includes *The Road*. The director has also diversified successfully into the commercialmaking arena, making an auspicious debut with Levi's "To Work"



Michael Shannon (I) and Jessica Chastain in *George & Tammy*

most enthused over the film's impact as it sparked thousands of new organ donors whose generosity has saved or improved numerous lives (considering that one person can donate up to eight vital organs). *Corazón* was produced via Serial Pictures, which continues to handle Hillcoat in the commercialmaking/branded content sector.

### Eric Appel

Eric Appel has already made his mark during this awards season, garnering a DGA Award nomination for the tongue-in-cheek feature-length biopic, *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story* (Roku). Appel also earned in tandem with Yankovic a Writers Guild Award nomination.

showing him biopic trailers on his laptop. They teamed on a bogus trailer which debuted online in 2013, carrying the hype promo line, "This film is sure to sweep next year's Academy Awards."

For years, Yankovic would screen that faux trailer during costume change intermissions at his concerts. Then in 2019, Yankovic emailed Appel about turning that trailer into a movie. As quick as Yankovic got back to him many moons ago, Appel immediately said "yes."

Still, there were challenges. "The trap we didn't want to fall into was that it would wind up feeling like a comedy sketch that was too long," said Appel. "We were reverse engineering a movie from a

Continued on page 8

# "Triumphant"

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## DGA Nominee Eric Appel On *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story*

Continued from page 6

fake trailer, trying to not make it feel like a joke and instead giving it a real story. We were telling a story that didn't exist about a bizzaro 'Weird Al' character that we created for this movie. But we wanted it to feel like a serious biopic."

The goal, continued Appel, was that "if you watched the movie on mute, it would look like some serious Academy Award-nominated biopic. But when you hear the words, the absurdity comes through. I always said that I wanted the biggest surprise for audiences to be that the movie is actually good, that the story works, that—as absurd as things get—you care about this fictional version of 'Weird Al,' you root for him to succeed. Our tightrope act

a series helmed by Appel for the short-form programming platform Quibi which itself turned out to be short-lived. "I had never met her before but she came highly recommended by a couple of editors I knew." After a favorable experience collaborating with her on comedy thriller *Die Hart* starring Kevin Hart and John Travolta, Appel again gravitated towards Kennedy for *Weird*, which became the first feature she ever cut. "Neither of us had made a feature before," said Appel. *Die Hart* was the closest thing—bizarre chapters or chunks that added up to a movie. "Jamie was good at cutting TV comedy, is a huge movie fan and movie nerd, and a major 'Weird Al' fan. She wound up bringing a lot to the film."



Photo by courtesy of Roku

**Evan Rachel Wood in a scene from *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story***

was to make this absurd, satirical piece but with emotional moments that work for the audience."

Towards that ambitious end, Appel enlisted the support of artisans including cinematographer Ross Riege and editor Jamie Kennedy. Appel was first struck by Riege's lensing of director Jordan Vogt-Roberts' *The Kings of Summer*, which made its initial mark at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival. "I'm a big fan of that movie and the photography is gorgeous," assessed Appel who then went on to work with Riege on episodes of the sitcom *Selfie*. "I hit it off with him. He has an incredible eye, knows how to shoot comedy. He can walk that line between comedy and drama which is what I was looking for. He brought so much to the look of *Weird*, shooting anamorphic, giving it a lot of character."

As for Kennedy, she edited *Die Hart*,

*Weird: The Al Yankovic Story* marks a turning point for Appel. "I'm originally from the sketch comedy world. I spent years directing half-hour comedy shows while also wanting to make movies. Making this movie showed me I could do it, gave me the confidence to step into what is hopefully the next phase of my career."

The response to this film in terms of positive audience feedback, critical acclaim and the DGA nomination affirmed for Appel the value of trusting one's instincts even when unsure about how people will react. "So much of directing is about confidence—being confident in the decisions you are making."

Helping to hone those instincts and that confidence, observed Appel, was his extensive experience with "the run-and-gun style of doing short-form comedy, especially internet comedy for Funny or Die, without big budgets. "I also did a lot



Photo by courtesy of Roku

**A scene from *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story***

of Adult Swim shows, 11-minute episodes with two days to shoot them yet very ambitious. It helped me to work in a really nimble way, knowing what I need to get, being economical, not over-shooting. We shot *Weird* in 18 days, which is insane. Without all those years of doing short-format work, I couldn't have pulled it off."

Appel recently talked to Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, aka the directorial duo The Daniels, on the awards show circuit. "These guys came from the short-form and music video world, creating [Best Picture Oscar winner] *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. Everyone was shocked to find out how much that film cost to make. How could they have made it on that budget? In sort of the same way people were shocked to hear that *Weird* was shot in 18 days. It comes down to having been in the short-form world, you learn valuable filmmaking lessons."

As for what's potentially next, Appel's slate includes *Stepdude*, a comedy feature starring Jack Black

### Stuart Howell

Our Road To Emmy journey goes from the absurdity of *Weird* to the stark reality of *A Small Light* (National Geographic), an eight-part limited series based on the inspiring true story of Miep Gies (portrayed by Bel Powley), who helped to hide the family of Anne Frank (Billie Boulet) from the Nazis during World War II. Gies and her husband, Jan (Joe Cole), along with several other everyday heroes, watched over the Frank, van Pels and Pfeffer families hiding in a secret annex.

Cinematographer Stuart Howell, a BSC

Award nominee for his lensing of a season two episode of *The Crown*, was brought into shoot six episodes of *A Small Light*—the first three, which were directed by Susanna Fogel, and the last three helmed by Tony Phelan. DP Azul Serra did the other two, directed by Leslie Hope.

Howell noted that director/executive producer/writer Phelan, writer/exec producer Joan Rater and Fogel, who also served as an executive producer on *A Small Light*, didn't want a straight period drama approach. They wanted to avoid the feel of looking at characters through, said Howell, "a reverse telescope into history." While period elements would be part of the series fabric, it was also important that there be a contemporary feel so that viewers could better relate to the characters, underscoring the ongoing relevance of this story to our world today.

Relative to that relevance, the story almost asks us what we would have done in Gies' shoes. And in modern times, would we have the courage to push back against hatred? While many stood by, Gies stood up and stood tall.

"While it is an ensemble piece in a way, it's always from Miep's perspective," related Howell. "In planning shots, we talked about the flow of her character, her emotional ride through the story, using framing mechanisms and lighting to try to get a sense of the world around her from her perspective."

Howell also collaborated with cinematographer Serra to help maintain continuity and consistency. "You're not making individual stories but rather there's one arc, one story, from start to finish."

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# Howell Shines A Small Light

Continued from page 8

-which is especially true given how audiences view things now [multiple episodes at a time; binge watching of an entire series in one sitting]. Azul is a fantastic artist. We spent time together talking lighting, style, approaches to scenes. He was on set watching [Howell's episodes]. He and Leslie [director Hope] worked

Nyman as Hermann van Pels; Caroline Catz as Auguste van Pels; Rudy Goodman as Peter van Pels; and Noah Taylor as Dr. Fritz Pfeffer, who all hid in the annex with the Frank family.

*A Small Light* had a multi-network launch on May 1, with a simulcast across National Geographic, Nat Geo WILD and Lifetime of the first two episodes. On May



Live Schreiber (l) and Bel Powley in a scene from *A Small Light*

to carry the story through their two episodes, to make it as seamless as possible.”

The DPs deployed the Sony VENICE camera and opted to shoot anamorphic. Howell has a comfort level with the VENICE, relating that the camera “sees the way my eye sees things.” As for going the anamorphic route, Howell explained that he was drawn to its ability to help lend “a claustrophobic atmosphere” to the attic setting. “In confined spaces, it gives you a slightly more claustrophobic feel—but once you get outside, it opens up the world. I love what anamorphic does to the light and the image.”

At the same time, continued Howell, the challenge inherent in a claustrophobic setting is dealing with “a lot of people in a very small space. You have to give each character their due space. A small box with 16 people in it in hiding carries the challenge for a cinematographer to somehow make it visual while telling the story.” Helping immeasurably on this front was the set work from production designer Marc Homes.

In addition to Powley, Boulet and Cole, the cast for *A Small Light* includes Live Schreiber who plays Otto Frank, husband to Edith (Amira Casar) and father to Margot (Ashley Brooke) and Anne; Andy

6, Freeform had an encore presentation of the premiere episodes. For the full season run, two episodes debuted every Monday on National Geographic, streamed the next day on Disney+ and Hulu, and became available on the Nat Geo TV and ABC apps.

“When we first heard the remarkable story of Miep Gies, we were gripped and deeply moved. We were also convinced that this limited series about an everyday superhero—one that most people around the world have never heard of—needed an unprecedented rollout,” said Carolyn Bernstein, EVP, scripted and documentary films, National Geographic. “We are determined to bring *A Small Light* to the largest global audience possible and hope this ambitious rollout across multiple networks and streaming platforms allows audiences to fall in love with and be inspired by Miep just as we have.”

## John M. Valerio, ACE

Last year, John M. Valerio, ACE won an Emmy in the Outstanding Single-Camera Picture Editing for a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie category on the strength of the “Departures” episode of *The White Lotus* (HBO). That same epi-

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## Hot Locations

### Film Incentives Expanded In New Mexico

Amber Dodson, director of the New Mexico Film Office, said that with recently signed legislation to increase the cap on tax credits, the state’s film and television industry is poised to continue to expand, solidifying growth well into the next decade while creating thousands of jobs.

New and improved elements of New Mexico’s competitive film tax credit were included in House Bill 547, an omnibus tax package signed into law on



Amber Dodson

April 7. The enacted updates gradually increase the annual cap on industry tax credits from \$110 million to \$160 million in \$10 million annual increments over the next five fiscal years. With the continued growth of productions in New Mexico, the increase is essential to prevent a backlog of rebates. These updates exempt resident principal performers from a \$5 million credit cap per production to further incentivize local casting for leading roles. Also

included is an increase to the above-the-line credit cap from \$5 million to \$15 million per production for New Mexico film partners, Netflix, NBCUniversal, and 828 Productions, with a maximum total credit cap of \$40 million per fiscal year. This increase will allow New Mexico to capture larger and more lucrative productions and also bolster postproduction work inside the state.

### NYWIFT Partners With Jordan Film Commission

New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) and the Royal Film Commission—Jordan (RFC) are teaming on “Hakayaha: Stories of Women in Jordan,” a new initiative to inspire, educate, and expand creative boundaries, funded by the U.S. Embassy in Jordan. The project aims to train and mentor aspiring female filmmakers from across Jordan, and to fund, develop and produce serialized work in the form of docu-series and narrative series. The initiative includes all aspects of creating serialized work: development, writing, production and postproduction. The guiding principle of the work is the creative vision of filmmakers in Jordan that transcends boundaries, unites our shared humanity and explores the richness of Jordanian culture.



Cynthia Lopez

“Hakayaha: Stories of Women in Jordan” will include filmmaker labs that will run for two years through which 30 filmmakers from across Jordan will be selected to develop, and produce a docu-series and narrative series to be exhibited via local screening in Jordan. Selected filmmakers will be mentored by an award-winning team of NYWIFT directors, producers and writers on a mission to

develop, train, and inspire the next generation of filmmakers in Jordan.

NYWIFT CEO Cynthia Lopez said the initiative will bring “unique support and training opportunities for filmmakers in the Middle East. And what better venue to announce such a program than on the beautiful international melting pot of Cannes?”

### Ireland To Host AFCI Cineposium

Limerick City in Ireland will host the Association of Film Commissioners International’s (AFCI) 46th Annual Cineposium Conference which runs September 26–28. This is the first time in Cineposium’s 46-year history that the conference will take place in Ireland.

Hosting the event is the result of a competitive bid process open to all AFCI film commission members, which was won this year by Film in Limerick. Over



Jaclyn Philpott

the past decade, Cineposium has been held in the U.S., France, New Zealand, Spain, South Korea, Russia and Colombia. The annual Cineposium conference connects AFCI members and film industry professionals with production industry partners and policy makers worldwide.

Jaclyn Philpott serves as executive director of the AFCI. Paul C. Ryan is regional film manager at Innovate Limerick/ Film in Limerick.

## Editor John M. Valerio Discusses *The White Lotus*, Mike White

Continued from page 10

sode additionally garnered him an ACE Eddie Award nomination for Best Edited Limited Series.

Fast forward to this year and Valerio's cutting of the "Arrivederci" episode of

with. He gives me creative autonomy to try things. I feel like we complement each other. He's such a smart writer. He writes amazing stories and characters—characters who feel real but at the same time are funny. He tells a story that takes

such wonderful people like Mike. You don't always get these opportunities to share something with someone so smart, so generous, so talented—and to have so much fun along with such rich material. I remember walking away from season one feeling all that—and even more so in season two."

Beyond his collaborations with White, Valerio's body of work spans such series as *Parks and Recreation*, *Men of a Certain Age*, *Shameless*, *Jack Ryan* and *Banshee*. Starting out with a strong reputation in comedy, *Men of a Certain Age* had Valerio dipping his toes in dramatic waters, with *Banshee* later placing him in his first real heavy drama.

### Matthew Flood Ferguson

Production designer Matthew Flood Ferguson has enjoyed a deep collaborative bond with series creator Ryan Mur-

Design Award.

Now Ferguson is in the running for more awards show recognition on the strength of Murphy's *Dahmer--Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story* (Netflix), which recently won the BAFTA Television Award in the International category. Evan Peters portrays real-life serial killer and cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer in the series which tells a story of a case fraught with racism and homophobia—seemingly making it less of a priority for police to solve as law enforcement repeatedly ignored warnings from the public as to what was happening.

Episode 7, the Jennifer Lynch-directed "Cassandra," for example, chronicles an apartment complex neighbor of Dahmer, Glenda Cleveland (played by Niecy Nash-Betts) who repeatedly called police about suspicious activity going on next door but to no avail. A Black woman, Cleveland



Jennifer Coolidge (l) and Francesca Zecca in *The White Lotus*

*The White Lotus* won the Best Edited Limited Series Eddie Award, positioning him once again as a leading Emmy contender.

*The White Lotus* continues an enlightening collaboration for Valerio with series creator, writer and director Mike White that began with HBO's *Enlightened*. Valerio edited a couple of White-directed *Enlightened* episodes. It was on that series that Valerio struck up a rapport with White and his producing colleague, David Bernad.

Valerio described Bernad as "a big champion of mine," regularly reaching out for prospective projects. Unfortunately, Valerio was seemingly always busy, including when *The White Lotus* first came along. Valerio at the time was working on *The Old Man* and was fully committed to its first season.

However, after Valerio's agent, Craig Mizrahi of Innovative Artists, got the call about *The White Lotus*, later that same day came the news that *The Old Man* had to shut down since lead actor Jeff Bridges was diagnosed with lymphoma and had to undergo chemotherapy. Thankfully Bridges has since recovered. Still the timing meant that the once closed door had opened up for Valerio to take on *The White Lotus*.

Valerio said he loves working with White, noting, "He trusts me so much, as much as anyone I've ever worked

you places where you feel, 'Oh my gosh, I can't believe this,' but he does it in a way that feels so real."

Valerio added that even the locations in *The White Lotus* "sort of feel like they're real characters." And in the case of season two, the setting turns to Sicily.

Episodes were longer in season two as compared to season one. The second season also had more pressing airdates. Longer episodes with compressed schedules made season two trickier and more difficult. And for the second season, Valerio noted that an even greater volume of high-quality material had to be left on the proverbial cutting room floor. Figuring out what to eliminate from choice content was a challenge in and of itself—perhaps even more challenging was striking the right balance between telling a new story while retaining *The White Lotus* style and distinctive brand.

"People sort of recognized there was this sort of tone and style with the music, the transitions," said Valerio. "You try to keep that while introducing a new version in Sicily. What should this new chapter or version be like? We had totally different locations with different characters and a new story but still needed to keep that familiarity with the tone and style of the first season."

Still, in the big picture, Valerio feels an overwhelming sense of gratitude. "It's such a pleasure when you work with



Niecy Nash-Betts in *Dahmer--Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*

phy. It's a relationship that dates back to Ferguson's days as a set decorator when he worked in that capacity on the Murphy-directed film *Running With Scissors* and then such series as *American Crime Story* and *Ratched*, as well as the pilot for *Pretty/Handsome*. Ferguson got to team with acclaimed production designer Judy Becker on *American Crime Story* and *Ratched*. On the latter, Becker had to move onto another project with Ferguson stepping in for her as production designer on the last three episodes. On the heels of that came Ferguson's first full-fledged production design gig on Murphy's limited series, *Hollywood*. In 2020 *Hollywood* landed Ferguson his first career nominations for an Emmy and an Art Directors Guild (ADG) Excellence in Production

was given no heed in a murder spree (which stretched from 1978-'91) claiming the lives of 17 people, 15 of whom were Black, Indigenous, Asian or Latino men and boys, mostly in the predominantly Black Northside neighborhood in Wisconsin. Dahmer met a number of his victims in gay bars and LGBTQ community locales.

Grateful for the opportunities Murphy has afforded him—and gratified over their positive collaborative relationship—Ferguson described him as "very clear about the look and vision" of any given project. "That's very helpful for me and my entire department. One of the first things he defines—after story, how it will be told—is the color palette. For *Ratched*, it was

Continued on page 22

# Reporting For Jury Duty

Perspectives across such Cannes Lions categories as Film, Creative Effectiveness, Mobile, Music, Innovation, Design, Sustainable Development Goals

A SHOOT Staff Report



It's only natural that jury presidents and judges think that the award category she, he or they are involved in is one of, if not the most significant in competition. And generally a good case can be made--and has been in this Cannes Lions Preview by the likes of Film Lions jury president Bruno Bertelli, Mobile Lions president Shannon Washington, and Creative Effectiveness Lions judge Tahaab Rais, among others.

This year's crop of Cannes Lions judges consists of some 300 experts from across 46 markets, representing the global industry's leading talent from a diverse range of disciplines. Work from around the world will be judged, awarded and celebrated during the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, running from June 19-23.

Ten new brands represented in the awarding juries are Experian, Globacom, HSBC, Hulu, Kimberly-Clark, Mojang Studios, Nedbank, Safaricom, Suntory Brands and Vodacom.

Lions CEO Simon Cook said, "Our jurors have a huge responsibility--giving up their time, energy and expertise to set the benchmark for creative excellence as part of the 70th edition of the Lions. We are excited to see the body of Lion winning work that will set the industry standard for the next 70 years. This year, we have representation from seven new markets, our highest-ever representation from Africa and the Middle East, and a strong showing from a diverse mix of brands. We're delighted to be able to bring a breadth of voices and perspectives to the jury rooms and we thank them all in advance for their dedication and care."

Speaking of the Middle East and North Africa, new ground is

being traversed as Impact BBDO's Ali Rez will serve as Cannes Lions' first jury president from the MENA region, overseeing the Print & Publishing Lions. Rez said, "The UAE is a place where creativity thrives, and where we believe nothing is impossible. It is a special honor to represent that very spirit of this inspiring country, and the rich heritage of the Middle East. I hope this will pave the way for many more people from the region to lead juries in the future."

This marks the second time since the pandemic that the Cannes Lions jurors will be able to come together in person. There is no replacing that face-to-face dynamic among judges whose work will set a benchmark for creative excellence. Cannes Lion recognition helps to champion great work, and brings awareness to content that not only inspires people but gives them something tangible to which they can aspire. It conjures up food for thought and even at times sparks empathy, understanding and potentially a stronger sense of community.

Jurors have been assessing deserving entries and engaging in give-and-take discussions in the Lions competition since 1954. These thoughtful deliberations have had a positive ripple effect on the industry at large. It's a legacy that continues to set a high global bar for juries today spanning creativity as well as strategy.



**Bruno Bertelli**

While the diverse voices and discussions in jury rooms will be loud and clear at Cannes this month, here's a taste of *SHOOT*'s dialogue with select judges from the advertising agency side to shed some light on what's in store on the Lions front.

## **Bruno Bertelli**

For the second time in his career, Bruno Bertelli is serving as a Cannes Lions jury president. The first tour of such duty came in 2017 when he presided over the Outdoor Lions jury. This time around, Bertelli—who is global CEO of Le Pub, global chief creative officer of Publicis Worldwide, and CCO of Publicis Groupe Italy—is at the helm of the Film Lions jury, a role which, he said, requires him and his jury colleagues "to look closely at the work to understand the cultural context behind each campaign. Compared to some years ago, where all the effort was to be relevant within the consumers' lives, today the objective is being relevant within culture. It will be important to understand the overall situation and the

*Continued on page 14*



# Need a director who's gonna crush those boards?



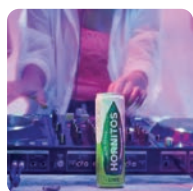
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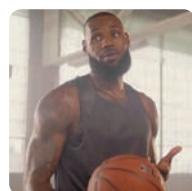
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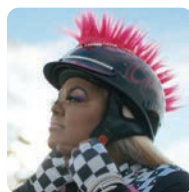
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LIFESTYLE | STORYTELLING



**ky dickens**

PHARMA | LIFESTYLE



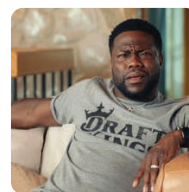
**lucky twins**

REAL PEOPLE | DIVERSITY



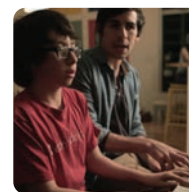
**mark nickelsburg**

VISUAL COMEDY



**max gutierrez**

TOURISM | CELEBRITY



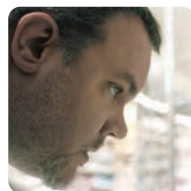
**michael shapiro**

ORGANIC STORYTELLING



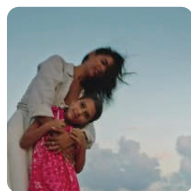
**norman brothers**

HUMOR | DIALOGUE



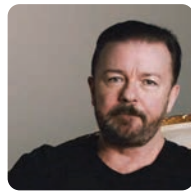
**ramesh iyer**

DRY HUMOR



**ron hamad**

CINEMATIC | LIFESTYLE



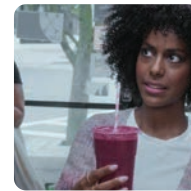
**sam washington**

STORYTELLING | DIALOGUE



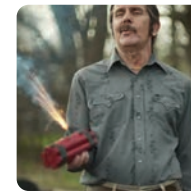
**tamir moscovici**

VISUAL STORYTELLING



**tessa greenberg**

IMPROV COMEDY



**timothy kendall**

COMEDY | CELEBRITY

## Insights From Film Lions, Creative Effectiveness Jurors

*Continued from page 12*

context. For instance, in which region did it take place, what was the tension the brand was facing and was there a specific event that triggered it? But never forgetting the central role of the brand.”

Bertelli affirmed, “It’s a true privilege to serve in a category that has always been provocative, innovative, inspiring and personally very important to me as a creative. The Film Lions are more about the brand’s positioning and what a brand really represents: the tone of voice, the attitude, and the ambitions. It’s more a strategic than tactical approach, mirroring what a brand stands for. Presenting a film that is not in line with the brand’s identity will damage not only its communication in the short term but also the perception of the brand as a whole. The medium of film is always reinventing itself to stay relevant, bringing very different approaches and celebrating the creativity of the moving image.

“Every piece of work,” he continued, “will be under close examination and generate an animated exchange of viewpoints and perspectives from the jury. We will be watching everything from 10-second microfilms to long-formats, and films created with new and exciting tech. More than two thousand entries need to demonstrate brilliant brand storytelling intended for a screen; content created for TV, cinema, online and out-of-home experiences.”

Bertelli noted that this year’s Film Lions jury “consists of members with a variety of experiences and backgrounds. Creatives from both agencies and streaming platforms, film directors and producers. We are lucky to have a wide range of points of view and perspectives to discuss the work. Meeting and having these discussions in person will be great and is always the most rewarding part of judging any show. I am looking forward to having these debates with my fellow jury members as we explore the campaigns that are the most challenging, relevant, disruptive, bold and that subvert the conventional thinking and touch us with their outstanding vision and impressive originality. I will be looking for work that feels fresh, work that surprises and work that stands out in such a large category.”

For Bertelli, the experience of judg-

ing at Cannes is invaluable. “The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity has championed creative excellence and has driven progress, becoming the world’s most respected benchmark for creative greatness. Every year it gathers international campaigns and more



**Jordan Doucette**

than 30,000 pieces of work.

“Having such a view of the overall landscape of the work, both in our own regions and globally, will give us the chance to evaluate the content from different angles. It’s great to have an overview of how and where the industry is moving, and also a great discussion starter with clients, inspiring them with what is breaking new ground.”

### Jordan Doucette

One of those Film Lions jurors providing perspective to Bertelli and others is Jordan Doucette, chief creative officer, Dentsu Creative, Canada. She’s looking forward to the experience, given how meaningful her first time judging at Cannes proved to be.

“It was quite literally a life-changing experience for me. Having the gift of being in the room with creative leaders from all over the world was beyond inspiring. The ability to sit, without interruption, and discuss work with these amazing minds was incredible. The diversity of thoughts and perspectives made me want to push myself to experience creativity beyond my Canadian borders. I ended up making a move from Toronto to Chicago shortly after that to experience the U.S. market and grow as a creative. Best decision I’ve ever made.

Being a Film Lions judge is particularly appealing to Doucette who noted that it’s the oldest Cannes jury in existence. “I think it started in 1954. So naturally there is something very special about it. And at the heart, it reminds us the beauty and power of a story well told, and that making people feel something is still, and will

always be relevant.”

Doucette said that after the first recent jury call, she was “already excited about being together with such an exceptional group of people, and most importantly, such a diverse group of people. While we are all ‘judges’ of the work, the experience can also make you feel like a ‘student’ again, igniting your passion for creativity in a way no other experience can do.”

There is an inherent pressure, though, to jury duty. “Being a judge is not only a huge honor but comes with great responsibility. As a jury, you are selecting work for a category that will define the future of work being created in that space. It sets a standard the entire world will look to for inspiration.”

### Tahaab Rais

“Ralph Waldo Emerson spoke about this truth that when a mind is stretched by a new idea, it never returns to its original position,” related Tahaab Rais, a Creative Effectiveness Lions judge.

Rais, group chief strategy officer, Publicis Groupe, MENAT, noted that “every Cannes helps us (and me) get positively envious. And particularly judging does two things. Firstly, it helps gain continual insight into how judges look at the work that wins and work that doesn’t win. And that’s always a great school. Secondly, it helps us see what the world is doing, the scale behind the work, the craft behind the work, the investments behind the work, and where we—as agencies and importantly, as clients too—need to get better.

“In doing so, it enlivens our imagination, it helps stretch our brains beyond our cognitive Kansas, it helps to collectively uplift our work, our region, our industry and our people. I take back all learnings from such shows to our teams in the forms of proprietary workshops and sessions we’ve developed—for our teams and for our client partners who need to a part of the ambition to create better work and win; workshops and sessions that help us relook at the work we do or look at it in a new light, to make it more creative and more effective.”



**Tahaab Rais**

As for the appeal and significance of the Creative Effectiveness Lions, Rais said, “Here’s a provocation: Every category at Cannes is/should be a creative effectiveness category! Because the best creative work is effective, and the most effective work is creative.

He continued, “Now, each piece of work submitted into the Creative Effectiveness Lions that stands a chance to win, is work that has ideally won Lions in the year or years prior.

Therefore, what’s exciting about the category of Creative Effectiveness Lions, specifically, besides the fact that it rewards work that has worked, is that it’s actually the best of the best competing with each other - for the honor of being recognized as the ones that have worked best in the real world. And so, it’s our responsibility as the jury to dig deeper into those famed winners and interrogate further, to really identify which of those made a tangible, measurable, positive change – on the brand, or on the business, or on people’s lives, or on culture, or on (ideally) all of it together.

Rais hopes to bring to this year’s Creative Effectiveness Lions “a few key values I’ve fundamentally always practiced. “First, respecting the work matters. Judging is an immense responsibility. We are responsible not just for awarding work but also awarding people as a result—and those awards matter to them as individuals, to their families and to their futures in one way or another. Plus, people put in a lot of time to make those submissions and entries happen. So, we need to respect their work, read the forms, watch the videos, and give every case its chance to make its case.

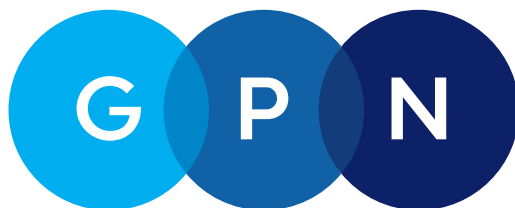
“Second, get rid of biases. We need to look at the work without any bias or any politics. Those should not exist in any judging session. Being objective and neutral about the work, forgetting which agency you represent, makes the whole experience more enriching and more enjoyable.

“Third (and I wish we did more of this), is to interrogate the work and its

*Continued on page 16*

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## Presiding Over Innovation, Sustainable Goals Lion Juries

*Continued from page 14*

creativity as well as its effectiveness. Has it been done before? Knowing what work has been done and won matters. Did it really get the PR it claims? A quick Google search does the job. Are the results substantiated and do they have context? Looking at the logic and impact behind the magic is key.

“Fourth, diversity matters. The juries these days are consciously diverse and inclusive. So, it’s amazing to listen to others’ perspectives on the work and to either build on each other’s perspectives as well as debate healthily and challenge/influence a change in perspectives. Our differences make the judging experience richer.”

Regarding his wish list as a juror, Rais shared, “I’d love to see, judge and reward work that sets a benchmark for the industry—not just the category—when it comes to work that’s impactful. We need a new standard for creative effectiveness in the industry and almost a new charter for what that looks like. Whether it be a film that moved people to do something, whether it be a promotion that earned attention and drove growth, whether it be a purpose-driven campaign from a brand that drove social impact, or whether it be a meaningful brand intervention (an act, a product, a new CX experience), the work needs to be creative and impactful in the real world, beyond case studies. And as shared, that impact needs to be a tangible, measurable, positive change—on the brand, or on the business, or on people’s lives, or on culture, or on (ideally) all of it together.”



**Erica Roberts**

“What will also be beneficial,” concluded Rais, “is having an output from this Cannes Lions that encompasses a calling for clients and the industry on how to make work effective in today’s exponentially advancing world—what we need to embrace when it comes to tech

and what we need to hold onto when it comes to good old human intelligence.”

### Erica Roberts

Erica Roberts, chief creative officer, BBH USA, has moved up the Cannes Lions judging ranks as a member of the Entertainment Lions for Music jury. “Last year, I was a shortlist judge. This is my first time being on an official jury, and it’s a huge honor that comes with significant responsibility. Being a creative and a leader of creative teams, you recognize the effort and craft involved in developing the idea—plus the amount of effort that goes into the packaging of your work for Cannes. With that effort in mind, you want to ensure you’re giving each piece of work the attention it deserves.”

“Historically, this has been an important category for BBH. Last year our work with Google for Black-owned Friday won a Gold Entertainment Lion for Music and several other Lions.” Roberts noted that being a Cannes Lions judge carries a sense of purpose. “Winning a Lion is among the most prestigious honors in our industry. As jurors, it’s our responsibility to preserve what Cannes stands for with each Lion we award.”

She added, “As a juror, I find the most fruitful conversations are born from defending the right ideas versus criticizing the wrong ones. This approach allows you to open your fellow jurors’ eyes to aspects of the work they have glossed over. Not every winner is an immediate crowd pleaser. Some are the sleeper hits—the more time you spend with them, the more you appreciate just how brilliant they are.”

Among the most appealing aspects of serving as an Entertainment Lions for Music judge, observed Roberts, is “the makeup of the jury itself. It’s not just members of the advertising industry. It includes people from diverse perspectives and professionals from the music industry, music influencers, and artists. As a result, the conversation, and the different perspectives make it an extra-special jury. I can’t wait to be in the room with such a talented array of people.”

Also drawing Roberts to the Entertainment Lions for Music competition is the fact that “music is one of the most powerful tools we have as advertisers. It’s a cheat code for emotional connections with consumers and a gateway to cultural relevance.”

As for the impact of judging on the judges, Roberts observed, “Attending Cannes is always a memorable experience. The energy, the creativity, the people, the fun! I am most excited about being hunkered down with the best of the best from both inside and outside the ad industry. These are people that I would never have had an opportunity to have this level of conversation with. For me personally, I think it’s going to change the way I evaluate work, particularly the use of music in our work.”

The experience will inform her, her agency and her clients. “I will come back from Cannes with new considerations for how we utilize music in our craft. I’m interested in learning from jurors outside of the industry and hearing their perspectives on the use of music in ad world. This will help dimensionalize my view of music and our work. Music is becoming more critical as the landscape becomes more cluttered. At BBH we’re always trying to educate clients on the importance of investing in music to help push break through. I have no doubt that after judging, I’ll have even more amazing examples in my arsenal to point to.”

### Grace Francis

No stranger to judging at Cannes, Grace Francis though is breaking new personal ground this year as a jury president for the first time—specifically for the Innovation Lions. Francis, global chief creative and design officer at WongDoody, has judged at Cannes and Eurobest in previous years. “Both shows have taught me to meet the work in the cultural and historical moment it is set in—especially when exploring innovation.”

Francis observed, “Innovation Lions as a category changes every year—because the world shifts with it. Awarding Degree

Inclusive (a deodorant that can be used by people with partial limbs or paralysis) the Innovation Grand Prix [in 2021] was a landmark moment. It reminds us innovation doesn’t come through technology alone—it comes from advances that radically shape and improve society.”

As for her Innovations Lions wish list, Francis said she wants “to connect with my jury and create a space where each of us can bring our intersectional identities to the room—not just our work personas. If I can do that, we can better explore the entries together and be sure to award entries that will become part of history.”

The judging experience, assessed Francis, “lights up agencies of all sizes—it helps us explore how our peers and clients think, what they value and most importantly, what is coming next.”



**Jean Lin**

“To participate is to connect with others who believe in the work just as passionately as you—people who get the late nights, notebooks scribbled with the next idea, who value collaborating to put something significant into the world.”

### Jean Lin

Jean Lin, chief culture officer at Dentsu Group Inc., presides over this year’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Lions jury. This marks the third time she’s been a Cannes Lions jury president—first for Cyber Lions in 2015 and then for Digital Craft in 2018.

Lin related, “Judging at Cannes has always been a rich learning experience and time for reflection for me personally. Listening to the perspectives from diverse talent in the room informs the jury’s viewpoint and helps put our own perspectives into context.”

“It is also a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to help set the tone and define the category for the industry—any piece of work that we award carries a

*Continued on page 18*



**Grace Francis**



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## Jury Presidents Share Insights On Mobile, Design Lions

*Continued from page 16*

key message and significance. We as jurors learn so much from the debate to clarify what is important. What I learned in my past jury president experiences is that the most important task for the jury president is to set the standard for the category and facilitate an open and respectful environment for discussion from a culturally diverse group. For SDG Lions, the composition of jurors goes beyond the geographical and cultural differences, as some jurors are specialized in SDG and not from the creative industry. Creating a safe environment for debate and dialogue with a common goal is critical to achieve successful jury outcomes. This is the microcosm that represents our society—in order to create the sustainable development of our society, we need everyone to work together and join a productive conversation to action and decide.”

Relative to the significance of the SDG category, Lin said, “More than ever, we



**Shannon Washington**

need creativity and innovation to shift consumer behavior to embrace sustainable lifestyles, and to shape society in a way that

businesses thrive from greener products, services, and business models. The significance for the SDG Lions is to recognize and advocate the actions, creativity, and ideas that make the world we live in kinder and more sustainable, create systemic changes and impact at scale.”

Lin said that she looks forward to the jury room dynamic where she will have the opportunity to learn “from some of the brilliant minds in our business together with wider SDG industry specialists. Of course I’m hoping to see some ideas that move us forward as an industry. Ideas that have the power to drive systemic changes and make the world a better place. Every time people buy something, they are casting a vote for the kind of world they want to live in. The marketing and creative industry has a big role to play in designing

solutions to contribute to the journey.”

Lin concluded, “The opportunity of looking at the best work created in our industry helps set the bar and shows us how creativity and innovation can help solve some of the biggest sustainability challenges our clients are facing. I will take back some of this thinking to our teams at Dentsu who are working with our clients to create sustainable business solutions for the future. Dentsu has a rich heritage and long-standing commitment to sustainability to help our clients reach their sustainability goals with ideas and innovation. This aligns with our vision at Dentsu to be at the forefront of people-centered transformations that shape society.”

### Shannon Washington

This marks the second time Shannon Washington has judged at Cannes and her first time as jury president. Washington, R/GA’s U.S. chief creative officer for connected communications, presides over the Mobile Lions jury.

She shared, “I’m walking into this jury room more relaxed with a focus on pushing my jury to not only think critically, but to also actively engage one another and make sure we all are heard. The chemistry of excellence in the room is what makes a Cannes jury experience like no other. Yes, it’s important to have a keen eye for craft and expertise with the category—but the biggest lesson I’ve learned in judging is that the room has GOT to have an open vibe.”

The Mobile Lions competition looms large for Washington who assessed, “The omnipresence of mobile technology, utility and creativity is undeniable. Mobile runs entire nations, it platforms cultures, distributes news at a scale never seen before—in some cases it literally saves lives. To me, it’s the most socially relevant category at Cannes.”

As for the jury room dynamic, Washington shared, “I love a good, healthy debate where both things can absolutely be true. In advertising we take creative thinking and harness it for business and brand effectiveness. But, creativity at its core is very subjective. So, when you deconstruct the work like we do in the room, and get into discussion, it’s incredible how one person’s POV can completely upend things you knew to be true. So,

then you’re in a place where as a bystander, though it can be harder to decide, you walk away incredibly inspired.

“Also, this is trivial, but I really want a room that doesn’t feel like Antarctica.”

Washington observed, “One of my favorite things about judging in general is that it’s a continuing education. I bring back a ton of case studies for my teams to dive into and dissect and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

“When it comes to my own jury,” she added, “I like to give my team an honest look into the process, to include how to be an effective jury member even if they aren’t ready for that experience yet. From these conversations we connect the dots between the jury experience, the art of giving feedback, critical thinking, curating your work and so much more.

### Quinnton Harris

Last year Quintton Harris, CEO and co-founder of Retrospect, was a Design



**Quinnton Harris**

Lions judge. This year he presides over the Design Lions jury. Harris recalled “how beautiful” his experience as a judge in 2022 was as he got to know “the stories and professional journeys for each of my fellow jurors. Our diverse group was curated from all over the world—including Europe, Japan, Australia, India, Canada and Brazil. As the 2023 Design Lions Jury president, I’m even more excited to meet 9 new Design Lions jury members and further the legacy of last year’s president, Lisa Smith.”

Harris noted that pre-festival judging is essential as some 1,000-plus entries had to be sorted through. “Judging early and often is a must.” As for other considerations to keep in mind, Harris cited:

—“Commercial impact and applied design should be considered foundational to the awards process. Design Lions awards recognize the power and necessity of applied design within business. We believe

we set a global standard for how creativity fuels and grows business impact.”

—“Onsite deliberations can be both intense and exhilarating, but we must work very hard to include those whose first language is not English. This is a global jury, and if we aren’t diligent, the fluent English speakers can unnecessarily dominate conversations.”

—“Community is at the heart of jury experience—building and maintaining community and values for kindness, openness, and excellence will be key in determining our success as a jury.”

Harris believes that Design Lions is “the most important and humble” of the Cannes Lions categories. “While we take into consideration trends and hot topics, we also prioritize how the craft for design is commercially applied versus purely a work of art or solely purpose-driven. We look for novel and fresh work that solves real consumer needs and fundamentally shifts the way we behave as a society.”

As jury president, Harris said, he looks forward “to helping guide the judging process from a lens of deep retrospection, one that centers true impact and commercial viability in context of real, nuanced issues facing businesses, consumers and communities across the globe. Also I hope my fellow jurors will take the time to earnestly listen to and learn from each other’s unique perspectives.”

Harris also anticipates the jury room discoveries and deliberations will inform not only him but his brethren at Retrospect, a Publicis-backed, Black-owned studio that helps brands be more culturally connected, inclusive and equitable.

“Judging Cannes Lions gives me the opportunity to share some of the most brilliant and compelling work from our contemporaries with my colleagues at Retrospect,” said Harris. “As a research, strategy and design company, our mission is to build culture-forward brand experiences at the highest standards of craft and impact, and having Cannes Lions widen our perspective is a priceless gift.

“At the same time,” he continued, “I believe I’m well positioned to cultivate an atmosphere and regard for nuanced perspective and inclusivity, infusing many of the practices we use at Retrospect to consider, weigh and champion lived experience in design craft.”



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# Kat Coiro

*Director/executive producer reflects on entering the Marvel universe with She Hulk: Attorney at Law*



**By Robert Goldrich**

Kat Coiro made her first foray into the Marvel Cinematic Universe with *She-Hulk: Attorney at Law* (Disney+), directing multiple episodes and serving as an executive producer on the series. Tatiana Maslany portrays Jennifer Walters, an attorney for superhuman cases who, like her cousin Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo), turns into a Hulk when she gets angry.

The tongue-in-cheek show—which has generated Emmy buzz—adds to an already eclectic body of work for Coiro whose exploits range from the feature *And While We Were Here*, which she wrote and directed, to the pilot for Tina Fey's *Girls5Eva*.

*And While We Were Here* earned a Jury Award nomination from the 2012 Tribeca Film Festival for Best Narrative Feature. And the pilot for streaming Peacock series *Girls5Eva* garnered a 100 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

Among Coiro's television directing credits beyond *Girls5Eva* are *Dead to Me*, *Shameless*, *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, *The Mick*, *Modern*

*Family*, *Brooklyn 99*, *Florida Girls*, *Girlfriends' Guide to Divorce*, and *Mozart in the Jungle*.

In addition to *And While We Were Here*, Coiro has a feature filmography which includes *Life Happens* and *Marry Me*. The latter starred Jennifer Lopez, Owen Wilson and Maluma, opening last year as the number one title on Peacock.

At press time Coiro was wrapping a multi-episode run of *The Spiderwick Chronicles* for Disney. She had also directed a *Matlock* reboot starring Kathy Bates in the title role for CBS.

Coiro studied theater and film at Carnegie Mellon, the American Film Institute and the Moscow Art Theater in Russia where she also got engaged in Russian history and literature. Beyond her entertainment content output, Coiro is passionate about working towards a plastic-free environment and has made it a priority to eliminate or at least dramatically reduce the presence of the environmentally damaging material on her projects.

Coiro's comments have been edited for clarity and brevity.

**SHOOT:** What attracted you to *She-Hulk: Attorney at Law* and the Marvel storytelling arena?

**Coiro:** I was a She-Hulk fan as a kid, I grew up with her.

And I became a fan of the Marvel Cinematic Universe from a filmmaking perspective. I remember being so amazed when watching the *Thor* movies, how they adapted and evolved—from starting out serious and then the latest movie being comedy. I loved the way that Marvel listened to audiences and how they created this universe that changed over time tonally.

I was excited when I heard they were making *She-Hulk*. I thought how are they going to adapt the Marvel Cinematic Universe to encapsulate the tone of *She-Hulk* which is very different from everything else. She breaks the fourth wall.

The script I read early on allowed for the

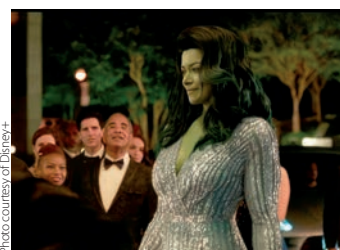
tone of the comics, pushing boundaries.

**SHOOT:** Did you enter the Marvel Universe with any trepidation?

**Coiro:** The show is so tonally different and so big. But the only time we were scared was before we had Tatiana. We had worked on the script for quite a long time. Pretty early on we were discussing casting and her name came up.

Hers was the one name that was unanimous, from Kevin Feige [Marvel Studios president] to me, the producer, the writers. I cast her for the part. She has the intelligence and the emotional vulnerability as an actress. She can play both sides of the coin.

**SHOOT:** What was (were) the biggest challenge(s) that *She-Hulk: Attorney at Law* posed to you as a director?



"When you see visual effects that don't quite work, it's often because humanity is not being put in the front seat."

**Coiro:** The visual effects were so extensive, even bigger than anyone at Marvel had originally imagined. We had a grounded real world with a CGI character. This CGI character was inhabiting part of his natural world. [Marvel Cinematic Universe exec producer] Lou Esposito told me, "How do you feed an elephant? The answer: One bite at a time." It can all be accomplished if you break it down into its smallest parts.

Plus working at Marvel, you have at your fingertips all the visual effect technologies. There's not a default technology. Instead you have much to choose from in order to figure out the best way to capture a scene.

**SHOOT:** The cinematographer on the six episodes you directed was Florian Ballhaus. What drew you to him?

**Coiro:** I started my career in micro-budget indies in the rom-com world. He was at the top of my wish list but not attainable. Finally for *Marry Me*, with Jennifer Lopez and Owen Wilson, I got Florian.

We had a wonderful time working together. He approaches everything through the story as a cinematographer. We collaborate on story.

I then brought him onto *She-Hulk*. And

then he did *The Spiderwick Chronicles* with me.

I'm building up a team of people I work with. It allows the work to be better. You speak a common language. You hit the ground running. My DP, costume designer [Ann Foley] and production designer [Elena Albanese] from *She-Hulk* all went on to do *The Spiderwick Chronicles* with me.

**SHOOT:** What was your biggest takeaway or lessons learned from your experience on *She-Hulk: Attorney at Law*?

**Coiro:** Since *She-Hulk*, I directed and executive produced a new series for Disney [*The Spiderwick Chronicles*]. It was very visual effects heavy. I went into it feeling so prepared, because of the skills I developed in visual effects that I walked away with from *She-Hulk*. I'm feeling a confidence with effects, which is such a gift. It makes me so happy to have that toolbox with me.

What I learned within the visual effects world is that ultimately [acting] performance is still king. When you see visual effects that don't quite work, it's often because humanity is not being put in the front seat. We had those priorities straight [for *She-Hulk*], working with talented actors like Tatiana Maslany and Mark Ruffalo.

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## Matthew Flood Ferguson Teams Again With Ryan Murphy

Continued from page 11

green; for *Hollywood*, brown and harvest tones. For *Dahmer* it was dingy, dingy yellow. That palette would run across the entire project, a starting off point on which to build the emotional tone. It's an uncomfortable looking color, is very of the period." Ferguson went through varied color swatches, making the yellow lighter, darker, adding stains--and then sharing them with Murphy as ways to set the mood for Dahmer's apartment, reflecting an uncomfortable, ugly, bleak world.

Re-creating that apartment was one of the series' prime challenges, related Ferguson who had the invaluable help of set decorator Melissa Licht and art director Helen Harwell. The former served as set decorator on the *Hollywood* team that earned the aforementioned Emmy nod. Back when he was set decorator, Ferguson first hired Licht as his buyer. "I could immediately tell how good she is--better than me," he laughed. "She's so organized. We share a visual aesthetic, speak the same way in terms of furniture. Our working together was seamless."

Upon getting his first full-on production designer gig on *Hollywood*, Ferguson hired Licht for her first full-time gig as a set decorator. That collaboration continued on *Dahmer*.

As for art director Harwell's contributions, Ferguson assessed, "She did a great job, brought a lot of creative ideas as to how to open up the set. Dahmer's apartment was very claustrophobic. It needed to feel that way on camera but it also needed to have crew access." Ferguson worked with Harwell to put some walls on tracks, pulling them away when called for so that cinematographer Jason McCormick could get the necessary shots.

Ferguson said there's constant collaboration in developing the sets as he, like Murphy, seeks out opinions and other options to arrive at the best solution supporting the story and its characters.

Murphy's ties to past collaborators extend well beyond Ferguson on *Dahmer*. This is especially evident in the cast--not only for example Peters and Nash-Betts but also Richard Jenkins (who played Dahmer's father, Lionel).

Murphy had previously cast Peters in *American Horror Story* and *Pose*, worked with Jenkins on the feature *Eat Pray Love*



**Molly Ringwald (l) and Richard Jenkins as Jeffrey Dahmer's parents**

(directed by Murphy and starring Julia Roberts) and teamed with Nash-Betts who took on a bit part in *Popular* (Murphy's first TV show) and then a starring role in *Scream Queens*. In a recent awards season session, Murphy moderated a conversation featuring Peters, Nash-Betts and Jenkins.

SHOOT earlier covered that talk in which Jenkins recalled receiving scripts for the first three *Dahmer* episodes. Jenkins loved the writing, describing it as "so human" and connecting with the feeling that a father cannot help but to blame himself to some extent for what his son did in this case.

Jenkins also read "A Father's Story" written by Lionel Dahmer. The book, related Jenkins, was "a cautionary tale" as the father acknowledged that he didn't want to hear that his son was gay. Lionel Dahmer lamented that perhaps this denial and ignorance of who his son was somehow contributed to the young man's

psychological problems which in turn led to the heinous crimes.

Nash-Betts meanwhile was best known for her comedic work but Murphy could see she had dramatic chops and was just lacking the opportunity to show them. He was confident in her ability to take on the role of Cleveland and she was eager to oblige.

Nash-Betts observed that she was unfortunately all too familiar with the story which is "still playing out today--marginalized people being over-policed, themes of homophobia and white privilege in the world. The story is not new." Nash-Betts said she could relate to the role of a Black woman who is not heard. "I have been a Glenda Cleveland all my life--not being believed. To not be heard is painful. I wept for this woman, for all the times I wasn't heard."

Nash-Betts added that she wasn't all that enamored with Peters personally at first. But later she discovered that his seemingly detached, aloof, unfriendly behavior was rooted in his acting method which had him immersed in the Jeffrey Dahmer role. His process did not allow him to be engaging.

"I wondered why is he being mean to me?" smiled Nash-Betts. Peters wanted and needed to keep that tension going. That tension on camera played well--particularly in a scene from "Cassandra" in which Jeffrey Dahmer visits Cleveland in her apartment, trying to convince her to retract her complaint to the landlord which has resulted in an eviction notice for Dahmer. He presents her with a home-made sandwich as a questionable peace offering. Murphy said he loved the

scene which afforded the two actors in character to "go at each other."

Nash-Betts relished the scene as an opportunity for Cleveland to finally "confront him properly," ultimately scoring a checkmate on Dahmer. Cleveland held her ground throughout the encounter despite how scared she really was.

When not on camera, Nash-Betts and Peters talked to each other sparingly, if not barely. It was only after shooting was wrapped that Nash-Betts got to know Peters and came to like him on a personal level.

Back in November 2022, *Dahmer-Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story* became at the time only the third Netflix series ever to register more than 1 billion hours of viewing in its first 60 days--the others being *Squid Game* in 2021 and season 4 of *Stranger Things* in 2022. *Squid Game* and *Stranger Things*, season 4, reached that milestone in the first 30 days as did most recently *Wednesday*, Tim Burton's Addams Family spinoff.

### Ramsey Avery, Kate Hawley

Production designer Ramsey Avery and costume designer Kate Hawley collaborated for the first time on *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power* (Prime Video)--and both are considered Emmy contenders for their work, in part due to the respective guild recognition they've already received this awards season.

Avery won the ADG Excellence in Production Design Award for the "Adar" episode while Hawley scored a Costume Designers Guild Award nomination for the series' very first episode titled "A Shadow of the Past."

Avery aspired initially to a career as an astrophysicist. While he explored various fantasy books over the years, the first to profoundly influence him was J.R.R. Tolkien's novel "The Hobbit," which led Avery to "The Lord of the Rings."

"That world felt utterly real to me. It sparked my interest in the whole idea of science fiction and fantasy," recalled Avery who as a result realized he could "make worlds"--and "didn't have to figure out how they work" as an astrophysicist. Rather than serving as a scientific observer, he could actively create worlds in his imagination and bring them to fruition through design. Little did he know



**Production designer  
Matthew Flood Ferguson**

## Production and Costume Designing The Rings Of Power



Photo courtesy of Prime Video

### Benjamin Walker in *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*

that the profound influence of Tolkien on his art and livelihood would one day translate into his bringing life to Tolkien-inspired worlds in *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*.

Avery came into the ambitious project with his share of world-building experience. As an art director, he contributed to the future worlds in such films as *Minority Report* and *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*, eventually becoming supervising art director on *Star Trek Into Darkness*, *Mirror Mirror*, *Tomorrowland* and *Guardians of the Galaxy*, vol. 2.

As a production designer, Avery has designed the films *10 Cloverfield Lane*, *Hotel Artemis*, *Peppermint*, and the Sundance selections *Waitress* and *Right At Your Door*.

In addition, he has designed national commercials for, among others, Budweiser, Microsoft, and Capri Sun, plus a Super Bowl spot for Dodge. He was nominated for an ADG Award for Excellence in Production Design for his design of the

live action portion of the trailer for *The Bee Movie*.

Avery is no stranger to the ADG Awards' circle, having been nominated as an art director for *Tomorrowland*, *Star Trek Into Darkness*, *Minority Report* and *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*. And now his production design on *The Rings of Power* yielded the aforementioned ADG win.

There was plenty of room for imagination in *The Rings of Power* as the show takes place thousands of years prior to *The Lord of the Rings* feature films. While Tolkien provided the road map for navigating the worlds in *The Rings of Power*, Avery had creative room on his journey. For example he was tasked with bringing the island of Númenor to life, a kingdom-known for its strength in water and sailing—never previously depicted on screen. Within that environ came a life-sized ship with 30 foot sails. The set for Númenor was built on a lot in New Zealand spanning some five acres.

Avery also had to create such locales

as the underground Dwarven kingdom of Khazad-dûm, the elves' city of Lindon, and pop-up villages of the Harfoots. Avery tapped into such talent as illustrators John Howe and Alan Lee known for their Tolkien book artwork as well as concept art for Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy. But the concept art they did for *The Rings of Power* was an original proposition in that Jackson's movies portrayed the decline of the various worlds of men, elves, Tolkien's dwarves. *The Rings of Power* in contrast showcases these kingdoms back when they were flourishing. *The Rings of Power* brings to screens for the very first time the heroic legends of the fabled Second Age of Middle-earth's history.

When feasible, practical sets were constructed—giving actors an inhabitable space even when the locations are fantastical. Environments had to feel real and honest. Avery also had to design for visual effects when an in-camera approach wasn't viable. He explained that they took every opportunity to put the camera in a real place—to make the worlds and cultures real.

Ramsey affirmed that *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power* was “the only show I ever worked on where the visual effects and art departments stayed hand-in-hand from the very beginning.” He recollected that “day in and day out you knew where the visual effects were, where the construction was.”

This coordination and communication made the creation of worlds efficient and optimal. Similarly, Hawley noted that her ensemble was in sync with the visual effects team relative to not just backgrounds but creature creation. The costume department knew the ongoing status of their effects counterparts' work and how it impacted costume design.

Hawley's costume design exploits span such features as *Edge of Tomorrow*, *Pacific Rim* and *Crimson Peak*; the latter two directed by Guillermo del Toro. For *Crimson Peak*, she earned her first Costume Designers Guild Award nomination.

Like Avery, Hawley was influenced by Tolkien whose books she discovered at the age of 12. Hawley became enamored with worlds that felt so real and “defined fantasy in a different tone. The poetry of it blew me away. The poetry felt like music

to me.”

Hawley never lost sight of that poetry and the “beautiful characters” who impacted her. Fast forward to adulthood and she's grateful for the opportunity to have an artful hand in defining all of this in a streaming series.

Hawley and Avery also benefited from their teams coming together. Avery cited as an example Hawley's Dwarven costumes which were “so rich that we were careful not to have the backgrounds be too rich as well.” This, he explained, helped the grandeur and beauty of each of the Dwarven characters to “pop forth from the background.”

This creative give-and-take in order to best tell the story proved integral to *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*. It's all the more impressive when you factor in the scale and scope of the series. “You may have a couple of major worlds in some movies,” said Hawley. But in the case of this series—which Amazon Studios has committed to five seasons of—there are “characters and environments everywhere. Each had to be created from the beginning this first season.” And those creations encompassed a wide range in costume and production design—from tiny details to major elements.

Another balancing act was the desire to show the grittiness of these worlds—to create “a grounded world, not a *Star Wars* fantasy,” said Avery—while also capturing the intangibles including a sense of beauty. “As much as you wanted to make sure you felt the dirt, Kate would remind me about the poetry, to think about the poetry,” continued Avery. This kept the dynamics of “romanticism, a depth of passion” at top of mind for Avery, ensuring that this dimension would be infused in the story.

*This is the sixth installment of SHOOT's weekly 16-part The Road To Emmy Series. Future parts in the series are slated to run in the weekly SHOOT®e.dition, The SHOOT Dailies and on SHOOTonline.com—with select installments also in print/PDF issues. Emmy nominations will be announced and covered on July 12. Creative Arts Emmy winners will be reported on during the weekend of September 9 and 10, and primetime Emmy ceremony winners will be covered on September 18.*



Photo courtesy of Prime Video

A scene from *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*



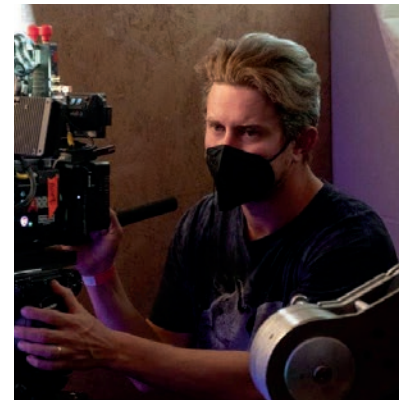
Nicola Daley (l) and Elisabeth Moss



Damian Garcia



Corrin Hodgson



Larkin Seiple

## Shooting Beef, The Handmaid's Tale, Andor and 1923

DPs Seiple, Daley, García and Hodgson discuss collaborators, creative challenges

By Robert Goldrich

One DP picked up his first Emmy nomination in-between lensing this year's Best Picture Oscar winner and then a streaming series that has garnered widespread acclaim.

Another cinematographer successfully took on season five of a lauded series which she's been a fan of from the outset.

Yet another lenser entered the Star Wars universe with a streaming show which last month earned a Peabody Award.

And our fourth artisan made his debut as a cinematographer on a high-profile series after 15 years as a gaffer.

Here are insights from Larkin Seiple on *Beef* (Netflix); Nicola Daley, ACS on *The Handmaid's Tale* (Hulu); Damián García on *Andor* (Disney+); and Corrin Hodgson on *1923* (Paramount+).

### Larkin Seiple

It's been an extended awards season for cinematographer Larkin Seiple, dating back to when a film he lensed made an auspicious debut at the SXSW Fest in March of 2022. *Everything Everywhere All at Once* went on to assorted high-profile accolades, including Best Picture and Best Director Oscars for writers/directors Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, aka The Daniels. *Everything Everywhere* won a total of seven Academy Awards.

Four months after the *Everything Everywhere* premiere at SXSW, Seiple received his first Emmy nomination—for the "Will" episode of the limited series *Gaslit*, a modern take on Watergate that

focused on the untold stories and forgotten characters of the scandal. Heading the *Gaslit* cast were Julia Roberts as Martha Mitchell and Sean Penn as her husband, Attorney General John Mitchell. *Gaslit* marked the first full television series Seiple had ever shot. Previously, his TV exploits were confined to a couple of pilots.

*Gaslit* additionally garnered Seiple his fifth career Golden Frog nomination from Camerimage; the other four nods coming for music videos, including Seiple winning the honor in 2018 for Childish Gambino's "This Is America."

Fast forward to current industry awards banter and prevalent in the mix is *Beef*, a critically acclaimed show created by Lee Sung Jin which follows an epic ever escalating feud—triggered by a single, off-the-charts road rage incident—between two strangers portrayed by Ali Wong (*Always Be My Maybe*) and Steven Yeun (*Minari*,

*The Walking Dead*). The twists and turns, while darkly entertaining, say a lot about our society, laying bare the rage, angst, ugliness and insecurities that have become so prevalent—but still managing to cast a cathartic ray of hope somehow reflecting the better side of human nature.

Seiple was drawn to the story, getting the opportunity to take it on when Jake Schreier, who directed six of the 10 episodes, reached out to him. Seiple and Schreier are friends, having previously teamed on various commercials. (Schreier is with Park Pictures in the spot/branded content space.)

Seiple described himself as "going out of my way to do what's best for performance" by the actors. In the case of *Beef*, he felt compelled to "restrain the camera and let the characters do the work." He explained that the vendetta-motivated characters were so obsessed, made such

crazy, bad decisions that any extra effort from the camera would make the proceedings seem unrealistic. Along these lines, there was a conscious decision on the part of Seiple to let scenes linger, to not cut too much, "to sit in trauma, to sit in the awkwardness." And in that vein, there was at least one lengthy continuous take, a significant scene sans cuts—aka a "oner"—in every episode.

Shooting had to be very fast paced as Seiple found himself doing five to seven pages of script each day. "We had to find a way to shoot fast and still allow time for performance and to choreograph the oners," he related.

Providing context for the time-related challenges of the series, Seiple at press time noted that he had an upcoming feature, *Wolfs* directed by Jon Watts, slated for 70 shoot days. While that schedule was for a two-hour film, he had but 65 days for 10 episodes of *Beef*.

Seiple embraced all the challenges *Beef* posed, noting that, for example, the cinematography sought to "find beauty in the mundane." He credited production designer Grace Yun with creating "beautiful sets" that were "textured, real, not showy." This helped him to play with sunlight and shade to create an ambiance, at times playing to darkness to counter some of the brighter yet barren sets—such as the house of Ali Wong's character which was "beautiful but bold" and "empty" in many places.

Seiple observed that as the series comes to a close, the feel is more akin to a Coen brothers' film, marked by mayhem



Steven Yeun (l) and Ali Wong in a scene from Beef

Photo by Andrew Cooper/courtesy of Netflix

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and chaos with a color palette that leans toward more reds. “The show folds in on itself and compounds themes,” shared Seiple.

For *Beef*, Seiple opted for the ARRI Alexa LF in tandem with Zeiss Supreme Prime lenses. He cited his affinity for the

rors politics now, people stepping forward and speaking up about issues—especially when they’re told to stay silent,” said Seiple who found that situation akin to last year’s House of Representatives’ hearings on the January 6th insurrection.



Ali Wong in a scene from *Beef*

way Alexa renders skin tones.

In addition to *Everything Everywhere All at Once* and *Gaslit*, other lensing credits for Seiple include one of director Watts’ early features, *Cop Car*. Incidentally it was Watts who played a role in the DP garnering his Emmy-nominated turn on *Gaslit*. Watts initially connected Seiple with *Gaslit* creator Robbie Pickering, which then led to the DP meeting that show’s director, Matt Ross. Seiple had a meeting of minds with Ross on the approach to *Gaslit*, which entailed maintaining a delicate balance when it came to the time period. “We wanted it to feel like you were in the 1970s as opposed to watching a ‘70s film,” explained Seiple. “The nostalgia is there but not being harped upon. The look was built more around our characters—softer, more intimate lenses for Martha Mitchell, sharper lenses, more distorted for the villains.” For Martha Mitchell, there was a theme of mirrors and reflections. “We’re often seeing her through mirrors and how she sees herself—contrasted with how the world sees her,” observed Seiple.

By adopting a character-driven visual dynamic—which is a thread running through Seiple’s work, including *Beef*—and not getting too preoccupied with that ‘70s movie look, *Gaslit* became a story with contemporary relevance. “It mir-

As for how Seiple landed the *Everything Everywhere* gig, many moons ago he went to school with Kwan and Scheinert but “didn’t quite know them” back then. Fast forward to The Daniels’ first music video upon moving out to L.A., and Seiple was most impressed with what he saw. “It was like a hundred dollar video, playing alongside videos from established directors. And Daniels’ video was the best of the bunch. It led me to seek them out and say, ‘Remember me? We went to school together.’ I wound up shooting short films and music videos for them. It’s been a fun relationship. They like to do absurd, crazy, silly projects. My job is to shoot them as if they were completely normal, serious projects to counter what they’re doing, to help make the audience believe it’s real or could happen.”

On the feature side, Seiple then lensed The Daniels’ *Swiss Army Man*, which won the Dramatic Directing Award at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival and earned Kwan and Scheinert a Best First Film nomination from the Independent Spirit Awards. (As a directorial duo, Kwan and Scheinert are represented by PRETTY BIRD for commercials.)

## Nicola Daley, ACS

A huge fan of *The Handmaid’s Tale* from the outset, Nicola Daley, ACS

jumped at the opportunity to shoot multiple episodes of the show’s season five, including three installments directed by Elisabeth Moss who also stars as June Osborne and serves as an executive producer on the series. Helping the cinematographer get the coveted gig were a couple of classmates at film school in Australia—DPs Zoe White who shot some of season two, and Bonnie Elliott who had worked with actor/exec producer Moss on the series *The Shining Girls*. (Moss also directed part of *Shining Girls* but those episodes were not lensed by Elliott.)

With ties to White and a recommendation from Elliott, Daley got her foot in the door for *The Handmaid’s Tale*, ultimately getting the job. She’s found the experience—which includes perhaps most notably the first and finale episodes of season five, both directed by Moss—to be most gratifying. Daley described Moss as being “hands down, one of the best directors I’ve ever worked with” and hopes the two can do many more projects together. “It’s a joy to sit in a room and jam on ideas with her,” related Daley. “We think the same, often finishing each other’s sentences on set. That sounds a little dorky but it’s great. She’s a good mix of

came up with a shot to open season five to reflect how Osborne is figuratively upside down about what she did, twisting the camera about, achieving a spinning around effect as Osborne contemplates what she had done to Waterford. “The cinematography should always come from the storytelling and the journey,” observed Daley who added that it was most satisfying to see their idea for the first shot in the first episode of season five “kick into place”—and more importantly, to see it work as a storytelling device.

Daley also felt the responsibility of carrying on the cinematography lineage of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, including work from Stuart Biddlecome, an Emmy-winning turn for Colin Watkinson and a nomination for White. Daley brought to the table well-rounded experience spanning features such as *Pin Cushion* which premiered at the Venice Film Festival, and *Benediction*, an official selection of the Toronto International Film Festival, series work such as *Paradise Lost* and *Harlots*, and early on in her career extensive documentary fare. In fact she earned two Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) Award nominations for documentary cinematography—



A scene from *The Handmaid’s Tale*

knowing what she wants as a director but still listening, collaborating and open to other ideas. That’s the secret sauce in *The Handmaid’s Tale*. They hire great people and give them the space to do their job, whatever that job is.”

Daley recalled brainstorming with Moss about how her character Osborne feels after murdering Commander Fred Waterford in the season four finale. They

—first for *Go Back to Where You Came From* and then for *I Am a Girl*.

The British born Daley, who resided in Australia for a long stretch, lensed documentaries for some 10 years, noting that she learned much from the experience. “I used to do observational documentaries, carrying the camera and having to shoot scenes. You had to get all the

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## Lensing A Handmaid's Tale

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shots for the editor. Nothing could be repeated. If you didn't get it, it wasn't in the final film. From that I learned to sort of edit in my head really well. Now I find in drama that this is a really good skill, especially if time is running out. I wouldn't swap my documentary background for anything."

Daley continued the camera (ARRI Alexa Mini) and lenses of choice (TLS-rehoused Canon K35s) for *The Handmaid's Tale* onto season five, reasoning, "You don't come into a season and re-

maid's Tale, she continued is blessed with a stellar acting ensemble. "The actors are so wonderfully secure," translating into their being cooperative when it comes to "where we want them to stand. They are happy to sort of make it all work."

And that make-it-work attitude will continue at some point on the sixth and final season of *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In addition to the aforementioned AACTA Award nominations, Daley received an Australian Cinematographers Society NSW & ACT Gold Award for the fictional drama short *I Am Emmanuel*, an



Diego Luna (l) and Alex Lawther in *Andor*

invent the wheel," especially in light of the high visual bar set and maintained for the show with the resources already being used. The Alexa Mini and K35s, she said, deliver a wide range of looks from "Kubrick-esque sort of wide shots to handheld closeups of June's face."

Daley encountered plenty of challenges in season five, including what a gaffer told her was one of the biggest lighting setups in the series thus far—specifically for episode six, "Together," in which Osborne and Lucas Neff (Ryan Wheeler) are caged in an enormous factory-like space. The setting necessitated 24 18Ks plus a bunch of other lights, rivaling the big ticket lighting required for Boston's Fenway Park back during season two.

An unsung, almost "secret skill" behind an elevated level of cinematography, said Daley, is blocking so that the camera works optimally in rhythm with the actors and the lighting. Blocking, she affirmed, is "how the actors and the camera crew come together to make the space work to be visually stunning." *The Hand-*

maid's Tale, she continued is blessed with a stellar acting ensemble. "The actors are so wonderfully secure," translating into their being cooperative when it comes to "where we want them to stand. They are happy to sort of make it all work."

### Damián García

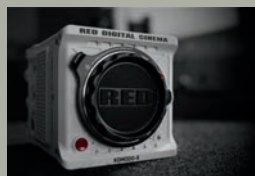
As a cinematographer on *Andor*, a prequel series to the feature film *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, Damián García knew the visual bar would be inherently high given that he was traversing the universe of a hallowed franchise. *Andor* goes back five years from the events of *Rogue One*, following Cassian Andor (portrayed by Diego Luna who also played Andor in the movie). Season one consists of 12 episodes which cover one year in time. Season two plans to take viewers over the next four years leading into *Rogue One*.

Whereas *Rogue One* brings us the character of Andor fully shaped as the consummate warrior and leader of the Rebellion, the TV series delves into the early years of the Rebellion, exploring Andor's complex history—and the road he

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## RED Introduces KOMODO-X Camera

RED Digital Cinema® revealed its KOMODO-X camera, the newest addition to RED's popular KOMODO line of small form-factor 6K global shutter sensor cameras for cinema. KOMODO-X builds on the original KOMODO, multiplying frame rates and advancing dynamic range performance while expanding on the versatility of KOMODO.



RED's KOMODO-X

KOMODO-X features a next-generation 6K S35 Global Shutter sensor, expanding on the KOMODO image performance with architecture improvements that allow for increased low-light performance and double the frame rates at 6K 80P and 4K 120P, making KOMODO-X an even more powerful tool for filmmakers across the industry.

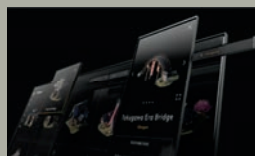
KOMODO-X is currently being offered in a limited-edition white ST beta version for \$9,995. The black production version of KOMODO-X will be available to order at the same price shortly after the ST beta program ends. The black production version of KOMODO-X will be sold with options for a pre-bundled starter pack or production pack.

The KOMODO-X features improvements to seamlessly integrate into any professional workflow while still maintaining the legacy of the small KOMODO form factor at only 4"x4"x5" and 2.62 lbs. The new I/O array features 12G SDI, full-sized DC-IN, USB Type-C, and a phantom powered locking audio connector. In addition, an integrated 2.9" LCD allows for simplified control and image preview, and for even more precise monitoring, KOMODO-X also supports the direct-mounted DSMC3 7" Touch LCD.

RED president Jarred Land said, "With its global shutter, increased frame rates and improved audio and power infrastructure, the KOMODO-X is our new all-around workhorse that fills a much-needed gap in our lineup between the 6K KOMODO and our mighty 8K V-RAPTOR."

## KitBash3D Launches Cargo

KitBash3D, known for premium 3D assets, has just unveiled its groundbreaking new software, Cargo. Fresh off the heels of its partnership with Epic Games, announced at GDC's State of Unreal keynote, KitBash3D continues to push the boundaries of 3D asset interoperability with Cargo. This software allows creators to easily search and filter through KitBash3D's extensive library of over 10,000 models and materials. With just a single click, artists can seamlessly import any individual asset into popular 3D content creation tools like Epic Games' Unreal Engine 5, Blender, and Autodesk Maya and 3ds Max.



KitBash3D's Cargo

KitBash3D library assets have appeared in major film franchises, such as *Dr. Strange*, *Black Adam*, and *Spider-Man*, as well as hit TV shows like *The Last of Us*, *Star Trek* and *Halo*, and AAA gaming titles including *The Last of Us Part II*, *NBA 2K*, and *The Elder Scrolls*.

"As we witness the rapid evolution of digital content creation, we believe it is crucial to equip artists with tools that keep pace with their creative ambitions," said Banks Boulté, co-CEO of KitBash3D. "This requires eliminating technical barriers by providing creators with access to the fundamental 3D building blocks—models and materials—and ensuring that those assets work with any platform."

Cargo is KitBash3D's response to this challenge, offering easy access to its entire fully customizable library and effortless integration with 3D software and game engines so that creators can focus on their vision without getting bogged down by the complexities of asset management and 3D data transferring. KitBash3D is looking to establish Cargo as the ultimate solution for handling the growing use of 3D data by simplifying asset management for creators. With Pixar's Universal Screen Description at its core, Cargo is built to quickly and seamlessly move data across 3D software packages, and adapt to a user's needs in real time.

## Damian Garcia's Star Wars Sojourn Leads To Andor

Continued from page 26

took through his personal life to become the one person whom the Rebellion trusted to carry out a bold revolt. Similarly other fascinating characters—for whom *Rogue One* could only provide snapshots—are more thoroughly examined in *Andor*:

cinematographer to put his own visual stamp on the work. García felt he was afforded a lot of freedom as to where he took his episodic block visually. “We shared some sets of course,” related García, but within that context each cinematographer had “room to play with.”



A scene from *Andor*

The story has a lasting merit that goes beyond the popularity of all things *Star Wars* as reflected last month when *Andor* won a Peabody Award, one of just 35 recipients selected for telling the most compelling and empowering stories released in broadcasting, streaming and interactive during 2022.

A statement from Peabody judges read in part, “Few other long-running franchises loom as large in today’s contemporary pop cultural imagination than *Star Wars*. Yet amid stories of destiny-driven heroes and doomed super-powered villains, [series creator] Tony Gilroy’s *Andor* tackles that familiar galaxy with plenty of spectacle, but also a keen-eyed commitment to mirroring our own mundane trials and tribulations as it follows scavenger Cassian Andor, who unwittingly becomes radicalized in the wake of a police state that’s intent on crushing any and all signs of the Rebel Alliance.”

García was one of three cinematographers entrusted with lensing multiple season one episodes to help tell this story—the others being Adriano Goldman, ASC, BSC, ABC and Frank Lamm. While continuity among the episodes from one cinematographer to the next is generally vital, García noted that each DP’s block of episodes was akin to “three separate films in a way.” There was room for each cin-

The cinematographers deployed the Sony VENICE camera combined with the E and G series of Panavision anamorphic lenses. This tandem of modern digital camera and vintage lenses helped to advance the story and its characters, said García,

The DP further noted that Tony Gilroy and co-producer John Gilroy took what amounted to “almost like an adult *Star Wars* approach” that proved inspiring and interesting. “We were trying to find a way to tell this story that’s based in this world so known by everyone but at the same time looking to create a specific aesthetic. It was challenging but also a joy,” continued García, citing the yeoman work of contributors such as production designer Luke Hull and costume designer Michael Wilkinson.” As a cinematographer, García said he felt “the challenge of trying to keep pace with and do justice to those beautiful sets and costumes.”

For the season one finale, episode 12, maintaining such a pace seemed analogous, commented García, to “keeping some form of musical rhythm for an hour or so,” with the tension constantly growing. Titled “Rix Road,” episode 12 was directed by Benjamin Caron. In fact, all three episodes shot by García were helmed by Caron.

From their first meeting, García felt

simpatico with Caron. “He’s an intelligent director,” assessed García. “We share a lot of common taste and references. And in the end you know that is probably the most important thing in a collaboration. We share the same idea of what is nice and what is not, what is important and what isn’t. I respect and admire him as a director. You quickly understand when a collaboration is going well—when one person is adding to the other person’s ideas. He was adding to me and I was adding to him.”

*Andor* adds to a filmography for García which also includes multiple episodes of the TV series *Narcos: Mexico* and *Mars*, as well as the features *I’m No Longer Here* and *Gueros*. The latter won the Jury Award at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival for Best Cinematography in a Narrative Feature.

### Corrin Hodgson

For Corrin Hodgson, *1923*—the prequel to *Yellowstone*—marks his debut as a cinematographer. The transition to full fledged DP builds on a track record Hodgson has established with writer-director Taylor Sheridan. Hodgson has served as a gaffer on such Sheridan ve-

hicles as *Yellowstone* and the movie *Wind River*, and as chief lighting technician on the feature *Those Who Wish Me Dead*. *1923* also marks a continuation of another even lengthier collaborative relationship—this one 10 years and counting—which teamed gaffer Hodgson with cinematographer Ben Richardson, ASC. “We met on a small independent film shooting in L.A. and found ourselves

Both Richardson and Hodgson too have evolved in the Sheridan universe. An Emmy-nominated cinematographer for his work on *Mare of Easttown* and *1883*, and the recipient of ASC Award nods for *Yellowstone* and *Mare of Easttown*, Richardson has successfully diversified into episodic directing, notably on such Sheridan shows as *Yellowstone*, *1883*, *1923* and *Tulsa King*.

Meanwhile Hodgson, after 15 years as a gaffer, spread his creative wings into cinematography on *1923*, a transition aided by Sheridan and Richardson. Hodgson and Richardson have served largely as co-directors of photography on select episodes of *1923* directed by Richardson who



Helen Mirren in a scene from *1923*

is also one of the series’ producers. Hodgson has valued the planning and brainstorming he and Richardson have engaged in for *1923*. On one hand, “we get into it,” shared Hodgson as they have detailed discussions of what’s needed, the proper approach to particularly tricky scenes and so on. Yet on the other hand, they don’t have to talk all that much since

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# Balancing Technology and Humanity; Striving For Diversity

**A cross-section of production & post pros share their takes on the business, creativity AI, AR, inclusion**

**A SHOOT Staff Report**



“The times They Are a Changin’,” famously wrote Bob Dylan. A contemporary update on those lyrics would additionally reflect that our times are also a-challenging—with labor unrest as exemplified in the writers’ strike, concerns if not outright fear over AI, the quest to attain diversity, equality and inclusion, the struggle for a work-life balance, the efforts to harness technology for the greater good, and somehow trying to build positive consensus, caring and empathy in an increasingly fragmented world.

Meanwhile try grappling with all this and more while running a business and seeking to foster creativity within that enterprise. Still, there is cause for hope within our industry. Skilled storytelling, for example, can spark some of the empathy and understanding so sorely needed, which in turn underscores the pressing need for diversity and inclusion. Labor and management can come together, valuing each other for the betterment of both. Brilliant minds in production and post can embrace technology, realize its positive potential while not letting it compromise, undermine or corrupt our humanity.

As we approach the mid-year point, *SHOOT* surveyed production and post professionals to tap into their concerns, expertise and priorities. One of the themes that emerged is the balance of technology and humanity. A number of respondents shared their thoughts on the promise of tech—while also emphasizing the human need for giving voice to the unrepresented or underrepresented, opening up opportunities for people from all walks of life.

Lauren Schwartz, owner/executive producer of production house kaboom, shared, “Many people are talking about how

to create and support a thriving, equitable industry; How to promote a diverse, happy workplace, and how to get the best creative possible from partners and the strongest collaborations from vendors. In our business, agencies and clients increasingly ask to work with woman-owned businesses, small businesses, and diverse talent. That’s a powerful step in the right direction. But the truth is that one of the best ways to support a healthy industry, especially small business vendors, many of which are female and minority owned, is to pay fairly and most importantly - in a timely fashion. In addition to advocating for fair payment and payment terms, many years ago I certified kaboom as a WBENC business, am a member of Free The Work and Owned by Women, and am proud to have attended the very first 3 Percent Conference and every one thereafter. But even as a women owned business, I know there is plenty more that I can do to help usher in much needed change including addressing another ‘ism’ our industry largely ignores: ageism. Change means stepping outside of your comfort zone, reflecting and acting on transitional change even if it is messy, hard, and uncomfortable. In fact, it is that difficult space that likely means we are on the right track in charting new paths.”

Ali Brown, president, PRETTYBIRD, noted, “We Double the Line on every job we can to make sure that we are changing our industry from one predicated on nepotism to one that embraces talent from all areas of entertainment. We hire from incredible organizations like Manifest Works and Streetlights who have the best PA training programs around. We try to create a culture and ethos at our company where it isn’t something to think about on occasion, but a part of the work we need to do every day.”

On the technology front, Luke Ricci, president of RSA Films, related, “I’ve spent quite a bit of my career working in emerging tech within an advertising context. From Google’s VR Film “Help” which launched their VR platform Spotlight Stories and won 2 Gold Lions at Cannes including the first ever in the VR category, to producing the award-winning Augmented Reality Car Configurator for the 2018 launch of the new Jeep Wrangler for FCA (now Stellantis), creating a VR educational STEM experience with Verizon, shooting projects in the volume, and all sorts of virtual production during the pandemic. The big takeaway from all of these efforts is that producers need to constantly be learning about new ways to engage technology in the craft of making content. Take AI for instance: I have spent a lot of time learning how to use ChatGPT, Midjourney, and Dall.E to figure out ways to integrate these tools into our workflows at RSA. There are certainly limitations to the functionality of these applications, but they are incredibly powerful and must

## Survey Respondents Offer Insights Into Production, Post

be fully understood.”

Rebecca Niles, managing director/exec producer of ArtClass, noted that roster talent Paul Trillo “has spearheaded groundbreaking projects where AI seamlessly merges with human creativity. For instance, our recent collaboration involved an innovative video campaign for a GoFundMe initiative, leveraging AI-generated visuals to evoke powerful emotions and inspire action. Through this project, we discovered the immense potential of AI in amplifying the impact of storytelling, connecting people to important causes, and driving social change.”

On the post side, LaRue Anderson, managing partner at Apache Digital, said, “We started working on AR and AI projects back in 2015 and it was exciting to get a glimpse of the road ahead. These past generations of AR projects required specialized gear to view, which created an obstacle in featuring the work on reels, but it was very much alive and well back then. Now we’re seeing the conversation around AI tap into feelings of fear, which is a natural human emotion. Whenever something perceived as new emerges you should aspire to embrace and learn from it. We love digging into Unreal Engine projects, animated and AR environments.

In the physical world, we are in the process of developing a film profiling aspect based on spectroradiometer and densitometer readings of selected film and print stocks. These are custom film profiles built on negative/print combinations and tweaked to client requests. We have built shooting LUTs for so many cameras over the years, most recently we’re fulfilling a lot of requests for the Alexa 35 (LogC4) and Sony Venice 2. Our technical ability to collaborate with clients who are looking for certain film looks, based on empirical data and finessed to the show’s needs streamlines the grading process. The LUTs are extremely helpful in unifying a look across multiple cameras on a single project and they can be carried across shooting and into the edit.

### Survey

These industry pros are part of a cross-section spanning production and post who participated in this Production Outlook survey. *SHOOT* posed the following questions to them:

**1) What was the biggest challenge posed to you by a recent project? Or share insights to a recent project you deem notable. Briefly describe the project, why**

**it was particularly noteworthy or what valuable lesson(s) you learned from it. If the work is complete and you’d like to share a link to it, please include.**

**2) Are you involved in virtual production or experimenting with AI, AR or other emerging disciplines or new technologies? Have you engaged in any real-world projects on these fronts? If so, relative to experimental and/or actual projects, briefly tell us about the work & what you’ve taken away from the experience. If the work is complete and you’d like to share a link to it, please include.**

**3) Does your company have plans for any major diversification and/or expansion/investment in technology and talent this year and if so, what? How will this investment or diversification add value to what you can offer to clients? If instead you have already realized any actual expansion, made such an investment and/or diversified significantly recently, share those developments with us**

**along with what they mean to your staff and clients.**

**4) Gender pay disparity, sexual misconduct and the need for diversity & inclusion are issues that have started to be dealt with meaningfully. While the industry has made strides to address these issues, there’s still a long way to go. What policies do you have in place or plan to implement or step up in order to make progress on any or all of these fronts?**

**5) Tell us about significant creative, filmmaking or tech talent you’ve recently brought into your company—including from those groups underrepresented in the industry--and what drew you to him, her and/or them. If this was talent new to the industry, how did you go about “discovering” him, her and/or them?**

What follows is the feedback we received, at times with minimal edits. Full survey responses can be found on *SHOOT*online.com and in the *SHOOT*>e. dition.



**LaRue Anderson**  
**Managing Partner**  
**Apache Digital**

**1)** Most recently we had the privilege of working on "Bono & The Edge: A Sort of Homecoming with David Letterman" for Disney +. Shot on 4 different cameras, colorist Taylor Black worked closely with the DP (Nicola Marsh) to create 4 different luts, which essentially pre-created a cohesion across the film before it even came to post. The director and the talent were really happy with what they saw on set and throughout the edit. This head start allowed us to spend the majority of color focusing on the beauty in the details.

**2)** We started working on AR and AI projects back in 2015 and it was exciting to get a glimpse of the road ahead. These past generations of AR projects required specialized gear to view, which created an obstacle in featuring the work on reels, but it was very much alive and well back then. Now we’re seeing the conversation around AI tap into feelings of fear, which is a natural human emotion. Whenever something perceptively new emerges you should aspire to embrace and learn from it. We love digging into Unreal engine projects, Animated and AR environments. In the physical world, we are in the process of developing a film profiling aspect based on spectroradiometer & densitometer readings of selected film and print stocks. These are custom film profiles built on negative/print combinations and tweaked to client requests. We have built shooting luts for so many cameras over the years, most recently we’re fulfilling a lot of requests for the Alexa 35 (LogC4) and Sony Venice 2. Our technical ability to collaborate with clients who are looking for certain film looks, based on empirical data and finessed to the show’s needs streamlines the grading process. The luts are extremely helpful in unifying a look across multiple cameras on a single project and they can be carried across shooting and into the edit.

**3)** We are always looking to invest in talent and technology. As part of a request to help curb timelines and budgets from our finishing partners on commercial campaigns, we are providing training for and utilizing Fusion. This help us provide support with respect to cleanup and VFX when requested by our creative partners.

**4)** I strive for everyone to know about postproduction as an option for a career and have discovered that fresh minds and amazing talent can be found in environments where exposure and the knowledge of postproduction is not necessarily at the forefront. I recently joined the advisory board for the Long Beach City College Film program and I am an AICP mentor for emerging talent. I enjoy helping others navigate and succeed in advertising and film. While not everyone needs a helping hand, many do need opportunities and connections to thrive as artists and work on projects that allow them to express their creativity. Gender pay disparity and the need for diversity & inclusion are just a few of the reasons why we opened Apache Digital back in 2014. We are a woman and minority-owned company. We believe that every employee deserves to be valued for their work. When we can, we promote from within before looking outside of our ecosystem for talent. When you leave Apache you leave with credits and a career. We believe that when you treat people well, they will do their best work. Our core values are empathy, honesty, integrity, and courage. The result is a company that grows and thrives because everyone’s efforts are aligned.

*Response continued on page 37*

## Feedback From Brandon Bloch, Jordan Brady, Ali Brown

Continued from page 29



**Brandon Bloch**  
Founding Partner  
Hometeam – Global Content

**1)** After remotely filming four seasons of contestant home follow packages for The Voice, NBC approached Hometeam with a seemingly impossible task – Their new show “American Song Contest” would feature a musical act from every U.S. state and territory and they wanted to film background packages of all contestants in their home states, all remotely, all during the pandemic travel restrictions. By tapping Hometeam’s hand-picked filmmakers in each state and territory, we were able to pull off 56 shoots – beautifully and consistently shot in broadcast quality – in 8 weeks. Some days shooting in multiple states simultaneously. No one ever set foot on a plane. <https://wearehometeam.com/project/nbc-american-song-contest>

nbc-american-song-contest

**2)** Hometeam is always working at the leading edge of what’s possible in remote production on a global scale. We’re best-in-class at working with local crews to capture content where it lives and streaming shoots to client via virtual video village. We’ve done this for clients as varied as Google, Apple, LG, Ford, L’Oreal, Walmart, NBC, HBO, and many more. We’ve filmed in every state, U.S. territory and on every continent in the past two years. In the past year, we’ve also extended our capabilities through postproduction to enable crews to quickly upload footage from wherever they shoot – no more hard drives in the mail! And client and post creatives can work remotely and collaborate in the cloud. One great example – for the America Is All In Coalition and Deutsch NY – found us filming 12 subjects (including high-powered execs and A-List celebrities) across nine cities all completely remote – <https://wearehometeam.com/project/america-is-all-in>

*Response continued on page 37*



**Jordan Brady**  
Founder/Filmmaker  
True Gent

**1)** I have a love/hate relationship with director’s treatments, but recently they’ve gotten out of hand. I love diving into the written words (I write mine) and the handful of visual references (I pay for those) are crucial to explain the director’s vision, inform the bidding process, and help all craftspeople in production. But the expectation for memes, gifs and photos of Paul Rudd is a waste of time. “Casting is crucial. . .” Yup, we all know that.

Recently, an agency team asked for a follow-up call to go over a treatment. When “What part can I clarify?” is answered with “Just take us through all of it” — that means no one read it. Once I politely asked, “Did you have a chance to read it?” and was met with blank stares until the CD confessed “Honestly, I only had time to skim it.” The team was sheepishly silent. Why not just hold up flash cards?

Bullet points and scrap should tell you who you vibe with, assuming you loved the reel and connected over the initial zoom. I’d bet a shiny nickel that if agencies had to pay the few grand to cover the cost we spend supporting the cottage industry of treatments, more people would read them. And they would not bid more than three directors.

Some agency teams read every word and why wouldn’t you? Your spot is super important and you need to trust whomever you bring onboard.

**2)** Our director/DP Ben Brady held a virtual tech scout using AR before shooting “Connection” for Cava de Pro Tequila at Void Studios. Rather than scout an empty soundstage, he walked everyone through the virtual set with the lighting plan and camera placements. It’s like operating with a scalpel versus a machete. It’s also reduces the carbon footprint of production.

“Connection” Cava de Oro: <https://simian.me/ab06u>

*Response continued on page 37*



**Ali Brown**  
President  
PRETTYBIRD

**1)** Rather than focus on a project that had challenges, I’d love to focus on a success. We recently did a Little Caesar’s project with our directing duo Tim&Eric and it was a blast. An awesome agency partner in Cylndr who navigated budget challenges to come up with great creative solutions. A client in Little Caesar’s who trusted both the agency and us/the guys and let them do what they do best. A great production team who made the shoot fun. And I think you see it in the work – we had time to prep, creative collaboration, and shared trust of all the partners and that’s when we can make great things even if budgets are tight. Everyone talks about the tightening of budgets, but when there is true collaboration you

can still make great things. <https://wdrv.it/171e62006>

**2)** We have been involved in several projects that use emerging disciplines and technologies. One example is the AR project we did with Nissan. We created an AR experience with several different worlds and of course the amazing Brie Larson. <https://www.nissanusa.com/ar-electrified/>

We also are fans of the volume stage. Sometimes it can be cost and schedule prohibitive, but we’ve done several projects on the stage and have used both 360 footage we shot along with footage created with Unreal Engine to allow for accurate lighting on the subjects. Our creatives love it!

**4)** We Double the Line on every job we can to make sure that we are changing our industry from one predicated on nepotism to one that embraces talent from all areas of entertainment. We hire from incredible organizations like Manifest Works and Streetlights who have the best PA training programs around. We try to create a culture and ethos at our company where it isn’t something to think about on occasion, but a part of the work we need to do every day. <https://www.aicp.com/initiatives/equity-and-inclusion/double-the-line>

*Response continued on page 38*

## Burde, Estellon Share POVs



**Dalia Burde**  
**Founder & Executive Producer**  
**Avocados and Coconuts**

1) Every project is unique which is why I love what I do. No two days are the same and no two projects require the exact same skill set. Production is creative problem-solving, and as the industry shifts, each new problem requires a newly learned skill.

Currently, the biggest challenge is how stretched every company is on marketing dollars compared to the amount of content they need to produce in a given year just to keep up with our short attention spans. Two of our recent projects stand out to me. They could not be more different as far as the creative is concerned, but what they have in common is the list of deliverables. In both instances, we were able to deliver a huge list of films for a jaw-droppingly reasonable cost per film. We focused on creating multiple assets at once, prepping and shooting them in tandem to make the dollar stretch even while they might have divergent strategic goals. This required us to expand the ways we thought through our approach to casting, locations, and production.

Since both projects have yet to go live, I sadly can't reveal the projects or clients at this stage but can say for sure this has been a whole new creative challenge. If done right, when we see how all of that smart upfront planning pays off, it can be as satisfying at the end of the day for us as it is for our clients.

4) As a business owned by a queer woman with a business partner who is a man of color, this topic is always at the top of mind. How did we get here, how can we help others get here, and how can we change this industry (at least through our small business) from the ground up? It is challenging because, simply put, the industry wasn't built on a diverse base. So, our approach is to start with the opportunities. We have to provide them for a more diverse group of young people to grow into the next generation that will run this industry. As a company, we've focused on building women into more creative roles, including art directors, editors, motion graphics artists, and producers. Ideally, creating the opposite of the "boys club" mentality that has dominated this industry for so long.

I do feel there has been an incredible shift in the industry overall and it is exciting to see what this does to the final work in the long term. I strongly believe that when there is diversity in the room, there is diversity of thought and therefore, stronger creative.



**Thibaut Estellon**  
**Founder and Executive Producer**  
**REVERSE**

4) Modern brands actively seek talent and narratives that genuinely reflect society, enabling authentic connections with consumers. These directors' multicultural experiences and sensitivities permeate every aspect of their work and collaborations, establishing a genuine bond

with diverse audiences. They possess a meticulous attention to detail, even in areas that may be overlooked by others. For instance, when it comes to casting multicultural talents, having individuals behind the camera who comprehend cultural nuances, lighting techniques, and the subtleties of diverse skin tones is essential.

However, promoting diversity in the media should not be forgotten behind the camera. Our objective is to sustain this positive momentum and cultivate a well-balanced roster through future signings. Yet, the most significant challenge lies in gaining acceptance and respect for these new voices in production. We still sometimes encounter condescending questions during certain creative calls, particularly in settings lacking diversity. It is crucial for us to push harder, firmly establish boundaries, and ensure our directors are treated with the utmost care during preparation and on set. Even though there is a growing demand for diversity and female talent, deeply ingrained patterns and behaviors take time to evolve.

5) We are dedicated to diversifying our roster and investing in talent development. Our two most recent direc-

*Response continued on page 38*

## Short Takes

### W+K LONDON ON "GUARD" FOR AMAZON PRIME

This playful spot directed by Michael Spiccia via MJZ for agency Wieden+Kennedy London expands Amazon Prime's global "It's On Prime" campaign.

Titled "Gourmet Guard," the piece introduces us to a security guard who discovers a passion for cooking—and a new career path. Bored with his meal options on the job, our budding culinary enthusiast finds inspiration from Prime Video shows to go on and prepare delicious meals through cookbooks and kitchen necessities, all delivered quickly thanks to Prime.

Charlie Lanus and Lucas Reis of W+K London were the creative directors. Chris Blauvelt served as DP. Paul Hardcastle of Trim edited the commercial. Fiona Crombie was the production designer.



### BUCK LAUNCHES LONDON OFFICE

BUCK is expanding in Europe with a new office in London and has hired James Britton as executive producer to lead its U.K. team. Britton joins BUCK from Stink Studios where he was group managing director for over a decade.

The London office is BUCK's second location in Europe, following the opening of its Amsterdam office in 2021. BUCK, which also has locations in Los Angeles, New York, and Sydney, now has five offices globally.

Britton will lead a team in the U.K. which includes associate creative director Jen Zhang, sr. producer Jamey Kitchens, animation director Joe Brooks, sr. designer and animator Bianca Beneduci, and a seasoned creative team spanning design, animation, branding and experience with creative leadership under executive creative director and partner, Vincent Lammers.

Britton's work as a sustainability champion will bolster BUCK's efforts in this space as it pursues its B Corp certification. Britton brings with him certifications as a B Leader with B Corp U.K. and experience as a non-executive advisor to the carbon measurement start-up, Zevero.

Britton brings a wealth of experience to BUCK, having worked with global clients such as Spotify, Google, Nike, and U.K. cultural icons such as Warp Records, iD Magazine, and Tate. Having previously worked with AKQA and Nike, he spent a 12-year tenure at Stink Studios, helping to grow the agency to more than 120 people, winning multiple awards at Cannes Lions and D&AD.

### PEOPLE ON THE MOVE...

L.A.-based production company World War Seven (WW7) has hired Sloane Hayes Skala as exec producer. She comes over from The Directors Bureau where she served as EP since 2021 and represented directors such as Wes Anderson, Sofia Coppola, Natasha Lyonne and Emmanuel Adjei. Before the Directors Bureau, Sloane spent a decade as a freelance commercial line producer.

Storytelling is in Sloane's blood. She grew up in Hollywood, the granddaughter of Oscar-winning screenwriter John Michael Hayes, whose credits include *Rear Window*, among other films for Alfred Hitchcock. Sloane carried on the family tradition, graduating from USC's School of Cinematic Arts, after which she produced and EP'd a web show for RedBull, the brand's first-ever series and narrative property and one of the first major branded projects to use influencers as talent.



*Sloane Hayes Skala*

Sloane also served as head of production for RedBull TV during that time.... Comedy editor Ryan Spears, an Emmy nominee for his work on *Saturday Night Live*, has joined The Den for commercial representation....

## TigerLily and Alkemy X POVs

Continued from page 31



**Andrew Fallon**  
VP, Partner/Creative Director  
TigerLily

1) We've always pushed ourselves into new ideas and new formats. One of our long-time clients, FIS, approached us with a completely new challenge: an opening conference experiential film spread across eight different screens stretching over 200 feet wide. A mix of different sizes,

aspect ratios, and perspectives — the eighth screen was overhead floor projection.

When working on such a complex project, there are so many moving pieces you have to keep in mind. You're juggling the technical needs with the story goals. There's a lot of back and forth between the how and the why. And then there are moments where you just wonder, 'how is this going to come together?' You can't see it in context until the screens are built and you're at the walkthrough.

So, you just have to trust the process, trust the team, trust the vision, and keep pushing. From the words on the page to the ideas discussed to the sketches, it all starts coming to life. You start to see and feel the experience how the audience would. That's when all the stretching and pushing past your limits pays off. You've surmounted the challenge; something that seemed so big and new is now behind you.

Then you move on to the next one and push again. A bit stronger, a bit wiser, and a bit more ready for the next challenge.

Link to work: <https://vimeo.com/tigerlilymedia/emerald-2022?share=cop>

*Response continued on page 38*



**Jim Huie**  
Director of Production/Executive Producer  
Alkemy X

1) We recently worked on a challenging but fun project with Tel-eFlora that featured a lot of unique planning and a hidden camera approach. When we send flowers to loved ones, we rarely get to see the reaction of the recipients. But this concept set out to change that.

We worked closely with 12 senders to surprise their recipients in the right place and at the right time to allow our hidden cameras to capture each delivery. 12 unexpected deliveries, to 12 distinct people, in 12 different places over a 2 day period. And we went 12 for 12 thanks to tremendous planning and teamwork at every level from PAs to the CMO and everyone in between.

2) T-Mobile engaged us to produce a series of videos promoting their 5G cellular network. Alkemy EP Nick Pitcavage and director Jonathan Yi spent a week in Seattle filming this immersive 5G story with the help of celebrity host Jason Silva, and the use of XR technology. As described by Nick, since our worlds were stylized T-Mobile environments, XR was a much more practical choice over physical sets or locations. And by creating our virtual scenes in the Unreal Engine, our environment interacted with our talent and camera in real time - no comping required! Scheduling for an XR shoot is completely opposite than that of a traditional green-screen shoot. With XR, every background has to be fully developed in its final high resolution format before filming can begin. So the schedule is front loaded with asset creation that is typically done at the end of the schedule.

4) We are committed to working to change the demographics of our industry to reflect the world that we live in. We've developed our own grass roots initiative to help eradicate the barrier of entry to our industry. We've worked in partnership with the national network of Big Brothers and Big Sisters to help identify and connect to young people interested in film production who might otherwise lack access. Our goal in staffing on each project is for BIPOC to represent at least 20% of our team and we aim higher. We regularly collaborate with our clients to develop staffing plans specific to their diversity and inclusion goals as well.

## An Absolute Hire: Alice Mitchell



Alice Mitchell

Absolute in London has brought Alice Mitchell on board its film and TV team as lead compositor. Mitchell joins following 20+ years at DNEG, where she worked on films including *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *Captain America*, *Mission Impossible—Fallout*, *The Hunger Games—Part 2* and *The Matrix Resurrections*.

She has also been active on the TV front. Recent projects include Prime Video's *Snow White and the Huntsman* and *Les Misérables*, as well as Disney+'s *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Super/Natural*.

An avid BAFTA member, Mitchell has worked with noted talent such as Kenneth Branagh and Christopher Nolan, with her work gaining recognition on the awards show circuit. Steve Barron's *Dreamkeeper* took home an Emmy, while Nolan's *Inception*, on which she worked across some major shots, scored an Oscar, a BAFTA and a VES award for best VFX.

## Andy Hargreaves Joins Ghost VFX



Andy Hargreaves

Ghost VFX, Streamland Media's visual effects division, has added Andy Hargreaves as VFX supervisor. Hargreaves has over 20 years of experience across commercials, films and episodics including *Prehistoric Planet*, *The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance*, and Marvel's *Inhumans*.

Hargreaves, who previously worked for DNEG and MPC, was recently nominated for an HPA Award for Outstanding Visual Effects for *Prehistoric Planet*. His additional credits include working on BAFTA Award nominee *Emerald City*, the Emmy and BAFTA winning series *Outlander*, and the popular crime drama *Death in Paradise*.

From Ghost VFX's London studio, Hargreaves will be available to service projects anywhere in the world.

In addition to London, Ghost VFX has studios in Copenhagen, Los Angeles, Manchester, Toronto, and Vancouver, and its Pune studio is moving into a new facility this year. Recent Ghost VFX credits include *Fast X*, *The Book of Boba Fett*, *Troll* and *The Mandalorian*.

## Shape+Light Promotes Thomas, Neitz, Lehr

Santa Monica, Calif.-based boutique visual effects and design studio Shape+Light has made several promotions, including Aidan Thomas and Aaron Neitz each rising to creative director, and Cara Lehr to managing director. Rounding out the rest of the Shape+Light team are: sr. Flame artist Emily Irvine, Flame artists Pat Hunsberger and Austin Lewis, jr. Flame artist Eugene Vernikov, sr. producer Arielle Weir, and producers Jade Fuller and Rachel Pring.



Cara Lehr

Thomas joined Shape+Light in 2022, having previously spent 12 years at Method Studios where he worked his way up from sr. Flame artist to creative director. He began his career at MPC and The Mill. Thomas has collaborated with directors including Michel Gondry, John Hillcoat, Tom Carty, Brian Buckley, and Dante Ariola, and delivered award-winning projects for brands such as MSFT, Google, Dr. Pepper, Levi's, Coca Cola, Guinness, Ford, Honda, Apple, Nike, and Taco Bell. Based in Los Angeles, Thomas was born and raised in London.

Neitz joined Shape+Light in 2021. He has worked across commercials, music videos, feature films, documentaries, and short form, with notable ad clients including Google, Meta, Gatorade, and just about every major automotive brand. Prior to joining Shape+Light, Neitz spent over a decade at Riot/Method Studios as a lead Flame artist, and eight years in editorial at King Cut.

Lehr has been with Shape+Light since its inception in 2019, originally joining as executive producer. She brings over two decades of VFX experience at award-winning shops including Method Studios, Digital Domain, Psyop, Asylum, and Brickyard VFX. Lehr has had a hand in work for brands including Apple, Meta, Nike, Chevrolet, and the NFL, shepherding them through the post process....

## Observations From Mccurrach, Niles and Rayburn



**Adrienne Mccurrach**  
Co-Founder, Executive Producer  
Unicorns & Unicorns

**1)** This is a trick question. I mean, so many challenges on jobs and many of them are just the fun ones to solve. Like, how do we find THOUSANDS of roses during mothers day. . . Well, we can tell you now. We have those florists and wholesalers on speed dial. But these are the fun challenges - what are we here for right? The crazy stories on the other side. . . I do think some of our more pressing challenges haven't been specifically related to the job itself. We're feeling the waterfall pressures coming from the top to get more assets for less money. It is a real challenge and a lot of innovation is coming out of it - and a lot of stress. I also think that being remote or hybrid is awesome. I also think that a lot of the learning and sharing and evolving that happened collectively in a shared space is not the same - and we're all trying to figure out how to get that back. It's a new world of working & learning & vibing & solving. But dude, if you need flowers, let us know. We got you.

**2)** We just completed an incredible AI project. We photographed pets that needed to be adopted and created AI-generated costumes for them inspired by red carpet wardrobes. They were shared on social media and some of the furballs got adopted, which is awesome. AI is not new, but has taken on new vigor in our conversations with partners on the agency side. When exploring the potential applications for tech, we've found the most success when it is used to be additive as opposed to using the tech to use the tech. In this case, for example, we stayed up with our creative partners from the agency and picked outfits in real time to develop and post online. This is a great use of AI - it's not overly complicated, it's timely, it's helping cats get adopted - it's fun. Sometimes the best ideas are the simplest and when it comes to using tech in advertising, we've found that most of the time, this especially holds true. I think there is a lot of excitement for creative possibilities that AI unlocks - we're all just really getting started.

[https://www.instagram.com/p/CrQ9biGu9wI/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link&igshid=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==](https://www.instagram.com/p/CrQ9biGu9wI/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igshid=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==)

*Response continued on page 40*



**Rebecca Niles**  
Managing Director/EP  
ArtClass

**1)** One recent notable project that presented a significant (and welcome) challenge was the Peloton campaign "Such A Great App" we produced. The urgency and tight timeframe in which we had to react to the news cycle surrounding Christopher Meloni's revelation to People magazine that he works out naked, was immediate and swift. With only three days to prepare, our team had to demonstrate maximum efficiency, speed, and accuracy while ensuring a successful campaign.

The project required us to develop a creative response that captured the attention of the public and leveraged the buzz generated by the news. The idea was to align Peloton's brand with the humorous and unexpected nature of the story while showcasing the benefits of their fitness products.

Throughout the project, we learned valuable lessons about the importance of agility and adaptability in the fast-paced world of marketing. Reacting swiftly to current events while maintaining the quality and integrity of the campaign was crucial. Our team had to work closely together, making quick decisions and executing them flawlessly to meet the demanding deadline.

Despite the time constraints, the project was a success. The campaign, directed by Vincent Peone, effectively utilized humor and creativity to engage the audience and generate buzz around Peloton. It demonstrated our ability to think on our feet, deliver exceptional work under pressure, and adapt our strategies to fit the evolving news cycle. We learned many things on this project, all at the speed of an Internet meme.

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**James Rayburn**  
Editor/Owner/CEO  
charlieuniformtango

**1)** We recently had the opportunity to produce photorealistic renders of the cutting-edge Ram Electric Truck for their website. This undertaking presented significant challenges as the vehicle was still undergoing changes in its design when we started our work, and it had not been physically manufactured yet. Through close collaboration with Ram's internal design team, our objective was to faithfully represent their product accurately, and quickly adjust our renders whenever they made modifications to the designs. It was a lot of fun to work on a vehicle that had never been seen before and be an integral part of the creative process leading up to its highly anticipated reveal. <https://www.ramtrucks.com/revolution/ram-1500-rev.html>

**2)** Our team is always keeping an eye on trending technologies such as AI and virtual production. We've already seen our clients embracing AI in their workflows, and as AI starts to saturate the production and postproduction world's more, it'll be the companies that learn to embrace those tools and to deliver faster and better content for their clients that rise to the top. Whether it's AI based video editing or AI assisted music composition, the change to our industry seems to be rapidly approaching. charlieuniformtango has already utilized AI tools during our editing process as well as creating placeholder AI voiceover before celebrity talent is available to record.

**3)** We have put a focus on diversification this year. As the amount of traditional advertising work continues to shrink and get more competitive, we are pursuing work on longer form advertising work, such as branded films, in addition to traditional TV and long form film projects. We continue to try and diversify and grow our roster of directors as well to meet the needs of our clients.

**4)** charlieuniformtango has embraced the needed change in our industry to diversify and support underrepresented groups. Since 2021 alone we have taken multiple steps to diversify our workplace, with 6 out of our 7 additions to our team during that time being either female or from underrepresented groups. We also continue to invest in growth and career training for our staff whenever possible.

**5)** We are announcing a new director to our roster very soon. Jennell Renai is self-taught and one of the most driven individuals I've come across in a while. She started her professional life in financing, but it didn't take her long

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## Luke Ricci, Bradley Ross

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**Luke Ricci**  
President  
RSA Films

1) Though I truly find myself excited about all of the projects we produce, I was very proud of the work Jake Scott directed for Diageo's Crown Royal for the Super Bowl featuring Dave Grohl. I mean Jake Scott, Dave Grohl, Whiskey, and the Super Bowl?! To quote Gershwin: These are a few of my favorite things . . . Having something air in the big game still gets me bristling with excitement even after being in the business for some time now. It's moments like seeing something you produced in the Super Bowl that make me so grateful to be working with such wonderful filmmakers and brands. It keeps things fun for me.

2) I've spent quite a bit of my career working in emerging tech within an advertising context. From Google's VR Film "Help" which launched their VR platform Spotlight Stories and won 2 Gold Lions at Cannes including the first ever in the VR category, to producing the award-winning Augmented Reality Car Configurator for the 2018 launch of the new Jeep Wrangler for FCA (now Stellantis), creating a VR educational STEM experience with Verizon, shooting projects in the volume, and all sorts of virtual production during the pandemic. The big takeaway from all of these efforts is that producers need to constantly be learning about new ways to engage technology in the craft of making content. Take AI for instance: I have spent a lot of time learning how to use ChatGPT, Midjourney, and Dall.E to figure out ways to integrate these tools into our workflows at RSA. There are certainly limitations to the functionality of these applications, but they are incredibly powerful and must be fully understood.

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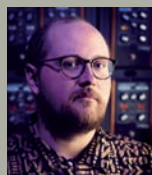
**Bradley Ross**  
President/Director  
Open Swim

1) Nowadays, it seems like it's rare to bid on a project without a multitude of additional needs emerging. We've had a variety — from additional stills units to additional social or product videos, and even additional agencies we're not contracted with showing up on set because the client is engaged across multiple agencies who want to access the footage. Before you know it, what you were shooting needs to be adapted into 30 other things.

One such scenario occurred with one of our favorite long-standing clients. We set out to shoot a brand spot with them, but during prepro, we started to discuss how the work would ultimately address their need to be specific in one execution and broad in the next. Over two days, we had to capture conceptual and interview footage of all ages, indoors and out, urban and rural, day and night. We covered hiking in the woods, playing piano, cooking in the kitchen, swimming underwater, bonfire gathering, driving on a highway, playground & nursery, gym—just to name a few. The work has been repurposed into over 75 different cuts. The campaign is still performing, so we have more versions ahead of us with this footage. We know it so well and every iteration that has been used, but we still need to approach it with fresh eyes. Being a director/editor on this one has been beneficial, but we're now looking to musicians to help open up new possibilities with the cuts ahead.

2) We took on a CGI project request for PEDRO, a shoe brand in Singapore. They were not interested in using traditional CGI software and processes, so we used UnrealEngine, Metahumans, and about six other plug-ins. We pushed the software to its limits with the amount of custom work we needed to apply. These projects require so many cross-disciplines. In this specialty, you have to be one part artist, coder, storyteller, technician, and even osteologist! Everytime we changed a pose, we would have to go bone by bone on the metahuman to make it look real. It was grueling, but rewarding, as the community was engaged in how to outsmart issues that arose.

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Dan Deacon

## Composer Dan Deacon Joins Barking Owl

Barking Owl has added Baltimore-based musician Dan Deacon to its roster of composers. Within the realm of live performance, Deacon has premiered compositions at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center and collaborated with innumerable artists and institutions, including Kronos Quartet, Sō Percussion, the L.A. Philharmonic, and Justin Peck with the New York City Ballet. Deacon has also toured internationally with popular recording artists, including Arcade Fire, Miley Cyrus, Future Islands, and The Flaming Lips. When performing solo, Deacon's live shows are known for large-scale audience participation, frequently setting up his performance space on the floor level with the audience engaged in close proximity.

Deacon's work in the classic-contemporary scene led him into the world of film and television. Deacon created original music for Francis Ford Coppola's horror feature film *Twixt*, starring Val Kilmer. His work composing for documentary films *All Light, Everywhere* (2021, Sundance Film Festival) and *Ascension* (2021, Tribeca Film Festival) garnered him nominations for Outstanding Original Score at the Cinema Eye Honors in 2022, with Deacon taking home the prize for *Ascension*. Deacon has also provided the musical score for the sports drama *Hustle* starring Adam Sandler, currently streaming on Netflix.

## Squeak E. Clean Studios Promotes Max Taylor

International creative audio network Squeak E. Clean Studios has promoted Max Taylor from sr. producer to head of production. Taylor joined Squeak E. Clean Studios in 2020 after spending four years at 20th Century Fox coordinating music for the hit drama *Empire*. Since joining the team, Taylor has produced a wide range of projects, including working collaboratively with Squeak's global ensemble on Budweiser's "Tomorrow Is Yours to Take" campaign featuring Anderson.Paak as well as the recent Marriott "Roam Around the World" campaign that included a series of covers of "Roam" by the B-52s across a multitude of genres of sound.

Chicago native Taylor grew up in the music industry, spending his formative years around concerts and musicians with his father as a sound engineer. He studied recording industry at Butler University before kicking off his career in music ticketing and promotions. He spent five years working across multiple functions of live events between Chicago, Los Angeles and New York City, liaising between artists, management teams and venues to optimize the guest experience. In 2016, he joined the production team of *Empire* as a music production liaison, overseeing the end-to-end process for the music-driven series.



courtesy of FX Networks

## Halle Petro Named ECD At Sonic Union

Halle Petro has been upped to executive creative director at Sonic Union. In her new role, Petro will be instrumental in deepening the studio's sonic storytelling experiences for entertainment and advertising—including collaborations with music and sound narratives. She'll also continue to expand Sonic Union's podcast productions working closely with a team that includes creative producer Kimu Eloia.



Halle Petro

Prior to being named executive creative director, Petro was Sonic Union's executive creative producer working on music and sound collaborations. As Sonic Union started having demand for more creative project applications and liaising, Petro moved the company into new areas of exploration to further diversify the studio's offerings.

Among them, working with clients to develop high-impact content with creatively driven sound design, and creating a team for original composition and a catalog of music for licensing. That breadth of work includes commercials, documentary features, episodic television, animated series, award winning podcasts and sound installations.

## Lauren Schwartz, Hani Selim, Brandon Tapp Talk Trends



**Lauren Schwartz**  
**Owner & Executive Producer**  
**kaboom**

**1)** During COVID it was amazing to see how we were able to pivot to remote work and produce with what was literally in our immediate circle. But now that we are able to work in person, as was the case on a recent project with PayPal, the value of that time on set side by side was immense. And all of us—production company, agency and client alike were thrilled to be able to communicate in person and not rely on zoom. It made the process so much more efficient and ultimately resulted in a better creative result. Just like the good olde days!

As is often the case, we took the project through post as well and leveraged a hybrid approach to do so. Although we often started each segment of the post process remotely, finishing in person was always preferred—whether in edit, sound design, mix or VFX. We have found that the subtleties of the final notes on the edit, mix, sound design and VFX in those last hours are best understood with body language and eye contact, and face-to-face conversations.

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**Hani Selim**  
**EP/Managing Partner**  
**Durable Goods**

**1)** We were very recently tasked to execute a very ambitious project for Shea Moisture for Men with Dominique DeLeon, an African American creative director and director with a pedigree from Google, who really stepped up to the plate. His experience brought so much incredible insight to the table. While the scope of the creative was very ambitious, there were some budgetary limitations we had to consider. Dom understood the ask and worked closely with the client to ensure that we pulled inspirational and authentic stories out of real people. He did an amazing job at maximizing scenes while bringing these underrepresented people to life.

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**Brandon Tapp**  
**Executive Producer**  
**Camp Lucky**

**2)** Camp Lucky is uniquely positioned in that our production facility is outfitted with a Volumetric stage. This level of direct access has allowed our entire team, production and post, to work in tandem to push new applications of this emergent technology in the commercial arena. We have already completed more than eight commercials, shot entirely on our Volume with virtual environments ranging from commercial kitchens and living rooms to mountainside cottages and desert landscapes.

One recent application involved creating the lobby of a national fast-food chain, as our client was unable to close a store for filming and the budget did not allow for something of this scale to be constructed practically. Our environment artists designed a perfectly realistic dining room model, complete with branded booths, ceilings with hanging sconces, and windows that allowed a view outward toward foliage that swayed lightly in a virtual breeze. In this instance, the implementation of the Volume was absolutely critical in our ability to realize the client's vision for this spot.

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## Sugarhi Expands With Addition of International Director Paloma Rincón

Sugarhi announced the immediate addition of Paloma Rincón to its directorial roster. Rincón is now available for commercial and music video projects throughout North America.

PRX and Sonic Union Form Strategic Partnership to Provide Podcast Creation and Production Services for Brands and Agencies Sonic Union and top podcast distributor PRX announced a new strategic partnership. PRX Productions—PRX's team specializing in high-quality audio production and storytelling—and Sonic Union will jointly provide podcast creation and production services to brands seeking to create original podcasts.

Raucous Content Launches New, Curated Directorial Roster & Independent Reps Under Sole Leadership of EP Steve Wi Leading production company Raucous Content launches a new phase under the sole leadership of Owner/EP Steve Wi. This next chapter for Raucous Content includes a newly curated directorial roster and a new slate of independent representatives, as well as a freshly designed website...

Black Spot Flies Into The Future Top Creative Talent Alex Reyes To Lead New Design Unit 'Aviary' Black Spot, an end-to-end creative services agency serving such major clients as ABC, AMC, HBO, and NBC-Universal, announces the launch of "Aviary"—a new design practice to complement and propel its suite of marketing service capabilities.

The 2023 AICP Awards Honors The Best Advertising of the Year The year's best advertising was saluted at The Museum of Modern Art at a gala AICP Awards celebration and screening. Winners for the 2023 AICP Show: The Art & Technique of the Commercial, the AICP Next Awards and the AICP Post Awards premiered earlier in the week.

Smartypants Embeds With Delta Air Lines To Document The Airline's Tragedies and Triumphs Throughout Pandemic in New Documentary Film:

Delta Air Lines has released the feature-length documentary film, "The Steepest Climb: How Delta Air Lines Navigated the Global Pandemic," produced by Brooklyn-based Smartypants Pictures and directed by Oscar®-nominated director Joshua Seftel.

LiveTribe's Kaia Lavender and Gary Ravenscroft Go "Weightless" For Merrell LiveTribe directors Kaia Lavender and Gary Ravenscroft travel to the Canary Islands to take viewers on a run of their lives. All to highlight Merrell's latest Merrell Test Lab (MTL) Skyfire 2 trail running shoe in a :30 spot, "Weightless."

Stephen Arnold Music Teams With Tinsley Advertising To Attract Travelers To Florida Keys and Key West A new promotional campaign for Florida Keys & Key West invites visitors to "come as you are" to a place that's "Close to Perfect" and "Far from Normal." Conceived by Tinsley Advertising, the spots convey the beauty, diversity and quirkiness of the island paradise.

Cap Gun Collective Has Added Award-winning Director Jordan Fein To Roster For US Representation. "We are really excited to work with Jordan," says Cap Gun Managing Director and EP Matt Abramson. "He is a passionate filmmaker who is fully committed to his craft and looks for opportunities to elevate his projects with fresh ideas and innovation." charlieuniformtango and The Launch Agency Team Up For Baylor Scott & White McLane Children's Hospital The eight-spot project tells the stories of four different children who, with the help of McLane Children's, have triumphed over serious injuries or illnesses.

New York Festivals Partners With Scott Goodson, CEO of StrawberryFrog To Launch a New Content Series "Purpose Haze" As series host Scott Goodson sits down with some of the industry's most admired marketing leaders who are at the forefront of purpose-driven companies and through in depth interviews they de-fog purpose.

ALIBI Music Serves Up Summer of Pride In Debut of "Catwalk Beats 2" Kicking off a summer of Pride celebrations and programming, ALIBI Music announced the release of "Catwalk Beats 2" The album—a super-sized serving of runway sass and celebration—features 14 cool, confident and sexy tracks (plus stems, mixes & alt versions).

Sony Electronics Announced Firmware Updates for the FX6 & VENICE 2 Sony announced the upcoming release of new firmware updates for the FX6 full-frame camera and the flagship VENICE 2 digital cinema camera. FX6 Version 4.0 and VENICE 2 Version 2.1 will be released this summer and a major new upgrade for the VENICE 2, Version 3.0, will be available in early 2024.

Lost on Dawn Patrol: Filmmaker Win Brooks' Satirical 'Surfing Sucks' Spot With his inventive, satirical new spot—a :45 featuring the ...Lost surfboard brand—multimedia director, writer, and editor Win Brooks lays out the many reasons why kooks (aka rookies) should absolutely NOT learn to surf.

STORY's David Orr Helps Nick Cave's "Wood Dove" Take Wing Director and visual artist David Orr weaves a single bird's feather into a shimmering kaleidoscope of incredible complexity and stunning beauty in a video accompanying the new Nick Cave song Wood Dove. Produced by Cave with longtime collaborator Warren Ellis...

Halle Petro Named Executive Creative Director Of Sonic Union

Sonic Union announced that Halle Petro has been named Executive Creative Director. In her new role, Petro will be instrumental in deepening the studio's sonic storytelling experiences for entertainment and advertising.

Whitehouse Post New York Promotes Ryan Smith To EP Whitehouse Post promotes one of their own to the Executive Producer role in New York. Ryan began his career with Whitehouse at their London office and joined full time as a producer in 2017.

Mob Scene Acquires Social/Digital Team From Ammo Creative Mob Scene has acquired the award-winning Social/Digital Team that had previously been housed within Ammo Creative—a marketing agency that recently shuttered.

Founding Partners Melanie Bridge and Sharlene George Usher The Sweetshop Into New Era The two vision-forward women replace Wilf Sweetland, who after five years, is stepping back from his Global CEO position. Sweetland had been with The Sweetshop for a total of 12 years, having started out by overseeing the company's Australian business.

Perception Collaborates With Marvel Studios To Enhance The World-Building Of "Guardians Of The Galaxy Volume 3" On May 5th 2023, Marvel Studios' Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3 premiered in theaters worldwide. Perception collaborated with Marvel Studios on this film to develop several world-building aspects, including organic technology designs and narrative features.

Mr. Wolf Continues To Grow with Additions of Ryan Tuttle and Charles Paek Mr Wolf is expanding its advertising division with Creative Director Ryan Tuttle and Creative Director/Head of CG Charles Paek joining its senior creative team.

Human Wins Best in Show at 2023 AMP Awards for Music & Sound with "Remember The Why" for Adidas The three-minute spot captures the Ryan Barkan Best in Show Award and also wins the David & Jan Horowitz Award for Best Original Score; Deutsch LA, Wave Studios NY and Yessian are two-time winners.

Sarofsky Evolves Its Elemental Design Touches For James Gunn's "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3" Produced by Marvel Studios and distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3" is the final installment in the film series' blockbuster trilogy. Written and directed by James Gunn, and featuring an ensemble cast including Chris Pratt, Zoe



Saldaña, Dave...

More Media Signs Director Dwayne Logan Athlete, dancer, music producer, and director Dwayne Logan is on a mission to change lives through his art. That's what inspired LA-based production company More Media to sign the director

New Production Music From ALIBI Delivers Wide Range of Genres, Vibes and Uses The 5 albums feature versatile tracks, stems, mixes and alt versions that help editors customize as they sync.

Green Stone Elevates Agency Leaders To Partner, Adds Scott Prindle as Partner, Innovation Branding specialist Green Stone grows its leadership team, announcing the addition of Scott Prindle as Partner, Innovation and the elevation of agency members Sean Cardiff, Inah Mercedes, and Eli Bynum to Partner.

HPA Awards Opens Call For Creative Entries The 2023 Hollywood Professional Association (HPA) Awards call for entries for creative categories is open. Deadline is July 28, 2023.

Community Coffee Launches New Creative with Baker & Bonner Creative Emporium Community Coffee just launched its first brand spot created and produced by its new creative agency of record, Baker & Bonner Creative Emporium. The new ad, called "Bustin' Loose," is a 30-second spot that supports Community Coffee's new Dark & Bold blend.

Maxon Enhances DCC Compatibility and More In Product Releases Maxon announced a comprehensive update to a series of products in the Maxon One family.

For the full stories [and many more], contacts info and videos with credits, visit SHOOT® Publicity Wire ([spw.SHOOTonline.com](http://spw.SHOOTonline.com)). SPW is the best place to announce your news or video release to amp up the "buzz" among the entertainment & advertising industries motion picture segments' movers and shakers from Hollywood to Bollywood and from Madison Avenue to Cannes and beyond. To get more info on how to "Toot Your Own Horn" via SPW visit [pr.SHOOTonline.com](http://pr.SHOOTonline.com)

## LaRue Anderson, Brandon Bloch and Jordan Brady

### LaRue Anderson

*Continued from page 29*

5) Los Angeles native Quinn Alvarez is not new to Apache but he's a talent with a passion and a purpose. We were introduced by mutual friends and I was immediately inspired by his craft and his ethics. We actively seek out artists who will mentor young talent and he's always offering the next person a hand up. Alvarez was looking for a new home that embraced the importance of diversity and the works of people of color throughout the film industry. On the importance of that mutual ground we ultimately became family. Alvarez has graded several Super Bowl commercials and celebrated Cannes Lions wins with clients including Xfinity and Burger King. His latest project, The Space Race will premiere at Tribeca Film Festival and Disney+.

### Brandon Bloch

*Continued from page 30*

3) Hometeam is coming off three consecutive years of growth and a recent Fast Company Most Innovative Company honor and we're expecting that growth to continue even in an economic climate of uncertainty. Our model of remote production eliminates travel costs, extended timelines, and other production inefficiencies and allows clients to get more production value out of their budgets. So we're finding a lot of budget constrained clients are reaching out to Hometeam to help them find strategic ways to do more with less while continuing to improve the quality and scale of their storytelling. We've done this by building a remotely distributed network of filmmakers and stitching it all together with tech-enabled streamlined processes. We call it "right sized production" and our goal is to re-imagine production and build a company for today's content needs.

4) Hometeam is proud of the filmmaker network we've built beyond the typical coastal production hubs. We hire hundreds of filmmakers coast-to-coast across all genders and ethnicities. We find stories told by local filmmakers, who lean into their know-how of locations, local customs and languages, are often richer and more authentic. In a recent example, to film "Women of Worth" a campaign about Women's Empowerment for L'Oréal and HBO Max, we assembled eight female-led, female-majority crews in eight different cities to extend the campaign's spirit to the team behind the lens. <https://wearehometeam.com/project/loreal-paris>

5) One of our most recent hires was Dan Tundis who we brought on as our EP, director of postproduction. We tasked Dan with helping us research and develop a leading-edge solution for postproduction in the cloud. With crews located across the U.S. and 150 countries, oftentimes the biggest bottleneck becomes shipping drives from a shoot in the field to the editing team. Dan was able to find and build solutions that now enable our production crews to upload their footage within hours to postproduction staff located remotely around the world. Post teams--AEs, editors, VFX, finishing--can all collaborate on the same timeline from the comfort of their own home studios. We're able to work with the best editorial talent regardless of location and turn around edits and deliver versions much faster than before. <https://wearehometeam.com/our-team>

### Jordan Brady

*Continued from page 30*

I've shot a dozen spots on three different LED stages, and in each case we shot our plates for the wall. Haven't used Unreal Engine environments yet because of the specificity the scripts called for. "Staycation" needed a hotel room with a view of a Toyota dealer. Thunder Studios worked better than scouting for an Embassy Suites across from a dealership. <https://simian.me/8kev6>

"Fix it in prep" has never been more appropriate. I'd hate to have a crew stand around when a client asks to make the CG ocean waves more dramatic. A green/blue screen is going to be faster and more budget-friendly if you don't have enough work to do on the wall. And will AI rotoscoping soon make both tools obsolete?

4) True Gent sponsors the Filmmaker Diversity Award — sending qualified filmmakers from under represented populations to Commercial Directing Bootcamp in Los Angeles for free. Past recipients have gone on to get signed and helm big campaigns for major brands. Several have been featured in the SHOOT New Directors Showcase. We have a shadow director on every shoot. We're openly biased towards BIPOC, female and LGBTQ filmmakers. A recent example, director Geneva Faye shadowed on my RAM Trucks with Sapient. As a Latina & LGBTQ filmmaker building her reel, this exposure to an automotive client while learning real-world, director-agency protocol was enlightening and confidence building. My personal aim as founder of both True Gent and Commercial Directing Film School is to foster and develop talent based on merit and need. I want to be a resource for True Gent, ad agencies and yes, other production companies. Rising tides lift all ships.

## Flash Back

**June 19, 2018** Feature, commercial and branded content director John Hillcoat, who's handled in the ad arena by Serial Pictures, has seen *Corazón*, his 48-minute film about organ donation for Montefiore hospital out of agency JohnXHannes, NY, win the Cannes Lions Health & Wellness Grand Prix. *Corazón* was lensed by Oscar-nominated (*Arrival*) cinematographer Bradford Young, ASC, and scored by Oscar-winning composer Atticus Ross (*The Social Network*)...MJZ earned most honored production company distinction at the AICP Awards (spanning the AICP Show and Next Awards) with 13 honors followed by m s s n g p e c e s and Craft New York/Traction Creative, which each earned four honors. The Corner Shop, Furlined, O Positive and SMUGGLER each received three honors. Among directors, Spike Jonze and Matthijs van Heijningen, both of MJZ, each received five honors. David Shane of O Positive, Malik Vitthal of The Corner Shop, and Dougal Wilson of Furlined each received three honors. On the agency front, BBDO New York earned 10 honors and Wieden+Kennedy earned eight honors, TBWA\Media Arts Lab had seven honors. McCann New York had five honors, while Saatchi & Saatchi had four. Leo Burnett had three honors, as did the in-house agency at Apple....

**June 21, 2013** Director Paris Barclay was elected president of the Directors Guild of America by acclamation at the Guild's National Biennial Convention held at DGA headquarters in Los Angeles....David Perry, executive VP/head of broadcast production at Saatchi & Saatchi New York for the past 24 years, is leaving that position at the end of July. Succeeding him as head of broadcast production on August 1 will be John Doris, currently an executive producer at Saatchi whom Perry hired from the agency's London office seven years ago. Perry broke into the agency community as a music director for JWT New York. After four years there, he moved over to BBDO New York and filled the producer's slot vacated by Jerry Bruckheimer who had gone to Hollywood to see if he could get into the movies. After four years at BBDO, Perry landed his first head of production job, moving over to Scali McCabe Sloves, succeeding Ken Yagoda who had gone over to FCB. Perry spent 10 years at Scali, which included memorable work for Volvo, Maxell and Hertz. Perry then briefly went to the Midwest, heading production at JWT Chicago before returning to NY to begin his tenure at Saatchi...

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# PRODUCTION OUTLOOK

## Brown, Estellon and Fallon

### Ali Brown

*Continued from page 30*

5) We recently signed A.V. Maxwell who is a creative force. Her film *A Thousand and One* won the Grand Jury award at Sundance this year, but more importantly she is this incredible powerhouse combination of a heartfelt storyteller who has incredible visual style. And she is just beginning. We are so excited to be working with her.

### Thibaut Estellon

*Continued from page 31*

Our signings are women: Cali Bondad, an Asian American, and Agos Bruera, a director from Argentina based in Mexico City.

Cali brings a wealth of experience beyond her years, approaching creative challenges fearlessly and collaborating seamlessly with both clients and on-set teams. She possesses a fresh perspective and a relentless pursuit of perfection, all while maintaining a positive and enjoyable atmosphere. Additionally, her background in agencies ensures effective fulfillment of our clients' needs.

Agos adds a breath of fresh air to our roster. Coming from Argentina, a thriving hub of emerging talent, she has learned from some of the country's best. Her comprehensive understanding of the industry spans from treatments to art direction, cinematography, casting, and even digital culture. Furthermore, her skills extend beyond directing, as she is also involved in music and painting, naturally captivating those around her with her coolness.

As the owner of a self-taught production company, I have always resonated with young and ambitious talents, the underdogs, and the trendsetters who revolutionize the industry. Both Cali and Agos perfectly embody this spirit, and we are thrilled to have them on our roster.

### Andrew Fallon

*Continued from page 32*

2) We've done a lot of research and experimented with different platforms early in their development stages. Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, Runway, DALL-E 2, and, more recently, Firefly. The tools are now maturing to a point where they're truly more and more viable for real-world production without large complex pipelines around them.

They've also more or less developed their own "looks." We've zeroed in on Midjourney, Firefly, and Runway as tools to explore. We're looking at Midjourney as our scratchpad, another way to think and brainstorm. Firefly is interesting because it's trained on licensed images instead of scraping the wider web. Our artists are keen on that and the ethical issues are absolutely at the forefront of our consideration.

For the last half of 2023 and beyond, we'll be exploring how they can integrate with our current pipeline. Especially going beyond still asset generation and moving into motion applications with Runway and other tools.

I think the trick is finding how they work for you and enhance what you already do well. I can easily see a world where the "AI-style" becomes a thing. A derivative and iterative look that repeats in various forms. Which is inevitable of any new look that captures the zeitgeist.

Where it can be really exciting is how people will integrate it more seamlessly into the work they do. That's the area we're interested in and we have a few projects in the pipeline that are testbeds for this approach.

4) As a woman-owned company that is made up of 50% minority staff, we've always championed diversity and inclusion.

Even with that being a longstanding principle, we are looking for ways to improve. We want to bring in more voices from different socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as other underrepresented groups, to continue developing our variety of voices and perspectives.

We plan on attacking this in multiple ways. All future staff positions will be considered to further our overall diversity and inclusion.

We're also looking to diversify our partners to identify directors, artists, and other creatives that represent different cultures and people beyond what is in-house.

Beyond these initiatives, we think the most important area of improvement is the work. Continuing to tell diverse stories from underrepresented voices. And doing so by hiring and empowering those same voices. Encouraging our staff to embrace their histories and put their voice into the work. Living it as if it was no different than breathing.

## street talk

Caviar has added director Miguel Campaña to its London, Amsterdam, Paris and Brussels rosters for commercial representation. His body of work spans such brands as Canon, Land Rover, Orange and Volkswagen, among others. Campaña's two most recent recognizable spots for Carlsberg featuring Mads Mikkelsen are "Better With Beer" for Carlsberg O.O. and "Chamber of Secrets." The director's work has garnered accolades at such competitions as the Cannes Lions, Clios and Ciclope. And his acclaimed short film *The Following Year* with Rachel Keller has been selected for more than 50 international film festivals....Publicis Groupe has acquired Publicis Sapient AI Labs, an innovative artificial intelligence research and development joint venture launched in 2020 in partnership between Publicis Sapient,

Elder Research and Tquila. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. Publicis Sapient AI Labs will fully become part of Publicis Sapient, Publicis Groupe's digital business transformation company. The acquisition will further strengthen Publicis Sapient's data & AI capabilities and enable the company to develop innovative solutions across industries for a wide range of applications, such as generative AI, natural language processing (NLP), computer vision and autonomous systems. Transforming the way enterprises interact and understand their customers, Publicis Sapient AI Labs combines Publicis Sapient's more than 30 years of global delivery of its SPEED (Strategy, Product, Experience, Engineering and Data & AI) capabilities with Elder Research's 28 years of expertise in the multidisciplinary fields of data science, AI and machine learning, and Tquila's record of hiring and rapidly scaling new technology services practices worldwide. The highly experienced AI and data science professionals from Publicis Sapient AI Labs will become part of the company's existing data and AI practitioners, together propelling client enterprises into the era of advanced analytics, data-driven insights and intelligent solutions....

## report

The Directors Network (TDN), a boutique talent agency representing freelance commercial directors and professionals, has signed Sam Washington, an award-winning director whose performance-driven work has earned him global recognition. Washington has won such prestigious distinctions as inclusion in the BAFTA Newcomers roster as well as advertising's marquee honor, the Cannes Lion. Between commercials for clients such as Netflix, VISA, Nintendo, Keurig, and

HBO, Washington turns his attention to longer narratives and has a catalog of short films that have won multiple awards at film festivals around the world. Originally from the U.K., he is now based in Los Angeles....Ricardo Honegger, who for the last three years was managing director of DAVID Miami, has been promoted to chief growth officer of DAVID in the U.S. Honegger will focus on new business in the U.S. market, including partnerships and opportunities with Ogilvy and WPP. Since January 2020, he has helped DAVID Miami achieve +35% YoY business growth....Experience design company Imagination has hired Justine Carr as its new head of growth in Australia. Joining from her role as APAC business director for George P Johnson, Carr will spearhead new business planning, development and execution, driving sustained new client engagement and growth. Her appointment follows a string of recent hires on Imagination's global growth team including Stephanie Balme, U.K. business development director, and Chad Hines, U.S. director of business development. In her new role, Carr will be responsible for Imagination's wider strategic goal of building its brand reputation and driving business growth by delivering world-class immersive and integrated experiences. This includes experience design consultancy, live events, brand destinations and digital content. She will work alongside Kate Daly, creative service director....

## Debuting As A DP In 1923

Continued from page 27

their collaborative relationship is so deep and their understanding of one another so extensive. “It’s all very natural to us. There are days we’ll block a scene and walk away from each other and not say anything,” related Hodgson. Richardson

tended dynamic range,” assessed Hodgson, adding that “the highlights hold so incredibly well.”

Hodgson recollected that he started out the year 2022 “quite content as a gaffer. It’s such a fun job, one of the best jobs you can have. Then Ben asked me to do



Photo by Emerson Miller/courtesy of Paramount+

Brandon Sklenar in a scene from 1923

and Hodgson have been together for the beginnings of Sheridan’s career so there’s a natural grasp of his creative vision and what’s entailed in realizing that vision.

The episodes of 1923 have been “incredibly dynamic” and carry “so much scope,” observed Hodgson. “These episodes take place across three continents, in multiple states, span different bodies of water. It’s incredibly challenging...lots of stunts, lots of animal action and a cross-over of the two.”

Hodgson recalled for one episode having to shoot a set of animals on one side of Africa, another set on the other side of Africa, deploying animatronics in different parts of the country, shooting trees on location, having a tree built on a set, having to shoot so as to facilitate a seamless stitching of location and stage work. While complex, the work has been rewarding, all geared towards advancing the story, with a cast led by Harrison Ford and Helen Mirren.

For 1923, the camera selected was the ARRI Alexa 35, continuing Richardson and Hodgson’s involvement in ARRI digital systems which has been steady for several years. Hodgson said the Alexa 35 provides “a tremendous amount of latitude,” taking on day exterior contrast without having to add much artificial light. “What I love most about it is the ex-

perience [transition to a cinematographer]. I didn’t know what to think of it. I went along for the ride and it ended up being this amazing experience. I had a lot more creative freedom than in the past—and I was in the Taylor Sheridan arena which meant there were so many resources and so much support for me to explore and try new things and in the process have a lot of fun with it. Every day I woke up having completed some massive challenge you couldn’t have imagined getting through so relatively easily.”

Coming on set or location, Hodgson said that embedded in his mind are “the faces of the crew. On the coldest, wettest days, everyone is powering through with a smile in their face.” This work ethic, sense of purpose and community are what strike him as he reflects on 1923 and beginning a new chapter in his career as a cinematographer.

While he intends to press forward as a DP, Hodgson still retains a strong sentiment for gaffing. “To say that’s over are not the words I want to use,” he shared. Hodgson’s gaffer credits over the years extend beyond his collaborations with Sheridan. Hodgson has served as gaffer on such TV projects as *Thai Cave Rescue*, *Tales of The Walking Dead* and *Insecure*, as well as the features *Dear White People*, *Sand Castle* and *Rise*.



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## Continued Thoughts From Mccurrach, Niles, Rayburn

### Adrianne Mccurrach

*Continued from page 33*

3) At Unicorns, we're super hyped on curiosity. It doesn't really matter if you're asking about a project that has no blueprint or tech applied in a way that doesn't have a reference point or if you're asking us to solve a content shoot with significant restrictions that we get to creatively solve for — we love any questions that starts with “how do you...?”. To be honest, the wheels of innovation are turning so quickly in the industry that we point our noses to wherever flow is happening with our agency partners, and our stable of Unicorns. We fondly reflect on the past few years of categorical hypes. I think we are all still recovering from the personal and professional impact of COVID. Those lines got really blurry—working from home, holding grief and fear together, and learning how to be functional in a totally dysfunctional environment. We started Unicorns with a guiding principle of do no harm, and take no shit — and that carries through. We look for the Unicorns to join the stable and we find the work that inspires us — creatively and interpersonally. We've recently started exploring a new development that brings tech and social together in a creative lab. It's our playground right now and it is inspired by the creative drive of folks from Unicorns. Our major investment is making cool shit with rad people—and that seems to track with our external creative partners.

4) These are issues near and dear to our hearts. When we founded Unicorns & Unicorns, we scribbled things on those large white wall post-its and “representation” was at the core of our “why.” There are so many stories out there that have yet to be told. Brands and agencies have a captive audience with consumers that are eager to see their unique experiences reflected in the myriad advertisements we're bombarded with every day — somewhere between 4k-10k according to my new friend chatgpt. Each ad that is produced has the potential to be the inspiration for a little kid somewhere that sees it and, potentially themselves, in places that they hadn't previously considered. We don't mean the current mainstream narrative with women and people of color swapped out for straight, white counterparts—this is not representation. This is playing house. That being said, the conversations that are taking place are wildly inspiring. Change has to start somewhere. It is an everyday exercise to recognize our own internalized biases and challenge them. This is what we work on at Unicorns. We pay attention to who we bring into the roster; we pay attention to the microaggressions captured in normalized language and work to adjust it. We have a long way to go—and we have wild aspirations at Unicorns to make deeper change where representation is concerned. We just turned 5 this year, and realized that our biggest commitment to change, right now, is in the details. We're working with our stable — gathering information to figure out how we can best support and provide the growth opportunities to create happiness and security. Our roster of directors is committed to representation, and work really hard to fold in crew and meet new folks. We're just starting, and I think excited to see what greater impact we can contribute.

5) Oh we're always on the hunt. We have such amazing talent within Unicorns — we've built a stable of delight. We've put a lot of time and energy into finding great folks to add to the director roster too. We look everywhere. Honestly. We're always thinking about representation — that is baked into our DNA. One of the challenges we face is that we will find people that are amazing talents — like some directors, for example — but we need to figure out how to sell them in. We're stoked with the squad now, though. And, like I said, always looking for collaborators in all the places. I think you have to these days. We've been expanding the skillset of some of our Unicorns, too. That has been really fun. I think this is unique to a set-up like ours. We have folks that can cross-pollinate as art directors on some projects and produce others and then explore directing others. Its awesome and becoming more and more relevant. We're seeing most success with folks who are hyphenates — or maybe more importantly who are into being hyphenates.

### Rebecca Niles

*Continued from page 33*

2) At ArtClass, we are deeply involved in virtual production and continuously push the boundaries of emerging disciplines and new technologies, including AI, AR, and beyond. Our collaborations with director Paul Trillo and others exemplify our commitment to harnessing the power of AI in storytelling.

Trillo has spearheaded groundbreaking projects where AI seamlessly merges with human creativity. For instance, our recent collaboration involved an innovative video campaign for a GoFundMe initiative, leveraging AI-generated visuals to evoke powerful emotions and inspire action. Through this project, we discovered the immense potential of AI in amplifying the impact of storytelling, connecting people to important causes, and driving social change.

Moreover, we are thrilled to welcome Curry Sicong Tian, a multidisciplinary talent specializing in AR and 3D, who recently joined our team. Curry's expertise in blending art, technology, and immersive experiences has resulted in captivating projects. Her past work showcases the seamless integration of AR and 3D elements into visual narratives, offering audiences a new level of engagement and interactivity.

We are excited to announce our event during the 2023 Cannes Lions Festival. In partnership with OpenAI, the event will feature a vibrant mix of panel discussions, case studies and an artist gallery showcasing real-world applications and demonstrations of AI's contribution to the creative process opening up a creative dialogue that aims to inspire and energize the industry.

5) At ArtClass, we strive to create an inclusive environment for all kinds of creators, and believe in the power of diversity and inclusivity. We are proud to have a team that reflects a strong gender and identity balance. Our top executives are women, and we are committed to providing a platform for diverse talent in the industry.

Among the many incredible creative individuals we collaborate with at ArtClass, here a just a few: As a woman of Chinese heritage, Curry Tian represents an underrepresented voice in the film and advertising industry. Her creations are breathtaking, and her directorial style is one of the most unique I have ever encountered. Jams x Bash, have spent the last decade crafting award-winning commercials, documentaries, music videos, and social content. They are driven by a desire to tell stories of the authentic American experience, infused with a strong sense of magical realism and rooted in a love for beautiful, boundary-pushing design and classic filmmaking technique. They recently won a Webby for their work on The Lion King “Generations.” Shahana Khan is known for work spanning music videos, ad campaigns, and documentaries. Prior to directing, she worked as a creative director and VFX supervisor on campaigns for Nike, Adidas, Levis, Amex, Coke, Verizon, and Honda. She has received an Emmy for her work on the final season of Game of Thrones opening title and nominations for her work on other title sequences.

### James Rayburn

*Continued from page 33*

to figure out her passions lied elsewhere. So she walked away from that profession to hone her creative skills, starting with photography and then expanding into videography and documentaries and eventually commercials. While we're excited to add a female director of color to our roster, we're more excited that her work is so well crafted. She approaches each project holistically, not only paying attention to the details of what's being shot, but thinking about how it will ultimately be edited. I think this is why she is such a good fit for Tango. We are most successful when all disciplines collaborate through the production.

### Luke Ricci

*Continued from page 34*

3) RSA has been and will continue to be very proactive about diversification — it is part of our ethos. The company falls under the Ridley Scott Creative Group which consists of Scott Free Film and TV, RSA Films (UK, US, EU, Asia), Black Dog Films, our unscripted division, and a new creative services division. There is a general interest at the company in always searching for new ways to give storytellers the ability to work in different formats. Diversification is key.

5) We just signed Jared Malik Royal and I am thrilled to have welcomed him into the fold of RSA and Black Dog Films. Jared represents to me the new guard of filmmakers that are on the rise. What drew me to Jared's work was a unique perspective that I see in the way he uses the camera to tell stories and the way he captures people. He's a wonderful talent that we can all expect to see incredible work from.

## **Bradley Ross, Lauren Schwartz, Hani Selim, Brandon Tapp**

### **Bradley Ross**

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As a result, one of our team members just created additional pieces for the marketplace that simply didn't exist before. The sense of community around emerging technology is powerful and truly one of our favorite aspects of an approach like this. It's always super fulfilling at the finish line--in this case, to celebrate a truly 100% original campaign on the forefront of gaming technology (that will probably be different next week.)

3) At Open Swim, we pride ourselves on diversification. Everyone on our team thrives with cross disciplines both professionally and personally. For example, our EP Amyliz Pera is also a professional performer and writer. Nate Bloom, our chief blockchain officer, is also a car mechanic. As for me, I direct and edit commercial work, but I also produce feature films. After three years, we are on the brink of delivering I'll Be Right There, a scripted feature starring Edie Falco, Bradley Whitford, Michael Rappaport, Charlie Tahan, Jeannie Berlin and Kalie Carter. We're on the heels of producing a fashion-based CGI project, and next up in our never-ending quest to create bespoke teams for unique projects is a new podcast production. While the brand business promotes specialization, we continue to cross specialties and share the knowledge from opposite disciplines with our clients.

4) One of the things that our EP Amyliz Pera noted in a recent meeting is that Free The Bid does not necessarily mean Free The Job. We love to mentor and take on interns. It's something I have benefited from in my own career, and we've been discussing ways to get some of our up-and-coming women directors to the table. Their reels are not going to grow in the way they need to without an opportunity to execute the job. Our latest endeavor is to set up co-directing opportunities where the good fortune I've had to grow a reel can be shared, and we can collaborate without a client getting stuck on the risk of working with someone at the start of their career. The fresh point of view is great for me, so it's mutually beneficial. We currently have women we'd like to build and support in a number of categories from fashion to healthcare. There are so many more voices to be heard, but Amyliz and I believe that every step toward inclusion is one in the right direction.

### **Lauren Schwartz**

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3) kaboom has always been diversified in terms of our creative offering; we are a production company first and foremost but our directors often work in various disciplines, combining editing and directing, stills and motion, and so on. We also have an editing suite and a network of post creatives, so we can do turn-key projects. Our director talent resides in various cities nationally and internationally. So my focus now is to further diversify our talent in terms of identity. We all benefit from having a workforce and creative perspectives that aren't a carbon copy of our own, and it is incumbent upon those of us who own companies to build a team that looks like the world around us.

4) Many people are talking about how to create and support a thriving, equitable industry; How to promote a diverse, happy workplace, and how to get the best creative possible from partners and the strongest collaborations from vendors. In our business, agencies and clients increasingly ask to work with woman-owned businesses, small businesses, and diverse talent. That's a powerful step in the right direction. But the truth is that one of the best ways to support a healthy industry, especially small business vendors, many of which are female and minority owned, is to pay fairly and most importantly - in a timely fashion. In addition to advocating for fair payment and payment terms, many years ago I certified kaboom as a WBENC business, am a member of Free The Work and Owned by Women, and am proud to have attended the very first 3 Percent Conference and every one thereafter. But even as a women owned business, I know there is plenty more that I can do to help usher in much needed change including addressing another "ism" our industry largely ignores: ageism. Change means stepping outside of your comfort zone, reflecting and acting on transitional change even if it is messy, hard, and uncomfortable. In fact, it is that difficult space that likely means we are on the right track in charting new paths.

### **Hani Selim**

*Continued from page 35*

3) AI is rapidly changing the advertising landscape due to its host of benefits and ability to get smarter over time; so, like many companies, we are investing heavily into learning AI and exploring the best ways to leverage it in advertising. The goal is to find opportunities to personalize, leading to better customer experiences and audience segmentation before ads are even served. We are hoping that AI can create a more interactive experience by giving agencies and clients performance optimization that will also lead to budget optimization and targeting. Being at the forefront of this is quite exciting for us. However, the interim road of development is challenging.

5) Christina Xing is a young Chinese LGBTQ director who brings a whole different approach to filmmaking. Her use of 35mm film and her stylized aesthetic brought two very different films for Visa and Kinder Bueno to life recently. Christina is really a shining star at 25, grounded and experienced beyond her age. There is a bit of a chicken-and-egg scenario happening in advertising. In order to usher in a new generation of talent, agencies and clients must empower these filmmakers and give them opportunities to create a larger body of work that ultimately gives them an equal seat at the table. We also believe it's important to mentor below-the-line crew and give them the chance to grow in a production environment. We can really see a shift already happening here and hope we can see the same in the above-the-line world in the very near future.

### **Brandon Tapp**

*Continued from page 35*

While shooting on a Volume is by no means the perfect solution for every application, it certainly has its place. With uniquely designed environments using the Unreal Engine, we are able to maintain complete control of every aspect of production from time of day, weather, lighting, sound, and so on. We learn something new with every project and are continually finding fresh and innovative ways to use this tech to bring creative visions to life.

3) Our roster of talent is varied and diverse, not only in their backgrounds but also the paths that brought them into our industry. I feel we all share that love and passion for creating a visual narrative, whether that be in a :06 social spot or a 90-minute feature film.

The move of content from the screen to online, broke down the barriers of classically defined media buys. Longform deliverables and brand films blurred the lines as some commercials started to look more like features.

This transition opened our eyes to the possibilities of allowing what was seemingly a natural progression to find a permanent place at Camp Lucky. For years, our full roster of talent had been involved in feature film and episodic work while balancing the demands of the commercial workflow. As these opportunities continued to increase, we decided to make it official by establishing a separate Longform division with a staff dedicated solely to that cause.

This expansion puts in place a structure that can more soundly respond to, as well as grow, this type of new work. And, while we scaled up our staff to meet these demands, we're extremely fortunate that our full roster now has the ability and increased access to follow their passion into new arenas.

While the foundation of our company has been grounded in commercials for more than three decades, we feel this expansion fuels the passion of our roster of filmmakers which, in turn, benefits our entire client base.

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