EUROPEAN CREATORS' LAB

2024

The European Creators' Lab is a creative sandbox powered by IONDA GmbH, in collaboration with Pôle PIXEL, the Economic Development Agency of the City of Leipzig, Film Fund Luxembourg, in partnership with the LABLAB, Theoriz Studio, AADN, DOK Leipzig and DOK Exchange XR, supported by Diversion Cinema, the Games & XR Association Middle Germany, XRMust, co-funded by the Creative Europe Media Programme of the European Union.

SUPPORTED AND MADE POSSIBLE BY:

Co-funded by the Creative Europe MEDIA Programme of the European Union

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THEORIZ

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CONTENT

TEAM
ASTRID KAHMKE

Head of European
Creators' Lab

Astrid works as a consultant and curator for immersive media. In her 35-year journey from theatre to festivals to filmmaking, Astrid fell in love with digital storytelling and immersive worlds. An award-winning producer of international feature films, she switched sides in 2013 and has since worked in training, consulting and events, fascinated by innovative tools and platforms for future narrations. She is a passionate networker, community builder and supporter of the European XR ecosystem. She launched the European Creators' Lab in 2017 and has been its director ever since. Astrid is the founder and CEO of IONDA GmbH and an internationally recognised expert when it comes to the future of our storytelling.

LinkedIn | IONDA GmbH | Instagram

MADS DAMSBO

Head of Studies

Mads Damsbo is the founder and creative producer at Makropol, an innovative production studio based in Copenhagen. Mads focuses on developing unheard narratives, utilizing emerging technology, provoking unexpected emotions and experiences in diverse audiences. Schooled as a Producer from the progressive film school Super16 and with a bachelor in Media Directing from the Danish School of Media and Journalism, Mads has since become an expert on the production of immersive media narratives, giving lectures, organizing workshops and teaching masterclasses all around the world. His latest production END OF NIGHT won the Venice Lion for "Best Immersive Narrative".

TEAM
AGNIEZSKA KRACLA

Social Media Management	Immersive Residency, Prototyping Lab

Agnieszka is a social media manager based in Berlin. With a background in film production organization and media studies, she primarily works with companies in the audiovisual field.


SIMON PARLANGE

Coordinator Lyon	Development Lab

Simon has been organizing and producing cultural events for more than ten years. His appeal for new technology and innovative projects made him focus his activity in the field of digital art and new media. He co-created and directed the Mirage Festival in Lyon from 2013 to 2020 which offered during 8 editions the opportunity to a large and various audience to discover hybrid and innovative projects proposed by a new scene of artists. He is now mostly using his experience and network as an expert and producer to help artists to produce and show transmedia projects.
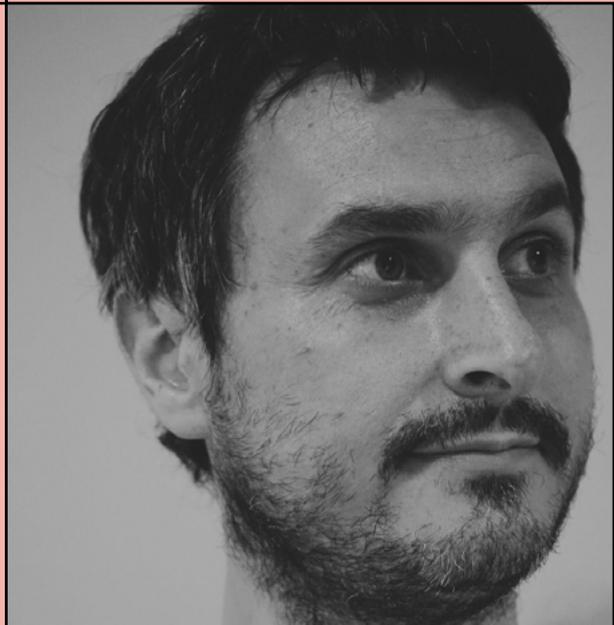
DEVELOPMENT LAB — LYON

MADS DAMSBO

Head of studies & online keynote

   Mads Damsbo is the founder and creative producer at Makropol, an innovative production studio based in Copenhagen. Mads focuses on developing unheard narratives, utilizing emerging technology, provoking unexpected emotions and experiences in diverse audiences. Schooled as a Producer from the progressive film school Super16 and with a bachelor in Media Directing from the Danish School of Media and Journalism, Mads has since become an expert on the production of immersive media narratives, giving lectures, organizing workshops and teaching masterclasses all around the world. His latest production END OF NIGHT won the Venice Lion for "Best Immersive Narrative".

Website

CENK GÜZELIS

Cenk is a creative technologist and new media artist. He researches and educates at the ./studio3, Institute for Experimental Architecture of Innsbruck University, co-founded Me AndOther Me, a new media-driven artistic and architectural research studio exploring the future of our spatial experiences and communication through practical applications of social mixed reality experiences focused on online culture, post-human critique, and the spatial web. He is a board member of the CSC Immersive Arts. A Centre for The Expanded Moving Image – the Immersive Arts Department of the National Film School of Italy.

Website

ORIANE HURARD

As a producer, Oriane Hurard has been working in the audiovisual and immersive field for the past ten years. She notably produced *Isle of the Dead* by Benjamin Nuel, winner of Best Story VR Award at Venice in 2018. Later, *Meet Mortaza* VR by Joséphine Derobe and *The Passengers* by Ziad Touma were both selected at SXSW 2021.

Also in 2021, Oriane joined the award-winning ATLAS V team as a senior producer. She is the lead producer of the VR documentary series *Missing Pictures*, starring Abel Ferrara, Catherine Hardwicke and Naomi Kawase that premiered in Tribeca in 2022. Her most recent production, *Emperor* by Marion Burger and Ilan J. Cohen, has been awarded as Best Achievement at Venice Immersive 2023 and Best VR Experience at Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2024.

CORINE MEIJERS

Founded by Corine Meijers in 2019, Studio Biarritz is now an established production house that specializes in audiovisual projects that cross borders. Studio Biarritz develops its own projects, but we also love collaborating with filmmakers, artists and partners from all over the world to produce stories with a lot of heart that are relevant for our trying times. We cross borders in 1) form, technology and subject matter, in 2) collaboration with filmmakers, artists & partners and 3) in audience reach, distributed on multiple platforms.

As a creative producer at Studio Biarritz, Corine Meijers is also involved as a (script) coach for several VR and immersive projects at the Flemish Audiovisual Fund as well as the Film Fund in The Netherlands. She is a mentor at the Playgrounds NEXT talent development program in Brabant (NL), the Immersive & Interactive I media training for scientists, at the Silbersalz Institute (DE) and was involved as a mentor at the immersive section of the Venice College Biennale and European Creators Lab in 2024.

Website

CRAIG QUINTEIRO

As the Artistic Director of the Taipei-based Riverbed Theatre Company, Craig has written and directed over fifty original image-based performances, including productions in Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Singapore, China, France, Germany, and the United States. His first VR experience, All That Remains, premiered at the 79th Venice Film Festival (2022) and won the prize for Best Immersive Experience at the 2023 Luxembourg Film Festival and the Best 360 VR Film at the 2024 Kaohsiung Film Festival. His most recent VR experience, Over the Rainbow, premiered at the 2023 Tribeca Film Festival and was shown as part of the "Best of" section at the 80th Venice Film Festival. The project won the Panorama Award at the 2024 Festival du Nouveau Cinema. Filmmaker Magazine selected Craig as one of the "25 New Faces of Independent Film 2023." Craig is also a sculptor and installation artist whose work has been shown at the Asian Biennial, Venice Biennale Collateral Events, Kobe Biennale, Taipei Biennale, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei MOCA, and the Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art. A former Fulbright Senior Scholar and Mellon Foundation Humanities Unbounded Fellow, Craig received his Ph.D. in Performance Studies from Northwestern University and is a Professor in the Department of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies at Grinnell College.

NIKOLAJ (STAUS) STAUSBØL

Staus is a future experience designer with a focus on anchoring playful interactive stories into reality. His projects has a tendency to lean towards emulating photorealism w. volumetric capturing and shader work pipelines and anything that allows for a near real time dialogue with code and digital creativity; Node based tools, generative AI storytelling, algorave live-coding, etc.

As a Creative Technology Director and Partner at Manyone, he's built numerous large scale XR and spatial projects for both large corporate clients and cultural institutions.

His work has been exhibited at Venice Film Festival, SXSW, Copenhagen Contemporary, Las Vegas and United Nations Climate Assembly in Kenya to name a few.

SYLVIA ALBERT–VOGL

Sylvia Albert-Vogl is a project leader and Head of SEO at ARD/BR. She transitioned from a TV journalist to content innovation management, focusing on audience engagement, R&D, and SEO. She has gained experience from marketing agencies, broadcasters, and startups, with an emphasis on user-centric storytelling and content distribution. In 2023, she became a DLT Talent, adapting to Web3, NFTs, and the Metaverse. Additionally, she is a PhD Researcher at the University of the Arts London, teaches media business, and organizes workshops and conference events in the UK and Germany. Sylvia also holds an international MBA from UEL, blending her practical media expertise with global business acumen.

Contact | LinkedIn

EDWARD BUTTON

Edward Button is an award winning Director and Director of Photography. He has shot around the globe for clients such as Gillette, Pantene, Western Union, Sony/BMG, Save the Children and shot feature film work for directors such as Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini, Doug Liman, Brett Leonard, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, Trish Dalton, and Liz Hinlein. Edward started his career working in the camera department for Emmanuel Lubezki ASC on films by The Cohen Brothers and Terrence Malick. Currently, Edward has been working extensively in Virtual Reality having served as Director of Photography and Producer on Doug Liman's cinematic VR series "Invisible" and Brett Leonards cinematic VR Series "Hollywood Rooftop". He shot and was Supervising Producer on the VR Music Video Reeps One "Does Not Exist" with The Mill, worked with Emblematic Group, and was Technicolor NY's Artist in Residence where he developed XR Projects including a collaboration with Artist Shantell Martin. Amongst others, Edward's work has been screened at The Cannes Film Festival, Cannes Lions, The Sundance Film Festival, and the Brasov International Film Festival where he won the Best Cinematography award. Edward has taught VR at The American Film Institute and spoken at conferences such as SXSW, Digital Hollywood, The Manhattan Media Summit, VR Fest, and VRTO on VR/XR and the future of filmed entertainment. He holds Masters degree's from the American Film institute and NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Program.

RAPHAËL CHÊNAIS

Raphaël is a XR production manager at Dark Euphoria, a south of France based digital & immersive arts production agency, and takes part in several activities such as:

- artistic projects (from writing, to funding, to production, to distribution) with a close relationship with artists & authors

- cultural structuration & innovation through larger programmes funded by EU (Realities in Transition) or France 2030,

- event organization with SVSN (="Live performance, digital stages"), a 2-day event happening during the Festival d'Avignon, aimed at digital arts, digital, and performance professionals to gather, network, and foster a community around hybrid practices.

As a Arts & Métiers and Gobelins/Enjmin graduate, Raphaël is a technologist interested in exploring XR technologies and philosophies, innovative interaction design, hybrid practices, and mixing virtuality with physicality.

Contact | LinkedIn
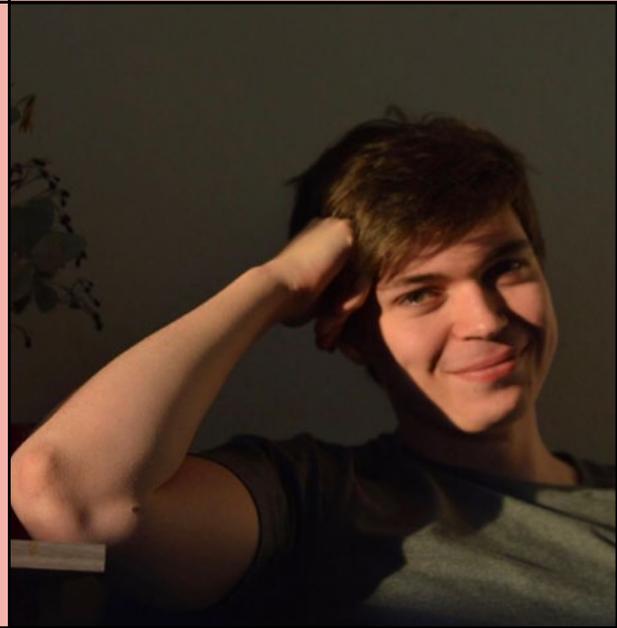
LINDA CURTIN

Linda is an award-winning filmmaker, participatory artist and filmmaker who has been embracing immersive technologies for the last three years. Her film works have been funded by bodies such as Screen Ireland, Arts Council of Ireland and CREATE and have been TV broadcast and exhibited in galleries and festivals internationally. She has just wrapped on her first co-directed Cinematic VR Film that was workshopped at the 2023 EUCL and supported through innovation funding by Animation Ireland, Screen Ireland, the Department of Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and British Telecom. Most recently, Linda has joined an exciting research community based at Ulster University to pursue a PhD in Virtual Production and explore XR innovations in the screen sector.

ANAN FRIES

Anan Fries (they/them) is a transdisciplinary artist based in Berlin and Basel. They built up two theater companies, which are both known for their experimental take on performing arts: Anan Fries is co-founder and former artistic director of pioneering game-theatre collective machina eX, which is specialised in creating interactive, gamified experiences and has toured extensively in Europe and the US. And they co-founded Henrike Iglesias, a feminist performance collective. Their porn performance OH MY was touring internationally and was last shown at FIBA in Buenos Aires. Anan Fries' artistic practice is located at the intersection of digital & performing arts, where they are researching hybrid aesthetics and phygital worldbuilding. Their work is inspired by posthuman and xeno-feminist discourse and circles around themes such as reproduction, techno-spirituality and the entanglements of nature and technology. Their VR-essay on non-normative pregnant bodies, [POSTHUMAN WOMBS], was presented at IDFA DocLab Amsterdam, DOK Leipzig, GIFF Geneva, Konsthall C Stockholm among other places. They are recipient of the 3rd prize of the VR Art Prize by DKB. In collaboration with HAU Berlin they made two hybrid performances, R.I.P. - Resurrect in Peace and VIRTUAL WOMBS. Both combine immersive technologies and live performance.

LUCY HAMMOND

Lucy is an Immersive Director and Creative Producer. Recent projects include 'The Archive', an interactive game exploring happiness and the VR experience 'Monoliths' (BFI London Film Festival, Sheffield Docfest, Melbourne International Film Festival), celebrating the voices of women and landscapes from the north of England. Lucy's 2019 VR piece, 'Traitor' which combines virtual reality, film and a live actor premiered in competition at Tribeca Film Festival 2019.

Lucy was shortlisted for Content Creator at the Arts Council England Digital Culture Awards 2023 and is a BAFTA Connect Member 2023-26. Her work explores themes ranging from teenage experiences of happiness and resilience to folklore, identity, nature and whistleblowing narratives around our relationship to the technology we use every day.

Contact | LinkedIn

NIKITA KHUDIAKOV

Nikita FREEBOID Khudiakov is a multidisciplinary artist and a creative producer. Originally from Mykolaiv, Ukraine he is currently based in Berlin. Nikita FREEBOID is working in the intersection of digital arts, social impact and futurology. As an artist, he's working in genres of generative art, augmented and virtual reality and audiovisual art (see artworks at freeboid.com). One of his metaverse spaces, "Metacouncil", was presented at the Ars Electronica 2020 as a part of "In Kepler's Gardens". He started to work with XR in 2015 by organizing a VR art hackathon where game developers were collaborating with artists. In 2019, 2020 and 2021 Nikita FREEBOID hosted a VR art festival in Kyiv, Ukraine. He's remotely teaching students of Karazin University (Kharkiv, Ukraine) about metaverse space production.

Website

LARA KNESCHKE

Lara Kneschke creates digitale immersive spaces that raise awareness of environmental issues and encourage viewers to engage in personal dialogue and active action. Her approach is to transfer the real world into the digital sphere in order to then incorporate these experiences into the exhibition design.

She combines art, science and social concerns in an innovative way to encourage people to experience their environment and the associated challenges in new and impressive ways.

Website

ELISAVET KOLINIATI

Elli Koliniati is an XR technical designer from Athens, Greece, with a multidisciplinary background. She studied architecture and piano in Creta, and computational arts in London, combining programming with design to create immersive interactive spaces. Her expertise extends from game and level design for video games, her current field of work, to set design for short films and theater, such as the Greek National Opera. Elli focuses on XR as the sole medium capable of facilitating genuine embodiment within virtual environments, as she seeks to merge video game mechanics with theatre practices and performance art to create unique and impactful narrative experiences. She is particularly drawn to multiplayer approaches that foster diverse gameplay behaviours, exploring the profound ways we can connect through this medium.

Website
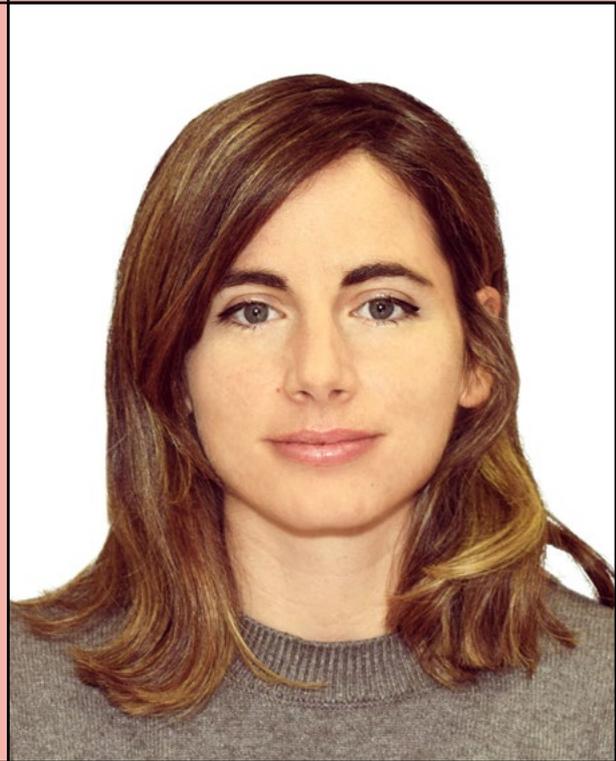
ELODIE LERAY

I am a French & English immersive technology enthusiast!

My journey started after having co-organised the hybrid arts festival ZERO1 in La Rochelle.

Since then, I have been evolved in planning events, exhibitions and creative workshops related todigital cultures and artistic practices.

My favourite quote is : Tell me and I forget, Teach me and I may remember, Envolve me and I learn.

My main focus is in crafting immersive experiences as a way to explore our reality through innovative perspectives. I believe that through authentic connections, individuals can discover meaning and undergo profound tranformation.

(Currently honing my skills in Unreal Engine and Unity for future projects !)

LinkedIn

ANNA MANANKINA

   Interdisciplinary media artist, working in the field of digital technologies with video, VR and AR, installation, AI, 3D-animation with an emphasis on posthumanism and feminist practice.
   In her artistic statements, she covers a wide range of issues: from geopolitical situations and power structures to purely intimate spheres of life, addresses the topic of violence and gender identity, the position of women in artistic and social contexts. Artist-in-residence at ZKM Center for Art and Media in 2022. Participated in the exhibition at Manifesta 14, Prishtina curated by Secondary Archive. Finalist of the cultural exchange program Exter, supported by the Ukrainian Institute. Fellow of the Gaude Polonia program 2021 from the Polish National Cultural Center. Participated in 19th Media Art Biennale WRO 2021 in Wroclaw, Poland. Worked on a collaborative project with <rotor> Association for Contemporary Art, Graz, Austria. Graduated from Kharkiv Academy of Design and Arts in 2020. Worked on a personal project during KAIR residence in Sopa gallery , Kosice. She studied in the American Art Incubator program in collaboration with the Izoliatsya platform in Kyiv. Finalist of Non-stop media biennale for young artists. Her works were exhibited in Germany, France, China, Slovakia, Austria, Ukraine, Latvia, Poland, and Lithuania.
   Living and working in Karlsruhe, Germany.

Website | Vimeo | Instagram

KAI MYSLIWIEC

   I am a software developer working more than 20 years in the media industry. My last position was Head of Engineering for Addressable TV at ProSiebenSat.1.
   I am now pursuing an old dream of working on interactive 3d worlds and games. I am proficient in a lot of programming languages, Unity and Blender.

Website

PAULA NIETO

Hi, my name is Paula and I live in Barcelona, Spain. I'm a seasoned, creative professional with extensive experience spearheading design process from concept to execution for websites and mobile apps. Expert in developing wireframes, prototypes, and high-fidelity mockups to communicate design concepts and interactions. Understanding of UX key concepts and design thinking. I want to develop my talent for creating immersive experiences including AR, VR, and AI applications. I like to resolve complex issues and stay at the forefront of design trends. I'm adept at shaping the future through cutting-edge technologies. I'm also passionate about art and culture in all its forms.

Website | LinkedIn | Behance

JENNIFER SHORTALL

Jennifer Shortall, a director and storyteller, merges her theatrical roots with a passion for immersive storytelling. With a background and education in Theatre and Film, she ventured into VR filmmaking in 2021, collaborating on a project selected for the Venice Biennale College Cinema VR. Since embarking on her journey in immersive storytelling, Jennifer has dedicated herself to mastering Unreal Engine and crafting AR experiences. Currently, she leads a groundbreaking AR project funded by Screen Ireland/Animation Ireland, which transports users to Dublin's historical prostitution quarter of the early 20th century, blending storytelling and history with immersive experiences to captivate audiences.

OLEKSANDR SIROUS

Oleksandr Sirous (b. 1996 in Kharkiv, Ukraine) is a media and sound artist. His practice has been closely connected with the latest technologies, various fields of science such as microbiology, biohacking, and quantum physics. He uses participatory practices in his work to explain the complex processes taking place in the world around us. Lately, he is focused on trying to make it impossible to create centralized systems at the cellular level. He studied at the Kharkiv Art Collage in the painting department and at the Kharkiv Academy of Design and Arts in the department of graphics. In 2017–18 he was the curator of the new media art course in HudpromLoft (Kharkiv). In 2018 he was the curator of the course of new media art in the Kharkiv Academy of Visual Arts. Since 2019, he has been a teacher at the 3D programming course in the Kyiv Academy of Media Arts and part of PHOTINUS Studio in Kyiv. Funded by the Ukraine Support Program of the Goethe-Institut, Oleksandr Sirous was artist-in-residence at ZKM | Karlsruhe in 2023.
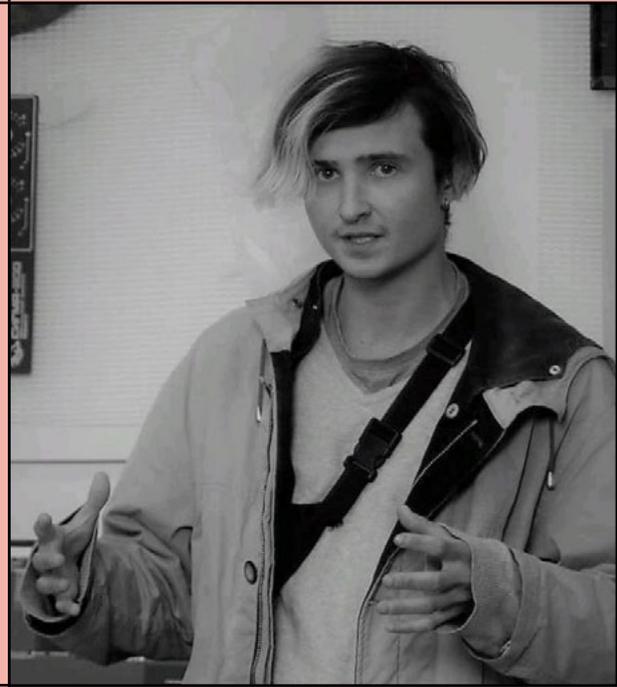
MANUEL TOLEDO

With over ten years of international experience as a designer and cultural producer, Manuel has initiated and developed international projects in the arts and creative industries while working with diverse cultural, corporate, and academic partners to deliver them successfully.

Manuel's creative professional experience has focused on transdisciplinary topics related to architecture, design, film, and new media, especially where boundaries become blurry and new ideas can arise.

By joining the Development Lab, he wants to explore a path where narrative, new media, and technology can help him develop ideas and stories that deserve to be told.

Website | LinkedIn | Instagram

CLEMENT GAMGIE RIGNAULT

Clément Rignault aka Gamgie is a digital artist, author and adventurer.

In 2011, he created with the magician Moulla, the company Augmented Magic, based in Paris. He explores the link between magic and technologies. For 5 years, he participated in the creation of acts, shows and installations mixing illusion, digital art and video projection. His creations tour internationally on different festivals, events or TV shows.In 2016, he went on a journey, alone, hitchhiking and backpacking. He left for 800 days across America, from South to North. 2 years of adventure, exploration, artistic research around other mediums (drawing, writing ...). It is a real experience of introspection that feeds his adventurer's imagination: the poetry of wide open spaces, the intoxicating power of an inevitable present moment, the adventure of great paths, of encounters, of mysticism and spirituality.

Back in France in 2019, he wrote his first book "Je n'ai pas peur de mourir. Juste de ne pas vivre" (I'm not afraid to die. Just not to live) which was released in 2020 and which relates his 2 years of adventure.

Since 2020, Gamgie resumes his digital art projects. He creates interactive and generative visuals for installations, shows, performances or concerts. He accompanies and participates in the creation of shows and installations in collaboration with other artists (Compagnie Ombre, Compagnie Michel Onomo, Theoriz, Mouawad&Laurier...). He works on his own installations (Propagason, Sarhzad) and performances (STELLAR DRIFT). Gamgie focus his work on the concept of reality, showing the invisible around us and explore the different perspective on life itself. It is link to spirituality, sacred art, animistic beliefs, life after death, art & science combination, cosmos. He builds tool to perform live. For example Oxipital a visual instrument, he codes to use in its creation.

He is also a performer doing clown, theater and dancing.

Website | Instagram

KENDRA VALENTINE

Kendra Valentine is a Story Strategist that helps both creative and business projects through a method she calls Strategic Story Design. Her work focuses on identifying the "red thread" or through-line in a story and innovating authentic ways to share it. She believes in an audience first approach to all her work, focusing on bringing value and clearly communicating ideas. Her clients have included Nickelodeon, Electrolux, government institutions, many start-ups. She also has a background in film & TV production, having worked with studios such as Warner Bros. With a particular passion for youth & family content, her goal is to start a story studio that consults on client projects as well as produces original content for a global 'age-agnostic' audience. Her book outlining her storytelling methodology will be published by Pearson Business in Fall 2024."

Website | LinkedIn

SANDER VAN BELLEGEM

Sander van Bellegem is a visual and immersive designer, artist with a focus on 3D by the name "AKÆRI". His main interests are creating installations, interior designs, and digital- and interactive art. His approach to art and design is characterized by a quest for symbiosis between humans, nature, and technology, carving a niche within Protopian art and design.

After completing his studies in Digital Design at LUCA Gent, Sander shared his knowledge and passion as a teacher of 3D and Game Design at Digital Arts in KTA Brugge. He later expanded his teaching endeavors as a Lecturer in 3D for the courses "Mixed Experience Design" and "Graphic Design" at Howest Brugge. Here, he's also writing a research project on the possibilities of AI and design.

He resides in Ghent, Belgium, where he also contributes to the immersive art and design community by organising events together with Lucas Dewulf, Bavo Dekuyschere by the name XRT.

Website | Instagram

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