

makers^m

REAL INSIGHT INTO GLOBAL PRODUCTION

CANNES 2022

#9

EYE POPPING TRENDS

Will NFTs, the metaverse & virtual production transform film & TV?

FESTIVAL SEASON

What to expect as the film & ad industries return to Cannes





Welcome to the ninth edition of *makers*, the magazine for the global production industry. After more than two years of disruption from Covid-19, the television, film, advertising and games industries are getting back to business as usual in many parts of the world.

Clear signs of this will be evident at the Cannes Film Festival in May and the Cannes Lions in June (see pages 21 & 49 for previews of each event). Both are expected to attract decent crowds this year; registrations for Cannes Film, for example, are running at pre-pandemic levels.

Nothing stays the same for long in the production sector though, so it's hard to say truthfully that business is progressing as it did two years ago.

Sure, producers, crews and suppliers are busy as production has burst back into life after the pandemic. But many are aware they are operating in a very different landscape, where technology such as Zoom has ushered in hybrid ways of working.

In this issue, we look at some of the other technologies that promise to shake up the industry in the near future: from virtual production (page 154), the metaverse (page 159), new tech platforms (page 133) to NFTs (page 40).

We also look at other ways the pandemic has left its mark on the industry. The games sector thrived during lockdowns, leading to a sudden rush of consolidation in the gaming industry (page 130). By comparison, cinemas struggled – and we examine the prospects for exhibition (page 56).

makers also picks out some of the most notable international growth markets in this issue, among them Saudi Arabia (page 76) and South Korea (page 80). Growth is also a key theme in the buoyant studio sector (page 140), which is experiencing an unprecedented boom – but is it sustainable?

All this and more is rounded out by *makers*' regular reports on some of the world's best countries to film in, weighing up the infrastructure, skills and incentives on offer.

We hope you enjoy this issue. *makers* will be back again in the winter. If you have any feedback, or would like to get in touch, do drop us a line at info@thelocationguide.com

Tim Dams, Editor



NOTHING STAYS THE SAME FOR LONG IN THE PRODUCTION SECTOR THOUGH, SO IT'S HARD TO SAY TRUTHFULLY THAT BUSINESS IS PROGRESSING AS IT DID TWO YEARS AGO.

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Africa On The Rise

**WHY
ARE
SO
MANY
MEDIA
COMPANIES
BEING
DRAWN
TO
AFRICA?**



South Africa's *Blood & Water* © Jonathan Ferreira / Netflix.

Media investors have been drawn in by Africa's potential, with businesses such as Netflix, Amazon and Disney Plus now working in different parts of the continent. With new funding opportunities and a wealth of talent, could the continent become a filmmaking force?

There are clear signs of growth in the African media sector. Digital TV Research predicts that the number of pay-for-TV subscribers in the continent is set to grow by 46% between 2021 and 2027, adding 18 million subscribers for an overall total of 57 million. African audiovisual production also continues to rise, meaning that incoming filmmakers can capitalise on new opportunities.

Currently, three groups account for 90% of Africa's pay-for-TV subscribers. Multichoice – through its DStv and GOtv platforms – is anticipated by Digital TV Research to have 20.8 million subscribers by 2027, while subscriber numbers for StarTimes and CanalPlus are predicted to hit 18.4 million and 11.2 million. The global streamers have also started to put down roots in the continent. At the end of 2021 Netflix had an estimated 2.6 million subscribers in Africa, while Amazon Prime Video

**NETFLIX ANNOUNCED
A COMMITMENT OF
USD1 MILLION TOWARDS
THE NEWLY-ESTABLISHED
NETFLIX CREATIVE
EQUITY SCHOLARSHIP
FUND FOR SUB-SAHARAN
AFRICA'S FILM AND
TELEVISION STUDENTS**



Castle & Castle © Kelechi Amadi-Obi / Netflix.



The Ghost and the House of Truth © Temple Productions.

reached approximately 575,000 subscriptions. Disney Plus is launching in South Africa, Egypt and Libya this year.

Netflix has been pumping money into African content. Nigeria's EbonyLife Media was the first African company to sign a multitle deal with Netflix, encompassing features *Oloture*, *Blood Sisters* and *Death and the King's Horseman*, and the series *Castle & Castle*. EbonyLife also has a first-look deal with Sony Pictures Television, as well as a slate of film and television projects with Jada Pinkett Smith's Westbrook Studio.

"The filmmakers are happy that finally the world recognises their talent and that their works can be seen outside of their country," explains Karine Barclais, founder of Pavillon Afriques at Cannes Film Festival. Pavillon Afriques supports African cinema at the festival, offering various promotional networking and training opportunities. "For a few, funds are also getting more accessible. The more platforms, the more opportunities seems to be the motto now."

Barclais adds: "From the conversations I have with film professionals, it seems that they are beginning to be concerned with the share they get out of the deals they get. Quality is rapidly improving and in a few years' time, African filmmakers will probably begin to be more demanding. They also feel that they should have their own powerful streaming platform, not to be dependent on others, which would help to prevent their work eventually 'getting out of fashion' in the eyes of other parts of the world."

Netflix has announced a commitment of USD1 million towards the newly-established Netflix Creative Equity Scholarship Fund (CESF) for Sub-Saharan Africa's film and television students.

The company also recently unveiled African Folktales, Reimagined – a competition championing short film adaptations of traditional folktales across the continent. More than 2080 submissions in numerous languages were evaluated by industry professionals. A shortlist of 21 talented directors will be whittled down to six winners. In turn, each of the final six filmmakers will be given a production grant of USD75,000 to create their story.

Investment is also being directed towards production partnerships between different African nations. KwaZulu Natal Film Commission in South Africa have worked on two films with Nigeria. *Comatose*, shot in Durban and Lagos, will feature on Amazon.

While the filmmaking infrastructure across Africa is relatively uneven across different countries, there are options for potential collaborations between separate African territories. The Namibian Film Commission, for example, launched a fund to encourage coproduction between African filmmakers and those in the diaspora and Namibia.

Meanwhile, a wealth of talented women have shaped Nigerian filmmaking over the years, long before the streamers started investing in the continent. Ego Boyo's 2003 film *Keeping Faith* essentially began the era of romantic comedies for the Nollywood industry, offering new ways of portraying the lives of

**"MULTI-AWARD
WINNING FILMMAKER
MILDRED OKWO IS
ONE OF THE KEY
FIGURES IN THE
NIGERIAN FILM
INDUSTRY WHO IS
KEEPING A CLOSE EYE
ON THE INCOMING
STREAMING GIANTS'
ACTIONS."**

AFRICA

WOMEN

OPPORTUNITY





Le Femme Anjola © The Audrey Silva Company.

AS THE LARGE-SCALE INVESTMENT FROM THESE MEDIA CONGLOMERATES ILLUSTRATES, AFRICA IS EMERGING AS A NEW FORCE WITHIN THE GLOBAL FILM INDUSTRY.

African people. Boyo also produced *The Ghost* and the *House of Truth* in 2019, a gritty, critically-acclaimed film that opened Film Africa Festival in 2020.

Chioma Ude founded the African International Film Festival (AFRIFF), one of the country's most impactful events. At the last edition of the festival, Amazon attended and revealed its future business strategy in Africa, communicating its desire to work with independent filmmakers.

"For a female filmmaker it's the best time to be alive because, as a matter of fact, a lot of us women have paved the way, especially in Nigeria and Africa," says actress-turned-director Omoni Oboli. She starred in 2009's Nollywood thriller *The Figurine* and won Big Screen Actress of the Year at the 2014 ELOY Awards (Exquisite Lady of the Year) for her movie *Being Mrs Elliot*, which she both acted in and directed. "Female filmmakers from other parts of Africa reach out to me and say thank you for the work that [we] do because we have paved the way... Any female filmmaker, feel free to come in now. It's a lot easier for you now. Feel free to come in and make your mark – there's a seat at the table for all female filmmakers because we really have stood our ground. We're here!"

Multi-award winning filmmaker Mildred Okwo is one of the key figures in the Nigerian film industry who is keeping a close eye on the incoming streaming giants' actions. Okwo's directorial debut came in 2006 with *30 Days*, an action thriller that received eight nominations at the 2008 Africa Movie Academy Awards.

In 2010 the former lawyer cofounded a film and entertainment production company with her friend Rita Dominic, the celebrated actress who received an African Movie Academy award for Best Actress in a Leading Role in the Kenyan film *Shattered*. Together, the two filmmakers created the Audrey

Silva Company. *The Meeting* (2012) and *Suru L'ere* (2016) are comedy films set in Lagos that explore the joys and complications of contemporary relationships. *Le Femme Anjola* (2019) is a psychological film noir outing, following the mysterious entanglement between an enigmatic wife of a gangster and a stockbroker-saxophonist, who is tempted to stray from his girlfriend.

"When we established the Audrey Silva Company, we felt that there was a need to tell sophisticated African narratives at a level that the rest of the world would understand," explains Okwo. "We want to make films in such a way that other parts of the globe come to recognise what an African story means, what it means to be an African. At the moment, we have lots of organisations arriving into the continent, the big streamers Amazon and Netflix – and we hear that HBO and Apple could be arriving soon too. For our company, this means we have projects coming up in the next two or three years that will reach new international audiences, and now more than ever it is the time for Africans to tell their own stories."

As the investment from these media conglomerates illustrates, Africa could now emerge as a new force within the global film industries – meaning it could be the perfect time for international producers to engage in business with the African film community.

"Challenge the continent with your highest expectations, and you'll be the pioneer of a new perspective, of an exclusive overview of the world," emphasises Lalie Rabeharison, founder of the African Fixer Guild. "Take risks and go through new, exclusive locations even if in remote areas: we always find a way to set up logistics. Many locations on the continent are still unexplored. Be the first to film them, as you know that remarkable places give a true branding to great movies!"

"WE WANT TO MAKE FILMS IN SUCH A WAY THAT OTHER PARTS OF THE GLOBE COME TO RECOGNISE WHAT AN AFRICAN STORY MEANS, WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AFRICAN."



Namibia's longest-running production company
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www.namibfilms.com

GEORGIA

gorgeous sights



Positioned at the intersection of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, Georgia is a mountainous country characterised by stunning views atop soaring heights. The nation's geography includes swamplands and marsh-forests, eternal snows and glacier formations, and even a small section of semi-arid plains.

In 2016, Enterprise Georgia introduced a programme titled: Film in Georgia. This joint initiative is orchestrated by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia. The scheme offers filmmakers a 20% cash rebate on qualified expenses incurred in the country. Film in Georgia aims to support the development of Georgia's film industry, encouraging international filmmakers to shoot in the region.

"From snowy mountains to the sea shores, everything is close together, which makes filmmaking so much easier for new producers," explains Tatia Bidzinashvili, the head of Film in Georgia. "We have a mixture of Asian and European cultures, so there will always be a lot of exciting options."

"FILM IN GEORGIA AIMS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEORGIA'S FILM INDUSTRY, ENCOURAGING INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKERS TO SHOOT IN THE REGION."

An additional rebate of up to 5% is available if a production passes a cultural test by promoting Georgia as a prime destination to visit. In order to get the rebate, beneficiaries must provide an official independent audit conclusion document within one year of production. In turn, the rebate will be provided between ten days and up to a maximum of one year after the document has been received. The digital application processes are designed to be as smooth and flexible as possible when foreign filmmakers apply.

Taxes on incoming companies are generally very low in Georgia, meaning that it is one of the most cost-effective places to shoot in Europe. Film



LOCATION HIGHLIGHT

The ancient riverside city Kutaisi is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Often considered the country's second capital after Tbilisi, it is Georgia's third most populous city with good transport links for incoming producers.

Alexandre Koberidze's German-Georgian feature film *What Do We See When We Look at the Sky?* is in many ways a poignant tribute to the city. The project follows the daily traditions that encapsulate Kutaisi's essence, from reunited friends sharing freshly-baked cheese-bread Khachapuri to the slow, gentle pouring of fresh coffee in one of the location's many quirky cafés.

The first edition of the Kutaisi International Short Film Festival ran in May 2021. Originally scheduled for 2020 before the pandemic struck, the event aims to diversify the Georgian film scene by showcasing how – beyond the capital city – Kutaisi is itself a cultural hub. The second edition will be held in October 2022.



Q&A

TATIA BIDZINASHVILI
HEAD OF FILM GEORGIA



AN ADDITIONAL REBATE OF UP TO 5% IS AVAILABLE IF A PRODUCTION PASSES A CULTURAL TEST BY PROMOTING GEORGIA AS A PRIME DESTINATION TO VISIT.

producers who use the cash rebate can save even more money than they would in other parts of the continent, where film incentives are high yet typical business taxes are even higher.

Fast and Furious 9 was shot in Georgia over five weeks. Filming for the Hollywood action movie took place on the streets of the Georgian capital Tbilisi. Approximately 4,000 local citizens were hired to work on the project, and numerous key positions within the production were filled by the country's filmmaking specialists.

"We worked on the feature film *Fast and Furious 9*, the first major studio production in Georgia," details Sophio Bendiashvili, line producer and co-founder at Enkeny Films. "We also work on all kinds of commercials – a really interesting one was the winter campaign for one of the largest banks in Georgia that we did on 8mm film. A mixture of incredible locations and cost-effectiveness create a very film-friendly environment in this country."

Ample support is available for incoming productions. A props rental company called Props Box is based in Tbilisi, offering an extensive catalogue of useful items for film production teams. The capital also hosts 1991 Productions, a business run by two friends from high school that can assist with location scouting, equipment hire and much more.

The Martini Shot is an international production service company who was forced to move its main offices from Ukraine to Georgia. The company has been collecting and sending humanitarian aid from Georgia to Poland, with its contacts then sending these resources into Ukraine.

"By chance, we had a large team working in Georgia when the conflict started," details Valeria Berezhna, the company's head of new business, "so we have decided to use our favourable position to do some good. We have been reaching out to lots of our international friends and potential clients, because most of Europe service work has been done in Ukraine rather than Georgia. We are trying to spread the word about getting projects here. Georgia is an amazing country, and we are inviting others to work with us so that we can stay afloat and, at the same time, support our team members who are trapped in bomb shelters in Ukraine."

Q: *Why should producers consider filming in Georgia?*

A: There are three key points that make our country a prime destination for filmmakers. Firstly, our locations are stunning and situated close together. We have six different climate zones, so you could film in freezing mountains and then visit the beach for a sun tan. Secondly, we have a really effective and efficient cash rebate system. The procedures are designed to ensure things are very flexible, so getting that 20% rebate is easy. The third and main point is that our government is dedicated to attracting filmmakers and production companies to Georgia.

Q: *What else makes filmmaking in the country special?*

A: I think it is important to mention Georgia's crew. They have gained lots of valuable experience and have taken massive steps forward recently. They are operating at a really high international standard and we are very proud of their work. Georgia's cost-effectiveness is also important. Our service prices are very competitive, and our low tax rates work together with our cash rebate system to facilitate large savings.

Q: *How do local Georgian people regard the film industry?*

A: Our society loves cinema. It helps to create a really warm and film-friendly environment, as illustrated when *Fast and Furious 9* came to Tbilisi. Our communities were excited to host a Hollywood blockbuster.

Q: *Any final comments for incoming producers?*

A: Come and experience our culture, our lifestyle and our wine. When all of Georgia's different cultural traits work together, nothing beats filming in this country.

SOMETHING ELSE

Lasha Talakhadze is a Georgian weightlifter known as the Thoughtful Champion. The three-time winner of the IWF Male Lifter of the Year is widely considered one of – if not the – greatest of all time. Regardless of weight category, since 2021 he has held the all-time world records in the snatch (225kg), the clean and jerk (267kg) and the total (492kg).

On several occasions the Georgian behemoth has arrived on stage for his first set of weights when other competitors have finished lifting. After emphatically defeating his opponents and claiming gold at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020, Lasha now aims to reach a grand total of 500kg at the Paris Olympics. At 6' 6" and 390 pounds, Georgia's Thoughtful Champion epitomises strength and power.



Edgard Garrido / Reuters – stock.adobe.com

Media Convergence Comes of Age

**WHY
HAVE THE
BOUNDARIES
BETWEEN
DIFFERENT
TYPES OF
MEDIA
BECOME SO
BLURRED?**



Netflix's new interactive series *You vs Wild* © Netflix.

From advertisements and music videos to films and video games, rigid definitions of media forms are being challenged. Savvy businesses and creatives are now tapping into multiple markets as the barriers that traditionally compartmentalise media formats quickly erode.

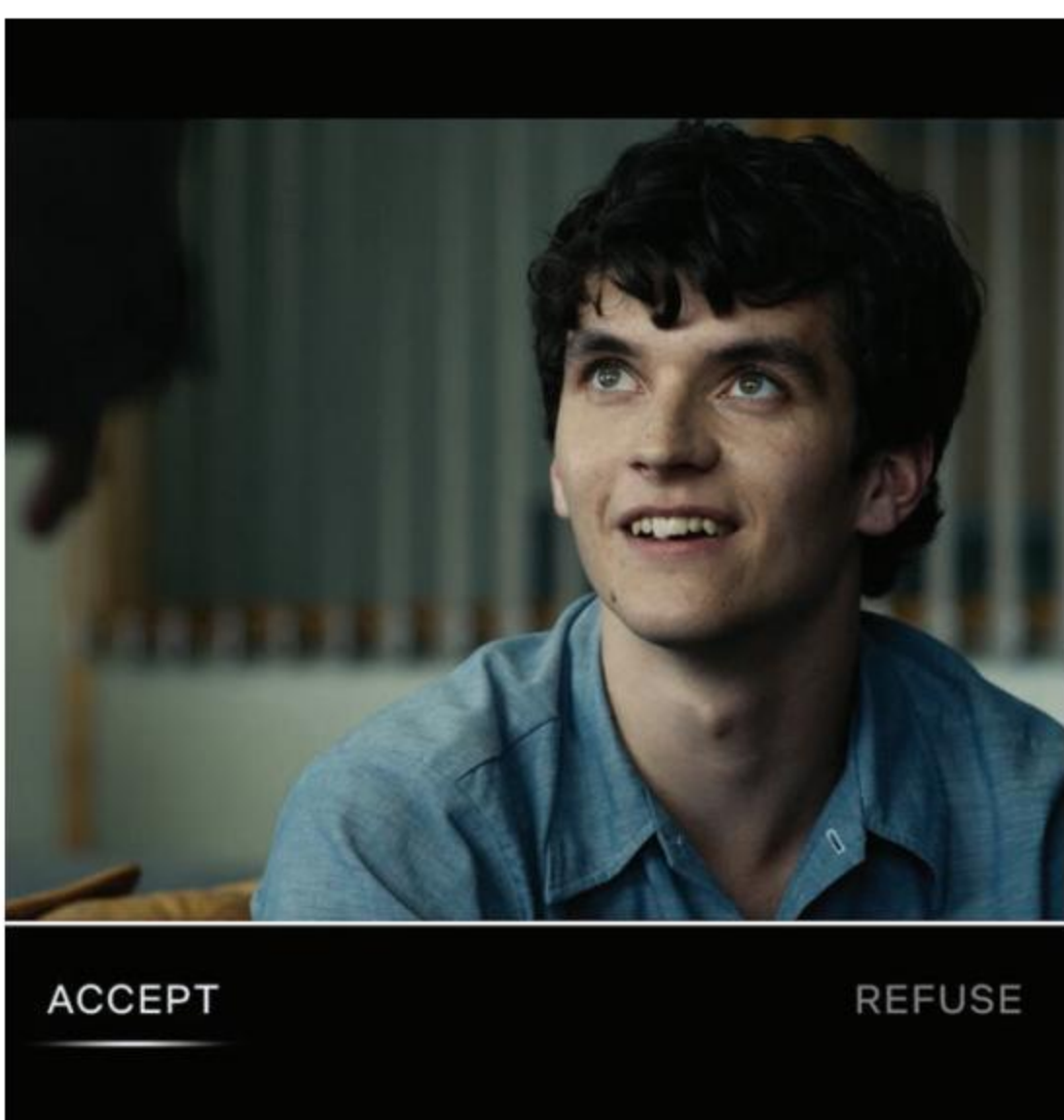
The enhanced interconnectivity provided by the internet means that content creation is entering a new golden era. Media formats across film, television, games, online learning, music videos and commercials are increasingly interacting and converging – allowing brands and businesses to amplify their messages across more platforms and channels than ever before.

BBC Maestro, for example, is an e-learning service granting access to some of the world's leading creatives, from Helena Bonham Carter and Gary Barlow to Marco Pierre White and Sir Tim Rice.

The BBC project's courses span different topics and disciplines, and, behind-the-scenes its producers must likewise adopt a range of interdisciplinary skills in order to bring these classes to life.

“With the majority of campaigns being entirely multi-platform, a producer needs to understand the intricacies of a whole range content production from video to print, and from large scale technical builds to singular one-off comms,” says Nick Guyan, creative studio lead at BBC Maestro. “A producer really is required to dip a toe into every skillset in the team.”

THE VIDEO GAMES INDUSTRY NOW OFTEN SURPASSES TRADITIONAL CINEMA IN SALES, DUE TO THE NATURE OF ITS HIGHLY APPEALING, THRILLING INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES



Black Mirror: Bandersnatch © Netflix.



Secret Magic Control Agency © Netflix.

Beyond the digital learning sphere, the film sector is being drastically affected by media convergence too. “The film industry used to be very compartmentalised, with creatives working in very specific job roles,” explains Sefi Carmel, an award-winning composer and sound designer. “Today, it is very much the opposite where film (and sound) professionals in general need to have much wider skillsets.”

Carmel runs a company called Soundtrack Creation, working on Hollywood projects with Ridley Scott and Chris Columbus, as well as mixing and mastering music for David Bowie, Phil Collins and Bruno Mars. His advertising clients include agencies Publicis and M&C Saatchi as well as Mercedes, BMW and Samsung, and recently the company worked on action film *Legacy of Lies* and animated feature *Secret Magic Control Agency*.

“The gap between the film, television and video games industry is becoming ever smaller,” notes Carmel. “Myself and the team take great pleasure working on projects across these mediums and in particular have found the gaming and online industry to be thriving in 2022. The video games industry now often surpasses traditional cinema in sales, due to the nature of such highly appealing, thrilling interactive experiences. Take *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch* for example and you’ll see the clear ‘game-like’ nature the format of the programme follows.”

Netflix’s experimental show *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch* from December 2018 allows viewers to determine the protagonist’s destiny, controlling the character’s reactions to different scenarios. In response to the programme’s popularity, Netflix announced plans to create more interactive content, such as *You vs Wild* with survival expert Bear Grylls.

The incorporation of gamification distinguishes *You vs. Wild* from Grylls’s popular Discovery Channel series *Man vs Wild*. Viewers can control how the host responds to harsh environments, guiding Grylls to safety or placing him in unusual, risky situations.

Such convergence between the film and video game industries is opening up many more options for creatives. Over the last decade, video game experiences have become increasingly cinematic.

Last of Us: Part 2 and *Ghost of Tshushima* openly draw inspiration from the film industry through their carefully-constructed storylines and emotive soundtracks.

“THE FILM INDUSTRY USED TO BE VERY COMPARTMENTALISED, WITH CREATIVES WORKING IN VERY SPECIFIC JOB ROLES.”

Game designer and producer Hideo Kojima is considered a video gaming auteur, using early forays into filmmaking at the start of his career to shape his gaming work today. Kojima released a director’s cut to accompany the *Death Stranding* project. His merging of media forms has been praised by Hollywood A-listers, such as Academy Award-winning director Guillermo Del Toro.

In recent times a collection of high-end film projects have been directly inspired by video games. *The Assassin’s Creed*, *Super Mario Bros* and *Minecraft* video games are hugely popular across the world, and each franchise is currently working on a film adaptation for 2022 or later. Former pro-wrestler Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson is rumoured to be starring in the forthcoming *Call of Duty* film adaptation. In the same manner, films such as *Uncharted*, *Werewolves Within*, *Detective Pikachu*, *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* and *Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City* tap into the global reach of their franchises’ respective gaming communities.

INTERACTION

CONVERGENCE

INTERDISCIPLINARITY



The Witcher © Netflix.

WHEN WORKING IN THE COMMERCIAL INDUSTRY, I THINK PEOPLE SOMETIMES TEND TO FORGET THAT WE ARE CREATING FORMS OF ART.

The technology used to create audiovisual works during this period of convergence is fast developing too. Digic Pictures is a Hungarian 3D animation studio based in Budapest, celebrated for its work with gaming franchises *Call of Duty*, *Assassin's Creed* and *The Witcher*. "We are best known for creating fine details and realistic characters as well as world-class rendering in the animated shorts we produce," details Digic CEO Alex S Rabb.

As well as attracting high-profile attention for its work in the gaming industry, film studios are now turning to Digic for production assistance. The company's high-quality motion capture studio is equipped with world-class T160 cameras. The T160 camera's custom-built motion sensors can capture 16 megapixels of data at a rate of 120 frames-per-second, offering four times the resolution of any other motion capture camera on the market. This technology allows Digic to produce cutting-edge visual effects for film projects alongside their work in games industry.

"We partnered with some of the biggest Hungarian movie production studios," Rabb highlights. "We provide motion capture and 3D photoscan services for movies that are shot in Hungary, such as *Dune*, *Halo*, *Terminator Dark Fate*, *The Witcher* and *Shadow and Bone*."

Besides tapping into the gaming industry for its photorealistic visual effects, *Dune* won numerous awards for its soundtrack, including Best Sound at the 94th Academy Awards. The film's composer Hans Zimmer has picked up many accolades thanks to his involvement with the soundtracks for *Inception*, *Gladiator*, *The Lion King* and *12 Years A Slave*.

Zimmer's film score work is readily available on streaming platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music, illustrating how creative industry business leaders can grow their profits if they expand into markets like music and games. 2021 saw global

music industry revenues surge at their fastest rate in more than two decades. As streaming subscriber numbers rise, the USD25.9 billion revenue total for the sector is the highest figure since records began in 1990s. The international video game industry is bigger still, with estimated revenues of USD180 billion in 2021.

These financial incentives are strengthened by the practical advantages of possessing interdisciplinary knowledge over different media formats. "Before and during a shoot, it is very useful to have a shorthand with the composer or the art director, communicating your ideas clearly and quickly," emphasises filmmaker, painter and musician Emile Rafael. "Being able to describe a mood you want to convey – whether a chord change or a specific key switch – helps in a practical sense as well as an artistic sense."

"THESE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES ARE STRENGTHENED BY THE PRACTICAL ADVANTAGES OF POSSESSING INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE OVER DIFFERENT MEDIA FORMATS."

Rafael has a background in music video creation. He currently operates as a commercial director, creating atmospheric advertisements for brands such as Audi, Coutts, Hennessy and Jaguar. If harnessed correctly, media convergence allows ambitious creatives to amplify their voices across different platforms, giving new potential to their work as they reach multiple audiences.

"At one point while working for Coutts, we needed these huge canvases, so I painted them myself," Rafael elaborates. "Being able to synergise the artistic sides with the practical benefits is vital. When working in the commercial industry, I think people sometimes tend to forget that we are creating forms of art. That's what stands out – that's what lasts in our memories."



GAMING

CREATIVITY

COMMUNICATION

GREECE

endless possibilities



Director Ferdinando Cito Filomarino & John David Washington on location in Athens for *Beckett* © Yannis Drakoulidis & Netflix.

There are 18 UNESCO World Heritage sites across Greece. Sunkissed islands and ancient ruins mark the country as a prime destination for filmmaking in Europe. If production teams spend a minimum of EUR100,000 then they could qualify for a healthy cash rebate of 40%.

G Millennium Media – the American production company behind *The Expendables* – is scheduled to shoot action-thriller *The Bricklayer* at its Nu Boyana Film Studios across Greece and Bulgaria in March 2022. Filming will take place in Northern Greece’s Thessaloniki, where the Greek section of the Nu Boyana project is currently under construction. In 2022 Millennium Media is set to build Greece’s first Hollywood-standard studio. First announced in 2019, the investment is worth EUR20 million, signalling the company’s intentions to revamp Greek filmmaking.

MBC Group from Saudi Arabia acquired a 30% stake in Greece’s Antenna Group. According to the announcement, the funds will be dedicated to the creation of state-of-the-art studios and infrastructure at an international standard, aiming to attract television and film producers from all over the world to Greece.

“EKOME SET UP THE NATIONAL FILM OFFICES NETWORK ACROSS 13 REGIONS AND THE TWO MAJOR MUNICIPALITIES OF ATHENS AND THESSALONIKI!”

Disney’s *Rise* was shot between May and July, exploring the story of Giannis Antetokoumpo and his family before the talented basketballer shot to NBA stardom. The project was filmed at Kapa Studios, a leading production company for film and television in Greece. The company’s modern, state-of-the-art complex is spread across 10 sound stages. As well as feature films such as *The Jackals* and *Turning Point*, Kapa Studio has also hosted a range of television series, from *Big Brother*, *X Factor* and *Dancing With The Stars* to *The Weakest Link* and *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*.



LOCATION HIGHLIGHT

Delphi

On the slopes of Mount Parnassus – high above the Gulf of Corinth – lies Delphi, one of Greece’s most famous historic sites. This location was known throughout the ancient Greek world as the sanctuary of the god Apollo, and it was here that the shrine of his oracle stood.

Delphi is a film star in its own right, having featured in *My Life in Ruins*, *High Priestess*, *A Woman at Her Window* and many others. Three of the last remaining pillars of the area’s Tholos Temple were used in the background for the end credits of the James Bond classic *For Your Eyes Only*.

Parts of Netflix’s recent film *Beckett* (main image) were shot among the ruins of Delphi. The project tells the story of an American tourist who becomes the target of a manhunt after a devastating accident while on vacation. It is the first Netflix movie filmed entirely in Greece.

Q&A

ADAM PETRITSIS
DIRECTOR & PRODUCER



Q: *What project did you work on in Greece, and who was involved?*

A: The latest documentary I worked on was about the Battle of Lepanto, which took place off the Echinades isles of the Ionian Islands region. It was a co-production with the Ionian islands Regional Unit, directed by Antonis Glaros.

Q: *Why are the Ionian Islands so special as a filming destination?*

A: The natural beauty and the history of the islands is on its own a great incentive for choosing the area as a film location. Together with the help of Angela Krokidi from the Ionian Film Office, the whole experience was very pleasant and as stress free as a shoot can be.

Q: *What makes Greece on a more broader level stand out for incoming productions?*

A: There is one element that makes Greece particularly excel as a location choice. That is none other than the unlimited variety of locations and seasons. You can find nearly every type of landscape you have in mind, in some corner of the country – whether that is a picturesque village, an underwater cave or a desert – with the advantage that throughout the year you also get all seasons from hot sun to heavy snow storms.

Q: *What advice would you give to anyone considering shooting in Greece?*

A: Be well prepared for all the bureaucratic procedures that will be needed, but know that you will be well rewarded with incredible cinematography and a friendly environment to work in.

Q: *What projects are you working on next?*

A: I am currently working on my Youtube series *Ancient Greece Revisited*, and in the early stages of another documentary on the Ionian Islands.

Filmed over 29 days in late spring, Mihai Mincan's *To The North* is a co-production between Greece, Romania, France, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, traversing a range of European regions. *Exodus* – the debut feature film from Lebanese director Abbe Hassan – is a Swedish project filmed in Attica, a part of Greece that recently hosted David Cronenberg's film *Crimes of the Future*. Kate Hudson, Daniel Craig and Dave Bautista have been spotted in the country filming the sequel to *Knives Out 2*, with new acting additions including Edward Norton, Kathryn Hahn and Leslie Odom Jr as well as musician Janelle Monáe.

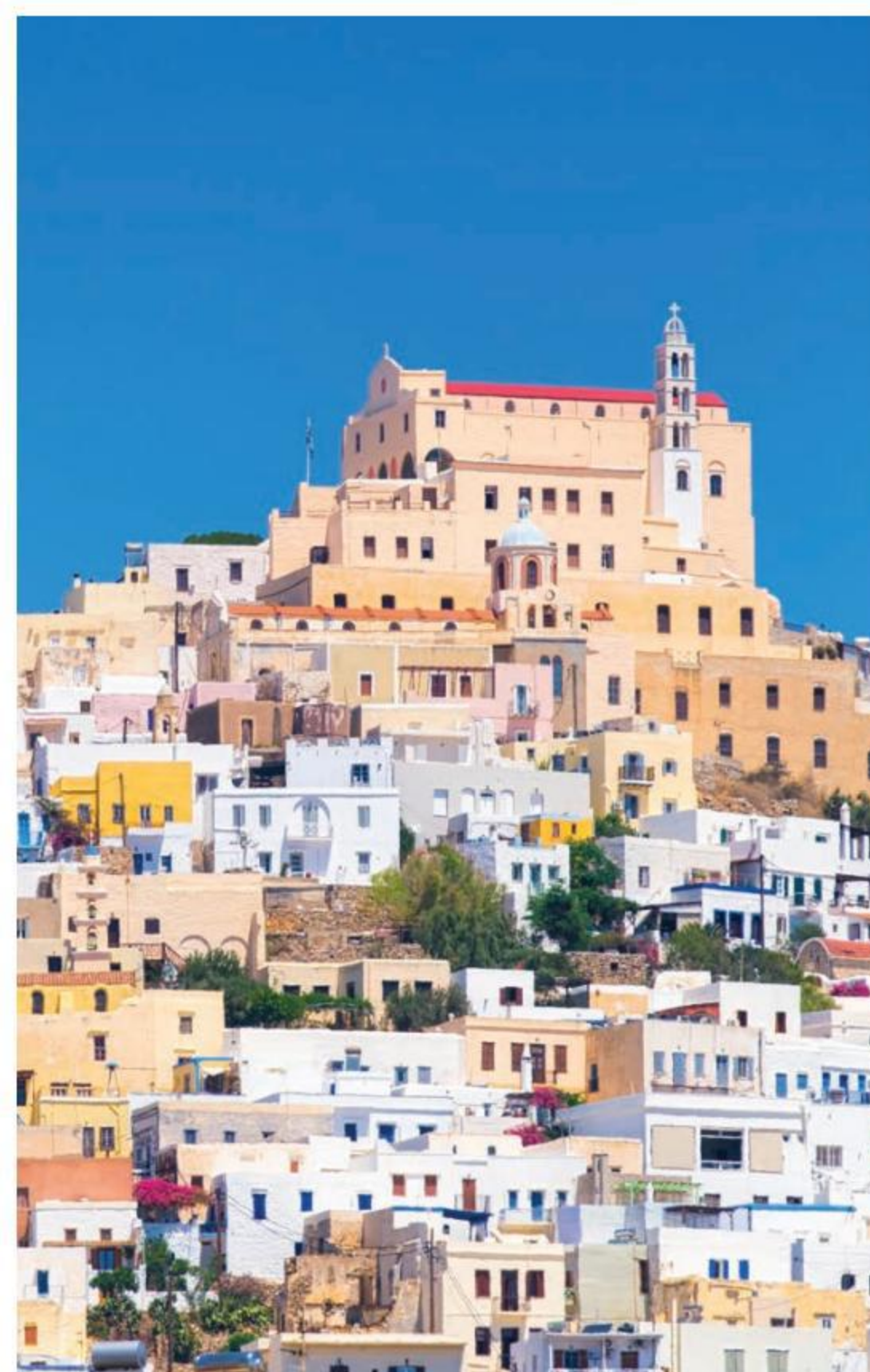
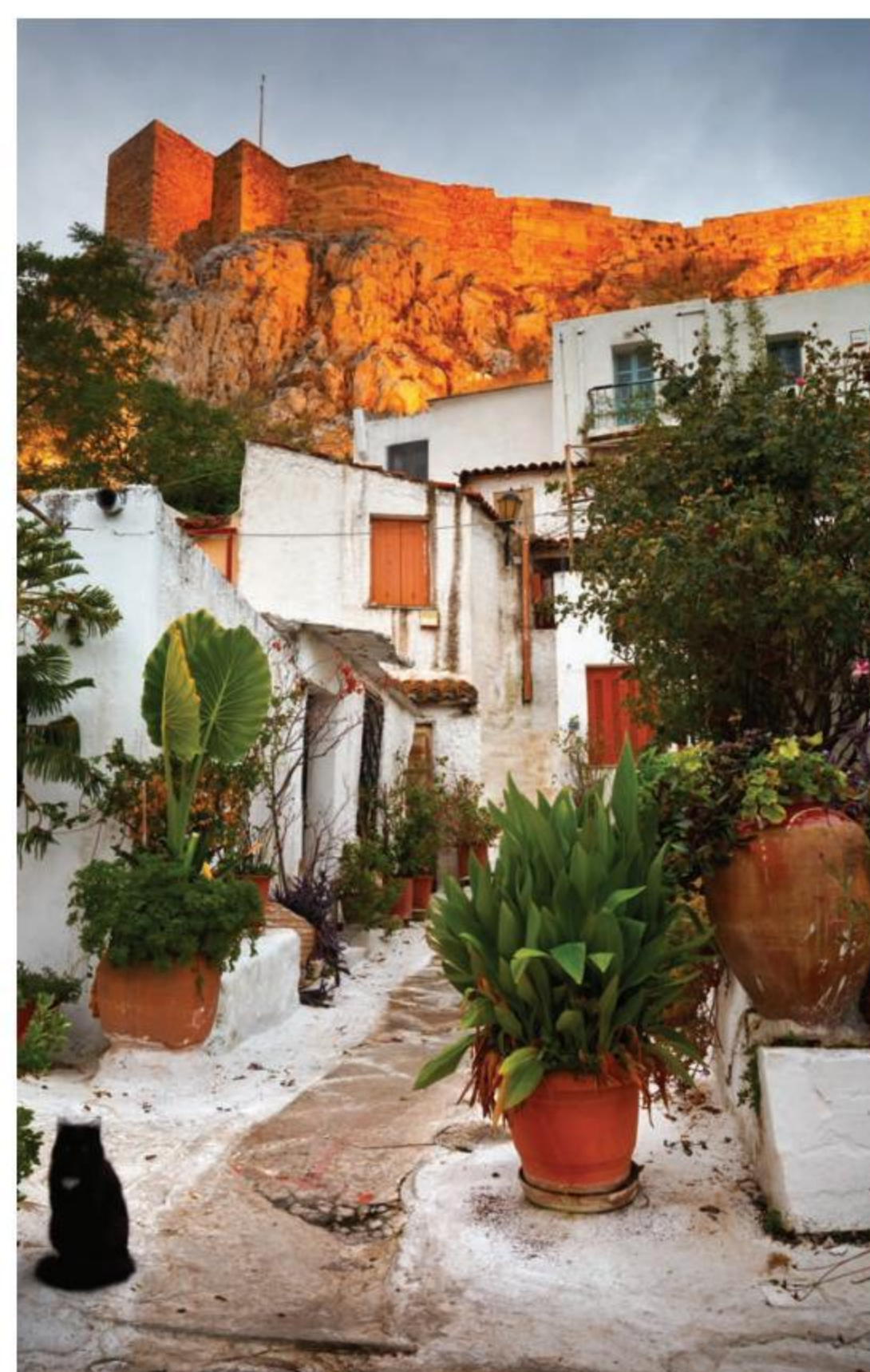
Among Greece's English-speaking workforce, a range of production service companies are on hand to assist incoming producers operating across film, television and advertising. "Our company has shot commercials for some of the top companies – such as Samsung, Johnny Walker, Coca Cola, and L'Oreal – and worked with the top advertisers and producers in the industry," details Andreas Tsilifonis, executive producer at Central Athens Film Productions. "We cover long format productions alongside advertising too, providing full production services for international clients."

"We have serviced a variety of projects, from commercials (most recently for Toyota, directed by Jake Scott for RSA Films) to the livestreaming of the iconic Christian Dior Cruise 2022 at the Panhellenic Stadium for Tendernight Paris, to feature films such as *Exodus* for BRF Films in Sweden, due for release this year," says Maria Kopanou, executive producer at Green Olive Films. "Green Olive Films is known for being highly skilled in service production, with internationally experienced producers both in commercials and feature films. Our company has worked with some of the world's leading creative talent, understanding their vision and providing the resources through our offices in both Greece and Cyprus."

The country's very competitive 40% cash rebate and 30% tax relief scheme are available for incoming filmmakers through a digital procedure that is simple, fast and transparent. A major selling point for the cash rebate programme concerns high budget productions. Eligible expenses in Greece over EUR8 million permit subsidies on non-resident labour (such as scriptwriter and director's fees, salaries of crew and cast for feature films and TV series).

Between April 2018 and February 2022, 204 projects were accepted to the cash rebate programme. 92 projects were international productions or co-productions with Greek production companies and foreign companies from Europe, Asia, United States, Canada and Australia. Nearly EUR316 million was invested in Greece for the production of audiovisual projects. Filming took place in more than 140 different locations across Greece, with more than 49,000 jobs created for production needs.

"In recent years, Greece has become a centrepiece for foreign audiovisual productions regardless of their size, format or genre," details Moris





ESSENTIAL FACTS

TAX INCENTIVES

40%

A promising 40% cash rebate is available on production costs spent in Greece. The maximum cash rebate per project is capped at EUR12 million. Maximum eligible productions costs must consist of 80% of the total project budget. For projects with eligible expenses over EUR8 million, special provisions for scriptwriter and director's fees are available for high-budget productions. Salaries of crew and cast for feature films may also qualify in these circumstances.

TIME ZONE

GMT+2

STUDIOS

Greek-American John Kalafatis – CEO & co-founder of New York City's York Films – is developing state-of-the-art soundstages & film studios on the outskirts of Thessaloniki. A joint venture with Millennium Media & Nu Boyana Studios Bulgaria, this colossal project is attracting major Hollywood production into Greece.

ATA CARNET

YES

RECENT PRODUCTIONS

Disney's *Rise*, *The Enforcer* & *The Expendables 4* from Millennium Films, Netflix's *Knives Out 2* and Apple TV's *Tehran 2* were filmed in the country. Foreign productions shooting in Greece include *The Bricklayer* from Millennium Films, Amazon Prime's *Greek Salad*, documentary *Future Tenses* and animation *The Adventure of the Universe*.

Gkormezanos, founder and head of productions at M21 Films. "Equipped with multiple National Network Film Offices throughout the country providing productions with free, step-by-step support, a 40% cash rebate programme and a 30% tax relief incentive, a diverse portfolio of outstanding locations, great weather conditions and highly-skilled crews offering quality production services, Greece offers filmmakers an unmatched experience."

EKOME (National Centre of Audiovisual Media and Communication) set up the National Film Offices Network across 13 regions and the two major municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki. The Film Offices Network acts as one-stop shop for international and local productions, providing help for permits and crew as well as promoting the advantages of the local communities.

The country is divided into three core geographical regions: the mainland, the islands, and the Peloponnese. Mountains, forests and lakes give the mainland a wild energy. Vikos Gorge, one of the world's deepest gorges, is located in the mainland's Pindus mountain range. Meteora is a stunning formation of gravity-defying rocks with monasteries precariously perched on top situated near the town of Kalabaka.

Greece typically enjoys a Mediterranean climate, though mountains are usually snow-covered. Dry hot days in the summer are cooled by seasonal winds known as the meltemi. Meanwhile, mountainous regions have generally lower temperatures and the winters are mild in lowland areas, with a minimum amount of snow and ice. A common phenomenon is the occurrence of different climactic conditions during the same season, meaning that mild heat manifests in coastal areas as cooler temperatures permeate the mountainous regions.

The Greek National Tourism Organisation recently created a campaign with advertising agency Ogilvy. The tongue-in-cheek commercial references the lesser-known snowy elements of the country's climate, announcing 'Greece has a winter too.'

While incomers may expect slight showers in their winter months, for the majority of the time one can

expect sun and mild weather throughout the year. This makes the country ideal for exterior shots. There is a good selection of standard and specialised equipment, and art departments and set construction units are of a high standard. All of the standard post-production facilities are in Athens, though new investments could shake things up over the next few years.

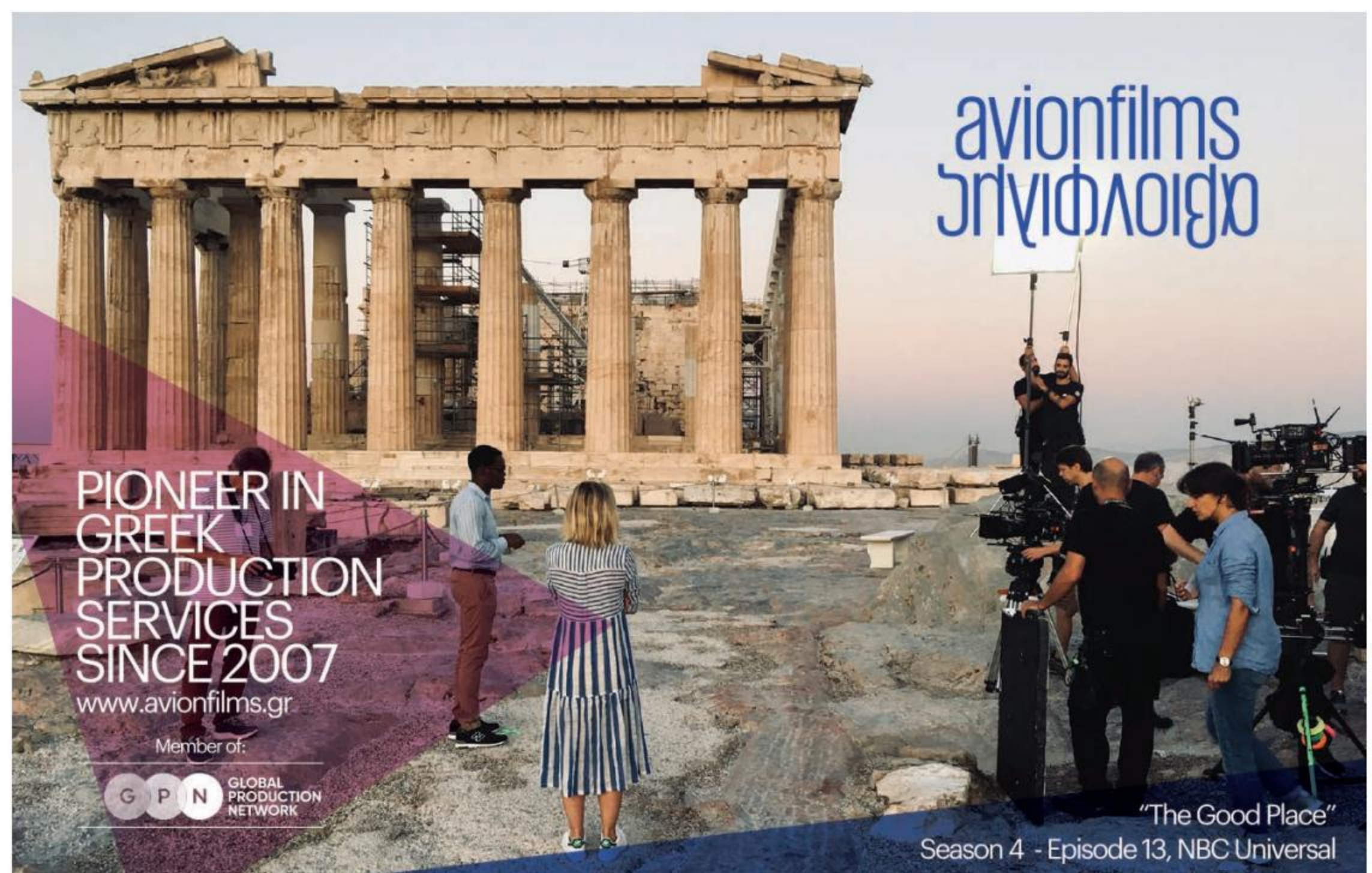


SOMETHING ELSE

The footballing world was stunned when underdogs Greece defied expectation to win the UEFA European Football Championship in 2004. With German manager Otto Rehhagel at the helm, Greek fans were treated to a magical summer as the national team slayed giants, forever placing themselves among the Sporting Gods of Greece.

Hosts Portugal were defeated 2-1 by Greece in the opening match of the competition, with Giorgos Karagounis and Angelos Basinas on the scoresheet to render Cristiano Ronaldo's strike obsolete. After battling through the group stages, Greece beat defending champions France in the last eight of the competition. The Czech Republic were defeated in the semi-final thanks to Greek defender Trainos Dellas scoring in extra-time.

Portugal had a chance to avenge their opening game defeat and win the competition on home soil, yet the Greek battlers had not read this script. Winning 1-0 with an emphatic header from Angelos Charisteads, Greece were crowned European champions. The bookies had given the country a slim 150-1 chance of winning the tournament, marking a truly remarkable campaign from the legendary group of players.



NORWAY

collaborative force



Dune © 2021 Legendary & Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.

Outstanding natural beauty underpins a large part of Norway's appeal for incoming production teams. Moreover, a healthy 25% incentive scheme means that the Scandinavian nation is an especially attractive option for filmmakers arriving from different parts of the world.

The natural landscapes in Norway are mesmerising, with its fjords attracting visitors from all over the globe. Filmmakers who have a taste for adventure might chose to shoot at the famous Geirangerfjord, one of Norway's UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

"Our terrain is rugged, unique and wonderfully accessible to the largest global production hubs," says Meghan Beaton, film commissioner for Norway. "Beyond stunning mountains and staggering fjords, we can guarantee snow and ice year-round. Norway is a lean, efficient and highly modern society, an ideal combination as host of large-scale, prestigious productions."

As well as offering city spaces shaped by vibrant modern architecture, one of the major appeals of the country lies in its proximity to the Arctic Circle.

"NORWAY IS A LEAN, EFFICIENT AND HIGHLY MODERN SOCIETY, AN IDEAL COMBINATION AS HOST OF LARGE SCALE, PRESTIGIOUS PRODUCTIONS."

Arctic Locations, a destination management company based in Northern Norway, organised a familiarisation trip for a group of UK-based location managers at the start of 2022.

"The most special thing about this trip to me, as a Norwegian and host, was watching very seasoned location managers truly appreciate what we always knew: that the landscape and architecture of Northern Norway as a location is truly spectacular and a fairly undiscovered place for film and stills," reflects Arctic Locations founder Eiril Skarbek.

The Lofoten Islands – an archipelago that is home to one of the largest coral reefs in the world – offer locations loaded with potential, especially for those



LOCATION HIGHLIGHT

North of the Arctic Circle, the subpolar archipelago of Svalbard is at once remote and accessible. The name of this territory derives from the Old Norse words svalr (cold) and bard (edge or beard), capturing the wild, icy character of this famous region. 60% of the area is covered in glaciers, offering a taste of the polar north amid staggering fjords and Arctic wildlife. Walruses, reindeer, the Arctic fox and approximately one-sixth of the world's polar bears call Svalbard home.

Counterintuitively, the area experiences midnight sun in summer and polar night in winter. A succession of ice ages created the landforms of Svalbard, when glaciers sliced and chiselled the former plateau into valleys and mountains. The first recorded landing on its islands of Svalbard dates back to 1604. An English ship landed at Bjørnøya, or Bear Island, in order to hunt walrus. The largest island is Spitsbergen, and the largest settlement is Longyearbyen.



Black Widow © Disney Enterprises, Inc.

ESSENTIAL FACTS

TAX INCENTIVES

25%

The national incentive offers up to 25% reimbursement on costs spent in Norway – as long as the production is produced partly or entirely in Norway, and intended for international distribution. Looking back at the previous five years, the main collaborator must have produced a film, drama series or documentary series that was widely distributed.

TIME ZONE

GMT+1

CO-PRODUCTION TREATIES

Norway is a member of the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production. An audiovisual co-production agreement is in place between Canada and Norway, offering access to the world-leading Canadian infrastructure. The Norwegian Film Institute is a member of several international partnership efforts, such as: Creative Europe, European Film Promotion, Filmkontakt European Film Academy and Scandinavian Films.

ATA CARNET

YES

INTERNATIONAL TALENT

Make-up artists Ana Oria, Maria Bjørnnes Hermansen & Rita Synnøve Sharma. Actors Kristofer Hivju, Ingrid Bolsø Berdal, Natassia Malthe & Aksel Hennie.

in search of the Northern Lights. Lofoten Film Collective – the leading production company operating across the islands – helped create the music video for Michael Bolton’s seasonal hit *It’s Christmas Time*.

“When Scream Media came here and wanted a special shot for a music video it sounded far-fetched at first,” detail producers Yngvar Christensen and Inge Wegge. “Matoma and Michael Bolton on top of a mountain – with a piano – in the sunset with nice weather. And a pretty short deadline! But with help from the local helicopter crew, great local mountain guides, and fast cooperation with the municipality, we managed to set it up in just a few days and get some great shots with camera and drone.”

Productions produced partly or entirely in Norway can qualify for grants of up to 25% on costs spent in the country. The minimum required for eligible costs spent in Norway is NOK4 million, and the minimum total production sums are: NOK25 million (around EUR2.6 million) for feature films, NOK10 million (approximately EUR1.04 million) for documentaries and per episode for drama series, and NOK5 million (nearly EUR521,600) per episode for documentary series.

Countries from the Nordic region have strong collaborative ties – especially in terms of media production. The Nordisk Film & TV Fond was established in 1990 by interparliamentary cooperative group the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM), aiming to promote the region as a whole by emphasising the possibilities engendered by cross-cultural collaboration.

The core film commissions in the country are the Norwegian Film Commission, Northern Norway Film Commission, Western Norway Film Commission, Midgard Film Commission Norway and Oslo Film Commission, and the key regional funds are Zefyr Media Fund, Filminvest and Filmfond Nord. Again, taking the time to compare what these bodies offer and promote is an important way of ensuring your production makes the most out of the Norwegian film industry.

Norway had a strong year as a filming location in 2021, being featured in major projects such as the Bond movie *No Time to Die* as well as blockbusters *Dune* and *Black Widow*. Norway’s advertising sector is also advanced and focused on digital outputs. According to Statista’s forecasts, spending in Norway’s digital advertising market is projected to reach EUR1.3 billion in 2022, with 52% of total ad spending generated through mobile and 83% through programmatic advertising by 2026. The market’s largest segment is expected to be banner advertising with a market volume of EUR557 million in 2022. The region’s top performing advertising agencies in recent times include: TRY, Los&Co, ANTI, JCP, Anorak and POL.



AS WELL AS OFFERING CITY SPACES SHAPED BY VIBRANT MODERN ARCHITECTURE, ONE OF THE MAJOR APPEALS OF THE COUNTRY LIES IN ITS PROXIMITY TO THE ARCTIC CIRCLE.

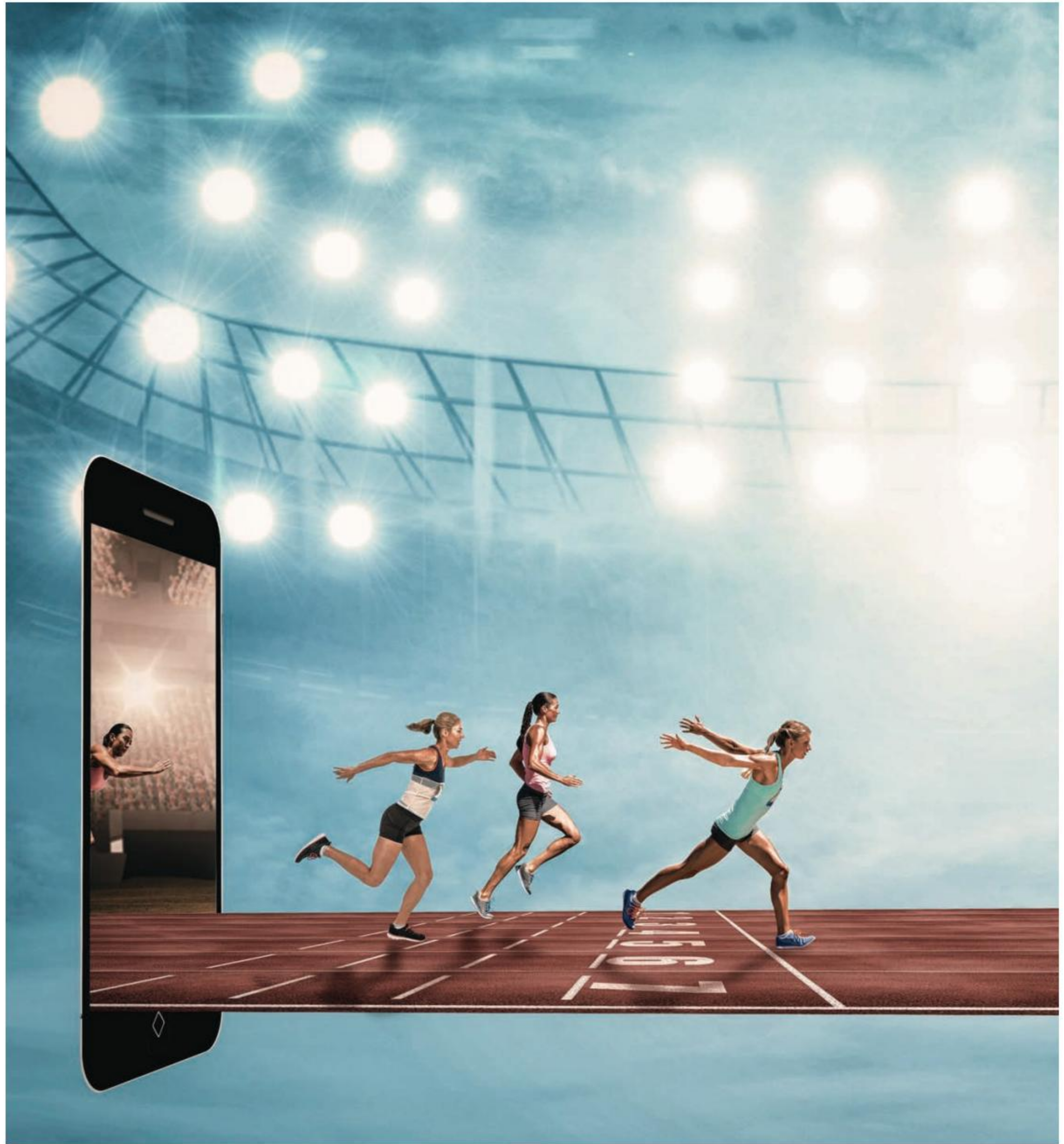
SOMETHING ELSE

The Norwegian King’s Guard visited Edinburgh Zoo in 1961, and lieutenant Nils Egelien was fascinated by its penguin colony. The King’s Guard returned in 1972 and arranged to adopt one of the penguins. The chosen penguin was named Nils Olav (in joint-honour of Nils Egelien and King Olav V of Norway) and given the rank of lance corporal. Nils Olav received a promotion every time the King’s Guard visited, advancing to corporal level in 1982 and then sergeant status in 1987. Nils Olav died shortly after this final promotion, and was replaced by his penguin doppelgänger Nils Olav II. Nils Olav II continued to advance up the ranks until he received a knighthood in 2008. His replacement is now a brigadier, meaning that Nils Olav III officially outranks Nils Egelien.



When Advertising Scores

**WHAT
MAKES
AN AD
STAND
OUT
FROM
THE
CROWD
DURING A
MAJOR
SPORTING
EVENT?**



Advertisers flock to big sport events because they guarantee large audiences. But brands need to strategise wisely and work hard in order to make a lasting, meaningful impact on consumers.

Ahead of the World Cup in Qatar, there are many advertising opportunities around major sporting events this year. From the SuperBowl and Winter Olympic competitions to NBA Playoffs and UEFA Champions League finals, these events guarantee attention for businesses and their products. But what kinds of work best stand out at sporting events, and how can brands effectively monetise investment in advertising when the competitions take place?

Executive producer Michal Skop recently worked on a Superbowl 2022 commercial for Bud Light with production company Park Pictures. Titled *Zero In The Way Of Possibility*, this spot was directed by Georgia Hudson and serviced by Stillking Films. Although the project was filmed in Europe, the producers created an ‘international’ feel that could not be isolated to a specific region.

“The shooting was a combination of locations and stage build,” explains Skop. “We shot in the castle and residential area about 50km from Prague, and the concert scene was shot in an old stage with dressing. We all agreed that the final look of the spot looks very international – you really do not see that all scenes were shot in the Czech Republic.”

This sense of global interconnectivity underpinning *Zero In The Way Of Possibility* captures the scale of today’s Superbowl. The event is highly attractive for any form of advertising – across all kinds of global brands – because it is one of the most watched sporting events in the world, let alone the USA.

The figures speak for themselves. The most watched NFL Final – the New England Patriots versus the Seattle Seahawks in 2015 – attracted roughly 114 million viewers. In turn, Superbowl 2015 generated TV advertising revenue worth USD268 million in the United States.

In 2022, the numbers were similarly staggering. Approximately 99.18 million viewers tuned in to see the Los Angeles Rams beat the Cincinnati Bengals. While this total did not break the records set in 2015, the commercial industry still thrived. Broadcaster NBC reportedly sold 30-second advertising slots at an average price of USD6.5 million. 18 new first-time advertisers joined the affair.

What made this year’s Superbowl especially interesting was the prevalence of cryptocurrency advertisements. The event has become colloquially



SPORT IS A MICROCOSM OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE - IT'S HARD NOT TO FIND AN ANGLE THAT WILL RESONATE WITH PEOPLE.



known as Cryptobowl 2022 in response to the number of cryptocurrency exchange companies who decided to purchase advertising slots. Businesses such as Coinbase, Crypto.com, eToro and FT Trading were all involved at the 56th edition of the Superbowl.

Coinbase's Windows 90-style campaign was one of the highlights of the event's advertising side. It generated 117 million impressions with a bouncing QR code, reporting that 20 million people visited their website in a single minute.

The reactions to the Superbowl's large number of cryptocurrency advertisements were mixed. While many voices applauded these alternative currency platforms for breaking into the mainstream on a massive scale, critics derided them for jumping on the Superbowl bandwagon, only engaging with the sport on a superficial level.

"Your brand needs to have a credible role in sport: if you don't have it, you need to find one, with time, investments, and passion," observes Carlo Cavallone, global co-chief creative officer and partner at New York-based creative agency 72andSunny. "Authentic-to-sport brands of course have a much easier life. The NFLs, the Nikes, the Gatorades, even the betting companies... they all naturally belong, and audiences expect them to have something to say. But brands that are not on the field or court have to work harder."

A lack of direct relevance to sport does not preclude businesses such as the cryptocurrency platforms from advertising at a large-scale sporting event. However, it does frequently mean that these particular brands must strategise very carefully in order to both fit in and stand out.

"Sport is a microcosm of human experience – it's hard not to find an angle that will resonate with people," adds Cavallone. "Starting from the truth is always the best idea. As it is counting on the fact that real fans appreciate authenticity."

Stamp Productions is a modern-day studio which worked on a successful campaign with Olympic athletes for Japanese tyre manufacturer Bridgestone. In collaboration with creative agency WeAreFearless, the production team created a project called *Chase Your Dream, No Matter What*.

The commercial showcased the unbreakable spirit of the athletes and related it to the Bridgestone tyre. While the company does produce content for brands and partners who are directly connected to the sports industry, Stamp Productions also aims to apply sporting stories to other types of brands.

"Viewers connect with stories through people and the situations they can relate to," explains Stamp Production founder Ben Uttley. "Comedy, a quest, and overcoming the seemingly impossible are all well-trodden archetypes. For instance, using a strong, deadpan, tough athlete can be used to good effect, as Samsung did with Martin Johnson and Jack Whitehall for the Rugby World Cup in 2015."

The Samsung *School of Rugby with Jack Whitehall* campaign was the brand's first multiplatform effort to "demystify the game" in the build-up to the Rugby World Cup. While the sport is commonly associated with brutal physical action with little room for nonsense, Samsung cleverly juxtaposed the quick-witted, lighthearted and perhaps above all skinny comedian against six rugby legends who, conversely, epitomise strength, power and discipline.

At the time, Samsung was on a mission to become a "meaningful brand." In the mock behind the scenes training videos of an out-of-depth Whitehall being mauled and battered by top athletes, the campaign struck a chord with fans and consumers alike. The popularity of the School of Rugby commercials managed to uncover the lighter side of sport, showcasing the camaraderie of the rugby players as well as their elite physical condition and world-class skills.

With the FIFA World Cup being hosted in Qatar this summer, brands will need to tread very carefully. The choice of host country was met with disapproval as a result of the country's poor human rights record. Homosexuality is banned in Qatar, and thousands of migrants have been killed or injured during a nationwide construction drive largely orchestrated in preparation for the World Cup.

Allegations of bribery among the World Cup's organisers – as well as unanswered questions surrounding the region's staggering heat and difficult playing conditions – have further mired the event in controversy before a single ball has been kicked. Advertisers have an excellent opportunity to reach new global audiences this summer – but how will they choose to engage with customers as the rest of the world watches on?

"When you look at sports-related campaigns around the [Football] World Cup, more than half of them have no insight, or idea – they just show screaming people on couches with national colours, getting excited for football," says Cavallone. "That's not good, or interesting, or stand-out. The best brands not only have POV in sport, but they also contribute to it. Just think, again, about brands like Beats, Coke or State Farm... they put the work (and money) in, and they found their place."

"The critical element in any campaign is that you have to spark the imagination of your audience in some way," Uttley emphasises. "Reflect in your content something that inspires them or gives them something authentically. Make them feel, and they will love you for it."

"YOUR BRAND NEEDS TO HAVE A CREDIBLE ROLE IN SPORT: IF YOU DON'T HAVE IT, YOU NEED TO FIND ONE, WITH TIME, INVESTMENTS, AND PASSION."

Filmmaking Across the USA



Behind the Scenes of *Stranger Things* © Tina Rowden / Netflix.

The USA is a filmmaking powerhouse with different regions offering different opportunities. Alongside stunning landscapes and impressive coastlines, there are a range of incentive programmes for incoming production teams. How can creatives make the most of the American industry?

When you think about the USA's film industry, Hollywood will always spring to mind. However, the country offers many different regional filmmaking hubs beyond California. Navigating these production environments requires taking time to recognise what each part of the USA can offer for incoming producers and their crew. It is vital to consider how each production area differs, evaluating the myriad options available across parts of country.

In the South-East of the country, a major film-making hub can be found in the USA's oldest city: Savannah, Georgia. While the Georgia Entertainment Industry Investment Act

"IT IS VITAL TO CONSIDER HOW EACH PRODUCTION AREA DIFFERS, EVALUATING THE MYRIAD OPTIONS AVAILABLE ACROSS PARTS OF COUNTRY."

grants an income tax credit of 30% to qualified productions, the Savannah Regional Film Commission offers a USD25,000 bonus to qualifying productions that hire 50% or more local crew. Producers can save money by merging the Savannah Entertainment Production Incentives with the state of Georgia's separate tax credit programme.

"The Georgia tax credit brings producers to the state, and the local incentive encourages them to consider Savannah," explains Beth Nelson, film commissioner and executive director of the Savannah Regional Film Commission. "And beyond these competitive financial incentives, we offer the largest historic district in the country, beach communities on the coastline and huge rural areas which have remained untouched over time. After all, people have been drawn here to make films for over 100 years!"

New Mexico similarly boasts a strong track record for filmmaking. Production spending in Albuquerque city reached a grand total of USD500 million during the 2021 fiscal year, surpassing spending in the fiscal year of 2019 by USD100 million. Television hits such as *Breaking Bad* and *Stranger Things* have prompted investment from Netflix. The streamer bought ABQ Studios in 2018, committing USD1 billion towards production spend at the site while aiming to generate 1,000 new production jobs in New Mexico over the next ten years. A 25-35% refundable tax credit makes the state a prime filmmaking destination.



THE NEW NATIONAL, NON-PROFIT TRADE ORGANISATION IS DESIGNED TO OFFER REPRESENTATION FOR ALL FILM COMMISSIONS ACROSS THE USA, PRESENTING A SINGULAR VOICE FOR THE MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR USA FILM INDUSTRY.

“New Mexico beckons filmmakers working in all genres with our competitive film incentive, diverse landscapes, deep and skilled crew base, wide network of businesses, stages, and infrastructure – along with some of the most unique beauty and cinematic light you’ll find anywhere in the world,” emphasises Amber Dodson, deputy director at the New Mexico Film Office.

The state of Mississippi, meanwhile, hosts white sand beaches along the Gulf of Mexico, as well as river communities, antebellum homes and railroad cities. A strong 25-35% cash rebate on spend and all payroll is bolstered by practical support from the Mississippi Film Office. The organisation helps with location scouting and research at pre-production stages, as well as troubleshooting during production and wrap, which in turn emphasises the underlying sense of community that characterises its film scene.

“Beyond our very competitive cash rebate incentive programme and a diversity of locations, Mississippians love to host film productions in their communities,” says Nina Parikh, director of the Mississippi Film Office. “We are named the Hospitality State after all, so you can expect good food, drinks, music, and conversations as you bring your story to the screen.”

A similarly open-armed ethos of collaboration is fostered in other ways in the state of Colorado. The region’s Film Crew and Support Services Directory provides producers with extensive listings of experienced film professionals throughout the state, from gear rental houses and camera operators to accountants and grips. A performance-based rebate for up to 20% of qualified expenses is available for feature films, documentaries, television pilots and series, and video games.

“I’ve lived in different parts of America, and as a movie producer I’ve worked in lots of states and even a couple countries,” says film commissioner Donald Zuckerman. “Yet one of the things that I find most unique about Colorado is its people. The film industry here is all about team work. Some places are cutthroat competitive – there is competition in the local industry but it is very friendly, healthy

competition. When someone is working on a particular job, they can call on other professionals among their networks to help out, and everyone finds a way to work together.”

In California, an organisation called FLICS (Film Liaisons in California Statewide) aims to facilitate efficient and effective location shooting throughout the state. The group helps filmmakers negotiate permits and access resources, sharing local knowledge with incoming production teams. “FLICS works with filmmakers and content producers across 42 different offices,” explains Sabrina Jurisich, vice president at FLICS and regional film commissioner for UpState California. “When a production has a location need in a particular jurisdiction, we can connect producers with neighbouring jurisdictions or refer them to a different film commission office in order to find an appropriate solution.”

The state offers a 25% transferable tax credit for independent films, a 20% non-transferable tax credit for feature films, new TV series, mini-series and pilots, and a 5-10% credit uplift for out-of-zone filming, visual effects and local hire labour.

“Our robust incentive system is complimented by the depth of our talented workforce, forming a dynamic, film-friendly environment,” details Colleen Bell, executive director of the California Film Commission. “We are known as the entertainment and production capital of the world, and visually our topography creates such a beautiful state for filming.”

Across the country in Florida, there is a state-wide sales tax exemption programme for the industry, allowing projects to save up 7.5% on sales tax for selected expenses related to production. However, as producers dig a little deeper, different parts of the state come with their own distinguishable filmmaking characteristics. For example, while most people associate Miami-Dade County with the stunning coastline of Miami Beach, this is just one of the many facets that has nurtured a thriving filmmaking scene in the region.

“SOME PLACES ARE CUTTHROAT COMPETITIVE – THERE IS COMPETITION IN THE LOCAL INDUSTRY BUT IT IS VERY FRIENDLY, HEALTHY COMPETITION.”



COLLABORATION CONNECTIONS
FILM COMMISSIONS



Better Call Saul © Michele K.Short / Netflix.

AT CANNES 2021'S MARCHÉ DU FILM, WE NOTICED THAT THERE WAS NO FILM INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION FOR THE USA AS A WHOLE.

“Over time, there was a realisation throughout the industry that Miami offered many more opportunities than people thought,” observes Bruce Orosz, CEO and president of ACT Productions and chairman of the board at GMVCB (Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau). “It wasn’t just the beach, it has an interesting urban downtown, there are fascinating outlying municipalities like Little Haiti, Little Havana and Overtown.”

Further up the coast, the newly-appointed Broward County film commissioner Sandy Lighterman arrives from Miami-Dade County's Office of Film and Entertainment. Before joining Miami-Dade County, she had a 30-year career as a film and television producer. Lighterman is now drawn to Broward County by the determination of new Mayor Michael Udine to revamp the county's filmmaking infrastructure through new funding opportunities and investment in state-of-the-art sound and production studios. “Broward County are putting a lot of resources towards the film industry, making it a cornerstone of their overall economic plan,” she explains, “and that was very attractive to me, being able to develop new policies that are extremely film-friendly at county-level as well as on a municipal-level. We have 31 municipalities, and one of our biggest goals is to streamline processes and make things even easier for incoming productions.”

From Miami to Savannah by way of Colorado, the possibilities for production across the USA are charged with potential. It really helps to get assistance in unpicking what the country might offer. This is why Film USA was established by Katie Patton Pryor and Tony Armer, film commissioners for Louisiana's Baton Rouge and Florida's St Pete-Clearwater, respectively.

“At Cannes 2021's Marché du Film, we noticed that there was no film industry representation for the USA as a whole,” Armer states. “The UK, for example, has a pavilion that represents its films, film commissions, tax credits and many key bits of information. So we thought: why couldn't we do something similar? Why not pool our resources together?”

“We started with this idea that we would provide international marketing opportunities for American film commissions,” recalls Pryor. “And when we began talking to everybody about this global marketing opportunity – starting at Cannes and growing from there – the reception was unbelievable.”

While almost all US states have a film commission office alongside several regional film commissions, there has never been an alliance of film commissions and filmmakers to represent the country as a unified whole. The new national, non-profit trade organisation is designed to offer representation for all film commissions across the USA, presenting a singular voice for the multi-billion dollar USA film industry.

Film USA's first physical event will take place at Cannes Film Festival 2022's Cannes's Marché du Film, with the aim of expanding across other important industry events over the coming years. Further information about filming in the USA can be found at the organisation's newly-launched website www.filmusa.org, or Film USA's Marché du Film pavilion.

“FROM MIAMI TO SAVANNAH BY WAY OF COLORADO, THE POSSIBILITIES FOR PRODUCTION ACROSS THE USA ARE CHARGED WITH POTENTIAL. IT REALLY HELPS TO GET ASSISTANCE IN UNPICKING WHAT THE COUNTRY MIGHT OFFER.”



OPTIONS

UNITED

ADVENTURE

PERU

picture perfect



A campaign for Opi shot in Chinchero Town © Bruno Canale.

The third largest country in South America, Peru's megadiverse status means excellent opportunities for filmmakers. Productions will also be immersed in a range of cultures when they set foot on Peruvian soil.

Peru has a wide array of unique looking locations within the country," says Bruno Canale, executive producer at APU Productions. "It is like a hidden jewel full of surprises that is yet to be discovered by international filmmakers. Peruvian crew has gained experience in the past year through projects such as *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*, *Ines del Alma Mia* and *Transformers 7*. On all of these projects the crew's friendly, open attitude and experience has worked very well with big foreign crews."

"Peru has a great diversity of locations in a relatively small area, including mountains, jungle and historical cities" adds *Transformers 7* executive producer Duncan Henderson. "And I'd definitely recommend talking with other production companies that have shot in Peru – there is a lot to learn."

"PERU IS LIKE A HIDDEN JEWEL FULL OF SURPRISES THAT IS YET TO BE DISCOVERED BY INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKERS."

There are three distinct geographical zones in Peru: coast, highlands and the jungle. Each zone has its own set of characteristics, and there are always site-specific outcomes to consider: heavy rain and consequent landslides in the jungle zones can delay filming, and acclimatation periods are required for film crew as they ascend parts of the Andes. Peru's tropical climate means that sunlight hours vary minimally from summer to winter, though incoming production teams should always check weekly and monthly weather statistics when planning their trip.

While there are no tax incentives for feature films or commercial projects, in certain situations foreign crews are exempt from sales tax on hotel



LOCATION HIGHLIGHT

The Sacred Valley

Under an hour's drive from Cusco, the Sacred Valley is a captivating location. Maras, Moray, Pisac, Chinchero, Urubamba and Ollantaytambo are situated in this Andean valley. The Salinas are man-made salt evaporation ponds found near Maras, used to extract salt since the time of the Incas. The town of Moray boasts circular terracing that was used by resident's ancestors for agricultural. Picturesque Ollantaytambo is known for its massive Inca fortress with large stone terraces.

The Pisac Ruins (above) are must-see elements of the Sacred Valley. Today, the Sunday Market in Pisac captures the vibrant culture of the area, with smaller market days held on Tuesday and Thursdays.

As part of Gordon Ramsay's *Uncharted* series, the swearing Scottish chef embarks on a motorcycle through this region, hoping to learn the secrets of high-altitude cooking.



On set of Brazilian TV's *Amor A Vida* © Bruno Canale.

ESSENTIAL FACTS

TAX INCENTIVES

Although there are no official government incentives or tax breaks, international filmmakers can take advantage of low cost of services, locations & crew in Peru. As well as being more affordable than Europe & North America, Peruvian costs can be lower than in other countries in South America – so it is worth producers taking their time to do some research.

ATA CARNET

NO

RECENT PRODUCTIONS

Highlights include: *Don't Look Up*, *Convergence: Courage in a Crisis*, *Down to Earth with Zac Efron*, *Chocolate Road*, *Song without a Name*, *The Last Tourist*, & *The Jungle Demon*. Amazon Prime Series *Ines del Alma Mia* is a story based in the 1500s at the time of the conquest of the Incas. It was shot in Chinchero & Ollantaytambo (Cusco).

TIME ZONE

GMT-5

INTERNATIONAL TALENT

Production teams looking for a specialist Director of Photography can reach out to a wealth of talent, such as: Miguel Valencia, Julian Amaru Estrada, Christian Valera, Fergan Chavez, Fernando Cobian, Paco Femenía, Carlos Catalán, Marc Miró, Marcus Hastrup, Natasha Brier, Eloi Moli, Javier Juliá, Juanmi Azpiroz, Borja Lopez or Jorge Roig.

accommodation, so it always helps to check for these opportunities with local fixers and production teams. Although locations and talent are inexpensive, the relatively small Peruvian media infrastructure means that key crew members and equipment may need to be exported into the country from abroad.

There is also a new Artistic Production visa, which was established for the *Transformers 7* project to be able to have a specific visa for foreign paid crew. This visa costs around USD50. A press visa is recommended for any crew entering Peru with filmmaking equipment, since these visas are free (and easily obtained after a minimum two-week processing period) through the appropriate international embassy. Presently there are no major studios or backlots in Peru. There is a standard processing and transfer facility in Lima, though most recommend shopping around and finalising postproduction abroad once footage is captured in Peruvian territory.

“We are very excited about the exposure our country is getting in film and TV productions,” explains Amora Carbajal, executive president of PROMPERÚ, the government agency that champions foreign trade and tourism in Peru. “We have been working for several years through Film in Peru, a strategy to promote our impressive locations to the world. In this way we try to boost and position the Peruvian identity in the world, attract private investment to the country and collaborate with its economic reactivation. In recent years we have been part of major film productions such as *Transformers 7: Rise of the Beasts*, *La Reina del Sur* Season 3, and *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*, among others.”

In order to film at key archaeological locations, permissions and entrance fees are required from the relevant government ministry. The pricing depends on the type of project. Documentary permit fees offer a day-rate of around USD375 per location, whereas commercial project fees can cost up to USD1500 for a two-day shoot per location. Machu Picchu is the most expensive, costing around USD2100 per day. Applications should take place at least 15 days prior to filming. In the case of Machu Picchu, allowing up to a month before shooting is probably a safer option. Some special sites require permission from the local indigenous community, so it is important to check in with local production service companies when navigating access.

PROMPERÚ also provides advice services to those interested in filming in the country in terms of

logistics, locations, national supply, access and permits. Carbajal says: “We anticipate great cinematography accomplishments made in our country and look forward with optimism to be able to tell more stories with our beautiful landscapes along with the great Peruvian talent. Peru is a country with much to discover, with great opportunities and particularly with an unparalleled friendliness.”

The US Embassy in Lima funded USD25,000 to support women from the Peruvian film industry in the aftermath of the pandemic. PROMPERÚ recently has been attempting to nurture ties between the Spanish and Peruvian animation sectors. Peru’s Maneki Studio - specialising in 2D and 3D animation - has partnered with international agencies such as Ogilvy and Circus Grey, and is planning to branch out to Chile and Spain. “Our efforts, together with those of other institutions, generate more and more opportunities and accessibilities for international productions,” says Carbajal.

SOME SPECIAL SITES REQUIRE PERMISSION FROM THE LOCAL INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY, SO IT IS IMPORTANT TO CHECK IN WITH LOCAL PRODUCTION SERVICE COMPANIES WHEN NAVIGATING ACCESS TO THEM.

SOMETHING ELSE

The national animal of Peru is a relative of the llama family: the vicuña. Prized for the quality of its warm, comfortable wool, in the ancient era only the most royal lineages could wear the vicuña’s produce. Their hypoallergenic coat grows very slowly, sometimes taking as long as three years to grow back once the vicuña is sheared, and it estimated to be 10% lighter than cashmere. Conquistadors hunted the vicuña after discovering “the silk of the new world” or, in other words, its luxurious wool.

This herbivore has adapted to its habitat: since plains and semi-arid grasslands dominate the creature’s land in Peru, it predominantly eats grass. It is the smallest camelid and became an endangered species in the mid-twentieth century. Around 350,000 roam free today.



Portugal Heats Up

**FILMMAKERS
ARE
FLOCKING
TO
PORTUGAL
FOR
ALL
KINDS
OF
PRODUCTION**



On set of Netflix's *Glória* © Paulo Goulart Photography.

Portugal has experienced an influx of international productions in recent years. The country's talent pool is growing as its infrastructure expands. When creatives examine the filmmaking possibilities within the country, it's little wonder that Portugal has become an industry favourite.

When producers consider working in the Iberian Peninsula, the strength of Spain's filmmaking infrastructure can often dominate the conversation. However, in recent years Portugal has proved itself as a promising option for foreign creatives.

"The internationalisation of our industry is growing, and our crews are improving and adapting," explains Sofia Noronha, founder of Lisbon-based production company Sagesse Productions. "As well as having great experience partnering with Fresco Film in Spain for the Portuguese parts of *House of the Dragon*, we were working with Sky for a show titled *A Town Called Malice* and a series with ITV called

The Thief, His Wife and The Canoe. Portugal has been a relatively unknown territory, but tourists and filmmakers alike are realising that we are here, understanding what our industry can offer."

America is showing interest in the region. Filmmaker Ira Sachs selected the foothills of a picturesque town named Sintra for American-French co-production *Frankie*, a family drama starring Isabelle Huppert, Brendan Gleeson and Jérémie Renier. Parts of rural Sintra (as well as sections of urban Lisbon) were also used in Nicolas Cage's sci-fi horror film *Color Out of Space*, replacing territory in New England.



VARIOUS SERIES AND FEATURE FILMS ARE IN PRODUCTION. COMBINED WITH A FLOOD OF COMMERCIALS BEING SHOT HERE, THE PROSPECTS FOR 2022 ARE VERY PROMISING



India entered the fray when Siddharth Anand chose Portugal for his action epic *War*, featuring Bollywood superstars Hrithik Roshan, Tiger Shroff and Vaani Kapoor. These Indian and American projects benefitted from cash rebates ranging from EUR631,000 to EUR1.9 million.

The country has attracted British investment from the MovieBox Group, a collection of companies that cover the development, production and distribution of films. Alongside investors Landsdowne Capital Partners, MovieBox pumped EUR60 million into a cutting-edge film studio production complex in Loulé.

The 15,000sqm site will feature three indoor soundstages, two outside water stages, a green screen, and a specialist TV studio with a technology hub. The construction is less than twenty minutes from Faro International Airport, and it is anticipated that the project will initially create around 300 high-quality jobs.

Portugal launched its incentive programme in 2018, the same year that Millennium Films set up in the country. The organisation established a post-production hub in Braga, near Porto. From this site, company has been involved with VFX work for Hollywood projects *Angel Has Fallen*, *The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard* and *Rambo: Last Blood*. Millennium Film emphasised that the development of the incentive programme had a direct impact on its growth.

Portugal provides visiting productions with tax rebates between 25% and 30%, depending on eligible local spend. The programme shifts to the 30% bracket if producers shoot in economically disadvantaged rural areas or employ staff (from actors to technicians) with disabilities. This rebate scheme is capped at a maximum of EUR4 million per project, as well as a maximum total annual spend of EUR12 million.

“Portugal is looking at having a booming film production year for 2022 thanks to the Film

Incentive Programme, with cash rebates of up to 30%,” says Staffan Tranæus, founder of production service company Southwest Productions. “Various series and feature films are in production making use of this programme. Combined with a flood of commercials being shot here, the prospects for 2022 are very promising. Portugal is solidly on the map as a film destination like never before.”

The country is certainly proving to be a popular destination among commercial producers. An advertisement for Unilever’s Magnum ice cream company was shot at the historic Palace Hotel Do Bussaco during the height of the pandemic.

“YOU HAVE THIS AMAZING BREADTH OF GEOGRAPHICAL OPTIONS: FROM THE SEA TO THE MOUNTAINS, ALONG WITH DESERTS, FORESTS AND LAKES.”

Travel restrictions meant that the production team needed to rely on the filmmaking infrastructure and talent offered in Portugal. “For Magnum, we normally work with an international casting and crew – but during this time we did not want our people travelling from different countries due to Covid-19,” recalls producer Pablo Martínez.

The project was created by Madrid-based production company Proppa (Propaganda Producciones) and Portuguese production service providers Ready to Shoot (RTS). RTS found a range of inspiring locations for Proppa, before settling on Bussaco’s Palace Hotel.

Following the trend, production company and set builders The ATS Team recently expanded its activities into Portugal. The ATS Team specialises in competition series and events, offering development, format and challenge producing, as well as design, fabrication, set construction, special effects and full line productions.

STUDIOS

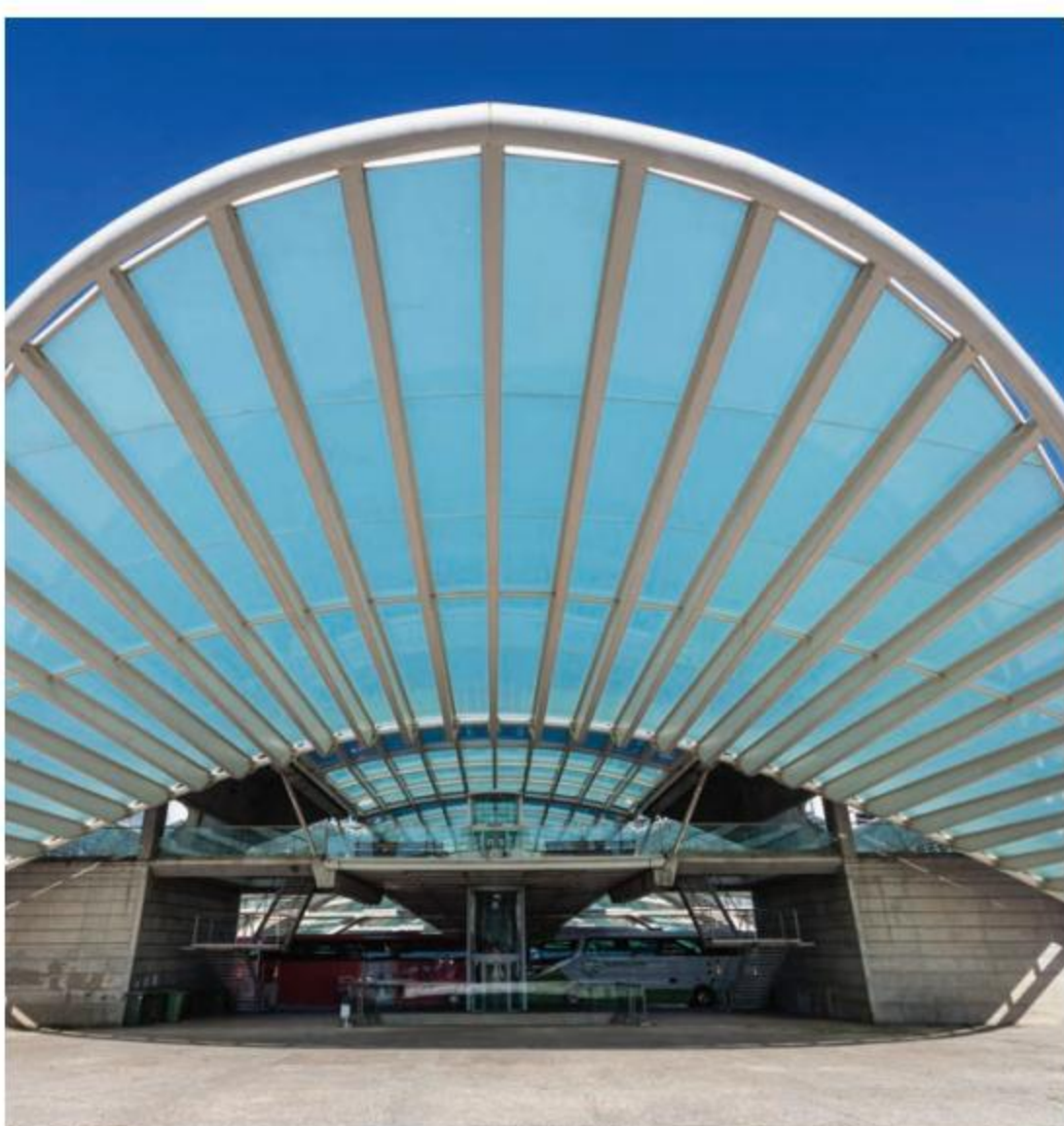
INTERNATIONAL

COLLABORATION





PORTUGAL IS LOOKING AT A BOOMING FILM PRODUCTION YEAR FOR 2022 THANKS TO THE FILM INCENTIVE PROGRAMME, WITH CASH REBATES OF UP TO 30%.



“We needed a hub in the EU for design and fabrication as well as storage for all the obstacles and materials for our international projects,” explains Shayna Waldman, development and production executive at The ATS Team.

The company has recently worked on different incarnations of the Ninja Warrior franchise, including *Germany Ninja Warrior All Stars – Series 2*, *France Ninja Warrior – Series 7*, *Germany Top Dog – Series 2*, and *Germany Ninja Warrior – Series 7*.

“Our project management team was already based in Portugal and spoke the language so they were able scout for the best location, negotiate a space, establish local relationships and oversee the operation,” adds Waldman. “We utilise a lot of local labour and services. Additionally, we are rapidly growing our fabrication team and operations, so these local relationships are crucial, especially in a part of the country where English is spoken less frequently.”

In order to generate meaningful relationships with local Portuguese businesses, organisations such as the Portugal Film Commission are on hand to connect producers with the country’s different commissions. The organisation is designed to support international work with foreign producers.

“The Portugal Film Commission has been very much committed to its mission, highlighting the many options that the country has to offer as well as the financial instruments available, from which the 30% cash rebate stands out,” emphasises film commissioner Manuel Clara. “The great results we now witness are a consequence of this national strategy that aims to place Portugal as a top tier destination for international producers.”

At present, the country has 12 bilateral film co-production treaties, encompassing Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, France, Germany, India, Italy, Morocco, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe and Israel. Negotiations are underway with China too.

Alongside these co-production agreements, the country is a key part of the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production, Eurimages, Ibermedia and the Ibero-American Cinematographic Co-production Agreement, allowing possible co-production projects with over 60 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. While the ICA (Instituto do Cinema e do Audiovisual) manages national funding opportunities for productions, supranational financial support is available from Creative Europe, the Eurimages Fund and the Ibermedia Fund.

Netflix is one of the major players to take advantage of such opportunities by heading to Portugal. The

streamer filmed parts of the fifth season for the hit Spanish production *Money Heist* in Portugal.

Towards the end of 2021, Netflix released its first Portuguese local-language original series. *Glória* is co-produced by the SPi production company of Grupo SP Televisão as well as RTP (Rádio e Televisão de Portugal). Set in a small Portuguese village from the 1960s, the ten-part series follows Miguel Nunes’s character João Vidal, a young man with family connections to the authoritarian regime Estado Novo.

According to The Portugal News, the project is the highest budget series in the history of Portuguese production, highlighting Netflix’s intention to tap into the country’s potential.

Meanwhile, RTP has recently shifted from creating telenovelas to generating series and documentaries aimed at the international market.

Beautiful scenery, relatively low costs and strong transport links frame Portugal as a prime destination for incoming shoots. “You have this amazing breadth of geographical options: from the sea to the mountains, along with deserts, forests and lakes,” emphasises Compass Rose executive producer Amy Kaemon. “Folded into this are perhaps some of the strongest North American looks available in Europe. And considering Lisbon is either home to, or a hop, skip and a jump away from, a long list of premium crew, filming in Portugal is even more compelling.”

“NETFLIX IS ONE OF THE MAJOR PLAYERS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH OPPORTUNITIES BY HEADING TO PORTUGAL.”

“Portugal has it all,” points out Margarida Adónis, producer and managing director at RTS. “There are breath-taking sites for filming almost any scenario: from vibrant downtown spaces and paradisiac beaches to rural areas and mountains, world-heritage monuments, parks and towns. The short distances everywhere are served by premium motorway infrastructure, and there are friendly public policies for the movie industry, as well as many other attractions.”

Portugal is in fact one of the greenest countries in Europe, using renewable sources for 60% of its electricity production and aiming to reach 80% by the year 2030. The Portugal Film Commission has launched a guidance project titled Greenshooting Portugal, offering advice and guidelines for visiting crews to ensure that productions are sustainable. Perhaps more so than ever, the country’s audiovisual industry is proving itself as an ideal environment for international partnerships.

INFLUX INSPIRE
DEVELOPMENT

New Asian Opportunities

**PRODUCTION
POSSIBILITIES
ABOUND
ACROSS
THE
EASTERN
REACHES
OF
ASIA**



Behind the Scenes of *Squid Game* © Noh Juhan / Netflix.

The international production community can make drastic savings if they turn to East and South East Asian options for 2022. Established and emerging incentive schemes work in tandem with the continent's low general costs and an abundance of skilled, hardworking crew.

As emphasised by the popularity of Netflix's record-breaking series *Squid Game*, media content created in East Asia continues to thrive. Powerhouses such as South Korea, China, and Japan have traditionally led the way internationally. However, recent investments in infrastructure and emerging production talent in the South Eastern regions of Asia mean that other nations – from Thailand and Vietnam all the way to Taiwan – offer promising prospects for incoming film collaborators.

One of the big advantages of shooting across the continent is the ease with which filmmakers can access an array of disparate cultures and settings at fair, affordable rates. In Taiwan, any foreign project that shoots at least 25% of its scenes in Taipei City (or has post-production at least partially done in the capital) is eligible for funding if it includes a Taiwanese production partner.

“The 2021 Taipei Film Fund selected projects were *Be with Me* from the United States, *For the Country* from France, *Snow in Midsummer* from Malaysia, *A Year of Cold* from Nepal, France,

ONE OF THE BIG ADVANTAGES OF SHOOTING ACROSS THE CONTINENT IS THE EASE WITH WHICH FILMMAKERS CAN ACCESS AN ARRAY OF DISPARATE CULTURES AND SETTINGS AT FAIR, AFFORDABLE RATES.



Turkey and Norway, and *Moving Bangladesh* from France and Bangladesh,” explains Taipei film commissioner Tzu-Ting Hsu. “As of late January, we have had 27 foreign productions, including six feature films, six music videos, eight web series, three short films, three commercials, and three TV programmes. *Dead and Beautiful* (Limelight, IFFR 2021) and *Moneyboys* (Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2021) were among the first international projects to receive investment from the inaugural Taipei Film Fund in 2018, both were filmed entirely in Taiwan before the coronavirus outbreak.”

When filmmakers consider Asia as a filmmaking destination, it is important to research the different opportunities across the continent. “Highly trained crews and production services such as post production can be commissioned for a fraction of the price compared to non-Asian countries,” explains Phil Choy, managing director of AFCNet. “Recent Korean streaming hit *Squid Game* was produced with less than a quarter of a Hollywood producer’s normal budget. This is why Netflix invests more money in Korea and Asian territories.”

The Malaysian Minister of Communications recently announced that the Film in Malaysia Incentive (FIMI) had increased from 30% to 35% for eligible production and post-production activities in Malaysia, making the country an even more attractive option for filmmakers.

“With international borders now reopened and improvements to the Film in Malaysia Incentive allowing up to a 35% cash rebate, Malaysia is now one of the most accessible and competitive production hubs globally,” says Rashid Karim, CEO of Iskandar Malaysia Studios. “In anticipation of increased demand, we have invested heavily on new facility offerings including permanent period sets of Penang and Singapore which we completed in 2021, and are planning further set additions and new stages in the coming years.”

“Our talented English-speaking crews have years of experience in international productions and are supported by a local film infrastructure that has grown exponentially over the last ten years,” says producer Bill Donovan of Biscuit Films, a leading production service company in Malaysia. The team provides support across all of South East Asia, and were the first company to successfully access the Film in Malaysia Incentive.



Across the sea, the newly-launched Vietnam Association of Film Production and Development (VFDA) serves as the country’s film commission. While there are no readily available tax breaks at present, the VFDA is working towards uniting and promoting the creative capacity of Vietnamese filmmaking.

It connects and supports foreign film producers working in Vietnam, and champions the nation’s scenery.

“In the old days, there were many films about or set in Vietnam, but not actually filmed here,” explains Othello Khanh, founder and managing director of

The CREATV Company. “After the country opened in 1994, we had productions like *L’Oriana* and others that finally anchored stories about Vietnam with Vietnamese locations. Now, our clients are becoming increasingly interested in locales here doubling for other exotic locations. With the mangroves of Can Gio, near Ho Chi Minh City, standing in for Sundarbans Mangroves in Bangladesh and the white sand dunes of Mui Ne playing as desert landscapes, Vietnam offers untapped opportunities for both large and small screen productions.”

Towards the East, the Philippines offers an International Co-Production Fund alongside its ASEAN Co-Production Fund. The country’s ASEAN scheme offers between PHP2.5 million (USD50,000) and PHP7.5 million (USD150,000) for co-producers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Brunei Darussalam, whereas the International Fund offers up to PHP10 million (USD195,120) for co-productions with the rest of the world. The Film Location Incentive Programme (FLIP)

“HIGHLY TRAINED CREWS AND PRODUCTION SERVICES SUCH AS POST PRODUCTION CAN BE COMMISSIONED FOR A FRACTION OF THE PRICE COMPARED TO NON-ASIAN COUNTRIES.”



DISNEY UNVEILED 27 SERIES AND FILMS IN LOCAL ASIAN LANGUAGES, HIGHLIGHTING THE ORGANISATION'S INTENT TO CRACK THE REGION.

also grants eligible international projects a 20% cash rebate on their qualified spend in the Philippines if they work with a Filipino line producer, post-production company or an animation studio.

Thailand is a similarly cost-effect place to shoot, and there are very few types of landscapes that cannot be found in the country. "It's cheap to house and feed crew and there are a tonne of locations in Thailand that would suit nearly any sort of production," explains Luke Cameron, director of Taipei-based Stone Soup Production Company, whose credits include feature *Burapa: Bikers of the East*, which shot mainly in Pattaya but also in Bangkok, and *Outlaw Land*, directed by Reza Sholeh. "We worked with a local fixer in Pattaya for *Outlaw Land* and also shot a few days in Bangkok as well. Highlights of filming there would be how easy it is to get from A to B and to source things quite quickly and easily."

The current rebate scheme in Thailand offers 15% on projects spending a minimum of THB50 million on services in the country. An additional rebate of 5% is available for shoots taking place before 31 December 2022. Pace Studio Bangkok presents various pre-built sets, and Studio Park in Samutprakan Province has a variety of world-class features, such as five sound stages and a water tank.

"Thailand's infrastructure is a key element that makes it really attractive for incoming production teams," Kulthep Narula, the COO of Benetone Films, explains. "And in today's climate, people are mainly concerned about safety measures. Thanks to the health and safety protocols in place in the country – as well as its effective production infrastructure offering a range of options for incoming clientele – Thailand remains one of the best production centres around Asia, not just South East Asia."

Big filmmaking nations such as South Korea have traditionally dominated the production landscape in

the Southern parts of Asia. "Thanks to a highly advanced IT infrastructure and experienced technicians, its digital post production and VFX houses boast world class services at competitive rates," observes Seo Sumin, senior manager of the international affairs team at the Korea Film Commissions and Industry Network (KFCIN). "Since Korea is easy to access, productions come to Korea for more flexible and cheaper production costs compared to other East Asian countries," adds Nine Tailed Fox, a leading South Korean production company.

Japan has likewise maintained a strong filmmaking identity on the international circuit, yet the country launched its first ever production incentives scheme in 2019 with very little fanfare. Now, a new incentive programme from the Tokyo Film Commission is being set up across two branches: Location Scouting and Shooting. For Location Scouting, the Tokyo Film Commission covers up to 50% of the flight ticket, accommodation, vehicle and coordination costs for a maximum of three people, with a maximum amount of JPY1 million. Meanwhile, they will cover up to 50% of the production expenses for shooting in Tokyo, at a maximum of JPY5 million (around USD40,709.25) for the Shooting Strand.

"THE CURRENT REBATE SCHEME IN THAILAND OFFERS 15% ON PROJECTS SPENDING A MINIMUM OF THB50 MILLION ON SERVICES IN THE COUNTRY."

Beyond the film scenes in South Korea and Japan, countries across the rest of Asia are currently building a promising array of opportunities for foreign production teams. Notably, there is mounting interest from the world's top streaming companies. Netflix recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Taiwan, and Amazon Prime Video announced ambitious plans to make a big push into South East Asia for 2022. Disney unveiled twenty-seven series and films in local Asian languages, highlighting the organisation's intent to crack the region.

"Streaming services like Netflix, Apple TV, Disney+ and Amazon have been building subscribers in Asian countries," says Choy. "During the pandemic, more global streaming productions were made locally and consumed widely. Streaming giants are investing more money to Asian local contents because they are heavily consumed by the viewer worldwide. And right now, there are many Western filmmakers running local location service companies in South Asian regions. So I'd say choose wisely, embrace the adventure and have fun."



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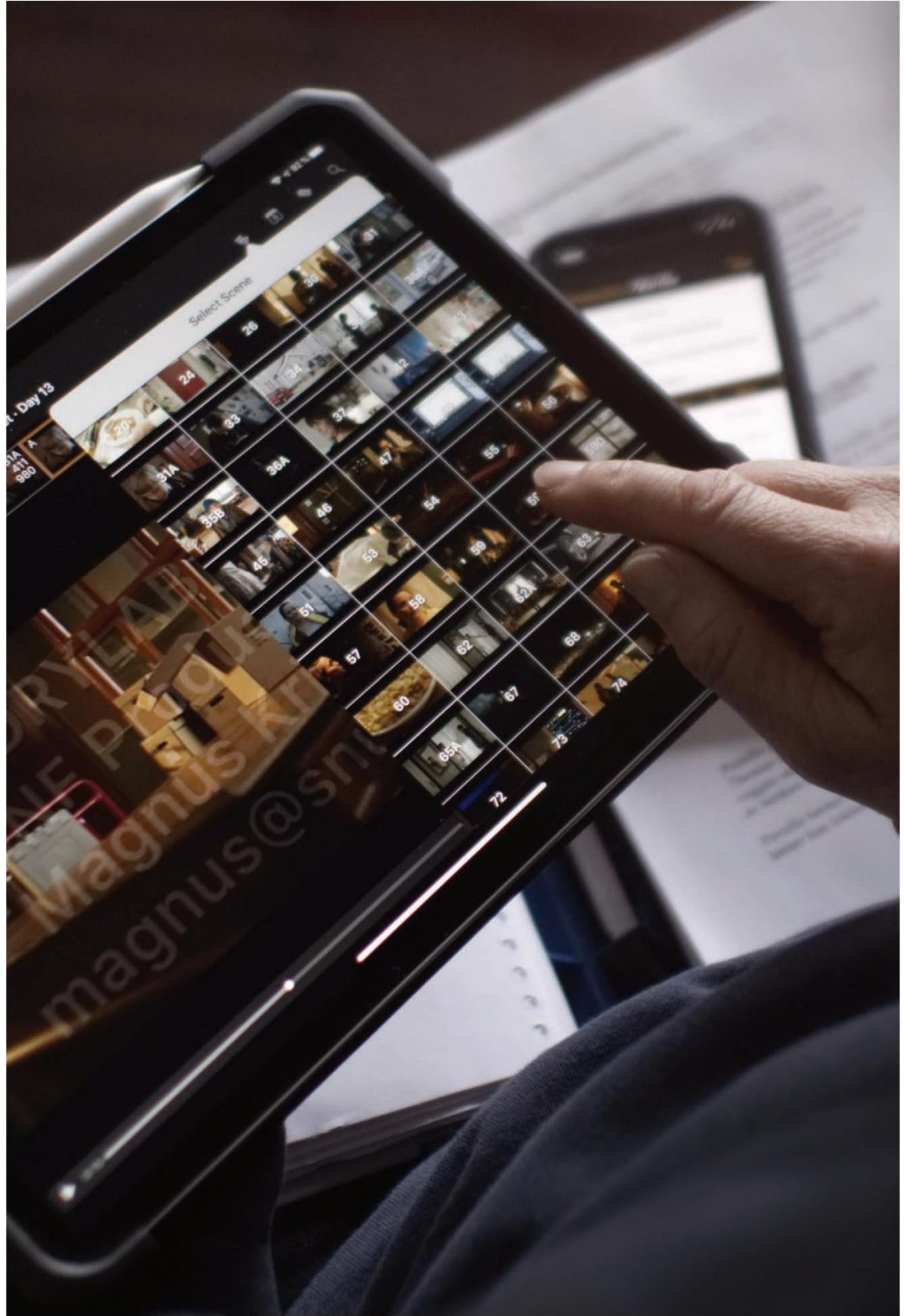


**Bilingual local crew
 Local knowledge
 Locations all over Japan**



Disruptive Tech

**PIONEERING
TECH FOR
FILM, TV
AND
COMMERCIAL
PRODUCTION
CONTINUES
TO EVOLVE**



John Chrisian Rosenlund.

New apps and digital platforms are emerging across the audiovisual sectors, seeking to challenge the traditional ways of doing things. Can these technological advancements change the industry for the better?

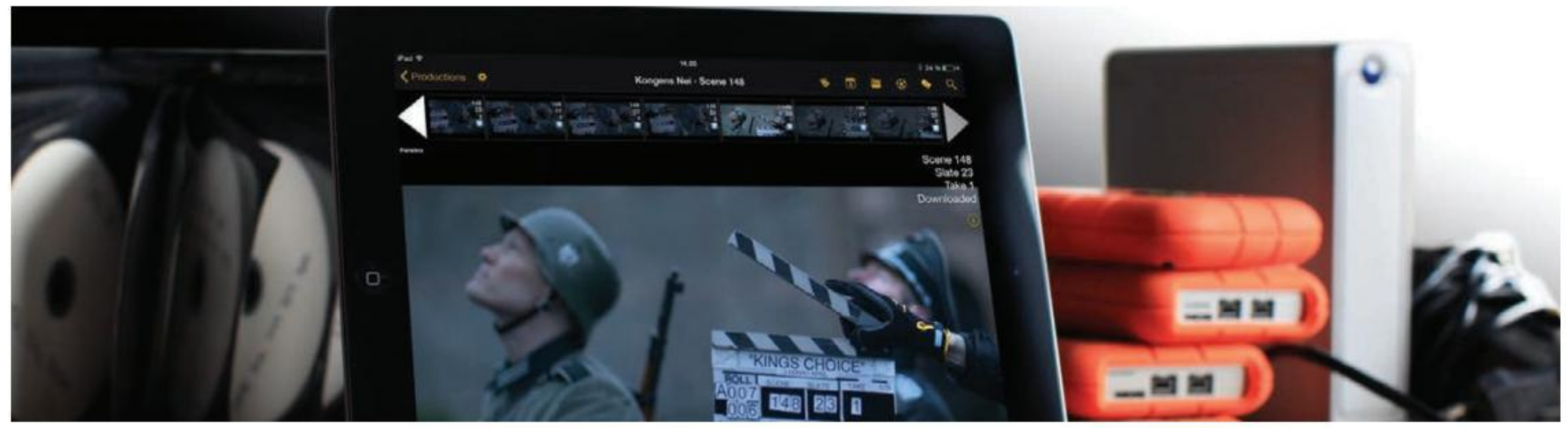
We live in an age where technology can quickly challenge and subvert what constitutes the norm.

Within the media industry, there are a swathe of new apps and digital platforms that are designed to help organisations to forge more efficient, safer and greener media environments.

makers selects a number of technology tools that have caught our eye, and that promise to improve the television, film and commercials industries.

Emerging voices frequently struggle to break through and sustain a career in the entertainment industry. In response, Smash (www.mysmash.media) was founded. Smash is a suite of free digital tools that helps build pitch presentations. It offers sales estimates, protects intellectual property, and gives users access to the Getty Images Easy Access library of high-resolution images and HD-quality video without charge.

Smash is also developing a matchmaking platform that connects creators and decision-makers. The platform's network will encompass streamers,



THE TECHNOLOGY FACILITATES EASY ACCESS TO COMPANY WELL-BEING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR FORMAL REPORTING, WHILE ALSO SIGNPOSTING CONFIDENTIAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

broadcasters, financiers and service providers, acting as a bridge between content producers with ideas and the people who can make these ideas a reality.

“We are trying to lower the barriers for entry, so new and emerging talent can come into our sector and share their ideas,” explains Fiona Gillies, CEO and co-founder at Smash. “Our platform helps new writers articulate their stories and pitches in a way that the industry understands easily. And we have received some really promising feedback from our users, who say our app is simple, intuitive and easy to use.”

Technologies such as Smash aim to break or ‘smash’ down the traditional barriers which prevent newcomers from getting a foothold into the industry. However, when new writers do manage to break into the business, another key problem – which is especially prevalent among younger members of the industry – is harassment. The University of Sheffield calculated that workplace conflict costs the UK economy around GBP28 billion per year, while an analysis from Deloitte estimates that poor mental health in the workplace costs Britain GBP45 billion.

The Call It! app was founded by three film and TV freelancers to help monitor and prevent bullying in the workplace. Call It! allows employees to record incidents of harassment and discrimination quickly and anonymously, enabling companies and productions to monitor the safety and wellbeing of their staff. The app asks staff: “How were you treated at work today?” and then gather anonymous data regarding experiences of bullying and harassment. The technology facilitates easy access to company well-being policies and procedures for formal reporting, while also signposting confidential mental health support.

“It’s all there in their pockets, ready if they need it,” explains Kate Wilson, the project’s co-founder. “Users are able to access third party information

including their employers’ relevant policies and procedures, the name, role and contact details for a person with whom to start a confidential conversation about any issues arising at work, and third party resources supporting mental health and workers’ rights.”

The Time Project is another disruptive technology protecting the rights of film and television workers. This anonymous data collection tool tracks the amount of hours that people work. These records are sent to the University of York, where the data is used to calculate which sections of the industry are the most pressurised and overworked. The project was celebrated at the *makers & shakers* awards ceremony at the end of 2021, and founder Lou Patel is interviewed in this edition of *makers* magazine (see page 54).

“WE ARE TRYING TO LOWER THE BARRIERS FOR ENTRY, SO NEW AND EMERGING TALENT CAN COME INTO OUR SECTOR AND SHARE THEIR IDEAS.”

Alongside workplace harassment and overworking, sustainability is a hot topic in the media industries. According to BAFTA, a single hour of television produced in the UK – fiction or nonfiction – produces 13 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide, nearly as much CO2 as an average American citizen generates in a year.

In Hollywood, the environmental damage scales up with a project’s budget. The average film is estimated to produce 500 tonnes of CO2 emissions (equivalent to running 108 cars for a year) while a USD50 million film can produce 4,000 tonnes.

TheGreenShot (www.thegreenshot.green) represents an attempt to make productions more sustainable, providing a tracker for costs and carbon output on set. The solution is hosted in the cloud, available through a secure web interface for computers and mobile devices. It is billed as the first real-time solution that connects operational costs to carbon emissions.

The company was applauded alongside The Time Project at the *makers & shakers* awards ceremony, winning the Production Tech Innovation of Year Award. “Connecting costs and carbon footprint as well as involving every crew member is





THE TEAM WHO DEVELOPED THIS TECHNOLOGY ARE FILMMAKERS, AND THEY REALLY UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS THAT NEED TO BE SOLVED.

essential to reduce productions’ carbon footprint,” explains COO Max Hermans. “Making sustainable choices can reduce production’s budget; TheGreenShot proves it daily whatever your production size.”

A company called Drylab is similarly disrupting the industry’s reliance on paper. Used in over 90% of productions in Norway and Sweden, Drylab was created by filmmakers John-Christian Rosenlund, Audun Vaaler and Stein Kvae to provide a full digital suite of functionality.

The shift away from paper is important for the industry. The average number of documents generated on an individual production is around 5,000, and on large productions can oftentimes exceed 10,000. 40% of the world’s commercially cut timber is used for the production of paper, according to the *Green Production Guide*, and Asian paper brand Double A estimates that 30 million acres of forest are destroyed annually as a result of the industry. “At the end of every shoot you had this ream of paperwork that you had to fill out – but now it’s all digital,” observes LMGI president and location manager John Rakich. “An unforeseen by-product of the Covid-19 pandemic was the shift where everything went paperless. A large amount of paper used to go to waste.”

Alongside the wide variety of paperless processes that Drylab offers, a key element that sets the technology apart from its competitors is the fact that it is the only product to combine an on set production tool with a digital dailies platform. For filmmakers who crave fast, effective solutions, Drylab’s amalgamation of technologies and services offers an industry-leading edge.

This was a major reason why Media Tech SPAC (MTS) purchased the business in 2022. MTS was formed to undertake acquisitions of other businesses in the media and technology sectors. The rationale behind the acquisition of Drylab is to use MTS’s network to expand the Drylab platform, moving it into the global marketplace.

“We want to take Drylab from the pond into the ocean,” emphasises MTS CEO John Mahtani. “The team who developed this technology are filmmakers, and they really understand the problems that need to be solved.”

The most successful disruptive technology companies identify key issues and proactively seek innovative ways to address them. For example, post-production scripts are typically produced as Word documents, offering limited re-purposing capability for use in other areas. If companies produce the post-production script in XML, they gain the ability to re-purpose the original data into the various scripts and reports needed throughout the entire content supply chain.

To this end, transcription company Take 1 has developed a metadata harvesting platform named Liberty. This platform supports the production of XML-based post-production scripts and TTML (Timed Text Markup Language) for captioning, as well as the re-purposing of this data into various documents, files and reports needed throughout the global content production workflow.

“MAKING SUSTAINABLE CHOICES CAN REDUCE A PRODUCTION’S BUDGET; THEGREENSHOT PROVES IT DAILY WHATEVER YOUR PRODUCTION SIZE.”

“By combining the talents of multiskilled teams to create high-value content, AI to streamline processes, and interchangeable data to create efficiencies across the content supply chain, Take 1 is uniquely able to deliver transcriptions, access and localisation services at scale while providing the personalised service of a boutique supplier,” says Claire Brown, the company’s vice president of global sales.

The group plans to virtualise Liberty in the cloud, open up their API gateway, and in turn allow clients to access these services. The move will provide new opportunities to integrate with partners’ and customers’ existing technology stacks (including their preferred programming languages and digital tools), thereby allowing the entire industry to extract value from this data.

From sustainability hacks thanks to TheGreenShot and Drylab through to Call It! and The Time Project counteracting toxic workplace cultures, disruptive technologies within the media industries are fast emerging. By challenging existing protocols and practices, these innovations can help businesses function more smoothly and efficiently than ever before. At the same time, they offer the building blocks for creating healthier, more inclusive workplace environments – for everyone.



SPAIN

a hotbed of talent



EUR1.6 billion is set to be invested in Spain's media sectors through a new government initiative. And, with around 7,500km of coastline, a plethora of iconic filming locations as well as world-renowned film festivals, Spain is loaded with opportunity.

This is a historic time for Spain, which has the opportunity to establish itself worldwide as the leading destination for the domestic and international film industry," says Spain Film Commission's president Carlos Rosado. "For the first time, all the agents in the sector, public and private, are aligned behind a common strategy: to make Spain a global set to attract and manage film shoots, business and investments, which will drive economic recovery and the creation of skilled jobs."

A government initiative titled *Spain: Europe's Audiovisual Hub* will invest EUR1.6 billion into the country's media sector between the years 2021 and 2025. The Spanish Film Commission has developed a five-point action plan, split into the following categories: Spain Film Talent Network, Spain Film Friendly Land, Spain Film Transmedia Platform, Spain Film Virtual Locations, and Shooting in Spain.

"EVERYONE IS WORKING TOGETHER TO FIND SOLUTIONS. SPAIN IS THRIVING BECAUSE WE ARE ALL AWARE OF BOTH THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTION."

The Talent Network is a social network that will bring together Spain's audiovisual talent, encompassing companies and professionals operating in all areas of the industry. The Friendly Land strand will continue to strengthen the Spain Film Commission's territorial network, including the Spain Green shooting project to promote sustainable shoots across the country.

The Transmedia Platform plan aims to make technological leaps in terms of content and format, such as a developing a new website alongside fresh social media strategies and mobile applications. Shooting in Spain intends to build on the activities



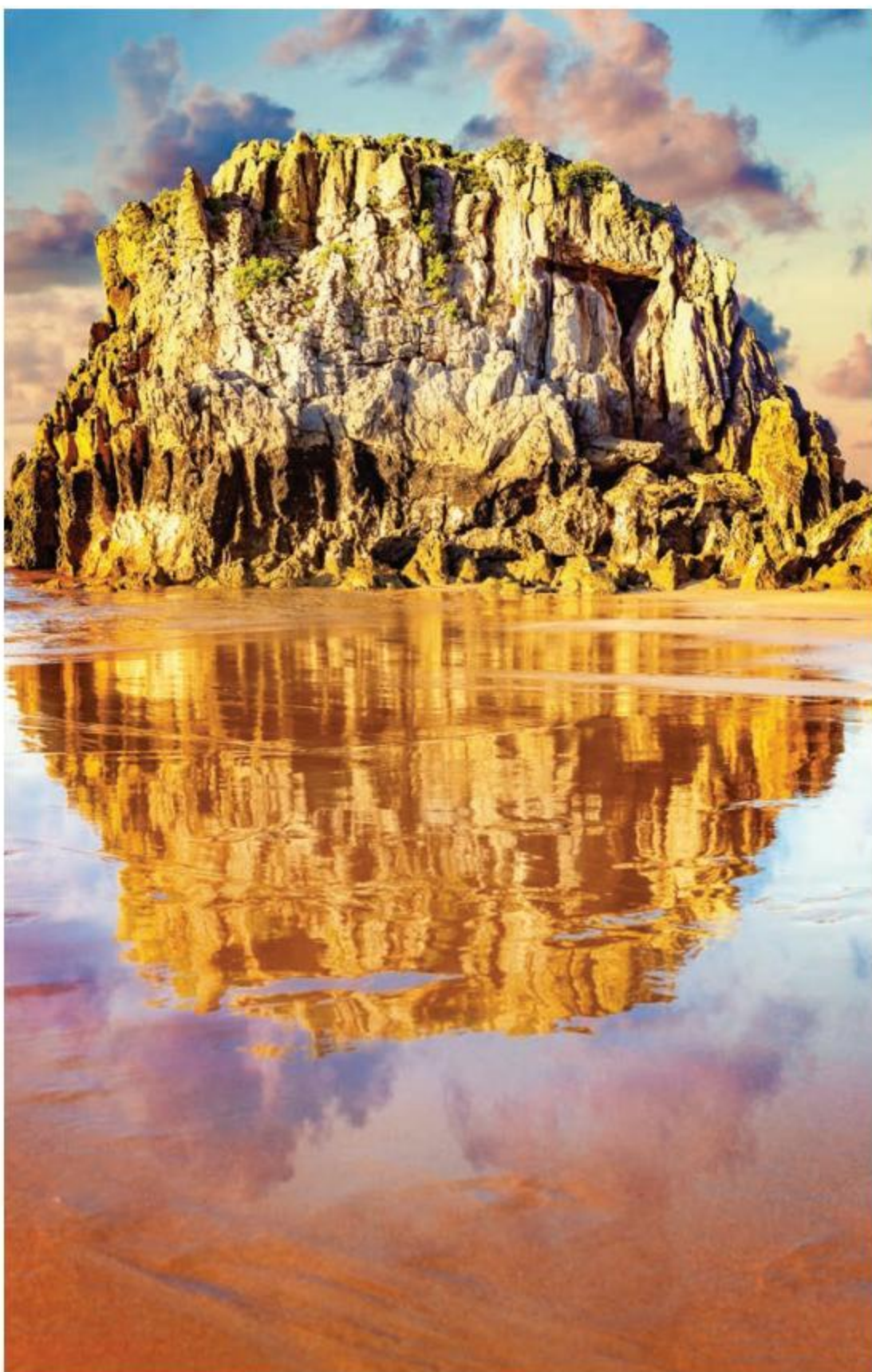
LOCATION HIGHLIGHT

The Plaza de España

The plaza is situated in Seville's Maria Luisa Park. This location was used as a set for Simply Red's *Something Got Me Started* music video. In *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*, exterior shots of the City of Theed on Planet Naboo were shot across the Plaza. The location reappears in *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones*, and was included in scenes for David Lean's classic *Lawrence of Arabia* as well as Larry Charles's *The Dictator*.

The Plaza was built in 1928 for the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929, and today remains loaded with potential for producers. The construction has a semi-elliptical shape, with a fountain in its central area and several towers at each end. There 48 benches decorated with tiles, each symbolising the 48 provinces of Spain. Every colourful bench has its own map, shield and special tile.

Money Heist © Tamara Arranz / Netflix.



of the Spain Film Commission, promoting the country as a prime destination for shoots and investment. The Virtual Locations category consists of creating three-dimensional models of the most outstanding monuments, buildings and urban spaces of Spanish architecture and urban planning.

“The opportunities and infrastructure are in place in Spain,” emphasises Teresa Azcona, Spain Film Commission’s vice-president. “We can connect you with everybody, and we can find creative solutions for everything. If you want to shoot to Spain, we are here to help you make magic.”

“We have lots of clients from Italy and France because we try to make the budget fair for everybody,” explains Mario Reinach, executive producer at Mendips Productions. “Spain is of course a big stage with all kinds of situations and locations - and we want act as a service company as well as partner company.”

Within the framework of the Spain Audiovisual Hub, ICEX-Invest in Spain has just backed Spain Audiovisual Bureau with EUR20 million. This scheme is billed as a one-stop shop for the internationalisation of the country’s audiovisual sector, presenting a team of consultants on hand to answer queries about creating films and commercials in Spain. “The Spanish Government has chosen the audiovisual sector as a strategic one,” says Elisa García, executive director of ICEX - Invest in Spain. “The aim is to turn Spain into a leading country in audiovisual production in the digital era, a magnet for international investment and talent with a reinforced ecosystem for exporting and competing in international markets.”

It is worthwhile taking some time to consider what the different parts of Spain offer for production teams. The main rebate for international shoots stands at 30% across the majority of Spain, whereas the Navarre region offers 35% through tax credits. Meanwhile, the Canary Islands offer a sizeable 50% tax rebate. Production spending must normally equate to at least EUR1 million in order to qualify for such filmmaking incentives. It is also worth considering that the sum of the incentives plus other additional grants must not total more than the equivalent of 50% of the total production costs.

“We shot in Tenerife for Burberry, and that was a great job to do,” reminisces Ivo van Vollenhoven, founder and CEO of 24/7 Productions. “Jonathan Glazer was the director, and it starred Adam Driver. Shooting on a beach, the story followed Adam chasing after a horse into the sea! We were looking for the perfect sunrise, and we found a private beach where we could film the horse and the star uninterrupted. Tenerife is a really film-friendly island, and they do lots of beach-related projects out there.”

Major productions from *Jason Bourne* and *Foundation to Wonder Woman 1984*, *Dr Who* and *Money Heist* have all shot in the region, which is just hours away from the main European capitals. Top brands such as Audi, Louis Vuitton and Hermes have also chosen Tenerife as their backdrop for their TV commercials or photoshoots. “Tenerife



Q&A

SILVIA ARÁEZ
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
Fresco Film



Q: *What projects have you been working on?*

A: This is a busy time for us, we’re currently working on Guy Ritchie’s *The Interpreter*, we have just shot *House of Dragons* for HBO and we have the premiere of *Uncharted* for Sony.

Q: *Why was Spain chosen for Uncharted?*

A: Part of it was filmed in Barcelona. It was one of the factual settings of the film. Madrid and its Naval Museum was also a primary location for the development of the story. Other locations such as Lloret de Mar and Alicante doubled for Thailand.

Q: *What makes Spain stand out for incoming production teams?*

A: One of the main attractions, in addition to the locations, are the tax incentives for foreign productions. From our 2021 productions, Fresco is administrating the return of more than EUR19 million in tax incentives to our clients. There is great fiscal security and specialised management teams.

Q: *What advice would you give to filmmakers considering shooting Spain?*

A: Spain offers civil and legal security, and we provide many years of experience in supporting international productions along with professional qualified bilingual technical teams who are used to working to international standards, both at the SET level, as well as in production and accounting workflows. "Our work is a way of life" is one of our mottos, and we say to visiting clients: "May the shoot be a positive life experience."

Media & the Metaverse

AS
THE
INTERNET
INVOLVES

WHAT
LIES
AHEAD
FOR
THE
INDUSTRY?



Across the media industries, businesses are starting to invest in the metaverse. If harnessed carefully and cleverly, this next step in the internet's evolution is loaded with potential. What opportunities could the metaverse pose for the global production community?

The metaverse refers to immersive digital worlds in which people will gather for work, play and much more. It is widely considered a new major phase for the internet's development.

"Taking into account the shifts between print and radio, television and film, or the internet and social media, I would argue that the metaverse (however you choose to define it) will be the next big evolution for communications," says writer, director and producer Jeff Norton. "And, as with previous media forms, I don't see it as an 'Either-Or' question – the metaverse will just offer new ways of engaging with people."

Norton is the author of the *MetaWars* series, a young adult collection that depicts two warring factions (the Millennials and the Guardians) duelling for control over an online virtual world known as the Metasphere. A full-fledged, operational metaverse akin to Norton's fictional Metasphere might be years – if not decades – away from the present. However, the emergence of this new digital environment has inspired investors to prepare for seismic shifts within the entertainment and media industries.

BY SHORTENING PRODUCTION TIME AND CUTTING LONG WAITING PERIODS FOR RENDERING, THE METAVERSE COULD UNLOCK A NEW ERA OF COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTIVITY AMONG THE INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKING COMMUNITY



Last year Facebook rebranded itself as Meta in anticipation of the technology sector's leap towards the metaverse. As well as establishing a sophisticated network of real-time 3D virtual worlds that maintain one's identity and payment history, Meta is developing a supercomputer to power the metaverse. Despite ongoing disputes with the European Union over data breaches, the company also revealed plans to create 10,000 new high-skilled, metaverse-related tech jobs within Europe over the next five years.

Microsoft's acquisition of Activision Blizzard for almost USD70 billion earlier in 2022 stems from the company's desire to expand into the metaverse. The tech giant's CEO Satya Nadella announced that the deal would "provide building blocks for the metaverse" by creating new spaces where virtual meeting opportunities coincide with existing video game technologies.

Today's gaming franchises rely on state-of-the-art graphics engines, organising how avatars, places and objects relate to each other in hyper-realistic fashion. Activision Blizzard and other leading gaming companies predict that cutting-edge video game technologies will be located at the heart of the forthcoming metaverse shift.

"In a sense we have been building towards the concept of a metaverse for a long time," details executive producer Jane Skullman on behalf of digital adventure game *Star Stable Online*. "We have seen the power of the community that has grown up inside the *Star Stable Online* universe and so we understand the attraction of a hyper-real alternative world and also understand the potential it has."

Star Stable Online is a MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game) available in 14 languages across 180 countries. Since its launch from Stockholm in 2011, the business has become

the fastest-growing online horse adventure game in the world. The organisation also has product lines spanning books, animations and music, extending its franchise beyond the game's core cyber universe. In a similar fashion, the metaverse could offer such franchises myriad new avenues for growth and development.

"The opportunities are endless," adds Skullman. "We are at the very beginning of this journey, and the effects on these industries are hard to predict and will take time to develop. With any new emerging concepts and technologies there is always a period of trial and error, such as those we discovered when making a VR prototype for the game in 2016. In 2020 we enabled AR on our Instagram, where players could use our horses to take immersive photos. We still have a lot to learn before we can harness the power of the metaverse correctly."

"AS WITH PREVIOUS MEDIA FORMS, I DON'T SEE IT AS AN 'EITHER-OR' QUESTION - THE METAVERSE WILL JUST OFFER NEW WAYS OF ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE."

While businesses are open to interacting with the metaverse, speculation surrounding what the metaverse might actually look and feel like will undoubtedly affect how the industry chooses to approach the new digital space. Some assume that the metaverse's online environments will be three-dimensional experiences transporting users to different digital worlds. Others suggest that most of the new action will predominantly play out on two-dimensional computer screens without drastically changing our daily lives. Perhaps the only thing certain about the metaverse is that its proponents are trying to provide users with new possibilities for immersion and interaction.



PIONEER

ADVANCEMENT

TECHNOLOGY





WHILE SOME THINGS ARE NOT CLEAR AT THIS EARLY STAGE, WHAT WE CAN SAY IS THAT THE METAVERSE WILL BE SHAPED BY IMMERSIVITY.

“While some things are not clear at this early stage, what we can say is that the metaverse will be shaped by immersivity,” elaborates Norton. “These immersive qualities are what sets the metaverse apart from its predecessors, this is what makes it different. And, in the worlds of entertainment and storytelling, this is where the excitement is focused. We are only just seeing what the intersection between old and new forms of communication and expression in the metaverse might look like.”

Music artists such as Ariana Grande and Travis Scott have performed live concerts in popular digital game *Fortnite* thanks to VR headgear. *Fortnite* and Coca-Cola recently collaborated with the launch of a new pixel-flavoured drink, where glimpses of this metaverse-inspired beverage first appeared within *Fortnite*’s digital universe rather than the world beyond the screen.

ViacomCBS is examining the ways in which its intellectual property can be reimagined in the metaverse. The company’s futurist-in-residence Ted Schilowitz delivered a keynote speech titled *Why the Metaverse Matters To Hollywood* at an event with MESA (Media & Entertainment Services Alliance). The event signified the launch of the MESAverse, MESA’s own take on the metaverse where delegates could interact in an exclusive virtual work environment.

Disney’s animation house Pixar has created an open-source language called Universal Scene Description (USD). USD was originally developed as a way for Pixar’s artists to work together using film-quality virtual assets. A designated VR space full of 3D graphics data is reachable if a member of the team has access to the internet. This readily-accessible coding language might offer ground-breaking possibilities for collaborative editing and filmic co-creation if it becomes widely-adopted across the metaverse.

“The film industry is all about content creation... If something like the metaverse offers another avenue for content creation then it’s good for us all,” muses

John Rakich, president of Location Managers Guild International (LMGI). “The only worry I have is that things could become a possession as opposed to something that everyone can see. As long as we figure out ways to keep things accessible and not exclusive, then it’ll be interesting to see where this could go within our industry.”

Virtual production was brought to the production community’s attention by Disney+’s *The Mandalorian*. This relatively new filmmaking technique harnesses game engine technology, merging live-action and postproduction into a single, streamlined process. Rather than shooting against a green screen and then turning to post-production and VFX at a later point, filmmakers can now visualise an entire scene ‘live,’ incorporating screen backdrops powered and rendered in real-time.

Real-time 3D – or real-time rendering – is a new form of computer graphics that enables photo-realistic graphics and animation to be rendered instantly. Once again, this technology was pioneered by the gaming industry. Organisations such as Epic Games and Unity

Technologies have adopted this process to create increasingly real forms of architectural visualisation in their games while, at the same time, enhancing the productivity of their workflows.

By shortening production time and cutting long waiting periods for rendering, the metaverse could unlock a new era of collaborative productivity among the international filmmaking community. However, the industry must approach the metaverse carefully, separating the developments which are obsolete or convoluted from the advancements which could change media production for the better.

“The joke has always been that the motion picture business is recession-proof because we create content,” observes Rakich. “That’s all we do – we create content for people to sit back and enjoy. Everyone wants escapism. No matter who you are in the world, you will always want entertainment, you will always want content. That’s what makes the film industry so special – being able to bring introduce something into someone’s life that they really care about, that they look forward to experiencing. And as the times rapidly change and evolve, we need to make sure that we don’t forget that.”

“THE FILM INDUSTRY IS ALL ABOUT CONTENT CREATION... IF SOMETHING LIKE THE METAVERSE OFFERS ANOTHER AVENUE FOR CONTENT CREATION THEN IT’S GOOD FOR US ALL.”



DESIGN COLLABORATION
 VIRTUAL REALITY