

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





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.

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



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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.

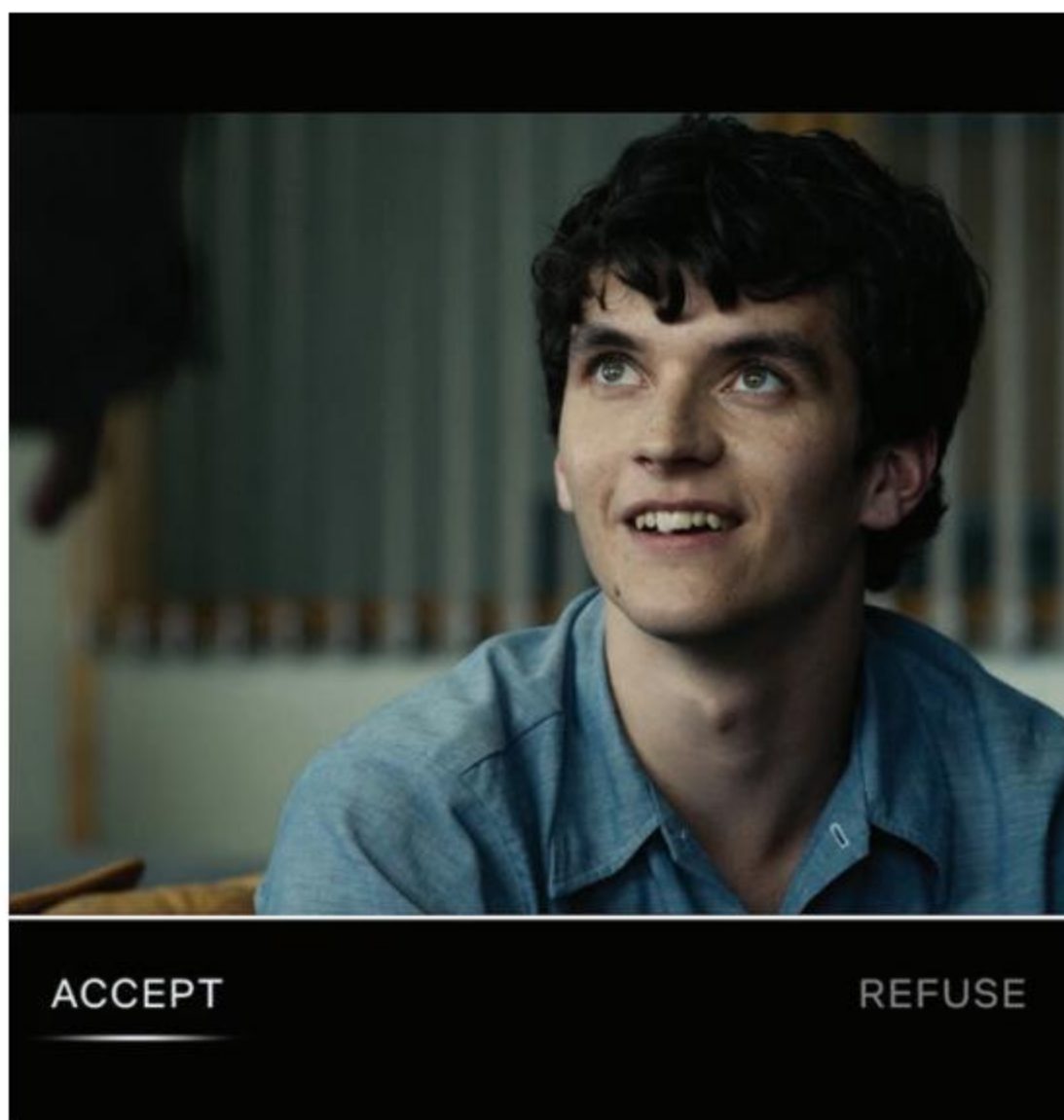
The enhanced interconnectivity provided by the internet means that content creation is entering a new golden era. Media formats across film, television, games, online learning, music videos and commercials are increasingly interacting and converging – allowing brands and businesses to amplify their messages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

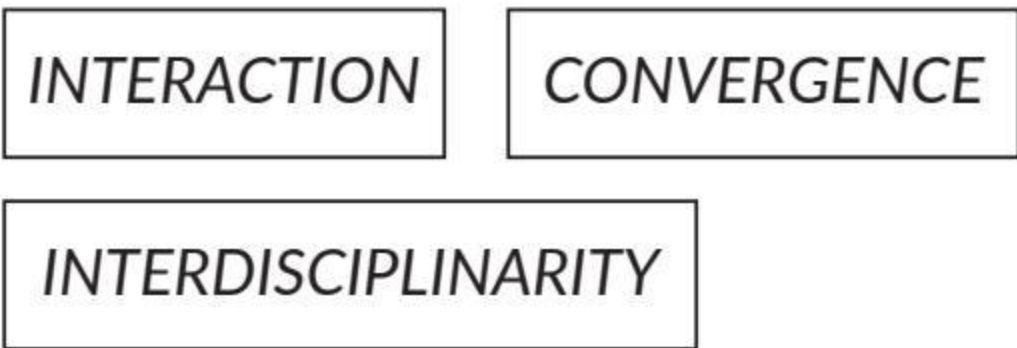
Such convergence between the film and video game industries is opening up many more options for creatives. Over the last decade, video game experiences have become increasingly cinematic.

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
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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.





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."

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."

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



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