

GLOBAL AI CINEMA

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A HUMAN-CENTERED FRAMEWORK

Cinema in the *Age of AI*

*Toward a shared language for evaluating, recognizing,
and preserving what is most human in the films of a new
era.*

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This paper proposes a way of seeing — not a final answer. It outlines the philosophical, evaluative, and institutional foundations on which Global AI Cinema is built, and invites filmmakers, scholars, technologists, and audiences into a longer conversation about what cinema becomes when made with — and not only by — human hands.

FOREWORD

A letter on what *we are trying to protect.*

Every era of cinema has had to ask itself the same question in new words: what is worth keeping?

Cinema has never been the camera, nor the celluloid, nor the cut. Cinema has been a way of looking — a way of holding human experience long enough that strangers can recognize themselves inside it. Every technology that has reshaped cinema, from sound to color to the digital cut, has triggered the same anxiety and the same opportunity: the chance to ask, again, what cinema is actually for.

We are inside such a moment. Generative AI has arrived not as a tool added to the filmmaker's kit, but as a new kind of collaborator — one capable of producing image, sound, and even narrative at scale. More than a million AI-generated video clips now appear each day. Festivals have begun screening AI work. Studios have begun commissioning it. The technical barriers that once separated who could make a film from who could merely imagine one are dissolving.

And yet, no shared language has emerged for evaluating what makes any of this *good*. No framework asks whether a work moves us, whether it gives voice to a story that would otherwise go unheard, whether it preserves the small human details that make cinema worth a life's attention. Without that language, the field risks measuring itself only by what is easiest to count — resolution, consistency, novelty — and missing what cinema has always been measured by: *truth, tenderness, and recognition.*

This paper is an attempt at that language. It is not a manifesto and not a standard. It is a first draft of a shared vocabulary — one we hope will grow through dialogue with the artists, scholars, and audiences who care about cinema as a human practice. We offer it now because the window in which a field defines itself is brief, and because we believe AI cinema, done with care, can expand rather than flatten what cinema has always meant.

What follows is the philosophy, the framework, and the architecture of an institution being built around a single conviction: *that AI cinema is at its best when it helps us see one another more clearly.*

JoJo Zou

FOUNDER · GLOBAL AI CINEMA

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The paper closes with the questions we believe a serious field of AI cinema must keep returning to. These are not conclusions. They are invitations.

PART ONE

I.

A defining *moment*.

The window in which a field decides what it values is narrower than the field itself realizes. We are inside that window now.

§ 1 · THE MOMENT

The arrival of a *new cinematic medium*.

In the span of three years, AI moved from a curiosity in post-production to a generative co-author of image, sound, and story. The tools went mainstream. The first AI films reached major festivals. And the speed of adoption began outpacing the speed of understanding.

By 2025, more than a million AI-generated video clips were being produced globally each day. By 2026, almost every major film festival had at least one program acknowledging the form. What had been called *experimental* a year earlier was already, by industry standards, mainstream practice. The cultural conversation, however, lagged behind the technical one.

A field is being formed in real time. Yet no widely accepted set of questions exists for evaluating what is being made. There are festivals. There are hackathons. There are short competitions, mostly judged on technical novelty. There is no shared frame for asking the older, harder questions cinema has always asked: *does the work mean something, and to whom?*

Three structural gaps.

The current AI cinema landscape is fragmented across three layers, each of which a mature field eventually develops and a young field rarely thinks to build:

PRODUCTION

The tools have outpaced the craft. Without shared reference points for what good AI filmmaking *looks like*, creators are mostly self-taught and self-judged. The result is extraordinary range — and almost no agreed-upon vocabulary for distinguishing what is masterful from what is merely competent.

EVALUATION

Most evaluation today is either purely technical (resolution, consistency, render speed) or purely promotional (likes, views, virality). The properly cinematic questions — story intent, emotional truth, originality, social weight — remain mostly absent from how AI work is judged.

DISTRIBUTION

Outstanding AI work struggles to reach the audiences who would value it most. Without curatorial infrastructure, films find platforms but not contexts. The next generation of AI filmmakers risks being seen by algorithms before they are seen by peers.

§ 2 · WHY NOW

Fields are shaped in *brief windows*.

Every cinematic movement that came to define a generation — Italian neorealism, the French New Wave, New Hollywood, independent cinema — was born in a narrow window when the tools, the audience, and the cultural appetite aligned, and a small group of people gave the moment a name and a set of values before anyone else did.

The same pattern is true of institutions. The Pulitzer Prize was founded in 1917, not because journalism waited for it, but because someone decided it should be defined now rather than later. The Academy Awards followed in 1927, at a similar inflection point for film. The Sundance Institute, decades later, gave independent cinema a permanent center of gravity at precisely the moment it had become possible — and was still being dismissed.

*The window is open. It is time to give AI cinema a soul —
before the world gives it a price.*

— A GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Whoever names the values of AI cinema in this window will shape the medium for decades. This is not a matter of prestige; it is a matter of *which questions get asked of every AI film made for the next generation*. If we ask only about technical sophistication, we will optimize for that. If we ask whether a film expanded what its audience understood about another human being, we will optimize for that.

The first of those futures is already arriving on its own. The second has to be built on purpose.

OUR POSITION

Global AI Cinema exists to make the second future possible — to establish, with academic rigor and institutional independence, a framework that judges AI cinema by what cinema has always been judged by: *how clearly it lets us see one another*.

§ 3 · THE RECOGNITION PROBLEM

The bottleneck is no longer *production*.

For most of cinema's history, the binding constraint was the cost of making a film. In the age of AI, that constraint has nearly dissolved. A different one has taken its place — and it is the one the framework is built to address.

Why the old categories *no longer fit*.

For a century, films have been evaluated through familiar categories: director, script, cast, cinematography, production design, editing, budget, genre, commercial potential. These categories still describe a part of what cinema is. They no longer describe all of it. AI cinema raises questions the old vocabulary cannot answer:

- What is the role of the human creator inside a work the machine partially produced?
- How much of the work was generated, guided, edited, or transformed by AI — and does that ratio matter?
- Is the achievement technical, artistic, emotional, narrative, or conceptual?
- How should we judge a film whose camera, actor, world, or image may not physically exist?

Infinite generation, *finite attention*.

When generation becomes effortless, the scarcities shift. Production is no longer the constraint. Three new constraints take its place — and they all run scarce in the same direction.

I · ATTENTION

Curation over production

When the volume of generated work is infinite, the bottleneck moves from making to choosing. Curation — and the standards that make curation legitimate — becomes more important than production capacity.

II · TRUST

The new scarcity

Audiences increasingly want to know what they are looking at, who made it, and on what terms. Provenance, authorship, and disclosure become the conditions under which any AI-generated work earns serious attention.

III · MEANING

The signal that survives copies

A work without meaning generates nothing — no resonance, no return, no memory. In an environment of infinite replication, meaning is the only signal that survives, and the only one worth organizing an institution around.

The problem is no longer production. The problem is recognition.

— THE SHIFT THE FRAMEWORK ANSWERS

PART TWO

II.

A human-centered *philosophy.*

The technical capabilities of AI cinema are real and astonishing. They are not, by themselves, what makes a film matter.

§ 1 · THE HEART

Cinema that *touches the human heart*.

A *film is good when, hours after it ends, something of it is still moving inside you. We believe AI cinema can do this. We believe most AI cinema today does not — and that the gap is not technical but philosophical.*

The instinct of any new medium is to celebrate what is newly possible. Early cinema marveled at motion. Early sound marveled at sound. Early color marveled at color. The marveling is a phase, not a destination. What endures is the work that uses the new capability in service of something older: *the human attempt to be understood by other humans*.

AI cinema is currently in its marveling phase. The output is breathtaking — and often emotionally empty. A perfect render of a face we do not care about is not a face. A technically flawless sequence whose subject we cannot locate in our own life is not a film; it is a demonstration. The dimension that AI cinema most often lacks is the one that classical cinema most depends on: *that we have been somewhere we could not otherwise have gone, and have met someone we could not otherwise have met*.

The first principle of our framework, therefore, is that AI cinema is to be judged the way cinema has always been judged: by whether it reaches the viewer. The most sophisticated AI pipeline matters less to us than a single image that makes a stranger weep.

A perfect render of a face we do not care about is not a face.

— ON THE LIMITS OF TECHNICAL MASTERY

§ 2 · EXPANSION

Expanding human *consciousness and perspective*.

Cinema's deepest function has always been to extend the range of what a viewer can imagine being. It does this by placing us inside a perspective not our own — a stranger's childhood, a country we have not visited, an interior monologue we have not had, a possibility we had not allowed ourselves to picture. When a film works, the world that walks out of the theater is larger than the world that walked in.

AI changes the cost structure of building those perspectives. Worlds that once required tens of millions of dollars can now be sketched by a single artist over a weekend. Histories that no studio would fund can be visualized by their descendants. Inner landscapes that no production designer could literalize can be rendered exactly as their author imagined them.

This is, in our view, the single most important promise of AI cinema: not that it lowers the cost of existing films, but that it *makes possible films that did not exist before* — and could not have existed under the old economics of production.

Three kinds of *expansion*.

I · GEOGRAPHIC

Worlds previously unreachable

Stories from regions, communities, and historical moments that the global industry has never had the economic incentive to film become visualizable by the people who carry them.

II · INTERIOR

Inner worlds made visible

Dream, memory, grief, hallucination, mental state — the cinema of the interior, long limited by literal photography, gains a new vocabulary in generative tools.

III · SPECULATIVE

Futures imagined honestly

Visions of possible futures — climate, technology, social organization — can be rendered with rigor by the thinkers who care about them, not only by the studios that can afford them.

Each of these is a form of consciousness expansion. Each asks the viewer to inhabit, briefly, an awareness larger than their own. We hold this kind of expansion as a central measure of AI cinema's worth.

§ 3 · THE UNSEEN

Giving visibility to *underrepresented and marginalized stories*.

The film industry of the twentieth century was a distribution problem before it was an art form. Whose stories reached a screen depended, more than anything else, on whose stories could afford to.

Cost has been cinema's quietest editor. Most of human experience never made it to film, not because it lacked drama or beauty, but because no production company could justify the budget. Languages spoken by a million people are too small a market. Histories that complicate national narratives are too risky. Lives lived outside major cities, major economies, and major identities are too unfamiliar to test well. Generations of human experience have been quietly left out of the visual record of our species.

AI cinema offers, for the first time, a real possibility of changing that arithmetic. A filmmaker in a small town can build a world. A diaspora community can reconstruct a history that was never filmed. A speaker of an endangered language can leave behind not only a recording, but a cinematic record of the world that language describes. This is not a marginal benefit of the technology. *It is, in our view, the most important thing AI cinema can be used for.*

A framework that does not actively reward this work — that treats it as a niche category rather than a defining one — will reproduce, in AI cinema, the same exclusions that shaped twentieth-century cinema. Our framework is constructed to refuse that outcome. The capacity of a film to give visibility to a story the world has not yet heard is, for us, one of the highest measures of merit.

COMMITMENT

The *Best Social Impact* category, the *Best Human–AI Collaboration* category, and the criteria underlying the *Jury Grand Prize* are all structured to surface, name, and elevate films that bring the unseen into the seen.

§ 4 · NUANCE

Preserving human *nuance and cinematic detail*.

There is a particular danger in any generative medium: that, in optimizing for what is easy to produce, it slowly forgets what is hard to notice. Cinema, of all the arts, lives in what is hard to notice. A film is rarely beloved for its spectacle; it is beloved for the small breath the actor takes before answering, the way light catches a particular cup, the silence held one beat too long. These are not flourishes. They are the medium itself.

We are concerned that early AI cinema tends, on average, toward a kind of smoothness — visually polished, narratively legible, but emotionally averaged. The texture of the individual moment is the first thing the optimization function loses. We believe a framework worth building must refuse this drift.

Rich detail as a *quality dimension*.

We are introducing, as a first-class evaluation criterion, the concept of *cinematic detail*: the density of small, observed, particular truths inside a frame. This is distinct from resolution, from realism, and from consistency. A film can be technically perfect and detail-poor. A film can be technically rough and detail-rich. The latter is closer, almost always, to what cinema is actually for.

WHAT RICH CINEMATIC DETAIL LOOKS LIKE

Specificity of place: the particular wear on a doorframe, the dust on a windshield, the way one window in a row of apartments is the only one with a plant in it. Specificity of behavior: the gesture a character makes only because of something that happened to them ten years earlier. Specificity of light: how it falls in a way no two cities share. These are not decorative. They are the signal that a human was paying attention.

WHAT HUMAN NUANCE LOOKS LIKE

Hesitation. Contradiction. The expression that doesn't quite fit the situation. The voice that gives away more than the line. A character who is not, at every moment, doing exactly what they were written to do. AI tends, by default, toward coherence. Humans tend, in their best moments, toward revealing inconsistency. The film that holds the second inside the first is the film we want to honor.

Cinema, of all the arts, lives in what is hard to notice.

— ON DETAIL AS SUBSTANCE

§ 5 · TRUTH & NATURE

Truth and nature in a *synthetic medium*.

Two older words anchor everything else we ask of an AI film. They are older than the medium. They are also more endangered by it.

On *truth*.

Truth in cinema has never meant accuracy. A documentary can lie; a fairy tale can tell the truth. What cinema has always meant by truth is *recognition* — the moment a viewer thinks, *yes, that is how it is*, even when the image is impossible. AI cinema, with its capacity to generate any image, makes this older meaning of truth more important, not less.

We will reward the work that arrives at recognition. We will be wary of the work that arrives at mere plausibility. Plausibility is a property of pixels. Truth is a property of what those pixels do inside a viewer.

On *nature*.

The other word we mean to keep is *nature*. By nature we do not only mean the natural world, though that matters. We mean the unforced, the unstaged — the quality of something that was not built but found. A leaf moves in the wind the way only a leaf can. A child says something the way only a child does. These are not effects to be reproduced; they are the world being itself inside the frame.

AI tends, by default, to compose. Every frame becomes a decision; every element, an intention. Our framework holds space for cinema that resists this default — work that lets the world remain partly itself, that does not author every grain of what it shows.

Truth and nature are not constraints on AI cinema. They are what AI cinema, done at its best, can give back.

— ON THE OLDER MEASURES

§ 6 · THE LAB

The lab, and the *wider circle*.

A *framework that lives only in a jury chamber is a framework that has already failed. Our values must reach the people making the films, not only those judging them.*

A new *economics of who gets to tell a story*.

For a century, the cost of cinema decided who got to make one. The stories that reached a screen were the stories someone could afford to tell. What costs ten million dollars to capture in classical production can now be approached for five thousand. That is not a marginal change. It is the largest expansion of cinematic authorship since the camera became portable — and it changes *who counts as a filmmaker*.

The *AI Cinema Lab*.

The Lab is the teaching and research arm of Global AI Cinema — open in spirit, structured in approach. Its purpose is to place the framework, the tools, and the harder questions in the hands of people outside the existing industry: the filmmaker in a small town, the diaspora storyteller, the community archivist, the young creator whose access to cinema has, until now, been an access to watching it. We are building the Lab for them as much as for the studios.

WHAT WE HOPE THE TOOLS ARE USED FOR.

We are not neutral. Across the work the Lab supports, three commitments recur: stories of communities and individuals history has not heard from; stories that aim, modestly or ambitiously, to move someone; and stories that hold themselves to the older standards of why a film should exist at all.

A NOTE ON SCARCITY

The technical horizon of AI cinema is *photorealism* — and photorealism, on its own, is an empty victory. What will become scarce, and therefore precious, is not flawless surface. It is human truth, human goodness, and human beauty — the older words for what cinema has always been measured by. We are building toward that scarcity, not away from it.

PART THREE

III.

Six *principles* of AI cinema.

The convictions of the previous chapter, made operational: six commitments we ask every work, every juror, and every institution carrying our name to honor.

§ 1 · THE PRINCIPLES

What we ask *every work to honor.*

These six principles are the operating values of Global AI Cinema. They guide selection. They orient the jury. They shape the evaluation framework. They are the questions every AI Cinema Award implicitly asks of every film.

*i.***Touch the *human heart.***

A film is not good because it is correct. A film is good because it reaches the viewer. We measure AI cinema by emotional truth before we measure it by anything else.

*ii.***Expand *consciousness.***

Each work should leave the viewer with a perspective they did not have before. We reward the film that enlarges the world, not the one that merely confirms it.

*iii.***Give voice to the *unseen.***

AI cinema's most important gift is access. We actively elevate work that gives visibility to stories, languages, and communities the industry has historically left out.

*iv.***Preserve *human nuance.***

The hesitation, the contradiction, the unfinished sentence — the marks of a real person inside a frame. We hold these as the irreducible signal of human authorship.

*v.***Honor *cinematic detail.***

The density of observed, particular truths inside the frame is itself a quality dimension. We treat richness of detail as a first-class measure of craft.

*vi.***Serve *cultural memory.***

AI cinema can preserve what would otherwise be lost — languages, places, lives, histories. The most enduring work, in our view, contributes to cultural memory rather than substituting for it.

Together, these principles describe a cinema that uses AI to deepen the human record, not to replace it.

§ 2 · IN PRACTICE

A *test* for any AI film.

The principles above can be condensed into a single working test that any creator, juror, or audience member can apply to any AI film, anywhere.

THE WORKING TEST

Does the work let us see another person, place, or possibility more clearly than we did before — with the particular detail, texture, and emotional truth that only a human, or a human working with AI, could have produced?

IF YES — THE WORK IS DOING THE THING WE ARE TRYING TO HONOR.

What the test *does not* ask.

It does not ask how the film was made. It does not ask what percentage of frames were generated. It does not ask which tools were used. The framework is intentionally medium-agnostic: an entirely human-shot film with AI used only for grading, and a fully synthetic film with no photographic capture, are evaluated on the same axes. What is being judged is the work, not its provenance.

What the test *does* ask is whether the work contributes to the human record. Whether it preserves something. Whether it expands something. Whether it moves someone. These are old questions in a new context, and they remain, in our view, the only durable ones.

An ethical undercurrent.

The principles are not neutral. They imply a position. We do not believe AI cinema is best evaluated by its technical surface, by its compliance with photographic realism, or by its commercial reach. We believe it is best evaluated by what it does for, and to, the people who watch it. The rest of this paper describes how that conviction is built into an institution.

PART FOUR

IV.

A framework for *evaluation*.

Philosophy made operational. Six dimensions through which we read every work — three concerned with craft, three with meaning, weighted to keep the human at the center.

§ 1 · DIMENSIONS

Six dimensions of *cinematic value*.

Every AI film is read through six dimensions, three on the side of meaning, three on the side of craft. The dimensions interact; a film cannot be reduced to a single score without losing what made it worth recognizing.

i.	Story & Intent	20%
Emotional resonance, originality, intent alignment, and the clarity of what the film is trying to do. Did the work move us, and did it move us in the direction it set out to move us?		
ii.	Cinematic Craft	25%
Camera, lighting, editing, sound, and rhythm. The classical disciplines of filmmaking, applied to the new medium. Includes <i>richness of cinematic detail</i> as a first-class measure.		
iii.	Human Nuance	15%
The presence of hesitation, contradiction, behavioral specificity, and unforced moments. The signature of a human consciousness inside the frame, however the frame was made.		
iv.	AI Generation Quality	15%
Technical execution of generative work: temporal consistency, spatial coherence, artifact discipline, motion realism. The floor on which everything else stands.		
v.	Human–AI Collaboration	15%
The clarity and inventiveness with which human authorship and machine capability are combined. Did the AI expand what the human could express?		
vi.	Cultural & Social Impact	10%
Visibility given to underrepresented stories, contribution to cultural memory, the work's standing as a record of a place, a moment, or a community.		

§ 2 · ANCHORS & CALIBRATION

Anchors, and the discipline of *calibration*.

A dimension without anchors is an opinion. The framework names what a high score looks like, what a low score looks like, and the language a juror is expected to use between.

Anchors — *worked examples*.

Human *nuance*

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 9 · HIGH | A character's expression shifts mid-line in a way that complicates what they are saying. Behaviour outruns the script. The film leaves the viewer holding more than they were told. |
| 6 · MID | Performance reads as real but legible — emotionally coherent, without surprise. Few unforced moments, but no falsification. |
| 3 · LOW | Faces are smooth, lit well, and emotionally flat. The actors do exactly what their function requires, and nothing more. |

Cultural *memory*

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 9 · HIGH | The film preserves a specific place, time, voice, or community that would not otherwise have been recorded. |
| 6 · MID | The film references a culture but does not deepen it. |
| 3 · LOW | The film is set anywhere, for anyone, in no particular time. |

Calibration and *bias control*.

Anchors reduce ambiguity. Process reduces bias. Four standing disciplines apply to every evaluation:

- Panel diversity by design. Each jury is composed across geography, language, generation, and discipline. No panel is staffed from a single cultural frame.
- Blind review where possible. Works are reviewed without identifying information about the creators wherever the category permits.
- Dimensional scoring, not single ranking. Films are scored across six independent dimensions, never reduced to a single ranking against another film.
- AI as second reader, not arbiter. Divergences between human and AI scores are flagged for jury discussion — not averaged into a hidden compromise.

ON NON-COMMENSURABILITY

The framework deliberately refuses to score a 1960s neorealist film and a 2026 generative short on a single number. Films are judged against the standards of the work they are. When cross-era or cross-cultural comparison is required, it is conducted *in language, not arithmetic*.

§ 3 · METHODOLOGY

How the framework was *derived*.

The dimensions are not invented in the abstract. They are derived from three concurrent inputs, each chosen to keep the framework honest to the field as it exists today.

I · CLOSE ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY AI CINEMA.

A studied corpus of AI-native works from the first wave of festival-screened cinema, examined scene by scene against classical evaluation traditions. Where existing vocabularies held, we kept them. Where they failed — most often around questions of authorship, originality, and the human signature inside generated material — we asked what new measures the work itself was calling for.

II · DIALOGUE WITH PRACTITIONERS AND SCHOLARS.

Structured conversations with filmmakers, producers, critics, technologists, and academics working at the leading edge of the form. These sessions surfaced what the field already implicitly judges by — and, more importantly, what it currently lacks the language to name. The framework is, in a real sense, a transcription of those tacit standards.

III · REVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL PRECEDENT.

How earlier media — photography, sound, color, the digital cut — were absorbed into the evaluation frameworks of their moment. What was kept. What was lost. What was added. AI cinema is the latest in a long series of such absorptions, and the patterns of that history shaped both our dimensions and their weights.

A LIVING DOCUMENT

The six dimensions and their weights reflect the conviction that *meaning and craft, taken together, must outweigh technical execution by design*. Weights will be reviewed annually by the Awards & Recognition committee in dialogue with the academic partner and the founding jury, and amended transparently in subsequent editions of this paper.

§ 4 · THE HYBRID MODEL

Two eyes, *one judgment*.

Every work is read twice — once by a jury of human experts, once by a structured AI evaluation system — and the two readings are placed in dialogue. Final decisions are made by the jury. The AI reading exists to make the jury's reasoning more rigorous, not to replace it.

LAYER ONE

The human jury

Specialized panels — Feature, Short, Technical, Narrative, Innovation — read each work for emotional truth, originality, and cultural weight. Independence, confidentiality, and diversity of perspective are the operating disciplines of the jury.

LAYER TWO

The AI reading

A structured AI system reads each work across the six dimensions, producing a transparent and explainable score. The reading is consistent, scalable, and built for replicability — not authority.

LAYER THREE

The dialogue

The two readings are compared. Where they diverge, the divergence itself becomes evidence the jury examines. The final decision belongs to the human jury, supported by the Board's ethical oversight.

Transparency as a *governing principle*.

The AI evaluation layer is built as an open academic instrument, developed in dialogue with academic and creative partners. Its weights, prompts, and reasoning are documented and published. The system is treated as a research apparatus — continuously revised, never treated as final or authoritative.

We hold this distinction firmly. *AI does not award films. The jury, supported by AI, awards films.* The boundary is structural, not rhetorical.

WHAT THE AI READS — AND WHAT IT DOES NOT.

The AI evaluation layer analyzes temporal consistency, spatial coherence, motion realism, artifact discipline, color and compression integrity, and structural features such as cut rhythm and pacing. It does not assess emotional truth, narrative significance, cultural weight, or originality of intent — those remain exclusively human domains. The boundary is drawn deliberately: AI is asked to read the surface of a film; the jury is asked to read what the surface is for.

PROCESS INTEGRITY

Every evaluation produces a documented audit trail: standardized categories, dimensional scores, qualitative rationale, and — where relevant — frame-level evidence. The same record is shared with the filmmaker. We believe that the explanation of a judgment is part of the judgment.

PART FIVE

V.

Institutional *architecture*.

Independence, accountability, and built to last. The governance model is borrowed from the institutions that have already shown that a new field can outlive its founders.

§ 1 · LINEAGE

Built on *proven models*.

Three institutions, each born in a similar inflection moment for its medium, gave us the structural template Global AI Cinema is built on. We borrow not their content but their architecture: an independent board, an academic partner, a vision-led founder, and a long horizon.

1917

The Pulitzer Prize

Administered by Columbia University. An independent board governs decisions. The university provides academic credibility and administration — not ownership. A century later, still the gold standard.

1927

The Academy

Industry-led. Categories defined by the field. Membership-based, evolving with the medium. The model for an institution that becomes the field's shared vocabulary without ever owning the field.

1981

Sundance Institute

Vision-led by a single founder. Academic and industry partnership at its core. Built the cultural authority of independent film over decades — a long-horizon institution by design.

What we keep from each.

From the *Pulitzer*, the principle that an institution must be governed by a board that does not own it. From the *Academy*, the idea that categories evolve with the medium and that the field defines its own standards. From *Sundance*, the conviction that vision matters and that authority is built across decades, not seasons.

A university administers. An independent board governs. The framework belongs to the prize.

— THE STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLE

§ 2 · GOVERNANCE

Independent, accountable, *built to last*.

Global AI Cinema is organized in five layers, each with a distinct role and a clear boundary against the others. The design is intentionally classical: the values are new, the institutional form is not.

I · INDEPENDENT BOARD

Strategic direction, standards, long-term continuity. Five standing committees — Ethics & Standards, Finance & Audit, Governance, Awards & Recognition, and Global Partnerships. A permanent founder seat sits among institutional representatives, industry leaders, and an Ethics & Integrity Officer.

II · ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP

A founding academic partner — to be formalized — will co-develop the evaluation framework, contribute faculty seats to the jury, and anchor the work in scholarly rigor. The academy is treated as a layer of legitimacy distinct from ownership: it shapes the standard without holding it.

III · EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS — GLOBAL AI CINEMA

Owns the framework and the operational system. Runs selection, evaluation, ceremony, distribution, and partnerships. Reports to the Board on a quarterly cadence. Carries the day-to-day responsibility for the integrity of the process.

IV · DUAL EVALUATION LAYER

Five specialized human juries paired with the structured AI evaluation system. Final authority rests with the jury; AI reading exists as an analytical support layer.

V · ECOSYSTEM & DISTRIBUTION

Festival partnerships, industry collaboration, media distribution, creator community, and the youth council. The layer through which the framework reaches creators and audiences globally.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

INDEPENDENCE · INTEGRITY · EXCELLENCE · DIVERSITY · LEGACY · INNOVATION

Six values, each binding on every layer. The board, the academy, the operations team, and the jury are each individually accountable to these — not to the founders, and not to commercial pressure.

§ 3 · TRUST & INTEGRITY

The architecture of *trust*.

Global AI Cinema is building a standard framework for AI-native cinema. It exists to build, test, publish, and continuously refine that framework in public dialogue with artists, scholars, technologists, festivals, and audiences. What follows is how we hold ourselves to that work.

TRUST PRINCIPLE

Global AI Cinema will not ask audiences, creators, or institutions to trust a black box. Every recognition process must be explainable, reviewable, and accountable. AI may assist the evaluation process, but final recognition belongs to human judgment. *The purpose of the system is not to automate taste, but to make judgment more rigorous, transparent, and fair.*

I · WHAT WE DISCLOSE.

Creators must disclose the AI tools used, the role of the human author and team, the source material, the rights cleared, and whether real people, voices, archival images, or likenesses appear in the work. Disclosure is the precondition of recognition — not a penalty, but a requirement.

II · HOW WE EVALUATE.

Every film receives a dimensional score across the six dimensions, a written rationale from the jury, and, where relevant, technical evidence supporting the AI reading. No final result is communicated without its reasoning.

III · WHAT AI CAN AND CANNOT JUDGE.

AI assists with technical analysis — consistency, coherence, motion realism, structural features. AI cannot decide emotional truth, cultural significance, moral value, or final awards. Those determinations remain human, and they remain final.

IV · CONFLICT OF INTEREST, AND FINAL AUTHORITY.

Jurors must recuse themselves where they hold financial, personal, advisory, or production ties to a submitted work. Recusals are documented; replacements are independent. *Final recognition always belongs to the human jury.*

§ 4 · A PATH TO VALIDATION

From proposal to *validated standard*.

This is a proposed framework, not a final universal standard. The path from one to the other is public — and the path itself is part of the work.

ON THE STATUS OF V·01.

White Paper V·01 is based on early field observation, expert conversations, analysis of emerging AI-native films, and review of historical award and governance models. It is not yet a statistically validated benchmark. The next phase will publish a pilot evaluation protocol, sample scoring sheets, the juror calibration process, and anonymized findings from the first evaluated film cohort.

FIVE PHASES TO A WORKING STANDARD.

PHASE 1 Foundational framework. White Paper V·01, public philosophy, proposed evaluation dimensions.

PHASE 2 Pilot evaluation. Evaluate 20–50 AI films with human jury and AI analysis.

PHASE 3 Calibration. Compare juror scores, AI readings, points of disagreement, and creator feedback.

PHASE 4 Public report. Publish the AI Cinema Evaluation Report V·01 with findings and revisions.

PHASE 5 Recognition system. Launch annual awards and category-based recognition.

VERSION HISTORY.

V·01 — First public release, 2026.

V·02 — Planned methodology expansion, pilot findings, scoring protocol.

Global AI Cinema is not simply defining the standard, or launching an award. It is building the trust layer for AI-native cinema.

— WHAT THIS PAPER IS FINALLY FOR

PART SIX

VI.

Categories of *recognition*.

The awards are not the objective. They are the most visible expression of the framework — a way of pointing, each year, at the work the field should remember.

§ 1 · THE CATEGORIES

Eight categories. *One commitment.*

Recognition over competition. Each category is built to surface a particular kind of excellence — not to rank filmmakers against each other, but to make visible the plural ways AI cinema can be done well.

Best AI <i>Feature Film</i> Full-length narrative works where AI plays a central role in storytelling, visual language, or production.	Best AI <i>Short Film</i> Short-form works under 20 minutes demonstrating innovative use of AI in cinematic expression.
Best <i>Visual Innovation</i> Exceptional use of AI in cinematography, visual effects, animation, or image generation.	Best <i>Sound & Score</i> Outstanding AI-generated or AI-assisted music composition, sound design, and audio storytelling.
Best <i>Screenplay & Narrative</i> Excellence in AI-assisted or AI-generated story structure, dialogue, and narrative originality.	Best <i>Social Impact</i> Works using AI cinema to advance cultural dialogue, social awareness, or cross-cultural storytelling.
Best <i>Human–AI Collaboration</i> Works that demonstrate the creative partnership between human vision and AI capability — where AI brings out the fullest creative potential of the human.	<i>Jury Grand Prize</i> The highest honor — awarded to the work that best defines the future of AI cinema across all dimensions of the framework.

A NOTE ON CATEGORIES

The categories are deliberately broader than they are granular. We believe a young medium needs room to surprise its evaluators. As the field matures, categories will be reviewed and revised by the Awards & Recognition committee in dialogue with the academic partner.

PART VII

When everything can be generated, *Real becomes priceless.*

I f we do our work, the awards ceremony at the end of this decade will look unlike any cinema ceremony before it. What follows is not a prediction. It is a working sketch of where the framework points.

The *rarest material in the room.*

In an age of infinite replication, the one resource that cannot be synthesized is the lived experience and physical presence of a real person. Among the honored guests at our ceremony will be the protagonists themselves — the woman from a remote town whose story crossed an ocean, the elder whose language was nearly lost, the ordinary subject whose life became the substance of a film. Their existence and their experience are precisely what AI cannot make. That is why they belong on the stage.

The ceremony as a *working model.*

STAGE ONE

The human–AI debate

Best AI Short Film is announced jointly by the jury and the AI evaluation system. Where they agree, the choice stands. Where they diverge, the disagreement is staged openly — a public conversation, in real time, about why two readings yielded two answers.

STAGE TWO

Co-creation

Each winner names three words from the stage. The audience, using AI tools on their own devices, generates a one-minute response film in real time, projected on the dome above the room. It is imperfect by design — the ceremony briefly becoming the medium it celebrates.

STAGE THREE

The honored guest

The real person inside the film steps forward. Not as subject, but as witness. The room is reminded what the whole apparatus is finally for: a human being, made more visible to other human beings.

The *post-star era.*

The post-star era is not a star-less era. Two new figures will stand at the center of cinematic culture: the *real human inside the AI film* — whose story was told, whose presence anchored the work — and the *AI cinema director* — who chose, framed, and shaped the system around them. Authorship and presence, both honored. The top artists of this era will be the ones who capture the smallest, truest human details, and who raise the harder philosophical questions inside the technological flood. We are setting, in advance, the standard for what will turn out to matter.

In the age of AI, a good film is one that lets you see another real person more clearly.

— THE MEASURE WE ARE BUILDING TOWARD

APPENDIX

Notes and *references*.

This paper is a foundational document, not a survey. The notes below identify the primary sources and historical references that shaped its claims, and mark areas of methodology that will be expanded in subsequent editions.

1. ON THE SCALE OF AI VIDEO

The figure of more than one million AI-generated video clips produced globally each day is drawn from industry reporting in 2024–2025, including the *Reuters Digital News Report* and tracking by major generative-video platforms. The absolute number is less significant than the trajectory: the form has crossed from experimental to ambient within roughly thirty-six months.

2. ON CINEMATIC MOVEMENTS

References to Italian neorealism, the French New Wave, New Hollywood, and the independent cinema of the 1980s and 1990s draw on the standard historical literature — Bazin, Truffaut, Biskind, and contemporary film historians — without aiming to argue any one position within that scholarship. They appear here as examples of moments in which a medium's evaluative language was formed inside a brief window.

3. ON INSTITUTIONAL PRECEDENT

Historical details concerning the Pulitzer Prize (founded 1917, administered by Columbia University), the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (founded 1927), and the Sundance Institute (founded 1981 by Robert Redford) are drawn from each institution's public record. We cite them as governance models, not partners.

4. ON THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The six dimensions and their weights are the product of analysis and dialogue described in Part IV §3. A more detailed methodology paper, including the corpus reviewed and the protocols of expert consultation, will accompany White Paper V·02 in 2027.

5. ON AI DISCLOSURE

The institution's posture on disclosure aligns with emerging frameworks for provenance and authorship labeling — including the C2PA content credentials standard and parallel efforts by major festivals and studios — and will evolve as those standards mature. Operational disclosure requirements for submission will be published separately as the framework moves from foundation to practice.

6. ON THE STATUS OF THIS PAPER

White Paper V·01 is a foundational, not final, text. Subsequent editions will refine the framework in public, in dialogue with the field. Corrections, challenges, and contributions are welcomed at the correspondence address on the final page.

The questions we keep *returning to*.

i. In the age of AI cinema, how can the medium unlock the fullest creative potential of humanity?

ii. How can technology preserve what is real — and what is human — when both have become possible to simulate?

iii. What kind of visual storytelling is worthy of the highest honor in a medium without a settled form?

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Founding Technical Advisor & Technical Evaluation Lead, Global AI Cinema; video quality and imaging scientist; former Principal Scientist at IMAX; co-founder of SSIMWAVE, recognized for AI-driven video quality measurement.

The framework also benefits from ongoing private conversations and informal exchanges with practitioners across AI, cinema, recommendation systems, imaging science, and emerging media.

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