

TOP SCREEN 2021

Tuesday 23 March – Thursday 20 May
ACMI, Fed Square

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority is proud to present Top Screen 2021 at ACMI, as part of the VCE Season of Excellence.

Top Screen 2021 is a fantastic representation of the originality and creativity of talented filmmakers from all over Victoria.

VCE Media is a brilliant study! Students have the opportunity to create a product of their choosing while being able to master their ariform by using their imagination, creativity, problem-solving skills and industry-style processes.

After such a challenging year, especially for practical subjects like VCE Media, the filmmakers of Top Screen 2021 were still able to create and present works that show their dedication, enthusiasm and pride in their concepts. Ideas were tweaked, plans were changed (sometimes entirely!) and media forms were altered, yet these students still produced wonderful films in a very difficult context. These media products reflect the students' resilience and will go on to have a life outside of school, which is something to remember and be very proud of!

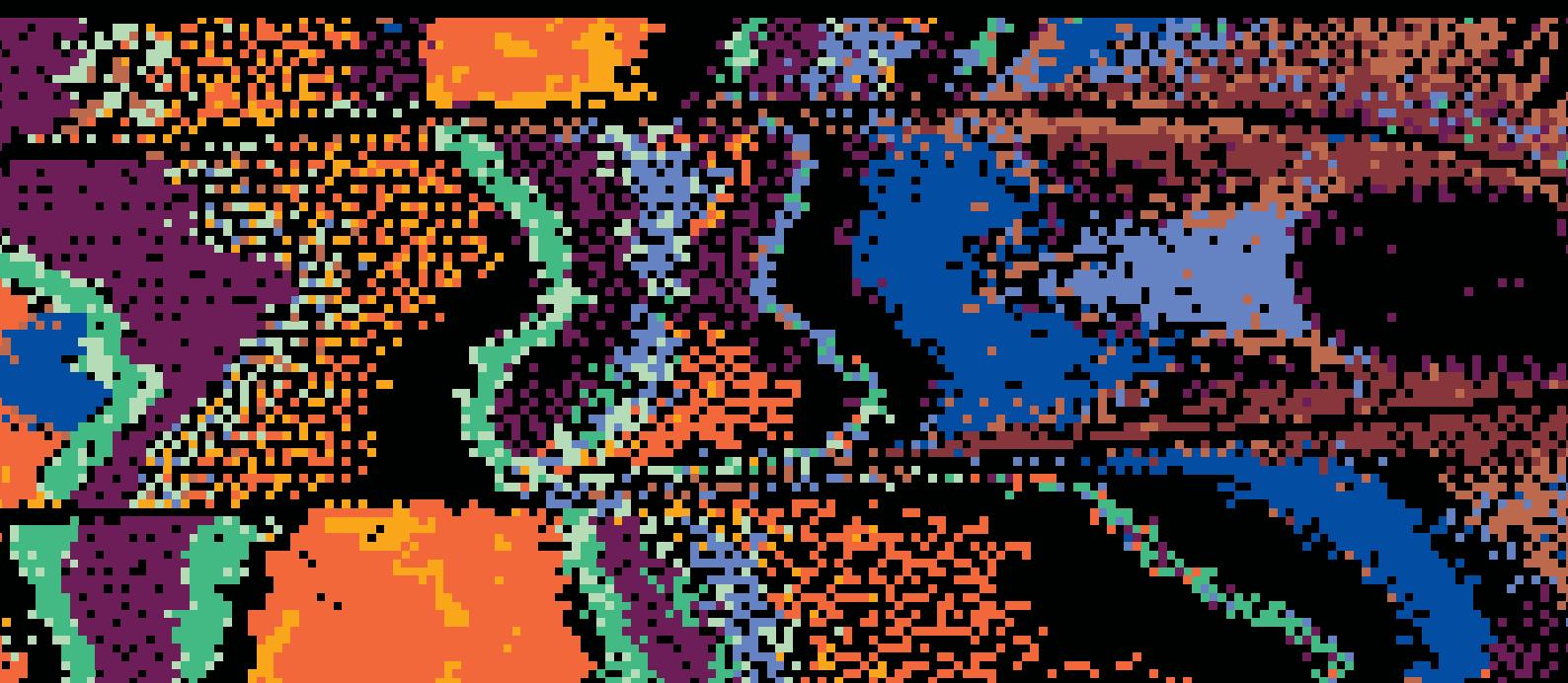
This year's Top Screen program only represents a small segment of the wonderful films created by VCE Media students in 2020. Students told stories that reflected their feelings throughout the year. They were honest, moving, funny and entertaining. These media creators have represented the world as they experience it today. The selection panel was impressed by the variety of work, from animations to documentaries, and the range of genres as well as the flexibility that students demonstrated to produce meaningful narratives.

We are so proud of the work that has been created in VCE Media and would like to thank the teachers, schools, families and friends who have inspired and supported our filmmakers to produce such engaging products.

Top Screen is just one of the displays of wonderful Media products; don't forget to visit the Melbourne Museum to see other VCE Media products in photography, print and audio at Top Designs.

Congratulations to all the filmmakers, their schools, families and teachers on being a part of Top Screen 2021.

Renee Paxton, State Reviewer for VCE Media



Anise Perry

Williamstown High School, Williamstown

Just Peachy

Animation, 6 min

In the dead of night, Peachy's boring life is brightened as he discovers a peach tree placed mysteriously on his doorstep. At his office job, he savours the peach, devouring its delicious flesh, his only respite from the drudgery of work. However, what initially brought him joy now reveals itself to be a thing of nightmares.

In making this project, I intended to create an animated short film in a magical realist style to explore artistic expression. Inspired by the Japanese animators Atsushi Wada and Q-rais, it seeks to comment on the dystopian lifestyle of corporate workers.

Elle Vanden Boom

Genazzano FCJ College, Kew

In My Dreams

Drama, 4 min

Ash is a teenage girl who deals with the struggles presented by the COVID-19 lockdown. As she adapts to the challenges of being isolated and unable to do the things that make her happy, she reflects on, through her dreams, the times before the pandemic. The production explores themes of youth and coming of age.

In this film, I hoped to represent the effects of the lockdown from a teenage perspective. As isolation from normal life becomes a reality, the protagonist is forced to reflect on her past.

Elaf Elsheikh

Southern Cross Grammar, Caroline Springs

Recycled

Animation, 4 min

A young boy struggling to perfect his passion for art, learns to acknowledge the changing environment. With a focus on deforestation, this tale delves into the harm it has on nature's beauty. The story journeys through Sam's life as he grows older and draws comparison with the land decaying around him.

In making this film, I hoped to draw attention to the issue of deforestation by showing the perspective of a younger boy who realises its devastating effect on the world. I wanted to empower audiences to make a change.

Tadji Ulrich

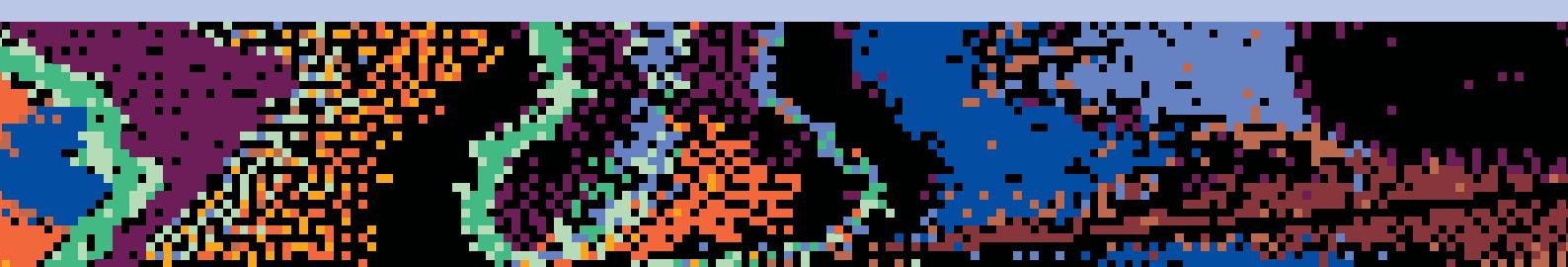
Box Hill High School, Box Hill

The Final Thought

Science fiction, 10 min

Phen is a recently single university student looking for some money and a little romance. He accepts an offer to join an experiment in which he will interact with a female humanoid with artificial intelligence (AI), Mila. He is told the experiment is about whether a humanoid with AI can love, but the question arises, what is the real intention of the experiment?

In making this film, I intended to construct a speculative narrative that questions the power of love by exploring its effects on AI. Inspired by the work of Alex Garland and Ridley Scott, I wanted to harness a non-linear structure and twist ending to subvert the expectations of the audience.



Baptiste Emery

Melbourne High School, South Yarra

Reboot

Animation, 2 min

A solitary robot toils at a single, monotonous task within the depths of an enormous factory. However, a strange turn of (mechanical) fate plunges him into a strange and unknown world. Flourishing with nature and light, the new world presents itself as the antithesis to his industrial tomb.

My intention was to create a film that emphasised the isolation, disenfranchisement and insecurity faced by younger generations, who have to contend with a changing social and economic climate. It is inspired by films such as *Blade Runner 2049* and *Metropolis*.

Flynt Robbins

Padua College, Mornington

Yellow

Animation, 2 min

The film follows a young boy as he is guided to a place of acceptance by his yellow balloon.

I set out to make a film that was inspired by films that I had seen when I was younger. I imagine my film could be screened before a Disney animation, as it was heavily inspired by the short film *Paperman* (2009). My film is aimed at children and explores themes such as isolation and belonging in a way that is easy for my audience to understand.

Zak Scott

Brighton Secondary College, Brighton East

Breakfast for Maisie

Stop motion, horror, 5 min

Two characters find themselves locked in a room with a giant, slumbering creature. They are faced with the task of feeding the creature, raising the question, 'who will become breakfast for Maisie?' This stop-motion horror short focuses on cultivating a claustrophobic, tense atmosphere.

My intention for this film was to create an entirely visual story. Relying on animation techniques such as those used by Henry Selick and Robert Morgan, I aimed to create something uniquely nightmarish that would stick with the audience long after the film was over.

James Miller

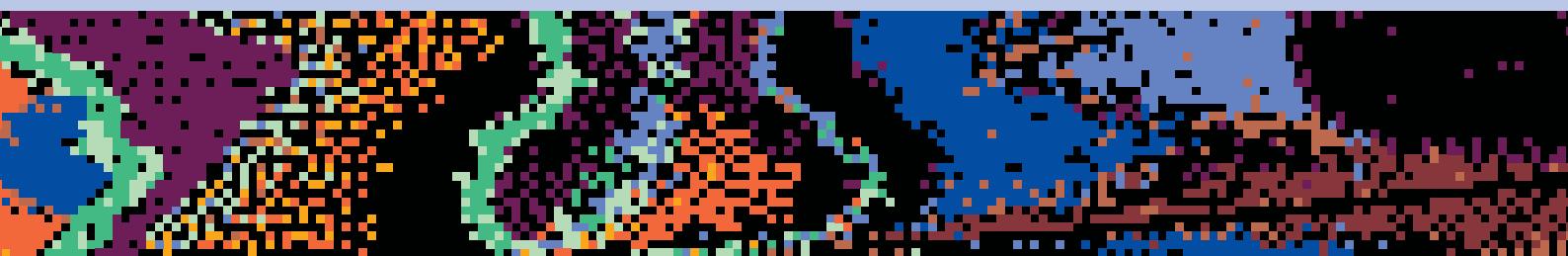
St Kevin's College, Toorak

Magnum Opus

Mockumentary, 10 min

A film crew follows the struggles of an intrepid director as he attempts to make his magnum opus.

Through this live-action/stop-motion hybrid film, I sought to create a self-referential mockumentary that blurs the lines between satire and autobiography. In doing so, I aimed to highlight the artificiality of traditional documentaries, providing a humorous look at the artistic process and prompting audiences to reflect on the underlying purpose of art creation.



Holly Rumble

Eltham High School, Eltham

Quarantined

Stop motion, comedy, 3 min

This film pokes fun at a situation that many have found themselves in under COVID-19 restrictions and quarantine: complete, unadulterated boredom. Two brothers navigate life in a pandemic by trying to occupy their newfound time in some rather unconventional ways.

Inspired by the stop motion stylings of Aardman Studios, I aimed to poke fun at some of the more trivial challenges of life in quarantine through light-hearted claymation. My hope is that the absurd lengths the characters go to, in order to remedy their own crippling boredom resonates with audiences.

Matthew Cantone

St Bernard's College, Essendon

Intruder

Horror comedy, 5 min

A young man moves into an old Victorian-style house, only to find it already inhabited by a creature of the night along with other horrors that await inside. He must run for his life to outlast his malicious yet clumsy foes if he wants to live in this monster of a house.

I intended to parody and replicate the works of classic 1920s silent films through horror and comedy. I utilised German expressionism to create an atmosphere of mystery, uncertainty and stress contrasted with slapstick. Films such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Nosferatu* inspired my work.

Miki Flett

Templestowe College, Templestowe

Space Cadet

Animation, 4 min

Orla, a cadet lost in space, discovers a creature who seeks a cup of tea. After sharing a cup, the creature returns the favour by providing a warm hue that washes over Orla before vanishing. When Orla feels hopeless, the creature returns but refuses to provide their warmth.

In making this animated short, I explored the exaggerated use of lighting as a major component of narrative. Not only did the lighting represent the protagonist's emotions, it also directed actions throughout the plot. The whimsical aesthetic quality was inspired by the many works that have come out of Gobelins.

Joel Rasmussen

Casey Grammar School, Cranbourne East

Wrangler

Documentary, 10 min

This documentary tells the story of Wrangler Studios, a DIY music venue in Melbourne. It covers its conception and development of the establishment and events held at Wrangler. It also addresses the impact of the global pandemic on the venue and how they are handling the situation.

I hoped to shine a light on the volunteer run, non-profit venue, which provides a positive atmosphere for so many people from all walks of life to create and enjoy music. I wanted to bring awareness, interest and support to Wrangler, both during the pandemic and into the future.



Ruby Taylor

Kardinia International College, Bell Post Hill

The Girl Who Cried Sick

Stop motion, dramedy, 3 min

A child hypochondriac's escalating attention-seeking lies lead her parents to dismiss her complaints when she becomes genuinely ill. Inspired by the cautionary tale 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf', this handcrafted animation gives humour and heart to a grim true story.

Within the walls of this animation's richly textured sets, the audience follows the humorous and escalating fibs of a hypochondriac. Works such as *Fantastic Mr Fox* and *Negative Space* inspired my film's immersive sound design and detailed mise en scène.

Blair Smith

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

The Superhero

Animation, 4 min

Superheroes can't save everyone. And in this case, it's sadly true. After a horrific encounter that ends in the loss of life, the superhero feels responsible and returns home to deal with the heavy weight of her job. As the superhero struggles with her mental health, she looks for strength within herself.

In making this film, I hoped to create a story centred on mental health through the lens of superheroes. Combining our real world with the unique comic book world, it allows for an immersive experience that leaves a lasting message about dealing with mental health.

Ana Luiza Souza Alberti

Melbourne Girls' College, Richmond

Itsy Bitsy

Animation, 3 min

Ana, a young immigrant girl, struggles to adapt after moving from her small hometown in Brazil to a big Western city for university. She finds comfort in replicating one of her grandmother's recipes, which remind her of home. This film is about nostalgia and homesickness with a slightly surreal twist.

I wanted to explore the struggle that many immigrant women face when moving alone to a different country. Through this personal story, I wanted to deliver a message of hope to those who feel homesick or isolated, and encourage others to reach out for help and embrace their cultural roots.

Montepulciano Callen

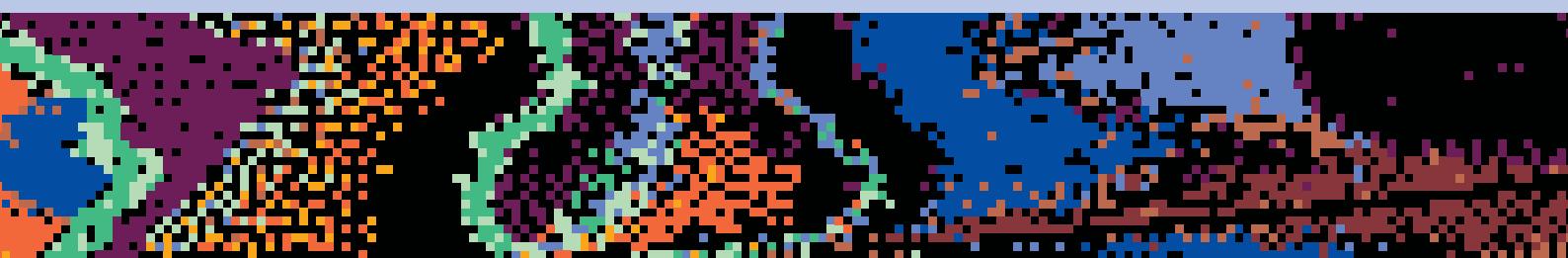
Brighton Secondary College, East Brighton

Like No Other

Drama, horror, 10 min

Cillian is a Year 12 student in her last days before her Specialist Maths exam. However, with a global zombie pandemic in the way, she needs to decide where her priorities lie: a good ATAR, or her own life.

I originally wrote the film to allegorically express the challenges that VCE students face when they neglect their wellbeing in the pursuit of academia. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Victoria, I tailored the story to be more fitting for the year like no other. I wanted to create a sense of fear, tension and sympathy, inspired by the work of Denis Villeneuve and Alejandro González Iñárritu.



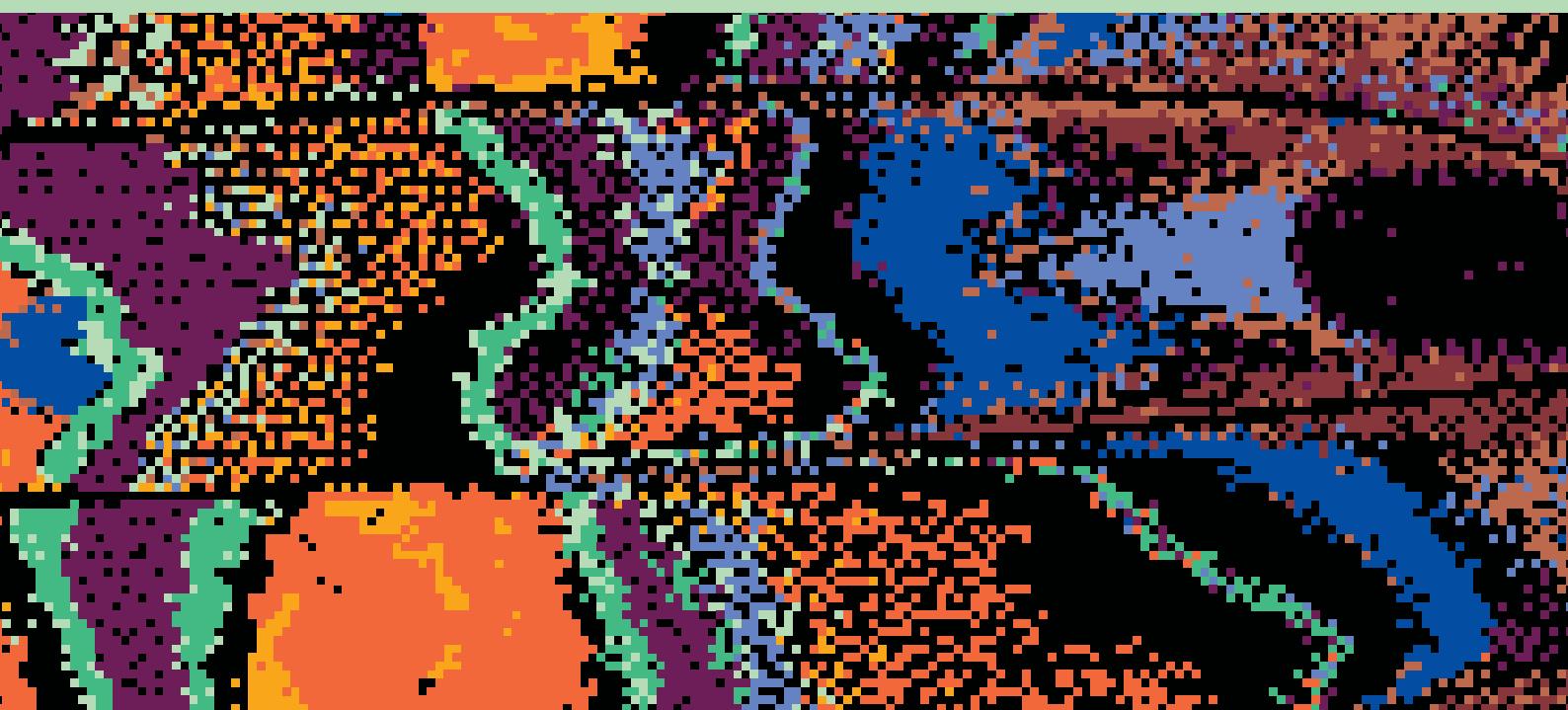
PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

How to vote

After the screening, head to bit.ly/topscreen and vote for your favourite film of Top Screen 2021. Polls for each session will remain open until 4pm.

Thank you to our generous prize sponsors, ACMI and Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF).

ACMI MIFF



SHORT-LISTED FILMS

Onwards by Cooper Bonetti

Ringwood Secondary College, Ringwood

Hard Boiled by William Crossley

Melbourne High School, South Yarra

ELEANOR by Nicholas Littlewood

Alkira Secondary College, Narre Warren South

LD20 by Angus McFarlane

Horsham College, Horsham



Thanks to

Top Screen 2021 filmmakers, their teachers and families

Credits

Festival and Events Manager: Miranda Picton-Warlow

Festival and Events Coordinator and Top Screen Coordinator: Jenny Sun

Festival and Events Officer: Jim Thomas

Festival and Events Assistant: Jessica Dunn

State Reviewer for Media/Chair, Media Selection Panel: Renee Paxton

Media Selection Panel: Travis McKenzie, Ramona Tilley, Nicholas Yandell

ACMI Festival and Events Manager: Lee Farrell

ACMI Festival and Events Coordinator: Tiana Stefanic

Graphic design and motion graphics: Nuttshell

DCP creation: ACMI

Trailer production: Oliver Ramsay

Tell your friends!

The works in Top Screen are also presented as part of the Top Designs exhibition, on display from Saturday 17 April to Sunday 11 July 2021 at Melbourne Museum.

ENJOYED TODAY?

Take a look at some of the other exciting Season of Excellence 2021 events at vcaa.vic.edu.au/seasonhub

TOP CLASS

Friday 26 February –
Tuesday 30 March

TOP SCREEN

Tuesday 23 March –
Thursday 20 May

TOP DESIGNS

Saturday 17 April –
Sunday 11 July

TOP TALKS

Thursday 4 March

TOP ARTS

Friday 26 March –
Sunday 11 July

TOP ACTS

Saturday 1 May