
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Italicized Moment

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, October 9th, 2024

Filipino American identity pugnaciously explored in Boyle Heights; commissioned contemporary debuts in Long Beach; indigenous dance traditions in Brentwood; seasonal vampires and zombies haunt El Segundo, Beverly-Fairfax and Hollywood; contemporary take on doomed romance in Beverly Hills; street dance meets club dance in Cheviot Hills; more SoCal dance this week, plus a peek at next week.

Deja vu all over again?

These **LA Dance Project** performances of *Romeo & Juliet Suite* are described as the Los Angeles premiere, yet it is more an expansion of earlier iterations with the LA Phil in 2018 at Disney Hall and 2019 at the Hollywood Bowl. Those are now described as ‘previews’ of the current issue from choreographer and LADP artistic director Benjamin Millepied that toured France. Like the earlier versions, this R&J presents a combination of onstage dance and then Millepied or associate artistic director Sébastien Marcovici trails the dancers with a steadicam that livestreams dancing in offstage portions of the theater, this time an historic post office turned theater. Fortunately, the work retains three casts of the lovers—male/female, male/male and female/female. These and other elements that made the prior incarnations thoughtful, enjoyable, and inventive seem to be present, perhaps reworked and expanded. And sadly, no LA Phil. Whatever the work’s evolution, LADP’s superb dancers are always worth a watch. The Wallis, 9390 N Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Thurs.-Sat., Oct. 10-12, \$49-\$109. [The Wallis](#).



LA Dance Project. Photo courtesy of LADP

Taking it off campus

Presented by CAP UCLA's new director Edgar Miramontes' innovative *Mapping Los Angeles*, contemporary choreographer **Jay Carlon** lures the audience away from the Westside campus to an East LA nightclub for *Wake*. Coinciding with Filipino American History month, Carlon's newest event explores the tensions in his Filipino American identity and promises "performance and queer nightlife for a one-night-only immersive club experience." The choreographer gets help (and gives event co-credit) to sound artist **MICAELA TOBIN** (*WHITE BOY SCREAM*) along with other AAPI collaborators, LA nightlife collectives: QNA and SEND NOODZ, and Filipiniana fashion house VINTA GALLERY. Don Quixote Nightclub, 2811 E. Olympic Blvd., Boyle Heights; Fri., Oct. 11, 8:30 pm, \$35. [RA Tickets](#).



Jay Carlon. Photo courtesy of the artist

This makes it four

Contemporary choreographer **Kyle Abraham** and the dancers of **A.I.M. by Kyle Abraham** return for their fourth appearance at this venue which commissioned one of the scheduled danceworks, the world premiere of *6 Lost Labors*. Also scheduled are Keerati Jinakunwiphat's *Someday Soon*, Rena Butler's *Shell of a Shell of the Shell*, and two solos by Abraham, including one set to singer Etta James. Stay around for the post-performance Q&A with the company. Carpenter Center, Cal State University Long Beach, 6200 E. Atherton St., Long Beach; Sat., Oct. 12, 8 pm, \$40. [Carpenter Performing Arts Center](#).



A.I.M. by Kyle Abraham. Photo courtesy of the artists

Dancing tradition

For its 2024 *Celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day*, the Getty Center hosts a live performance of traditional dance styles and songs by **WildHorse Native American Association** at 11 am and 2 pm. The event also offers live music and poetry, hands-on art workshops, film screenings, garden tours. A full schedule is at the website. Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Dr., Brentwood; Sat., Oct. 12, 11 am-3:30 pm, free w/reservation and parking info at [Getty](#).



WildHorse Native American Association. Photo courtesy of the artist

Taking flight

Commissioned by the Latino Theater Company, *A Girl Grows Wings*, from **Organización Secreta Teatro (Secret Organizaion Theater)**, blends dance with theater, video, sound design and live music in a wordless tale of an immigrant who blooms despite obstacles. Written by Marisela Treviño Orta, the work is directed by Rocío Carrillio. LA Theatre Center, 514 S. Spring St., downtown; Sat., Oct. 12, 8 pm, then Thurs.-Sat., Oct. 17-19, 8 pm, Sun., Oct. 13 & 20, 4 pm, \$10-\$45. [Latino Theater Company](#).



Organización Secreta Teatro. Photo by Erika Gomez

Street to club

LA street dancer Slim Boogie and two USC dancers join NYC-based **Laye Rhythm**'s dancers, an emcee, a band, and a vocalist in the audience-influenced event *Switch*. This show marks the company's West Coast debut. Founder Mai Lê Hô describes *Switch* as blending street and club dance energies with improvisational traditions of Black and Latinx communities. Glorya Kaufman International Dance Center, USC, 849 W. 34th St., University Park; Wed., Oct. 16, 7:30 pm, free w/reservation at [Visions and Voices USC](#).



Laye Rhythm. Photo courtesy of the artists

Seasonal spooky #1

That toothy vampire **Dracula** is back and **West Coast Ballet** has him for their third annual production. Eduard Sargsyan is the blood-hungry protagonist, Rachel Hutsell and Robbie Downey are his targets. El Segundo Performing Arts Center, 640 Main St., El Segundo; Sat., Oct. 12, 7 pm, \$43.45. [Eventbrite](#).



American Contemporary Ballet. Photo by Asilda Photography

Seasonal spooky #2 (plus more)

For the Halloween season, **American Contemporary Ballet** puts three of artistic director Lincoln Jones' ballets in rotation, two each 90-minute show. *Inferno* riffs on Dante's poem, *Rite* takes on Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, and *Burlesque* is just that. Which shows are which night are at the website. These performances also mark a move to a new venue. CBS Television City, 7800 Beverly Blvd., Beverly-Fairfax; Fri.-Sat., Oct. 11-12, 18-19, 25-26, Thurs., Oct. 17, 24 & 31, 8 pm, \$65-\$140. [American Contemporary Ballet](#).



Blood/Love. Photo by Graham Washatka

Seasonal spooky #3

Twilight Saga meets Faust, with a twist, in **Blood/Love: A Vampire Popera**. The immersive rock musical is in residence this month at the aptly named **Crimson**, a Hollywood pop up gothic nightclub. Running through November 2, the vampire-meets-rock-star event injects a devilish romance into the spooky season. The **Crimson**, 6356 Hollywood Blvd., First Floor, Hollywood; Thurs.-Sat., thru Sat., Oct. 19, 7 & 9:30 pm, then, Wed.-Sat, Oct. 23-Nov. 2, 7 & 9:30 pm, \$59-\$119. [Blood/Love](#).

Another *Swan* swims in

For the second time in a month, a touring company stops off at various local venues with a production of *Swan Lake*. The identity and other information about the new arrival, **ICBT Pace Ballet** is rather opaque, but suggests they once boasted about their Russian roots and now emphasize the dancers' home countries, most of which were once part of the former Soviet Union. Good dancers and good ballet deserve an audience and attention wherever they are from, yet the lack of transparency is troubling. There's enough disinformation and redirection in politics without it bleeding into ballet. The Wilshire Ebell, 4401 W. 8th St., Hancock Park; Sat., Oct. 12, 2 & 7 pm, \$73.34-\$137.36, [Eventbrite](#). Also at the Long Beach Terrace Theatre, 300 E. Ocean Ave., Long

Beach; Sun., Oct. 13, 2 & 7 pm, \$112-\$155. [Ticketmaster](#). Also at the Alex Theater, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Thurs., Oct. 17, 7 p.m., Fri., Oct. 18, 2 & 7 pm, \$71-\$169. [Ticketmaster](#). Also at La Mirada Theatre, 14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada; Sun., Oct. 20, 2 & 7 pm, \$15.40-\$121. [La Mirada Theatre](#).



ICBT Pace Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

Taxing

In the satiric *Urinetown*, puns and double entendres take over a town that confiscates then charges for bathroom privileges. **Liz Hoefner Adamis** choreographs and Daniel Nakawatase directs for CAL REP. Studio Theater, Cal State University Long Beach, north side of the Theatre Arts Building, accessible via 7th Street and East Campus Drive, Long Beach; Wed.-Sat., Oct. 8-12, 7:30 pm, Sat., Oct. 12, 2 pm, Sun., Oct. 13, 2 pm, \$25, \$23 seniors. [Tickets](#).



The Empire Strips Back. Photo courtesy of the artists

Teasing

The title says it all: *The Empire Strips Back: A Burlesque Parody*. The show returns after its 2022 run at this venue. The Montalbán Theatre, 1615 Vine St., Hollywood; Opens Thurs, Oct. 11, 7:30 pm, then Thurs., 7:30 pm, Fri., 7 pm, Sat., 7 & 9:30 pm, Sun., 4 pm, thru Dec. 1. \$44-\$109. [The Empire Strips Back](#).

A Peek at Next Week (October 18-24)

Lineage Dance — *A Matter of Time* at The Gamble House, 4 Westmoreland Pl., Pasadena; Mon. Oct 21, Thurs., Oct. 24, Sat.- Sun., Oct. 26-27, Wed., Oct. 30, Fri.-Sun., Nov. 1-3, 7 pm, \$75, \$45 students & seniors. [Lineage Dance](#).

LA Performance Practice — *Casual* at LA LGBT Center 1118 N. McCadden Pl., Hollywood; Sat., Oct. 19, 8 pm, \$10-\$49. [Tickets](#).

Dance Theatre of Harlem at Musco Center, Chapman University, 415 Glassell, Orange; Thurs., Oct. 24, 7:30 pm, \$45.50-\$83. [Musco Center](#).



Dance Theatre of Harlem. Photo by Rachel Neville

G?R Collective — *Gasket* at Highways, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., Oct. 18-19, 8 pm, \$20. [Highways](#).

BLACK LODGE at United Theater on Broadway, 929 S. Broadway, downtown; Sat., Oct. 19, 6:30 pm, \$47.78-\$71.28. [Tickets](#).

Circa — *Humans 2.0* at the Wallis Annenberg Theater, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Fri., Oct. 18, 7:30 pm, Sat., Oct. 19, 2 pm, \$39-\$99. [The Wallis](#).

Versa-Style Dance Company — Hip Hop 1v1 Battle at Mihran K. Studios, 135 N. Victory Blvd., Burbank; Fri., Oct. 18, 8:30 pm, \$15. [Versa-Style Dance Company](#).

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Understanding the Process of Buying a Yacht

Our Friends · Wednesday, October 9th, 2024

Acquiring a yacht is often associated with notions of luxury and sophistication. However, penetrating the complex and often enigmatic landscape of yacht buying may seem, to many, a far-off reality, detached from the realm of their comprehension. This article aims to simplify this process and brings into light the understanding of the **yacht buying process with Simpson Marine**.

Initiating the Process of Yacht Buying

The journey of buying a yacht starts with understanding your needs. Are you interested in a speedy cruiser, a comfortable luxury liner, or a sailing yacht that yields to the whim of wind and sea? The type of yacht you seek should reflect your lifestyle, and one must also consider the size that best fits. Keep in mind the purpose for which you intend to use the yacht – whether it be for family vacations, entertaining guests, or taking part in yacht races.

Establishing a Budget

Another critical aspect of purchasing a yacht is setting a realistic budget. Beyond the initial purchase price, various factors can significantly influence the total cost. The size of the yacht plays a major role, with larger yachts typically commanding higher prices not only for acquisition but also for ongoing maintenance. The age, design, and reputation of the builder are also crucial considerations—newer yachts or those from prestigious builders often come with a premium price tag. However, budgeting doesn't end with the purchase. You'll need to factor in operational expenses such as regular maintenance, insurance, docking and mooring fees, fuel costs, and crew salaries if necessary.

The Hunt for the Right Yacht

Once you've set your budget and determined the type of yacht that suits your needs, the search for the perfect yacht can truly begin. This phase requires thorough research to explore all available options. You'll want to dive into yacht listings, compare different models, and understand the pros and cons of each. Trusted yacht manufacturers and experienced brokers can be invaluable resources, guiding you through this complex process and helping you find the ideal yacht. Partnering with a reputable company like Simpson Marine offers additional benefits, as their expertise and industry knowledge provide you with insider insights and expert guidance, making the yacht-buying experience smoother and more rewarding.

Going for a Sea Trial



Once you've identified a yacht that seems to meet your needs, the next step is conducting a sea trial. This crucial phase allows you to take the yacht out on the water and experience its handling, performance, and overall comfort firsthand. Much like a test drive when buying a car, a sea trial offers a practical evaluation of how the yacht operates in real-world conditions. You'll be able to assess key aspects such as the engine's power, steering responsiveness, stability, and onboard systems. It also provides an opportunity to detect any potential issues that may not be apparent on paper. A thorough sea trial is essential in ensuring the yacht meets your expectations and aligns with your intended usage before making the final purchase decision.

Assessing the Yacht's Condition

After the sea trial, the next critical step is conducting a marine survey. This in-depth inspection assesses the overall condition of the yacht, ensuring that you have a clear understanding of its state before finalizing the purchase. Performed by a qualified marine surveyor, the survey evaluates crucial aspects such as the yacht's structural integrity, including the hull and deck, as well as its mechanical and electrical systems, ensuring everything is functioning correctly. The surveyor will also inspect the safety equipment, plumbing, navigation systems, and any other essential components. At the end of the inspection, a comprehensive report will be provided, detailing any issues discovered, potential areas of concern, and necessary repairs.

Sealing the Deal

Finally, once the conditions have been met, all that is left is to seal the deal. This phase sees the exchange of ownership proceedings. It starts with the paperwork including the Bill of Sale, proof of deletion from the previous registry if applicable, and the Certificate of Ownership, amongst others.

Moreover, it's crucial to have a fair understanding of the taxation and registration procedures in the prospective owner's home country or state. While there are regions like the Caribbean where taxes

are not applicable, others have specific regulations related to yacht ownership.

The process of buying a yacht can seem overwhelming, especially for first-time buyers. Hence, resources like Simpson Marine are invaluable for understanding the yacht buying process. With thorough research and careful consideration of the factors mentioned above, this aspirational dream can indeed become a reality.

While this article attempts to cover the yacht buying process extensively, every individual's journey could vary based on a host of factors including budget, personal preference, and geographical location. Regardless, the gratification of becoming a yacht owner, accompanied by the freedom and thrill of setting off onto the open waters, remains the constant pursuit in this journey.

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Super Derm Complex Review: Healthier Skin, Nails & Joints?

Our Friends · Wednesday, October 9th, 2024

Health and beauty go hand in hand because for you to achieve healthy skin, hair, and nails, you need to be healthy inside. This is where the Super Derm Complex comes in handy.

Formulated using powerful ingredients sourced from nature, Super Derm Complex works from the inside out to *help enhance health and beauty.

However, the question is, does Super Derm Complex work? Can you really experience the claimed health benefits while using it?

In this review, we explore the science behind this dietary supplement, its health benefits, and how it works to deliver the said health benefits.

Super Derm Complex: A Comprehensive Approach to Healthy Skin, Hair, Nails and Joints

Super Derm Complex is a dietary supplement tailored to *support health and beauty. Packed with a blend of powerful natural ingredients, Super Derm Complex purports to *support healthy skin, hair, and nails and also promote other aspects of health body health.



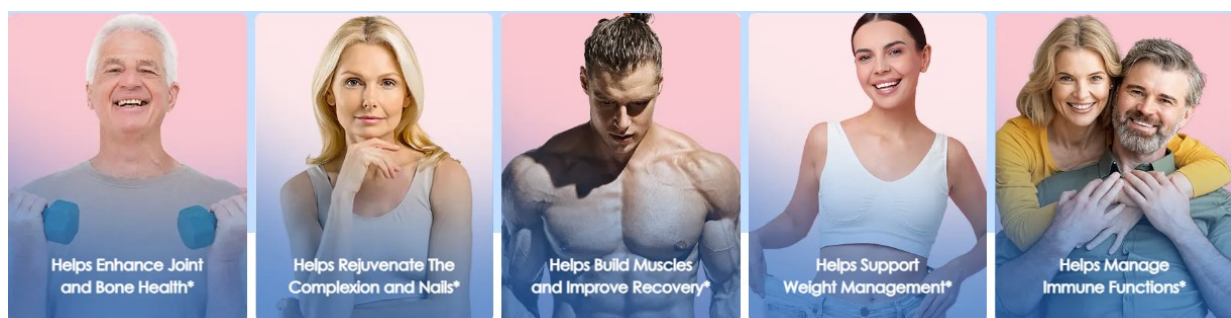
Besides, the formula is designed to *support healthy digestion, boost immunity, support cardiovascular health, promote bone and joint health, and enhance muscle mass, strength, and recovery.

Stronger Joints & Radiant Skin—Buy Super Derm Complex

How Super Derm Complex Works: A Closer Look at Its Natural Mechanisms?

Super Derm Complete features a powerful all-natural blend that builds on each other to *support healthy hair, nails, and skin and promote other aspects of health.

Here is how the supplement works:



Enhances nail, hair, and skin health:

This complex *helps to promote skin hair and nail health all thanks to Type IV collagen peptide which works to smooth wrinkles and fine lines and improve elasticity.

Helps to relieve joint pain and inflammation:

The formula contains ingredients like type V collagen peptide to strengthen the body's mechanism of dealing with inflammation and pain in the joints.

Fades away signs of aging:

The blend can also *help reduce signs of aging by rejuvenating the skin and smoothing wrinkles and fine lines, thanks to ingredients like type I collagen peptide.

Building and strengthening muscles:

The dietary supplement is formulated using type V collagen peptide that *supports building up and strengthening muscles.

Fat burning and weight loss support:

Super Derm Complex is formulated using type III collagen peptides that work to promote fat burning in the body and also support healthy weight loss.

Healthy Skin, Hair & Joints Await! Buy Super Derm Complex

The 7 Super Derm Complex Ingredients That Make It Effective

Type I collagen peptide

Type I collagen is a popular compound in cosmetic compounds because it has been found to be effective in rejuvenating the skin, reducing wrinkles, and reversing skin aging symptoms.

Type II collagen peptide

Type II collagen has been studied and found to improve digestion and boost immune function. It also contains a specific immune-mediated mechanism known as oral tolerance vital for preventing tissue catabolism and inflammation.



Type III collagen peptide

Type III collagen peptide has exhibited the potential to improve and also ensure physiological function maintenance.

Type IV collagen peptide

Type IV collagen peptide has proven to be a key basement membrane component in providing structural and functional support to various types of body cells.

Type V collagen peptide

Type V collagen peptide has been studied and found to have the ability to enhance also help in building muscles and accelerating recovery.

Benefits of Super Derm Complex

- *Support healthy joints
- *Helps ease pain and inflammation
- *Help in weight management
- *Improve hair and nail health
- *Helps fade away signs of aging
- *Can enhance skin hydration
- *Helps build muscle mass and strength

Buy Super Derm Complex And Support Your Health & Beauty

Wrapping Up

In conclusion, Super Derm Complex offers an excellent option for individuals looking to achieve healthy skin, nails, and hair and also improve their different aspects of health. *

Apart from *Promoting skin, hair, and nail health the supplement also purports to boost immunity, improve digestion, support cardiovascular health, improve joint and bone health, enhance muscle mass and strength, and accelerate recovery.

The overwhelmingly positive reviews posted by users are proof that Super Derm Complex works to deliver the claimed health benefits.

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the results may not be the same for all users. Users who combine the supplement with a healthy diet and lifestyle are likely to experience faster and more successful results.

Disclaimer:

The product specification and the claims made about this product have not been evaluated by the United States FDA and are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent disease.

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Gamdom Promo Code: Your Guide to Unlocking Bonuses

Our Friends · Wednesday, October 9th, 2024

Gamdom is one of the most popular platforms for online gambling enthusiasts, offering a wide range of games and betting opportunities. To enhance the experience, many players are constantly on the lookout for promo codes that offer extra bonuses, free credits, or exclusive perks. In this

guide, we will explore everything you need to know about Gamdom promo codes and how to make the most of them.

What is a Gamdom Promo Code?

A Gamdom promo code is a special combination of letters and numbers that players can enter on the platform to receive various rewards. These rewards can range from free spins and bonus credits to access to exclusive games or higher betting limits. If you're new to the platform, or even a seasoned player, using these codes can help you get an edge and enhance your gameplay.

For those interested in claiming their bonuses, [see this](#): Promo codes are frequently updated, so be sure to stay informed about the latest offers.

How to Use a Gamdom Promo Code?

Using a Gamdom promo code is simple. Here's a step-by-step guide:

1. Sign up or log in to Gamdom: If you're not yet a member, create an account by providing your details.
2. Find the promo code: Many sites and forums share valid promo codes, or you can see this section on Gamdom's website for official offers.
3. Enter the code: Once logged in, go to the promotions or bonus section and enter the code.
4. Enjoy your bonus: After entering the code, the rewards will be credited to your account.

Benefits of Using Promo Codes

Gamdom promo codes are not just about free money—they offer various other perks that can make your time on the platform more enjoyable:

- Boosted bankroll:

Some promo codes offer free credits or cash bonuses, allowing you to play more without spending your own money.

- Free spins or bets:

Promo codes often provide free spins on slot games or free bets in other sections of the site.

- Exclusive access:

Certain promo codes might give you access to special games, tournaments, or events.

For the latest information on the best promo codes, always make sure to see this: Regular promotions are updated to keep players engaged and rewarded.

Where to Find Gamdom Promo Codes?

Promo codes can be found in various places:

- Official website: Gamdom often releases special offers directly through their website.
- Affiliate websites: Many gambling websites partner with Gamdom to offer exclusive codes.

- Forums and social media: Gamdom enthusiasts frequently share promo codes in communities and forums.

To make sure you don't miss any codes, see this tip: subscribe to Gamdom's newsletter or follow them on social media for instant updates.

Conclusion

Using a **Gamdom promo code** is a great way to maximize your gameplay and enjoy extra rewards on the platform. Whether you're after free credits, exclusive games, or simply want to boost your bankroll, these codes are a fantastic tool. Don't forget to regularly see this for the latest updates and make the most out of your Gamdom experience!

Happy gaming!

FAQ: Gamdom Promo Code

1. How do I get a Gamdom promo code?

Promo codes can be found on Gamdom's official website, through affiliate sites, or on community forums where players share the latest codes. Always make sure to check trusted sources and see this on Gamdom's promotions page for official codes.

2. Can I use more than one promo code at a time?

Typically, Gamdom allows only one promo code per account at a time. After using the code, you'll need to wait until a new promotion is available. For details on available codes, see this in the promotions section.

3. Are Gamdom promo codes available for all users?

Yes, Gamdom promo codes are available to both new and existing users, but some codes may be exclusive to new sign-ups or special events. To find the right promo code for you, see this on Gamdom's official platform.

4. What rewards can I get with a promo code?

Promo codes may offer rewards such as free spins, bonus credits, or access to exclusive games. Each code comes with specific benefits, so make sure to see this when entering the code to understand the full range of perks.

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Top 5 Affordable Beach Destinations You'll Love

Our Friends · Wednesday, October 9th, 2024

When it comes to planning a beach vacation, many assume that a getaway to a sandy paradise will break the bank. However, as highlighted on [traveltoplist.com](https://www.traveltoplist.com), the world is full of affordable beach destinations that offer sun, sand, and sea without emptying your wallet. Whether you're seeking a tropical retreat or a peaceful coastal escape, there are budget-friendly spots waiting to be discovered. In this guide, explore the top five affordable beach destinations that not only offer incredible scenery but also allow travellers to enjoy a vacation without overspending.

1. Zanzibar, Tanzania

Zanzibar, a stunning archipelago off the coast of Tanzania, combines affordability with a tropical ambiance that rivals high-end destinations. With its turquoise waters, soft white sands, and vibrant marine life, it's a paradise for those looking to relax and explore.



Prison Island, Zanzibar, Tanzania. Photo: MariusLtu via Canva

One of the best things about Zanzibar is the variety of affordable accommodation options, from cozy beach bungalows to budget-friendly hostels. Local food markets and street vendors also offer delicious and inexpensive meals, allowing visitors to savour authentic Swahili dishes without overspending. For those interested in activities, snorkeling and spice tours are popular, and both come at a fraction of the cost compared to other beach destinations.

2. Playa del Carmen, Mexico

Located along the Riviera Maya, Playa del Carmen is a great choice for budget-conscious travellers wanting to experience Mexico's Caribbean coastline. While its neighbour, Cancun, may be known for luxury resorts, Playa del Carmen offers a more relaxed and affordable vibe.

Visitors can find budget-friendly accommodations ranging from hostels to boutique hotels just steps from the beach. Dining options are abundant, with many local eateries providing meals that won't stretch the budget. Additionally, Playa del Carmen has plenty of free and low-cost activities, such as visiting the nearby cenotes (natural swimming holes) and exploring the local beaches. For those interested in history, the ancient Mayan ruins of Tulum are also a short, inexpensive bus ride away.

3. Koh Lanta, Thailand

Thailand has long been a favourite destination for affordable beach holidays, and Koh Lanta is no exception. Located in the Andaman Sea, this island offers a quieter, more laid-back experience compared to the bustling beaches of Phuket or Krabi.



The pristine beaches of Koh Lanta, Thailand. Photo: Alexander Ozerov via Canva

Affordable beachfront bungalows and guesthouses line the shores, giving visitors the chance to wake up to stunning ocean views without the high price tag. Street food stalls and local markets offer an array of delicious Thai dishes at extremely low prices, making it easy for travellers to eat well on a budget. Activities like island-hopping tours and snorkelling adventures are reasonably priced, allowing visitors to explore the surrounding waters and nearby islands without overspending.

4. Algarve, Portugal

For those seeking an affordable beach destination in Europe, the Algarve in southern Portugal is a fantastic option. Known for its stunning cliffs, hidden coves, and golden sands, the Algarve provides an excellent mix of natural beauty and affordability.

Accommodation options range from budget hotels to affordable vacation rentals, with many

offering beautiful views of the Atlantic Ocean. Eating out is also economical, especially when sampling local Portuguese cuisine at traditional restaurants. The Algarve's beaches, such as Praia da Marinha and [Benagil Cave](#), are some of the most picturesque in Europe, and exploring them is free. For a small fee, visitors can take boat trips to see the sea caves or rent kayaks for a more active adventure.

5. El Nido, Philippines

El Nido, located on the island of Palawan, is a dream destination for beach lovers on a budget. Known for its limestone cliffs, crystal-clear waters, and diverse marine life, El Nido offers a tropical paradise at a fraction of the cost of other beach resorts in Asia.



El Nido Bay, Philippines. Photo: Dmitry Peichugin via Canva

Budget accommodations, including hostels and guesthouses, are widely available and provide comfortable stays close to the beach. Local eateries serve fresh seafood and Filipino delicacies at wallet-friendly prices. Popular activities like island-hopping tours, which take visitors to hidden lagoons and pristine beaches, are both affordable and memorable. With its stunning scenery and budget-friendly options, El Nido makes it easy to enjoy an unforgettable beach holiday without a hefty price tag.

Final Thoughts On Beach Destinations

These affordable beach destinations prove that a stunning beach vacation doesn't have to come with a luxury price. From the turquoise waters of Zanzibar to the tropical bliss of El Nido, there are numerous budget-friendly options for every type of traveller. Whether exploring Southeast Asia, venturing to Africa's coast, or uncovering hidden gems in Europe, these destinations offer everything needed for a memorable beach escape without breaking the bank. For those eager to bask in the sun and enjoy the sea while sticking to a budget, these five spots are sure to inspire

your next adventure.

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Milla Jans: “to know you is to understand the sacrifice it takes to find peace”

Milla Jans · Monday, October 7th, 2024

to know you is to understand the sacrifice it takes to find peace

by Milla Jans

09/28/24

I reach for you

dull blade in hand
conscious of each
freckle of water
purging my skin

drowning

in your tribulations
how becoming of my
own faults
they, shaky rose
petals, break at your
bones, roughed and bruised,
like a smile

reaching,

counting the spaces between

each line, the distance —————> telephone?

it would take to

words on a

render us insignificant

page? how

[it is as if I cannot

far I am

live without you.

from you,

it's always drowning.

how I am in ungodly peril

when will it stop? ;

unable to fix myself

broken- seamless-

let alone your crafter's hands

fire- steady

I'm beginning

beat

to lose my

beating still

way, and in

a shockwave

the process, you.

can you hear me?

you are more

can you breathe?

than I

suddenly,

have ever

my lungs

been

feel connected
 to my arms
 a length
 away
 a part of me
 steps,
 breaking
 out of line]

Peace by piece
 each piece
 guiding towards
 depths, the same
 portrait of us
 dwellers
 swimming, bloodied,
 enslaved
 a shout,
 and the knife slips
 and we are
 one

(This piece is part of our yearlong series called [Heart Beets](#) that features the work of a group of teen writers, giving us a glimpse into their journey through the school year.)

Posted in [Heart Beets, Poetry](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Smart Defenses: AI's Impact on Crypto Card Fraud Management

Our Friends · Monday, October 7th, 2024

In the rapidly evolving world of finance, cryptocurrencies have taken center stage. With the rise of crypto cards like the **Bybit Card**, people can now transact with their digital currencies just as easily as they would with traditional banking cards.

However, as with any financial innovation, this convenience comes with its own set of challenges, most notably the risk of fraud.

Luckily, advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are stepping in to bolster fraud detection and risk management for crypto card transactions.

What Is a Crypto Card?

For those who might not be familiar with it, a crypto card works just like your typical debit or credit card, but instead of being linked to traditional cash, it's tied to your cryptocurrency wallet.

You can use it to buy groceries, pay for coffee, or shop online, just as you would with any bank-issued card. It's an incredibly convenient way to bridge the gap between the crypto world and your daily spending.

However, as crypto adoption increases, the threat landscape also changes. Cryptocurrency card transactions are attractive to fraudsters due to their anonymity and the high value of many digital currencies. Companies are now turning to AI to create an intelligent line of defense to stay ahead of these threats.

The Growing Concern of Fraud in Crypto Transactions

Cryptocurrency transactions are anonymous and secure, but this doesn't make them immune to fraudulent activities. From phishing scams to unauthorized transactions, fraudsters constantly find new ways to exploit vulnerabilities.

Crypto card users, in particular, face unique challenges. When someone uses their card to make a transaction, the last thing they want is to find out that they compromised their funds. This situation is where AI comes into play.

How AI and Machine Learning are Transforming Fraud Detection

Artificial intelligence and machine learning are changing the game for fraud management in several ways. Here's how:

Real-time Transaction Monitoring

AI algorithms can analyze transaction data in real time, detecting unusual patterns or behaviors that might indicate fraud. For example, if a user typically makes small purchases but suddenly tries to make a large transaction from an unfamiliar location, the AI system can flag this for further review. This swift response helps mitigate potential losses before they occur.

Behavioral Analysis

One of the standout features of AI in fraud detection is its ability to learn and adapt. Machine learning models can analyze a user's transaction history, identifying what is considered "normal" behavior for that individual.

If a transaction deviates from this learned behavior, like a user suddenly making multiple purchases quickly, it raises a red flag. This personalized approach allows for a more accurate detection of fraud.

Anomaly Detection

Beyond just monitoring for suspicious behavior, AI can also identify anomalies across the entire system. For instance, if there's a sudden surge in transactions in a specific geographical area, AI

can compare this with historical data to determine if it's an anomaly or a new trend.

By understanding these patterns, crypto card providers can proactively adjust their fraud prevention strategies.

Predictive Analytics

AI isn't just about reacting to fraud; it can also predict it. By analyzing vast amounts of data, AI systems can identify trends and potential vulnerabilities before exploiting them. For instance, if a particular crypto card is frequently used in fraudulent activities, AI can suggest tightening security measures for that card or issuing alerts to users who may be at risk.

Risk Assessment

Every transaction has its own set of risks, and AI can help assess these risks before a transaction is approved. Evaluate multiple factors, including the user's transaction history, the amount charged, and the merchant's credibility.

AI can determine the likelihood of fraud. This assessment helps prevent unauthorized transactions while allowing legitimate transactions to proceed smoothly.

Enhancing User Experience with AI

While fraud prevention is crucial, ensuring legitimate users have a seamless experience is equally important. Here's how AI strikes the right balance:

Reduced False Positives

One of the common frustrations users face is when legitimate transactions are flagged as fraudulent. AI's ability to learn from historical data means that it can significantly reduce these false positives.

By fine-tuning the algorithms based on actual user behavior, AI can make more informed decisions about what constitutes suspicious activity.

User-Friendly Alerts

In cases where a transaction is flagged, AI can provide users with clear and user-friendly alerts explaining why it halted the transaction. This transparency helps users feel more secure, knowing it effectively monitors their transactions.

Future: AI in Crypto Card Fraud Management

As technology continues to advance, AI's role in managing crypto card fraud will likely become even more critical. Enhanced algorithms, more robust data sets, and the integration of advanced technologies like blockchain could lead to even greater levels of security.

There may also be more collaboration between financial institutions and AI companies in the future to share insights and best practices for combating fraud.

Conclusion

The rise of crypto cards like the Bybit Card has made digital transactions more accessible than ever, but it has also opened the door to new types of fraud. Artificial intelligence and machine learning are proving to be powerful allies in the fight against fraud.

With real-time monitoring, predictive analytics, and personalized user experiences, AI is enhancing fraud detection and risk management to keep users secure without sacrificing convenience. As these technologies evolve, we can expect even smarter defenses in crypto card transactions.

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Brian De Palma

Elisa Leonelli · Sunday, October 6th, 2024

After reading a Los Angeles Times [review](#) of *The De Palma Decade* by Laurent Bouzereau, I was reminded of the many times I interviewed the Italian-American director as an entertainment journalist and the articles I wrote about his movies.



Brian De Palma © Elisa Leonelli 1978

I met [Brian De Palma](#) for the first time in 1978 in his New York office, when I was writing for the

Cinema supplement of the Italian newsweekly *L'Europeo*.

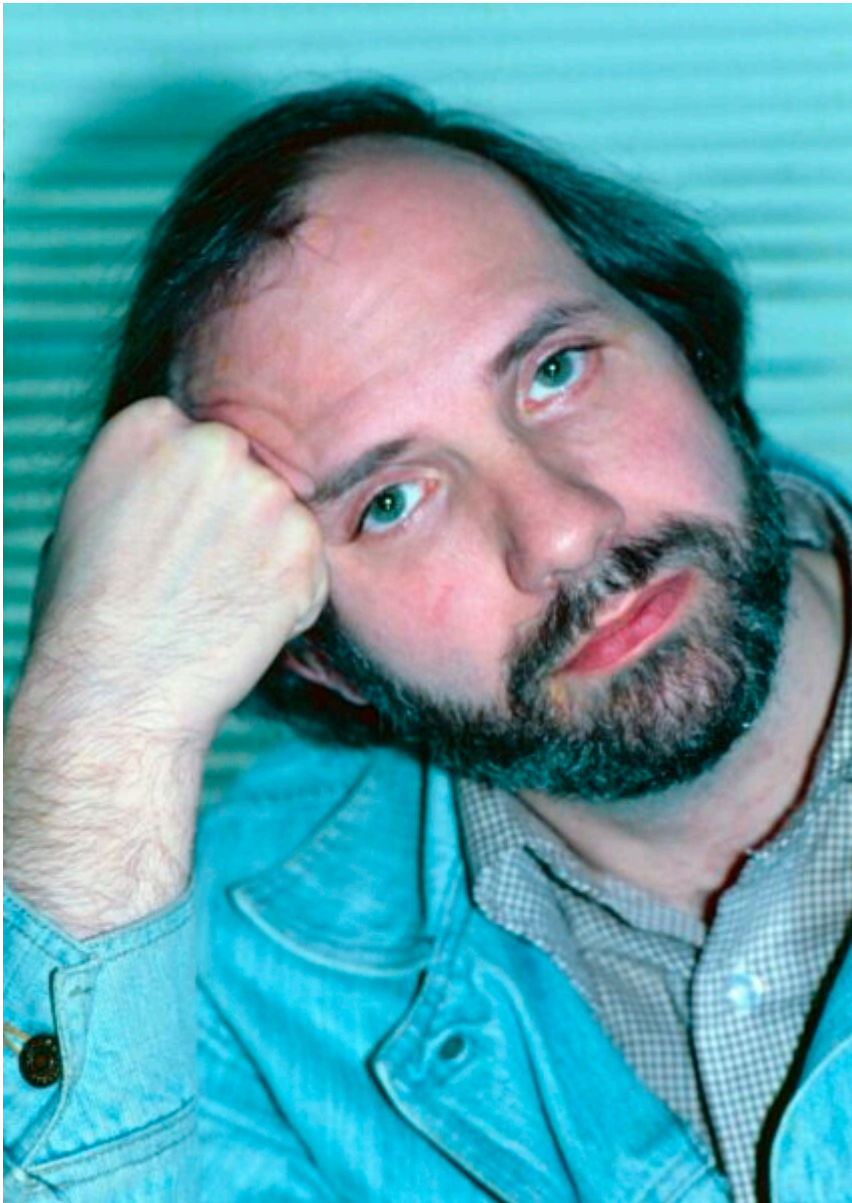
We spoke about his latest work, *The Fury*, and I asked him about some of the movies he had directed until then.

He said about *Hi Mom!* starring Robert De Niro: “We were seeing the Vietnam War essentially as a voyeuristic experience. America then became a cold nation in front of the horrible things that we were doing.”

Sisters: “It develops the classic theme of the good sister and bad sister, the two aspects of our personality, one light and one dark.”

Obsession: “I was imitating my favorite film, *Vertigo* by Alfred Hitchcock, telling a very romantic story.”

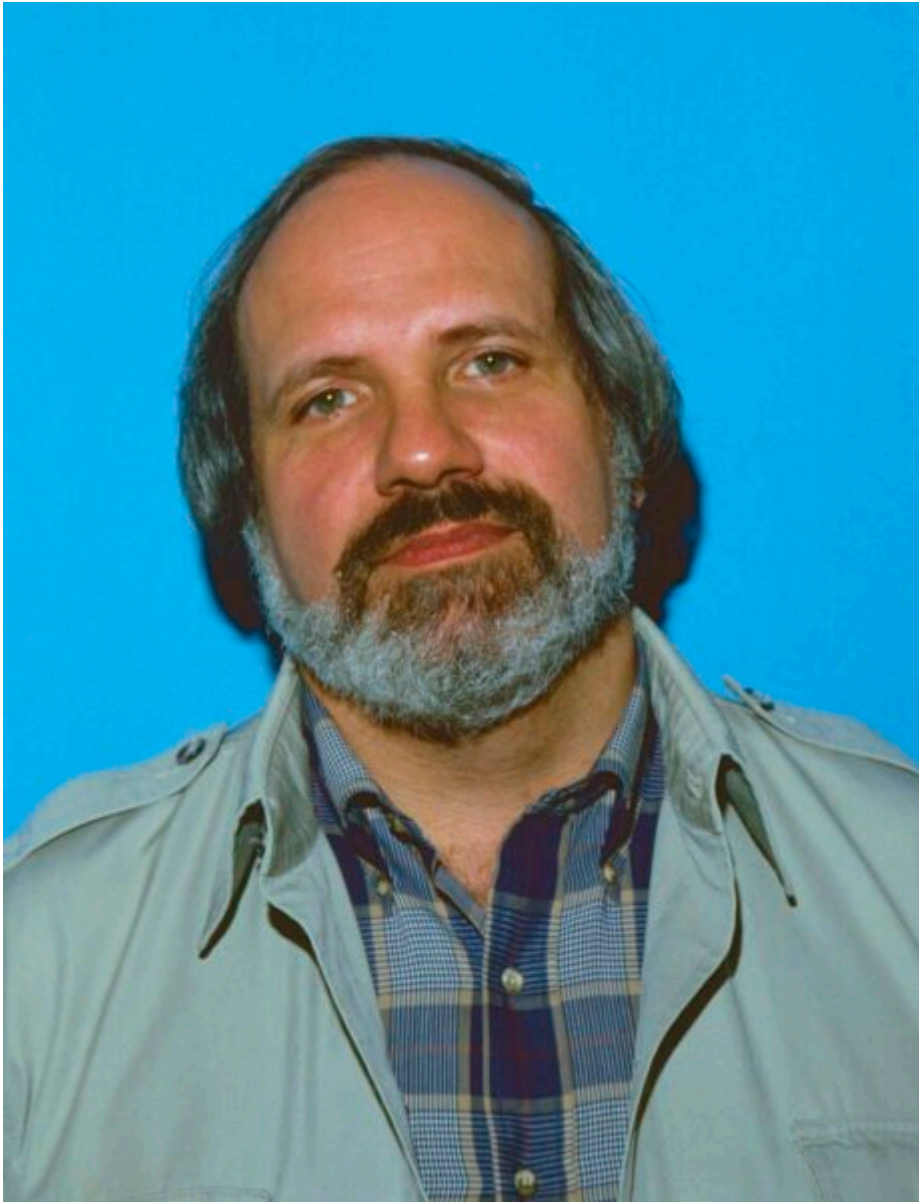
Carrie: “I wanted to represent the high school experience in a different way. It’s typical of a teenager to feel cut off like the ugly duckling.”



Brian De Palma © Elisa Leonelli 1978

In 1987 the editors of CIAK, the Italian film monthly, proposed that I write a weekly newsletter

about what was happening in Hollywood, plus film reviews and interviews with actors and directors, as their Los Angeles Correspondent. I held this position until 1994.



Brian De Palma © Elisa Leonelli 1987

The first article, my interviews about *The Untouchables* with Brian De Palma and Kevin Costner, was published in the [September 1987](#) issue as an 8-page cover story.

I asked the director about working again with Robert De Niro who played Al Capone: “We are older, but our relationship hasn’t changed. When you know somebody that long, it’s like a member of your family, a brother or something, you can talk very simply and directly.”



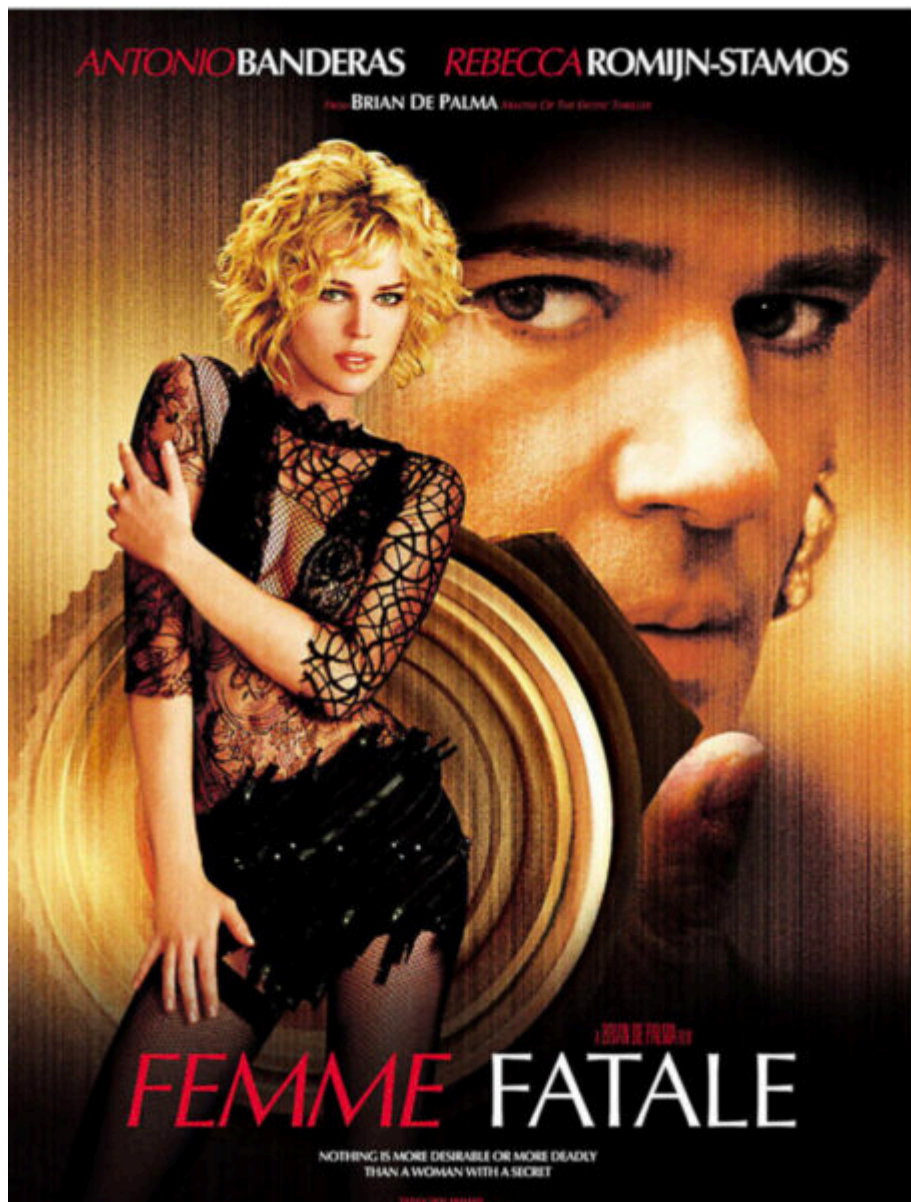
Brian De Palma, Elisa Leonelli 1989

For [CIAK September 1989](#) issue I wrote what De Palma said about *Casualties of War*.

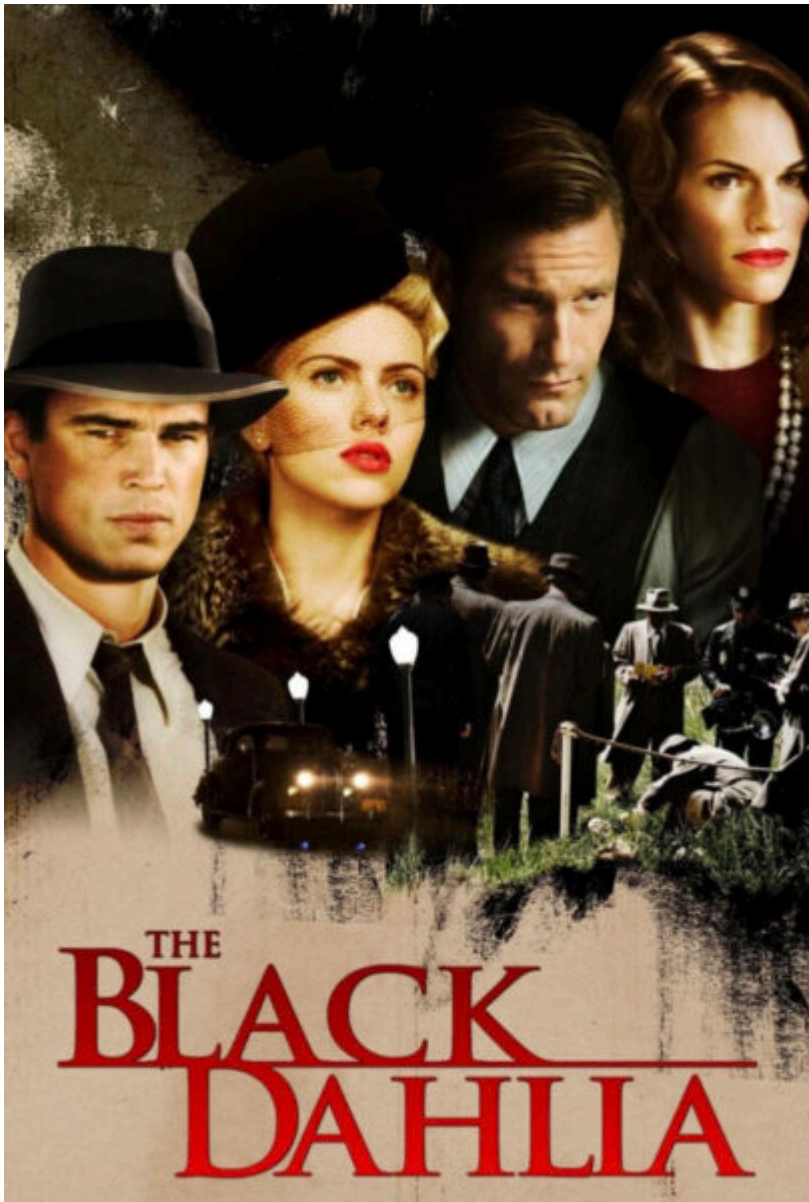
On the perspective on the Vietnam War, 20 years later: “It’s very confusing to us because we don’t quite understand why we were there, so it’s a continuing unexplained festering sore. We have all kinds of explanations, and we didn’t win the war.”

For [CIAK January 1991](#) issue I wrote what De Palma and Tom Hanks said about *Bonfire of the Vanities*.

De Palma: “The satiric and ironic tone was in the book, which deals with broad caricatures, so the movie had to be essentially a black comedy, like *Dr. Strangelove* by Stanley Kubrick, which is the best example I can think of in the history of cinema.”



I later interviewed De Palma about *Femme Fatale* (2002) and *The Black Dahlia* (2006) from the 1987 novel by James Ellroy.



I just watched on Max the documentary *De Palma* directed by Noah Baumbach and Jake Paltrow that premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2015. See [trailer](#). The director talks about every one of his movies, including *Dressed to Kill* (1980) with Angie Dickinson, *Scarface* (1983) and *Carlito's Way* (1993) with Al Pacino, *Mission Impossible* (1996) with Tom Cruise. He describes his friendship with Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Francis Coppola: “What we did in our generation will never be duplicated.”

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5 Ways Cultural Sites Preserve Collective Memory

Our Friends · Saturday, October 5th, 2024

Cultural sites, like museums and historical landmarks, act as memory keepers. They safeguard stories, traditions, and events that define communities or nations.

The idea of preserving collective memory means they help remember shared histories and experiences. Think of them as time capsules showing where we came from.

Let's explore five ways these sites maintain and communicate this shared history to future generations.

Cultural Sites Safeguard Historic Landmarks for Future Generations

Historic landmarks serve as touchstones of collective memory by embodying stories and events that shaped communities.

Preservation efforts at these sites, like funding renovations or implementing protective legislation, ensure their endurance for future generations.

Take the restoration of old courthouses or historic theaters—these endeavors not only protect physical structures but also maintain their narrative value within a community.

By engaging local volunteers and historians in these projects, cultural sites promote a sense of ownership among residents.

This collective stewardship fosters a deeper connection to shared history and encourages ongoing education about past achievements and struggles while ensuring vital links between the present community identity and its historical roots remain intact.

Museums Capture Oral Histories

Museums often play a crucial role in preserving collective memory by recording oral histories. These stories, shared directly by community members, offer authentic insights into personal and cultural experiences.

By conducting interviews with diverse individuals, museums gather narratives that reflect various aspects of a community's past and present. This approach not only enriches exhibits but also ensures voices from all walks of life contribute to the historical record.

As these accounts are preserved digitally or as part of interactive displays, visitors gain access to a rich tapestry of human experiences.

This initiative keeps important traditions alive while providing future generations with firsthand perspectives on events that shaped their communities' identities over time.

Interactive Displays Map Community Memories

Cultural sites often utilize interactive displays to map out community memories, transforming historical information into engaging visual narratives.

These dynamic tools allow visitors to explore local history through virtual timelines, geographical overlays, and digital storytelling elements.

By integrating touchscreens and augmented reality features, these displays provide an immersive experience that brings the past to life.

This method engages audiences by allowing them to visually traverse significant events and landmarks while understanding their cultural contexts.

Additionally, they can highlight diverse perspectives within a community's history by incorporating multimedia elements such as photographs.

These innovative presentations encourage deeper connections with heritage by inviting the exploration of shared stories in a more accessible format than traditional exhibits might offer.

Exhibitions Share Personal Narratives

Exhibitions within cultural sites play a vital role in preserving collective memory. They often do that by sharing personal narratives. These stories, often drawn from diaries, letters, or interviews, provide unique insights into individual experiences that collectively shape community history.

By curating exhibits focused on these personal accounts, museums and heritage centers can create an intimate connection between visitors and the past. They can illustrate broader historical themes through the lens of everyday lives.

This approach ensures diverse voices are represented and heard. It allows for a richer understanding of events' impact on different groups within a community.

As visitors engage with these exhibitions, they can gain an appreciation for how individual stories contribute to the complex tapestry of shared human experiences over time.

Cemeteries Honor Community Legacies

Cemeteries (whether they are famous ones like **Cimetière du Père Lachaise in Paris**, or ones that are well known among local communities like **Gate of Heaven Cemetery and Mausoleum in East Hanover, NJ**) can act as cultural sites that preserve collective memory.

They provide a physical space where community histories unfold through tombstone inscriptions and mausoleum architecture.

These elements offer insights into societal norms, family legacies, and cultural practices over time.

The cemetery becomes an open-air archive where each gravestone narrates its own story of past lives and experiences.

By maintaining these spaces with care and respect, communities ensure that future generations can explore their heritage through direct encounters with their history's silent storytellers.

Final Thoughts

Cultural sites serve as custodians of collective memory by preserving diverse narratives, safeguarding traditions, and highlighting personal stories. Through innovative exhibits and engaging programs, they connect us to our past while educating future generations.

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Finding the Perfect Luxury Assisted Living for Your Loved One—Here’s How to Nail It

Our Friends · Saturday, October 5th, 2024

When it comes to finding the right care for a loved one, the pressure can be overwhelming. Everyone deserves a comfortable, safe place where they can maintain their independence while getting the help they need. But when it comes to luxury assisted living, the search can get a little more complex—especially if you want a place that feels like home, not just a healthcare facility. Whether you’re looking for something local or somewhere a little farther, finding the right fit for your loved one involves a balance of style, care, and location.

So, how do you navigate this important decision? Let’s dive into what makes a luxury assisted living facility stand out, and how to find one that aligns with your loved one’s lifestyle and needs.

Start With Location, But Don’t Stop There

Location often tops the list of priorities when searching for the right assisted living facility, especially if staying close to family is important. The good news is that you can easily start your search by checking for **“assisted living near me”** online, which gives you a clear idea of what’s available nearby. But don’t just stop at the first place on the list—proximity is just one piece of the puzzle. The facility’s vibe, level of care, and amenities also need to align with your loved one’s lifestyle.

A luxury assisted living community should offer more than just basic care. Look for spaces with beautifully designed interiors, lush outdoor areas, and amenities like fine dining, fitness programs, and wellness activities. Essentially, the space should feel like a high-end resort, where the focus is on enhancing life, not just maintaining it.

What Sets Luxury Apart? It’s All About Lifestyle

When searching for the right luxury assisted living option, the details matter. The term “luxury” in assisted living goes beyond just having nice furniture or well-manicured lawns. It’s about creating a lifestyle where your loved one can thrive, enjoy community, and still feel pampered. High-end facilities often include gourmet meal options, personal chefs, spa services, and activities tailored to residents’ interests.

One of the key things to remember is that **choosing the right retirement option** is not just about the perks—it’s about how those amenities contribute to overall well-being. Does the facility offer concierge services? Are there wellness programs to keep residents active and healthy? What about cultural events, movie nights, or trips to the local community? Make sure the facility fosters an engaging lifestyle that supports your loved one’s health and happiness.

Personalization is Key—Find a Place That Understands Your Loved One's Needs

Not all luxury facilities are created equal, and personalization is a major factor to consider. The best places offer customizable care plans tailored to individual needs. Whether your loved one requires minimal assistance or needs more comprehensive care, it's important to find a community that can adapt to their specific situation.

Look for facilities that offer a range of care options, from independent living to memory care, all while maintaining a high standard of luxury. That way, as your loved one's needs evolve, the level of care can adjust without forcing them to move to a completely different facility. Continuity in care and surroundings makes a huge difference in their quality of life.

What Does Daily Life Look Like?

When it comes to luxury assisted living, daily life should be anything but ordinary. If the community only offers basic activities like bingo or movie nights, it might not be the best fit. Today's top-tier facilities go above and beyond to offer engaging programs that keep residents active, socially, and mentally stimulated.

Think **yoga classes**, art workshops, cooking lessons, and even continuing education programs. Luxury living also often includes special services like housekeeping, laundry, and transportation, freeing up time for residents to enjoy more of the things they love. After all, retirement should be a time to relax, but it should also be an opportunity to stay active and involved in the things that make life exciting.

Trust Your Gut—Visit in Person

All the research in the world can't replace an in-person visit. Photos and online reviews give you a snapshot, but the true essence of a community only becomes clear when you're physically there. Take a tour, meet the staff, and talk to some of the current residents to get a feel for the atmosphere. Is the staff attentive and friendly? Does the facility feel warm and welcoming? These are things you can't fully gauge from a website alone.

During your visit, pay close attention to how the facility handles personal care, cleanliness, and resident engagement. Don't be afraid to ask detailed questions, like how they handle emergencies or what kind of training the staff undergoes. Also, take note of how the residents interact with each other. A thriving community is one where people feel connected and supported, not isolated or overlooked.

Finding a Place Your Loved One Will Love

Choosing luxury assisted living for your loved one is a big decision, and it's important to take the time to get it right. The best luxury assisted living communities are those that feel like home—offering both comfort and care while allowing your loved one to live life to the fullest. When you find that perfect place, you'll know.

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Art and Science Collide at Getty Center

Stephen West · Friday, October 4th, 2024

The latest edition of Pacific Standard Time, or PST Art, a sprawling series of exhibitions supported by Getty at more than 70 Southern California institutions, continues to roll out. This third series, called [Art and Science Collide](#), includes eight separate shows just at the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

The biggest of the bunch isn't about how modern high-tech materials have been used to make artworks, as you might expect. Instead, the flagship show, "Lumen: The Art and Science of Light," focuses on the period of 800 to 1600 A.D. and "how science informed the artistry of the Middle Ages and Renaissance," as a wall label explains. It was a time when instruments such as the astrolabe—used to measure light from the stars for navigational purposes—were developed. That led eventually to telescopes and microscopes and all the rest.



Tapestry of the Astrolabes, about 1400-1450, Flemish, wool and silk; Cabildo Catedral de Toledo, Primada de España, Toledo, Spain; photograph by David Blazquez.

One of the most spectacular works in the show, *Tapestry of the Astrolabes*, of about 1400-1450, is a huge Flemish wall hanging from the cathedral of Seville, Spain. On the upper left, God directs all the activity in the scene, with an angel below turning a crank to keep the world in motion. On the right are the poet Virgil and astronomer Hipparchus. In the center are two golden rings arranged like an astrolabe, inside of which are all sorts of mythical and real-life creatures, from a winged horse to strange snakes to a brown bear, as well as personifications of philosophy, geometry, arithmetic, and astronomy. It's an astounding scene.





Muhammad b. Abi Bakr (Iranian, active 1200s), *Astrolabe With a Geared Calendar (front and rear views)*, 1221 or 1222, copper alloy, silvered copper alloy, silver, and wax; History of Science Museum, University of Oxford, images © History of Science Museum, University of Oxford.

The exhibition includes several astrolabes, which measure the angle of the North Star to the horizon and can calculate the time of day or night and determine the latitude of a ship at sea. They consist of a pair of circular plates made of copper or brass alloys and inscribed with intricate scales for measurement. On the back are gears to coordinate their motion. The astrolabes in the Getty show are particularly beautiful, probably made more for show than for long ocean voyages.



Compound Microscope and Case, With All Accessories, France, early 1750s, gilt bronze, iron, enamel, sharkskin and glass; wood, gilded leather, gilt bronze fittings, green silk velvet, gold braid; slides of various natural specimens and brass implements; Getty Museum.

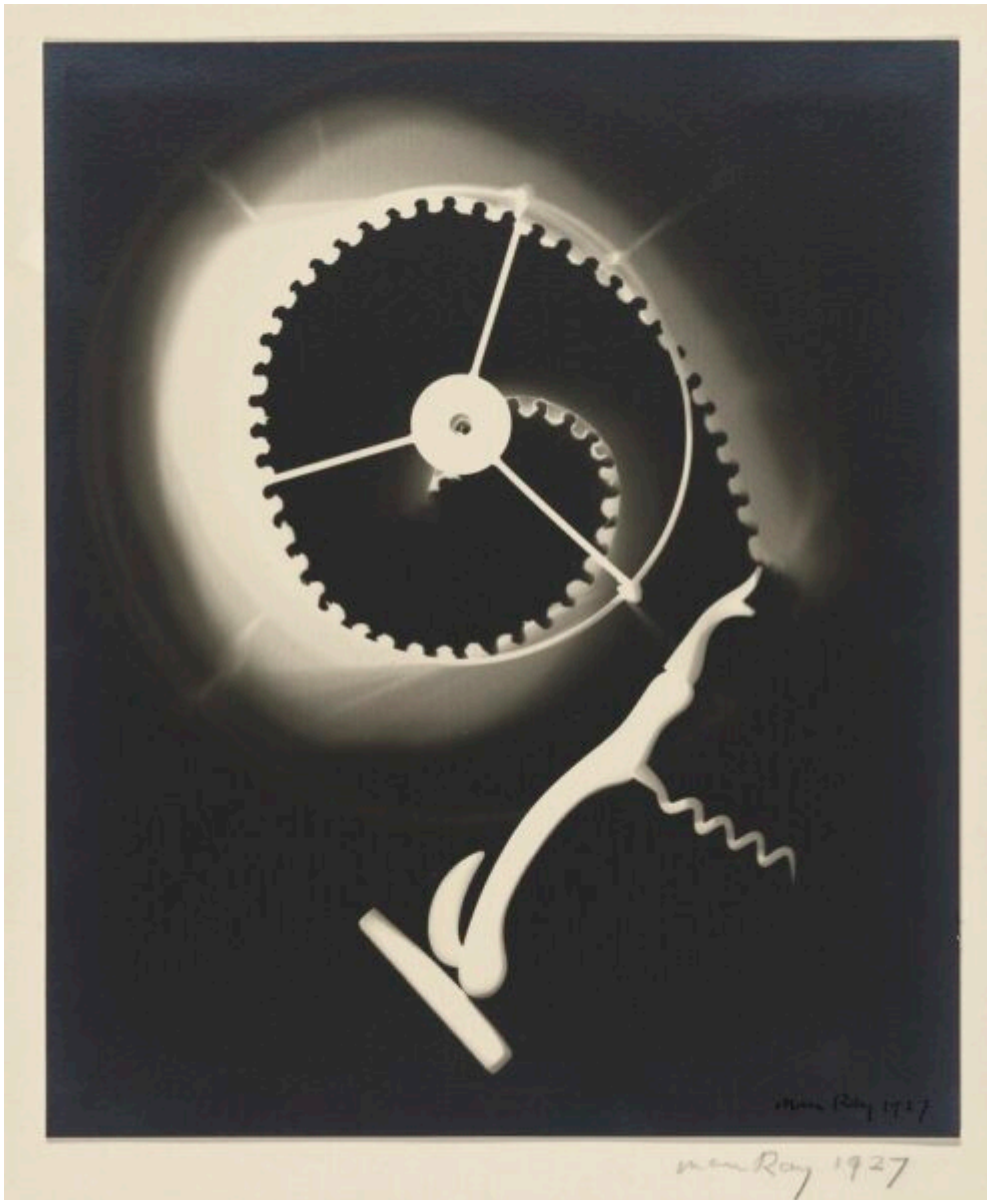
Another exhibition at Getty Center, “Magnified Wonders,” features essentially one object, an 18th-century microscope that’s a work of art in its own right. As the show notes, the elaborately decorated instrument (and its equally decorated case) was “doubtless made for an aristocratic amateur scientist” and is similar to one owned by King Louis XV.

Though the gilded base of the microscope looks like a Rococo sculpture, the instrument itself is not that different from modern versions: a plate on which objects are placed to be studied, a large brass knob to focus the image, a concave glass mirror to light the specimen, additional knobs to adjust the eyepiece. Everything packs neatly into a velvet-lined wooden case, including slides and other accessories.

Experimental Photography

Not all of the Getty’s PST shows feature objects from centuries ago. Two lively exhibitions, “Abstracted Light: Experimental Photography” and “Sculpting With Light: Contemporary Artists

and Holography” offer works from the 1920s forward to the present.

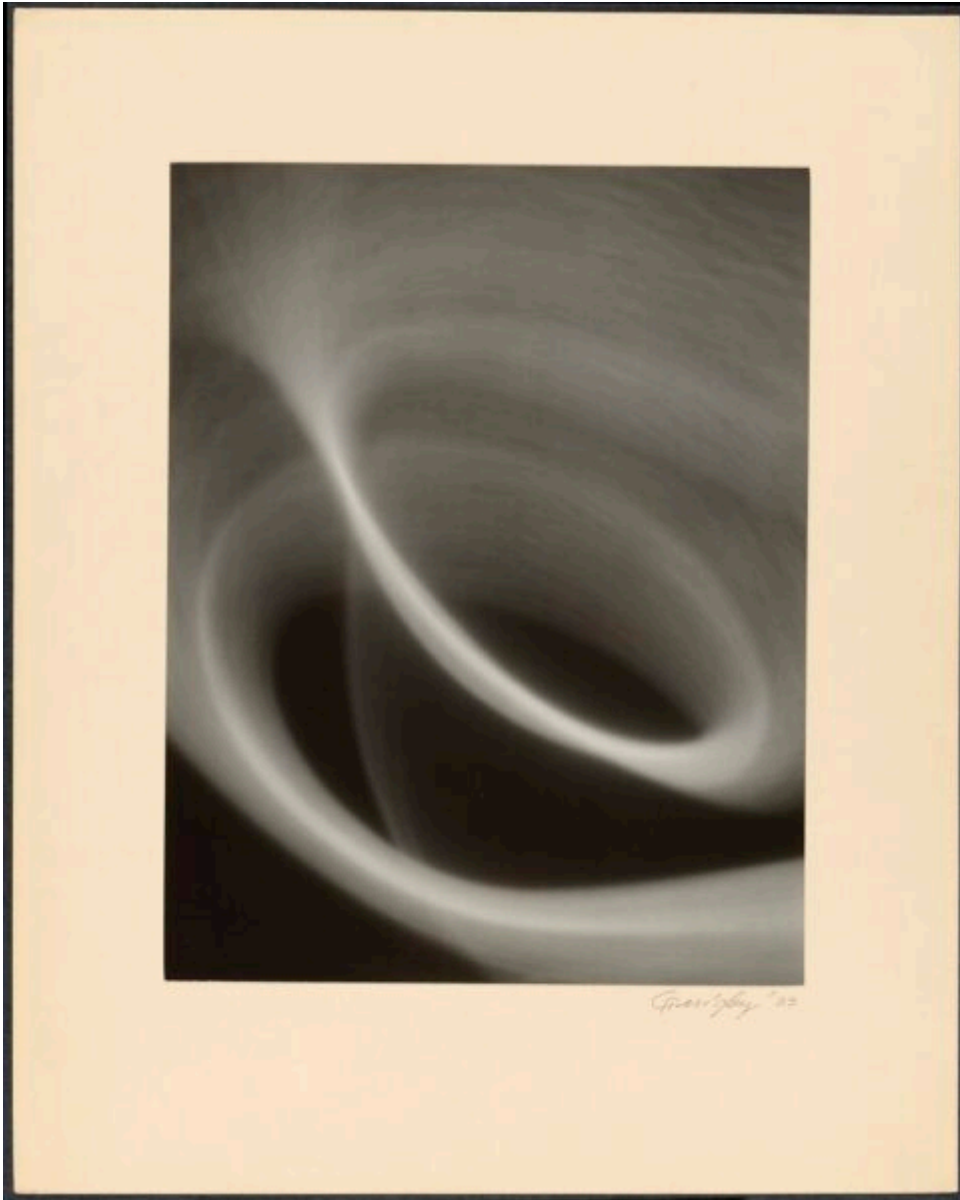


Man Ray (American, 1890-1976), *Untitled (Corkscrew and Lampshade)*, 1927, gelatin silver print, Getty Museum, © Man Ray Trust ARS-ADAGP.

“Abstracted Light” focuses on photograms, produced mostly in the 1920s and 1930s. Artists including Laszlo Maholy-Nagy and Man Ray began to use photography in a new way, without cameras, by imprinting images on photographic paper. Ray, for example, created *Untitled (Corkscrew and Lampshade)* of 1927 by placing a corkscrew and lampshade on unexposed paper and turning on a light for a moment. He modestly called it a Rayogram.

The picture itself looks like something out of 1920s Italian or Russian Futurism. The lampshade is transformed into a geared machine, with the corkscrew seeming to function as a handle or lever.

Other artists employed different techniques to make images on paper without cameras. Asahachi Kono, for example, used the same negative more than once, in contrasting orientations, to create his photograms. Theodore Roszak shifted his light sources to produce multiple images from a single object placed on a sheet of photographic paper. Barbara Morgan in effect drew on paper with a handheld light.

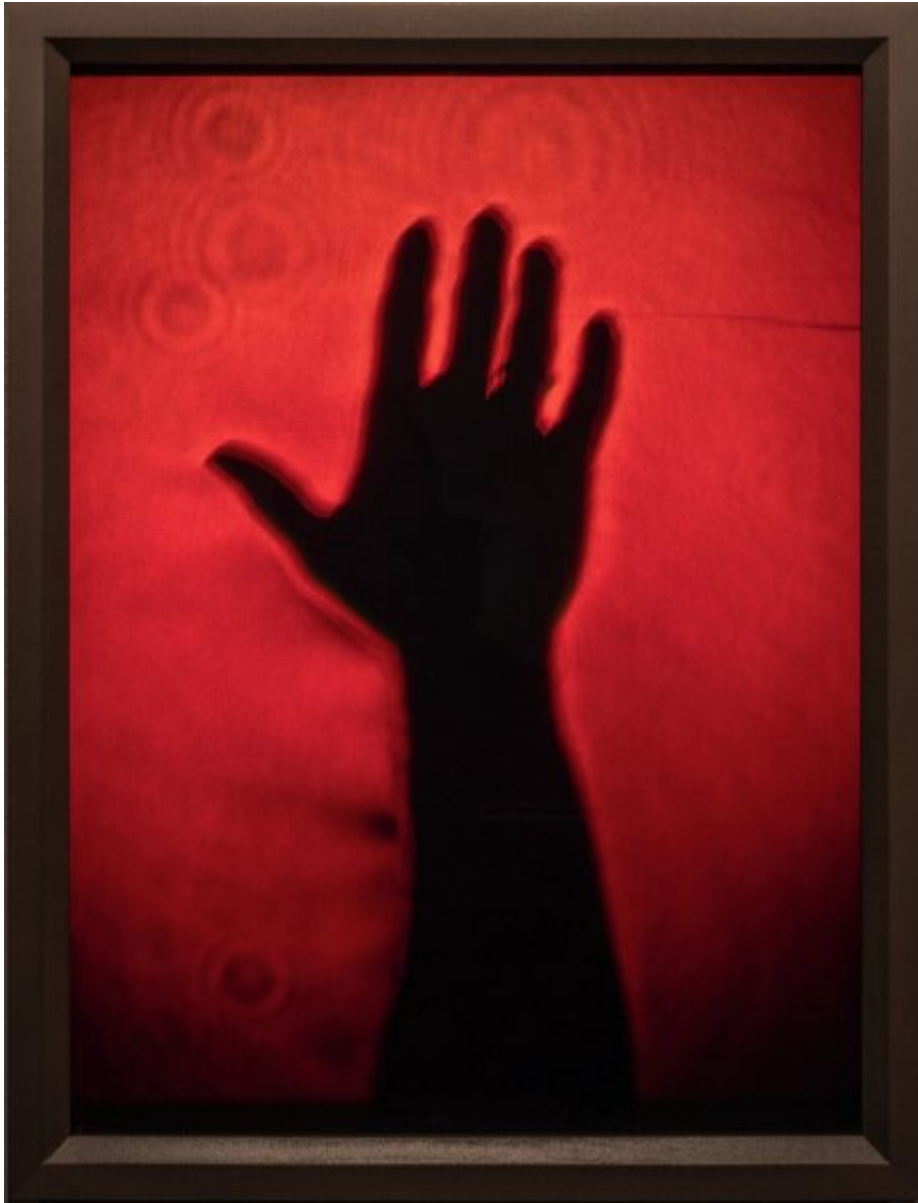


Edward W. Quigley (American, 1898-1977), *Vortex*, 1933, gelatin silver print, Getty Museum. © Estate of Edward W. Quigley.

Edward W. Quigley, described in a wall label as “secretive about how he achieved his special photographic effects,” may have used “long exposures and projected forms in motion.” However he produced it, *Vortex* of 1933 is a powerful and mysterious image. It could represent something as simple as a whirlpool in a stream or as massive as a black hole in space. In any case, it’s a knockout.

Three Dimensions

Another exhibition in the photography galleries focuses on the three-dimensional but mainly monochromatic images known as holograms. “Sculpting With Light: Contemporary Artists and Holography” certainly features some big-name artists, including Ed Ruscha, Chuck Close, and John Baldessari. Yet to me, at least, they come across as gimmicks as much as powerful artworks. (Showing Chuck Close’s head and shoulders from five angles rather than one doesn’t really make it more interesting.)



Matthew Schreiber (American, born 1967), *Bowie 5*, 2016–2023, reflection hologram, courtesy of the artist, © Matthew Schreiber.

The younger artists in the show seem to make more of the holography medium. Matthew Schreiber, for example, is represented by two groups of images, one a series of eerie landscapes set in a small village in upstate New York.

The other, a group of eight images of Schreiber's own hand in various poses, was made as a homage to rock musician David Bowie after his death in 2016. The holograms are arranged in a simple horizontal row on the wall. Their variations in background colors – oranges, blues, greens — and his hand's positions within the frame creates a lively ensemble.

The Getty's experimental photography and holography shows run through November 24. The Lumen medieval art and science exhibition is on view through December 8, and the 18th-century microscope through February 8, 2024, all at the Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles. The museum is closed Mondays.

*

Top image: *Tapestry of the Astrolabes* (installation view), about 1400-1450, Flemish, wool and

silk; Cabildo Catedral de Toledo, Primada de España, Toledo, Spain; photograph by Stephen West.

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Companionship 2.0: How Innovation is Filling the Loneliness Gap

Our Friends · Friday, October 4th, 2024

Loneliness seems to be rising, even with the increased global interconnection facilitated by technology. Many studies indicate that there is a significant portion of the population who feel alone and isolated, especially among the youth. Innovation has come up to fill the gap of companionship as societies continue to face this problem of emotional epidemic, introducing a new form of social interaction.

The Loneliness Epidemic

Nowadays, researchers compare the impact of loneliness on health with smoking and obesity. Social media was created to bring individuals together; however, it has greatly increased the number of shallow relationships among people. In addition, the Covid-19 epidemic has worsened the problem of loneliness and social isolation, as individuals are compelled to keep their distance from each other for a long time.

Research indicates that being alone can be detrimental for a person's state of mind and body. It adds to the development of illnesses like depression, anxiety as well as heart diseases. As a result, there is an increasing concern that has arisen over the years calling for new ways of improving social interactions.

The Role of Technology in Combating Loneliness

Technology has often been criticized for contributing to loneliness, yet it is also being harnessed to combat it. Several innovative approaches have emerged, leveraging advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and social platforms to create new avenues for companionship.

1. **AI Companions:** **AI chat** and virtual companions are becoming increasingly sophisticated. These digital entities can engage users in conversations, provide emotional support, and even learn preferences over time. Users can get a personalized AI friend from such applications that will stimulate deep conversation and encourage emotional expression. This type of companionship can serve as a bridge for those who may feel uncomfortable engaging with humans due to social anxiety or other barriers.
2. **Virtual Reality Social Spaces:** Virtual reality technology is creating immersive social environments where individuals can interact in real-time, regardless of physical distance.

Platforms like AltspaceVR and VRChat allow users to create avatars and engage in social activities, such as attending concerts or playing games together. This immersive experience can foster a sense of presence and community that is often lacking in traditional online interactions.

3. **Social Apps and Communities:** Various apps have come up that help in linking people who have common interests, hobbies or lifestyle. These platforms are aimed at helping individuals make new friends beyond their usual social circle. Through this, they can engage in events, have fun as a group or just chat with each other and make some new connections along the way.
4. **Telehealth and Support Networks:** The rise of telehealth services has made mental health support more accessible than ever. Online therapy platforms provide a means for individuals to seek help and build connections with therapists and support groups. These platforms not only address loneliness but also contribute to overall well-being, creating a more supportive environment for those in need.



The Human Touch in Innovation

Loneliness can be fought by technology, but it cannot work alone. Empathy and emotional intelligence should be given more importance than ever in these new solutions. Today, more and more businesses and engineers understand the need to create goods that would deeply touch the hearts of customers. It means that one should take into account the feedback of users, comprehend different emotional requirements and make sure that the technology improves real communication instead of substituting it.

The Future of Companionship

The future of companionship appears promising. Advancements in technology are expected to fuse even more with our day to day activities thereby providing additional means for linking up and interacting with others. Nevertheless, one must be careful to ensure that they strike a balance between virtual reality and actual relationships.

It is difficult to make sure that technology enhances rather than replacing human interaction. This can be achieved by creating an environment that promotes real communication and emotional relationships among people, so that we solve the problem of loneliness but still take advantage of

technological progress.

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Top Rugby Podcasts

Our Friends · Friday, October 4th, 2024

Whether you're catching up with the latest round of the Currie Cup, or staying updated on international fixtures, rugby podcasts are a fantastic way to delve deeper into the game. Here's a look at some of the best rugby podcasts that will keep rugby fans engaged.

1) The Big Jim Show

A spin-off from *The Rugby Pod*, *The Big Jim Show* is hosted by former Scotland international Jim Hamilton. Known for his charismatic personality, Hamilton conducts in-depth interviews with some of rugby's top players. [According to Rugby365](#), its blend of humour, insight, and serious conversations make it a must-listen for those interested in exploring rugby beyond the game itself.

2) RugbyBits

RugbyBits is a fan-driven podcast focused on South African rugby, offering a mix of light-hearted banter and tactical analysis on the Springboks, Super Rugby, and the United Rugby Championship. Known for passionate discussions, it keeps fans updated on the latest developments in both local and international rugby, providing an entertaining yet insightful experience.

3) The Good, The Bad & The Rugby

The Good, The Bad & The Rugby began in the UK but now has a South African spin-off hosted by former Springboks, Schalk Brits and Gcobani Bobo. This version covers both local and international rugby, with candid discussions featuring South African players and coaches. Combining humour, personal stories, and rugby insights, it brings the original's flavour to South African listeners.

4) SA Rugby Podcast

This is the official podcast of South African Rugby, making it a go-to for fans of the Springboks and local competitions. Covering the latest news from the world of South African rugby, this podcast includes interviews with current and former Springboks, as well as updates on Blitzboks and domestic competitions. For die-hard Springbok fans, it's an essential listen?.

5) To The Last Drop

Produced by veteran rugby journalists Brenden Nel and Liam Del Carme, *To The Last Drop* brings nearly 60 years of reporting experience to the table. The podcast covers everything rugby-related, from match previews to quirky anecdotes and in-depth analysis of South African and global rugby. It's ideal for fans seeking a detailed, journalistic perspective while staying entertained.

6) Under The Sticks

Under The Sticks covers rugby from a Southern Hemisphere perspective, including Super Rugby, Rugby Championship, and the international rugby scene. It features expert analysis, fan engagement, and interviews, catering to a global audience?

These rugby podcasts provide the perfect mix of humour, insight, and in-depth rugby knowledge, making them essential listening for any South African rugby enthusiast.

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Building an Emergency Fund into Your Family's Budget

Our Friends · Friday, October 4th, 2024

Having quick access to a cash emergency fund can prevent your family from falling into debt. Building an emergency fund into your family budget provides financial protection when unexpected expenses arise. Follow these steps to create your family's rainy day fund.

Assess Your Risk

Evaluate your family's risk level based on job security, health, homeownership costs, and other factors. Higher risk families should aim for a larger emergency fund equivalent to 6-12 months of living expenses. Lower risk households can start with 3-6 months' worth.

Find the Money for Your Family Budget

Dedicate a percentage of your family's take home pay, such as a **foster care allowance**, to emergency savings each month. Start with 10% then increase the amount gradually. Look for areas to trim back, like eating out, to free up more savings. Temporary lifestyle cuts can help build the fund faster.

Pick Your Savings Account

Choose an accessible low or no fee **savings account** to hold the emergency fund. Online banks tend to offer higher interest rates. Make sure you can easily transfer money into your everyday

spending account when urgent needs arise. Be wary of savings accounts that lock your money down for a fixed term.

Make It Automatic

Set up an automatic monthly transfer from your household account to the emergency fund account so contributions happen consistently without effort. Some employers allow splitting direct deposit payments between different accounts.

Track Your Progress

Note your monthly emergency fund contributions in your budget and check totals quarterly. Watching the balance grow will keep everyone motivated. Celebrate hitting key milestones like £1,000 or 3 months' worth saved.

Protect the Balance

Avoid the temptation to tap the emergency fund for non-emergencies like holidays or new gadgets. Stick to using it only for true financial crises like job loss or major home repairs.

Consolidate Accounts

If you have multiple savings pots, consolidate them into your emergency fund account so it's clear what is readily available. Keep longer term savings like university funds separate.

Top Up Regularly

Review your emergency fund total every 6 months and top up as needed to stay near your target amount as your family's living expenses change. Aim to replenish the fund quickly after any withdrawals.

Broaden Protection

In addition to cash savings, consider supplemental insurance for added protection from risks like illness, disability, or job loss. This can reduce how much you need in emergency cash reserves.

Keep Some Cash

Hold a small amount of actual cash at home in a safe place. In a crisis where electronic bank access is disrupted, cash ensures you have funds to cover critical needs.

Review Annually

Schedule time once a year to review your emergency fund goals and policies to ensure they still meet your family's evolving financial situation and risk profile. Adjust the fund amount and contributions accordingly.

Having 3-12 months' worth of living expenses in an accessible emergency fund provides enormous peace of mind. **Disasters happen**, but your family will be financially prepared with a dedicated rainy day savings buffer built into your budget.

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