Dean Celine Parreñas Shimizu Introductory Remarks

Special Screening of WarGames +
Live Recording of the UNOBTANIUM Podcast

Welcome to today's screening of War Games at TFT!

In 1983, I came to this country and *WarGames* was one of the very first movies I saw here just as Computer Science classes were starting in my own high school in Cambridge, Mass. The movie imagines a computer bringing humanity to the brink of global thermonuclear war and the premise of a machine acting beyond human instruction is no longer fantastic but too real today. Forty-three years later, as AI reshapes how we live, its lessons hold: human judgment, doubt and conscience must be the safeguard. How? Can we teach it the lessons of Tic Tac Toe?

Many of us meet AI with apprehension and with anger: about the work we train for, the images and voices we make, and the way we learn to think, write and create as necessary not only to higher education but democracy itself.

What we know at TFT, where we hold AI summits that center human creation, is that technology demands human responsibility, and artists, storytellers and scholars lead that conversation. At the university, critique and analytic power develop alongside creation.

On November 16, two-time Academy Award-winning production designer Rick Carter joins us to share how he engages AI as a collaborator, resonant at TFT, where Vivian Sobchack's film phenomenology calls the film experience an intersubjective one where the film is not merely a tool, nor an object. A resource and key ingredient to collaboration itself–which is the heart of film and theater–where everyone contributes to the director and writer's vision consequentially. At TFT we demand new relations with industry to learn from the academy as we question, imagine and shape what comes next with what they can learn from us: data-driven and evidence-based inquiry, and even holding contrary ideas or remaining comfortable in the questions we ask. So how perfect that a great conversation happens after the film today.

Filmmaker Adam Sigel and UCLA Professor of Astronomy Amy Mainzer record their podcast UNOBTANIUM live with *War Games* co-screenwriter Walter Parkes and UCLA Professor of Computer Engineering Nader Sehatbakhsh who specializes in computer security. Artists, scientists and scholars in one room: this is one UCLA, this number one university because we are comprehensive and need each other across disciplines, and this is TFT itself–unifying across production and scholarship in our research and in our thinking and training the next generations. This cross-disciplinary inquiry is embodied in the person who came up with the idea to bring the sciences and arts together like this, Screenwriting Professor George Huang.

On behalf of TFT, our deep thanks to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for sponsoring tonight. Since 1997, the Sloan Science and Film Program has supported filmmakers and screenwriters, many of them our very own students, staff and faculty.

So sit forward. Engage. Enjoy. Then stand up to defend and protect human creation in the talk that follows every movie and your movie experience.

November 8, 2026
James Bridges Theater