Narrating Authorship
The VFX Career and Protest
Through 'Social-Actor-Networks'

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Abstract:

This chapter considers the role that social-networked, self-curated, precarious career narratives play in the visual effects (VFX) industry labor market. Specifically, the chapter focuses on networked protest and the negotiation between human, technological, and corporate actors in the VFX industry and beyond. An examination of 'green screen' protests that took place almost a decade ago asks what we can learn about liminal labor, inequality, networked protest, and the role that narrative plays in constructing shared meaning and collective value in a precarious and decentralized sociotechnical world. Concluding with a comparative evaluation of the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, this piece argues that networked protests of the 2013 visual effects industry were a glimpse of a future in which resistance narratives and networked protest function together to redefine liminal labor.

In 2013, visual effects (VFX) animators began to mount a global and vocal protest over the structure and working conditions of their industry. In what was to become a textbook case of the ills facing the VFX industry and the precarious nature of its economic model, the production company Rhythm and Hues suffered bankruptcy just as its most recent film (*The Life of Pi*, directed by Ang Lee, 2012) secured widespread commercial and critical success. Within days of these events, a highly visible wave of protest spread throughout much of the industry. For many beyond the industry itself, these protests might have gone unnoticed had they remained localized in the Los Angeles area. But what was initially located within a few blocks of the Dolby Theatre quickly moved online, where open letters addressed to director Ang Lee were published protesting the treatment of artists and the structure of the industry's economic model.

Beyond open letters, other forms of protest emerged on global social networks, most notably on Facebook. First, VFX artists and their friends began to change their social network profile pictures to green: a representation of the green screen

so central to the industry and a signifier of solidarity with the artists who felt that their treatment at the hands of a deregulated, increasingly outsourced, and precarious short-term contract system of employment had gone too far. Next, VFX artists around the world began making and circulating a new meme entitled "Your Movie Without VFX" ("Movies Without CGI"). These images, often humorous in tone, invariably featured a photograph from the set of a well-known blockbuster movie with a large green or blue screen dominating the picture and a tag line "[movie title] without VFX." In effect, these meme images aimed at making visible the quantity of screen real estate now reliant on VFX production and, more specifically, made explicit the threat that movie production studios could face crippling paralysis should industrial discontent escalate.

The images, like the green profile pictures, did more than function as signifiers of protest, however: They contributed to an emergent public narrative regarding the lives and labor of VFX artists making Hollywood movies increasingly built upon invisible exploitation. The green profile pictures made visible the usually hidden or unacknowledged artists of what I shall call the 'social-actor-network' of the visual effects industry. In a corporate structure governed by above- and below-the-line hierarchies in which artists have little or no legal authorial right to the material they produce, social networks are emerging as platforms on which authorship, participation, and stakeholder identity of liminal labor and the VFX industry career is narrated (Stahl, "Nonproprietary Authorship"; Stahl, "Privilege"; Banks). From green profile pictures and blue screen memes to tagged credit sequence snapshots and shared show-reel videos, the social network and its corollaries (LinkedIn, Vimeo, and IMDB) are emerging as the means by which VFX professionals informally narrate their personal role in the authorship of the movies they work on. In so doing, they contest the invisibility brought about by what Matt Stahl has described as "copyright's doctrine of *work for hire*" (Stahl, "Privilege" 55; emphasis in the original). This chapter will consider the impact of such developments in the ongoing negotiation and narration of the visual effects industry and its place in Hollywood's larger production culture. Specifically, I shall consider the role that the green profile picture protests played around the time of Rhythm and Hues's demise in providing a brief and frenetic burst of negotiation between human, technological, and corporate actors in the VFX industry and beyond. Though the green screen protests took place almost a decade ago, they are still important today for what we can learn about liminal labor, inequality, networked protest, and the role that narrative plays in drawing these together in a decentralized sociotechnical world.

In his work on Actor Network Theory (ANT), Bruno Latour famously proposed a new model by which the social sciences could articulate the relationship between

what he described as "actors," "actants," and the "networks" they existed within.[1] For Latour, ANT was proposed as a means by which the relations between people and technologies could be understood through the intentionally oxymoronic juxtaposition of the centered performative "actor" on the one hand and the decentered "network" on the other.

I shall, in this chapter, refer to the 2013 VFX profile picture protests as a visible example of social-actor-networks. Much has already been written on the relationship between precarious labor in the creative industries and the role of social networks (Greg; Ross; van Dijck; Papacharissi; Bervall-Kåreborn and Howcroft). Similarly, historical studies of Hollywood's social networks have been undertaken, as have contemporary appraisals of this work (Rosten).[2] So far, however, there is little work on the relationship between the social network, broader structures of sociotechnical relations (technologies, software, and working structures) of the creative industries, and the ways in which creative professionals perform and narrate their industrial experience.

In accordance with both Melissa Gregg's and Andrew Ross's descriptions of the way in which social networks function for those in the creative industries as a fuzzy space where the lines between personal and professional are blurred, many VFX professionals have Facebook open throughout the day, posting and commenting on topics both intimate and industrial. For many in the industry, the social network provides a crucial platform through which to stay abreast of the formation of new alliances, the posting of new material (music, movie, advertisements, and more), the development of new technologies, and the emergence of new ideas central to the industry. This, then, is what I mean when I refer to the 'social-actor-network': a platform through which the relationships between human actors and technological actants are constantly renegotiated, narrated, and updated. If, as John Law points out, ANT requires recognition of the performative aspects of this constant sociotechnical renegotiation (4-6), then the social network timeline functions as a massively multifaceted, open-ended, crowdsourced script at the same time as it provides the stage on which the drama plays out.

Credit Where Credit is Due: Tagging the Professional Network

Before turning to a close analysis of the green profile picture protests, I wish to address a particular public networked performance by VFX artists that first drew

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1   For a succinct summary of the difference between ANT terminology such as 'actant' and 'actor' as it refers to movie production, see Mould.
2   For an excellent account of the historical study of Hollywood social network in Leo C. Rosten's work, see Sullivan.

my attention to the idea of the 'social-actor-network' and functioned as a precursor of the protests to come. Following the release of any given major Hollywood movie, I noticed a flurry of photos appearing on the Facebook news feed containing 'tags' of multiple VFX professionals' profile names. To an outside observer, these images might appear to be surprisingly unremarkable, literally featuring a black background and some blurry white text containing names (Fig. 1). These images are photos of a section of end titles in which a VFX professional and their departmental colleagues are credited and then tagged. Given that these credits are generally public knowledge on IMDB by the time of a film's release—in fact IMDB lists are more detailed than those that can fit on the end of a Hollywood movie—there is little need to capture such images for public record. Nevertheless, it has become a tradition that VFX professionals share these images and, in doing so publicly, act out the fact of their shared authorial participation in such huge Hollywood productions. An initial reading of such images might suggest that they informally and collectively assert authorship in an industrial context where VFX professionals have little legal contractual claim to authorship over the material they help produce (see especially Stahl, "Nonproprietary Authorship" and Stahl, "Privilege" on this subject). While such a reading—thus, my initial response to observing such photos—would be valid, it would fail to give a full account of what is happening in a number of telling ways that provide insight into the narrative of the profile picture protests that followed.

Fig. 1: The tagged credit list on Facebook
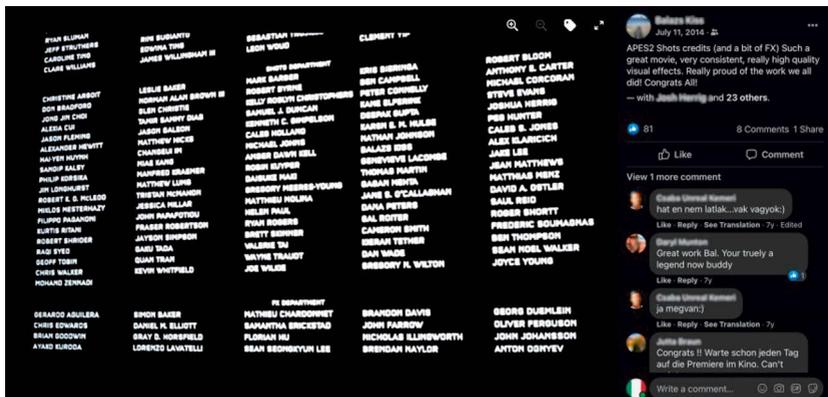
While we could argue that tagged Facebook photos of movie end credits are a public assertion of shared participatory authorship, in reality such photos are not publicly witnessed by a great deal of people. If a photo tags twenty VFX professionals and each has five hundred friends, then such photos will reach a maximum of

ten thousand people. Furthermore, such images are generally circulated amongst people already acquainted with the fact that these industry professionals are involved in the business of producing Hollywood movies. Finally, the majority of VFX artists (including the two thirds who, for various reasons, do not make it into the credit list at the end of a movie) make sure to register their involvement in a movie with IMDB (a process that is then fact-checked and verified by the VFX production houses). This being the case, it makes more sense to understand such images less as a performance to an unknown broader public and more as a personal and professional performance to family, friends, and, most significantly, colleagues in their close social network. In other words, these photos serve to build a narrative of shared community, or, in the words of Benedict Anderson, who argued that the notion of nationhood rested upon constantly reaffirmed shared narratives, we might say 'imagined community.'

We might ask how these images constitute a narrative in any recognizably conventional sense, and, considered in isolation, it may be hard to attribute narrative to them. But while these images might appear purely symbolic on their own, they do not function as discrete units but, rather, exist within an ongoing series of similar images distributed across the network of participants. It is, then, in the context of their ongoing function that they constitute a narrative: a shared story of networked, decentralized labor, authorship, and community. Here the tagged image serves as a public reminder and acknowledgement of a professional's place in a large-scale, globally distributed culture industry. This last point is particularly significant: In this industry—an industry in which both the companies and its workforce are globally mobile—a photograph of a collection of tagged friends serves as a means to solidify a record of working relations at a particular moment in time and at a particular moment in a VFX artist's career. Taken as a series of images, these photographs constitute an ongoing public reading of developing careers, networks of friends and colleagues, ongoing labor, and work authored. Given that many of the people featured in these photos may not work together again for considerable periods of time, if at all, the tagged images serve as a memento of that particular moment at the same time as they represent ongoing life narratives.

Elsewhere, I have considered the double-edged sword of global mobility and short-term contracts in the VFX industry (Gurevitch). On the one hand, global mobility is regarded by many professionals as a signifier of the cultural and industrial capital their skills embody. Here, their mobility places them in a global elite for whom the usual migration restrictions are waived in light of the capital—which economists since Marx have long noted travels more freely than labor—that their skills represent. On the other hand, the flip side of this is less glamorous. As tech-

nical director Daniel Lay[3] stated, notably anonymously at the time, on his blog *VFX Soldier* in 2010:

> Vfx facilities are now becoming 'rent seekers' where they move from country to country, state to state to take advantage of free government money. This has led many vfx artists to become permanent nomads where some are forced to leave their partners and newborn children to find temporary work in the far reaches of the world. I know of senior colleagues who purchased homes with a false sense of job security only to end up being laid off months later and forced to foreclose when they could only find work in another country.

Rhythm and Hues, to be fair, was a company known in the industry for the humane treatment of its staff, paying them well, and providing above industry standard benefits. As Michael Curtin points out in his excellent analysis of Rhythm and Hues's demise, the company was highlighted by John Caldwell for resisting some of the more extreme examples of 'rent seeking' (Curtin 224). Nevertheless, the consequence of an industry-wide tendency toward mobility, flexibility, short-term contracting, and high workloads has been an undeniable and pervasive sense of insecurity and competition amongst the professionals that make up its workforce. Following Michel Bauwens's description of a global "cognitive working class" increasingly reliant on the peer-to-peer network as an insulation against the precarity of flexible capital/labor (207), I have argued that Facebook performs a particular role in this dynamic. Specifically, it acts as a means by which VFX professionals constitute informal professional networks that aid them in a context in which responsibility for job security has been outsourced to the individual. Consequently, the Facebook protests that followed Rhythm and Hues's demise and Ang Lee's acceptance snub at the Oscars can be characterized as an example of peer-to-peer protest that arose as much as an indirect result of corporate neglect of subcontracted labor as it was a direct result of the immediate circumstances around which the VFX community rallied. That is to say, because contemporary VFX professionals have had to turn to the social-actor-network to narrate their professional stories of career progress and highlight their currency as a hedge against future job insecurity, the personal/professional network pathways and the experience of using these pathways as global communication conduits had already instituted long before the *Life of Pi* debacle.

As both academics and industry bloggers have noted, the dynamics behind the current VFX industry labor woes are complex and multivalent (Caldwell; Curtin;

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3   Lay's CV includes posts as a technical director at Sony Imageworks, Dreamworks, and Digital Domain ("Daniel Khin Lay"; Cohen).

Gurevitch).[4] To most outsiders, it would appear that the film industry and the visual effects industry are one and the same entity, but this is not the case. Rather, the film industry, the studios that were formed in the 1920s and 1930s, commission films and hold the economic power in the industry. These studios were regulated and unionized during the Great Depression era of their rise. Visual effects houses, on the other hand, can be regarded as a product of the IT industry of the 1980s and 1990s. In contrast to the film studios, the VFX industry emerged in an era of flexploitation and DotCom mania. Like the rest of the tech industry, the VFX industry is largely non-unionized. When making movies, the studio majors divide up visual effects production across a network of VFX companies and drive down costs by running a sometimes ruinously competitive bidding process. All of this results in working conditions that are often brutal, shouldered by freelance artists who migrate around the world for precariously short-term contracts. The economic pressures of this model mean that a not insignificant number of these artists have experienced the collapse of companies they worked for. This was precisely the situation that Rhythm and Hues found themselves in when they filed for bankruptcy shortly before the movie they had made the bulk of won the Oscar for Best Visual Effects.

Going Green: From Name-Tagged Networks to Faceless Profiles

Against this background, the VFX profile picture protests of 2013 were as much an articulation of deep frustration amongst global VFX professionals over the broader structure of their industry and its place in Hollywood generally as they were an expression of anger over the treatment of Rhythm and Hues employees by their company specifically. In both the open letters and the green profile protests there emerged a nuanced and sophisticated acknowledgement of the industrial circumstances in which jobs had moved overseas. Perhaps more important, however, was the palpable sense of insult sustained on the part of visual effects industry professionals when Ang Lee did not acknowledge the artists who helped him make his movie. Lee's public 'snub' and the subsequent discussions over the number of seconds of airtime he was granted at the Oscars ceremony when compared to Rhythm and Hues's VFX supervisors was crucial. In particular, it was seen as symptomatic of the contempt in which the VFX industry is held by the established power brokers in Hollywood. To some degree, we can see this as a tension between an old industrial monopoly holding a new and potentially disruptive industry in check. If one looks closely, this tension can be seen playing out at the Oscars every year—Ang

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4   For industry commentary, of which there now is an overwhelming quantity, see, for instance, Snyman; Barkan; Rome.

Lee's blunder was just one example. Each year that passes there is a new, ground-breaking visual effect that stirs debate on the nature of the awards given out and their celluloid inheritance. This leads to an unusual dynamic in which VFX studios and their employees are upheld as the cutting edge of Hollywood's movie innovation at the same time as they perceive a shortfall in the Academy's capacity to recognize and/or keep up with the pace of this innovation. Unsurprisingly, the contradictory combination of short-term contracts and stringent non-disclosure agreements only compound this feeling of frustration among VFX professionals.

Ultimately, what plays out across the visual effects industry labor environment is an oddly schizophrenic sense of both insider and outsider status at the same time. In her excellent work on ethnographic access in Hollywood, Sherry Ortner describes the "inside[r]/outside[r]" dynamic as one which onlookers from the margin must necessarily negotiate when studying the film industry (176). Scholars, industry watchers, and popular writers, she argues, must at some point face a social and industrial wall in which they are either on the inside or on the outside. In the VFX industry there is not simply an "inside" and an "outside," however, but multiple layers of 'in' and 'out.' For VFX studios themselves, from the animators up to the creative directors, there is a sense that they are partial outsiders when it comes to Hollywood's economics and awards system alike.

Unlike labor disputes in many industries, the VFX industry is characterized by an unusual and somewhat indirect form of labor relation tension. Many artists in the industry express the sense that the studios in which they are employed face as equally precarious a position as they themselves do, giving rise to an unusual landscape of industrial relations in which many VFX artists both sympathize and identify with their employers as victims of a larger, bullying Hollywood corporate complex. Perhaps the best example of this can be found in the short documentary *Life After Pi*, in which owner John Hughes and the artists employed by him express their devastation that they could not save their company from bankruptcy. In this scenario, then, the major Hollywood studios are regarded as disenfranchising entities against which global VFX professionals are engaged in asymmetric protest. To take the profile picture protest as an example, the green chroma key color square functions as a peculiarly indirect symptom of an industry in which its freelance workforce are unable to take more overt action for fear of losing what tenuous positions they have attained.

The green profile squares were adopted en mass amongst the global VFX community as a sign of solidarity and marked a telling point of contrast with the tagged credit images described earlier. Where these credit lists were very much based around the proud identification of individual artists, the profile pictures, by contrast, functioned according to the logic of anonymity through mass conformity. As a metaphor, the green profile images could not have been better chosen, literally neutralizing the core of individual identity around which the social network pro-

file usually functions and replacing them with faceless images that foreground an industry standard chroma key color value.[5] As a concrete manifestation of protest and resistance, however, the green profile images are considerably more ambiguous in their functionality. Like traditional protest, the green screen images function by combining high aggregate visibility with an individual anonymity that comes from mass protest. Unlike traditional protest and activism, which relies on the power of physical mobilization and the visceral expression of anger, the profile pictures were virtual. If the protest had had a nineteenth-century slogan it would have been a somewhat ineffectual: 'Workers of the World Unite! You Have Nothing to Use But Your Social Networks.' By virtue of remaining largely virtual, the green screen protests were limited in their demands and effectiveness.

Fig. 2: VFX Solidarity International encouraging users to adopt the green profile picture
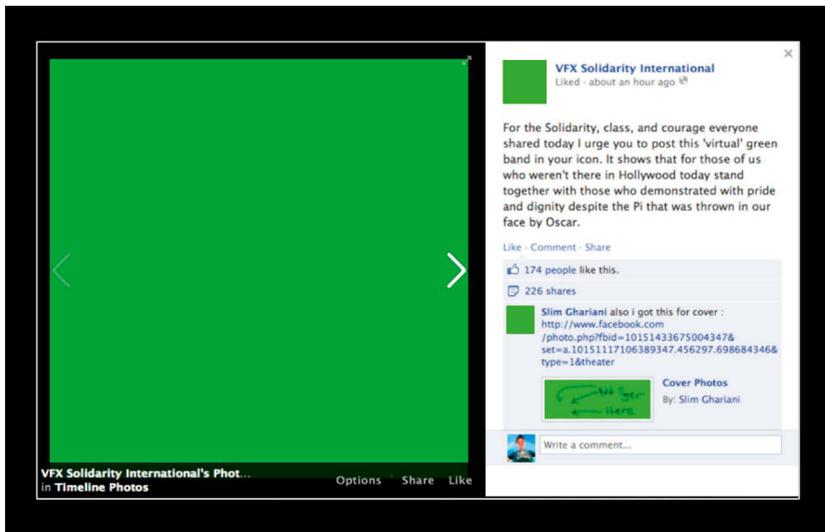
In their book *Inventing the Future*, Srnicek and Williams suggest that limited and timid (if not altogether absent) demands amongst twenty-first-century protest movements are the result of what they call "folk-political sentiment." Folk-politics is, they argue, characterized by a series of widely accepted values: "[S]mall is beautiful, the local is ethical, simpler is better, permanence is oppressive, progress is

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5   Furthermore, the images referred directly to a reality of the visual effects industry: that it is based upon the premise that successful VFX are those in which the circumstances of their production are obscured by their indistinguishability from the physical reality of people, objects, and places that they are merged with.

over." These limitations, then, are favored over any counter-hegemonic project that could contest capitalism "at the largest scales." Instead, folk politics is driven by a profound pessimism that large-scale collective social change is possible. Crucially, entwined in this is a fear of returning to the grand narratives that characterized the progressive utopianism of nineteenth-century socialist movements and fell out of favor amongst postmodernists for obvious reasons:

> Such folk-political sentiments blindly accept the neoliberal common sense, preferring to shy away from grand visions and replace them with a posturing resistance. From the radical left's discomfort with technological modernity to the social democratic left's inability to envision an alternative world, everywhere today the future has largely been ceded to the right. A skill that the left once excelled at—building enticing visions for a better world—has deteriorated after years of neglect. (Srnicek and Williams)

One could see these green screen protests as an example of precisely this "posturing resistance." If the unifying narrative of the green screen protests was hard to identify, perhaps it was because it was so by design. In an era of protest that rejected the grand narratives of social and political progress that were apparently so comprehensively defeated by late twentieth-century neoliberalism, the green profile pictures operated as a communication device that reached the same local network ecosystems of the tagged credits photos. Like the title credits photos, green profile pictures themselves became a means of communicating industry membership, participation, and identity. At an individual level, they may have functioned positively for VFX professionals: signaling solidarity amongst each other in a manner that was difficult if not impossible for the large studios (who were not their direct employers) to counteract or object to. In the absence of labor mobilization or even concrete demands beyond recognition and incremental improvements in labor conditions, however, there was a palpable degree of distributed passivity about the protests. In an environment where professionals under short-term contracts with extremely stringent non-disclosure clauses are cautious to the degree of paranoia about making public pronouncements, especially over labor rights,[6] the green profile pictures represented a form of passive resistance to the events taking place over Rhythm and Hues.

What was especially noteworthy about these protests, however, was the instantaneously global nature of them, an early manifestation of the potential for the workers of the world to unite in Western countries (given that much focus on social media's role in galvanizing protest at this time was concentrated on the Arab

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6   Note for instance that Daniel Lay anonymously founded VFX Soldier in 2010—a blog that gained great traction during the protests and which took on the green chroma key signature—but did not 'out' himself publicly until long after the Oscars protests in late 2013.

Spring of 2010). In doing so, the green screen protests demonstrated one of John Law's key claims of what characterizes the actor network and Actor Network Theory:

> Actor-network theory articulates some of the possibilities which are opened up if we try to imagine that the sociotechnical world is *topologically non-conformable*; if we try to imagine that it is topologically complex, a location where regions intersect with networks. (7; emphasis in the original)

There are probably few places where Law's description of the "*topologically non-conformable*" is more applicable than the global VFX industries online presence. The VFX protests reveal the rapidity with which an initially geographically and temporally specific local protest outside the Dolby Theatre on Oscars night transitioned into globally dispersed communicative performances that lived on through the Facebook newsfeed and which also proliferated around the internet more broadly. Interestingly, this was a chain of events that ran contrary to previous and subsequent experiences of protest that often start online and then morph into physical street protests. They potentially represent an important shift in the nature of protest narratives. If physical protest could spark online social awakening, it suggests a more complex model is required to understand the real-time online growth and interaction of symbolic resistance with emergent narratives of protest.

Conclusion: Labor Liminality and the Future of Networked Protest

The very rapid rise of green profile picture protests marked a public, networked display of community identity. But they also displayed the astonishing degree of topological non-conformity inherent in the social-actor-networks of the VFX industry. Suddenly, outsiders were party to the tumult taking place within the industry: something which, as Ortner points out, the majors have long regulated physically—via high walls and security gates on their studio lots—and mentally—via a community in which the boundaries between insider and outsider are significantly more compartmentalized (176-79). One could, of course, argue that there is little point in being an 'insider' if one does not perform such a status publicly from time to time. Indeed, the public performance of belonging to a group is what constitutes that group. Nevertheless, something the profile picture protests revealed was the degree to which the boundaries between insider and outsider are shifting in an age of social-actor-networks.

In the past few years, a number of fundamental events have unfolded that complicate both our understanding of the VFX green screen protests and of the structure of the industry more broadly. With the emergence of the COVID-19 global pandemic in 2019, the world went into lockdown. In an attempt to continue functional

output, the VFX industry implemented work-from-home practices. This was something it had previously been unwilling to allow on data security grounds in light of Sony BMG's huge data leak of 2014. As thousands of VFX professionals worked from home, the nature of both workplace and work practice changed radically, as it did for many industries. At the same time, other social-actor-networks witnessed a rapid and profound upsurge of online and in-person protest.

The Black Lives Matter protests that spread across America quickly became a global phenomenon. Some commentators suggested these waves of protests were partly a consequence of the devastating impacts of a global pandemic and the resulting lockdowns, but most were rightly careful to point out that this was at best a secondary influence upon what was a long burning fury of generational racial inequity and state-tolerated murder. Early the following year, another form of online social-actor-network metastasized into an attempted, fascist-inspired coup at the US Capitol. Interestingly, while the Capitol attack was profoundly significant, an element of its execution reflected a degree of the "posturing resistance" described by Srnicek and Williams above. Having stormed the Capitol building, the attackers appeared at a loss of what to do once inside. As Caitlin Flanagan has described, "when they got to the National Statuary Hall, on the second floor, where velvet ropes indicate the path that tourists must take, they immediately sorted themselves into a line and walked through it. [...] They were dazed by power and limited in their conception of what to do with it."

By contrast, the Black Lives Matter protests demanded far-reaching change and staged ongoing widespread civil disobedience that left no doubt that this was more than posturing. The significance of the BLM movement is multifaceted. Firstly, BLM is the most visible example of a protest in the era of social-actor-networks that spread rapidly from the network onto the streets at a global level. Secondly, BLM demonstrates that networked shock and street-level mobilization is a phenomenon not lost to progressive movements of Western countries, as Srnicek and Williams had suggested. Finally, the BLM protests that swept the streets of capitals around the world were underpinned by profoundly clear understandings of the actors involved and the power struggles in play. It would be problematic to reduce the BLM movement to questions of narrative when the lives and deaths of oppressed people are in the balance. And yet, the BLM movement identified a social cancer, placed a spotlight upon the perpetrators, implemented a unifying theme, and asserted demands for change no less significant in scope than the 'grand narratives' of progressive workers movements of the nineteenth century.

In this context and with the benefit of hindsight, the green screen protests of 2013 in the VFX industry look more and more like an important precursor to a growing culture of networked activism. Walkouts and unionization at Google over workers' rights, not to mention outcry over Google AI ethics researcher Timnit Gebru's firing, suggest significant shifts are now underway. While Srnicek and Williams

ask why right-wing political forces are winning the battle of ideas and of mobi-
lization, the past year suggests the jury is still out on such a claim. That is not to
negate or underestimate the profound dangers presented by a resurgent neofascist
movement built upon a globally networked torrent of conspiracy narratives. But to
understand the progressive forces operating across social-actor-networks we must
also recognize the unifying narratives emerging in the progressive cracks of the
ongoing collapse of neoliberalism. More to the point, we must undertake more
work to understand the process by which unifying narratives emerge across the
social-actor-network. The narrative liminality of progressive protest and change
will surely shape the decades to come. In the meantime, the nature of the visual
effects industry, its geographies of labor and the corporate economic structure of
Hollywood is changing profoundly. Under pandemic lockdowns, cinema exhibition
models have undergone one of the most profound shocks of their 125-year history.
While Hollywood scrambles to articulate a response to streaming models previ-
ously anathema to their existence, visual effects production, rooted as it is in its
networked IT origins, has continued apace to supply insatiable streaming content
demand. It seems likely that post-pandemic VFX artists may not be so concerned
with their status as Hollywood insiders or outsiders. To what degree this impacts
long-term industrial stability and labor conditions remains to be seen, but 2020
suggests that the future of social-actor-networked protest will be forever changed.
It is the next green screen protests, rather than the last, where the demands of
liminal labor will be articulated. The narrative of protest has changed.

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