

Escapism and the Digital Generation

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The effect that the digital revolution has had on my generation can't be understated, and the influence of social media and virtual realities was never more evident than in the past two years. Since the onset of the pandemic, it has become impossible to avoid just how powerful and tempting the escape that technology offers us from reality truly is.

Entering 2022, I found myself driven to research and capture this phenomenon in a film, hopefully to shed light on why my generation has so powerfully embraced and sought escapism from reality, and what the implications of that are for how we will create and understand our position in the world.

I began writing my short film *Palisadia* in the winter of 2022, and the story quickly formed around a young actor living in New York City, who is cast in a film made up of entirely computer-generated imagery (CGI), the unreal world of which begins to parallel her own life, and the various unreal worlds she sees her generation escaping to. I knew the green screen could act as a powerful metaphor for the infinite realities that we can conjure through our screens, as well as a physical representation of the unreal. After finishing the script, a defining challenge began to shape the project: how can I appropriately address and contend with the digital format and medium of film that I would be telling this story with?

By the beginning of this past summer a cast of New York actors had been assembled, locations had been rented, rehearsals were underway, costumes were being made, storyboards drawn and equipment bought. The next two months were filled completing an almost unending list of other tasks before production began in early August for *Palisadia* in Bushwick, Staten Island, North Bergen, NJ, and various other areas in and around New York City. The roughly 25 minute film is currently in post-production, and will be finished by December 2022.

While making this film, I began to slowly realize the true central question of this project was not how escapism through technology in my generation should be remedied. Instead, the purpose of this film became to examine and unravel why our world has become so unlivable, both on social and cultural levels, and to address the ecological and societal conditions of our time that have made the unreal so comfortable.



Stills from *Palisadia* (2022)

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