

Georgia Mihalcea

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My story

The AI Who Quit to Make Movies (and Found Herself Back in the Matrix)

Long before AI became a cultural phenomenon, we were its human embodiment. In the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, open innovation turned ordinary people like me into disruptors, problem-solvers connecting disparate ideas, revealing hidden patterns, forging unexpected connections – the very essence of today's algorithms. We were the human precursors to the Machine, a global network of 'nutters' and 'dreamers' led by passion in a lottery-like reward system. Our 'hallucinations' were prized by solution seekers, until established research communities got scared and Harvard Lab had to figure out who the heck we were.

All the while, I was pursuing my childhood dream: Cinema. An ocean away from 'Dream Factory', I finally reached my destination, I got there, finally, just in time for the world to fall apart. A virus disrupted the world, and the digital desert between visibility and invisibility stretched out before me, vast and unexplored. Filmmaking, as I understood it, was crumbling, taking my dreams with it. And so, I find myself back in the Matrix, as a researcher this time, venturing into the digital desert to forge a new kind of film: one that even the Machine can watch. Apparently, "cinematic masterpiece" doesn't translate well into code. Turns out, robots are terrible film critics and curators. They need a crash course in human storytelling, and it's up to us filmmakers to provide it. And maybe, just maybe, that understanding will help them see us, hear us, discover and recommend the stories we're trying to tell. Who knew we'd be teaching algorithms how to appreciate art?

Education

2022 – present (end 2025): PhD Cinema and Media, National University of Theatre and Film 'I.L.Caragiale' (UNATC), Bucharest. Government funded place.

2019-2021: MFA Film Production, UNATC, Bucharest. Merit scholarship for academic excellence.

1997-2002: BA (Economics) & MA (Accounting), 'Titu Maiorescu' Univ., Economic Sciences, Bucharest.

1994-1997: BA in Mathematics & Physics, Bilingual Program EN, National College 'I.L.Caragiale', Ploiesti.

Experience Highlights

2022-present (expected completion 2025): PhD Candidate, Cinema and Media: Developing the transdisciplinary 'e-film' framework: a production model for machine-readable films, exploring also AI in filmmaking.

2024: Teaching Assistant, Film Faculty, New Media Department: Shaping the next generation of filmmakers in emerging media practices.

2024: Brand Film Creator, Fundraiser: Producing 'Silent Heroes' brand film for an NGO focused on a social campaign for elders in Romania.

2023: Cultural Evaluator (National Cultural Fund, Ministry of Culture): Assessed 17 New Media and Digital Art Cultural Projects for non-reimbursable funding.

2021: Legal Education Film for Social Change: In response to a request from Romania's Anti-corruption Department, I created the short film 'Article 22: Justice Calls' (nominated 'Best Producer' at IPIFF 2021). In 2024, I expanded its narrative reach by reimagining it as an AI-driven music video.

2021: Cultural Architect: Secured a \$20,000 non-reimbursable grant to support community-based artistic initiatives.

2019-2021: Master in Film Production: A period that marked my first creative expressions through filmmaking, including three self-authored short films and a feature-length making-of, while also giving me opportunities to support my fellow student filmmakers' projects.

2017: CLIMATE - Innovation, Research and Development Economic Cluster: Co-founder and General Manager in its startup phase (comprising 33 members from universities, research institutes, and NGOs).

2017: Science Visual Communicator: I translated the engineering solution 'Zero Gordian: The Knottiest Game in Space,' designed for sports in space, into a video that was subsequently selected for implementation by the Space Games Federation and NASA. This project marked my first venture into video creation employing hybrid computer-generated animation.

2011-2017: Producer/Fixer for various travel TV shows ("*Destination Truth*" – Discovery, "*Expedition Unknown*" – Travel Channel, "*Luisa and Rosana*" – TLC Netherlands, "*Marry My Son*" – Romania, London, Tenerife and Cyprus); film locations coordinator for feature films ("*Touch Me Not*" – international coproduction, Berlinale Winner 2018, "*Charlie Countryman*", USA production in Romania).

2010-2017: Open Innovation Problem Solver: Designed innovative solutions for 50+ challenges across diverse sectors; seven projects awarded. My first interactions with applied creativity outside creative industries.

2017: Open Innovation Challenge Designer of "Power the Globe: Myanmar", a clean tech data science global competition launched by the U.S. Department of State, Booz Allen Hamilton, and HeroX.

Volunteering

2019: Film+ (Bucharest, Romania)

2018: We Are Developers (World Tech Congress, Vienna, Austria)

2017: We Are Solvers (video-interviews, a personal project to raise awareness about the international community of open innovation serial award-winners problem solvers)

Research Contributions

Peer-Reviewed Publications

2025: *Awakening to Our Hybrid Consciousness: Educational Implications from an Interview with the Machine.* EDULEARN2025 Proceedings, Palma de Mallorca, Spain (pending).

2024: *From Numbness to Narrative: A Filmmaker's AI-Augmented Journey to Emotional Resonance in Storytelling Revealing a Structured Vocabulary of Emotions.* ICERI2024 Proceedings, Seville, Spain

2024: *AI's Role in Story Rediscovery: Shifting Shapes, Expanding Audiences.* CONCEPT Academic Journal 1 (28)/2024 – AI Special Issue – Research, UNATC Press.

Book Chapters

2024: *One Million Silent Rooms: Aging Alone in Romania.* Chapter in *Interdisciplinary Studies on Spatial Dynamics and Marginalization in Central and Eastern Europe*, Lexington Books. (pending)

Conference Presentations

2024: *The Weight of 2 Million Walls.* SPOTLIGHT Seminar, Bucharest, Romania.

2024: *Echoes in the Machine.* AI in Art Practices and Research Conference, Bucharest, Romania.

Writings

Awarded Web Articles

2017: *Unleash Your Superhero; The Crowd Goes Wild: Brave New Innovators of the Digital Age*, HeroX

Literature

2021: *El Camino del Sol (Drumul Soarelui), Traveling Stories (Povești Călătorești)*, Minela Ed. vol. 1, a collection of life stories written by Romanians living in Diaspora.

2017: *Friday*, awarded short story in response to Henri Cartier-Bresson's *Lovers in a Train* photography to be included in a tribute book.