AN INTRODUCTION TO AN EDUCATIONAL KIT NARRATION AND GENERATIVE AI

.

CONRAD FESTIVAL, Krakow
Lola Rossi, Ecole ARTFX

–15h–

• INTRODUCTION (15min) •

Presentation of ARTFX

- **Demo Reel:** School dedicated to special effects, 3D animation, video games, and digital effects creation.
- **3 campuses:** Paris, Lille, and Montpellier
- Founded in 2004, recognized as a reference in creative and technological image professions.
- 5-year programs
- 2D/3D Animation; Special Effects and Video Games
- Demo Reel
- **Mission:** create an educational kit on generative AI for middle/high schools.
- **Objective:** understand AI (how it works, uses, limitations) + connect it to narration and image.

Why this kit?

- Input from **image and storytelling professionals**.
- Project financed by **France 2030 → free for teachers**
- **Double objective:**
  - Help students create stories.
  - Give teachers keys to supervise AI.

Content

- **Step-by-step** format.
  Each step = 2 videos:
  - One for “SUPERVISOR” → for teachers (advice, animation keys, technique).
  - One for the “CLASS” → for students (5 min, accessible).
- Total duration ≈ XX min viewing + XX h practice.
- Can be used in its entirety or in parts (e.g., just the AI part).

Required equipment

- Tablets or computers + Internet connection (for AI tools).

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

- PC + speakers + video projector (for classroom videos).

Conclusion

- A simple, free, and complementary approach.
- **Goal:** make AI and narration accessible to all.
  Today, I'm going to offer you the **accelerated version** of this kit, to give you a concrete overview of the workshop.

Presentation of the speakers

- I work at the intersection of cognitive science and new technologies — artificial intelligence, digital media, and immersive environments. I explore altered states of consciousness through visual arts and techno-rituals, and I also teach, helping students develop both critical and creative ways of engaging with AI. Rather than seeing technology in a dualistic way, I use it as a tool for perception, imagination, and introspection, within a cyberfeminist perspective.

- The kit is created as a duo with Pierre: special effects supervisor for cinema and today I am a writer-director, specializing in documentary series: I made 2 series for the Arte channel – Points de Repères and Déclics – and another for Canal+: 2080, Nos Futurs.

You might have the impression that this is a new technology, but in fact, AI tools have been gradually entering creative industries for more than 10 years: however, with ChatGPT or MidJourney, we have moved to a higher level and, above all, to a very wide dissemination to the general public. Our goal is that at the end of this workshop, which can stretch over several days or be done in one block, each of you will have created an "AI photo novel".

> *Example of an already produced AI photo novel*

The **kit and our workshop today will be divided into 4 main stages**

1. **Writing a story** → How to build a simple and effective narrative.
2. **Composing a meaningful image** → Working with image as a language.
3. **Discovering generative AI** → Its origins, how it works, its limitations.

Practical workshop → You will create your own **photo novel with AI**.

–15h15–

• PART 1 – CRAFTING STORIES •

Let's start with the first part: Writing a story.

**The goal is for each student to develop their own story, in order to then illustrate it in the next part. We*

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

will first learn how to create a character, then stage them within a narrative structure. Each student will then present their story to the class during a pitch session.

Today, I will quickly go over this part to be able to focus more on AI.

Introduction

Today, as in the past, human beings have always loved to tell stories.

From cave fires to Tiktok
Carl Sagan said: *"We are all made of starstuff, and our stories are the ways by which we understand this cosmic connection."* Storytelling isn't just for school. It's useful throughout life. **Why does it work?**

Because our brain is hardwired for narratives. Stories release hormones linked to attention, pleasure, and empathy. They captivate us, surprise us, they are anchored in our memory. But then, what makes a story thrilling... ... and another boring?

The key: the characters

The first ingredient of a good story is us. This may seem counter-intuitive: when we read a manga, go to the movies or play a video game, we don't expect to talk about ourselves...

And yet, we identify with the characters. We live the story through their eyes, we feel their emotions as if they were our own.

→ **Narrative empathy**.

Neuroscience shows that when we follow a character's adventures, our brain activates the same areas as if we were actually experiencing the situation. Example: who has never felt pain just by hearing a friend say they ripped off a nail?

In other words:

- we are happy when the character succeeds,
- we suffer with them,
- we jump when they are in danger.

The character becomes a mirror: they reflect our fears, our dreams, our doubts.

Universal… but variable

This narrative empathy transcends cultures.
We, and our students can root for a Greek hero, a superheroine, an alien, or even a sausage. No need to be a robot to get attached to Wall-E, nor a rat to love Ratatouille!

But there are variations: we identify more easily with characters who resemble us.

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

I, for one, will spontaneously feel closer to a 30-year-old woman than to the hero of Breaking Bad. But that doesn't stop me from thrilling for him. And when I play video games, I like to identify with the character I control. I even say "I" when talking about him. In short, without a character, a story becomes abstract. With a character, it becomes alive, human. Seeing a character overcome trials inspires us. He or she shows us that change is possible. This is one of the great strengths of storytelling.

Transition Exercise

Normally, at this stage, students create their avatar. I ask them to imagine their own character by going beyond their appearance:

- their passions and values,
- their flaws and fears,
- their past and their dreams.

In the kit, mini-games are offered to help students create their character, such as the "papers in a hat" technique with themes, contrast opposition techniques, or even the spirit animal. However, for this workshop, we will move directly to story construction.

The structure of a story

Once you have a character, you need to put them in motion, into a story.

The art of storytelling, in its most ancient as well as its most contemporary forms, is a vast subject of study that reveals universal constants.

Understanding the structure of myths and ancient narratives allows us to grasp the foundations upon which rest the stories that have captivated humanity for millennia. **Is there a common "recipe," a narrative archetype that transcends cultures and eras?** > *Quick introduction to Campbell*

It seems so: most stories, whether they come from ancestral oral traditions or the most recent productions on TikTok, Snapchat, follow an astonishingly **similar structure.**

This universal framework is present everywhere, demonstrating its effectiveness and its deep resonance with the human psyche: in big-budget cinematic blockbusters, mangas with complex and rich universes, varied comic book narratives, immersive video games that invite the player to become the hero, YouTube series with innovative formats, or even ephemeral TikTok micro-stories. **This omnipresence testifies to the timeless power of these narrative patterns.**

“Traditional” 3-act structure

We're talking about the three-act structure:

- **Act I – Beginning:** The initial situation. Who? Where? When? We introduce the hero and the

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

world they live in.
- **Act II – Middle:** Imbalance, conflicts, trials. This is the heart of the adventure. The hero doubts, fails, learns, gets back up.
- **Act III – End:** Resolution. Final decision, climax, then return to a new balance.

This pattern seems obvious to us... because it corresponds to how our brain understands stories: order → chaos → new balance. The three-act narrative structure is fundamental because it reflects how our brain understands narratives: a transition from order to chaos, then the establishment of a new balance.

Examples

- *Harry Potter*: normal life at the Dursleys → entry into the magical world → confrontation with Voldemort.
- *Avatar*: Na'vi life → destruction of the tree → rebirth and final victory.
- *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*: Miles doubts → he learns to become Spider-Man → leap of faith and victory.

No matter the universe or genre, this logic remains the same.

Express Workshop – Identify the Structure (10 min)

Quick analysis of a work or an excerpt (film, image, comic strip…).

Simple questions:

- What is the initial situation?
- What is the inciting incident?
- Where is the climax?
- What is the new equilibrium?

Conclusion: human beings almost always tell their stories using this model, consciously or unconsciously.

The Pixar Method

Like in cooking, you can approach this recipe by starting with the basics, then add subtleties, complexity, and twists as you go until you become a true chef!

Pixar is an American animation studio famous for its films Toy Story, Wall-E, Inside Out, and Ratatouille. And when a studio **has won 19 Oscars and offers you a method for writing screenplays, it deserves our attention, doesn't it?**

Examples from Pixar films:

Nemo:

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

Continue these sentences
Once upon a time…
Every day…
Until one day…
Because of that…
Because of that…
Until finally…

Toy Story:

Once upon a time, Woody, a little boy named Andy's favorite toy.
Every day, he patiently waits for Andy to come home and play with him.
Then one day, a new toy, Buzz, arrives and dethrones Woody, who is very jealous.
Because of that, Woody throws Buzz out of the bedroom window, so he can never return to Andy. That's why the other toys are very angry with Woody and banish him.
Until finally, united for the boy's happiness, the toys save Woody and Buzz to bring them back to him.

There are several writing methods; some are more suitable for one subject or another, but most actually follow the same universal framework, a fundamental narrative scheme deeply rooted in how humans understand, feel, and transmit stories.

The Pixar Method is the most approachable because it relies on a simple mnemonic device that sounds like a nursery rhyme!

And you can take Pixar's word for it: if you use this recipe, you'll have the basics of a good story! And now, it's your turn: use the Pixar Method to make the character you've created live an adventure that will be remembered!

–15h45–

Express Exercise (15 min)

Each participant writes their story on the distributed sheets following the Pixar method.
3-4 sentences are enough.

** In the toolkit, I ask the students at the last stage: to make the **pitch**. A pitch is an **spoken trailer**: presenting your story in 30 seconds, in 2-3 sentences max.*

*Goal: to make people want to know more, without telling the ending. It also teaches students to **defend their project with clarity and emotion**, while learning to distinguish useful criticism from useless ones.*

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

• PART 2 – COMPOSING IMAGES •

Introduction

Welcome to our 2nd part: **Composing an image**.

The objective is simple: to understand that the way an image is constructed influences its meaning and the emotions it conveys.

An image is never neutral: it reflects a point of view.

Since the dawn of time, humans have told stories with images:

- cave paintings,
- Egyptian frescoes,
- stained glass windows in churches (a "comic book" for those who couldn't read).

Even today, in Insta or TikTok feeds, every framing, every filter, every color already tells a story.

Express Mini-activity: in 2 minutes, scroll through your phone → spot a photo/video. Ask yourself: *why this framing? why this light? what effect does it have on me?*

Composition Tools (15 min)

In cinema and photography, we study the 'grammar' of an image; it's like a foreign language that allows us to communicate emotions visually! Let's go over some concrete "notions" of image grammar:

1. **High-angle shot / Low-angle shot**
    - High-angle shot → vulnerable, small.
    - Low-angle shot → powerful, confident.
    - Questions about selfies: How does this choice also convey self-representation?
2. **Framing within a frame**
    - Using a window, a door, a branch → creates depth, draws the eye, gives an impression of espionage.
3. **Rule of Thirds**
    - Divide the image into 9 squares. Place key elements on the lines or intersections → balance, dynamism.
    - Example: sports photo vs. posed portrait.

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

4. **Colors**
    - Red = alert, energy.
    - Blue = calm, sadness.
    - But it all depends on the culture → in Japan, white signifies death.
5. **Light**
    - Hard (strong shadows) → dramatic.
    - Soft → enveloping, flattering.
    - Backlight → mysterious.
6. **Shots**
    - Establishing shot → to situate.
    - American shot → interaction.
    - Close-up → emotions (eyes, hands).
    - Caution: never cut at joints (wrists, knees) → otherwise, it gives an impression of disarticulation.

--> No need to remember everything. The goal is to see that **every visual choice has an impact on meaning**.

–16h30–

Practical exercise (15 min)

**Outside, if sunny, acts as a break.*

In pairs:

- Take the **same subject** (e.g., a cup).
- Photograph it twice: once "happy", once "sad" (playing only with angle/light/framing).

Deconstruct an Image (6–7 min)

Let's look at a few images together:

- The same scene from 2 different angles.
- A famous press photo (Afghan Girl, Tank Man).
- A propaganda image vs. a neutral image.

Discussion:

- What do you see?
- What do you feel?
- What changes between these versions?

Conclusion: **even reality changes depending on the framing.**

Composing an image is like writing a sentence: you choose your words, you choose your tone.

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

Every framing, every light, every color has an impact. Even a simple breakfast photo tells a story: do I want to show that my life is simple? luxurious? healthy? fun? It all depends on the angle, the filter, the chosen moment.

The next time you look at an image, ask yourself: what is it really telling? And most importantly: is it telling what its author intended to say, or am I the one giving it that meaning?

** In the pedagogical kit, this part is further developed. Ethical questions are also asked:*

- *Can an image manipulate?*
- *To what extent can framing influence our opinion?*
- *Do we choose what we see… or are we guided without realizing it?*

These questions are not only aimed at teaching technique, but also at awakening a critical mind towards the images that surround us.

–17h–

• PART 3 – GENERATIVE AI •

Excerpt from the introduction to AI from the Toolkit :

We will use artificial intelligence to generate images around a story you have written.
This sequence aims to enable students to appropriate artificial intelligence from a creative, cultural, and critical perspective. This is not a deep technical course on AI, but an awakening: a fun and active initiation that helps them understand the basic operating principles of these technologies, recontextualize them in history, and discover their expressive potential.

The proposed approach is based on three phases. The first is a technical awakening to what AI is, through concrete and familiar examples for students. We don't start from theoretical knowledge, but from their own experience: TikTok, Siri, YouTube, video games, and voice assistants are already part of their daily lives, but they don't necessarily know what lies behind these tools. It is through these entry points that we lead them to understand what artificial intelligence is, how it works, how it "learns," and especially how it is created by humans, from real data. It is important at this stage not to hesitate to value their digital culture, their uses, their intuitions: they already know many things, we just need to make them aware of it.

The second phase of this sequence consists of recontextualizing artificial intelligence within a broader history: a history of ideas, technologies, and human thought. We mention, for example, Ada Lovelace or

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

Alan Turing, who laid the first stones of what would become AI in the 19th and 20th centuries. This historical overview shows that AI did not fall from the sky, that it is the fruit of ancient human reflections, an accumulation of knowledge, and that it is part of a logic of progress... but also of power, control, and dreams.

Finally, this sequence aims to demystify AI, to take it out of the imagination of the "thinking machine" or the "robot that will replace us," to reposition it as a tool that is both powerful, imperfect, and above all... creative. The aim is to show students that they too can use it to create images, stories, and emotions. Not to "do it for them," but to extend their ideas, illustrate their inner world, and explore new forms of narration.
A particular point of attention in this sequence is the distinction between hardware and software. This is a difficulty I have often encountered in class: many students fail to differentiate between what relates to the physical object (a computer, a camera, a sensor...) and what relates to the program, the application, the code that makes this object work. However, this distinction is fundamental to understanding what AI is, where it is located, and how it acts. We will therefore begin with this distinction.

Introduction

"What examples of artificial intelligence do you use every day without perhaps even realizing it?" – "Do you know what artificial intelligence is?"

Examples to present:

- Voice assistants: Alexa, Siri.
- Recommendations: YouTube, Spotify, Instagram.
- ChatGPT, Gemini: text generation tools.
- NPCs (non-player characters) in Minecraft Education.
- Autonomous cars: Tesla,
- Facebook, Apple Face ID analyzes your facial features to unlock your devices
- Google Translate
- Medicine: IBM Watson Health
- Diagnose diseases by analyzing X-rays or medical tests.
- Duolingo
- Dall-e
- Smart cameras can detect intrusions or alert in case of danger.
- AI also helps explore space, predict climate, or develop new drugs.

"Why do you think YouTube knows which videos to suggest to you?" – "Is Siri intelligent or just programmed to answer?" – Are these AIs truly intelligent, or simply very well programmed? – The difference with a calculator?

A calculator:

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

Does exactly what it is programmed to do (example: 2+3 = 5).
Cannot learn from its mistakes.
Does not get better over time.

An AI:
Learns from data and experiences.
Becomes more efficient with practice (like a student).
Can adapt and propose new solutions.

"AI is like a student learning to play a new video game. The more he practices, the better he becomes. At first, he makes mistakes, but he learns from them and progresses. However, he needs a teacher to guide him or give him data."

"An AI is perhaps a bit like a student who cheats: it has memorized a lot of information (in its databases), but does it really understand what it says?"

Conclusion :

→ AI is not magic, but a set of very advanced programs that learn from their mistakes and experiences.
→ We already use AI every day, often without realizing it.
→ AI has limits: it does not necessarily understand the deep meaning of what it does.
→ Humans retain a crucial role: to guide, verify, supervise, and ensure ethical use.

–17h20–

A brief history of Artificial Intelligence

“Did you know that the very first person to imagine programming a machine was a woman in the 19th century? Do you know her name?”

Ada Lovelace:

- 19th century, Ada Lovelace worked with Charles Babbage on the “Analytical Engine” (a mechanical calculating machine).
- She wrote what is considered today to be the first computer program in history.
- **Punched cards** and weaving looms → The first ideas of **programming**.
- **Difference between calculation and creativity**: Ada Lovelace believed that the machine could only manipulate symbols, without truly **inventing** or **creating**.
- Nevertheless, she **perceived the immense potential** of a programmed machine.
- In your opinion, can a machine create something new or only do what it is told to do?”
- Ada Lovelace was nicknamed: “the Enchantress of Numbers”

Alan Turing (The Imitation Game”):

- British mathematician, one of the fathers of modern computing.
- He decrypted Enigma (World War II), and then became interested in the question: “Can machines think?”

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

- “Imagine three participants: a human interrogator, a human respondent, and a machine. The interrogator asks questions in writing, without seeing either one. If he cannot guess who the machine is, then we can consider the machine to be “intelligent.”
- If a machine can imitate human conversation to the point of deceiving a human, then it can be considered intelligent.
- He asks the question: *What is intelligence?*

→ *For him, it’s therefore the **Observed Behavior** and not the “process”**
The Paradox of Imitation: A machine can pass the test by imitating human responses without truly understanding or possessing a form of consciousness.

“Have you ever talked to an AI like ChatGPT? Was it convincing? Why or why not?”

Key Dates:
“Does beating a world chess champion prove that the machine is intelligent or simply that it calculates faster?”

1997: DeepBlue beats Kasparov at chess.

2011: Watson wins Jeopardy!.
How Watson combines speed and massive databases to outperform humans.

2016: AlphaGo beats the world Go champion.
Analysis of “move 37”: An unexpected move judged “creative.”

> *“Do these exploits show intelligence or optimization? What is the difference in your opinion?”*

How is this working?

Guess what I'm thinking? Ask me yes or no questions.
"The more relevant questions you ask, the more you reduce error."

Supervised learning is a machine learning method where the computer learns from **labeled** examples. This means that each data example used for learning is accompanied by a **correct answer**.

–17h30–
Exercise / Game Break
https://quickdraw.withgoogle.com/

Imagine you are learning to recognize letters of the alphabet when you are little. You see examples, you are told "**that's an A**, **that's a B**", and by seeing and repeating, you eventually recognize them without a problem. AI is a bit similar; it learns through a process called Machine Learning or automated learning.

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As with humans, there are several learning stages:

- **Data collection:** The AI begins by **observing** many examples. For instance, if we want it to recognize cats, we show it thousands of cat images.
- **Model training:** Then it will look for common points between cats: pointed ears, whiskers, body shape... It will create a recipe for recognizing a cat. "If I have pointed ears and whiskers, I'm probably a cat."
- **Evaluation and improvement (tests and corrections):** "Once the AI has its 'recipe', we test it. We show it new photos and see if it can recognize cats. If it makes a mistake, we show it the correct answer, and it adjusts its 'recipe' to be more precise. It's like when you do an exercise, and the teacher corrects you: you learn from your mistakes."
- **Continuous improvement:** Each time the AI makes a mistake, it **corrects** its strategies to become more precise, just as you improve your game by learning from your errors.

"*When you learn vocabulary in English, you repeat and correct your mistakes until you know how to write and pronounce a word correctly.*"

Exercise, let's build our own AI!

https://teachablemachine.withgoogle.com/train/image

"You see, in a few seconds, we *taught* an AI to distinguish two hand positions, just by giving it examples and the correct label."

Exercise: Rock-Paper-Scissors:

- Ask students to take photos of their hands making rock, paper, and scissors signs.
- Guide them through the Teachable Machine steps: create a new image project, upload photos, train the model.
- Test the model live and observe its accuracy.

Exercise: Emotion Recognition:

- Ask students to take photos of themselves expressing different emotions (joy, sadness, anger, surprise).
- Use Teachable Machine to train a model to recognize these emotions.
- Discuss the limitations of this approach: *does the AI truly understand emotions, or does it simply recognize facial expressions?*

"What did you observe during these exercises? What was easy? Difficult?"
Answers: The importance of data: The more examples we give the AI, the more precise it becomes. Supervised learning: We give the AI the correct answers to help it learn.

The limitations of AI: AI is good at recognizing patterns, but it doesn't understand the deep meaning of things. It can make mistakes if the examples are poorly chosen or insufficient.

–17h50–

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

Some ethics concerns

“Do you think there are risks associated with the use of AI? Which ones?”

Some possible answers:

- Privacy
- Algorithmic bias
- Disinformation
- Jobs replaced by machines

PRIVATE LIFE

What do you share online? Think about your photos, videos, messages, browsing history… AI needs data to function. But how is this data collected, used, and protected?

Concrete example: Targeted ads on Instagram or YouTube. AI guesses your tastes by analyzing your interactions.

→ Question: *“Do you agree to your data being used for these kinds of things? Why or why not?”*

ALGORITHMIC BIASES

An AI is not neutral; it reflects the biases of the data it learns from.

Example: A recruitment AI trained with historical data could discriminate against certain profiles if these biases existed in past practices.

Concrete cases: Facial recognition less accurate on certain ethnic groups, or AI reproducing sexist stereotypes. Importance of Transparency and explainability (XAI)

→ Question: "If AI makes a mistake or discriminates, who is responsible? The machine or the humans who created it?"

DISINFORMATION AND MANIPULATION

    - Deepfakes: AI-generated videos or images that can manipulate reality.
    - Chatbots: Tools like ChatGPT can generate content, but sometimes inaccurate or misleading.
    - Human dignity: an AI therapist?
- Current example: The spread of false information via AI-generated images or texts.

  → Question: "How can we ensure that information is true?"

AI has no consciousness or morality: it executes what it is programmed for.
→ Humans must therefore set limits and guarantee ethical use, particularly at the European level with the AI Act.

lola.rossi@artfx.fr

→ Importance of algorithmic transparency (AI / Black Box)
Imagine you had to establish a rule for AI to be used ethically. What would that rule be?

Example: "AI must never collect personal data without the user's consent."
Each group shares its rule, collective discussion to compare them.

CONCLUSION: **

"AI is therefore a powerful tool that learns through data and algorithms. It's a bit like an apprentice who needs a master to guide them. Humans remain essential to create AIs, provide them with quality data, test them, and ensure they are used responsibly."

–18h–

• PART 4 – CREATING IMAGES WITH AI •

Right, here we are at the last part: production!

For the students, it's both an awaited moment - they'll be able to "play" with AI - and a working moment that requires discipline and organization.

Having reached this point in the training, the students have all the keys in hand - artistic as well as technical - to manage on their own.

Now that you've learned everything there is to know, it's time to start creating our AI photo novel!

Your final objective is as follows:@

- *Using the technical tools provided, create images illustrating each step of your story. This is the ideal moment to pay maximum attention to the composition of each generated image.*
- *Assemble all these images to create a photo novel that will then be shown to the whole class!*

*To do this, your class will have to transform into a production studio, meaning that each of you will have to be able to work in calm and mutual respect. Have fun!**

– 18h45 – Printing of the projects
– 19h – End of workshop

lola.rossi@artfx.fr