

THE NEXT MACGYVER



In celebration of National Engineers Week in February 2015, the U.S. National Academy of Engineering (NAE) and the University of Southern California's Viterbi School of Engineering (USC Viterbi), in collaboration with The MacGyver Foundation and Lee Zlotoff (creator of the TV series MacGyver), launched a worldwide crowdsourcing competition called "The Next MacGyver." The contest was launched at a press event in Washington, D.C., hosted by "TODAY Show" digital lifestyle expert Mario Armstrong.

Sponsored by the United Engineering Foundation, the project sought ideas for a scripted television show featuring a female engineer character in a leading role. The goal of the competition is to create a historic TV series that inspires young people, especially women, to pursue careers in engineering.

Almost 2,000 submissions were received and, through a screening process involving judges from both engineering and entertainment, 12 finalists have been selected. The finalists hail from as far away as Australia and include practitioners and scholars in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields, seasoned and first-time writers, students, and an Internet personality. Show concepts include: science fiction thriller, comedy, classic spy, historical, and interactive crime drama.

During a live pitch event in Los Angeles, Ca., on July 28, the 12 finalists will present their show ideas along with concept art before an esteemed panel of judges. Five winners will earn the rare opportunity to be mentored by successful Hollywood TV producers and engineering experts in developing their pilot scripts, in addition to receiving a prize of \$5,000 each.

A special panel session "From Script to Screen," illuminating the process of taking a TV show concept from idea to pilot, will take place during the event while the judges are deliberating. Bloomberg Associates' Katherine Oliver will moderate the panel, which includes: Ann Blanchard (CAA), Marci Cooperstein (ABC Family), Danielle Feinberg (Pixar Animation Studios), and Ann Merchant (Science and Entertainment Exchange). The event emcee will be Julie Ann Crommett, who leads Google's efforts to improve the perception of computer science and engineering in media.

The judges and mentors* for this competition are:

- **Wanda Austin**, Aerospace Corporation president and CEO; member of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology
- **Madeline Di Nonno**, CEO of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media
- **America Ferrera***, actress/producer (*Ugly Betty*, *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*)
- **Clayton Krueger***, senior vice president of television at Scott Free Productions (*3001: The Final Odyssey*)

- **Maja J. Mataric**, professor and Chan Soon-Shiong Chair in Computer Science, Neuroscience, and Pediatrics; vice dean for research at USC Viterbi School of Engineering
- **Lori McCreary***, CEO and founder of Revelations Entertainment; president of Producer's Guild of America (*Madam Secretary, Through the Wormhole with Morgan Freeman*)
- **Gabrielle Neimand***, head of Take Fountain Productions; producer (*The Last Exorcism, The Thing*)
- **Roberto Orci***, writer/producer (*Star Trek, Scorpion, Sleepy Hollow, Hawaii Five-O, Fringe*)
- **Debbie Sterling**, founder and CEO of GoldieBlox
- **Valerie Weiss**, biophysicist; founder, PhD Productions
- **Lee Zlotoff**, *MacGyver* creator
- **Anthony E. Zuiker***, creator and executive producer of the *CSI* franchise, including *CSI: Cyber*

“The Next MacGyver” finalists are:

SERIES TITLE: Doctor Tailor



Doctor Tailor Concept Art by Mina Price

Finalist Name: Kristen Bobst

Title: Doctor Tailor

Genre: Drama - Procedural

Logline: Former fashion designer Tilly Tailor became a wearable technology engineer after clothing saved her life. Working as a consultant for the FBI, she helps solve crimes and foil wrongdoers by examining, creating, and hacking articles of clothing. She gives “dressed to kill” a new meaning.

Kristen Bobst is a Los Angeles-based ghostwriter and freelance new media writer. She is a graduate of the University of Southern California’s Writing for Screen and Television MFA program, and she also has degrees from the University of Florida and Trinity College, Dublin. Kristen has co-written environmental-educational mobile apps for children and is the founder of production company popKraken, a creative initiative whose purpose is to bring whimsy to life.

SERIES TITLE: Imagineers



Imagineers Concept Art by Brian Rhodes

Finalist Name: Wesley Burger

Title: Imagineers

Genre: Comedy

Logline: An offbeat single-cam workplace comedy about a diverse group of quirky but brilliant Disney Imagineers who make dreams come true. Think Silicon Valley or The Office

but aimed at teens and infused with official behind-the-scenes Disney material a la The Wonderful World of Disney. This is a fictional series that will cross over with real Disney properties, events, attractions, culture, and lore – making that classic mouse house magic freshly relevant in the current tech zeitgeist.

Wesley Newburg is a writer, entrepreneur, and technology executive. As Director of Business Development at the El Segundo based entertainment technology startup MediaHound, Wesley manages partnerships, licensing strategy, and recruiting. Wesley received a BFA in Writing for Screen & Television from the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts, where he wrote several feature scripts fueled by a strong sense of genre as well as three original television pilots. Hailing from Saint Charles, Missouri, Wesley now lives in Long Beach, California with his wife Hannah and enjoys cooking, beach volleyball, and taking care of their adopted animal family.

SERIES TITLE: Kansas



Kansas Concept Art by Kathy Liu

Finalist Name: Shane Courtney

Title: Kansas

Genre: Science Fiction Drama

Logline: Sophie Villeneuve, a celebrated French engineer, overcomes personal tragedy by immersing herself in creating the first human settlement on Mars.

Shane Courtney was born on the East Coast of Ireland, where storytelling is a national pastime. So it's no surprise that writing is his passion. Raised in the small town of Warrenpoint, in County Down, he attended Newry & Kilkeel College, and graduated with a degree in Media Studies in 2008. After three years of working odd jobs to fund his writing, Shane moved to the U.S. to marry his wife, Alison Grisham. Together they live in Fayetteville, Arkansas, where he is pursuing script writing. This is the first piece he has submitted for review.

SERIES TITLE: Ada and the Machine



Ada and the Machine Concept Art by Zoe Chevat

Finalist Name: Shanee Edwards

Title: Ada and the Machine

Genre: Historical / Steampunk

Logline: In 1832, 17-year-old Ada Lovelace, the real-life daughter of the poet Lord Byron, meets the first computer engineer, a young and dashing Charlie Babbage. A highly skilled mathematician, Ada generates logarithms and creates programs for Charlie's wild new

calculating machines. Together, they adventure through the steam age, obsessed with creating a super machine that can be programmed to “think” like a human.

After earning her Master’s Degree in Screenwriting from UCLA Film School, Shanee received several awards including the Samuel Goldwyn Excellence in Screenwriting Award, the Women in Film Award and the Alfred P. Sloan Science in Screenwriting Award. Shanee recently made her directing debut in her short film Wink, and is currently the film critic for the online magazine SheKnows.com. In addition, she produces/hosts the web series She Blinded Me w Science to encourage young girls to explore science and technology. Shanee’s ultimate goal is to write stories for film and television about strong, spirited women whose passion, humor and courage inspire us.

SERIES TITLE: Rule 702



Rule 702 Concept Art by Jiedi Chen

Finalist Name: Beth Keser

Title: Rule 702

Genre: Adventure / Procedural

Logline: A young and beautiful engineering and science prodigy decides to forego corporate life to pursue a career as an expert witness. She spends her new life traveling across the country to testify in torn-from-the-headlines cases, but in each case she finds a mystery that requires a keen mind and

scientific investigation to find the truth.

Beth Keser, Ph.D., a recognized global leader in the semiconductor industry with over 17 years of real world experience, received her B.S. degree in Materials Science and Engineering from Cornell University and her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Beth’s excellence in developing revolutionary electronic packages for semiconductor devices has resulted in 8 patents, 11 patents pending, and over 40 publications in the semiconductor industry. Based in San Diego, Beth, a rare woman in this industry, leads the Low Cost Device Assembly Technology initiative at Qualcomm. Earlier in her tenure at Qualcomm, Beth’s team qualified over 50 products resulting in over 6 billion units shipped-technology consumers around the world enjoy in cell phones today.

SERIES TITLE: SECs (Science and Engineering Clubs)



SECs (Science and Engineering Clubs) Concept Art by Michael Penick

Finalist Name: Jayde Lovell

Title: SECs (Science and Engineering Clubs)

Genre: High School Dramatic Comedy

Logline: Emily, a beautiful but snotty teenager, must join the high school Science and Engineering Club to avoid getting expelled, after

accidentally setting fire to the school gymnasium during a science fair. She helps the club achieve their dreams of one day coming first at FIRST, the national science and technology competition for teens. It's Glee meets Mean Girls, with an educational element embedded in each episode.

Jayde Lovell is a STEM communicator for the New York Hall of Science, and 'resident science host' for YouTube's TYT Network. After enduring a degree in Neuroscience, she decided something had to be done to change the way STEM subjects were communicated. She relocated to New York to launch the YouTube channel 'Did Someone Say Science' from YouTube Studios. She has produced videos for organizations such like NASA, Scientific American, the American Institute of Physics, and Rolls Royce Engineering, and has been featured on BuzzFeed, Men's Health Magazine, The Peak, and USA Today.

SERIES TITLE: Q Branch



Q Branch Concept Art by Matthew Zikry

Finalist Name: Craig Motlong

Title: Q Branch

Genre: Spy Action

Logline: You know those gadgets that spies use on dangerous missions? The shoe phones, the laser pens, the gas pellets hidden in watches? Someone goes in the field and invents those. This is her story.

Craig Motlong is a creative director at an advertising agency in Seattle. He grew up playing with tinker toys, erector sets, and watching the Six Million Dollar Man, fascinated with the way technology keeps pushing humanity forward. He is an avid hiker and reader, and is thrilled to be living in the golden age of television. He is the father of twin preschoolers who are already learning to code.



SERIES TITLE: @Gnosis

@Gnosis Concept Art by Matt Griffin

Finalist Name: Judy Wu

Title: @Gnosis

Genre: Interactive Social Media Crime Drama

Logline: It's Veronica Mars meets Gossip Girl meets Hackers with a social media element. When the mayor's popular daughter is abducted, five teenagers form an alliance to share clues via a Twitter(esque) alias (@Gnosis) to solve the mystery. They realize that there is a genius psychopath out there who

is bent on destroying not only their town but their lives. Only by using their kick-ass brains can they outsmart the villain. The interactive Twitter element will be used to engage the audience during the show, week by week, to build the plot and create stimulating discussion.

What do you get when you gather four imaginative women in a room to create a show? It's not your average group. These working women pack a powerful punch. Meshing together their Bioengineering, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science, and Industrial Engineering and Operations Research backgrounds, Jinwah, Rachel, Judy, and Penny hope to inspire young women to pursue engineering. What started off as an excuse to drink while creating a story has become an epic discussion on creating a world that will inspire young women to question and break free of the stereotypes about women in engineering.

SERIES TITLE: Isabelle.exe



Isabelle.exe Concept Art by Ruolin Li

Finalist Name: Daniel Wright

Title: Isabelle.exe

Genre: Science Fiction / Drama

Logline: Isabelle thinks she's an ordinary college freshman, until an accident reveals she's an advanced robot with programmed memories, but not a very well put-together one. With the help of fellow students and professors, Isabelle tries to learn how to keep herself functioning and figure out who created

her, and why.

Daniel Wright is an aspiring writer living in Brisbane, Australia. He graduated from the University of Queensland with degrees in Biomedical Science and Psychology, and is currently working as a software tester. Daniel writes in many different genres, with a tendency toward action, thriller, science fiction, and urban fantasy. His story topics range from time-travelling thieves, to magical druids in Central Park, to revolutions played out through social media. He enjoys exploring the impact of the fantastical on a mundane world. When not writing or watching TV, he enjoys reading and playing video games. Isabelle.exe is his first foray into writing for TV.

SERIES TITLE: Riveting



Riveting Concept Art by Tim Szabo

Finalist Name: Miranda Sajdak

Title: Riveting

Genre: World War II Drama

Logline: During WWII, a local prom queen's life is turned upside down when her fiancée is killed overseas. Determined to make sure that never happens again, the girl goes to work as an engineer, learning and perfecting her trade to do her part for the war effort.

Miranda Sajdak is a film and TV writer/producer/director currently living in Los Angeles. She's worked for producers of films from indie hits like Drive to studio features like Final Destination and showrunners of China, IL, Huge, and My So-Called Life. She co-wrote/produced/directed the short Snapshot with Savannah Dooley, which premiered at Outfest in 2010. In 2012, she co-founded coverage service Script Chix and production company Under the Stairs Entertainment. She also produces with Center Mass Studios. Additionally, she was a finalist in Go Into the Story's feature film Quest Initiative in 2013. Miranda enjoys hard-hitting dramas, 90s legal thrillers, and anything with a complex female lead.

SERIES TITLE: Enhanced



Enhanced Concept Art by Peter Bollinger

Finalist Name: Sam Ruano

Title: Enhanced

Genre: One-hour Drama Procedural

Logline: Enhanced deals with crimes and criminals of the late 21-st century where technology, biology and robotics have given rise to a new breed of criminal. The show follows the career and personal life of bioengineer Claire Parish, as she adapts to life as a newly recruited FBI field agent. Selected for her expertise in the

field, Claire helps her team investigate crimes perpetrated by individuals with artificially enhanced abilities amidst a growing climate of civil unrest and techno-paranoia.

Sam Ruano hails from Montreal, Canada where he earned his BFA in Film Production at Concordia University, going on to become a videographer on Discovery Travel's "Exploring Horizons" in the wilds of Latin America. He's an alumnus of the Canadian Film Centre's Prime Time Television Writing program and has written for such shows as CBC's "Little Mosque On The Prairie", HBO Canada's award winning "Call Me Fitz" and Showcase's cult favorite "Lost Girl". Most recently, he worked as a story editor on the Syfy drama "Killjoys." Sam can often be found daydreaming behind a comic book and a dirty martini.

SERIES TITLE: THE MIND



The Mind Concept Art by Eric Tortora Pato

Finalist Name: Nao Murakami

Title: The Mind

Genre: Sci-Fi / Fantasy / Crime Drama

Logline: In the universe that's just like ours, but slightly different, the minds of great scientists and innovators are stored within the super computer. When that technology gets stolen, an engineer forms a partnership with an android who can download the minds of the past.

Nao Murakami is a PhD candidate in the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics at University of Washington. She grew up in upstate New York, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering in 2007 and a Master of Engineering degree in Aerospace Engineering in 2008, both from Cornell University. Having experienced the gender disparity in STEM field firsthand, Nao is passionate about inspiring women to pursue STEM. Her love for storytelling and good TV drama drew her to enter in The Next MacGyver competition, and she is excited to be part of the top 12 finalists.