

THE BLAVATNIK FAMILY FOUNDATION MAKES \$25 MILLION LEAD GIFT TO ESTABLISH THE BLAVATNIK CENTER FOR VIRTUAL PRODUCTION AT THE USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS

JUNE 16, 2025 (LOS ANGELES, CA) – The Blavatnik Family Foundation has made a \$25 million lead gift to establish the Blavatnik Center for Virtual Production at the USC School of Cinematic Arts (SCA). The donation was announced today by Elizabeth M. Daley, Dean of the USC School of Cinematic Arts. The 15,000 square foot center will be the centerpiece of the School's curriculum in virtual production filmmaking.

"We are so grateful for the Blavatnik family's generosity and for what it will mean for scaling up the virtual production workforce our industry desperately needs," said Dean Daley. "At USC we understand the importance of state-of-the-art tools in helping to facilitate the masterful storytelling that grounds our curriculum. The Blavatnik Center will be an important workspace as we collaborate on creating the dynamic filmmaking of the future."

"Virtual production has become an integral part of filmmaking, led by the next generation," said Len Blavatnik, Founder of the Blavatnik Family Foundation. "I'm proud to support the School and provide young filmmakers with the tools and resources needed to master these emerging technologies and lead the industry's future."

The Blavatnik Center for Virtual Production will be a multi-use, state-of-the-art space housing two stages with wraparound LED panel walls, as well as performance capture, camera tracking, and lighting systems. The stages can be operated separately or joined together to form a large production set. The Center will also contain multiple classrooms and labs equipped with computers with real-time 3D design software and digital asset libraries.

The Blavatnik Center for Virtual Production will make possible the expansion of SCA's already robust virtual production curriculum, including skills building in all aspects of virtual production work flows and tools, and generative AI. Students, faculty, and industry professionals will use the stages to collaborate and explore the future of virtual production.

Since its founding in 1929, a USC School of Cinematic Arts (SCA) education has always mirrored technological developments in the industry, while maintaining a foundation of compelling storytelling. The School's philosophy of learning through doing, coupled with mentorship from industry-experienced faculty, is the perfect model for growing the workforce of the set-ready professionals needed to navigate and innovate the growth of virtual production filmmaking.

“Virtual production is the centerpiece of today’s filmmaking processes, and USC has always been the leader in developing the best models for training the industry’s leading filmmakers,” says Dean Elizabeth Daley.

To date, the School of Cinematic Arts has trained more than 400 students and alumni in ICVFX cinematography using an LED volume. The Blavatnik Center for Virtual Production will also be a training facility for SCA alumni and other industry professionals who are interested in expanding their knowledge of virtual production.

The School’s virtual production curriculum is being developed by leading industry professionals, including:

- Habib Zargarpour, who was instrumental in creating the Virtual Production System used by Jon Favreau on *The Jungle Book* and by Steven Spielberg on *Ready Player One*, and whose other credits include *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania*, *Greyhound*, *Blade Runner 2049*.
- Scott Kroopf, who heads the producing track at the School of Cinematic Arts, and who has produced, executive produced, and supervised more than 70 productions, and run two production companies.
- Ken Williams, the Executive Director and CEO of the Entertainment Technology Center at USC, a technology think tank that brings together the top entertainment, technology and consumer electronics companies to better understand and collaborate on the impact of new technology on all aspects of the entertainment industry.
- Brad Kean, the Director of Creative Technology at the USC School of Cinematic Arts who helps the school stay at the forefront of storytelling tools and techniques.

The Center builds on SCA’s reputation as a leading industry partner in researching the latest industry technologies, then training the next innovative users of the groundbreaking tools.

ABOUT THE BLAVATNIK FAMILY FOUNDATION

The [Blavatnik Family Foundation](#) supports world-renowned educational, scientific, cultural, and charitable institutions in the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, and across the globe. Led by Len Blavatnik, founder of Access Industries, the Foundation advances and promotes innovation, discovery, and creativity to benefit the whole of society. Over the past decade, the Foundation has contributed more than \$1 billion to over 250 organizations.

The Foundation’s contribution to the School of Cinematic Arts stems from the Blavatnik family’s support of thought-provoking independent films and documentaries. Mr. Blavatnik has executive produced more than 50 features, television series, and short films, including *Conclave*, which was nominated for eight Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and won the 2025

Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay, and *The Zone of Interest*, which won the 2024 Oscar for Best International Feature and Best Sound.

See more at <https://blavatnikfoundation.org/>

ABOUT THE USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS

The University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts is one of the leading media schools in the world. Founded in collaboration with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 1929 over 90 years ago, the USC School of Cinematic Arts has fueled and mirrored the growth of entertainment as an industry and an art form. The School offers comprehensive programs in directing, producing, writing, cinema and media studies, animation and digital arts, production, interactive media and games, all backed by a broad liberal arts education and taught by leading practitioners in each field. Its more than 17,000 alumni are among the world's most distinguished animators, scholars, teachers, writers, directors, producers, cinematographers, editors, sound experts, video game designers and industry executives. Since 1973 not a year has passed without an alumnus or alumna being nominated for an Academy Award or an Emmy. <https://cinema.usc.edu/>