



## Logline

A mother desperately yearns to escape an oppressive dystopian society where humans have merged with machines and life is automated by artificial intelligence, but her family would rather live in technological comfort than escape with her into the unforgiving wilderness.

# **Synopsis**

In the not too distant future, humans have merged with machines. Microchip implants have made it possible for everyone to be connected to the internet, and each other, at all times. Talking has become a minor inconvenience, instead people telepathically send messages to one another (TK'ing). The average person now spends more time engaging in a virtual reality than they do their own and when they do engage with reality, it's augmented. This connection to the digital world runs so deep that disconnecting from the network has become a social taboo. Your Whereabouts are to be known and shared at all times. This is a world where every single citizen has every comfort and convenience provided to them. This is the world Evelyn desperately wants to escape...

Everyday is the same for Evelyn and is planned out by her A.I. personal assistant. Feeling imprisoned, Evelyn begins to break from her normal routine. She shows up to work late. She stays out at night feeding the homeless (those who refuse microchip implants), which is illegal. As a result, Evelyn is forced to attend mandatory psychiatric treatment. At this point, she decides to escape the system and go live in the wilderness with a rumored commune up north. Evelyn refuses to leave without her son, but her husband will not allow her to take him away.

Date of Completion: **2021**

Genre: **Science Fiction**

Running Time: **19'31"**

Aspect Ratio: **1:2.39**

Screening Formats: **2K 5.1 DCP, ProRes.**

Sound: **5.1 or Stereo**

Shot on **Arri Alexa, 24p, original format 2.8K ANA**

Language: **English**

*Artificial Existence* was shot in November-December 2018 and May 2019. It was completed in May 2021.

## **Director's Statement**

With the rapid development of technological progress over the last few years, the world is becoming increasingly more Orwellian in nature. We are gradually slipping from a physical reality into a digital one. I wrote, *Artificial Existence*, to explore a version of the future where we have allowed technology to control us and every aspect of our lives, but no one seems to notice or care that their freedom and humanity has been gradually traded away for comfort and convenience. One mother sees the dystopian prison for what it is and longs for her and her family to escape it. It is my hope that the film would make audiences more cognizant of some of the potential risks technology threatens us with.

Society seems to act retroactively about technology as we are seeing with social media, and we may not have that luxury over the next generation. It's not that I am against technology, I believe we have to be careful with how we use it. It can be used to empower or too oppress, to bring us closer or to divide us, and if we are not careful it could easily rob us of our humanity. It seems like many of these issues dealt with in *Artificial Existence* are being ignored in general and that is what I have attempted to capture and communicate with this film.

## **John D Marshall - Writer / Director / Executive Producer**

John D. Marshall is a writer/director based out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Drawing from his diverse background in commercial production and VFX/post, he released his debut narrative short, *Artificial Existence*, in 2021 after three years of development. John is currently developing two feature films and a television project to add to his growing body of work.

## **Sé Marie Volk - Evelyn**

Sé Marie is based out of Los Angeles, California and received an acting degree in 2011. She began her career as a stunt double for Rachel McAdams and Vinessa Shaw, before transitioning into acting full-time. She has lead multiple feature films to major film festivals and been filmed in numerous commercials, including a national Nissan commercial campaign beside Joey King.

## **Charles Mengine - Adam**

Charles started acting as a child and was featured in multiple films. He moved to New York to study at The Neighborhood Playhouse in Manhattan. After the Playhouse, Charles worked on multiple television shows for a number of years in various background roles. He also worked on many Off-Broadway theater productions. After living abroad in Rome, Italy for six years he returned to his hometown of Pittsburgh and has been working on commercials, industrial films, and independent films in the Pittsburgh area. He was also featured in the Netflix season two of "Manhunt".

## **Mark Chapman - Director of Photography / Producer**

Mark Chapman is a filmmaker and photographer located in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area. The desire to create has pushed Mark to explore many different formats. Whether he is producing a local artist's music video, working with corporate clients to develop safety and training videos, creating travel documentaries all around the world, or developing an immersive video and photo exhibit for the Yellowstone Arts Museum, Mark is always searching for new stories to tell and creative boundaries to push.

## **Production**

*Artificial Existence* is a US production produced by [Cinephoria Productions](#).

# **Credits**

Sé Marie - Evelyn

Charles Mengine - Adam

Jonah Rensi - Seth

Rory Marshall - Jaxon

Paul Guggenheimer - Dr. Erickson

Alisha Westerman - Scarlett

Katherine Kennard - A.I.

Writer / Director / Executive Producer - John D. Marshall

Produced by - Mark Chapman & Katherine (Withrow) Mielo

Co-Executive Producer - Jarrett Rice

Director of Photography - Mark Chapman

Production Designer - Chris Frank

Music Supervisor - Jason Deutsch

Music by - LÔR, Rich Bradford, Matt Bradford, Matt Gramc

1st Assistant Director - Luke Keibler

Additional 1st Assistant Director - Max Ciani

Makeup Artists - Danielle Mock, Shawn Wallisch

Gaffer - Nathaniel Peters

1st Assistant Camera - Brett Wagner

2nd Assistant Camera / Swing - Nolan Duncan

Arri Tech - Troy Bogdan

Editor - John D. Marshall

Sound Recordist - Jason Deutsch, Rich Bradford, Matt Gramc

Sound Mixing - LWG Production, Matt Gramc

Sound Design / Sound Editing / Foley - LWG Production

VFX / Coloring / Finishing - Cinephoria Productions

Set Decorator / Prop Design - Jarrett Rice

Production Assistants - Evan Szejka, Mike Spinos

Camera & Lenses Furnished by - Cinefit, Inc., The Camera Department

Grip & Electric Provided by - Midwest Grip and Electric, LED by light

## **Special thanks to**

Brad Grimm, Glenn Syska, Danny Haritan, Chris Hampel, Jon Radermacher, David Jamison, Helena Vanhala, Patricia Then, Lynne Moidel, Robert Morris University, Hilaire Klein, Breanna Marshall, Ryan Kroboth, Jim McClain, Chris Frank Sr., Meg Frank, Tom Frank, Peggy Cygnarowicz, Lorenzo Lamphwait, Adam Solar Rides

## **Artificial Existence - Contact & Social Media**

The Film - Artificial Existence

[www.artificial-existence.com](http://www.artificial-existence.com)

[www.instagram.com/artificialexistencefilm/](https://www.instagram.com/artificialexistencefilm/)

Twitter: @AEShortFilm

Director - John D. Marshall

johndmarshallfilms@gmail.com

724.991.1412

[www.cinephoriaproductions.com](http://www.cinephoriaproductions.com)

# **Festivals**

Gold Remi Award Winner - WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival  
Best Narrative Short - Pittsburgh Independent Film Festival  
Audience Award Best Sci-Fi Short - Something Wicked Film Festival  
Winner - Budapest Film Festival  
Best Director - Smoky Mountain Film Festival  
Best VFX - FantaSci Short Film Festival  
Best Sci-Fi (Short) - Vancouver Independent Film Festival  
Winner - Cyber Film Festival  
Most Creative - Underground Indie Film Festival - Horror, Cult, Sci-Fi, Fantasy  
Daily Pick - Film Shortage  
Best Director - Thrills, Chills, and Kills  
Best Short 1st Runner Up - Myrtle Beach International Film Festival  
Best Actress Nominee - Bucharest Shortcut Cinefest  
Best Short Film Nominee - Film in Focus  
Official Selection - Jacksonville Film Festival  
Official Selection - Brooklyn SciFi Film Festival  
Official Selection - Fantasy/Sci-Fi, Film & Screenplay Festival  
Official Selection - Indie Suspense Horror Sci-Fi Film Festival  
Official Selection - Etowah Film Festival  
Official Selection - Midwest Sci-Fi Short Film Festival  
Official Selection - Wyoming International Film Festival  
Official Selection - Miami International Science Fiction Film Festival  
Official Selection - Fort Myers Beach International Film Festival  
Official Selection - Jim Thorpe Independent Film Festival