

forward looking statements

what's ahead in themed entertainment? get a sneak peek at what will be discussed at IAAPA

by Christian Lachel, Vice President, BRC Imagination Arts

Twenty years ago, the TEA hosted a discussion with industry leaders where each predicted what the future held for the leisure and themed entertainment industries. In the years that followed, those leaders reached new heights with their businesses, opening doors for many of today's players.

Fast forward twenty years: While our industry is perhaps at its most exciting stage ever, the approaches used to engage audiences today – and in the years ahead – are changing at warp speed. While storytelling and emotional engagement are still the basis of what we do, and great stories still draw the greatest audiences, the tools and the vocabulary for telling stories, creating content and designing experiences and spaces have changed drastically.

Social media, mobile devices, a digitally savvy audience, increased competition and new economic realities – all these factors are changing our industry. In anticipation of the FUTURE Legends 2011 – The Next 20 Years panel, presented by the TEA at IAAPA on Thursday, November 17, I've asked the panel members, who are all rising stars in their respective areas, to predict where experience design is heading.

Participants include:

- Tali Krakowsky, founder, Apologue. Tali has led the conceptual and strategic development of projects that seamlessly integrate storytelling, new media and physical environments. Clients include the MOMA, Chanel, HBO, and Victoria's Secret.

- Brian Morrow, Corporate Director of Creative Development, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment. With a passion for developing original and enriching guest experiences, Brian most recently oversaw the development of SeaWorld's



Tali Krakowsky

acclaimed Manta, the first coaster in the world to blend animal habitats with coaster thrills.

- Robb Wagner, founder, Stimulated, Inc. With deep understanding of immersive storytelling and interactivity, Robb's work embodies once-in-a-lifetime, high-impact experiences. Clients include the Academy Awards, the MTV Video



Brian Morrow

Music Awards, and the film *Michael Jackson's This Is It*.

Lachel: The blurring of physical and virtual audience engagement has had a dramatic impact on the industry. Who's the audience you're designing for today versus several years ago?

Krakowsky: Today the audience we design for is often young, savvy and comfortable in the digital space. My philosophy is that as human beings we are dynamic creatures that can have simultaneous multiple thoughts and can move from different states of mind from one moment to the next. But despite this dynamism, our spaces are entirely static. The use of new media brings dynamism to our physical environment in the form of seamlessly integrated digital media. Designers are more savvy about how they think of integrated design, and technology is at a place where we can build the spaces in our imagination.

Wagner: We are always designing for tomorrow's audience. I have my own focus group at home: my 11-year-old daughter and 13-year-old son. I see how they interact with friends and participate in social media, and I know they represent our future. I extrapolate behaviors I see and think about experiences that will engage the audience. Everything we do for the future needs to be more adaptable so we can respond to what the audience wants at any given moment. This is the main difference between today's audience and earlier ones. All content needs to be more on-demand. And even if it's not, it has to feel like it is.

Morrow: The target audience for our parks has not changed. Rather, the manner in which we engage their imagination has expanded. Our parks inspire guests through up-close

animal encounters and real experiences, and technology has delivered new ways for us to entertain, educate and inspire. The new Turtle Reef attraction at SeaWorld San Diego features extraordinary up-close views of animals, as well as technology that engages guests. Things like interactive gaming, QR codes, and live tracking of sea turtles via multi-touch walls are getting rave reviews by visitors.

Lachel: The design tools and technologies used to engage audiences are rapidly changing, and each has its own learning curve. What tools and technologies are you investing in, and why?

Krakowsky: The most important tools are those that promote conversations, new media delivery systems that defy our tradition of thinking of a screen as two-dimensional and rectangular, and content that is driven by human logic but is self-generating. Ultimately, new media is heading towards seamless integration into architecture and complete personalization.

Morrow: We are exploring technologies that can be integrated into our park attractions to enhance the experience and allow guests to learn more. This combination of physical, immersive environments mixed with technology is a key focus in our new attraction development.

Wagner: I have found that investing in technology can actually be a trap. Obviously social media and interactivity will be a big part of all our designs and products. But we are focused on creativity before technology, and then we look for the tools to execute.

Lachel: The economy for many developing countries has exploded, and leisure travel is no longer just local. How are you approaching emerging markets and what do you think the future trends for travel will be?

Krakowsky: As every coordinate in the world seems to become closer, it's important to think of travel as something that begins and ends with a thought: today's travel begins in our mind with a plan and ends with a memory. By developing platforms and tools that help us to imagine all the things we can do, audiences can plan travel, build fantasies before departing and then bring those fantasies back home in digital form.

Wagner: We're developing concepts that transcend the boundaries of language and culture and speak to a global audience. More and more people are interconnected with each



Robb Wagner

other through content and communication. It doesn't matter where you're from. The content speaks to everyone.

Lachel: What have the ramifications - and opportunities - of the economic crisis been for your industry?

Krakowsky: In some ways, the economic crisis has been a gift. It has forced innovation, realization that the past hasn't been working, and built a desire to try something new. There's more courage to take risks and a much more open-minded attitude towards change. It also had an effect on the perception of youth. Silver hair used to be the only testimony to knowledge. Today, as a young entrepreneur, I feel like the world is willing to embrace new ideas about expertise.

Morrow: We've had an extraordinary year of growth. 2011 was the largest year of capital investment in our company's history, with 10



Christian Lachel

new attractions throughout our parks. This will continue and we are excited about the new experiences in store for guests.

Wagner: The state of the global economy has had an effect on our industry. Both television and concerts took big blows with canceled tours and slashed budgets. Yet, people still need to be entertained, and therein lies the opportunity. How do we approach entertainment in the future? I find myself thinking more about the next wave rather than the immediate challenges we face. I am excited about the future; there are many opportunities out there.

Lachel: If you could place one bet on a major shift that will occur in your industry in the next 20 years, what would it be?

Morrow: The appeal of immersive attractions at theme parks will continue to grow, with new extremes that envelop guests in amazing environments and experiences. Guest engagement will become a fundamental element - even today there is an increasing expectation that guests become a participant in the experience. There will always be a demand for a day of memory-making with family and friends, and theme parks will always provide this experience on an extraordinary scale.

Krakowsky: The future is in interactive environments. The seamless integration of intelligent new media into physical spaces is our inevitable and hopeful future. Bringing all the information, entertainment and fascination of mobile devices into our architecture so that we can continue to lead truly organic, dynamic lives is where I place my bet unequivocally.

Wagner: Entertainment will not be passive; the audience has to be part of the show. Everything will become on-demand, or have to feel like it is. This trend will continue as Facebook and YouTube users become our next generation of customers. The nature of entertainment will become more of a telemetric response, giving audiences what they want when they want it. It will be up to our industry to present it in a compelling manner.

About Christian Lachel

For 15 years Christian has brought creativity, leadership, design expertise, business acumen, and strategic thinking to BRC's clients. Recent clients include China Mobile, China Telecom, and the Museum of Liverpool.