

INSIDE NESTA

HOW TO APPLY

MEDIA ROOM

OUR AWARDEES

INSPIRE ME



News releases: Full article

→ INTRODUCTION

NEWS RELEASES

→ IMAGE LIBRARY

→ NESTA FACTS

→ NESTA IN THE MEDIA

→ CONTACTS

**Michela Ledwidge**

Invention & Innovation
London
£125,000

"As a film-maker, performer and technical architect, I have always seen film as a two-way interactive experience."

28 Jun 2004 - Don't just sit there! Edit the movie yourself

Cinema-goers often grumble that they themselves could have made a better film. They may soon get the chance, thanks to film-maker and Internet pioneer, Michela Ledwidge.

Toolbox
 [Print full story](#)

Michela has just received a £125,000 Invention and Innovation investment from NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) – the organisation that backs UK innovators - to explore new ways for audiences to 'fiddle with film' as though it were a musical instrument.

Her aim is to enable viewers to use a games console or desktop computer to modify the film as they watch it. Michela wants film sampling to become as common as music sampling, offering audiences a new way of being entertained by film.

She says: "Technology and online culture have changed the relationship between film-makers and their audience. Relationships are no longer one-way. As a film-maker, performer and technical architect, I have always seen film as a two-way interactive experience."

Michela wants to exploit the appeal of audiences being able to see themselves on screen but her project goes beyond creating a new toy. Re-mixing film could be used as an art form as well as within education, with viewers able to share the results of their efforts.

"I see it as a new type of film that comes assembled like a Rubik's cube" she adds: "No cinema-quality film has ever been given to its audience in pieces, in the form of a library of re-mixable art. No director has encouraged the audience to tamper with the work to this degree."

With NESTA's support, she is testing the waters by producing a short film, *Sanctuary*, as a demo and a prequel to the feature film, *ten weeks in the head bin* which she will also produce.

Ian Poitier, of NESTA, says: "The experience of watching a film has changed very little over the past century. We're delighted to be supporting an innovative project which aims to exploit technology to offer audiences something different."

A self-confessed 'geek', Michela received a congratulatory email from World-Wide Web founder Tim Berners Lee in January 1993 when she set up the first web site in Sydney, Australia. She founded a production company, thequality.com, and after winning an interactive screenwriting competition in 1997, she spent 13 months developing *ten weeks in the head bin* – the idea at the heart of her current efforts.

Michela tested the market for web3d filmmaking in 2001 with her *Horses for Courses*, "enabling the viewer to lean back and watch or lean forward and fiddle." A multi-lingual short, made for £10,000, it beat off a £60 million offering from Disney to be awarded the web3d art prize at SIGGRAPH 2001.

Now she is a member of the Web3D Consortium, setting the standards for lightweight 3D graphics, and has been a member, until recently, of the UK Cabinet Office's Special Interest Group on Open Source Software, and the BAFTA Interactive Entertainment Committee.

Michela – who, together with her team, has established MOD Films – plans first screenings of *Sanctuary* for August 2005, with DVD release scheduled for December 2005. She adds: "It's about throwing down the gauntlet to the audience and empowering them, stimulating their personal creativity. I just want to be one of the first users."

Notes to editors

- NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) was established by Act of Parliament in 1998 to pioneer ways of supporting and promoting talent, innovation and creativity in science, technology and the arts.
- NESTA's income initially came from the interest on an endowment of £200 million from National Lottery funds. In February 2003, NESTA received an additional £50 million bringing the endowment up to £250 million and an extra £45 million to use as revenue expenditure until 2006 (£15 million a year from 2003). NESTA plans to spend over £20 million a year on UK creativity and innovation.
- Since May 2000, NESTA has spent over £40 million on more than 387 awards.
- NESTA has a dedicated Media Room on its web site where news releases like this are easily available and where journalists can subscribe to receive any future releases. Other information, including high-resolution images to download and Press Office contact details, are also available at www.nesta.org.uk/mediaroom

[Back to current news releases](#)