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Contact: Naomi Goldman, NLG Communications  
T: 424-293-2113 or 310-770-2765  
ngoldman77@gmail.com

## **Visual Effects Society Names Acclaimed Director/Producer/Writer Ava DuVernay A Keynote Speaker at 2017 VES Summit**

**Los Angeles (SEPTEMBER 6, 2017)** – Today, the Visual Effects Society (VES), the industry's global professional honorary society, announced acclaimed director/producer/writer **Ava DuVernay as a Keynote Speaker** at its 9<sup>th</sup> annual Summit, "*Inspiring Change: Building on 20 Years of VES Innovation.*" The interactive forum on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> celebrates the Society's milestone 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and will bring together top creatives, executives, thought leaders and visionaries from diverse disciplines to explore the dynamic evolution of visual imagery and the VFX industry landscape in a TED Talks-like atmosphere.

**Keynote Speaker: Ava DuVernay.** Nominated for the Academy Award and eight Emmy Awards, winner of the BAFTA for Best Documentary and The Peabody Award, Ava DuVernay's *13TH* is one of the most critically-acclaimed films of 2016. In 2015, DuVernay directed the historical drama *Selma*, which garnered four Golden Globe nominations and two Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture. Her current directorial work includes the award-winning dramatic television series *Queen Sugar*; and the upcoming Disney feature film *A Wrinkle in Time*.

DuVernay previously wrote, produced and directed the dramatic feature, *Middle of Nowhere*, which earned her the 2012 Sundance Film Festival Best Director Award. In 2010, she wrote, financed, produced and directed her first narrative feature, *I Will Follow*. The family drama was hailed by critic Roger Ebert as "one of the best films I've seen about the loss of a loved one." DuVernay made her directorial debut with the critically acclaimed 2008 hip hop documentary, *This Is The Life* and has directed several network documentaries, including *Venus Vs.* for ESPN. She has directed significant short form work including *August 28: A Day in the Life of a People*, commissioned by The Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, as well as acclaimed fashion and beauty films for Prada and Apple.

In 2017, DuVernay was named one of *Fortune Magazine's* 50 Greatest World Leaders and *TIME Magazine's* 100 Most Influential People. She also distributes and amplifies the work of people of color and women directors through her film collective ARRAY, named one of *Fast Company's* Most Innovative Companies.

The VES Summit will host a stellar roster of experts and provocateurs. As previously announced, these include:

- Keynote Speaker Syd Mead, acclaimed visual futurist and conceptual artist
- President of IMAX Home Entertainment Jason Brenek on *Evolution in Entertainment: VR, Cinema and Beyond*
- CEO of SSP Blue Hemanshu Nigam on *When Hackers Attack: How Can Hollywood Fight Back?*
- Head of Adobe Research Gavin Miller on *Will the Future Look More Like Harry Potter or Star Trek?*
- Senior Research Engineer at Autodesk Evan Atherton on *The Age of Imagination*
- Founder/CEO of the Emblematic Group Nonny de la Peña on *Creating for Virtual, Augmented & Mixed Realities.*

Additional speakers and roundtable moderators will be announced soon.

## 9<sup>th</sup> Annual VES Summit: Keynote/Featured Speakers

The 2017 VES Summit takes place on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> at the Sofitel Hotel Beverly Hills, located at 8555 Beverly Blvd. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.visualeffectssociety.com/news-events/summit>.

Sponsors include Rotomaker and Houdini. Media partners include *Animation Magazine*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *SHOOT Online*, *Variety* and *The Wrap*.

**Note: Media interested in attending must reply to Naomi Goldman to request credentials.**

### **About the Visual Effects Society**

The Visual Effects Society is a professional global honorary society dedicated to advancing the arts, sciences and applications of visual effects and to upholding the highest standards and procedures for the visual effects profession. It is the entertainment industry's only official organization representing the extended global community of visual effects practitioners, including supervisors, artists, producers, technology developers, educators and studio executives. VES' 3,600+ members in more than 35 countries worldwide contribute to all areas of entertainment – film, television, commercials, animation, music videos, games, new media and special venues.

To learn more about the VES, visit [www.visualeffectssociety.com](http://www.visualeffectssociety.com) and follow us on Twitter: @VFXSociety. Read *VFX Voice*, our signature print and digital publication, at [www.vfxvoice.com](http://www.vfxvoice.com).

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