

Adobe



Adobe Presents
'The *Unfinished* Film'

THE CHALLENGE

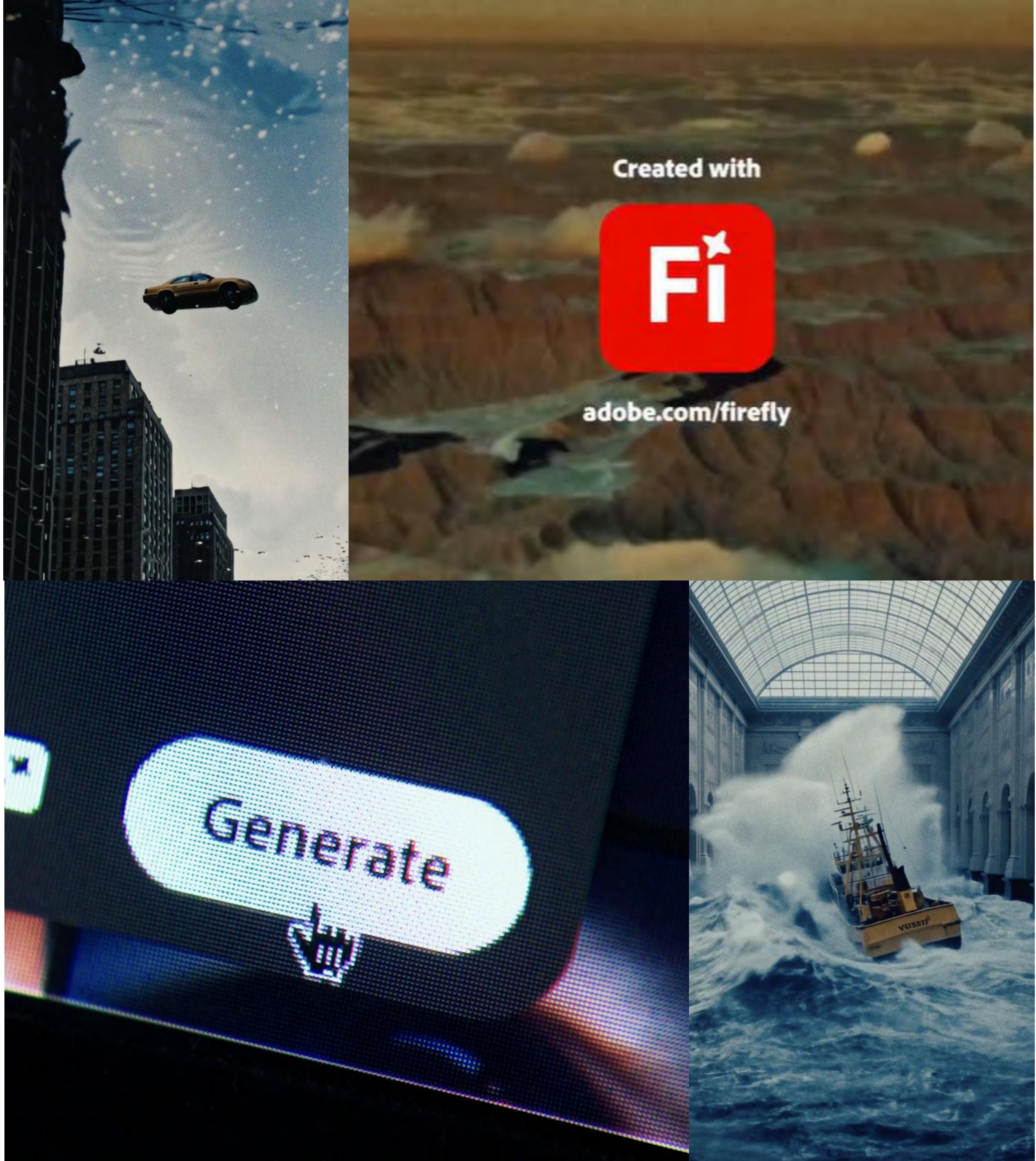
The Creator Challenge

Adobe launched Firefly in 2023, positioning itself as an AI leader for creative professionals. But by 2025, as generative AI rapidly entered creative workflows, many feared that automation would erode authorship, flatten originality, or replace the very craft that defines creative work.

Most critically, creators' relationship with AI was a volatile mix of curiosity and active hostility. Research revealed widespread anger about ethical violations, with artists viewing generative AI tools as exploitative, stealing intellectual property without compensation or consent. The creative community was deeply divided: filmmakers debated whether AI was "a threat to jobs or long-overdue equalizer."

Adobe set out to confront this skepticism head-on with Firefly, its generative AI platform, by reframing the role of AI not as a substitute for human creativity, but as a collaborator that amplifies imagination. For the launch of Firefly's upgraded version, Adobe needed to overcome creators' AI fear while demonstrating that human creativity remains central. If Adobe could win with creators, the most AI-skeptical audience, they would win in broader culture.

The brief was clear: create an idea that transforms skeptics into believers by proving Firefly empowers rather than replaces human creativity.



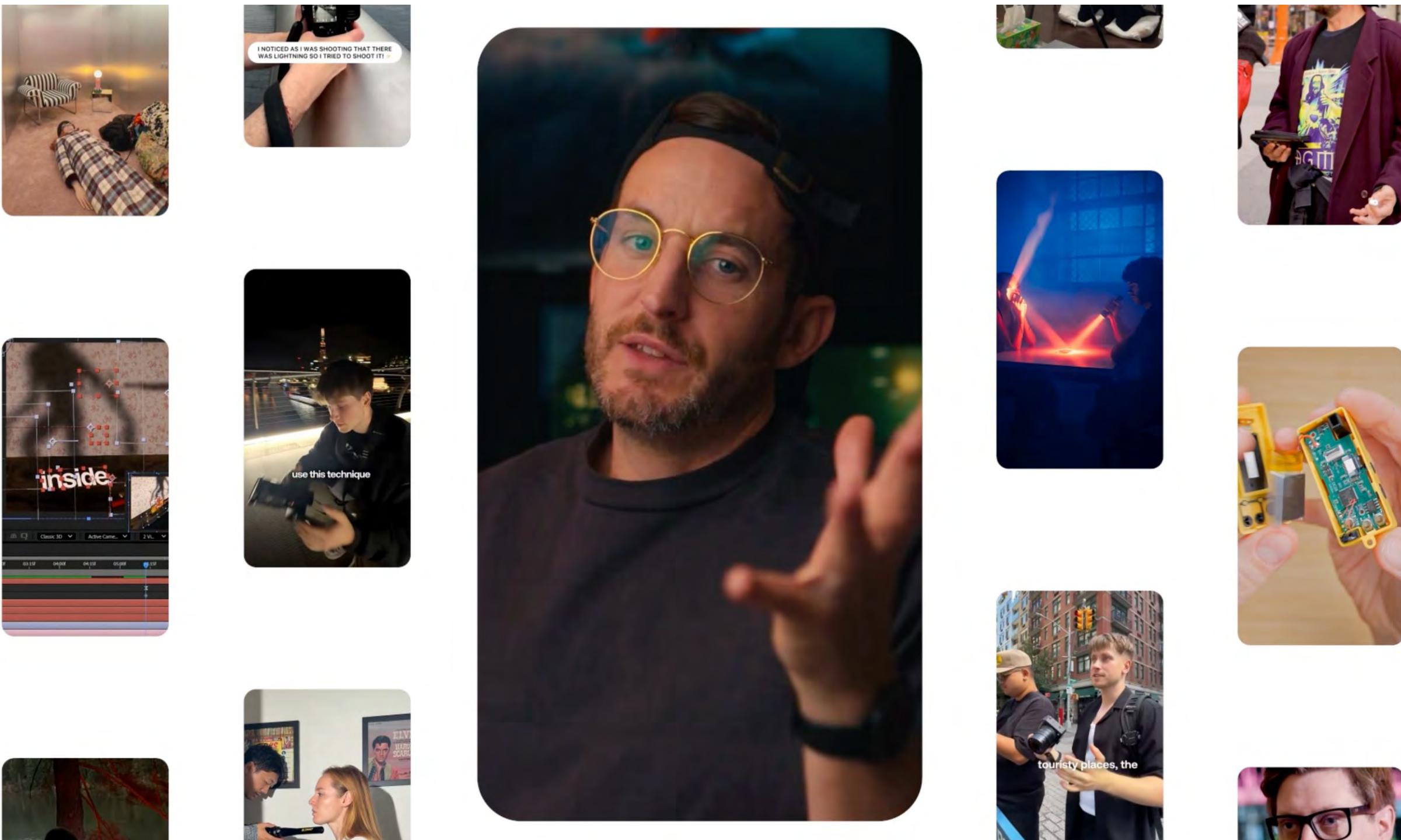
The Fear Of Replacement

Research revealed a creative industry at a critical inflection point. A February 2024 survey of 1,500 creative professionals found that 42% believed AI "will harm people" in their field—yet paradoxically, 66% were already experimenting with or using AI tools. This wasn't fear of AI itself, but fear of being replaced by it.

The data exposed "The AI Paradox": creators were simultaneously anxious and intrigued. While 74% expressed concern about intellectual property violations, adoption was accelerating. Adobe's 2025 Creators' Toolkit Report surveying 16,000 global creators found that 86% were using creative generative AI.

The filmmaking community exemplified this tension. As one creator posted on Reddit: "AI—threat to jobs or long-overdue equalizer?" The divide was stark. Established professionals worried about eroding opportunities while emerging creators argued AI democratized storytelling. With 70% of films now integrating AI during production, the technology was reshaping workflows whether creators liked it or not.

The insight became clear: the community wasn't rejecting AI, they were rejecting the belief that AI replaces human creativity. What creators needed wasn't corporate messaging. They needed to see trusted peers advocating for AI as a collaborative amplifier, showing that the human-AI partnership enhances rather than threatens their role.



"A.I. is going to kill the videographer"

Inspired Not Replace

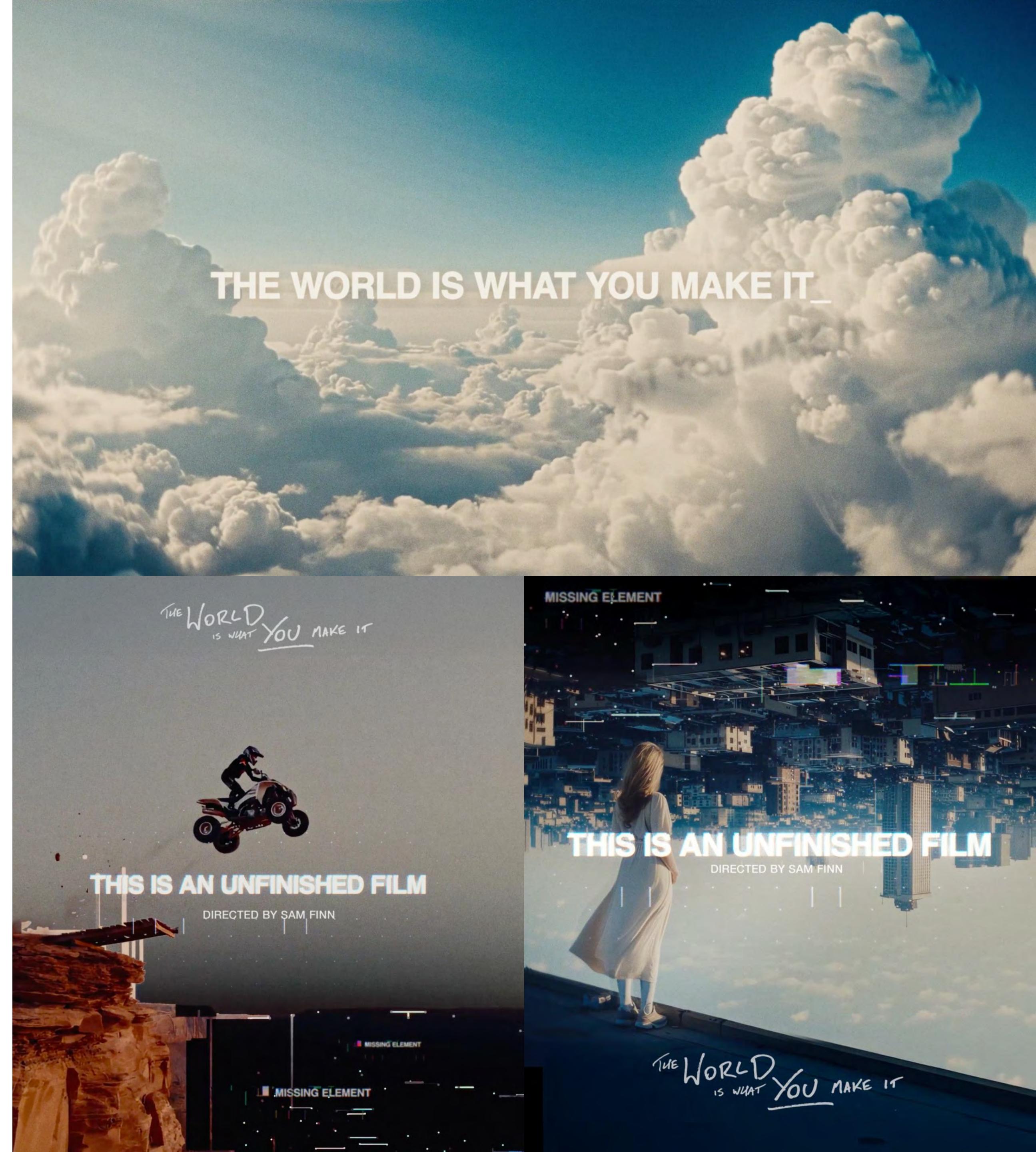
Film holds a unique status in the creative hierarchy. As one emerging filmmaker explained: "I always loved working in a team, and I love how a film set lends itself to that...combining technical aspects and a good story to achieve a meaningful result." With 91.8% of internet users watching digital videos weekly and the film production market expanding by 7% annually to reach \$102.2 billion, video creation represents the pinnacle of creative expression.

Our strategy focused on leveraging film's cultural impact to demonstrate AI as creative amplifier of human potential.

'The Unfinished Film' was the breakthrough idea.

An intentionally incomplete film that invited creators to finish their own visions, positioning them as co-directors rather than passive users.

The concept embodied Adobe's belief that "creativity is better when it's shared" and "rarely happens in a straight line." By surrendering the director's chair, we created an open invitation: download the original sequence, use Firefly tools to reshape it, and share your vision. This approach democratized filmmaking—lowering barriers while preserving the creator's central role—and generated authentic proof that AI amplifies rather than replaces human creativity.



THE UNFINISHED FILM

Credibility Through Expert Partnership

Adobe partnered with director Sam Finn (AI.S.A.M), a London-based AI photographer whose "groundbreaking work seamlessly merges the real with the artificial, challenging our perceptions of authenticity in virtual worlds." His unique position as both acclaimed traditional filmmaker and AI pioneer positioned him as the perfect bridge between craft and innovation, a trusted voice who could authentically demonstrate Firefly's capabilities without corporate bias.



THE UNFINISHED FILM

Creator-Led Collaboration

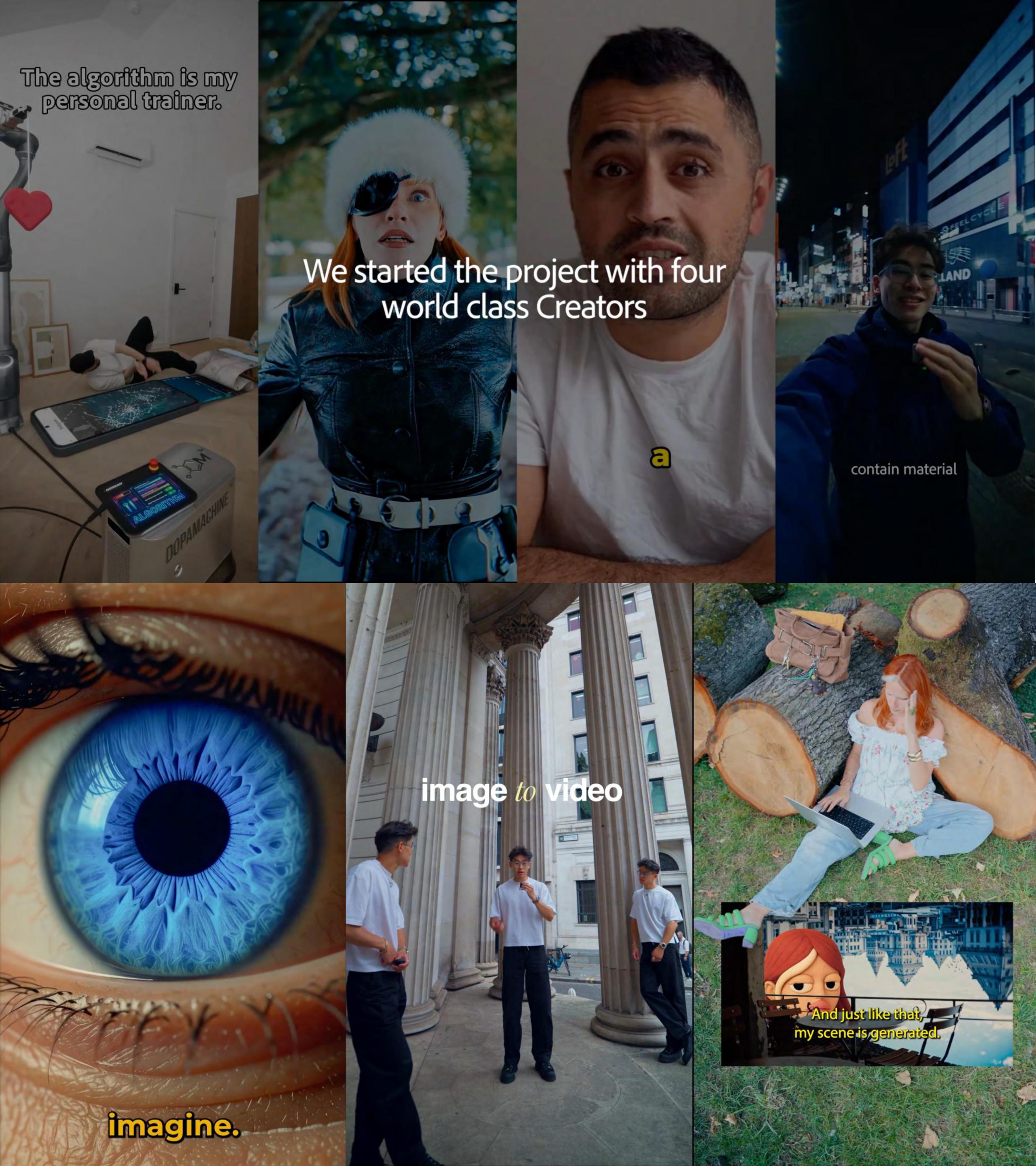
Sam created an intentionally incomplete film, made entirely with AI, featuring scientifically impossible scenes like upside-down cities and flying taxis that would require Hollywood-level budgets to produce traditionally. We then curated a diverse global creator cohort: Noémie Pino (lifestyle/travel content creator), Phil Cohen (creative director/VFX specialist), Keenan Lam (filmmaker/educator), and Jad Kassis (brand designer/AI specialist). Influencers and AI key opinion leaders served as focal points for creator-to-creator conversation, transforming skepticism into hands-on engagement and positioning Firefly as a practical, creator-first tool rather than abstract technology. Each creator began with the same source material, yet arrived at a distinct final film, shaped by individual voice, aesthetic, and narrative instinct. Keenan leveraged Firefly-generated images as cinematic references. Noémie integrated herself by animating handmade clay characters into Sam's shots. Phil developed custom starting frames for complex transitions. Jad filled incomplete scenes with eye-themed elements signifying "you can create anything you see." Collaboration was central, not passive tool usage, but active creative partnership.



THE UNFINISHED FILM

Creator-Led Collaboration

Adobe published the Unfinished Film as an open creative brief and invited filmmakers to complete it using Firefly. The four creator versions followed, demonstrating diverse interpretations. Then each creator's behind-the-scenes content launched directly after their finished films, satisfying audience curiosity about methodology. This sequential approach—unfinished film, creator completions, then tutorials—matched social consumption patterns where audiences watch finished products then seek 'how it was made' content. All content was organized into comprehensive YouTube playlists, transforming individual videos into a collective demonstration of Firefly's creative possibilities. Cross-platform amplification coordinated media, influencer partnerships, and embargoed press outreach across creative, technology, and AI publications. The campaign was amplified in a live activation at Adobe MAX (Adobe's annual creative conference) where attendees collaboratively extended the story frame by frame using Firefly tools, reinforcing AI as a participatory medium for all.



RESULTS

THE UNFINISHED FILM: ADOBE'S HIGHEST BRAND GROWTH EVER

Driving Mass Participation

The campaign resonated powerfully, driving 44.5 million audience actions—161% over the 30-day target of 17 million. We achieved 1.2 million engaged interactions, 63% over target. YouTube demonstrated exceptional engagement with 69% of viewers watching Sam's unfinished film completely through, while 94% were new to Adobe's channel—proving the campaign successfully reached fresh audiences and expanded the creator community. The four-creator cohort drove 4.1 million interactions, accounting for 72% of total campaign performance and demonstrating the power of authentic creator voices over corporate messaging. At Adobe MAX, hundreds of creators from around the globe experienced the Unfinished Film booth and created their own iteration of the film.



THE UNFINISHED FILM: ADOBE'S HIGHEST BRAND GROWTH EVER

Record Sign-Ups

Curiosity converted into action at unprecedented scale. The campaign generated 189,000 link clicks to the Firefly site, reflecting strong intent to create. Most significantly, The Unfinished Film helped drive Adobe Firefly's highest growth: subscriptions climbed 35% year-on-year. This represented Adobe's strongest performance for Firefly. Brand studies from DISQO and Meta showed brand lift was equally impressive, with significant increases across familiarity, ad recall, favorability and consideration.

189K



THE UNFINISHED FILM: ADOBE'S HIGHEST BRAND GROWTH EVER

Overcoming AI Fear

Importantly, the campaign achieved 100% positive-neutral earned press sentiment, directly countering industry-wide AI backlash. Media coverage appeared in 40+ global outlets, with 50% in Tier 1 publications including AdAge, No Film School, and Design Taxi. Coverage consistently reinforced key messages: 85% encouraged creators to complete films with Firefly, 77% tied the project to real-world creativity, and 46% showcased creative freedom with AI tools. Audience sentiment remained overwhelmingly positive, with comments like "such a great way to show AI as a tool for artists to assist them in their craft, not replace them"—proving we successfully repositioned Firefly from feared threat to creative amplifier.

AdAge

 **nofilmschool**

TAXI

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*The campaign has helped grow
the Firefly business and support
our place at the heart of the
Creators culture.*

”

Jared Carneson, Global Head of Social Media.

Adobe