

Who Is Tilly Norwood? The Very First AI Actress Shaking Up Hollywood and the Internet



A new frontier in entertainment is causing real [tension in Hollywood](#): meet **Tilly Norwood**, an artificial intelligence-generated “actress” whose unveiling has provoked fierce debate among industry professionals.

Who is AI Actress, Tilly Norwood?



Tilly Norwood was first introduced during panels at the **Zurich Film Festival's Zurich Summit**, as the creation of Dutch actor-entrepreneur **Eline Van der Velden** and her AI ventures, Particle6 and its spin-off studio **Xicoia**. She is being marketed as a “hyperreal digital star,” with some already pitching her as the next Scarlett Johansson.

Van der Velden insists that Norwood is not intended to replace human artists, but rather to serve as a new form of creative expression—akin to animation or puppetry, tools that expand rather than eliminate human performance. She has defended the project publicly, asserting that Norwood is “a creative work — a piece of art.”

Celebrities Respond

Nevertheless, the backlash was swift and vocal. Actors and industry voices responded with alarm over the implications of treating a digital entity like a talent.

On Instagram, **Melissa Barrera** did not mince words:

“HOPE ALL ACTORS REPPED BY THE AGENT THAT DOES THIS, DROP THEIR A\$\$.
HOW GROSS, READ THE ROOM.”

Mara Wilson (of *Matilda* fame) added a provocative angle:

“WHAT ABOUT THE HUNDREDS OF LIVING YOUNG WOMEN WHOSE FACES WERE
COMPOSITED TOGETHER TO MAKE HER? YOU COULDN’T HIRE ANY OF THEM?”

During a recent episode of *The View*, **Whoopi Goldberg** warned that AI actors like Norwood could never replace human nuance or presence. She argued that while Norwood might be constructed from many influences—“Bette Davis’ attitude,” “Bogart’s lips”—human movement and emotional depth still set performers apart.

Additional performers, including **Kiersey Clemons**, **Toni Collette**, and **Lukas Gage**, joined the chorus of concern. Some even called for industry boycotts of agencies that sign such AI personas.



On the technical side, Norwood is the inaugural creation of **Xicoia**, a new AI talent studio operating under Particle6. The goal: to build digital characters with full backstories, voices, and personalities that can be deployed across film, TV, social media, and interactive formats.

Van der Velden frames her project as innovation:

“JUST AS ANIMATION, PUPPETRY, OR CGI OPENED FRESH POSSIBILITIES ... AI OFFERS ANOTHER WAY TO IMAGINE AND BUILD STORIES.”

Even amidst the uproar, she maintains that Hollywood studios are already **showing interest**, with agency representation for Norwood expected to be announced soon.

The saga of Tilly Norwood raises urgent, complex questions: What does it mean for the future of acting and performance when the line between human and synthetic becomes blurred?

How do we value emotional authenticity, lived experience, and human vulnerability in a world where a computer can mimic a face?

As the entertainment industry grapples with these issues, one thing is certain: the era of AI “stars” is no longer speculative. It’s here — and Hollywood, once the place where dreams are manufactured, now faces a new challenge in manufacturing the dreamers themselves.