

# Welcome

## Message from the VIS 2021 General Chairs

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We have been honored to oversee the organization of IEEE VIS 2021. This marked the first year in which the SciVis, InfoVis, and VAST conferences were merged into a single, unified IEEE VIS. When we began planning for VIS in 2019, we envisioned a great experience for our community, who would be able to enjoy the innovative scientific program provided by a unified VIS, while delighting in the hospitable and lively atmosphere of New Orleans. But even the best laid plans cannot account for all contingencies. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic changed and complicated much in our lives, including the planning for VIS 2021. Moreover, transition to a unified conference was not without its challenges as well. Despite the difficulties, our community showed, once again, its strength and resilience. Our organizing committee created an exciting conference with a rich program full of high-quality research with all challenges being continuously and admirably addressed. As general chairs, our primary responsibility was to watch these wonderful volunteers conduct truly inspiring work under extreme constraints. For this, we are deeply indebted.

As the pandemic was still very much a significant factor in the world in October 2021, the importance of the health, safety, and full participation of our community drove our decision, as in 2020, to move

VIS to a virtual format. We were in a fortunate position to make this decision early enough to benefit from the many lessons learned from VIS 2020 and improve upon that virtual experience. Although, unlike 2020, increased knowledge of the virus and the distribution of highly-effective vaccines allowed us to support smaller, local in-person events. While our primary mission was to produce the best virtual VIS possible, we introduced VIS satellite events. These small, local, in-person events operated as official, supplemental events to IEEE VIS. Each satellite allowed local attendees to view and participate in the main program, but also provided exciting local content. We hope these events supported the personal interactions that we value so highly while also promoting our conference to local community members who would not be able to attend VIS if it was held as a traditional, in-person event. This year we had eight satellites spanning three continents. We thank all local chairs for their efforts and pioneering spirit.

To conclude, we must express our appreciation to all the people that made the conference a great event. To the enormous effort of volunteers and members of our community, we dedicate all our recognition, without which VIS 2021 would not have succeeded.

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