



2022 Sundance Film Festival: New Frontier Spans Biodigital Terrain, Blends Online & In-Person in Real Time

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Audiences to Have Access To New XR Works From Anywhere; Festival Introduces New, Connected On the Ground Venue

Park City, UT — When the 2022 Sundance Film Festival kicks off on January 20, it invites audiences to participate from wherever they are, including in person in Utah. The 2022 edition of the Festival's New Frontier section will be a fully biodigital showcase, presented simultaneously on a bespoke WebXR spatialized virtual venue, **The Spaceship**, that has touchpoints in a newly conceived, free-to-access venue in Park City, **The Craft**. Ticketed New Frontier performances will also be presented in Park City's iconic **Egyptian Theatre**, with simultaneous presentations on The Spaceship.

The Spaceship, globally accessible via laptop or VR headset, houses spaces for Festivalgoers to see the official New Frontier lineup, interact with others and gather together to watch programs and performances in an immersive arthouse theater. This year, Sundance, working again with the creative studio Active Theory, will unveil a number of upgrades to enhance The Spaceship's functionality and accessibility. Festival attendees, both on the ground in Park City and online, can interact with each other

and maintain the sense of community that the Festival always aims to provide, including a bleeding-edge human-scale Biodigital Bridge that connects Festivalgoers in Park City and those attending The Spaceship online from anywhere in the world — establishing the Festival as a metaverse that overlays the physical event with a virtual one.

Since 2007, the New Frontier exhibition has showcased multimedia storytelling, art installations, and biodigital performances that make use of emerging technologies like virtual reality, haptic tech and AI, among other tools. The 2022 edition is visualized as a human-scale and person-first digital experience that balances connection with a sense of place.

“Since the earliest stages of planning ’22, we’ve centered access and learnings from past iterations,” said **Shari Frilot**, senior programmer and New Frontier chief curator. “After the ’21 festival, we realized that presenting the work online effectively took one of the hottest, hardest-to-access experiences of prior Festivals and made it instantly and globally accessible to anyone with the right tech. New Frontier this year prioritizes biodigital design as a very adventurous endeavor, and one that speaks to the priorities of its creators, artists and audiences.”

Full details on New Frontier’s 2022 edition, taking place across:

The Spaceship is a virtual venue situated to orbit Earth alongside the International Space Station and is globally accessible January 20-28 via laptop or VR headset. It will host:

- **The Gallery**, which will showcase the complete 2022 New Frontier lineup of XR work + Easter eggs.
- **Cinema House**, a venue featuring live streaming, room-scale address and chat functionalities.
- A programmed series of **Artist Spotlights** designed to enable artists to represent their projects in person at The Craft in Park City and on The Spaceship in Cinema House.
- **Film Party**, a virtual social space, that allows audiences to inhabit avatars for organic, proximity-based, person-to-person webcam chat and connection. This venue will host dedicated film premiere parties after their online premieres and live Q&As, bringing filmmakers together with their online audiences to celebrate their films in both halves of the festival.

The Craft is a newly conceived space in Park City for artists to come together around the present and future of artistic practice. It is an immersive environment that’s free and open to all Festival patrons. By day, artists present, discuss and celebrate the creative process through a series of special public events, also livestreamed through the online Festival platform. Providing a point of convergence between the online and “on-mountain” Festivalgoers, The Craft is open January 21-25 and will host:

- Creators, Festival filmmakers, New Frontier artists and creative technologists inside a venue that provides multiple immersive touchpoints to The Spaceship, including a bleeding-edge human-scale Biodigital Bridge — an innovative piece of technology from Active Theory that connects Festivalgoers at The Craft in Park City and those attending The Spaceship online from anywhere in the world.
- Daily curated **Beyond Film** conversations, artist and community panels, talks and gatherings, featuring Festival Artists and including Artist Spotlights.
- Social spaces designed for artistic encounters.
- Access to the 2022 New Frontier XR lineup with equipment and assistance provided. (Attendees are also encouraged to bring their own headsets, with equipment specs to be announced at a later date.)

The Egyptian Theatre will present dynamic New Frontier performances (simultaneously happening on The Spaceship) to a live and biodigitally converged audience who will be able to participate in a post-performance Q&A. Tickets are required and will be available on December 17 (packages) and January 5 (single tickets).

The 2022 edition of New Frontier at the Sundance Film Festival on the Spaceship is accessible to all holders of the **Explorer Pass** (\$50 via [link](#)), which is also part of all ticket packages.

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Festival Sponsors and Host State

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Sundance Institute

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