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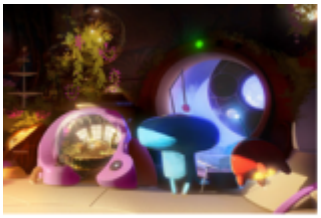
New Frontier Showcases Storytellingâ??s Future at 2017 Sundance Film Festival

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Park City, UT â?? Now in its second decade of breaking new ground at the forefront of art and technology, Sundance Institute has curated an in-depth vision of storytellingâ??s future for the 2017 edition of New Frontier at the Sundance Film Festival, January 19-29 in Park City. The full slate â?? including storyworlds in Augmented Reality headsets, projection-mapped acrobatics, a VR beauty salon producing neuroscience data via the internet of things and a host of socialized, interactive and immersively haptic VR story experiences â?? stands as a testament to New Frontierâ??s expertise in identifying, developing and amplifying the most relevant and high-impact modes of tech-enabled narrative.



ASTEROIDS!
Credit: Courtesy of Sundance Institute



Heroes
Credit: Jamie Caliri



Journey to the Center of the Natural Machine
Courtesy of Sundance Institute

Live performances, a feature film and augmented reality experiences will complement a total of 20 VR experiences and 11 installations, showcased between three venues in Park City. The historic **Claim Jumper** will host seven immersive installations focused on cross-disciplinary story construction and and two video works; the **VR Palace** will feature 15 VR experiences alongside additional installations; and the **VR Bar** will offer a lineup of mobile VR. Three projects are part of the Festivalâ??s **The New Climate** program, which highlights the environment and climate change. More New Frontier projects will be announced in the coming weeks.

Robert Redford, President and Founder of Sundance Institute, said, â??Every year, more artists are drawn to the vanguard of art and technology: independent, creative storytellers have more tools to break the mold than ever before. For the last decade-plus, New Frontierâ??s vision has evolved and

grown with this expanding palette, to curate and showcase the most exciting new work made with the latest advances.â?•

Shari Frilot, Sundance Film Festival Senior Programmer and Chief Curator, New Frontier, said, â??In an era that has recalibrated economies, redefined social realms and rewired the connection between the individual and the world, we must also reimagine what it is to be human. Through Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and various crafted immersive experiences, New Frontier this year challenges the very nature of perception and what we consider to be â??reality.â??â?•

Through New Frontierâ??s history, Sundance Institute has been at the forefront of new media storytelling, recognized as a pioneer of story-based, tech-enabled experiences; New Frontier alumni include Doug Aitken, James Franco, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Chris Milk, Nonny de la PeÃ±a, Pipilotti Rist and Jennifer Steinkamp. The Instituteâ??s support extends well beyond its curated slate of Festival projects, and includes the annual New Frontier Story Lab, which offers mentorship and development opportunities for new media storytellers, New Frontier Day Labs in cities nationwide and the New Frontier Residency Program, which combines the might of partners such as MIT Media Labâ??s Social Computing Group and Jaunt Studios to drive groundbreaking data-visualization and VR storytelling tools, training and resources to independent artists.

2016 marked New Frontierâ??s 10th Anniversary, with celebrations at MoMA in New York City, and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

In addition to the New Frontier program announced today, films in U.S. and World Competitions and NEXT have been announced and are listed at sundance.org/festival.

FILMS AND PERFORMANCE

18 Black Girls / Boys Ages 1-18 Who Have Arrived at the Singularity and Are Thus Spiritual Machines: $X in an Edition of $97 Quadrillion / U.S.A. (Director and writer: Terence Nance) â?? In this pair of performances, the artist Googles the phrase â??one-year-old black boyâ?• and â??one-year-old black girl,â?• ascending in age to 18, allowing Googleâ??s â??popular searchesâ?• algorithm to populate what words will follow.

Did You Wonder Who Fired the Gun? / U.S.A. (Director: Travis Wilkerson) â?? This documentary murder mystery about the artistâ??s own family is a Southern Gothic torn apart and reassembled. Journeying straight into the black heart of a family and country, this multimedia performance explores a forgotten killing by the artistâ??s great-grandfatherâ??a white Southern racistâ??of a black man in lower Alabama.

World Without End (No Reported Incidents) / U.S.A., United Kingdom (Director: Jem Cohen) â?? Close observations around Southend-on-Sea, a small English town along the Thames estuary, reveal not only everyday streets, everyday birds, unflagging tides, mud and sky, but also prize-winning Indian curries, an encyclopedic universe of hats and a nearly lost world of proto-punk music.

INSTALLATIONS

A selection of single-channel works by the collective A Normal Working Day / Switzerland â?? A Normal Working Day is an artist collective consisting of the installation artist Zimoun and the

choreographers and dancers Delgado Fuchs (Marco Delgado, Nadine Fuchs). Formed from the bodies of the two performers, these splendidly hypnotic projections are visual rabbit holes that shimmer with a presence that is larger than the sum of their parts.

Full Turn / Switzerland (Lead Artist: Benjamin Muzzin) â?? This installation explores the notion of the third dimension with the desire to get out of the usual frame of a flat screen. The rotation of two tablets creates a three-dimensional, animated sequence that can be seen at 360 degrees, unlike any other type of display.

Heartcorps: Riders of the Storyboard / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: dandypunk, Key Collaborators: Darin Basile, Jo Cattell) â?? Follow the story of Particle, a two-dimensional light being, as you walk through the pages of a giant, immersive comic book. Hand-drawn illustrations come to life around you using projection-mapping technology, while high-level Cirque du Soleil performers interact with animated characters in this â??digital light poem.â?• *Cast: Ekenah Claudin, Elon HÃ¶glund, Youssef El Toufali, Jenni Gamas.*

Heroes / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Melissa Painter, Key Collaborators: Tim Dillon, Thomas Wester, Jason Schugardt, Laura Gorenstein Miller) â?? The setting: An extravagant movie palace where silent films were shown. One danceâ??fiercely athletic and romanticâ??invites you inside. Through both Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality headsets, the story comes off the screen, challenging you to move, navigate heroic shifts in perspective and scale and reach out to touch the experience. *Cast: Helios Dance Theater, Stephanie Maxim, Chris Stanley, Melissa Sandvig.*

Journey to the Center of the Natural Machine / U.S.A. (Lead Artists: Daniella Segal, Daniel Lazo, Eran May-Raz, Charles Niu) â?? From stone axe to super-computer, our brainâ??s evolution has been guided by our tools, evolving it into the most complicated object in the known universe. Explore a holographic brain with a friend on the Meta 2 Augmented Reality Headset, and rebuild your relationship to the Natural Machine.

NeuroSpeculative AfroFeminism / U.S.A. (Lead Artists: Ashley Baccus-Clark, Carmen Aguilar y Wedge, Ece Tankal, Nitzan Bartov) â?? A three-part exploration of black women and the roles they play in technology, society and cultureâ??including speculative products, immersive experiences and neurocognitive impact research. Using fashion, cosmetics and the economy of beauty as entry points, the project illuminates issues of privacy, transparency, identity and perception.

Pleasant Places / United Kingdom (Lead Artist: Quayola) â?? A return to, and a modern elaboration upon, Vincent Van Goghâ??s Provence landscapes, this series of digital paintings interrogates and reframes concepts of representation and perception through image manipulation and augmented reality. Using bucolic and contemplative images, juxtaposed with raw data visualization, this project suggests alternate modes of visual synthesis.

Synesthesia Suit: Rez Infinite and Crystal Vibes / Japan (Lead Artists: Tetsuya Mizuguchi, Ayahiko Sato, Kouta Minamizawa) â?? A full-body 26-sensor suit combines audiovisual and vibrotactile textures to push technology-mediated sensory frontiers. Experience a multisensory climax with pounding beats and stringed instruments in acclaimed PlayStation 4/PS VR game Rez Infinite, or feel vibrations of candy-colored psychedelic sound rippling through the Crystal Vibes universe.

VIRTUAL REALITY

ASTEROIDS! / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Eric Darnell) â?? From the director of *Madagascar* comes Baobabâ??s VR animation. Journey the cosmos aboard the spaceship of Mac and Cheez, an alien duo so mission-focused they forget whatâ??s important in life. Itâ??s up to you to show them what really matters. *Cast: Eric Darnell.*

Chasing Coral: The VR Experience / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Jeff Orlowski) â?? Zackary Rago, a passionate scuba diver and researcher, documented the unprecedented 2016 coral bleaching event at Lizard Island on the Great Barrier Reef with this exclusive underwater VR experience. **THE NEW CLIMATE**

Chocolate / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Tyler Hurd) â?? This VR experience for the song â??Chocolateâ?• by Giraffage sets you in a cat-centric world of sparkling, colorful chrome with a tribe of people doing a ritualistic dance just for you, their robot god, to provide them with their precious resource, cute lilâ?? chrome kitties.

Dear Angelica / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Saschka Unseld, Key Collaborators: Angela Petrella, Wesley Allsbrook, Maxwell Planck, Ryan Thomas) â?? This project is a journey through the magical and dreamlike ways we remember lost ones and, even though they are gone, what remains of the ones we loved. *Cast: Geena Davis, Mae Whitman.*

Hue / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Nicole McDonald, Key Collaborators: KC Austin) â?? This is an immersive and visually driven interactive film about a man who has lost the ability to see color. Participants reawaken the protagonistâ??s sense of wonder and imagination through empathetic action as color and connection return to his world view*. Cast: David Strathairn, Benedikt Negro.*

If Not Love / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Rosemarie Troche, Key Collaborator: Bruce Allan) â?? A conflicted Christian man carries out a mass shooting. In his past: a same-sex hookup and self-loathing. What if events had unfolded differently? What if his partner had convinced him to face himself? Could that simple act change the course of history? *Cast: Zachary Booth, Mitchell Winter.*

Life of Us / U.S.A. (Lead Artists: Chris Milk, Aaron Koblin, Pharrell Williams, Key Collaborators: Megan Ellison, McKenzie Stubbert, Jona Dinges) â?? This shared VR journey tells the complete story of the evolution of life on Earth.

Melting Ice / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Danfung Dennis) â?? We take viewers on a transcendent exploration into the devastating consequences of climate change on Greenlandâ??s ice sheet. Stand under collapsing glaciers, next to raging rivers of ice melt and witness rising sea levelsâ??all visceral warnings of our planetâ??s future. **THE NEW CLIMATE**

Mindshow / U.S.A.(Lead Artists: Gil Baron, Jonnie Ross, Adam Levin, Key Collaborators: Jonnie Ross, Gil Baron) â?? Make VR cartoons with your body and voice. Teleport into different characters and act out all the parts. Create with your friends by passing scenes back and forth, then share your shows in VR and on social media. *Cast: Dana Gould.*

Miyubi / Canada (Lead Artists: FÃ©lix Lajeunesse, Paul RaphaÃ«l, Key Collaborator: Owen Burke) â?? Experience love and obsolescence as a Japanese toy robot, gifted to a child in the home of a fractured family in 1982 suburban America. *Cast: Jeff Goldblum, P.J. Byrne, Emily Bergl, Owen Vaccaro, Richard Riehle, Ted Sutherland, Tatum Kensington Bailey.*

Orbital Vanitas / Australia (Lead Artist: Shaun Gladwell, Key Collaborator: Leo Faber,) â?? This virtual reality experience presents a surreal sci-fi mystery and meditation on death. Initially placed in Earthâ??s orbit, participants soon notice an enigmatic form floating toward them. What takes place next makes perfect use of the VR format.

Out of Exile: Danielâ??s Story / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Nonny de la PeÃ±a) â?? In August 2014, Daniel Ashley Pierceâ??s family verbally and physically accosted him before kicking him out of the house because they disapproved of his sexuality. Built directly around audio Daniel recorded from that encounter, this project includes thoughts of hope and triumph from Daniel and three other LGBTQ youth. *Cast: Daniel Ashley Pierce, Kyle Wills, Julene Renee, Cyntia Domenzain, Angel VanStark, Phoebe VanCleefe.*

The Sky is a Gap / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Rachel Rossin) â?? The viewer is allowed to precisely move time with space by the use of a positionally tracked headset. Existing in the physical and virtual realms, the installation depicts a pyroclastic explosion inspired by Zabriskie Point, where the sceneâ??s progress is physically mapped to the participantâ??s forward and backward movement.

Through You / U.S.A. (Lead Artists: Saschka Unseld, Lily Baldwin) â?? Dance is used to inhabit a common mortal story of love born, lived, lost, burned and seemingly gone foreverâ??only to be found again. *Cast: Joanna Kotze, Amari Cheatom, Marni Thomas Wood.*

Tree / U.S.A. (Lead Artists: Milica Zec, Winslow Porter, Key Collaborators: Aleksandar Protic, Jacob Kudsk Steensen) â?? This virtual experience transforms you into a rainforest tree. With your arms as the branches and body as the trunk, you experience the treeâ??s growth from a seedling to its fullest form and witness its fate firsthand. **THE NEW CLIMATE**

Zero Days VR / U.S.A. (Lead Artists: Scatter, Yasmin Elayat, Elie Zananiri, Key Collaborators: Mei-Ling Wong, Alexander Porter, James George) â?? The story of a clandestine mission hatched by the U.S. and Israel to sabotage an underground Iranian nuclear facility told from the perspective of Stuxnet, a sophisticated cyber weapon, and a key NSA informant. Audiences experience the high stakes of cyber warfare placed inside the invisible world of computer viruses. *Cast: Joanne Tucker, Eric Chien, Liam Oâ??Murchu, Ralph Langner, Olli Heinonen, David Sanger.*

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Sundance Institute
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(Source:http://www.sundance.org)

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