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Sundance Institute's New Frontier Story Lab Explores the Future with Six Creative Teams and Projects

**Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Video Games and Installations
Take Center Stage as New Frontier Turns 10**



Peter Burr | Porpentine Charity Heartscape | Shawn Peters | Barry Cole | Josephine Decker | Jess Engel | Nicole McDonald |
Rob Auten | yako (Jean-Christophe Yacono) | Ziad Touma | Nicolas Peuffailit | Mark Farid | John Ingle | Nimrod Vardi

Los Angeles, CA – Sundance Institute announced today the six projects selected for the **New Frontier Story Lab**, the groundbreaking cinematic new media program that empowers creatives at the forefront of innovation in entertainment and storytelling, May 19-24 at the Sundance Resort in Utah. Past participants include Roger Ross Williams, Yung Jake, Chris Milk, Cory McAbee, Navid and Vassiliki Khonsari, Karim Ben Khelifa, Tracy Fullerton and Lucas Peterson.

The Sundance Institute New Frontier program, celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year, supports and fosters independent artists working at the convergence of film, art, media, live performance, music and technology. Through an annual exhibition at the Sundance Film Festival and Labs, Residencies and workshops throughout the year, the program builds a robust community of storytellers and creative technologists.

Activities at the weeklong Lab include individualized story sessions, conversations about key artistic, design and technology issues, and case study presentations from experts in diverse related disciplines. The Lab is planned under the guidance of Sundance Institute Feature Film Program Founding Director Michelle Satter and Kamal Sinclair, Director of New Frontier Lab Programs.

Satter said, "The massive Virtual Reality revolution now underway signals a broader shift towards

increasingly immersive storytelling forms. Our New Frontier Story Lab positions artists at the forefront of this technological evolution and allows their new stories and ideas to lead us into the future.”

Creative Advisors for the New Frontier Story Lab include: Nao Bustamante (USC Vice Dean of Art, Artist); Katherine Dieckmann (Filmmaker, *Strange Weather, Diggers, Motherhood*); Torfi Frans Ólafsson (Creative Director, EVE Universe IP at CCP Games); Alex McDowell (Production Designer, *Minority Report, Fight Club*); Rob McLaughlin (Executive Producer, National Film Board of Canada’s Digital Studio); Mark Monroe (Writer, *The Cove, Sound City, Who is Dayani Cristal?*); the legendary story expert Joan Tewkesbury (Filmmaker/Writer/Actor, *Nashville, Chicago Hope*); Rose Troche (Filmmaker/Producer, *The L Word, Perspective VR Series, Concussion*); Saschka Unseld (Creative Director, Oculus Story Studios); Meiyin Wang (Former Co-Director The Public Theater’s Under the Radar Festival) and Craig Zobel (Filmmaker, *Z for Zachariah, Compliance*).

For the first time, the New Frontier Story Lab will have an industry day that builds on the story-oriented conversations had earlier in the week, to go deeper into design, technology and strategies for project viability and financial support. Industry Mentors include: Michael Connor (Artistic Director, Rhizome); Michael Marchetti (Serial Entrepreneur and CFO & Executive Committee Member, Age of Learning); Tamir Muhammad (Director of Content & Artist Development, Time Warner Inc.); Kristina Reed (Producer, *Paperman, Feast, Monkey Kingdom*; Studio Leadership, *Frozen, Tangled, Wreck-it-Ralph, Zootopia*); Frank Soqui (General Manager Enthusiast Desktop Group, Intel Corporation) and Guido Voltolina (Head of Presence Capture OZO, Nokia).

Meet the creative teams and projects selected for the 2016 Sundance Institute New Frontier Story Lab:

Aria End

Peter Burr and Porpentine Charity Heartscape

Aria End is a science fiction video game and installation about Aria, a trans woman with cyborg intestines who works in a subterranean mega-ruin — the site of a bizarre disaster that changes all who are exposed to it. By inhabiting a series of underground base camps and modifying a network powered by intestinal flora, the player comes to identify with the space through the act of maintaining virtual architecture.

Peter Burr is an artist from Brooklyn, NY specializing in animation and performance. His work has been presented at venues across the world including Le Centre Pompidou, Paris; Reina Sofia National Museum, Madrid; and MoMA PS1, New York. Previously, Burr worked under the alias Hooliganship and in 2006 founded the video label Cartune Xprez, through which he produced live multimedia exhibitions showcasing artists working in experimental animation.

Porpentine Charity Heartscape is a new media artist, writer, game designer, and trash woman. She has been influential in the contemporary hypertext renaissance, and in popularizing the accessible text art software called Twine. She’s won the XYZZY and Indiecade awards; been exhibited at EMP Museum and the Museum of the Moving Image; been profiled by *The New York Times*; commissioned by *Vice*, the *New Inquiry*, and *Rhizome*, and she is a 2016 Creative Capital Emerging Fields awardee.

The Art of Dying Young

Shawn Peters and Barry Cole

The Art of Dying Young is a film installation and new media bike tour that examines the lives, local histories and place-making initiatives of the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Bedford Stuyvesant and South Williamsburg told through the lives of two young men who have been memorialized through murals.

Shawn Peters is a storyteller, filmmaker and director of photography. Peters started his career shooting music videos for artists like Esperanza Spaulding, Cody ChesnuTT, Pharoahe Monch, Breaking Benjamin, Michelle Williams, and Bilal. He has worked on narrative features and shorts with Terence Nance, Sebastian Silva, Laura Colella, and Raafi Rivero, which have premiered at film festivals including Sundance, Rotterdam, Berlin, Tribeca and Toronto. Peters has been awarded a 2015 Creative Capital Award for his personal project, *The Art of Dying Young*.

Barry Cole is a Grammy-nominated music supervisor with over 80 credits including *American Psycho*, *Brown Sugar* and *Marley*. Cole is co-producer of the 2014 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award-winning documentary *Alive Inside – A Story Of Music And Memory* and is co-founder of the transmedia company Dub Fiction. Cole presents at music, film and technology conferences including the Augmented Reality World Expo. In 2014 Cole founded Multisfalcon, a marketplace for the sale and licensing of multitrack audio.

Happy

Josephine Decker and Jess Engel

When Madeleine shows up for Kazie's birthday, the other guests and she discover Kazie curled up, half-dressed on the shower floor. So — why is everyone looking at Madeleine? *Happy*, a live-action virtual reality exploration, takes us into the architecture of mental illness, where the most unreliable narrator might be — yourself.

Ushering in a “new grammar of narrative” according to The New Yorker, Josephine Decker premiered her first two award-winning narrative features *Butter on the Latch* and *Thou Wast Mild and Lovely* at the Berlinale Forum 2014. The films played festivals around the world, including Torino, London BFI, and BAM Cinemafest. Decker got her start helping to produce docs for A&E and Discovery before making feature documentary *Bi The Way* (SXSW 2008, MTV's Logo and Netflix). She is currently working with the Museum of the City of New York on their Future of the City Lab and will shoot her next feature this summer.

Jess Engel is a NY-based Virtual Reality producer at Virtualize where she produces both branded and original VR content. Recent projects include *Giant*, an immersive VR narrative experience (2016 Sundance Film Festival), and *Flash of Color*, a conceptual VR hypnosis piece (2015 Chart Art Fair, Copenhagen). Engel is also currently working on *The Hubble Cantata*, a multimedia VR space experience about the Hubble Telescope in collaboration with National Sawdust and Arup, premiering in Brooklyn August 2016.

Hue

Nicole McDonald and Rob Auten

For Hue, life has lost its color. What once was bright and bawdy is now pasty and pallid. With the help of your hands and your heart, only you can help Hue find his formerly full spectrum. (A haptic VR interactive tale.)

Nicole McDonald is a multi-disciplined creative lead with over twenty years of experience in games, traditional advertising, and interactive experiences. It has been her life's passion to utilize technology as a creative tool and she is constantly seeking innovative ways for viewers to experience narrative as active participants. She has written and directed award-winning interactive experiences for Google: A Chrome Experiment, Cirque Du Soleil, Toyota, Dove, Motorola, and Volkswagen.

Rob Auten is an interactive writer and experience designer, editor, and director. He is co-founder of Hexagram, a creator of backend technology for immersive experiences. Rob has served as lead writer on billion-dollar gaming franchises including *Gears of War*, *Battlefield*, *Tom Clancy* titles, and *Fry Cry*. He led content creation for Disney's toy system Playmation, is creating a game adaptation of *Apocalypse Now*, and has advised film and game studios like Lionsgate and Take 2 Interactive. Rob supervised interactive production for 20th Century Fox, including *Aliens*, *Ice Age*, and *Avatar*.

The Passengers

yako (Jean-Christophe Yacono), Ziad Touma and Nicolas Peuffaillit

Take a seat among *The Passengers*, an immersive virtual reality fictional series set from the different point of views of strangers on a train, as you enter their subconscious to journey beyond the image they project.

The multiple award-winning creator yako is considered one of the most innovative interactive and creative directors in Canada. His projects range from interactive experiences on the web, mobile or VR devices, to art performances and installations. He founded the studio decod.ca and acts as creative director, interactive designer, producer, photographer or cinematographer.

Ziad Touma is an award-winning producer, director and writer working in film, television and transmedia. His most recent interactive series, "The Judas", an ARG that he produced and directed for Radio-Canada through his production company Couzin Films, won multiple Canadian Digi and Boomerang Awards including Best interactive series and Best Online Game, was nominated at the Numix, G meaux and Webby Awards and showcased at festivals around the world.

Nicolas Peuffaillit won the 2010 Best Original Screenplay Cesar Award for Jacques Audiard's *A Prophet*, which won the Jury Grand Prize at Cannes, a nomination for Best Foreign Picture at the Academy Awards, and 9 C sar Awards. Working for both art-house movies and pure entertainment, he also wrote the bible of the acclaimed TV Series *The Returned*. He's currently writing *ORDESA*, a real footage video game for ARTE, the European cultural TV channel. *The Passengers* is his first entry into the VR world.

Seeing-I

Mark Farid, John Ingle and Nimrod Vardi

For 24 hours a day, for 28 days, artist Mark Farid will wear a virtual reality headset through which he will experience life through another person's eyes and ears.

Mark Farid is a multimedia conceptual artist who investigates the perceived autonomy of the individual. Through his practice, Farid examines the ethics of performing in social situations to help understand how the State, and new technologies, prescribe the identity of the individual. A Fine Art graduate of Kingston University, London, 2014, Farid has since participated in group and solo exhibitions in England, France, Germany, Denmark, UAE, and Japan.

John Ingle is a director-cinematographer whose work challenges the audience's morality and ethical standpoint. Interested in projects that question the ambiguous nature of reality, Ingle's work always remains objective and unbiased. In 2014, Ingle graduated from Kingston University, London, with a commendation in moving image, and a 1st class degree in graphic design and was awarded a D&AD award for Moving Image. In 2015, his debut short film, *Stolen*, was broadcast on all MADE television channels. *Seeing I* is Ingle's first feature-length documentary.



Nimrod Vardi is the director and curator of arebyte, a gallery named as one of London's most experimental spaces, and Arbeit Project, a co-working space located across London, UK. His curatorial practice revolves around new media, digital and performance arts, examining the intersections between digital technologies, the body and human experience. At his work at arebyte Gallery he is developing projects with local and international artists exploring concepts of control, implications of digital technologies and testing the boundaries of contemporary art and life in general.

The Sundance Institute New Frontier program is supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Jaunt Inc., Time Warner Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Nokia OZO, Ford Foundation, Google, Oculus Story Studio, Intel, Annapurna and Vrse, Fox Innovation Lab, swissnex San Francisco and Pro Helvetia, David E. Quinney III, and Comcast Ventures.

Sundance Institute

Founded in 1981 by Robert Redford, Sundance Institute is a nonprofit organization that provides and preserves the space for artists in film, theatre, and new media to create and thrive. The Institute's signature Labs, granting, and mentorship programs, dedicated to developing new work, take place throughout the year in the U.S. and internationally. The Sundance Film Festival and other public programs connect audiences to artists in igniting new ideas, discovering original voices, and building a community dedicated to independent storytelling. Sundance Institute has supported such projects as *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Sin Nombre*, *The Invisible War*, *The Square*, *Dirty Wars*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* and *Fun Home*. Join [Sundance Institute](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

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