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## **New Frontier Showcases Storytelling's Future at 2017 Sundance Film Festival**

**Virtual / Augmented Reality Experiences, Installations, Live Performances Lead Programming, Including Works by Saschka Unseld, Chris Milk, Terence Nance, Shaun Gladwell, Nonny de la Peña**



*(L-R) ASTEROIDS!, Credit: Courtesy of Sundance Institute; Heroes, Credit: Jamie Caliri; Journey to the Center of the Natural Machine, Credit: Meta.*

**Park City, UT** — 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 storytelling's future for the 2017 edition of New Frontier at the Sundance Film Festival, January 19-29 in Park City. The full slate — 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 — stands as a testament to New Frontier's expertise in identifying, developing and amplifying the most relevant and high-impact modes of tech-enabled narrative.

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 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 Festival'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, "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 Frontier's vision has evolved and grown with this expanding palette, to curate and showcase the most exciting new work made with the latest advances."

**Shari Frilot**, Sundance Film Festival Senior Programmer and Chief Curator, New Frontier, said, "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 'reality.'"

Through New Frontier'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 Peña, Pipilotti Rist and Jennifer Steinkamp. The Institute'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 Lab'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 Frontier's 10<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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) — In this pair of performances, the artist Googles the phrase "one-year-old black boy" and "one-year-old black girl," ascending in age to 18, allowing Google's "popular searches" algorithm to populate what words will follow.

***Did You Wonder Who Fired the Gun?*** / U.S.A. (Director: Travis Wilkerson) — This documentary murder mystery about the artist'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 artist's great-grandfather—a white Southern racist—of a black man in lower Alabama.

***World Without End (No Reported Incidents)*** / U.S.A., United Kingdom (Director: Jem Cohen) — 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 Normal Working Day*** / Switzerland — 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) — 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) — 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 "digital light poem." *Cast: Ekenah Claudin, Elon Höglund, Youssef El Toufali, Jenni Gamas.*

**Heroes** / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Melissa Painter, Key Collaborators: Tim Dillon, Thomas Wester, Jason Schugardt, Laura Gorenstein Miller) — The setting: An extravagant movie palace where silent films were shown. One dance—fiercely athletic and romantic—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) — From the Oldowan rock to the modern super-computer, our brain's evolution has been guided by our tools, transforming it into the most sophisticated instrument in the universe. Explore a holographic brain with a friend on the Meta 2 Augmented Reality Headset, and discover the Natural Machine.

**NeuroSpeculative AfroFeminism** / U.S.A. (Lead Artists: Ashley Baccus-Clark, Carmen Aguilar y Wedge, Ece Tankal, Nitzan Bartov) — A three-part exploration of black women and the roles they play in technology, society and culture—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) — A return to, and a modern elaboration upon, Vincent Van Gogh'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) — 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) — From the director of *Madagascar* comes Baobab's VR animation. Journey the cosmos aboard the spaceship of Mac and Cheez, an alien duo so mission-focused they forget what's important in life. It'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) — 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) — This VR experience for the song "Chocolate" 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 lil' chrome kitties.

**Dear Angelica** / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Saschka Unseld, Key Collaborators: Angela Petrella, Wesley Allsbrook, Maxwell Planck, Ryan Thomas) — 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) — This is an immersive and visually driven interactive film about a man who has lost the ability to see color. Participants reawaken the protagonist'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: Rose Troche, Key Collaborator: Bruce Allan) — 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) — This shared VR journey tells the complete story of the evolution of life on Earth.

**Melting Ice** / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Danfung Dennis) — Al Gore takes viewers on a transcendent exploration into the devastating consequences of climate change on Greenland's ice sheet. Stand under collapsing glaciers, next to raging rivers of ice melt and witness rising sea levels—all visceral warnings of our planet's future. *Cast: Al Gore, Dr. Konrad Steffen.* **NEW CLIMATE**

**Mindshow** / U.S.A. (Lead Artists: Gil Baron, Jonnie Ross, Adam Levin, Key Collaborators: Jonnie Ross, Gil Baron) — 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: Félix Lajeunesse, Paul Raphaël, Key Collaborator: Owen Burke) — 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, ) — This virtual reality experience presents a surreal sci-fi mystery and meditation on death. Initially placed in Earth'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: Daniel's Story** / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Nonny de la Peña) — In August 2014, Daniel Ashley Pierce'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 VanCleeve.*

**The Sky is a Gap** / U.S.A. (Lead Artist: Rachel Rossin) — 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 scene's progress is physically mapped to the participant's forward and backward movement.

**Through You** / U.S.A. (Lead Artists: Saschka Unseld, Lily Baldwin) — Dance is used to inhabit a common mortal story of love born, lived, lost, burned and seemingly gone forever—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) — This virtual experience transforms you into a rainforest tree. With your arms as the branches and body as the trunk, you experience the tree'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) — 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 O'Murchu, Ralph Langner, Olli Heinonen, David Sanger.*

The Sundance Institute New Frontier program is supported by Cindy Harrell Horn and Alan Horn, Lyn and Norman Lear, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Time Warner Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Oculus Story Studio, Nokia OZO, Comcast Ventures, The Fledgling Fund, and David E. Quinney III.

### **The Sundance Film Festival®**

The Sundance Film Festival has introduced global audiences to some of the most groundbreaking films of the past three decades, including *Boyhood*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Whiplash*, *Brooklyn*, *Twenty Feet from Stardom*, *Life Itself*, *The Cove*, *The End of the Tour*, *Blackfish*, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*, *Super Size Me*, *Dope*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *sex, lies, and videotape*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Precious* and *Napoleon Dynamite*. The Festival is a program of the non-profit Sundance Institute®. 2017 Festival sponsors **to date** include: Presenting Sponsors – Acura, SundanceTV, Chase Sapphire®, and Canada Goose; Leadership Sponsors – Adobe, AT&T, DIRECTV, and YouTube; Sustaining Sponsors – American Airlines, Canon U.S.A., Inc., Francis Ford Coppola Winery, GEICO, Google VR, *The Hollywood Reporter*, IMDb, Jaunt, Kickstarter, Omnicom, Stella Artois® and the University of Utah Health. Sundance Institute recognizes critical support from the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development, and the State of Utah as Festival Host State. The support of these organizations helps offset the Festival's costs and sustain the Institute's year-round programs for independent artists. Look for the Official Sponsor seal at their venues at the Festival. [sundance.org/festival](http://sundance.org/festival)

### **Sundance Institute**

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