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## **Sundance Institute Announces 2019 New Frontier Story Lab Fellows**

**Groundbreaking Group of Emerging Media Creatives Convene to  
Push the Boundaries of Storytelling and Technology**



Sandra Rodriguez | Michael Burk | Klasien van de Zandschulp | Emily Baltz | Jenny (QinYa) Guo | Xin Liu |  
Eve-Lauryn Little Shell LaFountain | Razan AlSalah | Momchil Alexandrov Alexiev | Michael Fallik | Laura Emel Yilmaz

**Los Angeles, CA** — Sundance Institute announces six projects selected for the **2019 Sundance Institute New Frontier Story Lab**, which supports independent artists working at the cutting-edge convergence of film, art, media, live performance and technology. The New Frontier Story Lab is a week-long immersive experience that empowers creatives with individual story sessions, conversations about key artistic, design and technology issues and case study presentations from experts in multiple disciplines. Past participants include Roger Ross Williams, Josephine Decker, Silas Howard, Tracy Fullerton, Yung Jake, Chris Milk, Hasan Minhaj, Tommy Pallotta, Amelia Winger-Bearskin, Hank Willis Thomas, Jillian Mayer, Heather Dewey-Hagborg, Navid and Vassiliki Khonsari, A Dandy Punk, and Nicolas Peuffailit. The Lab takes place May 16-21 at the Sundance Resort in Utah, under the leadership of Sundance Institute Feature Film Program Founding Director Michelle Satter and Ruthie Doyle, Interim Director of New Frontier Lab Programs.

“The relationship between artists and creative technologists develops and expands during the Lab, using emerging and immersive media to find new forms of deeply personal storytelling, this year especially through performance, machine learning, and reimaginings at the intersection of the human and the machine,” said **Ruthie Doyle**, Interim Director of New Frontier Lab Programs. “Creative Advisors and Industry Mentors help bridge the gap between silos of discipline alongside our Fellows, supporting their artistic vision not only at the convergence of art and technology, but making connections across dislocation, diaspora and mediation.”

Creative Advisors and Industry Mentors for the Lab include:

Arvel Chappell III (Warner Bros.), Yasmin Elayat (Scatter, *Zero Days VR*), Sarah Ellis (Royal Shakespeare Company, *The Seven Ages of Man*), Jess Engel (Crimes of Curiosity, *Spheres*), Nick Fortugno (Playmatics, *Frankenstein AI*), Tracy Fullerton (USC Game Innovation Lab, *Walden*), Rachel Eve Ginsburg (Branding for Experience, *Frankenstein AI*), Maya Hawke (*Cave of Forgotten Dreams*), Lars Jan (*White Album*), Opeyemi Olukemi (POV Spark, AmDoc Interactive), Melissa Painter (MAP Lab, *Heroes*), Laura Poitras (*Citizenfour*), Jon Raymond (*Wendy and Lucy*), Alex Reben (Stochastic Labs), Jake Sally (RYOT, *Gloomy Eyes*), Hugues Sweeney (NFB Interactive), Joan Tewkesbury (*Nashville*), Brad Weiers (Unity), and Aaron Wickenden (*Won't You be my Neighbor?*).

### **Meet the creative teams and projects selected for the 2019 Sundance Institute New Frontier Story Lab:**

#### ***Chomsky vs. Chomsky: A Collective Experience***

**Sandra Rodriguez and Michael Burk**

*Chomsky vs. Chomsky* is a location-based, Mixed Reality (MR) experience that explores the promises, pitfalls and future of AI. Guided by AI Chomsky, with commentary directly from the actual Chomsky, the experience opens a timely conversation on AI, with AI, through AI.

Sandra Rodriguez is a creative director (VR/MR/AI), filmmaker, and sociologist of new-media technologies, whose current work explores algorithmic futures, AI, and human creativity. She has directed, produced and worked on award-winning docs, webseries and VR projects including *DoNotTrack*, *Deprogrammed*, *Big Picture VR*, *MANIC VR*, and leads MIT's first class on immersive media creation.

With a focus on "creative coding," Michael Burk is an interaction designer and media artist, with work ranging from conceptual to interactive environments that blur the boundaries between the virtual and the physical. Since 2015, he has been an integral designer and programmer at schnellbuntebilder.

#### ***Eat | Tech | Kitchen***

**Klasien van de Zandschulp and Emilie Baltz**

An interactive dinner party hosted by two futurist chefs from a future planet, *Eat | Tech | Kitchen* presents your online existence on a futuristic platter and reflects on the absurdity (and reality) of how we consume our daily technology.

Klasien van de Zandschulp is an interaction designer and multimedia artist who designs multi-sensory experiences, blending digital/physical and online/offline interactions.

Emilie Baltz is a food technologist, experiential director and multimedia artist who creates multi-sensory experiences that foster curiosity and wonder, one lick, suck, bite and sniff at a time.

#### ***The Greatest Wait***

**Razan AISalah and Momchil Alexandrov Alexie**

In a story of impossible yet eternal return, Zei, a 3rd generation Palestinian refugee, searches for "her place," floating through an endless map in virtual reality: a stitch of 1940s Haifa, 1990s Beirut and 2020s Montreal.

Razan AlSalah is a 2019 Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) Grantee and Sundance New Frontier Story Lab Fellow. In 2018, Razan was awarded the Knight Foundation New Frontier Fellowship at Sundance, Latham Award for an Emerging Experimental Video Artist at Ann Arbor Film Festival and the Sunbird Award for Best Narrative Short at Cinema Days Palestine.

Momchil Alexiev is a graduate of La Sapienza University in Rome and The Netherlands Film Academy. Over the past 10 years, he's worked as a filmmaker and theatre scenographer in Italy, Bulgaria and The Netherlands. As co-founder of Aesop Studio Research Center, Momchil works to establish new organic connections between performance, cinematic space and video projections.

### ***Living Distance***

**Jenny (QinYa) Guo and Xin Liu**

*Living Distance* is a fantasy and a mission, and a multi-sensory VR experience, in which a wisdom tooth is sent to the outer space and back down to Earth again. Carried by a crystalline robotic sculpture, the tooth becomes a newborn entity in space and tells the inconsequential, but ever so unique story of a person in this universe. It un.masks and un.makes the alienated technological space programs and reimagine visceral, active, empathic and poetic forms of engagement.

Jenny (QinYa) Guo is the co-founder of LumiereVR, dedicated to using virtual reality (VR) to bridge the gap between tech and arts, she has an extensive distribution network including flagship VR cinemas in aquariums, museums and major sports arenas across America, including a 230 seats VR theater at Madison Square Garden. Additionally, Guo is an award-winning cross-border creative producer, new media art collector and tech entrepreneur. She has been named one of Forbes' *30 under 30* twice and was selected as one of the top 5 female XR entrepreneurs in China.

Xin Liu, co-founder of slow immediate, is an artist and engineer whose practice expands from performances and artifacts to scientific experiments and academic papers. She thinks of science as a language and technology as a means to explore emotions, beliefs, and subjectivities. Xin is the Arts Curator of the Space Exploration Initiative, MIT Media Lab, and has received numerous awards and residencies, including the Van Lier Fellowship, Huayu Youth Award Finalist, Queens Museum, and Pioneer Works.

### ***Re/Dis Location***

**Eve-Lauryn Little Shell LaFountain**

Through site-specific virtual reality experiences, installation, and film, *Re/Dis Location* investigates the complicated personal histories and legacies of the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, which encouraged Native Americans to move off their reservations into urban centers. The resulting migration tore families and communities apart but was also instrumental in creating urban pan-Indian identities.

Eve-Lauryn Little Shell LaFountain (Turtle Mountain Ojibwa) is a Los Angeles-based multimedia artist and educator. Her work explores identity, history, indigenous futurism, feminism, ghosts, magic, and her mixed Native American and Jewish heritage through lens-based media and installations.

### ***Thin Air***

**Michael Fallik and Laura Emel Yilma**

In this tablet-based game, a recently widowed woman embarks on a psychedelic journey, a late in life coming-of-age through the tangled emotional landscape of domestic trauma.

Michael Fallik is a Los Angeles-based games/VR producer, and studio manager. His credits include BAFTA 2017 Game of the Year *What Remains of Edith Finch* by Giant Sparrow (Annapurna Interactive), and *Free the Night VR* (Jaunt/Microsoft). Currently, Michael is the Executive Producer for The Game Band's *Where Cards Fall* (published by Snowman), a coming-of-age narrative/puzzle game that delves through past memories, building houses of cards to form and shape the world around you.

A 10-year veteran of the Los Angeles motion design scene, Laura Yilmaz is an animator and art director specializing in 2D character work and animated psychedelia. Formerly head of 2D/cel animation at Buck LA, Laura has collaborated with some of the most prestigious motion studios in the world, and her personal films have screened at many festivals around the globe. She is now a senior lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington's School of Architecture and Design in Wellington, New Zealand.

### **Sundance Institute's New Frontier Program**

The Sundance Institute New Frontier Program is supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Cindy Harrell Horn and Alan Horn, Dell, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, WarnerMedia, Saul Zaentz Innovation Fund & ISET at the Johns Hopkins University Film & Media MA Program, 20th Century Fox, Oculus from Facebook, Unity Technologies, RYOT, VICE Studios, PlayStation, IMAX, TIME in partnership with Felix & Paul Studios, Vimeo, YouTube, and Google AR & VR.

### **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 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 *Sorry to Bother You*, *Eighth Grade*, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, *Hereditary*, *RBG*, *Call Me By Your Name*, *Get Out*, *The Big Sick*, *Top of the Lake*, *Winter's Bone*, *Dear White People*, *Brooklyn*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *20 Feet From Stardom*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *I'm Poppy*, *America to Me*, *Leimert Park*, *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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