

METL Immersive Storytelling Residency Research

(Research period concludes on Friday, April 3rd)

QUESTIONS

- What sources are coming up during this research phase?
 - Other experiences
 - *The Under Presents*
 - *Virtual Virtual Reality*
 - Other VR creators
 - Nancy Baker Cahill, “*Battlegrounds*”
 - Tender Claws x Piehole
 - Cabbibo
 - Games
 - *Journey*
 - Beautiful visuals
 - Free of text and dialogue
 - Plot is a digestible version of Campbell’s [monomyth](#).
 - AMAZING music
 - Elegant (simple + well-made)
 - Social component is a bonus but doesn’t ruin anything if it’s missing.
 - *Half Life: Alyx*
 - Films/Shows
 - *Her*
 - *Ex Machina*
 - *Honey Boy*
 - *10 Cloverfield Lane*

- *Westworld*
- *Cloud Atlas*
- *Interstellar*
- *The Invitation*
- Research papers, books, + other written materials
 - [“Mechanics, Dynamics, and Aesthetics”](#) model from Robin Hunicke et al
 - [“Deterritorializing the Child”](#) based on Deleuze philosophy
 - [“Theme Park Design & The Art of themed Entertainment” by David Younger](#)
 - [“101 Things I Learned in Architecture School” by Matthew Frederick](#)
 - [“Storytelling for Virtual Reality: Methods and Principles for Crafting Immersive Narratives” by John Bucher](#)
 - Chapter 4: Storytelling Principles for Immersive Space
 - Chapter 5: Designing an Immersive Narrative
- Other stuff
 - The future of 3D printing
 - Intel’s [Museum of Me](#)
 - Creepy, surprisingly almost 10 years old
 - [Muse](#), an AI to help parents raise self-actualized children +1
 - [El Camino de Santiago](#)
 - [Haji](#)
 - [Medjugorje](#)
 - Buddhist pilgrimage
 - The Architecture of [Zaha Hadid](#)
 - [Giovanni Battista Piranesi](#)
 - [Augusto Boal’s Theater of the Oppressed and “Rainbow of Desire”](#)
 - [Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller](#)
 - [Brian Clark’s ideas about phenomenology](#) (an approach that concentrates on consciousness and the objects of direct experience)
 - “All meaning of art comes from the audience, not from the work that you make.”
 - Being phenomenal XR creators means studying universal principles of how people experience things.

- [The Cinema Since 9/11](#)
- What centralized location can we use to store our research materials?
 - We use Discord to communicate, this doc to store links, and send images to Fernando to make assemblages.
- What might festivals like Sundance, Tribeca, and Venice be looking for in an experience?
 - Voices of VR: [Sundance Curator Milo Talwani talks about what they look for](#)
 - Milo curates for Sundance and Tribeca
 - Also puts together their own events
 - Creative technologist who also coordinates the tech needs for immersive programming at festivals
 - What programmers usually see before a festival is a “rough build”, and their offices have tech similar to what we have. Often, they have to go offsite to see more involved builds for LA-based experiences.
 - In cases where curators and artists can’t meet up, they have a VERY involved application that asks creators to describe the soup-to-nuts experience.
 - The [Sundance New Frontier 2021 application](#) opens on May 1, 2020.
 - Consider installation design and approximate runtime! Throughput is a BIG piece of the puzzle for curators.
 - Common themes in 2020 festival
 - the human body, changing it, understanding it, and socializing with other bodies in virtual space.
 - Actualizing data in a virtual space (breathing, EULAs)
 - In the world of distribution, folks currently don’t seem to be looking at anything beyond LBEs. However, Milo thinks that there isn’t really a need for a fancy, intricate LBE if the in-headset experience is exceptional; e.g. you don’t need to see “Frozen” in a special Frozen-themed movie theater
 - Milo co-curated [this show at the sp\[ace\] gallery](#) within the ayzenberg ad agency.
 - “This event is only worth doing if it’s comfortable and accessible for families”
 - Offered in hour-long time slots
 - “I enjoy both better understanding AND taking a break from my own body/space.”

- “When an architect designs a hotel, they have a say in how people interact with the space... but the guests ultimately have the last say about what they do in the space.”
- Shari Frlot [talks about what she looks for](#)
 - The Sundance New Frontier was established in 2007 to look at THE new frontier of storytelling- only in 2015 did it trend towards VR/XR. Even though other festivals now incorporate an immersive component, Sundance was truly the original.
 - In 2020, looking forward, the New Frontier is looking to return to its roots and base its programming on cutting-edge, experimental, interdisciplinary projects.
 - This year’s programming less represented sense-based immersive experiences, focusing more on setting up virtual social spaces where community can happen in otherwise impossible ways. Real actors and shared social spaces... it’s really more theatre than tech.
 - (Trent’s opinion) “The Empathy Machine” is old news. Even the idea of VR as a cool visceral sensory tool is outdated. The fringe now seems to be in theatre. Where on the innovation spectrum can we reasonably assert ourselves?
 - “If we continue to go down the path of embracing the technological realm as it is driven by agendas that have nothing to do with the betterment of humanity, it will not only accelerate the issues of our time (like global climate change), it will lead to our inability to understand ourselves.”
 - WE NEED TO STAY HUMAN!
 - Kent Bye: XR has an amazing ability to put you into a totally different context and even set new contexts. For example, on planets or communities we could never join otherwise- even if we could, we might otherwise not know how to navigate them.
 - Empathy is not experiencing or owning someone else’s experience, it’s being able to relate to a FEELING. Being in a VR experience about a house burning down does not give you empathy for someone whose house burned down. Only a similar experience of *loss* can give you that empathy.
 - “It’s important to keep people in the same physical space after a difficult experience and make sure they know that it’s okay to not talk and just process- art cracks us open to vulnerable places, and when we’re able to be in community when that happens, that’s the real frontier.”
 - “I’m interested in experiences that tie me to a lot of people with a physical element that we share...experiences that make us aware of invisible threats (e.g. toxic waste disposal sites in residential areas) and allow us to start conversations around it... reality largely happens beyond what our sense can perceive.”

- The challenge of the corporate grip that is on our immersive medium is dangerous (VR headsets are some of the best data-collecting devices ever invented!) and must be imploded, or at least met with another narrative about the agenda of our immersive environment. The job is to stay two steps ahead of the devil. Shari wants to magnify the ability of artists to do that.
- Artists should have a voice and be able to participate in conversations with platforms about the user data being collected as people make their way to those artists' content. The data economy/surveillance capitalism won't go away- data is more valuable than oil. But creators *can* humanize the data economy.
- "The values of creators need to be expressed, embraced, exercised if we're going to get out of this."
- We're experiencing a healthy uncertainty about the future of this medium and industry. It will eventually pass, and how it passes is how you sit with it. So make sure that you sit with it.