

Festival Feature: Immersive Virtual Reality at 2018 Tribeca Film Festival

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 14, 2018 - 11:24am

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NEW YORK CITY – Every year, the evolution of story experience is on display at the Tribeca Film Festival, and its popularity continues to escalate. The “Virtual Arcade,” which was at the festival hub in the Tribeca neighborhood, featured Virtual Reality (VR), interactive storytelling and immersive experiences.

These experiences turns the audience member into a participant within a story they once only watched. And new for 2018 was the addition of “Tribeca Cinema360” – a VR theater that featured screening programs in a 360 degree mobile content – was also part of the arcade at the festival hub.



Programmer Loren Hammonds of the Tribeca Film Festival Oversees the ‘Virtual Arcade’

Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com describes a few of those experiences below, but first there is a rerun of a 2017 talk between HC and Loren Hammonds, the programmer for Immersive presentations at the Tribeca Film Festival. He has worked for the festival for ten years, programming films and eventually becoming programmer for the Virtual Arcade.

In the following Podtalk, Loren Hammonds provides a perspective on the current state of the immersive/VR experience, and the future for the application of this technology for audiences.

On **PAGE TWO**, Patrick McDonald reviews the Immersive/VR presentations he experienced at the 17th Tribeca Film Festival...

INTO THE NOW

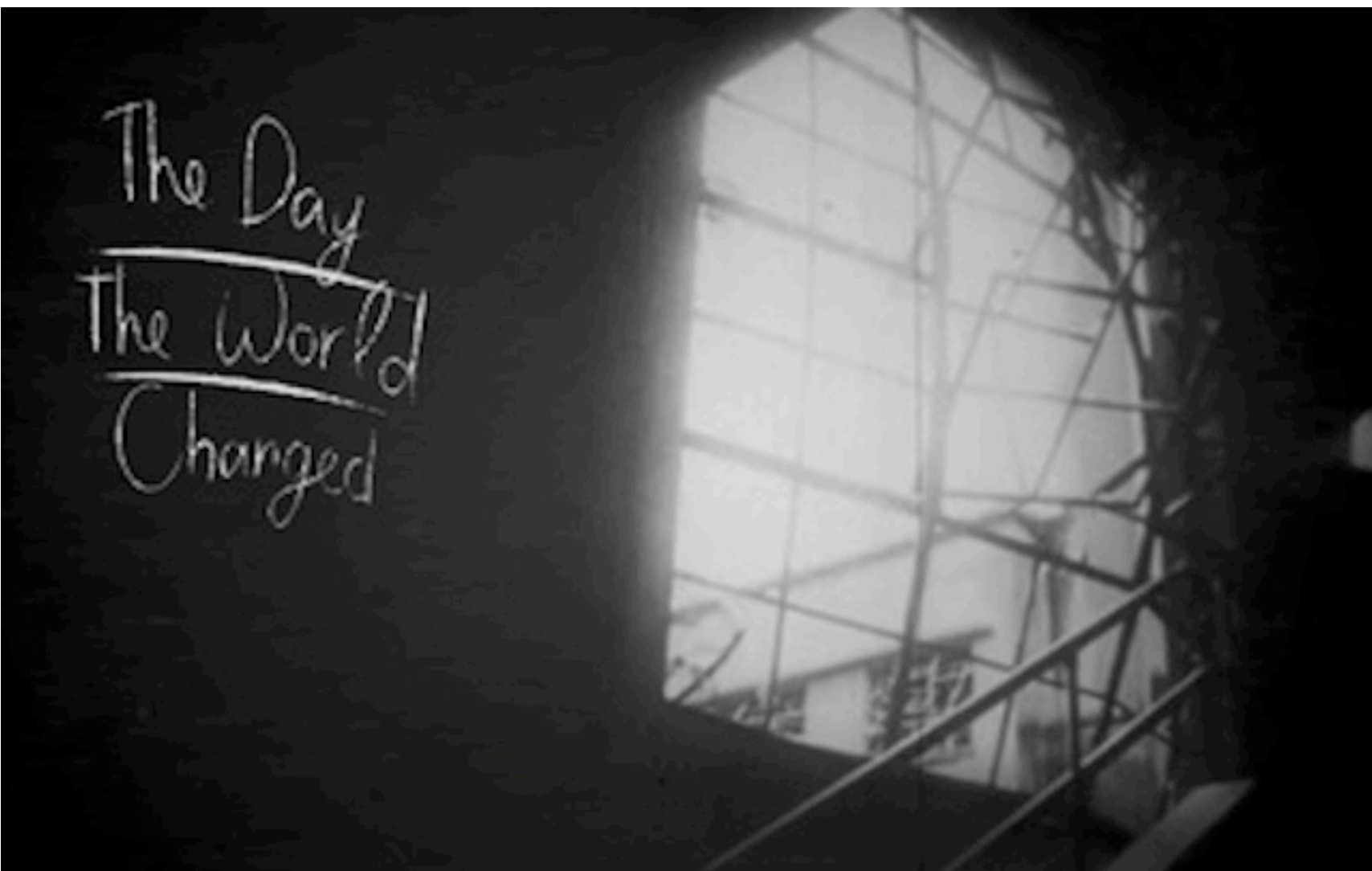


'Into the Now,' Created by Michael Mueller

Photo credit: Tribeca Film Festival

This one involved sitting in a pod chair, which moved in the directions as the presentation unfolded. Creator Michael Mueller is an adventurer, but still had elements of his life to conquer. This led him to interact with sharks, which he had always been afraid of. The purpose of this journey, which takes you into the depths of the sea and its creatures, is to work within the moment, and allow that most fears can dissipate if following that rule of life. A bit too Oprah, but the imagery is spectacular.

THE DAY THE WORLD CHANGED



'The Day the World Changed,' Created by Saschka Unseld and Gabo Arora

Photo credit: Tribeca Film Festival

In August of 1945, the only use of nuclear weapons in war occurred at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. "The Day the World Changed" chronicles the circumstances behind those days, both in recreating a building tumbling around you and interactive items that you can "touch" (with controllers that look like hands under the VR lens). Fascinating but hard to experience, given the build up of nukes over the years and their role in saber rattling. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the inventors of the "bomb" once said (quoting the Bhagvad Gita), "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."

QUEERSKINS: A LOVE STORY



'Queerskins: A Love Story,' Created by Illya Szilak and Cyril Tsiboulski

Photo credit: Tribeca Film Festival

Truly one of the most unusual VRs, and an interesting meditation at the same time. This is a true story about Sebastian, a gay man who died during the AIDS plague. He was estranged from his parents, so when participating in this presentation you first see a actual recreation of his Cleveland bedroom, before going on a VR journey with his parents to an unknown destination. While in the back seat of the car (with a strange deja vu, especially if you're familiar with 1980s automobiles) you hear the parents talking of their son in hushed tones, while you go through a box of his things. Of all the VR creations I've participated in, this was the most personal.

VACATION SIMULATOR



'Vacation Stimulator,' Created by Owlchemy Labs
Photo credit: Tribeca Film Festival

Another oddball entry, and not for people who don't do interactive games. The participant is thrust into a cartoon world, with several challenges having to do with being on vacation. You are asked to walk around in the world, with controllers, and work on "recreation," "relaxation" and the "sunburn." This was Owlchemy Labs follow up to "Job Stimulator," so it stands to reason you had to get away eventually. The cartoony world was definitely trippy.

#WARGAMES VR



'#WarGames VR,' Created by Sam Barlow
Photo credit: Tribeca Film Festival

This was actually a demonstration of a new web series, expanded to VR, which has taken the essence of the 1983 cult classic and brought it to now, unfortunately with none of the charm of the film. This is a typical the-kids-know-more-than-anyone hacker fantasy, where adolescent computer jockeys unlock doors and turn on sprinklers remotely ("Joe, I need you to do this in five seconds or we're all caught!" "I can do in four!" etc.). In fairness, this is part of a whole soap opera happening, which is not fleshed out by experiencing a bit of VR preview.

READ ALL OF PATRICK MCDONALD's COVERAGE OF THE 2018 TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL... (click on headline)

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The 17th Tribeca Film Festival took place from April 18th through April 29th, 2018. For more general information on 2018 Tribeca, [click here](#). [28]



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Source URL (retrieved on Apr 16 2024 - 7:48pm):
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