



**25<sup>TH</sup> RAINDANCE FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 40 RAINDANCE VRX AWARDS NOMINEES  
ACROSS 10 VIRTUAL REALITY CATEGORIES**

**The highly anticipated VR strand includes Raindance VR Experiences Summit and VRX Awards presented by Facebook 360 in partnership with Blend Media**

**LONDON - SEPTEMBER 27, 2017:** Raindance Film Festival, Europe's leading independent film festival, today announced 40 **Raindance VRX Awards** nominees across 10 categories:

1. Best Interactive Narrative VR Experience
2. Best Mobile Interactive VR Experience
3. Best Cinematic Narrative VR Experience
4. Best Documentary VR Experience
5. Best Animation VR Experience
6. Best Music VR Experience
7. Best Branded VR Experience
8. Best Sensual VR Experience
9. Best Social Impact VR Experience
10. Best Sound Design VR Experience

The Jury members include immersive storytelling visionaries such as *Vicki Dobbs Beck* of ILMxLAB, *Jenna Pirog* of The New York Times, *Resh Sidhu* of Framestore and leaders from Facebook, Blend Media, Google, Samsung, Disney, Pixar, ILMxLab and more.

*"We are thrilled to recognise groundbreaking Virtual Reality experiences and reveal the 40 nominees for the inaugural Raindance VRX Awards. The winning experiences will be showcased at the VR Arcade alongside a selection of world, European and UK premieres of 360 films and interactive experiences. We're also very excited to showcase the world's first experimental Augmented Reality short film, made with ARkit."*

Mária Rakušanová, Director of VR and New Media at Raindance.

**The highly anticipated Virtual Reality strand will run from September 25 – 30** and will feature the Raindance VR Experiences Summit and VRX Awards presented by Facebook 360 in partnership with Blend Media, VR Arcade sponsored by Lexus and 360 Filmmaking Masterclass with Facebook 360.

The 10 winners of the Raindance VRX Awards will be announced at the festival's awards ceremony in the evening of September 29. Earlier in the day, the festival will host the [Raindance VR Experiences Summit presented by Facebook 360 in partnership with Blend Media](#). It will feature a keynote by **Facebook 360**, a 360 filmmaking panel chaired by **Blend Media** and talks by pioneering creators such as *Wesley Allsbrook*, artist behind the hit Oculus VR experience, *Dear Angelica*; *Antoine Cayrol*, creator of the cinematic VR narrative *Alteration* which uses Artificial Intelligence for novel cinematic storytelling and many more.

Open to the public on September 29 – 30, the [Raindance VR Arcade sponsored by Lexus](#) will allow audience members to experience the latest advances in immersive storytelling by showcasing a selection of 20 experiences created by Raindance VRX Awards nominees. The selection includes 360 films and interactive VR experiences such as the world premiere of *Ray*, a VR fairy tale directed by Raindance alumni, *Rafael Pavón*, that combines 360° stereoscopic video with visual effects and voice recognition to interact with a computer generated beam of light; the world premiere of *Manifest 99* by *Flight School Studio*, an eerie story about finding redemption in the afterlife where staring into the eyes of characters will teleport you to their point of view; the world premiere of *Peroration Six*, a 360°

live action performance by musician *Sam Shepherd* and his band Floating Points that takes you on a supernatural journey in the Utah desert; and the world premiere of **Second Date** directed by *Jennifer Lyon Bell*, an unscripted portrait of two people fumbling towards sensual ecstasy. The VR Arcade will also feature the world premiere of **the world's first experimental Augmented Reality short film** by *Duncan Walker*, shot on iPhone, **made with ARKit**.

## **40 RAINDANCE VRX AWARDS NOMINEES ACROSS 10 CATEGORIES:**

### **BEST INTERACTIVE NARRATIVE VR EXPERIENCE**

***Life Of Us***, dir. by Chris Milk and Aaron Koblin, USA

Breathe fire, swim underwater, survive the Ice Age, and soar over volcanoes as you evolve through different creatures and a billion years of evolution in this action packed, multi-person VR adventure! Experience new voices, bodies, and special abilities before joining a post-singularity intergalactic dance party set to original music by Pharrell Williams. Created by Chris Milk and Aaron Koblin, with music by Pharrell Williams. A Within Original, produced by Chris Milk, Megan Ellison through her Annapurna Pictures, and Made with Unity.

***Manifest 99***, dir. by Adam Volker and Bohdon Sayre, USA, World Premiere

Created by Flight School Studio, Manifest 99 is an eerie story about finding redemption in the afterlife. Set on a mysterious train, rambling through an unknown void, you assist four travel companions on their journey to their final destination. Using character engagement as a method of movement, Manifest 99 explores scale and navigation unlike any other interactive VR experience.

***Ray***, dir. by Rafael Pavón, Spain, World Premiere

Ray is a VR fairy tale created by Future Lighthouse. It combines 360° stereoscopic video, impressive visual effects and arresting soundtrack. Immerse yourself in Lucy's room the night when Ray, a nosy beam of light, comes to play on her dreams. Ray is also an interactive experience where Ray is alive, and you can play with it using voice recognition and gestures.

Cast: Laia Manzanares

***Treehugger: Wawona***, dir. by Marshmallow Laser Feast, UK

Treehugger: Wawona, the latest virtual reality installation from Marshmallow Laser Feast, reveals the secret life of the giant sequoia and never-before-seen inner workings of the world's largest tree. Treehugger uniquely illustrates the sequoia's immense scale and questions our relationship with the natural world at a time of crisis and change.

### **BEST MOBILE INTERACTIVE VR EXPERIENCE**

***Horizons***, dir. by Yuli Levto, UK

Horizons is a series of interactive VR music journeys where you control the music, and the music controls the world. Make an otherworldly jungle come alive with sound, or travel at breakneck speed through colourful hyperspace. Featuring music from Bonobo, Reuben Cainer and My Panda Shall Fly.

***In the Eyes of the Animal***, dir. by Marshmallow Laser Feast, UK

In the Eyes of the Animal allows you to explore the forest through the eyes of four woodland species. It is an artistic interpretation of how animals view the world and their living environment.

***The Unfinished***, dir. by Balthazar Auxietre, France

In the museum, at night, the statues come alive. Through flashbacks, the viewer is told the love story behind the unfinished statue in the center of the room, and gets to interact with it to finish the unfinished, and free the sculptures within. This majestic ballet in VR unfolds to the score of The Planets by Gustav Holst.

Cast: Raphaëlle Boitel, Pauline Journe, Tarek Aitmeddour

***Virtual Virtual Reality***, dir. by Samantha Gorman and Adam Veal, USA, UK Premiere  
Created by Tender Claws, Virtual Virtual Reality is a meta-satire about VR in VR. Welcome to “Activitude”: Real Labor Like You’re Really There! Cater to the whims of A.I. clients, or put on VR headsets in VR to escape into Activitude’s layers of reality as Chaz, the A.I overlord, attempts to boot you out PERMANENTLY.

Cast: Ted Evans, Jared Ramirez, Skip Pippo, Alice Winslow, Hugh Kennedy

### **BEST CINEMATIC NARRATIVE VR EXPERIENCE**

***Alteration***, dir. by Jérôme Blanquet, France, UK Premiere  
Alexandro volunteers for an experiment carried out to study dreams in this poetic trip into the future. He can’t imagine that he will be subjected to the intrusion of Elsa, a form of Artificial Intelligence who desires to digitize his subconscious in order to feed off of it.

Cast: Bill Skarsgard, Pom Klementieff, Lizzie Brocheré, Amira Casar

***Broken Night***, dir. by Alon Benari and Tal Zubalsky, USA, UK Premiere  
A woman and her husband return home one evening to discover an intruder. As she recounts the events of that evening to a police detective, the viewer chooses which of her memories to follow. Exploring the nature of memory itself, Broken Night takes the viewer on a psychological journey to uncover the truth of what transpired.

Cast: Emily Mortimer, Alessandro Nivola, Michael Nathanson, Josh Green

***The Tragic Story of Betty Corrigall***, dir. by Peter Boyd Maclean, UK, European Premiere  
Abandoned by her whaler lover and left pregnant, Betty Corrigall drowned herself to escape her shame in the 1770s. Gather round the smoky peat fire to hear storyteller Tom Muir recall her tragic fate as Virtual Reality meets the centuries old tradition of oral storytelling.

Cast: Betty Corrigall, Tom Muir, Barbara Scollay, Willy Sinclair, James Watson

***UTURN***, dir. by Nathalie Mathe and Ryan Lynch, USA, European Premiere  
What happens when a young female coder joins a male-dominated floundering startup that’s deep in an identity crisis? UTURN is an immersive live-action VR comedy where viewers get to experience both sides of the gender divide.

Cast: Sophia DiPaola, Steve Goldbloom, Marc Fong Jr., Wynton Odd, Shruti Tewari

### **BEST DOCUMENTARY VR EXPERIENCE**

***First Impressions***, dir. by Francesca Panetta and Nicole Jackson, UK  
Created by the Guardian VR team using the latest research in neural development and colour vision in infants, this 360° film allows you to experience and interact with the world from the point of view of a baby. It’s a period that none of us remember but is the most crucial stage of our development.

Cast: Chetna Pandya, Natascha McElhone

***Iranian Kurdish Female Fighters***, dir. by Namak Khoshnaw, Iraq, UK, World Premiere  
17-year-old Aso Saqzi ran away from home in Iran to join the battle against the Islamic State. She is not alone. Hundreds of Iranian Kurds, many of them young women, have volunteered to defeat IS – and to fight for a Kurdish homeland.

***Songs of Vine***, dir. by Maira Clancy and Blake Montgomery, USA / Peru, European Premiere  
Songs of the Vine’ focuses on the healing modalities and medicine songs of the Shipibo, an indigenous group well-known for its tradition of plant-spirit shamanism and mastery of the visionary ayahuasca medicine. Through the immersion of VR, the film illustrates an ancient but increasingly relevant dynamic between humans and nature.

Cast: Ynes Sanchez Gonzalez, Jose Lopez Sanchez, Lila Lopez Sanchez, Laura Lopez Sanchez, Damian Pacaya Rodriguez

***¡Viva La Evolución!***, dir. by Fifer Garbesi, Cuba, UK Premiere

As American culture streams into Cuba for the first time in 50 years, DJ Joyvan Guevara struggles between the new opportunity for global success and a responsibility to the culture he helped build in the face of commercialization.

Cast: Joyvan Guevara

## **BEST ANIMATION VR EXPERIENCE**

***Arden's Wake***, dir. by Eugene Chung, USA, UK Premiere

A young woman lives with her father in a lighthouse perched atop an Endless Sea. When he goes missing, she must descend deep into the post-apocalyptic waters previously forbidden to her, embarking on a thrilling journey of family history and self-discovery. From the creators of the magnificent *Allumette*, *Arden's Wake* continues the elegant evolution of storytelling from Penrose Studios.

***Dear Angelica***, dir. by Wesley Allsbrook and Saschka Unseld, co-written by Angela Petrella, USA

From Emmy Award winning Oculus Story Studio comes *Dear Angelica*, a journey through the magical and dreamlike ways we remember our loved ones. Entirely painted by hand inside of VR by artist Wesley Allsbrook, *Dear Angelica* plays out in a series of memories that unfold around you. An immersive, illustrative short story starring Geena Davis and Mae Whitman.

Cast: Geena Davis, Mae Whitman

***Rain or Shine***, dir. by Felix Massie, UK

*Rain or Shine* is Nexus' interactive 360° mobile VR short film made for Google Spotlight Stories. Directed by Felix Massie, *Rain or Shine* follows Ella, a charismatic young girl who loves being outside in the sunshine, but whenever she puts her sunglasses on all loveliness disappears – her very own raincloud appears above her head.

***Song of the Sea***, dir. by Jerrica Cleland and Tomm Moore, Ireland, UK, Denmark, International Premiere

The *Song of the Sea* Virtual Reality experience is inspired by our Oscar-nominated hand-drawn animated feature film *Song of the Sea* by Irish animation studio Cartoon Saloon.

Cast: Jon Kenny

## **BEST MUSIC VR EXPERIENCE**

***Beethoven's Fifth***, dir. by Jessica Brillhart, USA

A journey into interstellar space with a performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, First Movement by the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Cast: Esa-Pekka Salonen

***Mind Enterprises: Chapita***, dir. by Eran Amir, UK

*Chapita* is brought to life in this VR experience combining an ambitious 360° storytelling experience with cinemagraphs and clonemotion technology. The result is an immersive narrative in which the dancer leads us into a multi-coloured world of choreographed dance loops, set against a backdrop of stark contrast that lends a sense of infinite space.

Cast: Mimi Jeong

***Peroration Six***, dir. by Fabien Coupez, USA, World Premiere

Get blown away by the force of elements inside this stunning VR experience! Set in the middle of the iconic Utah desert, this mesmerizing live performance will take you on an incredible journey that will unleash the natural and supernatural elements.

Cast: Sam Shepherd, David Okumu, Alex Reeve, Leo Taylor, Phillip Granell, Paloma Deike, Anisa Arslanagic, Magda Pietraszewska

***Reeps One: Does Not Exist***, dir. by John Hendicott and Gawain Liddiard, UK, USA, UK Premiere

*Does Not Exist* drops you into the centre of Reeps One's first virtual reality beatbox performance – exploring the latest technology for VR and head-tracked 3D spatial audio. Working in 360° from the

ground up, the track was composed to fully utilise the 360° sonic and visual space, creating a totally new style of music video.

Cast: Reeps One

## **BEST BRANDED VR EXPERIENCE**

***Manchester City - Match Day***, dir. by Adam May, UK, World Premiere

Get closer to the matchday action at Manchester City's Etihad Stadium in a new 360° fan experience. From the tunnel to the player, changing rooms to the grass being cut, experience a behind the scenes view of Etihad Stadium in full matchday action. A can't-miss for football and sports fans across the world.

***Snatch: Heist Experience***, dir. by Rafael Pavón and Nicolás Alcalá, Spain, USA, UK Premiere

Inspired by a real-life heist in London, Crackle's new series, Snatch, centers on a group of twenty-something, up-and-coming hustlers who are suddenly thrust into the high-stakes world of organized crime.

Cast: Rupert Grint, Phoebe Dynevor, Luke Pasqualino, Lucien Laviscount

***The Chainsmokers: Paris***, dir. by Brynley Gibson and Russell Harding, UK, European Premiere

Go on an epic journey with Grammy-winning DJ Duo and The Chainsmokers as you travel through dreamlike environments. Influence new remixes of the hit song Paris based on the choices you make. Choose a new path each time you enter the experience, let the music engulf you as you lean into it, or simply lean back and enjoy the daydream.

Cast: Drew Taggart, Alex Pall

***Welcome To Laphroaig***, dir. by Darren Emerson, UK, World Premiere

Created by VR City, this 360° film takes you on an epic journey into the heart of the historic Laphroaig whiskey distillery on the beautiful island of Islay.

## **BEST SENSUAL VR EXPERIENCE**

***Come! (Viens!)***, dir. by Michel Reilhac, France

Three women and four men, all naked, appear out of nowhere in the white, sunny space of a bright room outside of time. They meet, touch, share their energy, and are transformed spiritually, letting themselves become one with the world.

Cast: Amador Jojo, Ayoti, Christophe De La Pointe, De La Fouquette, Flozif, Yumie Volupté, Fox

***In My Shoes: Intimacy***, dir. by Jane Gauntlett and Andrew Somerville, UK

In My Shoes: Intimacy is a 360° experience which explores the power of human connection. Put aside your inhibitions, let these strangers guide you through their impromptu, unconventional and intense moments of intimacy. Intimacy is a first-person documentary designed for two people to experience three encounters from six very different perspectives.

Cast: Sarah Cowan, George Collie, Daniel James, Ellie Stamp, Neil Connolly, Stella Taylor

***Second Date***, dir. by Jennifer Lyon Bell, Netherlands, USA, World Premiere

Set on an Amsterdam houseboat, Second Date is a lighthearted, unscripted Virtual Reality portrait of two young people fumbling towards ecstasy. Trying to find common ground, their conversation veers from clumsy to joyous and back again - until they finally start connecting for real.

Cast: Anne De Winter, Bishop Black

***Through You***, dir. by Saschka Unseld and Lily Baldwin, USA

Using dance to inhabit a common mortal story of love born, lived, lost, burned and seemingly gone forever, Through You is a live-action VR richly infused with an atmosphere of raw passion.

Cast: Joanna Kotze, Amari Cheatom, Marni Thomas Wood

## **BEST SOCIAL IMPACT VR EXPERIENCE**

***42 Days***, dir. by Animal Equality, USA, Spain

Imagine you've just been born, but you have no mother to keep you warm. You are afraid. Just one chick among billions. And your life will only last until you're big enough to slaughter. This is the stark reality for billions of young chickens around the world.

Cast: Amanda Abbington

***Aftershock: Nepal's Untold Water Story***, dir. by Catherine Feltham, UK

Two earthquakes. One lifeline. One man's remarkable journey. This VR film follows Krishna, the only plumber in his district, as he works tirelessly to help repair his community's vital water system which was damaged during the 2015 Nepal earthquakes.

Cast: Krishna Sunuwar

***Munduruku: The Fight to Defend the Heart of the Amazon***, dir. by James Manisty and Grace Boyle, UK, Brazil

Combining cutting-edge Virtual Reality filmmaking and multisensory storytelling, Munduruku opens a window into the lives, stories and struggle of the Munduruku Indigenous People in the heart of the Amazon rainforest.

***You Are There. On the road to ending Polio***, dir. by Peter Collis and Vanessa Moussa, UK, USA, France, Switzerland

You Are There takes us to a Kenyan village to meet a nine-year-old boy, Job, infected with polio and Sabina, a dedicated vaccinator, on her travels to do whatever it takes to spare other children his fate.

Cast: Ewan McGregor

## **BEST SOUND DESIGN VR EXPERIENCE**

***Life Of Us***, dir. by Chris Milk and Aaron Koblin, USA

Breathe fire, swim underwater, survive the Ice Age, and soar over volcanoes as you evolve through different creatures and a billion years of evolution in this action packed, multi-person VR adventure! Experience new voices, bodies, and special abilities before joining a post-singularity intergalactic dance party set to original music by Pharrell Williams. Created by Chris Milk and Aaron Koblin, with music by Pharrell Williams. A Within Original, produced by Chris Milk, Megan Ellison through her Annapurna Pictures, and Made with Unity.

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Cast: Reeps One

***The Resistance of Honey***, dir. by Peter Boyd Maclean, UK, UK Premiere

Step inside the world of Bioni Samp, an urban beekeeper who makes honey—and music—from his bees. A fascinating, mind-expanding glimpse into the extraordinary world inside the beehive.

Cast: Bioni Samp

***The Tragic Story of Betty Corrigall***, dir. by Peter Boyd Maclean, UK, European Premiere

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Cast: Betty Corrigall, Tom Muir, Barbara Scollay, Willy Sinclair, James Watson

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Passes for the Raindance VR Experiences Summit presented by Facebook 360 in partnership with Blend Media can be purchased at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/raindance-vr-experiences-summit-presented-by-facebook-360-tickets-37392996459>

Raindance VR Arcade tickets can be purchased through the Festival website:  
<http://calendar.raindancefestival.org/programmes/vr-arcade>

Festival passes can be purchased through the Festival website:  
<http://raindancefestival.org/register-now/>

Press can apply for accreditation through the Festival website:  
<http://raindancefestival.org/press-accreditations-2016/>  
Industry can apply for accreditation through the Festival website:  
<http://raindancefestival.org/accreditations/>

For inquiries about VR at Raindance, please contact:

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## **ABOUT RAINDANCE FILM FESTIVAL**

### **Discover. Be Discovered.**

Listed by Variety as one of the world's top 50 'unmissable film festivals', Raindance showcases features, shorts, music videos, virtual reality experiences, 360 films and web series by filmmakers from the UK and around the world celebrating and supporting independent, new and alternative filmmakers not just during our 12 day festival but throughout the year.

The 25th Raindance Film Festival will take place from the 20th September – 1st October 2017 in Central London (Piccadilly Circus). Raindance Film Festival is officially recognised by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences USA, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts and the British Independent Film Awards. Selected shorts will qualify for Oscar® and BAFTA nominations. British short films that play in competition and all British features that play in 2017 will be eligible for entry for the 2017 British Independent Film Awards BIFA.

## **ABOUT RAINDANCE – THE VOICE OF INDEPENDENT FILM**

Raindance is dedicated to fostering and promoting independent film in the UK and around the world. Based in the heart of London, Raindance combines Raindance Film Festival, Training Courses, which are offered throughout the year through its 11 international hubs and the prestigious British Independent Film Awards.