



HIGHLY ANTICIPATED 2018 RAINDANCE IMMERSIVE STORIES (VR) AWARDS ANNOUNCED

THREE NEW AWARDS INTRODUCED

TRANSFERENCE CO-DIRECTED BY ELIJAH WOOD WINS BEST INTERACTIVE NARRATIVE EXPERIENCE

PROJECTS STARRING CHRIS O'DOWD, JOHN LEGEND, OPRAH WINFREY AND ALICIA VIKANDER ALL WIN PRIZES

Stills: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/jedcy0rkuebcsm4/AADtQDVYt0JGu8q2ZGjrNOOba?dl=0>

LONDON, Monday 7 October - On Saturday evening at Vue Piccadilly, Raindance Film Festival, Europe's leading independent film festival, announced the winners of **Raindance Immersive Stories (VR) Awards**, following a hugely successful, sold-out exhibition at the Raindance Gallery of Immersive Stories at OXO2.

Raindance VR Jury members included immersive storytelling visionaries such as *Vicki Dobbs Beck*, executive in charge of ILMxLAB; *Curtis Hickman*, co-founder and Chief Creative Officer at THE VOID; *Wesley Allsbrook*, the artist behind *Dear Angelica*, one of last year's winner of Best Animation Experience award; *Jérôme Blanquet*, director of *Alteration*, last year's winner of Best Cinematic Experience award; *Grace Boyle*, founder and director of The Feelies, one of last year's winners of Best Social Impact Experience award, and many more.

Psychological thriller game ***Transference***, directed by SpectreVision (Elijah Wood, Josh C. Waller, Daniel Noah, Kyle McCullough and Lisa Whalen) and Ubisoft (Patrick Plourde, Sylvain Bernard and Christian Bedard), wins **Best Interactive Narrative Experience** while ***Crow: The Legend***, receives the award for **Best Animation Experience**. Directed by Eric Darnell, and inspired by the Native American legend, it's an immersive journey exploring themes of self-discovery, diversity and selflessness wherein the viewer plays a key role in the story of Crow, voiced by John Legend. Other notable cast members include Oprah Winfrey, Constance Wu, Liza Koshy, Tye Sheridan, Sarah Eagle Heart, Randy Edmonds and Diego Luna.

The Winner of **Best Cinematic Experience** is ***Dinner Party***, directed by Angel Manuel Soto, about Betty and Barney Hill, an interracial couple who made the first report of a UFO abduction in America in 1961. **Best Documentary Experience** is ***Grenfell, Our Home***, directed by Jonathan Rudd, a bold and

innovative VR documentary, which combines survivor's testimonies filmed in stereoscopic 360° video with computer-generated animation. **Best Social Impact Experience** is **The Evolution of Testicles**, directed by Ryan Hartsell for Male Cancer Awareness Campaign, a salty sweet VR piece starring Chris O'Dowd raises awareness about testicular cancer through laughter.

Chris O'Dowd says, *"It feels terrific to win a Raindance Immersive Stories (VR) Award. It's exciting to be part of a new generation of filmmakers and a new medium. The potential that this medium has to have social impact is so important - we've won for a film about men checking their balls!"*

Best Music Experience is **Chorus**, directed by Tyler Hurd, transforms the viewer and five friends into fantastical female warriors and sends you on an epic journey to a faraway Tron-like fantasy worlds, while fighting to the visceral sounds of electronic music duo, Justice. **Best Multi-Person Experience** is **The Apple**, directed by Bin Gu, Kaoru Naito, Liquan Liu, walks the viewer through different stages of life whilst exploring the world of 'The Philosopher'. **British Award: Best UK Experience** is given to **Nothing To Be Written**, directed by Lysander Ashton, an artwork inspired by musician Anna Meredith's FIVE TELEGRAMS and drawing inspiration from postcards sent during the First World War.

The winner of **Grand Jury Prize: Best Immersive Story** is **Arden's Wake, Tide's Fall**, directed by Eugene YK Chung, featuring the voice of Academy Award-winner Alicia Vikander, this expansion of Penrose Studios's award-winning ARDEN'S WAKE embraces the art of long-form storytelling in Virtual Reality. **Discovery Award: Best Debut Experience** is given to **Madrid Noir - Prologue**, directed by James A. Castillo, where a detective named Manolo Monreal encounters a stray puppy named Paquita on the street.

"We are thrilled to recognise pioneering Virtual Reality experiences across a number of emerging genres in the medium. Reflecting the latest trends in the industry, this year we introduced three new awards, such as Best Multi-Person Experience, shining the spotlight on social VR experiences, giving audiences a taste of what the future of immersive storytelling will soon feel like; British Award: Best UK Experience and Discovery Award: Best Debut Experience, recognising first-time VR creators," said Mária Rakušanová, Curator of Raindance Immersive Stories and Interactive Worlds.

The winner of the **Spirit of Raindance: VR Film Of The Festival Award** is **7 Miracles**, the very first feature-length film in VR, a stunningly immersive adaptation of the seven miracles of Jesus Christ from the Gospel of John. **7 Miracles** was produced by Vive Studios, and created by acclaimed team of producers and directors, Joel Breton (Pirates of the Caribbean, Unreal, Anno 1602, Terraria), Enzo Sisti (Aquaman, Wonder Woman, Passion Of Christ, Avengers: Age of Ultron), Rodrigo Cerqueira (Jesus VR: The Story of Christ) and Marco Spagnoli (Hollywood Invasion, Hollywood on Tiber, Walt Disney, and Italy – A Love Story).

Raindance Film Festival continues to champion creators who are pushing the artistic development of the new mediums of Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Reality. This year's sold-out immersive strand, **Raindance Immersive Stories and Interactive Worlds**, was held between Thursday 4th - Sunday 7th October, allowed audience members to experience the latest advances in immersive storytelling by showcasing a selection of 33 experiences created by VR Awards nominees, split into dedicated areas for VR installations, and curated playlists presenting 360° films.

FULL LIST OF WINNERS

Best Interactive Narrative Experience

Special Jury Mention: Awake, Episode One

AWAKE: EPISODE ONE, directed by Martin Taylor, Australia, UK Premiere

Harry is a prisoner in his own house and lost in his mind, obsessed with discovering the truth behind a recurring dream of his departed wife. And now there is a new presence in his world: you. Your arrival signals a life-changing event capable of saving Harry from his darkness.

Cast: Jake McDorman, Analeigh Tipton, Nicholas Hope, Alan Watts

Best Interactive Narrative Experience

Winner: Transference

TRANSFERENCE, directed by SpectreVision (Elijah Wood, Josh C. Waller, Daniel Noah, Kyle McCullough, Lisa Whalen) and Ubisoft (Patrick Plourde, Sylvain Bernard, Christian Bedard), Canada, USA, UK Premiere

A psychological thriller placing you face-to-face with a fractured family, as you freely explore their minds. Navigate a dreamlike home filled with secrets. Collect the evidence of a family's history to choose how you repair their lives. Learn the rules of a place bent on breaking them. Unlock the truth.

Cast: Lindsay Burdge, Macon Blair, Tyler Crumley

Best Animation Experience

Winner: Crow, The Legend

CROW: THE LEGEND, directed by Eric Darnell, USA, UK Premiere

Inspired by the Native American legend, a fully immersive journey exploring themes of self-discovery, diversity and selflessness wherein the viewer plays a key role in the story of Crow, voiced by John Legend, who must give up everything he values to save his friends – or so he thinks.

Cast: John Legend, Oprah Winfrey, Constance Wu, Liza Koshy, Tye Sheridan, Sarah Eagle Heart, Randy Edmonds, Diego Luna

Best Cinematic Experience

Winner: Dinner Party

DINNER PARTY, directed by Angel Manuel Soto, USA, UK Premiere

Betty and Barney Hill are an interracial couple who made the first report of a UFO abduction in America in 1961. After undergoing recorded hypnosis to recover memories of their experience, the Hills listen to the recording during a dinner party, and what they hear could change their lives forever.

Cast: Malcolm Barrett, Sarah Sokolovic

Best Documentary Experience

Special Jury Mention: Inside Tumucumaque

INSIDE TUMUCUMAQUE, directed by Ina Krüger and Patrik de Jong, Germany, International Premiere

Discover the unique ecosystem of the Tumucumaque nature reserve in Brazil from the perspective of its

animals. Fly like a harpy eagle, swim with the black caiman and discover this magical world through the perception of animals as a sensual experience.

Best Documentary Experience

Winner: Grenfell, Our Home

GRENFELL: OUR HOME, directed by Jonathan Rudd, UK

GRENFELL: OUR HOME is a bold and innovative VR documentary, which combines survivor's testimonies filmed in stereoscopic 360° video with computer-generated animation. The film offers a powerful and original perspective on the Grenfell Tower fire and the community that existed before the fire.

Cast: Gomes family, Alves family, Corinne Jones, Jason Miller, Lilian Alwa

Best Social Impact Experience

Winner: The Evolution of Testicles

THE EVOLUTION OF TESTICLES, directed by Ryan Hartsell for Male Cancer Awareness Campaign, UK, Ireland, USA, International Premiere

Two parts humour, one part emotion, this salty sweet VR piece starring Chris O'Dowd raises awareness about testicular cancer through laughter. This project is part of the Oculus VR for Good Creators Lab, where filmmakers are paired with nonprofits to make great VR in the name of social good.

Cast: Chris O'Dowd, Andy Neill, Ali Shaw, Jay Holmes

Best Music Experience

Winner: Chorus

CHORUS, directed by Tyler Hurd, music by Justice, UK Premiere

CHORUS transforms you and five friends into fantastical female warriors and sends you on an epic journey to a faraway Tron-like fantasy world. There, you will battle weird and treacherous monsters to save your species from extinction, while fighting to the visceral sounds of electronic music duo, Justice.

Best Multi-Person Experience

Winner: The Apple

THE APPLE, directed by Bin Gu, Kaoru Naito, Liquan Liu, China, Japan, Korea, World Premiere

THE APPLE walks the viewer through different stages of life whilst exploring the world of 'The Philosopher'. Each life stage is represented by distinctive styles of movement that are a metaphor for the human journey from beginning to end. Spatial compression algorithms were used to create this unique multi-person experience.

British Award: Best UK Experience

Special Jury Mention: Opinions

OPINIONS, directed by Alyssia Frankland and Kenneth Henderson, UK, World Premiere

Modern society is obsessed with social media. Online platforms provide us with a constant unwanted stream of other people's opinions. What happens when it all gets too much? Cabaret superstars Bourgeois & Maurice offer us a solution in this satirical VR music video.

Cast: Liv Morris, George Heyworth

British Award: Best UK Experience

Winner: Nothing To Be Written

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN, directed by Lysander Ashton, music by Anna Meredith, UK, World Premiere

During the First World War millions of multiple choice postcards were sent from the front. Nothing was to be written on them, as communication was only allowed through prescribed phrases. NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN is an artwork inspired by musician Anna Meredith's FIVE TELEGRAMS and drawing inspiration from these postcards.

Discovery Award: Best Debut Experience

Winner: Madrid Noir

MADRID NOIR – PROLOGUE, directed by James A. Castillo, UK, World Premiere

It's a warm spring night in Madrid, 1929. A detective named Manolo Monreal, grouchy after a long day on the job, encounters a stray puppy on the streets. Will Manolo be enchanted by her cuteness and keep her safe from the dangers of the night?

Grand Jury Prize: Best Immersive Story

Winner: Arden's Wake, Tide's Fall

ARDEN'S WAKE: TIDE'S FALL, directed by Eugene YK Chung, USA, UK Premiere

TIDE'S FALL continues the journey of Meena, a young woman living in a post-apocalyptic world and searching for her father in the depths of the ocean after his unexpected disappearance. Featuring the voice of Academy Award-winner Alicia Vikander, this expansion of Penrose Studios's award-winning ARDEN'S WAKE embraces the art of long-form storytelling in Virtual Reality.

Cast: Alicia Vikander, Richard Armitage

Spirit of Raindance: VR Film Of The Festival

7 Miracles

7 MIRACLES, directed by Rodrigo Cerqueira and Marco Spagnoli, USA, Italy, World Premiere

The world's first feature-length immersive experience, 7 MIRACLES is a deeply personal story of Jesus and his seven miracles, based on the book of John.

Cast: Dejan Bucin, Ben Starr, Sara Lazzaro, Lorenzo Balducci, Cosimo Fusco

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~ENDS~

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.

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.

