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THE PORTAL

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In partnership with

LMU
Loyola Marymount University
ANOTHER DREAM

DIRECTOR Tamara Shogaolu
KEY COLLABORATORS Lauren Dubowski, Natalya Sarch, Nada El-Kouny, Anastasia Semenoff (alpha_rats), Martijn Zandvliet, Gata Mahardika, Ytje Veenstra, Audioimmersive.com
PRODUCERS Tamara Shogaolu, Lauren Dubowski, Natalya Sarch

Another Dream, a hybrid animated documentary and VR game, brings the gripping, true love story of an Egyptian lesbian couple to life. Faced with a post-revolution backlash against the LGBTQ community, they escape Cairo to seek asylum and acceptance in the Netherlands. An accompanying installation allows audiences to reflect on what they have seen, heard, and felt in VR.

Another Dream is the second installment of Queer In A Time Of Forced Migration, an animated transmedia series that follows the stories of LGBTQ refugees from Egypt, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia, and from the 2011 revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa region.

BONFIRE

DIRECTOR Eric Darnell
PROJECT CREATORS Eric Darnell, Baobab Studios
KEY COLLABORATORS Maureen Fan, Larry Cutler, Kane Lee, Shannon Ryan, Ali Wong
PRODUCERS Shannon Ryan, Jeremiah Graves
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS Larry Cutler, Maureen Fan, Kane Lee

In Bonfire, the latest interactive VR experience from the award-winning Baobab Studios, you play the leading role. As Space Scout 817, you are on a mission to discover a new home for the human race after it has made a mess of Earth. The stakes are high. Too bad your piloting skills lack...precision. In fact, you crash-land at night in a mysterious clearing of an unknown planet 300 light years from Earth. Your only source of light is your makeshift bonfire. Beyond its glow everything falls to darkness. And what are those strange noises coming from the alien jungle?

COMMON GROUND

PROJECT CREATOR Darren Emerson
KEY COLLABORATORS Jean Bartlett, John Boughton, Kevin Holland, Aysen Dennis, Judi Bos, Anthony Badu
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS Ashley Cowan, Darren Emerson

Common Ground is a multi-layered immersive journey into the history, politics and human face of the current crisis in the UK housing system. Through the monolithic concrete blocks of the notorious Aylesbury Estate, the biggest social housing estate in Europe, audiences will enter the world of the estate from its birth in the 1960’s to its controversial redevelopment today. Stereoscopic 360 video, photogrammetry, 3D modelling, archive and interactivity allow this multifaceted VR documentary to question notions of community, examine the disenfranchisement and demonization of the working class, and capture the sense of betrayal that residents feel when they are forced to move on.
**FUTURE DREAMING**

**DIRECTOR** Sutu (Stuart Campbell)

**KEY COLLABORATOR** Visitor Vision

**PRODUCER** Ali Lucker

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER** Sutu (Stuart Campbell)

In this immersive virtual reality film, you will step into a time-warping dream bubble as four young Aboriginal Australians guide you through their futures. Their stories evolve from the present day to 20 years into the future where Nelson’s driving space trains, Maverick’s hanging out with robots, Ali’s a world-famous performer and Maxie’s the Governor of an off-world colony powered by emus on treadmills. Be ready for an intergalactic adventure. Look out for the space emus!

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**GLOOMY EYES**

**DIRECTORS** Jorge Tereso, Fernando Maldonado

**KEY COLLABORATORS** Antoine Cayrol, German Heller, Santiago Amigorena

It’s 1983 on a cold night in Woodland City. Being a zombie is against the law. The undead have been around for almost a decade now, but peaceful coexistence with the “normal” people continues to fail. They hide in the forest, away from the dangerous zombie hunters. Nights are calm and quiet, but Gloomy still tries to stay out of sight. Hunters are a real threat, but this zombie is hiding from something else as well...Truth is, he doesn’t feel too comfortable around others of his kind. But really, Gloomy not completely like other zombies. He has access to things we don’t see or understand. Nature knows he’s special.

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**HOME AFTER WAR**

**DIRECTOR** Gayatri Parameswaran

**CREATIVE PRODUCER** Felix Gaedtke

**PRODUCERS** Sandra Bialystok, Lauren Burmaster, Paula Cuneo

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER** Amy Seidenwurm

*Home After War* is a room-scale, interactive virtual reality experience that takes you to Fallujah, a city that was, until recently, under Islamic State (IS) control. The war against IS has ended but the city is still unsafe. There’s one looming fear for returning refugees — booby-trapped homes and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in the neighborhoods. Since the end of the war, thousands of civilians have died or been injured by IEDs. Ahmaied Hamad Khalaf and his family returned home after the fighting subsided. In the experience, you find yourself in Ahmaied’s home, which still shows signs of the damage from the war. Explore Ahmaied’s home by either walking physically or teleporting in the space as he tells you his story about returning to a home that might be booby trapped.
THE KEY

DIRECTOR  Celine Tricart
KEY COLLABORATORS  Oculus VR for Good Creators Lab
PRODUCERS  Gloria Bradbury, Celine Tricart
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  Amy Seidenwurm

The Key is an interactive experience mixing immersive theater and virtual reality. It has a strong narrative structure punctuated by moments of interactivity. The participant goes on a journey exploring dreams, and must face challenges and difficult decisions, while experiencing a metaphorical journey from danger to safety. Through this journey a hidden truth is uncovered, and a new beauty revealed.

RUNNiN’

DIRECTOR  Kiira Benzing
PROJECT CREATORS  Reggie Watts, Kiira Benzing
KEY COLLABORATORS  John Tejada, Amy O’Neal, Ani Taj, Adam Rogers
PRODUCERS  Adam Rogers, Ana Miren Achaval
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS  Reggie Watts, Kiira Benzing, Sarah Vick, Dave Smiddy, Diego Prilusky, Adam Rogers

Runnin’ pushes the boundaries of what is possible to bring you on a journey of musical expression. Creative duo Reggie Watts and Kiira Benzing leverage state-of-the-art technology, inviting the user to engage, interact, and play! Get in the mood, drumming to your own beat in our record store before being transported to a retro-future dance party. Show off your moves alongside a troupe of dancers, Reggie and his musical collaborator, DJ John Tejada. The first VR experience to showcase Intel Studios’ volumetric video, don’t miss the chance to join the dance. Runnin’ takes “music video” to the next dimension.

UNCEDED TERRITORiES

DIRECTORS  Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, Paisley Smith
PROJECT CREATOR  Paisley Smith
KEY COLLABORATORS  Paisley Smith, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, Patrick Weekes, ZeMind Studios
PRODUCERS  Jason Legge, Ketsia Vedrine, Peter Denny

Unceded Territories is an interactive VR experience where the audience experiences the colorful natural world made up of acclaimed First Nations artist Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun’s iconic pop-surrealist art style. Through infectious interaction, the participant creates a beautiful, natural paradise, experiences freedom and joy and the satisfaction of control over the land. A Tribe Called Red provides the powerful music for the piece and as the pulse of this world beats faster, the participant is increasingly faced with their lack of control as the wheel of environmental destruction has been set in motion.
WOLVES IN THE WALLS: IT’S ALL OVER

DIRECTOR Pete Billington
KEY COLLABORATOR Fable
PRODUCERS Jessica Yaffa Shamash, Chris Hanson
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Edward Saatchi

Eight-year-old Lucy suspects that wolves live in the walls of her family’s home. She has no one to believe her...but you. Forging a groundbreaking blend of film, theatre, audience agency, and sleight of hand, this exquisitely crafted animated experience casts you as an active performer in a narrative where you interact, have a relationship with, and go on a quest with the central character in ways that leave your mark on the experience.

360 DOCUMENTARY CINEMA

ACCUSED NO. 2: WALTER SISULU

DIRECTORS Gilles Porte, Nicolas Champeaux
KEY CREATOR Oerd (drawings)

The story of the struggle against Apartheid is symbolized by one man: Nelson Mandela. He came to public notice during a historic trial in 1964. Seven co-accused were sentenced with him to hard labor for life. Among them, Walter Sisulu, the grey eminence of the movement, was the first co-defendant to take on the formidable prosecutor Percy Yutar. Today, with 256 hours of audio recordings of the hearings, we can relive that battle and, through those remarkable resources, rediscover the story of the ANC’s fight against Apartheid.

ASHE ‘68

PROJECT CREATOR Brad Lichtenstein
KEY COLLABORATORS Beth Hubbard, Rex Miller, Jeff Fitzsimmons
PRODUCER Madeline Power
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Renee Frigo

Before Colin Kaepernick, there was Arthur Ashe. In 1968, one of America’s most tumultuous years, Ashe emerged as an elite athlete who parlayed his fame as the first black man to win the US Open tennis championship into a lifetime devoted to fighting injustice. The Ashe ’68 virtual reality experience brings viewers into the intimate moments right before Arthur Ashe’s historic 1968 US Open win, an event that changed his life and the course of sports history forever. This unique VR experience weaves together 360° video re-creations, archival material, and evocative, never-before-seen 360° sand animation to tell the story.
CHILDREN DO NOT PLAY AT WAR

PROJECT CREATOR Fabiano Mixo
KEY COLLABORATORS Leonardo Petersen Lamha, Carlos Alves, Etienne Chambolle, Leonardo Souza
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Amy Seidenwurm

Aloyo, a twelve-year-old girl living in Lira, Uganda, sits among other children around the fire to tell their story during war, what they saw, where they went. Mixing early oral storytelling tradition and contemporary virtual reality narrative, blending fiction and non-fiction elements, *Children Do Not Play at War* narrates the memories, dreams and daily lives of the children who returned from the war and about how they recovered their childhood.

GIRL ICON

PROJECT CREATOR Sadah Espii Proctor
KEY COLLABORATORS Espii Studios, Skye Von / little GIANT Wolf, Oculus VR for Good, Malala Fund, Milaan Foundation

Around the world, 130 million girls are out of school. Meet Rani, a Girl Icon, who is part of a growing movement of fearless girls leading change in their communities. “I want girls to look at me and think they can achieve anything they want,” says 17-year-old Rani, from Varanasi, India. Rani’s community and the Hindu caste system limits her family to washing clothes and linen for a living. But Rani is determined to finish school and train to become an army officer. In *Girl Icon*, Rani gives us an intimate glimpse of her life, hopes, challenges and dreams — and how she’s helping other girls in her community.

MERCY

DIRECTOR Armando Kirwin
KEY COLLABORATORS Armando Kirwin, Ruben Plomp, Oculus for Good

Our story begins with Edith, a 14-year-old who lives in the village of Centre Lobo with her parents and eight siblings. At the age of seven, Edith started to feel a pain in the side of her face. The pain eventually grew into a tumor on her lower right jaw the size of a lemon. Edith is mocked and teased at school, and even accused of being the victim of witchcraft. Despite the hardships she faces, Edith is notably happy and playful. We follow Edith as she travels by foot through the jungle for days in order to have a life-transforming surgery.
TRAVELING WHILE BLACK

DIRECTOR  Roger Ross Williams
KEY COLLABORATORS  Félix Lajeunesse, Paul Raphaël
PRODUCERS  Ayesha Nadarajah, Jihan Robinson, Lina Srivastava
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS  Joe Lovett, Bonnie Nelson Schwartz

Academy Award winner Roger Ross Williams’ finely observed and crafted visit to Ben’s Chili Bowl, a famed DC restaurant, transforms a central community locale into a symbolic safe space. African American visitors, some of whom lived through segregation, sit and share a moment of honest discussion, reflecting on their experiences of restricted movement and race relations in the U.S. These stories strengthen bonds among communities by bringing hidden histories into our modern collective consciousness. Confronting the way that we understand and talk about race in America, this virtual reality documentary immerses the viewer in the long history of restriction of movement for black Americans and the creation of safe spaces in our communities.

AUGMENTED REALITY (AR) SPOTLIGHT

7 AGES OF MAN

PROJECT CREATORS  Robert Gilbert, Jessica Curry
KEY COLLABORATORS  Royal Shakespeare Company, Magic Leap
PRODUCERS  Pete Griffin, Rebecca Paris
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS  Sarah Ellis, Ant Williams

The Royal Shakespeare Company explores the future of theatre with Magic Leap headsets in this sublime production of the “Seven Ages of Man” speech from Shakespeare’s “As You Like It.” Here they present a mixed reality experience using cutting-edge volumetric capture with Shakespearean actor Robert Gilbert and an original musical score by award-winning composer Jessica Curry. The line “all the world’s a stage” turns literal as users experience the play in multiple and simultaneous places.
**GEO-LOCATED AUGMENTED REALITY (AR) EXPERIENCES**

**MARGIN OF ERROR**

**DIRECTOR** Nancy Baker Cahill

The *Margin of Error* AR drawing/experience originally floated above the water at the site of the Salton Sea Recreation Area, a site marked by terminal, toxic environmental damage. Imagined as a “hyperobject,” a phenomenon whose scope and impact we can scarcely comprehend, the Salton Sea’s rate of evaporation must be constantly mediated to avoid tipping into a full-scale, airborne environmental catastrophe. With no stabilization outlets, the Salton Sea has already destroyed much of what was once a natural habitat for multiple species of birds and fish. The drawing refers to this razor-thin line which, if crossed, will have even more devastating biological, chemical, and geological impacts beyond our imagination.

**METHOD NO. 13**

**DIRECTOR** Nancy Baker Cahill

**KEY COLLABORATOR** Lisle Leete

The title of this piece is a nod to the first line of George Orwell’s “1984,” in which the clocks were “striking thirteen” and refers to contemporary methods of surveillance. Viewers, using the devices that require GPS tracking to activate the artwork, can experience the piece by looking “through” their screens at the artwork in the air above, and listening to the accompanying sound.

**REVOLUTIONS**

**DIRECTOR** Nancy Baker Cahill

The *Revolutions* AR drawing/experience was originally located at the Palm Springs wind farm as a monolithic, AI “garden,” which was “planted” to help harness energy from the natural wind corridor of the Valley. While clean energy is far preferable to fossil fuels, the wind farm underscores the inescapable human effects on the land. Inspired by richly chromatic, natural desert blooms, a series of animated “blossoms” rise above the turbines. Over the course of roughly two minutes, they expand and shatter as if they had just been plucked, thrown up into the air, and buffeted against the sky.

*Revolutions* asks viewers to imagine the fate of desert life and lives when (often sacred) land is razed in the interest of development. Some particulate fragments of the exploding blooms gesture South East toward the Salton Sea, as if to call or respond to its AR partner hovering above the polluted water.
THE UNDER PRESENTS -
THE INTERSECTION OF GAMING, THEATRE AND VR

Saturday, September 21 — 2:00 pm

**Moderator:** Jacqueline Lyanga, Artistic Director, Film Independent

**PANELISTS**

Samantha Gorman (Co-founder, Tender Claws) and Tanya Leal Soto (Producer, Tender Claws)

Samantha Gorman is the Co-founder and Director of Tender Claws, an award-winning independent creative studio operating at the intersection of art, games, and technology. Its notable projects include the hybrid novel “PRY,” named by Apple as one of the Best Apps of 2015; narrative VR game “Virtual Virtual Reality,” named the Best VR Experience at the Google Play Awards in 2017; mobile AR game “Tendar,” winner of the Innovation in Interaction Design Award at IndieCade 2018; and the highly anticipated VR, Immersive Theater adventure “The Under Presents,” launching later this year.

Samantha began working in VR/AR in 2002 and is currently a PhD fellow in Media Arts & Practice at USC’s School of Cinematic Arts. She specializes in writing for interactive media across genres including expanded cinema, games and virtual reality. With her work at Tender Claws she brings a unique approach to VR/AR content creation, making players question the nature of technology and our place in a tech-driven society, for experiences that truly compelling and provocative.

Tanya Leal Soto is a Mexican American director, producer and content creator. She is currently the Producer for Art & Tech Studio Tender Claws, working on a project for Oculus Quest to be released Fall 2019 where theater meets VR to bring live actors into your living room. Tender Claws is known for its long form interactive and narrative content and it is the studio responsible for the award winning game “Virtual, virtual reality” and mobile AR game “Tendar.”

Using her filmmaking background, she dove into 360 storytelling through directing and producing 360 video content. In 2018, Etiéne, a sci-fi 360 short she directed was part of NEXT the innovation hub at the Marché du Film de Cannes.

In 2017 she co-wrote a 10 episode series for Mexico’s Televisa Foundation called Technolochicas, with the goal of raising awareness among young Latinas and their families about opportunities and careers in technology.

Tanya is a part of Free The Bid a non-profit initiative advocating on behalf of women directors for equal opportunities to bid on commercial jobs in the global advertising industry. She is also a professional puppeteer.
RUNNiN’: A ViRtuAL REALiTy MUSiC ViDEO

Saturday, September 21 — 4:00 pm

PANELISTS
Reggie Watts (Musician, Executive Producer), Adam Rogers (Producer) and Tim Lobes (Head Developer)

Reggie Watts is an internationally renowned Musician/Comedian/Writer/Actor who currently stars as the bandleader on CBS’s The Late Late Show with James Corden. Using his formidable voice, looping pedals, and his vast imagination, Watts blends and blurs the lines between music and comedy, wowing audiences with performances that are 100% improvised.

Watts’ first Netflix special Spatial released to massive critical acclaim, with the New York Times calling it “a giddy rush of escapist nonsense” and dubbing Watts “the most influential absurdist in comedy today.” The A.V. Club described Spatial as “signature Watts, meaning it’s alternately exhilarating, silly, exhausting and transcendent,” and Exclaim! Magazine called his performance “engaging, absurd, thoughtful and, most importantly, wholly unpredictable.”

Watts was born in Germany, raised in Montana, and currently resides in Los Angeles.

Adam Rogers is an experienced hands-on Creative Producer at the top of his game having produced and project managed the full-body, multiplayer virtual reality experience Chorus which was designed by Tyler Hurd, produced by Chris Milk, as a WITHIN Original in association with Annapurna Pictures.

Adam has also produced Chocolate for Tyler Hurd’s VR studio Gentle Manhands, and Beach Body Bros in association with Oculus. Most recently he has Produced and EP’ed Runnin’ with Intel Studios and Reggie Watts. Runnin’ premiered at Sundance’s New Frontiers, and recently took home SXSW’s Best Interactive Award.

Adam is now a Creative Producer for Intel Studios, focusing on bringing innovative immersive experiences utilizing the world’s most advanced Volumetric capture system.

Tim Lobes is an independent designer and developer that works with talented individuals and teams around the world to build high-end experiences and prototype new ideas. Based in Los Angeles, spreading time across Tokyo and Berlin, he loves meeting founders tackling unique problems as well as creators with an interesting story to tell.

His career began in game development and visual effects, eventually making the west coast journey to work at Lucasfilm Animation on “Star Wars: The Clone Wars” series, swung down to Silicon Valley to work at YouTube and Google, finally making the switch to freelance where he built projects for Hololens, Magic Leap, iOS AR, and VR while working with teams to make ideas become reality.

You can find his work at: timlobes.com
DREAMS OF THE FUTURE, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Sunday, September 22 — 2:00 pm

PANELISTS
Tamara Shogaolu (Another Dream), Paisley Smith (Unceded Territories) and Sutu (Future Dreaming)

Tamara Shogaolu is the founder and creative director of Ado Ato Pictures and is a member of the XRBASE virtual and augmented reality incubator. She is an international director and new media artist with a track record in featuring her work at film festivals, galleries, and museums worldwide, such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the National Gallery of Indonesia. Her innovative approach to storytelling has led to sources like The Guardian and Vogue Magazine naming her a leader in the field of new and immersive media. She is a 2018 Sundance Institute New Frontier Lab Programs Fellow and a 2019 Gouden Kalf Nominee. Shogaolu is an artist interested in pushing herself and others around her outside the boundaries of traditional storytelling. She strives to share stories across mediums, platforms, and virtual and physical spaces in order to promote cross-cultural understanding and challenge preconceptions. She was a Burton Lewis Endowed Scholar for Directing at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts, where she graduated with an MFA. Shogaolu was also a Fulbright Scholar in Egypt, a Luce Scholar in Indonesia, and an Academy Nicholls Fellowship Semifinalist.

Paisley Smith is a Canadian filmmaker and virtual reality creator based in Los Angeles, California and Vancouver, British Columbia. She uses interactive technology to tell important stories that need to be felt and experienced.

Smith is the director of Unceded Territories, a VR collaboration with First Nations artist Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, that explores the connection between climate change and colonization by pitting a destructive “Super Predator” versus the environment. Unceded Territories had its World Premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival Immersive 2019.

Smith also directed Homestay, a VR documentary that deals with cultural understanding and loss. Homestay is nominated for “Best XR for Change” at Games for Change festival 2019.

Stuart ‘Sutu’ Campbell uses art and technology in new ways to tell stories. He has been commissioned by the likes of Marvel, Google and Disney to create Virtual Reality (VR) art for properties such as Doctor Strange, Ready Player One and Metropolis. He has also created four VR documentaries: Inside Manus for SBS, Mind at War for Ryot Films, The Battle of Hamel for the Australian War Memorial, and Future Dreaming for NITV. He is also known for his interactive comics including the Eisner-nominated “These Memories Won’t Last”, “Nawlz”, “Neomad”, and “Modern Polaxis.” He holds an Honorary Doctorate of Digital Media from Central Queensland University, is a 2017 Sundance Fellow and is the co-founder of Eye.Jack an Augmented Reality company. Stuart’s role as a Digital Media Coordinator and arts mentor in often isolated community settings sees him developing ground breaking digital interactive content in collaboration with local people. His community development work has been captured in the 2014 ABC documentary Cyber Dreaming and is featured with his NOMAD team in the award-winning documentary How Do We Get to Space?
Loyola Marymount’s School of Film and Television’s Immersive Advisory Council is teaming up with Film Independent to host a panel discussion on Immersive and Interactive Media in Education. The conversation will touch on how LMU is approaching immersive and interactive technology to enhance the educational experience while also preparing students to work in a constantly changing medium that demands both innovation and originality.

**MODERATOR**

Charles Howard (Lecturer for the School of Film and Television, National Board Member of the Producers Guild of America)

**PANELISTS**

John Bashyam (School of Film and Television Alum, Co-founder of Warm & Fuzzy)
Josh Morgan (Senior Lecturer of Animation and Computer Science for the School of Film and Television)
Justin Denton (School of Film and Television Immersive Council Member, Director at Blur Studio)
Shane Acker (Assistant Professor of Animation for the School of Film and Television, Academy Award Nominee)
**iMMERSiVE COUNCiL: XR iNNOVATiON AND EDUCATiON**

**John Bashyam** is an award-winning director, visual effects artist, and entrepreneur based in Los Angeles, CA. At the age of 22, John's visual effects talent had earned him the chance to work on feature films such as *The Finest Hours*, *Ghostbusters*, *The Shallows*, *The Walk*, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, *Ant Man* and *Unbroken*.

He has served as the VFX Supervisor/2nd Unit Director for the media production teams at some of the largest music festivals in the world, including Coachella, Stagecoach, Lightning in a Bottle and Bottlerock, and has filmed some of the music industry's hottest acts such as Muse, AC/DC, Guns N' Roses, Skrillex, Kaskade, Zedd, Calvin Harris, Chvrches, The Weeknd, Kid Cudi, and many more.

Most recently, John has teamed up with industry veterans to co-found the creative studio Warm & Fuzzy (warmnfuzzy.tv). They operate a full-fledged post production facility capable of handling commercial and feature scale jobs out of their office in Culver City. In the months since their inception, Warm & Fuzzy has completed a variety of projects ranging through commercials, VR films, concert visuals, pitch decks, and more.

In addition to his visual effects work, John is also an award-winning rising director. His animated short film, *The Night the Moon Fell*, has premiered internationally at the renowned Raindance Film Festival in London, as well as the critically acclaimed Cinequest Film Festival in Silicon Valley. It was also featured on Funny or Die, and garnered over 300k views as a Vimeo Staff Pick. He continues to take on more directorial work, recently working with Stan Lee on his first VR experience, and completing a live action proof of concept film, *Tempus*.

**Joshua J. Morgan** is the Animation Technical Services Engineer at Loyola Marymount University where he teaches Interactive Animation, Game Design and Game Development. He also teaches Interactive Animation at UCLA and has taught Game Prototyping at the Art Institute of Los Angeles.

A native to Southern California, Josh holds a BA in Communication Studies and an MFA in Animation, both from UCLA. He worked in feature animation as a technical coordinator and assistant editor on Shane Acker’s 9 (2009), and as an editorial coordinator on the blockbuster hit *Despicable Me* (2010).

He specializes in educational software development and he has programmed applications and games for the web and mobile devices. He was the lead programmer of Looney Tunes™ “ClickN READ Phonics®”, which teaches children to read and features classic Warner Bros. characters. He has also developed enterprise desktop, mobile and touchscreen kiosk apps for corporate clients.

**Justin Denton** is a Texas-born artist, writer, and director. By mixing a blue-collar work mentality, an innate passion for the fine arts, and a career in visual effects, Justin loves telling stories through technology. In 2015 he directed the VR experience *Beware Crimson Peak* for Legendary Entertainment. This was followed by the independent short film *Burlap* which has shown at over 20 festivals as both a short film and in VR including Fantastic Fest, Beyond Fest, and was optioned by Hulu. Next he directed *Ghost in the Shell VR*, and wrote/directed the critically acclaimed live activation *Legions: Sessions* at Comic-Con 2017. In 2018, Justin co-wrote and directed a three episode VR arc for *Nightflyers*, and created the sold out ground-breaking immersive theater show "Chained: A Victorian Nightmare." In 2019, he directed the sold-out interactive dance experience *Creature* and is currently writing and directing for Blur Studio.

Justin earned a BFA (2001) from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago and studied abroad at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia. His lectures and panels include SIGGRAPH, UCLA, The Academy, Digital Hollywood, On The Lot, Comic-Con, and LMU.

**Shane Acker** is an Academy Award nominated director, animator and designer. 9 was his feature directorial debut produced by Tim Burton and Timor Bekmambetov and was released by Focus Features in 2009. His short film 9 premiered at Sundance in 2005 and garnered numerous awards including a Student Academy Award, the “Best in Show” at the 2005 SIGGRAPH Electronic Theater and a student Emmy®.

Shane has a multidisciplinary background in the arts and worked as an architectural designer and animator before becoming a director. He is a graduate of UCLA where he received both a Master of Architecture degree and a Master of Fine Art in Animation. With over 20 years of experience in the entertainment industry, Shane has worked with top animation companies including WETA, Universal Studios, Disney, DreamworksTV, Reel FX, and The Third Floor in a multitude of production roles including directing, previs supervising, animating, concept development, storyboarding, and writing. Shane became an Assistant Professor in the LMU Animation department in 2016 and continues to hone his directing skills by writing, producing, and animating his own films.

Shane introduced VR into the LMU animation department curriculum in 2017 following an Academic Technology Grant that explored the uses of emerging Virtual Reality tools for media creation and for creating immersive narrative experiences.
THE PORTAL | MAP

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