

QUINZAINE
DES RÉALISATEURS
Société des réalisateurs de films
CANNES 2019

GO WHERE YOU LOOK!

FALLING OFF SNOW MOUNTAIN

LAURIE
ANDERSON

HSIN-CHIEN
HUANG

THREE VR INSTALLATIONS

ALOFT / CHALKROOM / TO THE MOON

AU SUQUET DES ART(ISTE)S

15 - 25 MAI 2019

7 RUE SAINT DIZIER
CANNES
ENTRÉE LIBRE

MARDI → VENDREDI 13H → 17H
SAMEDI, DIMANCHE
10H → 13H ET 14H → 18H

UNE EXPOSITION
MAIRIE DE CANNES



Le SUQUET DES ARTISTES

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Press kit



Go Where You Look!

Falling Off Snow Mountain

Aloft / Chalkroom / To the Moon

Three virtual reality installations by

Laurie Anderson
&
Hsin-Chien Huang

Le « Suquet des Art(iste)s »
7 Rue Saint-Dizier, 06400 Cannes

from May 15th to 25th

free entrance
subject to availability

Edito

«Laurie Anderson is a musician, filmmaker, writer, digital arts creative pioneer and, ultimately, a storyteller in the broadest sense.

In 1987, her bond with the Directors' Fortnight began as she presented her first feature film, Home of the Brave, now a cult film-concert. It is therefore natural for the Directors' Fortnight to invite her this year to present a new form of her exploration in storytelling: the entirety of her recent virtual reality creations, co-signed with new media creator Hsin-Chien Huang.

***Aloft, Chalkroom and To the Moon**, three poetically linked and complementary pieces presented together for the first time, give viewers a comprehensive overview of their research in these new narrative territories.*

The sensory, poetic and technological dimensions of these three pieces are tightly intertwined and offer new forms of storytelling by amplifying our cinematic experience. It is this singular and fully authorial, approach of virtual reality, that the Directors' Fortnight wishes to highlight, honour and share.

Laurie Anderson's artistic path is a testament to the Directors' Fortnight's exploratory spirit, and to this 51st edition, aiming to be both an observatory and a laboratory of the evolution of storytelling through moving images, as well as an echo chamber for all forms of creation in this field».

Paolo Moretti

Laurie Anderson

Laurie Anderson is one of America's most renowned and daring creative pioneers. Best known for her multimedia presentations, innovative use of technology and first-person style, she is a writer, director, visual artist and vocalist who has created groundbreaking works that span the worlds of art, theater, and experimental music. Her recording career, launched by "O Superman" in 1981, includes many records released by Warner Records among them "Big Science" (1982), the soundtrack to her feature film "Home of the Brave" (1986) "Strange Angels" (1989) "Life on a String" (2001) "Homeland" (2008) and "Landfall" (2018) released on Nonesuch which recently won a Grammy Award in 2019 for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance.

In 2002, Anderson was appointed the first artist-in-residence of NASA which culminated in her 2004 solo performance "The End of the Moon", the second in a series of three "story" performances along with "Happiness" (2001) and "Dirtday" (2012) all of which toured extensively internationally.

Anderson has published eight books. Her most recent release, "All The Things I Lost In The Flood" (Rizzoli), is a series of essays about pictures, language and codes.

Anderson's films include numerous music videos and installation works as well as *Home of the Brave* 1986 (included in Quinzaine des Réalisateurs), *Carmen* (1992), the high definition *Hidden Inside Mountains* (2005) and Arte-commissioned *Heart of a Dog* (2015) which was chosen as an official selection of the 2015 Venice and Toronto Film Festivals.



Laurie Anderson portrait by Ebru Yildiz

In 2017 Anderson joined four other artists in Mass MoCA's Building 6 inaugurating a fifteen year rotating exhibition of work. Anderson will show pieces from her archive as well as new work. Included in the first exhibition cycle are her virtual reality collaborations with Hsin-Chien Huang *Chalkroom* and *Aloft*. *Chalkroom* has been featured in film festivals all over the world including the Venice Film Festival where it won the award for "Best VR Experience" under its Italian title "La Camera Insabbiata". Along with their work *Aloft* and *To the Moon* it will be presented at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival as "Look Where You Go!" Anderson will have a major exhibition of her work at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC in 2020 and will be working with Hsin-Chien Huang on a major new piece for the Manchester International Festival.

Hsin-Chien Huang

Hsin-Chien Huang is a new media creator with backgrounds in art, design, engineer and digital entertainment. His career endeavor explores cutting edge technologies in art, literature, design and live performing. His projects often involve large-scale interaction, performing, mechanical apparatus, algorithmic computations and video installations.

He received the Fulbright scholarship as a visiting scholar in 2019. His VR collaboration with Laurie Anderson was awarded the Best VR Experience in 74th Venice Film Festival. He won the Fifth Public Art Award from the Ministry of Culture Taiwan in 2016, the Light of Taiwan's Honor from Taiwan's President Ma in 2011, the Muse Award of America Association of Museum in 2009 and the grand prize of «New Voices, New Vision» new media competition in 1994.

Hsin-Chien's art works has been exhibited in galleries, art museums, film festival and TV program around the world. The art events and venues include National Taiwan Museum of Fine Art, Venice Biennale, MOMA, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art Denmark, Shanghai Biennale, OK Center in Linz, Beijing 798, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art and 404 Festival in Argentina, among others. His live performing project was shown at SIGGRAPH 2015 and the America's Got Talent 2018 TV show and made the judges to wear VR for the first time.



He has been commissioned to create concert visual design for Taiwanese Singer Jay Chou, Wakin Chau and Jody Chiang. His large-scale interactive installations had been shown in Shanghai world expo 2010. He had worked as an art director at Sony and Sega computer entertainment from 1994 to 1999 and created global launch titles. Hsin-Chien also is a full-time professor at National Taiwan Normal University and collaborate with Yahoo Taiwan on Vtuber projects.

Laurie Anderson and Hsin-Chien Huang first collaborated on the CD-ROM *Puppet Motel* in 1995. Since then they have collaborated on several digital art forms and are planning some joint exhibitions of their work to be shown in Taiwan and Washington DC.

Statement

*«**GO WHERE YOU LOOK! FALLING OFF SNOW MOUNTAIN** is our series of three virtual reality works. Presenting these installations together in the Cannes Film Festival provides a unique opportunity to see new relationships between the them as well as a chance to see these works in the context of a film festival that promotes mainstream as well as experimental and high cinema.*

Presenting virtual reality is a challenge. It's an art form in very early stages. First of all, the head gear is uncomfortable and impractical to wear for very long. And for people with vertigo VR can be a sweat-soaked torture. Also only a few people at a time can see VR so it's not yet a social art form like concerts or plays. It plays for an audience of one.

On the other hand, it's the only art form in which you can fly, which is why I'm completely addicted to it. And some of these apparent disadvantages are also advantages. VR is an ideal short story form. It's also an extremely private art form that is partially created by decisions the participant makes.

Hsin-Chien and I have now presented our VR work in many contexts- art museums, film and literature festivals, music festivals, book fairs and tech events. Our approach is to show the digital in physical installations linking the virtual and real world, reinforcing social connections and giving the work a physical context.

The installations are sometimes artworks themselves, almost like small theaters. Although there are many interesting new VR directions that will let several people experience the work together, in our three pieces the participant is more like the solitary reader.

My vision for the future of VR presentation is a stylish open space in your local cineplex that presents a rotating selection of both documentary and fictional short pieces for both seated and ambient work. And unlike cinema, which only accommodates conversation in the ticket lines, this VR space would allow people to sit around, talk and share their experiences.

In presenting these works in various places I've noticed that people want to talk afterwards. Or they want to rest. Go Where You Look! in Cannes will have an adjacent bar so that participants who want to see more than one work will have a chance to catch their breath between pieces.

VR also has a learning curve. People can improve their skills with practice. The most adept VR participants tend to be ten year old boys who have lots of experience in the gaming world. I like to make VR for young audiences that doesn't rely on shooting or scoring but on dreaming, imagining and flying».

Laurie Anderson

Notes on virtual reality

«As an artist and performer I've become increasingly frustrated with stages and screens and more and more interested in immersive works- music you can walk into and images that completely surround you. I also love long extended drone work that fills the physical space and the imagination. I also like art that is composed and completed by the listener/viewer who walks into it and experiences it viscerally, emotionally and intellectually.

In working with VR I've had to relearn many of the things I know about narrative and stories. In VR the beginning, middle and end are shifting states, not sequential ones. I find this way of being in time increasingly interesting and actually true to life.

I want to get lost in works of art. Of course you can get lost in a Russian novel, lost in a pencil drawing. But getting lost in virtual reality has its own deep pleasures. I also enjoy that it can confuse and confound the sense of proprioception and safety as well as convey completely different messages to your several senses. For example sometimes your feet tell you, "I'm standing in a room in a museum, completely safe." But your eyes tell you, "I'm standing on a three hundred foot tall column and its only two by two feet." and you start to sway. The eyes rule!

Sometimes when we show VR in a film festival the VR work is somewhat ghettoized, exhibited in dark rooms far from the center of things. VR's the bastard child of cinema and tech with an occasionally obnoxious attitude. I've overheard other VR makers refer to the other works in the film festival as "flat films".

As someone who has used technology to tell stories for many decades I don't have any illusions that tech has any great advantages over other media. A good story is a good story. And while the latest technology has a certain sexy lure and commercial appeal, I like to spin on a common technology proverb: If you think technology will solve your problems, you don't understand technology. And you don't understand your problems.

But back to flying. I fly in my dreams and now I can fly inside of stories too. I love VR».

Laurie Anderson

The 3 installations

GO WHERE YOU LOOK! FALLING OFF SNOW MOUNTAIN is composed of three pieces : **Aloft**, **Chalkroom** and **To the Moon**.

*«The progression from the intensely interactive **Aloft** to the free-flying **Chalkroom** to the more emotional and dreamy world of **To the Moon** reflects our experiments and our attempts to infuse these works with more of the spirit of story and cinema».*

Laurie Anderson

Both **Aloft** and **Chalkroom** are currently installed in MASS MoCA in North Adams Massachusetts. Under its Italian title "La Camera Insabbiata" it won the award for "Best VR Experience" at the Venice Film Festival.

To the Moon was commissioned by Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark

Aloft



ALOFT is the first VR work that Hsin-Chien and I made together and it begins in a plane that's about to take off. You settle into your seat, look out the window. You can also get up and move up and down the aisle.

Soon the plane takes off and you notice some shafts of light appearing in the ceiling and floor. Then the plane begins to fall apart.

Your worst nightmare.

Except that this time it's gentle.

Suddenly you're floating in your seat past the black box (in this case bright red) towards a large luminous vortex.

A booklet of instructions on how to use your virtual hands twirls towards you.

You begin to reach out with your suddenly visible virtual hands to touch and hold the debris and objects that float past.

You touch a lily and it shatters into pieces that become the words of a story or song.

You touch a globe which turns out to be Mars and you're transported to that planet.

There's a raven and a typewriter and many other things with stories and music attached to them.

Depending on your choices you end up either in a placid lake with cherry blossoms falling on you or holding a copy of *Crime and Punishment* that releases its words which fracture into letters and spiral upwards.

It's a work that features the vortex, the spiral and the body. In my favorite scene, you drop your hands and when they come back they are hooves.

Chalkroom



CHALKROOM is a virtual reality work in which the participant flies through an enormous structure, a seemingly endless edifice made of words, drawings and stories.

Once you enter this space, you are free to fly and explore wherever you want. You can navigate across chasms, follow along narrow bridges, zoom through doors, jump off ledges, sail up, out of and around the edifice. Meanwhile, words float through the air. They fall into dust. They form and reform. It's a world made of language and stories- spoken, written and drawn.

Everything is dusty and dark. CHALKROOM is ideally installed in a large room painted with glow-in-the-dark white drawings so that even before you put the head gear on you enter an immersive world.

Inside CHALKROOM there are a number of places and choices of where to go.

The Dog Room is a 3D-abstracted take on a drawing from the *Lolabelle in the Bardo* charcoal series.

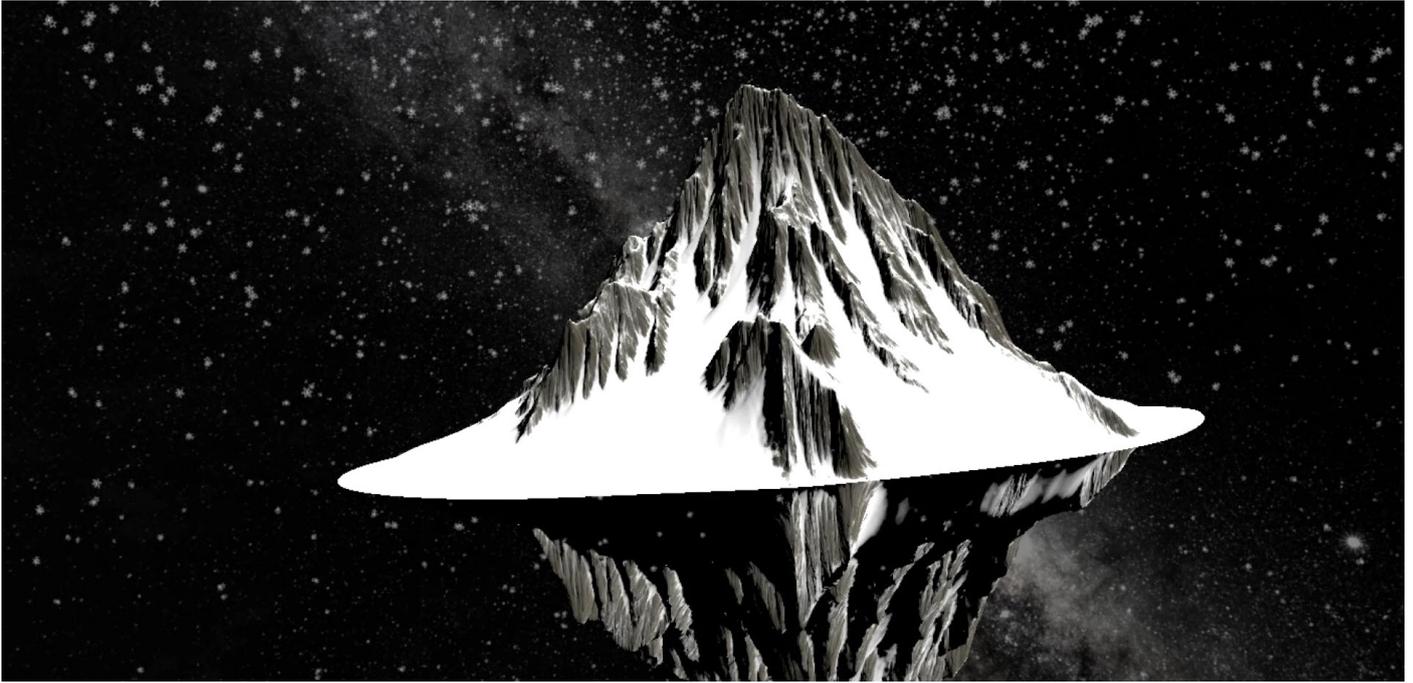
The Water Room is a surreal scene taking place in a flooded, ceramic-tiled room.

The Anagram Room is an interactive visualization and **The Sound Room** is a space where the viewer records audio that becomes 3D sound waves- virtual objects that look like huge colorful paper lanterns.

The Tree Room allows you to fly around an enormous tree that contains several stories.

The Writing Room allows words to flow out of physical gestures.

To the Moon



TO THE MOON was commissioned by the Louisiana Museum in Denmark for their comprehensive 2018 exhibition *The Moon: From Inner Worlds to Outer*.

TO THE MOON uses images and tropes from Greek mythology, literature, science, sci fi space movies and politics to create an imaginary and dark new moon. During the 15-minute VR experience, the viewer is shot out from earth, walks on the surface of the moon, glides through space debris, flies through DNA skeletons and is lifted up the side and then tossed off of a lunar mountain.

Unlike **ALOFT** and **CHALKROOM**, **TO THE MOON** is divided into scenes and has a more formal narrative structure while still allowing the participant choice of where and how to look.

Scenes include **Constellations** which features life forms that are becoming extinct - a polar bear, and the honey bee and emphasizes the transitory as opposed to the fixed. When the viewer looks at the constellations they evaporate the way that humans can create and erase their worlds.

In the **DNA Museum** you can fly through the skeletons of dinosaurs – made of DNA symbols - which morph into a Cadillac in a play on the history of fossil fuels.

In **Technology Wasteland** the moon is imagined as a dystopic dumping ground for plastics and nuclear waste and you glide through this toxic scene with long scaly tentacles instead of arms. Stone Rose, inspired by the rose in *Le Petit Prince* is a fossil rose adrift in the universe as planets swirl around it.

In **Snow Mountain** the viewer loses control and is swept to the top of a mountain. Inspired by the plot line of many space adventure movies, the viewer's virtual body dramatically tumbles away into deep space.

In the **Donkey Ride** you the viewer trot along on the back of a donkey through the lunar landscape. Eventually you float up and away into a universe of stars that begins to explode like fireworks.

There are less words in TO THE MOON than the other pieces.
And they are questions rather than stories.

*You know the reason I really love the stars?
It's that we cannot hurt them.
We can't burn them. We can't melt them or make
them overflow.
We can't flood them. Or blow them up
or turn them out.
But we are reaching for them.
We are reaching for them.*

What humans can and can't do in the natural world is one of the several themes in TO THE MOON.

TO THE MOON is dedicated to the ancient Chinese painter who made a huge vertical landscape, a painting of a mountain with groves of pine trees, a steep road winding up to the top, waterfalls, tiny hikers with walking sticks, thatched bamboo huts, and fishermen casting their nets in the sea far below. The painting was very intricate and it took many years to make. When the painter finally finished the painting he walked into it.

This is what we aim to do with TO THE MOON, allow the viewer to literally walk into a work of art.

Exhibition credits

Laurie Anderson & Hsin-Chien Huang, Authors

For Canal Street Communications Inc

Shaun MacDonald, Producer of special projects and exhibitions

Jason Stern, Technical Director

Jim Cass, production and fabrication

Betty Lees, financial and contractual

Lysee Webb press, communication, logistics

For Storynest Studio

Sai-ue Yue Tsau, production and financial

Wei-Chieh Chiu, Technical Director

Peng-Wen Tong, communication and contractual

For the City of Cannes

M. David Lisnard, Maire de Cannes, Président de l'Agglomération Cannes Lérins, Vice-président du Département des Alpes-Maritimes

M. Thomas de Pariente, Adjoint au Maire délégué à la Culture et à la Jeunesse

Le Conseil municipal

Mme Maud Boissac, Directrice de la Culture

M. Numa Hambursin, Directeur du PAMoCC

Mme Hanna Baudet, Directrice adjointe du PAMoCC

L'équipe du PAMoCC (Yvette Roll, Naoual El Assaoui - Guilouchi, Olivier Calvel et Abderrhazak Salouh

For Quinzaine des Réalisateurs

Paolo Moretti, Artistic Director

Christophe Leparc, Secretary General

Anaïs Desrieux, Exhibition Coordinator

Caroline Canu, Partnerships, events and production manager

Jimmy Hirayama, Production coordinator

Michel Welfringer, graphic design

Inès Alez Martin, Head of Communication

Jean-Charles Canu, Press Attaché

Catherine Giraud, Press Attaché

Practical Information

Le « Suquet des Art(iste)s »

7 Rue Saint-Dizier, 06400 Cannes

from May 15th to 25th

From Tuesday to Friday : from 1pm to 5pm

Saturday and Sunday : from 10am to 1pm and from 2pm to 6pm

GRAND OPENING - VERNISSAGE

(Invitation only)

at 4:30 pm on May 14th with Laurie Anderson

PRESS VISIT

on May 14th - 2pm-4pm

Laurie Anderson will be in Cannes from May 11th to 16th

An exhibition presented by Directors' Fortnight, Quinzaine des Réalisateur



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LOUISIANA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART



National Culture and Arts Foundation

TO THE MOON has been Commissioned by Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark