

Australian 360 content a highlight at Cannes' Next

For the second year running the **Byron Bay International Film Festival** (BBFF), will be presenting a Virtual Reality (VR) session entitled Australian Immersion at the Cannes Film Festival.

The session is part of Next, the innovation hub of the Cannes festival's Marché du Film, one of the largest film markets in the world. A combination of live action, animation, documentary and dance, the works make up a package for the European festival, showcasing Australia's cutting-edge creativity and prowess in the 360 space.

The session's curator and BBFF's Festival Director J'aimee Skippon-Volke says: "The stories being shared also speak to some of the country's most urgent social-political and environmental concerns."

From Reddogs VR comes Dominic Allen's documentary **Carriberrie**, a virtual reality exploration of indigenous dance and song. David Gulpilil guides the action through rain forests and funeral songs in the desert, from the most northern tip of Australia to Sydney's Opera House with the Bangarra Dance Theatre.

Bunya Productions (Sweet Country, Mystery Road) were behind **Every King Tide** directed by Aaron Fa'Aoso and Craig Deeker. The piece was created in association with The Gingerbread Man with production investment from SBS Television and Screen Queensland's Untold Stories initiative.

Every King Tide highlights the impact of rising sea levels combining stories from the people of Poruma with state of the art 3D maps and animated artwork from acclaimed Torres Strait Islander artist Laurie Nona. It provides an immersive experience that highlights a precarious future and illustrates what is at stake for the people of Poruma – their homes, their way of life, culture, customs, language and history.

Also created through Untold Stories is **Inside Manus**, which won Screen Forever's Best Interactive Production of the Year. Directed by Lucas Taylor and produced by Hoodlum, Chemical Media and Cutting Edge, **Inside Manus** premiered at last year's Melbourne International Film Festival and has gone on to feature at the 2017 Byron Bay Film Festival, Amsterdam's International Documentary Film Festival, New York's The Future of Storytelling, and the Sundance Film Festival.

Graphic novel-style 3D animations from SUTU (VR artist Stuart Campbell) bring the Manus Island detention centre vividly to life as the audience experiences the heartbreaking stories of three current detainees who came to Australia seeking asylum, told in their own voices and in their own words.

The session ends with **Rone** from Melbourne's Lester Francois, co-Founder of Studiobento, which focuses on the life and work of the street artist Rone, whose stunning large-scale portraits are often seen in forgotten spaces. Rone premiered at MIFF, and its interactive version has featured at SXSW.

"Cannes, the Marche Du Film and its VR component Next provide an amazing meeting place for the film (and VR) industry to come together. Last year just one of the directors in Australian Immersion joined me, but it's likely that this year all four experiences will have a team member there," J'aimee says.

"ProxiVR's Harrison Norris, who attended in 2017, walked away with a distribution deal and a spotlight at Fantasia International Film Festival – the largest and most influential genre film festival in the world. I am confident that opportunities will arise for those joining us this year."

Australian Immersion is presented in conjunction with Collective Reality –own VR Production Company. "I'll be travelling with a couple of my own VR projects – both finished and in development," J'aimee said.

After Cannes, she will also be presenting a panel in Amsterdam at VRX Europe together with VR Experts and department heads from France Televisions, ARTE and the BBC.

"But you don't have to be at Cannes to experience these Australian Immersion 360 pieces," J'aimee says. "The Byron Bay Film Festival has created a VR Showcase for the Gold Coast Film Festival this weekend at HOTA."

See <https://www.gcfilmfestival.com/project/virtual-reality/>