

VIRTUALLY OCCUPYING

360 Documentary and Spatial In/Justice



DYLAN VALLEY, CFMS

A Definition of Virtual Reality

- VR can be defined as a “computer-generated experience that can simulate physical presence in real or imagined environments” (Shin 2018:65)
- VR simulates a user’s physical
- presence and environment to allow for user interaction.
- There are different types of VR experiences



Telepresence

- Presence: the experience of one's physical environment, the perception of those surroundings. The sense of being in an environment.
- Telepresence: the experience of presence in an environment by means of a communication medium. (Steuer 1992: 75)
- In other words presence is the *natural* perception of an environment while telepresence is the *mediated* perception of an environment.
- This can be a real or virtual environment.
- A virtual reality is a real or simulated environment in which the perceiver experiences telepresence. (Steuer 1992: 76)
- VR is not a machine, it's an experience



Nonny de la Peña: Duality of Presence

- “Godmother of VR”
- As a senior research fellow at USC in 2009, de la Peña began experimenting with virtual reality headsets. By 2010, she started work on 'Hunger in Los Angeles,' an offshoot of the USC and Center for Investigative Journalism project 'Hunger in the Golden State.' With the help of her intern Michaela Kobsa-Mark and USC's Mixed Reality Lab, de la Peña built the VR piece.
- Hunger in LA - first VR documentary to show at Sundance. This is widely considered to be the first VR “film” ever.
- Duality of presence: Being in your body and somewhere else at the same time.
- VR developers/ creators have to be aware of the effects of the body/ mind relationship.



Empathy

- Empathy appears to be the most important factor in VR (Shin 2018).
- The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.
- Much broader concept - self identification with the life experience of someone else. It goes beyond understanding to a point of caring.



Virtual Reality and Empathy

- Chris Milk: “VR is the ultimate empathy machine.”
- “VR connects humans to other humans in a way I have never seen before in other media.”
- Milk screened *Clouds Over Sidra*, a film about Syrian refugees, at the World Economic Forum to policymakers “whose decisions affect the lives of millions of people.”
- Milk: VR is “the last medium”.





360 Documentary: *Azibuye: The Occupation*







THE GALLERY SYSTEMS. IT
CHALLENGE THE MOST UNEQUAL
CLASS BASED

THE PROJECT IS AN EXPERIMENT
IN MANY WAYS. USE OF THE PROJECT THROUGHOUT
THE YEAR IS THE CONTINUING PROCESS OF INSTRUCTION IN CO
THROUGH OCCASIONAL, INDIVIDUAL, PERSONAL, HORIZONTAL, RECUR
FORMS, THE COLOR OF THE VIBRANT, AND THE SIGNIFICANT HISTORY
CANNOT BE THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE OUTSTANDING, APPROPRIATE
IN THE SPAN OF HISTORY, AND THE MOVEMENT OF THE PROJECT.



ARTIST STATEMENT

Azibuye is a site
specific performance
art piece by an art col-
lative that will install
occupations







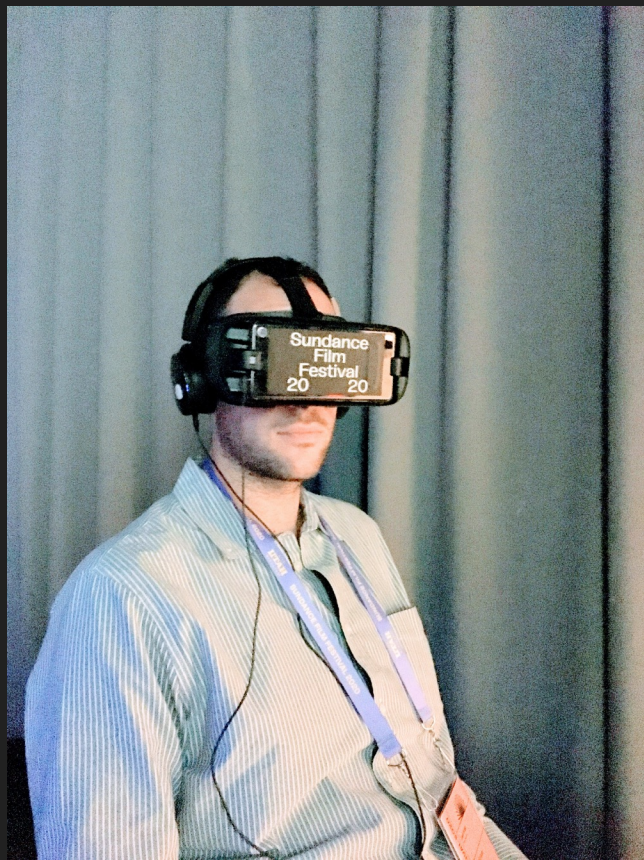
A Z I B U Y E

The Occupation



directed by Dylan Valley
produced by Caitlin Robinson

**ELECTR'C
SOUTH**





Vincenzo Cavallo and Andrea Kim - *Spatial Thinking*

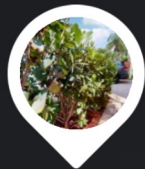
- “The emerging use of virtual reality as an urban art form is sparking a revival in spatial critique.”
- XR artists are appropriating the spatial dimensions of virtual reality to interrogate the neocolonial dynamics of urbanization.
- “The Other Dakar” (dir. Selly Raby Kane, Senegal, 2017), “Spirit Robot” (dir. Johnathan Dotse, Ghana, 2017), “Azibuye – The Occupation” (dir. Dylan Valley, Johannesburg, 2020), “Lagos at Large” (Jumoke Sanwo, Nigeria, 2019), and “African Space Makers” (dir. TheNrbBusCollective, Kenya, 2020).



Vincenzo Cavallo and Andrea Kim - *Spatial Thinking*

- In contrast to contemporary approaches to XR that attempt to automate empathy, spacemaking embraces the appropriation of technology as a technique for subverting broader techno-cultural discourses, embracing the position of cultural hybridity and marginality in their expressions.







CISSIE GOOL HOUSE, WOODSTOCK, CAPE TOWN





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360 Video x Architectural Animation/ Overlays





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NO PLACE BUT HERE

A 360 VR DOCUMENTARY

DIRECTED BY

DYLAN VALLEY

ANNIE NISENSEN



FEATURING THE RESIDENTS OF CISSIE GOOL HOUSE
FAGHMEEDA LING, KAREN HENDRICKS, TSUKIE BHALINDELA,
AMANDA GERICKE, QUINTIN MOOS.

WITH THANKS TO RECLAIM THE CITY

 Meta

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DISCUSSION

- What are the main unique properties of VR?
- Why is empathy often highlighted when discussing VR?
- What is the duality of presence and how does this affect the viewer?
- Would all films work in VR?
- Why use VR at all?