



IDFA begins collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Open Documentary Lab and announces the winner of the Filmfonds DocLab Interactive Grant

Amsterdam, Thursday, November 15 2018

Sunday, 18 November marks the start of a unique collaboration between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Open Documentary Lab and IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam). Together with partners and artists, MIT and IDFA will spend the next five years conducting fundamental research into immersive and interactive media—such as VR and artificial intelligence—and plan to use the IDFA DocLab festival as their living laboratory. This collaboration will be supported by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science within the framework of the Top Sector Creative Industry and the Top Consortia for Knowledge and Innovation (TKI). William Uricchio of MIT, Jann de Waal of the Top Team Creative Industry, and Casper Sonnen of IDFA DocLab will launch the R&D program on Sunday, 18 November at 10 o'clock during the Immersive Network Summit at the Brakke Grond.

At the IDFA DocLab opening on Thursday, 15 November, IDFA announced the three winners of the second Filmfonds DocLab Interactive Grant: *Eat | Tech | Kitchen*, *The Industry VR* and *Common Good*. Both *Eat | Tech | Kitchen* and *The Industry VR* had their world premieres on Thursday night as well.

IDFA DocLab Immersive Network R&D Program

Since it first began in 2007, IDFA DocLab has developed into an important international platform for interactive documentaries and digital storytelling. Partially thanks to the fact that it has never been limited to a single medium, technology or discipline, DocLab has flourished into an international breeding ground for talent development, artistic innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Following a pilot phase, which began in 2015, IDFA plans to work with the MIT Open Documentary Lab as its key partner on a new research initiative known as the IDFA DocLab Immersive Network R&D Program. Other research partners include Sound and Vision and Diversion Cinema in Paris. New research partners can participate in the project for one or several years. The program is focused on a growing international ecosystem of artists, scientists and industry partners. The R&D program will be supported by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, CLICKNL and the Dutch Film Fund.

Living Lab

IDFA's new R&D program will use the annual DocLab festival as a living lab for artistic experiments, fundamental studies and audience research. Drawing from the latest developments in interactive and immersive media, new research questions in the field will be formulated each year in collaboration with relevant partners.

This first year the primary focus is on artificial intelligence research. To this end, various installations and live performances have been developed, such as *I've Always Been Jealous of Other People's Families* by Shirin Anlen (in collaboration with NFB and Atlas V) and *A Dinner with Frankenstein AI* by Lance Weiler, Nick Fortugno and Rachel Ginsberg (in collaboration with Columbia University and National Theatre Immersive Storytelling Studio).

A second research domain explores the tension between linear and interactive storytelling methods in virtual media (VR/AR/XR) through, among others, the physical VR installation *The Collider: Chapter One* by British artist duo Anagram. Additional research into the future of interactive and digital media will be carried out in collaboration with Sound and Vision.

Winners of the Filmfonds DocLab Interactive Grant

The winners of the Filmfonds DocLab Interactive Grant 2018 were announced at the opening of *IDFA DocLab: Humanoid Cookbook*. This year's winners are *Eat | Tech | Kitchen* by Klasien van de Zandschulp and Emilie Baltz, *The Industry VR* by Mirka Duijn and *Common Good* by Nadja van der Weide. All three interactive documentary projects will receive funding to continue their development. *Eat | Tech | Kitchen* and *The Industry VR* both had their world premieres at IDFA 2018, and *Common Good* will be realized later in 2019.

The Film Fund DocLab Interactive Grant is to be presented for the second time. The award was inaugurated by the Film Fund and IDFA in 2017 as a stimulus for interactive projects from the Netherlands. Innovative projects of high artistic quality, with international potential and offering a collective experience are eligible for the award. 2017's winner, the podcast series *Bob*, premiered at IDFA DocLab last year, winning both the Tegel journalism award and the Dutch Podcast Award. This year's three winners were chosen from the IDFA DocLab 2018 selection.

The *Eat | Tech | Kitchen* project breathes new life into a rudimentary chatbot, *La Cucina Futurista* (1932), by translating dreams for the future into new table rituals and recipes for the digital age. The work can be experienced at the *IDFA DocLab: Humanoid Cookbook* exhibition, in four short performances, and during the *Eat | Tech | Kitchen Party*, an interactive dinner at Mister Kitchen.

The Industry VR interactive documentary examines the Dutch drug trafficking industry both on a personal level and from a bird's-eye view. Viewers can explore the places where drug traffickers work while listening to weed growers and cocaine barons tell stories about the thrill and stress of their illegal activities. The interactive documentary can be experienced at IDFA DocLab from 15-25 November at the Brakke Grond.

– End press release –

Editors' Notes

Press

For additional information on DocLab and requests for images, interviews and more, please contact Michel Langendijk, IDFA DocLab press officer michel@idfa.nl.

IDFA DocLab

IDFA DocLab is a festival program for new media within the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA). The mission of IDFA DocLab is to showcase interactive documentaries and other new digital art forms that successfully push the boundaries of documentary storytelling in the age of the interface. Projects are curated and presented online, as well as during live cinema events, exhibitions, workshops and industry panels.

IDFA 2018 takes place in Amsterdam November 14-25.

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