Media artists R. Luke DuBois and Shu Lea Cheang were featured in the 2007 festival as two examples of art-world figures who were innovating technology in their studios in ways that would resonate powerfully with the changes in communication architecture to come. Lynn Hershman Leeson was a returning filmmaker and media artist pushing the boundaries of form and content.

DuBois worked on the vanguard, developing algorithmic compression technologies to explore ideas of canon and historical progress in popular culture. His work, *Play*, melds every Playboy magazine centerfold since 1953 into a dynamic collective portrait of idealized feminine beauty as it has changed over the last half century, and his film, *Academy*, melds every Best Picture winner, in its entirety, into a single 70-minute film.

Cheang led the cutting edge of crowdsourcing narrative filmmaking with her interactive multimedia installation *MobiOpera*, which invited festival-goers to check out mobile phones in order to jointly script and shoot a narrative “soap-travaganza.” Soapsisodes were uploaded into a timeline and presented at a MobiSlam party to bring the authors together to jam their footage.

That same year, Lynn Hershman Leeson would present the first feature film offered to the denizens of the cybersociety Second Life. Her film, *Strange Culture*, played to both Park City and Second Life audiences and was discussed collectively in a Q&A organized across the live/virtual divide.
Traditional boundaries between artistic forms continued to be challenged by the artists in the 2008 edition of New Frontier. Cinematic images engaged architecture in Jennifer Steinkamp's *Mike Kelley Trees*, which transformed the basement lounge into a magical forest of digitally generated trees that twisted and turned in a toroidal electronic wind.

In an adjacent gallery, experimental game developer Eddo Stern gave Sundance audiences the chance to consider storytelling as they engaged with a work that integrated gaming and haptic feedback. *Darkgame* was a two-player game that worked with various forms of sensory deprivation to advance character development.
The same year, Cory Arcangel in collaboration with Paper Rad blew up pop art in a one-night-only film and live music performance that broke down consumer-sized ideas and colors with lucid, OCD-tripping, Nintendo-like worlds and “The Bruce Springsteen Born to Run Glockenspiel Addendum.” It would be the first time an artist presented work at the festival via Skype.

The power of computing started to manifest changes in how stories were told in the 2009 edition of New Frontier. Renowned MIT Media Lab scientist John Underkoffler was responsible for the computing visualized by Tom Cruise in the film *Minority Report*. Underkoffler’s new company, Oblong Industries, created the first operating system based on a gestural interface, called gspeak, and unveiled the video editing app Tamper, which allowed filmmakers not only to edit clips with hand gestures but also to take apart and reassemble visual elements of the clips into an entirely new composition, reintroducing the act of production into the post-production process.
Sundance filmmaker Cory McAbee was experimenting with creating a narrative that could show on cellphones and proposed the episodic series *Stingray Sam*, meant to be exhibited on small screens. This musically inspired project recounted the adventures of two space convicts as they earn their freedom in exchange for rescuing a young girl held captive by a genetically designed figurehead from a very wealthy planet. The project was accepted on script alone and was an unqualified hit at the festival.

Jonathan Harris and Sep Kamvar introduced Sundance audiences to the craft of creating narrative through data visualization with their work *We Feel Fine*, which explores human emotion on a global scale. Every few minutes, the program takes sentences that include the words “I feel” or “I am feeling” from all blogs that have just been published and visualizes them in ways that let viewers see what any part of the world is feeling at any given moment.
By 2010, the festival had witnessed a massive collapse of the independent film business as indie shingles in the studio system shuttered and financing for independent film dried up. Before this juncture, New Frontier had been regarded as a kind of marginal cool art experiment. Now festival audiences were entering the venue in an active search for alternative ways of moving forward with the art, craft and business of independent storytelling.

Documentarians Sam Green and Dave Cerf took cues from the music business, which had switched from selling albums to selling concert tickets, and created the live-performed documentary *Utopia in Four Movements*, in which Green and Cerf performed live narrative and soundtrack to accompany a PowerPoint presentation of images and footage to tell the story of the history of the utopian impulse.

The actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt presented a new brand of production company that was part crowdsourced media workshop, part social network and part live performance. hitRECord.org operated a production studio at the venue and invited audiences to collaborate with Levitt to create short films that would then be presented at the festival in an interactive revue hosted by the actor.
Arizona farmer Matthew Moore took cinematic storytelling out of the exhibition space and into the local grocery store. *Lifecycles* reconfigured the produce section of the Fresh Market grocery store in Park City by showing time-lapse films of crops growing alongside the bins of the very same crop being sold at the store, transforming audiences’ relationship to the produce they bought and consumed.

The 2011 edition of New Frontier was presented at the historic Miners Hospital and featured 18 works—art installations, performances and transmedia projects. Filmmaker/creative technologist duo Chris Milk and Aaron Koblin presented two works at the festival: the HTML music video *The Wilderness Downtown* [<www.thewildernessdowntown.com/>](http://www.thewildernessdowntown.com/) and *The Johnny Cash Project*, a participatory web-based project that invites audiences to create individual drawings that are woven into a collective, animated music-video tribute to Johnny Cash, set to his song “Ain’t No Grave.”
Filmmaker/transmedia storyteller Lance Weiler blurred the boundaries between R&D and festival exhibition with a multi-platformed story that tracks the spread of a mysterious zombie virus affecting adults as it spreads from its small rural town origins to Park City. *Pandemic 1.0*, a continually evolving transmedia storytelling experience that unites film, mobile and online technologies, props, social gaming and data visualization, allowed audiences to step into the shoes of the pandemic protagonists anytime during the day.

Animator/performance artist Miwa Matreyek presented two cinematic performance works—*Dreaming of Lucid Living* and *Myth and Infrastructure*—integrating Matreyek’s original animation with the artist’s live shadow play to create breathtakingly beautiful images that told a penetrating tale of the relationship between the domestic realm and the larger surrounding environment.

Lance Weiler, *Pandemic 1.0*, multimedia installation, 2008. (© Lance Weiler. Photo © Mike Hedge.)

2012 marked a major shift in how technology would affect the moving image, but no one knew it just then. Former *Newsweek* correspondent Nonny de la Peña developed a groundbreaking brand of journalism that made news reporting a fully immersive experience (*Hunger in Los Angeles*). The head-mounted display that she developed with 18-year-old intern Palmer Lucky would be the first prototype for the reincarnation of virtual reality.

Collaborators Chris Johnson and Hank Willis Thomas, in collaboration with Bayete Ross Smith and Kamal Sinclair, reimagined the social network with *Question Bridge: Black Males*, a work that allowed black men to speak for themselves and to one another from a safe, personal space. In this inspired exquisite corpse project, the interviews that the men recorded and uploaded in solitude were then edited together by the collective and installed to play as a forum discussion between the men.
The National Film Board of Canada’s *Bear 71* would break ground, gaining worldwide attention to the art and craft of transmedia documentary storytelling. Audiences follow an emotional narrative of a bear trying to survive in the Canadian Rockies as online participants join the interactive forest community in which the tagged Bear 71 roams.

The desire to create fully immersive media forms was trending rapidly among artists, with various forms of expression emerging on the deeply networked media landscape. Klip Collective, who began projecting on tables in the 2007 edition of New Frontier, created *What’s He Building in There?*, a large-scale 3D projection–mapped film that transformed the entire frontal exterior of the New Frontier venue, which that year was a retired lumberyard.
Inspired by the international science collaboration of 1761, which observed the transit of Venus, Lynette Wallworth created the visually stunning *Coral: Rekindling Venus*, a networked, augmented-reality, full-dome film presentation that was presented in planetariums worldwide. This epic project featured original deep-sea photography and music by Antony and the Johnsons.

Blending augmented reality, social media satire, IRL (“in real life”) performance and hip hop music video, Yung Jake was himself net art incarnate. Crafting a fluid and elusive identity that mainly lived as a conversation between himself and the various screens in his environment, Yung Jake’s work *Augmented Real* posed questions about identity in an age when most people were looking at their digital screens as much as at each other.
In 2014, New Frontier moved back to the Main Street area (sharing a building with the festival box office) and debuted Oculus Rift’s first development kit, offering festival audiences a showcase of four VR works, including the multiplayer game *EVE: Valkyrie* by CCP games; the music video *Sound and Vision* by Chris Milk; the app *VR Cinema*, where the 3D New Frontier shorts screened; and *Clouds*, a VR version of the interactive documentary about the world of creative code by James George and Jonathan Minard.
Media artist Doug Aitken presented a 2,000-square-foot pavilion installation designed in collaboration with architect David Adjaye that was installed in the Main Street area. *The Source* is an immersive, multi-platformed, generative documentary exploring the nature and source of creativity. The work was presented as a rhythmic, six-channel projection installation, a living archive website and short films presented in various screens throughout the festival.

The media performance art of Jacolby Satterwhite defies categorization, incorporating live vogue dancing, sculpture and various original CG animations depicting hallucinogenic and outlandishly sexual landscapes and storylines. His bold and hallucinogenic work burns with originality, desire and conceptual density. Satterwhite evokes a universe where sexuality runs hungry and wild through the psychobioelectric matrix in search of transformation and liberation.
In March of 2014, Facebook would buy Oculus for $2 billion and by June, Samsung would develop Gear VR, Google would release Cardboard, Sony would prototype their Morpheus headset and a veritable gold rush to develop a commercial VR camera would ensue. The technology seemed on the precipice of transforming cinematic storytelling, so we made a decision to focus on VR for the 2015 edition and show the diversity of approaches and artistic practices that were engaging the new medium. Works included Vincent Morisset’s groundbreaking Way to Go; Rose Troche and Morris May’s Perspective; Chapter 1: The Party; and Chris Milk’s stunning Evolution of Verse. Fox Searchlight had even produced its first VR experience, Wild, with Directors Felix Lajeunesse and Paul Raphael, also the first of its kind to feature widely recognized Hollywood stars.
VR would bring the world of the cinematic closer to the gaming industry than ever before, so we decided to showcase the hottest piece of game storytelling I had seen that year, *1979 Revolution*, a groundbreaking documentary about the namesake event, the Iranian Revolution, told as a game designed for iPad and Oculus.

After the 2015 edition of New Frontier, the field of VR exploded and would begin to transform both the entertainment and publishing industries, as much as it was affecting the gaming and medical industries. Cinematic storytelling entered a bold new world.
The 2015 festival proved to be a watershed event that connected the world of cinema to the medium of VR. Billion-dollar projections were being forecast for the industry, and VR companies, who once saw their future in games, began to talk publicly about the importance of VR storytelling. World-class musician Björk was creating a new album to be presented entirely in VR, and *The New York Times* gave away 1 million Google Cardboard goggles to its subscriber base. The media landscape was undeniably changing.
The 2016 edition of New Frontier, which marked the 10th anniversary of the exhibition, reflected how strongly storytellers were embracing VR. We featured a slate of 44 artists, 30 of which were VR experiences, ranging from documentaries to animation to live-action narrative. We developed an independent architecture within New Frontier at Sundance to showcase this burgeoning VR production and highlight its downloadable/mobile nature. Following the form of the medium, we also created the Sundance VR app for Android so that audiences outside of Park City might access the work.

Amid the landing of the VR tidal wave, New Frontier still needed to do its job at the festival to showcase and provoke continued innovation realized at the crossroads of film, art and technology. The 2016 edition presented the work being done in several important media labs around the world, including the 5D World Building Media Lab who were integrating VR and haptic environments, as well as advancing new forms of Augmented Reality storytelling in their developing storyworld, *Leviathan.*

Staying true to continuing to bring together diverse forms under one roof, several immersive projection works were presented, including Kahlil Joseph and Kendrick Lamar’s stunning two-screen work, *Double Conscience.*

Both the MoMA and Walker Art Center organized exhibitions saluting the achievement of New Frontier at Sundance that would run throughout the year. The success of the show prompted the relentless question from the press corp: “How has New Frontier changed?” But nothing had really changed. New Frontier was doing exactly what it had started to do in the basement of the Main Street Mall in 2007, which was find the artists who were working with cinematic language—regardless of whether they were working in the art world, or with technology, or in journalism or in performance—and bring them under one roof at the Sundance Film Festival and see how cinema culture could expand in ways we couldn’t have ever thought of before.
CALL FOR PAPERS

Pioneers and Pathbreakers

In anticipation of Leonardo’s 50th anniversary, we are seeking papers dealing with the history of developments in the arts, sciences and technology. The aim of the project is to establish reliable, selected, online documentation about 20th-century artists, scholars and institution builders whose works and ideas are considered seminal in the development of technological art. Since its founding, Leonardo has accompanied and championed the work of the pioneers who were just beginning to use computers and other emerging technologies for artistic purposes.

We are interested in topics including the following:

• Memoirs written by pioneer artists working in new media (holography, computer and electronic arts, telecommunication arts, interactive arts, new materials, space arts, bio art, etc.). Texts should cover an extended body of work. Preference will be given to artists describing early work carried out prior to 1980.

• Memoirs of engineers and developers who collaborated with artists or whose engineering or computer science work in the 1960s, 1970s and/or 1980s proved to be important for developing the new art forms based on new and emerging technologies.

• Memoirs by curators who organized art-and-technology exhibitions in the 1960s, 1970s and/or 1980s.

• Memoirs by pioneering collectors who were early supporters of technological artists.

• Memoirs by pioneering institution founders of organizations, university programs or centers pre-1984.

Texts must be in English. Length may be up to 2,500 words, 6 illustrations.

Readers of Leonardo are asked to encourage their colleagues to submit such memoirs, which will be invaluable primary documents for historians and scholars in the future.

Interested authors should submit manuscript proposals or completed manuscripts to the Leonardo Editorial Office. Email to: <leonardomanuscripts@gmail.com>.