IN THIS REPORT

About PXR .............................................................. 3
2023 Presentations ................................................... 6
Response to PXR2023 ............................................. 15
PXR by the Numbers ............................................... 19
Initiatives .............................................................. 25
Supporters ............................................................ 27
The PXR Conference, hosted by Single Thread and Electric Company Theatre, is a series of interactive presentations and discussions by Canadian artists and digital content creators on how they are using virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality (collectively known as XR) in the creation of live performance.
PXR2023’s Theme was 'Under the Sea'. The curation team felt this was an apt touchstone that represented both the boundless, unknown potential of XR live performance, as well as the importance of exploring this new realm in a responsible, symbiotic and equitable way. It followed that we held the conference within the expansive interior of a living solar-punk Blue Whale (inspired by stories of the 52 Hertz Whale) within VRChat!
To advance the use of XR technologies in performance across Canada, to empower creators and build the sector to international recognition, and to level the playing field for underrepresented artists by prioritizing their access to tools in this emergent medium.
Ferryman Collective and PXR2023 staff in VRChat. Photo by Amanda Baker.
PXR Port Toronto: Why PXR?
Co-producers Amanda and Samantha discussed the history of PXR and the potential for Canadian XR artist communities.

PXR Port Vancouver: Bringing theatre into multiplayer VR
Marco Cermussoni, the Co-Founder of Grapple Consulting spoke about revitalizing Shakespeare for the digital age.

PXR Port Gathertown
Digital attendees met online to watch presentations in Toronto and Vancouver.
Keynote: Michaela Ternasky-Holland
Emmy and Webby award-winning XR Director Michaela Ternasky-Holland shared why XR storytelling creates real-world impact.

Dragon Magic, Freedom Giants
SplashMango offered insights into the genius-level skills that were required to deploy Dragon Magic, Freedom Giants on the ENGAGE platform.

Find WiiLii
Ferryman Collective presents a live VR performance telling the story about the importance and often flawed nature of memory and forgetting.
Museums Without Walls
Gabriel Menotti explored XR systems for cultural access and preservation in Mozilla Hubs.

The Web We Never Lost
Andrew Sempere asked the question: what does it mean to design a new social platform worthy of the communities that live there?

Off Rail
In a live VR performance, RaptorXR presented a parody of a western-themed VR/AI theme park of the future where “nothing can go wrong.”
Live Performance 360
Two years into an ambitious project to document live performances using 360 video capture, Jay and Carey Dodge returned to share their explorations.

Sonic Mindscapes
Mana Saei presented her collaboration-based VRChat world, allowing users to discover creative sounds that emerge through their collective efforts.
NOV 17

PXR Ports Toronto & Vancouver: EarthMMO
EarthMMO CEO Thomas Vu demonstrated his AR MMORPG where conference attendees in Toronto, Vancouver, and online were able to play and interact with live actor NPCs to fight monsters, win loot and complete quests.

PXR Port Gathertown
Digital attendees from across the Canada and beyond met and mingle online to watch the live feeds from Toronto and Vancouver, as they partook in EARTHMMO.

Left Photo: NPC for Hire by Thomas Vu. Photo 2: Gathertown photo by Amanda Baker.
Navigating the Festival & Conference Circuit
Ferryman Collective shared their personal experience and gave insight on how best to present XR performance projects at festivals and conferences.

Putt Putt Quest
Attendees played Ostinyo’s VRChat 18-hole mini golf course.

The Unknown Showcase
Presented by The Unknown Theatre, this showcase featured live VR Improv, Sketch and Stand-up comedy.
XR Access

Raven John asked: What are the limits our social structures create for XR, and what barriers can we change?

Quick, Draw!

In this VRChat world created by Maki Maki, attendees played an immersive Pictionary game where players are tasked with drawing and guessing words within VR.
PXR2023 World Build
Liam Karry, Myles Steel, and Cole Paskuski gave a behind-the-scenes tour of our custom-built PXR2023 world while discussing how it was concepted and created within VRChat.

Futurenote: Tamara Shogaolu
Tamara Shogaolu of Ado Ato Pictures shared her XR work and discussed how XR can be a tool to battle social injustice – and how to prevent it from creating wider rifts.

X Rtist Link Up Showcase
Our amazing cohort of students in the X Rtist Link Up took the stage and showed us their creations from their week immersed in VR.

“As a trans brown woman, the intersection of digital spaces and emancipatory art is where my voice is best heard and listened to. PXR serves that niche like no other conference does.”

“PXR is a groundbreaking conference, bringing leaders from across the globe to meet and inspire as new creators and artists enter this space. They are some of the first people to see the growth of this new storytelling genre and to bring those together who are creating the next iteration of storytelling.”

“The importance of a conference forum that is both in-person and online cannot be overstated, and the use of interactive technologies is truly a experiment towards a more connected tomorrow.”
“PXR continues to bring together people from around the world with different specializations and types of projects so they can cross-pollinate their ideas and make a more interesting artistic future.”

James Hyett, Guest Services Coordinator

“Amanda Lin, XR Producer

“I am extremely thankful to Single Thread and Electric Company Theatre for extending this opportunity to me. I am a more well-rounded artist now because of this conference and I look forward to taking the skills I learned and applying them to my future work.”
“The immersive environments created by various artists allowed for seamless collaboration and fostering connections that felt as genuine as those made in person... the insightful presentations left me inspired and eager to explore the boundless opportunities that XR offers.”

Mana Saei

“[PXR] is a celebration of creativity, and a catalyst for innovation. I left the conference feeling energized, empowered, and excited to have to connected with other passionate and enthusiastic people who are shaping this emerging storytelling space.”

Deidre V. Lyons, Ferryman Collective

“PXR2023 was one of the most creative virtual festivals that I have had the honor to be a part of. The world building and experience design for the audience in VRChat was thoughtfully designed and beautifully executed.”

Michaela Ternasky-Holland

“PXR2023 was a lovely experience as a presenter. The platform seamlessly fostered meaningful connections and discussions within the extended reality community, providing valuable insights that significantly enriched my work. The event’s thoughtful curation and engaged audience make it a standout in the XR landscape.”

Tamara Shogaolu, Ado Ato Pictures
PXR BY THE NUMBERS
PXR2023 delivered 6 days of programming over 2 weekends with 20 presentations on XR in Live Performance.
130+ people attended PXR 2023 from all across Canada and the globe!
In the past four years, PXR has put 100+ Meta Quest Virtual Reality headsets into the hands of artists, including 13 sent to remote northern communities.
Since 2020, PXR has paid over $450,000 to artists, stimulating new content creation in XR.
Single Thread and Electric Company Theatre have partnered with organizations to support PXR2023 and VR accessibility initiatives.
In partnership with Debbie Deer Productions, we expanded the IBPOC Fellowship program, welcoming back PXR Fellows from last year and supporting 8 IBPOC artists with an honourarium and their own Meta Quest II headsets.

We launched 3 in-person hubs which hosted 4 exclusive presentations and allowed 30+ people without their own VR headsets to experience the magic!
Mentored by Working XR Professionals, 9 students from across Canada came together over the course of the conference to create an original VR experience which was showcased as part of PXR2023.
SUPPORTERS

PXR2023 would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors, funders, and partners.

IBPOC Fellowship
Debbie Deer Productions
National Arts Centre
City of Kingston
Weird Ghosts

Venue Partners
Modern Fuel
Progress Lab 1422
Theatre Passe Muraille

In-Kind Support
Boca Del Lupo
Ferryman Collective
Kingston Theatre Alliance

PXR Conference + Experience Stream
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The Government of Canada
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XRtist Link-Up
University of Victoria
Lethbridge College
York University