

PXR 2023

CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE REPORT

single
thread^{XR}

ELECTRONIC
COMPANY
THEATRE

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WHAT IS PXR?

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.

2023 THEME

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!

MANDATE

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.

2023 PRESENTATIONS



Ferryman Collective and PXR2023 staff in VRChat. Photo by Amanda Baker.

NOV 10

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Bringing theatre
into multiplayer VR
using Volumetric Capture

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.



Photo 1: *Why PXR?* by Amanda Lin and Samantha Vu. Photo by Allie Amplify. Photo 2: *Bringing theatre into multiplayer VR* by Marco Cermussoni. Photo by Carla Ritchie.

Photo 3: Attendees in Gathertown. Photo by Amanda Baker.

NOV 11



Keynote:

Michaela Ternasky-Holland

Emmy and Webby award-winning XR Director Michaela Ternasky-Holland shared why XR storytelling creates real-world impact.

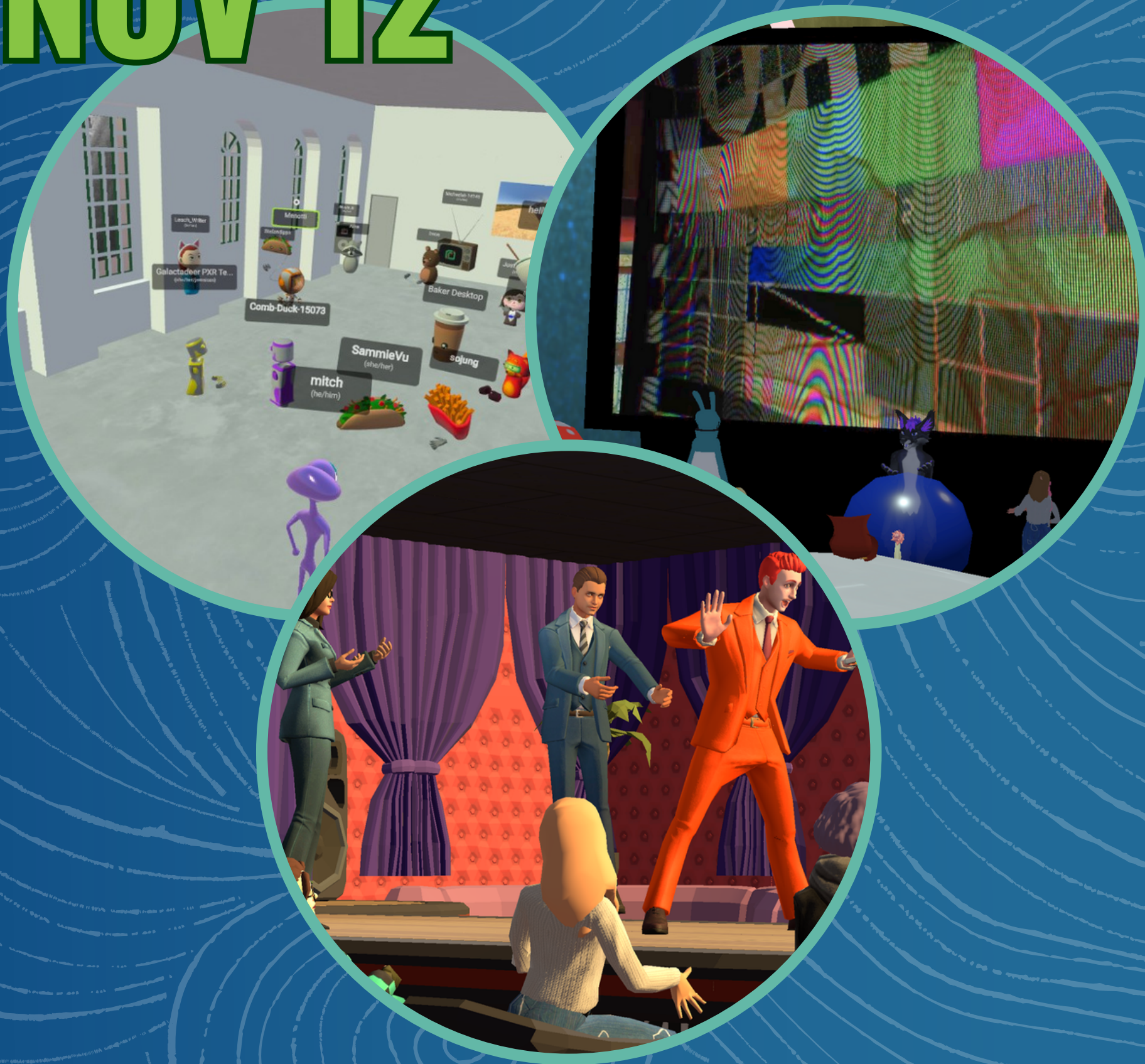
Dragon Magic, Freedom Giants

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.

NOV 12



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/AR theme park of the future where “nothing can go wrong”.

NOV 12

10



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.

Left Photo: *Sonic Mindscapes* by Mana Saei. Right Photo: *Live Performance 360* by Boca Del Lupo. Photos by Amanda Baker.

NOV 17

11



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.

NOV 18

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.



NOV 18

13



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.



Left Photo: *Quick, Draw!* by Maki Maki. Photo 2: *XR Access* by Raven John. Photos by Amanda Baker.

NOV 19



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 conceived 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.

XRtist Link Up Showcase

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

RESPONSE TO PYR2023

PYR 20
23
CONFERENCE



Dragon Magic, Freedom Giants by SplashMango in ENGAGE. Photo by Chris Madsen.

ATTENDEE RESPONSE

"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."

STAFF RESPONSE

"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."

Amanda Lin, XR Producer

"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*

PRESENTER RESPONSE

"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

"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."

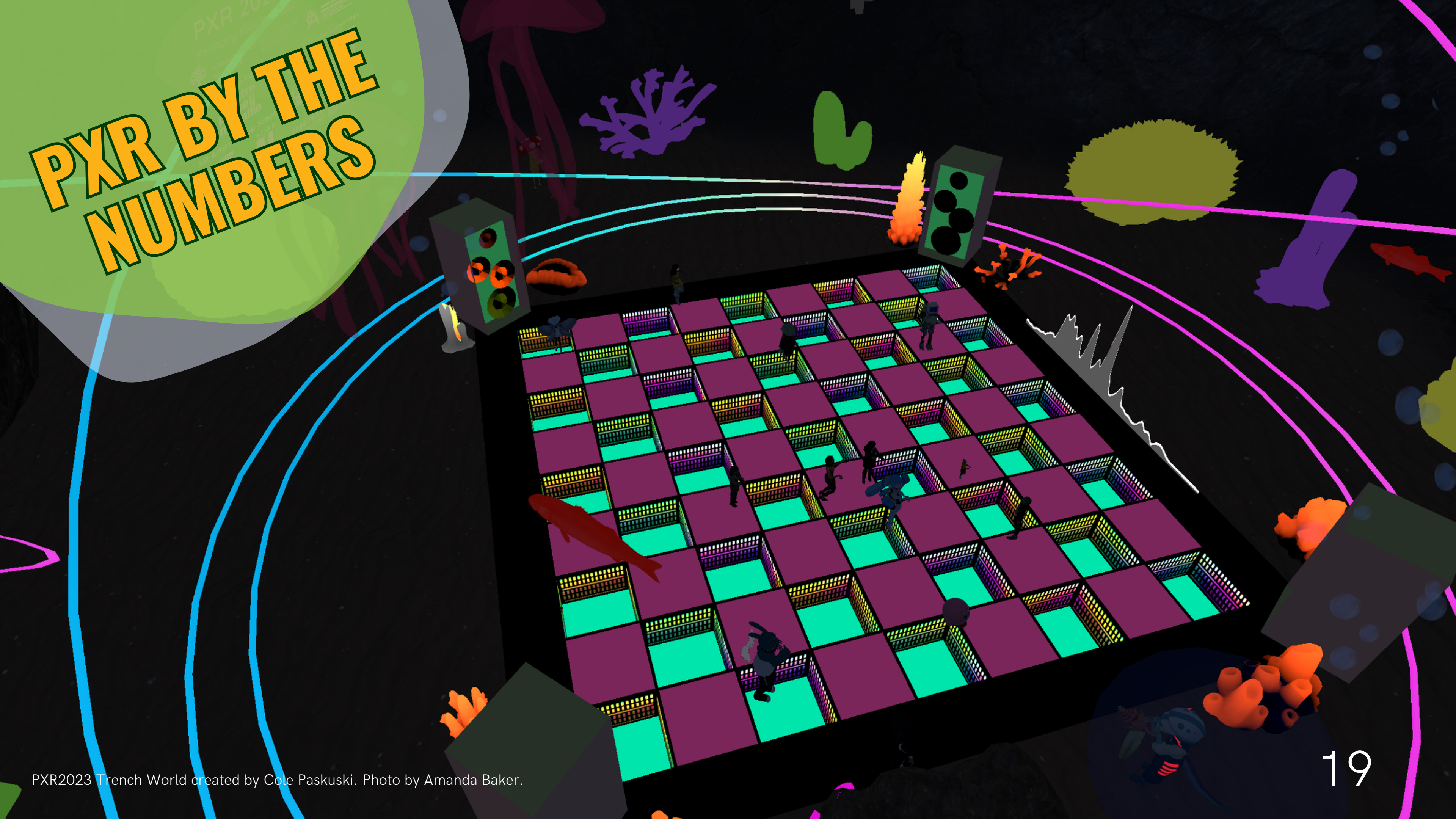
Tamara Shogaolu, Ado Ato Pictures

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

Deidre V. Lyons, Ferryman Collective

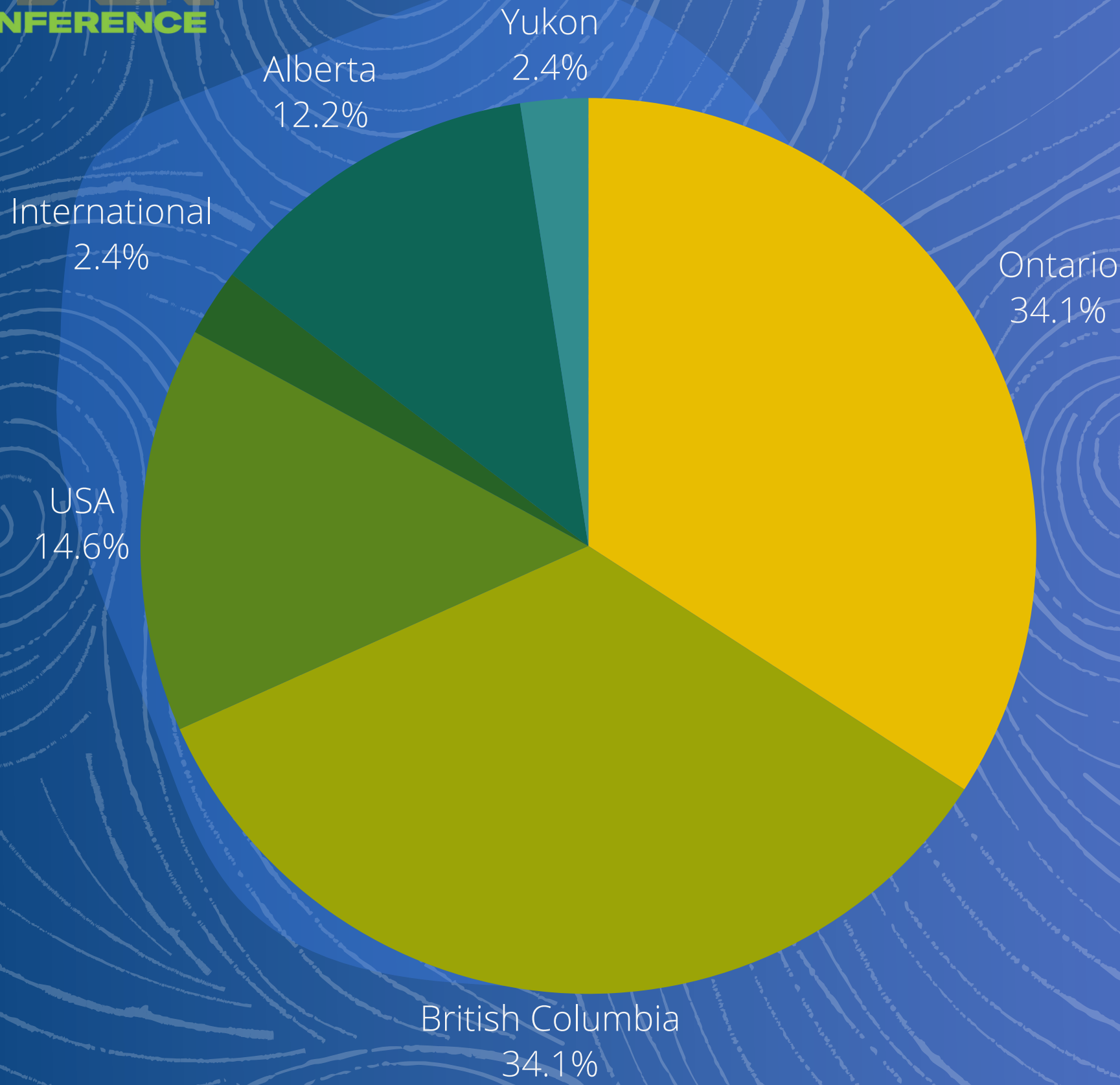


PXR BY THE NUMBERS



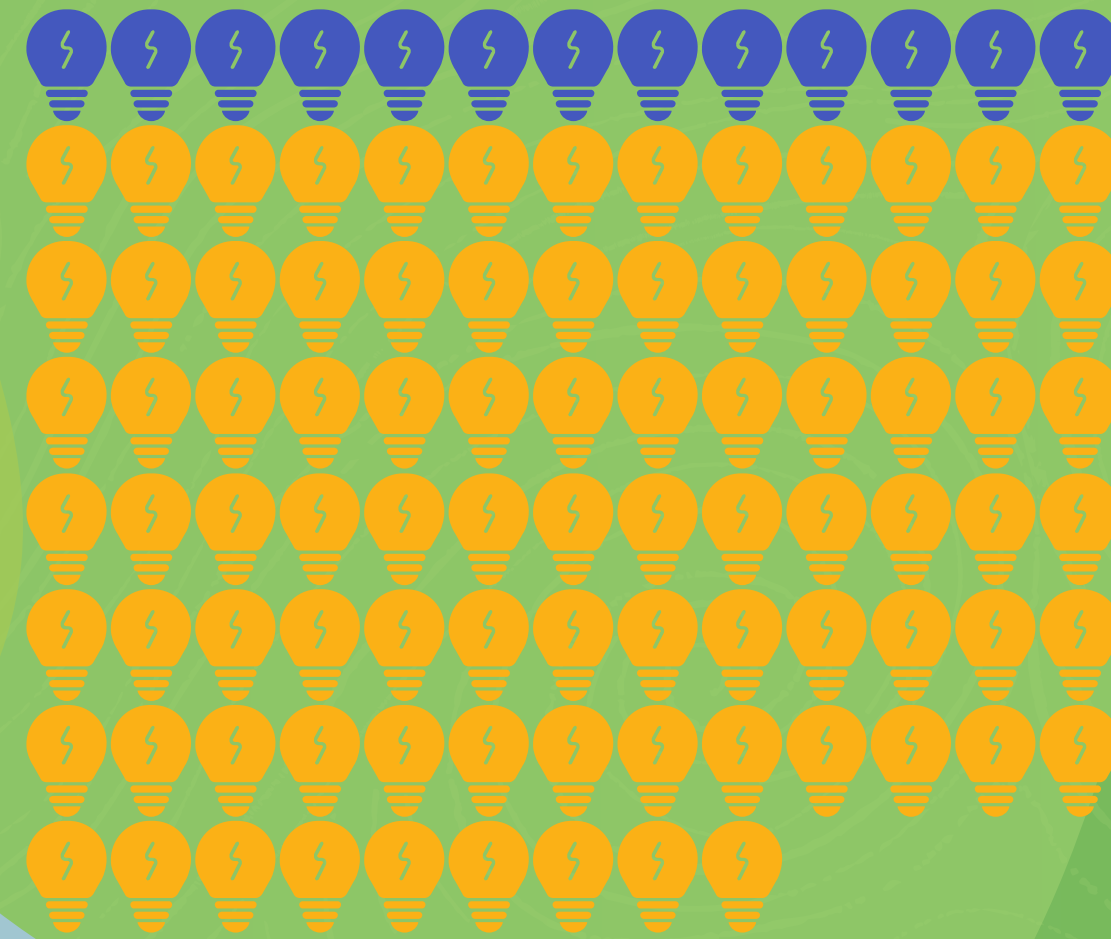


PXR2023 delivered **6** days of programming over **2** weekends with **20** presentations on XR in Live Performance.



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 **13** organizations to support PXR2023 and VR accessibility initiatives.

IBPOC FELLOWSHIP

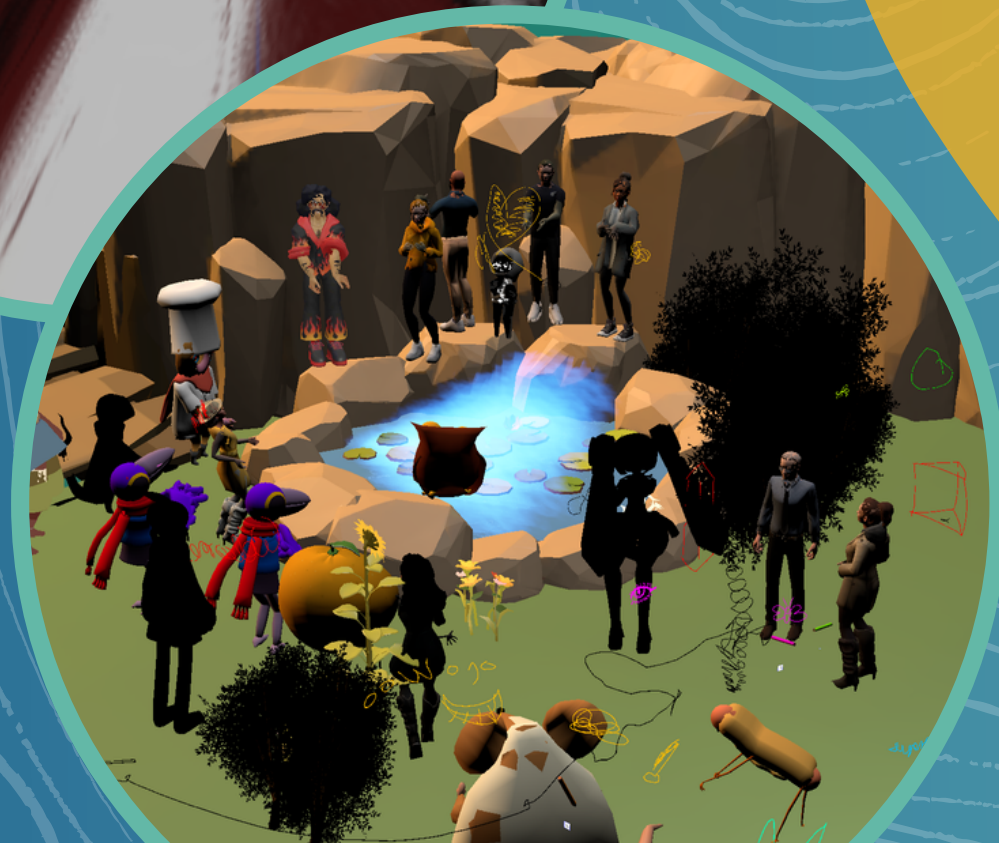
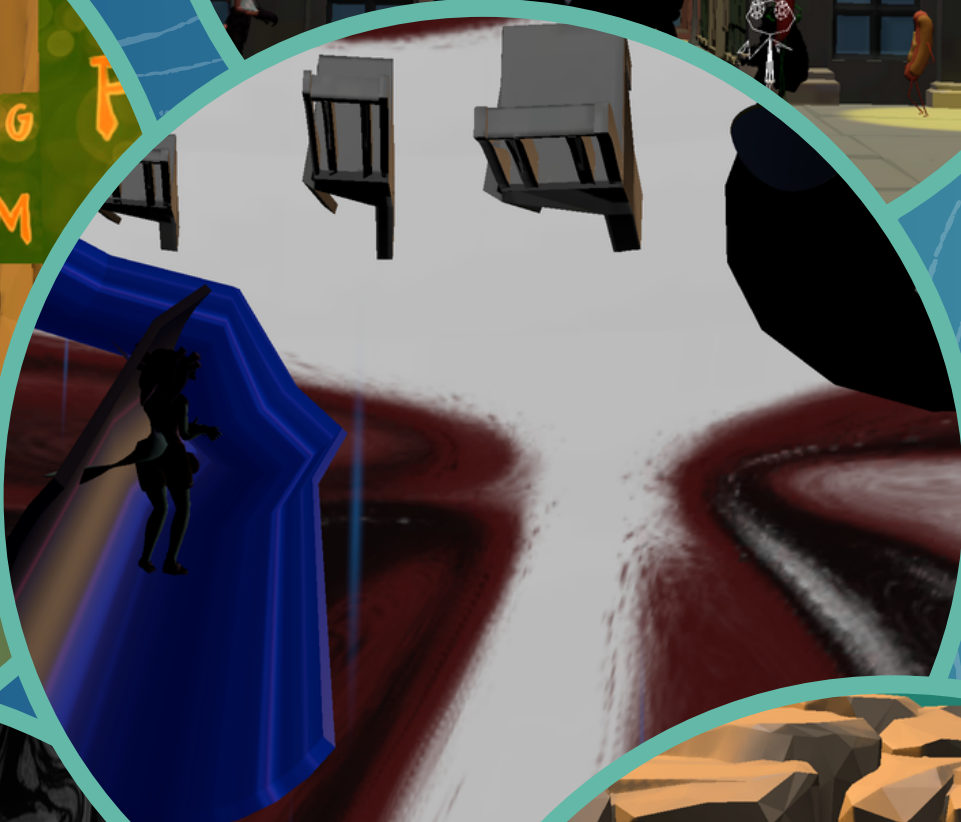
In partnership with Debbie Deer Productions, we expanded the IBPOC Fellowship program, welcoming back PXR Fellows from last year and supporting **8** IBPOC artists with an honourarium and their own Meta Quest II headsets.



PXR PORTS

We launched **3** in-person hubs which hosted **4** exclusive presentations and allowed **30+** people without their own VR headsets to experience the magic!





XRTIST STUDENT LINK UP

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

Canada Council for the Arts
The Government of Canada
Ontario Arts Council

XRtist Link-Up

University of Victoria
Lethbridge College
York University