

MK2 Launches International Sales on Director-Driven VR Content (EXCLUSIVE)

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COURTESY OF MK2

CANNES — Six months after opening Europe’s largest permanent virtual reality facility in Paris, MK2, a leading independent film group, is expanding its international sales division to start handling director-driven VR content from around the world.

MK2, which runs a thriving arthouse theater chain in Paris, will be launching in Cannes its first slate of VR content, including two shorts that have never been seen before: Momoko Seto’s “Planet,” a lavishly-lensed experimental short described by MK2 managing director Elisha Karmitz as a “Microcosmos” in virtual reality, and Benoit Lichté’s documentary “Dolphin Man 360” which follows apnea world champion William Trubridge and Sara Campbell as well as biologist Fabrice Schnokler.

MK2 will also start selling critically-acclaimed VR content that have already played at festivals, notably Pierre Zandrowicz's science fiction short "I, Philip," "Notes on Blindness: Into Darkness" which played at Sundance and Tribeca, as well as "Miyubi," the Sundance playing dramedy directed by Felix and Paul, and "Superhot," the first-person shooter game presented at South by Southwest.

Nathanael Karmitz, the CEO of MK2, said the wide-ranging VR roster is in line with the company's editorial line which centers around innovative, festival-friendly and crossover auteur titles like Naomi Kawase's Cannes-competing "Radiance"

On top of screening and selling VR content, MK2 is also open to board projects as a co-producer.

"We believe this year marks the coming of age of virtual reality, and soon this technology will have a profound impact on nearly every segment of society – entertainment, health, justice, and more; like the Internet did in the late 90's," argued Elisha Karmitz, citing the Oscar-winning helmer Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu who is making his VR debut this year in Cannes with "Carne y Arena;" and Steven Spielberg's upcoming "Ready Player One."

"At MK2, we aspire to break new grounds, allow for this new industry to flourish, nurture emerging VR talent and work with well-established filmmakers looking to experiment with virtual reality," added Elisha Karmitz.

The VR venue, located near Paris's digital startup cluster and adjacent to MK2's arthouse multiplex in the 13th arrondissement, was built with a budget of 1.5 million and expects over 100,000 visitors this year. Spreading over 3300 square feet, the state-of-the art facility also frequently hosts events such as the recent Kaleidoscope Volume II festival. The place contains 12 VR pods for individual experiences and large screens allowing visitors to follow the action in real time.

"The idea behind these diverse VR initiative is to build a chain of rights for distributors and improve their access to VR content through festivals, VR-dedicated facilities and digital platforms," said Nathanael Kamitz.

MK2 is also partnering up with the Paris Court-Devant festival, a startup called Virtelio, and the Luxembourg Film Fund to launch a VR script contest. The winner of the prize will be chosen by a jury of entertainment professionals during the Paris Court-Devant fest and will receive a grant of 150,000 Euros (provided

by the Luxembourg Film Fund) to complete his or her project. The contest will be announced during a presser in Cannes and is open to scripts from across the globe.

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