

STORYFUTURES IMMERSIVE ARCHIVE R&D CHALLENGE:

OVERVIEW

Calling creative companies with a track record in story-driven VR experiences and interest in innovating with film and TV archives:

- Up to 10 x R&D awards of minimum £50,000 on offer to make 3-10 minute VR experiences
- Develop emerging talent with additional £15,000 award for hiring, mentoring and developing diverse creatives from a national pool curated by StoryFutures across roles such as writers, designers, developers, artists, producers and more
- Opportunity to participate in the national Festival UK* 2022 project led by StoryFutures/StoryFutures Academy and its partners, including David Olusoga, the BFI, Nexus Studios, ISO Design, The Reading Agency and ProduceUK
- Gain privileged access to BFI and BBC archives and substantial in-kind support from StoryFutures and Partners

This is a unique opportunity to collaborate with world-leading researchers, foster diverse creative talent and showcase your work to a national audience of thousands during 2022.

Deadline: Midnight, Wednesday, 25th August 2021

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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND:

StoryFutures has been commissioned by Festival UK* 2022 to deliver an ambitious experiment in film, broadcast and augmented reality, that will combine public archives, with immersive storytelling to ask who are we, where did we come from, and where are we headed?

Together with StoryFutures Academy, our partnership draws together the British Film Institute, Uplands TV, broadcaster and film-maker David Olusoga, design-led cultural experts ISO Design, immersive experience producers Nexus Studios, placemakers and event specialists Produce UK, and a network of national libraries through The Reading Agency.

At the heart of what we deliver will be great immersive storytelling rooted in an ethos that speaks to the Festival UK* 2022 aims:

- Open – beginning a new chapter in our histories of public places and creative people
- Original – creating a new format and approach to showcasing the diverse creativity of our nations
- Optimistic – looking to the past to inspire, confront, rebuild, celebrate and create an ongoing conversation across time and place that changes how we think about who we are

SECTION 2: THE CHALLENGE: THE IMMERSIVE ARCHIVE

We are looking to commission eligible creative companies from London and the 'Gateway Cluster' [[click here for geographic eligibility](#)] to produce 10 x VR R&D projects that respond to our StoryFutures Festival UK* 2022 challenge:

Re-animate the BFI and BBC Archive using immersive technologies in innovative and experimental ways to reinvigorate our connection to public places in a moment of national celebration.

Selected companies will use and reinterpret our national media archives to develop new VR experiences and storytelling approaches. Royal Holloway, University of London experts will support companies' quests to push the boundaries and use media archives like never before.

You can start your journey into the archive [here](#).

We are seeking companies that are passionate about innovating in VR storytelling, from interaction design to spatial storytelling to formal techniques that explore point of view, editing, play or use of underpinning technologies from AI to ray tracing, lidar, photogrammetry or other. We are open to a range of responses that might encompass animation, live action and even audio-driven.

These VR R&D projects will have the opportunity to showcase as part of our Festival UK* 2022 project alongside a suite of multimedia experiences.

The approach and the content must be applicable to a family audience (children age 12+) and it is important to note we are looking to reach mainstream and underserved audiences and those that might be new to VR.

SECTION 3: R&D COLLABORATION

This R&D challenge asks companies to collaborate with one of our academic partners, who have research expertise in a number of these themes. We have included the biographies of our academic partners separately and we ask that you read those biographies thoroughly before you indicate who you would like to meet during the StoryLab development process.

Full profiles of each academic can be found [here](#)

SECTION 4: TALENT DEVELOPMENT

The StoryFutures Festival UK* 2022 creative experiences showcased across the country have a commitment to develop emerging diverse talent as part of this project. This talent will be experienced in production rather than new entrants.

The 10 selected companies for this programme will be expected to join this commitment, including providing mentoring and career development opportunities

for one Emerging Creative talent in their business for the duration of production. Roles might include: creative producers, writers, animators, designers.

This will include being asked to sign up to diversity and inclusion standards modelled on BFI, BBC and StoryFutures Academy commitments. Companies will be able to take part in an interview process for the selection of this talent in November 2021

SECTION 5: WHAT IS ON OFFER

Winning Creative Companies will receive the following:

- Minimum £50,000 cash R&D production budget to build a 3-10-minute archive-based VR experience in collaboration with one of the Academic research interests outlined in [Section 3](#). Please note, the award is outside the terms of VAT. Please see detailed 'heads of terms' for more information
- £15,000 cash as fee to hire and support the development of a diverse Emerging Creative talent as part of the production of the VR experience
- Training for the Emerging Creative by StoryFutures Academy in immersive storytelling
- 15-25 days of Academic partner(s) time to offer expertise in the topic area that the company chooses to address
- The chance to showcase the VR experience to thousands of audiences UK-wide as part of a national tour during 2022
- New IP developed by the company as part of the project, with the ability to commercially exploit this IP after a designated showcase period with Festival UK* 2022 from July 2022-Feb 2023
- Access to cutting edge expertise in creative storytelling, technology, audiences and business models at the StoryFutures R&D partnership to inform prototype development; and
- Introductions to private, public and third sector organisations who could offer routes to further development and market roll-out

To participate, the selected companies will need to:

- Provide in-kind contribution equivalent to minimum of £5,000, this must include:
 - A commitment of minimum 10 days of senior staff time to developing and mentoring the Emerging Creative
 - Two R&D or skills workshops with students and/or the group of emerging creatives recruited as part of the StoryFutures Festival UK*2022 project. The nature of these engagements will be agreed between the appointed company and academic collaborator, taking

- account of the current Covid19 Public Health England and UK Government guidelines
- Companies may also include any of the following as part of their in-kind contribution: additional staff time, IP, facilities or value of equipment acquired or used for the project
 - Commit to regular meetings with the Academic research team online or on-site at Royal Holloway's Egham campus when and if the current public health emergency allows.

OUTCOMES

1. A Virtual Reality R&D Prototype for Oculus Quest (see below) that provides an audio-visual and interactive benchmark of the experience which can demonstrate the core ideas as well as evidences some user-testing to help identify further routes to development and application; and
2. A 'next stage' document, written with the support of the StoryFutures R&D team, including ideas for further development of the prototype, technical feasibility study, piloting and evaluation approach, and a short business plan outlining possible commercial models; and
3. A 'career development report' for the Emerging Creative. This does not have to include a commitment to hire the creative, but should identify relevant skills training, networks and development opportunities for the creative as well as how the company will support them. A template will be provided.

Overall the growth and success of your business through developing a new collaboration with academic researchers and working with brilliant emerging talent is crucial to the success of the programme. Companies should approach the challenge with a commitment to innovation, collaboration and talent development.

TECHNICAL AND AUDIENCE SPECIFICATION:

R&D PROTOTYPES MUST BE:

- Delivered for Oculus Quest as an APK or via the Oculus Apps Lab.
- Between 3-10 minutes long

The VR experiences must be appropriate for:

- Audiences 12+
- Audiences across the UK

ELIGIBILITY

Full eligibility criteria are provided with the application form. This opportunity is, however, only open to companies across the breadth of the [Gateway Cluster and Greater London](#).

For London-based companies, please note that our remit to support growth in the Gateway Cluster region:

1. Prioritises companies local to the region;
 2. Is open to London-based applications able to demonstrate a willingness to collaborate and invest in the Cluster region. Examples of such commitments include hiring cluster-based subcontractors/freelancers, delivering workshops for cluster-based organisations, or offering support in other ways. We will discuss with applicants what these commitments might look like in the context of the current public health crisis.
- The named applicant must work at a Small to Medium Enterprise (SME), with less than 250 staff;
 - You must confirm that, if selected, your company is able to deliver by **Sunday, 1 May, 2022**
 - Agree to the R&D prototype produced being eligible for free-to-access events as part of Festival UK* 2022 showcase until January 2023.
 - You must agree to the reporting terms of our funder, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and that non-commercially sensitive insights will be published in industry and academic reports as part of the research collaboration;

SECTION 6: TIMELINE AND HOW TO APPLY

This is a 3-stage process, with stages 2 and 3 offered as a paid R&D sprint to develop collaborative pitches with academic experts:

Stage 1 - Initial Application

- Please be sure you meet the eligibility and selection criteria
- Please read both the [Academic Partner](#) profiles and the [Heads of Terms](#) documents
- Complete the application form [available here](#),
- **Deadline for applications:** Midnight Wednesday August 25th, 2021

Applications will be judged against the following criteria:

- Track Record;
- R&D opportunity;
- Research Collaboration;
- Audience Insight;
- Company Robustness.

Stage 2 - Collaborative R&D StoryLab Workshop:

- We hope to select 10 companies to be invited to attend our StoryLab 2.5-day workshop on **Tuesday 14th – Thursday 16th September, 2021** where the companies will be guided through the next step of concept development with the expectation that selected companies will move forward to commission. A 90-minute Briefing Session will be hosted online and two full days at the StoryFutures office located in Royal Holloway University, Egham
- As part of the workshops, the companies will be given access to StoryFutures Festival UK*2022 project team to understand the opportunity in further detail and meet with the academic researchers to discuss your ideas, find and define suitable collaborative approaches.

Stage 3 - Concept Development and Approvals

- Upon completion of the workshop companies will have two weeks to work with chosen academic collaborators to develop up to two alternative VR prototype proposals.
- Deadline to submit concept proposals for approval is **Friday, 1st October 2021**. Of the two proposals presented by each company we expect to select and commission one. However, in the unlikely event that neither of the submitted proposals fulfils the brief, they will not move forward to commission. We will endeavour to support and assist all 10 SMEs who have been invited to attend the StoryLab to submit successful proposals.
- Successful companies will be notified by: **Friday, 15th October 2021**

Stage 4 - Production and Delivery

- Companies will be able to interview Emerging Creatives November, 2021
- Production will commence December – April 2022
- The VR 3-10 min prototype experience will need to be delivered by: **Sunday, 1st May 2022**

Deadline for applications: Midnight, Wednesday, 25th August 2021

Complete the Application Form [here](#).

About: StoryFutures

StoryFutures works with businesses in the Gateway Cluster and Greater London to support and fund innovation in next-generation storytelling formats and technologies. The '*Gateway Cluster*' lies immediately to the west of London.

We exist to fuel innovation and growth in immersive storytelling by sharing cutting-edge research with SMEs. We also foster collaborations between world-leading institutions, creative industries and sources of funding.

With joint commissioning partners like the National Gallery, Discovery, Roald Dahl Marvellous Children's Charity and Heathrow Airport, we aim to innovate in story-form, evolve business models, develop data management processes, enhance audience experiences and help SMEs secure funding for growth.

About: [Festival UK* 2022](#)

Festival UK* 2022 will take place across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It will deliver a programme of ground-breaking new commissions with the ambition of reaching millions; bringing people together and promoting the UK's creativity to the world. Ten creative projects have been selected following an extensive R&D programme and rigorous assessment process to form the Festival's commissioned programme.

Led by Chief Creative Officer, Martin Green CBE, a new organisation, Festival 2022 Ltd, has been established in Birmingham to curate, manage and promote the Festival; working with strategic delivery bodies within each nation to devise, deliver and commission the programme. The Festival will demonstrate the important role that creativity plays in our lives, as well as providing unforgettable experiences. This investment comes at a time of need for sectors impacted by the global pandemic and will support the creation of work and jobs.