

THE IMAGINARY FRIEND

Cross media plan & distribution strategy

Goal

To build an engagement strategy that goes beyond the festival circuit and reaches out to a broader audience around the themes that this experience offers. This project already falls into a lot of hybrid spaces— fiction, animation, cinematic-interactive, etc.

Audience

The Imaginary Friend audience breaks down into two main categories. An interdisciplinary professional audience will engage discussions around the boundary-pushing nature of virtual reality technology and narrative design. It is imperative however, that we engage a broader audience than just the VR community.

Discrete & professional —> networking

VR makers and lovers (Men and women interested in technology age 20-50) animators in real time professionals.

Cinephiles and short film lovers.

University and research organizations focused on narrative design, user experience, performance, real-time computer graphics

Broad & urban —> engagement impact

Men and Women aged 10 -50 interested in family movies. People interested in kid's imaginative worlds and fantasy stories. People interested in the latest technology. People sensitive to children's well-being, parental issues, etc.

Distribution Strategy

We are interested to a variety of distribution platforms and revenue models that are emerging across two main areas: location-based entertainment (LBE), and through online platforms for entertainment consumed at home.

Festivals

For arts and cultural projects, selection, awards and press from world class festivals are essential for industry and audience validation and future monetisation opportunities, particularly for the many small or newly formed creative companies. Planning a festival strategy and choosing the best place to premiere work is the starting point of any distribution plan. Considered are festivals with significant press attendance and awards for a premiere. Festivals have varying requirements for premieres, for example Tribeca Film Festival or Venice Film Festival, the A-list festivals with an official competition selection for immersive content, with a jury and awards that require world and international premieres.

We are aiming for a premiere at Venice VR 2022, at part of the Venice Biennale.

Internationally we are talking to the Phi Centre in Montreal, The National Theatre in London, BOZAR -Centre of Fine Art in Brussels and the EYE Institute in Amsterdam. A-list Film and media festivals that we are connected to include The Venice Filmfestival, Tribeca, Sundance and SXSW in the USA, Cannes

XR and New Images in France, CPHdoc in Denmark, Sheffield and York Mediale in the UK, The Netherlands Film Festival, Go Short, IFFR, Cinekid, The VR Days Europe in the Netherlands, and more.

In Brabant

We are discussing the possibilities of presenting/distributing The Imaginary Friend to cultural venues in Brabant like NATLAB, PLAYGROUNDS, De Effenaar and BROET. We are also talking about collaborations with these partners about the exchange of expertise and educational purposes. Natlab is working on a VR/AR program for the next 4 years for which The Imaginary Friend will function as a pilot project.

Please find several Letters of Intention attached, i.e. from Playgrounds, Natlab and Broet.

Submarine Channel has a close collaboration with Playgrounds and the School of Arts in Brabant. We have organized events together; we exchange our expertise and help each other find young talented artists and makers to work on our projects. Submarine Channel is part of the consortium of partners of the talent development program Playgrounds NEXT. Corine Meijers is taking part as a mentor / Coach at NEXT. We have a strong relationship with students and teachers of St/ Joost, St Lucas, Avans. We tested, presented and evaluated our Immersive projects with students, and students often find their first jobs at Submarine / Submarine Animation / Submarine Channel.

Steye Hallema worked as programmer for the VPRO Medialab in Eindhoven in 2015/16 with the mission to investigate the storytelling potential of technology that was developed in Eindhoven. In 2019 he basically landed a position with basically the same mission now in the role of the Volumetric Director for the 4DR studios. In Steye's own words: "as a pioneer and innovator myself, I have always admired Eindhoven for being such a rich breeding ground for innovation and design. One of my personal heroes is inventor, composer and engineer Dick Raaijmakers who during his time as engineer in Philips' Natlab, played a significant role in the invention of the synthesizer and electronic music. I was very happy and proud to get a position as programmer for the VPRO in the same building! It is then and there when I learned how Brabant is able to achieve so many big achievements by the many professionals working closely together in an environment of knowledge and trust. This is why I immediately said yes when I was asked to work for the 4DRs studios. I am very grateful to work together with so many great inspiring and knowledgeable people in technology, innovation, design, media and education.

Distributors

Working with an international distributor or licensing expert can increase distribution chances for the project. We are in discussion with Diversion Cinéma from the beginning of the development phase. Diversion Cinema is a sales agent in France, Paris, that is closely collaborating with Casette Stories, a young new distributor from the Netherlands that is focusing on the Benelux. They have gained a lot of knowledge about the presentation of VR experiences, and in making a proper strategy for the revenue with ticket sales. We are very interested in the exchange of expertise between us.

Online Distribution

We are going to publish the single user version with a flat fee on store fronts Oculus, Viveport and Steam. In this case there is no presale or acquisition involved and the producer self-publishes.

Promotion strategy

Submarine Channel has over 15 years of experience with the production and distribution of award-winning innovative interactive project that explore new ways of storytelling. Its award-winning VR short film 'Ashes to Ashes' (2017) is one example. Submarine Channel produces and distributes all its

projects on its online channel (submarinechannel.com). By mixing ground-breaking interactive projects with strong editorial content, Submarine Channel has built a loyal and growing national and international audience of creators, professionals, and students from the creative industries (film, animation, illustration, motion design, VR) and people interested in new ways of storytelling.

Submarine Channel's Marketing Mix

Yearly, Submarine Channel reaches 100.000 visitors through its own website: Submarinechannel.com. Via its social media platforms, Submarine Channel has over 25.000 followers combined and with 3.000 people being subscribed to the monthly Submarine Channel-newsletter. This is just the organic reach Submarine Channel has on his various platforms and we use for marketing purposes to build a community for The Imaginary Friend. The actual reach is forecasted to be much higher, simply because of the use of advertisements on the various social media platforms. Down below an overview of Submarine Channel's social media platforms which will be used during the marketing campaign: Submarinechannel.com (100.000 visitors yearly), the newsletter (4.000 subscribers), Facebook (18.750 likes), Instagram (1380 followers), Twitter (4.445 followers).

Submarine Channel's newsletter has almost 4000 subscribers and it is still growing. Besides our own newsletter, we will also aim to get exposure in various newsletters from relevant influencers, bloggers and the newsletters from the festivals where the project is presented and the newsletters of the various distribution platforms.

Making-off

We are planning to distribute a making-off in the running-up to The Imaginary Friend's initial release. The making-off primarily serves as promotional content. Secondly the making-off also serves as educational content. Submarine Channel's community consists mainly of creators. During the making-off we'll be showcasing the process of using cutting-edge technology to tell an immersive story. The making-off will be distributed on the Submarine Channel's website and via its social media platforms.