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IMMERSION 5.0: Virtual Reality Creation Lab seeks applicants for artist residency

Wilmington, NC– The School of Making Thinking, in partnership with Cucalorus Film Foundation, has launched the application for the fifth iteration of our virtual reality creation lab, IMMERSION 5.0. The application is open through January with a submission deadline of February 1st, 2023.

The IMMERSION Lab is a combination of a virtual reality creation residency and an invitation for artists to engage the racial history of America within the context of a southern city: Wilmington, North Carolina. Bringing multiple meanings of immersion together, this residency is an opportunity for artists to put critical thinking into practice through immersive media projects. Previous experience with 360 cameras is not necessary – we provide the cameras and the instruction on how to use them. Participating artists exhibit their work made in residence at the Cucalorus Film Festival in November.

Since 2011, The School of Making Thinking (SMT) has been offering transformative artist residencies, classes, festivals and conferences that enhance artists' practices and shift cultural conversations about the power of art and community. The IMMERSION residency was born in 2017 when program founders – filmmakers Josephine Decker and Naima Ramos-Chapman, SMT Executive Director Sophie Traub and Cucalorus Executive Director Dan Brawley – put their heads together about how to create a social-justice focused video creation residency. At the time, VR technology was just taking off and tech companies were eager for content. Once the tech sponsorship was secured, the artists were free to explore the aesthetic and political implications of the new medium of VR, and develop experimental, collaborative pieces. IMMERSION has been such a success that we have reiterated the residency each year since its founding.

“In these times of political, social, climate and economic crises, we believe artists have an important role to play in the changes most needed in our time. Artists need support in order to harness the potential power of their arts careers towards the changes they want to see in the world. IMMERSION provides a space for artists to develop and play with the skills of channeling their practice towards social change. The program equips a group of diverse artists with the tools to work in a new media form, supports artists to collaborate well across differences of identity and culture, and invites artists to engage with the deep realities of the geographic and social context from which their work in residence emerges,” says Artistic Executive Director, Sophie Traub.

From Kesswa, Detroit-based artist after her time at IMMERSION 4.0, “How i’m doing: the time I spent here has been deeply transformational. the work i’m making feels so capacious, in ways that also feel exciting, inspiring, and divinely aligned. i feel great privilege in being able to literally sculpt a world big enough to hold the complexity of my experiences shared and personal. i feel empowered to commit to the departures necessary for the expansion of my professional horizons and most heartfelt dreams. i’m thrilled to keep reading and writing, being and making from a 4 dimensional place, always.” @kesswa on Instagram.



IMMERSION 4.0 artists at the end of their time in residence on the Cucalorus campus, in August 2022.

The IMMERSION residency is made possible through a partnership between The School of Making Thinking and Cucalorus Film Foundation, and through sponsorships from Toastlerlab, Pomp&Clout, UNCW and Brook Hopper.

Find our more about the IMMERSION 5.0 application and apply on our website at <https://www.theschoolofmakingthinking.com/immersion5.html>

Follow our journey on social media @theschoolofmakingthinking and @cucalorus on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). More about our programs, board of directors, and organization as a whole on our website at www.cucalorus.org and www.theschoolofmakingthinking.com