
**A NEW PROGRAM TO SUPPORT FRENCH VR
AND IMMERSIVE PROJECTS IN THE UNITED STATES
JUST LAUNCHED**

**April 5, 2018, NEW YORK—** The **Cultural Services of the French Embassy**, in partnership with **Unifrance**, the **Institut français**, the **CNC**, and **FACE Foundation**, launch **French Immersion**, a new program aiming to increase the export of French augmented and virtual reality projects and immersive experiences to the United States.

The new program will support immersive experiences made with digital and interactive tools including, Virtual Reality (VR), 360 videos, Augmented Reality (AR), Mixed Reality (MR), video games, location-based VR, and immersive art involving new technologies. The program accompanies the yearly selection of French projects presented at festivals and cultural institutions in the United States. Grants are intended to help fund the diffusion of the work in the US. More information is available here: <http://frenchculture.org/grants-and-programs/film-tv-and-new-media/7756-french-immersion>.

This spring, several French Immersion grantees will be presented at the Tribeca Film Festival (April 18-29) in New York, including “BattleScar” (New York Premiere) by Nico Casavecchia and Martín Allais, “Firebird: The Unfinished” by Balthazar Auxietre (World Premiere), and “Vestige” by Aaron Bradbury (World Premiere).

“While artists in France often benefit from financial support for the production of VR projects at home, it can be a struggle to export and present work abroad” said **Bénédicte de Montlaur, Cultural Counselor of the French Embassy**. “Raising the visibility of French VR in the US has been part of our mission at the French Embassy for several years. Today, we intend to expand this mission to provide French artists with the support they need to increase their visibility in the US, and to do so, we have joined forces with our French partners: UniFrance, the Institut français, the CNC, and FACE Foundation.”

This initiative is part of an increasing interest in the development of VR and immersive projects in Europe and the United States. Over the past few years, movie directors in the United States—including Alejandro Iñárritu, Wes Anderson, Darren Aronofsky—have begun working with VR.

In France, the CNC has supported approximately 120 VR projects since the appearance of the first virtual reality project there in 2014. The Cultural Services of the French Embassy has helped to support the presentation and distribution of a number of these projects to the US market, including “Notes on Blindness: Into Darkness” (produced by Ex Nihilo, ARTE France and AudioGaming, in co-production with Archer's Mark), a 2015 Tribeca Film Institute grantee presented at Night of Philosophy and Ideas at the Brooklyn Public Library in 2017; “The Enemy” by war photographer Karim Ben Khelifa (produced by Camera Lucida, France Télévisions, ONF/NFB, Dpt and Emissive), presented in 2014 at the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in its very first version and in 2017 at the MIT Museum in Boston; and “Sergeant James” by Alexandre Perez (produced by Floréal Films) shown at the Tribeca Film Festival 2017 and Colcoa 2017.

Since 2014, the French Embassy has developed strong partnerships with various U.S. festivals and institutions including Tribeca Film Festival in New York, Film Gates Miami, and Colcoa in L.A., to encourage the presentation of French productions. “The Cultural Services of the French Embassy have been an invaluable asset in the development of our work in the U.S., connecting us with key players in the American digital media industry” said **Arnaud Colinart, producer and co-founder of Atlas V**. “Without their support, many of our award winning VR projects such as *Notes On Blindness* (Storyscape Award 2016, Sundance New Frontier 2016), *Spheres* (Sundance New Frontier 2018) or *Battlescar* (Sundance New Frontier 2018) wouldn’t have been presented in US festivals.”

**ABOUT** *The* ***Cultural Services of the French Embassy*** *promotes the best of French arts, literature, cinema, digital innovation, language, and higher education across the US. Based in New York City, Washington D.C., and eight other cities across the country, the Cultural Services brings artists, authors, intellectuals, and innovators to cities nationwide. It also builds partnerships between French and American artists, institutions, and universities on both sides of the Atlantic. In New York, through its bookshop Albertine, it fosters French-American exchange around literature and the arts* [*http://frenchculture.org*](http://frenchculture.org)

*Under the patronage of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and of the Ministry of Culture, the* ***Institut français****, which serves the reputation of France abroad, promotes artists, ideas and works, the French language, and the creative cultural industries. It helps organize professional communities while encouraging artistic exchanges and dialogues between cultures. The Institut français serves as an implement for influence and cooperation, a source of expertise and advice. The Institut français maintains a presence in 96 countries and is the primary partner in the French cultural network abroad (the Institut français abroad, the cultural services of the embassies, and the Alliances françaises). institutfrancais.com/en*

*Created in 1946, the* ***Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC)*** *is a public administrative organization, set up as a separate and financially independent entity which comes under the authority of the French ministry of culture and communication. Its principal missions are regulatory; support for the film, broadcast, video, multimedia and technical industries; promotion of film and television for distribution to all audiences and preservation and development of the film heritage.* [*www.cnc.fr/*](http://www.cnc.fr/)

***UniFrance*** *is the organization in charge of promoting French cinema throughout the world. Created in 1949, in the form of an association under the law of 1901, UniFrance films is administered by French state authorities, in particular the CNC (Centre national du cinéma et de l’image animée). The association has nearly 1000 members: producers of feature films and shorts, sales agents, directors, actors, authors (screenwriters) and talent agents.*[*www.unifrance.org*](http://www.unifrance.org)

***FACE Foundation*** *is an American nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting French-American relations through innovative cultural and educational projects. In partnership with the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, FACE promotes artistic, literary and educational exchange and collaboration between creative professionals from both countries. With additional corporate, foundation, and individual support, FACE administers grant programs in the performing and visual arts, cinema, translation, and secondary and higher education, while providing financial sponsorship to French-American festivals and other cultural initiatives. FACE focuses on new and recent work of living artists and the promotion of bilingualism and the French language. FACE Foundation (French-American Cultural Exchange) is a 501(c)(3) organization chartered by the state of New York.* [www.face-foundation.org](http://www.face-foundation.org)

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