

Fovrth Studios Releases AUTHENTICALLY US: We're Still Here
Virtual reality documentary explores transgender and two-spirit identities

NEW YORK CITY, SEATTLE & MENLO PARK (March 5, 2018) – Oculus VR for Good, Pride Foundation, and Fovrth Studios will release the full-length virtual reality documentary AUTHENTICALLY US: We're Still Here at the South by Southwest (SxSW) film festival on March 12, 2018.

The film was directed by Fovrth Studios director Jesse (Jesus) Ayala. AUTHENTICALLY US: We're Still Here was co-produced by **Oculus VR for Good**, a creators lab leveraging Virtual Reality technology and storytelling to tell stories about social issues across the world, and **Pride Foundation**, a regional community foundation committed to making the world safer and better for LGBTQ people across the Northwest.

AUTHENTICALLY US: We're Still Here is the first film in a series of original documentaries that bring viewers into the lives of transgender and gender diverse Americans, who, through living authentically, are enriching our communities across the United States.

The documentary follows the story of Aiden Crawford, a Two-Spirit artist and historian in Boise, Idaho, who struggles to preserve and revive his heritage in a race against time. Two-Spirit is a cultural term describing the fluidity of gender identity and sexuality with respect to traditional tribal roles across First Nations throughout North America. Today, few Two-Spirit elders remain active across North American First Nations, and Aiden's story represents the intergenerational struggle to learn, educate, and pass down the wisdom of his First Nations Two Spirit elders.

The name "We're Still Here" is an anglicization of the Idaho State motto and reflects Aiden's purpose as a member of both Idaho and LGBTQ+ communities.

The film is being launched in partnership with Pride Foundation. "As a transgender man, I believe this project comes at a critical time in the fight for transgender equality. Across the country, we are facing yet another set of hateful and vilifying efforts aimed at gutting local nondiscrimination ordinances, ranging from eroding protections to allow businesses and agencies to discriminate against LGBT people based on religious beliefs, to anti-transgender legislation and ballot initiatives," said Jeremiah Allen, Pride Foundation Project Director.

"Our organization is excited by the opportunity to utilize innovative storytelling tools to offer a broad audience of people the experience of connecting with a transgender person—because we know that this connection helps build empathy, and ultimately changes hearts and minds," said Kris Hermanns, Pride Foundation Chief Executive Officer.

"As a gay man, I believe it is important for LGBTQ people to stand together on behalf of every single person in our community," said Jesse Ayala, Director of AUTHENTICALLY US. "Our community's diversity is what makes us strong and has helped us advance equality in love, work, and society at large, yet there still remains much to do for everyone within our community to feel safe and respected."

"Unfortunately we live in a time where LGBTQ+ visibility in front of and behind the camera remains low, and that is why this series, the first documentary VR series from Oculus and Facebook, is so important. It sends the message that in the virtual reality's first generation of content, LGBTQ+ visibility and representation will be more inclusive and reflective of America's diversity," said Jesse Ayala, Director of AUTHENTICALLY US.

AUTHENTICALLY US was developed to show the diversity within the transgender community and to use interactive technological tools to build empathy and advance equality. In the summer of 2017, Fovrth announced an open casting call for transgender people to star as leads in the series. After receiving overwhelming interest in the project and conducting over 100 interviews, Fovrth and Pride Foundation identified three subjects with compelling stories to tell. The series' leads

represent diversity across socio-economic, ethnic, racial, age, and geographic location. The films highlight the importance of transgender equality in the workplace, the integral role transgender people play in our communities, and that transgender people have always been in our society--that they are our neighbors, family, and friends. These stories demonstrate the diversity of the transgender community, while recognizing that there are many stories about the rich and varied life of transgender people in America.

Currently, VR is the only medium in which audiences are fully engaged without competing screens, providing a unique opportunity to connect viewers with characters in intimate and immersive ways. This medium allows audiences to see commonalities in their environments and identities without the editing techniques of traditional video. The goal of the project is for audiences to perhaps meet a transgender person for the first time and deconstruct prejudices in the process.

“Working with people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community at all levels of the project, from planning, filming, editing, sound engineering and so much more, was an affirming and rare privilege in this industry, and I hope the project reflects this spirit,” said Jesse Ayala, Director of AUTHENTICALLY US.

The full-length films in the series will be premiere in Spring 2018 at film festivals including SxSW. The series will be available on Facebook, Oculus, and Vimeo in Spring 2018 and shared across Pride Foundation’s social channels.

- AUTHENTICALLY US: We’re Still Here (premiering at SxSW Film Festival in March 2018)
- AUTHENTICALLY US: She Flies by Her Own Wings (premiering in April 2018, announcement forthcoming)
- AUTHENTICALLY US: A Treasured State (premiere date TBD)

More information is available at AuthenticallyUs.com.

About Fovrth Studios

Fovrth is an independent production house specializing in non-fiction video and virtual reality experiences. We remix classical cinematic techniques with new technologies, so your stories inspire and ignite. Our dynamic media embraces the intersection of entertainment, journalism, and action. Learn more about the studio at GoFovrth.com.

About Pride Foundation

Pride Foundation is the only LGBTQ community foundation serving the Northwest region of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Pride Foundation inspires giving to expand opportunities and advance full equality for LGBTQ people across the Northwest. For more information, visit PrideFoundation.org.

About Oculus VR for Good

Oculus VR for Good Creators Lab pairs up-and-coming filmmakers with unique causes to create transformative VR experiences that showcase the need for social change in breakthrough ways. Through Creators Lab, we work directly with people who champion various causes to illustrate how beautiful and moving VR experiences can change our perspectives and motivate action. We also challenge and support our creators to tell stories anyone can appreciate, regardless of their stance on a particular issue. Find out more at Oculus.com/vr-for-good/

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