

Virtual Reality experiences - a new avenue for voice actors to explore



Marinela Botha

SOUTH AFRICAN VOICE TALENT



The session will start shortly...

Virtual Reality experiences - a new avenue for voice actors to explore

Biography:

Marinda is a South African voice actor with 20 years of experience and a bilingual native speaker of Afrikaans and English. She is experienced in the British voice-over industry, as she spent 8 years living and working in London where she voiced work for BBC Worldwide Service, CNN Africa, Hallmark entertainment , Virgin Media etc. She moved back to South Africa 12 years ago, where she works from her home recording studio.

In South Africa, Marinda studied a degree in Acting for Stage and then furthered her training in London at the Actor's Centre. She recently went back to formal studies again, and now holds a Master's degree in English Literature, researching Storytelling in Virtual Reality.

As part of my MA research I stumbled upon a company that does live, interactive theatre in Virtual Reality. The company is called The Metamovie Project (<https://www.themetamovie.com/>). They do live, shared storytelling experiences with branching narratives and improvisation, all in VR. Their actors log in from different locations across the globe, at the same time and interact with each other and an audience, to tell a story.

This endeavour piqued my interest. I am always interested in new technology and how humans and technology interact, and, specifically, tell stories with technology. Plus, it sounded to me like traditional theatre in a virtual space.

I contacted the director, Jason Moore, auditioned to become part of the company and was accepted into their fold. This was about two years ago. Since then we have been rehearsing and performing Part 1 of a show called Alien Rescue, went to the Venice Film Festival IN 2020 and are now busy rehearsing Part 2.

This new medium of storytelling is starting to open up new possibilities for voice over artists and I wanted to share this with you. I will share a 30 min presentation with you and then I will open the floor for questions. So, please keep your questions until the end of the presentation.

Virtual Reality experiences - a new avenue for voice actors to explore

In order to access Virtual Reality, for the most part you need a headset (HMD) and controllers.

You then log into a VR platform where you can play games, watch films in VR, and hang out socially with other people. Now Virtual reality experiences have been around for many years, but only recently has the social aspect, Social VR, really found momentum.

Social VR has sparked the need for live shows and specifically interactive shows, where artists and viewers can share the authorship of a story that is being told in VR. This sparked a hybrid form of cinematic theatre, entails live actors and an audience from across the globe all logging onto a VR platform at the same time, doing a performance together.

One of the reason I am so excited about this new medium of storytelling is because it is providing a new avenue for specifically VO artists to explore. As you will see from the footage I will show you in a minute, actors working in this virtual space embody avatars. These avatars can visually look like anything the mind can conjure up/ developers can build. Thus, an actor can embody any type of character, and as long as you can provide the voice to match the visuals, you can play that character.

So, if you have always been told that you have a face for radio, or there is just no chance you will ever play the romantic lead in film/TV/theatre because visually you don't look the part, now you can. Because you are embodying a character that can look vastly different from yourself.

Your job is to bring the vocal performance. Thus, if you are quite good at character voices, or accents, or you just a really good, versatile voice over actor, you have an advantage over "traditional" actors who are also trying to enter the VR space.

And that, in short, is why I think it is important for VO artists to become aware of this new medium. It is still very niche at the moment but I believe it is set to grow. Let me show you the project that I am working on. Pay attention to the various characters, the variety of avatars you are seeing in the footage.

***Alien Rescue* - <https://www.themetamovie.com/>**



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4h_ds9ykd-o

***Alien Rescue* - <https://www.themetamovie.com/>**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGlpavwH9vs>

***Alien Rescue* - <https://www.themetamovie.com/>**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IR4ZpTNIr0>

So...as a voice over artist, why should I care?

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**New medium of storytelling that uses VO recordings.
Niche, but possibly a new revenue stream in future.
Not all VR experiences require in-person talent.**

**Due to the unlimited avatar creations,
it doesn't matter what you look like.
As long as you can do the voice that fits the visual avatar, you can play the character.**

**Thus, are you a versalite character voice actor?
Good with accents?
You have an advantage over (VO) actors who aren't that skilled in creating varied characters through their
vocal ability alone.**

So...where are these opportunities?

VR Festivals?
VR companies?
VR platforms?

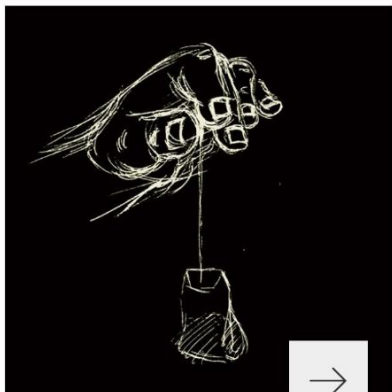


MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2020
Venice VR Expanded



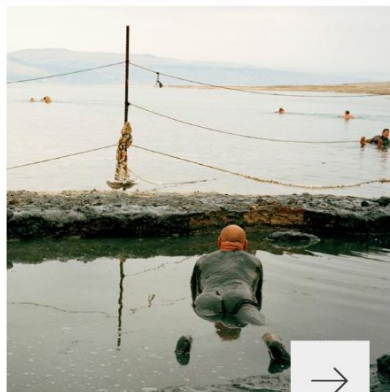
VENICE VR EXPANDED

HOW TO ACCESS AND NAVIGATE →



THE HANGMAN AT HOME. AN IMMERSIVE SINGLE USER EXPERIENCE

Director **Michelle Kranot, Uri Kranot**
Denmark, France, Canada / 25'



ONCE UPON A SEA

Director **Adi Lavy**
Main Cast Catherine Kidd, Eli Raz, Ronit Hillel, Shimon Shukrun / Israel, Canada / 22'



THE METAMOVIE PRESENTS: ALIEN RESCUE

Director **Jason Moore**
Main Cast Nicole Rigo, Kenneth Rougeau, Craig Woodward, Marinda Botha / USA / 40'

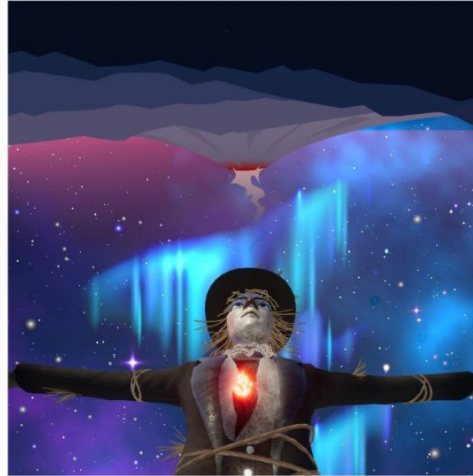




RAINDANCE IMMERSIVE | 28 October - 22 November 2020



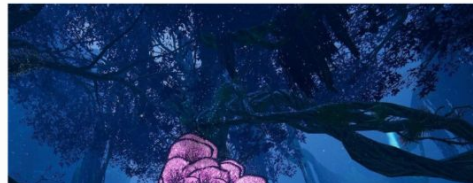
🏆 PAPER BEAST 🏆



🏆 SCARECROW VRC 🏆



STAR SHAMAN









MARCHÉ DU FILM
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

6 - 15 JULY 2021

News Ca

CANNES XR

And many more!

<https://vrfilmreview.ru/vr-film-festivals-2020-e809a6a3d633>

**So...how are these shows created?
What do I need?**

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Access to VR platforms online

Hardware:

Standalone VR headsets - no need for computer.

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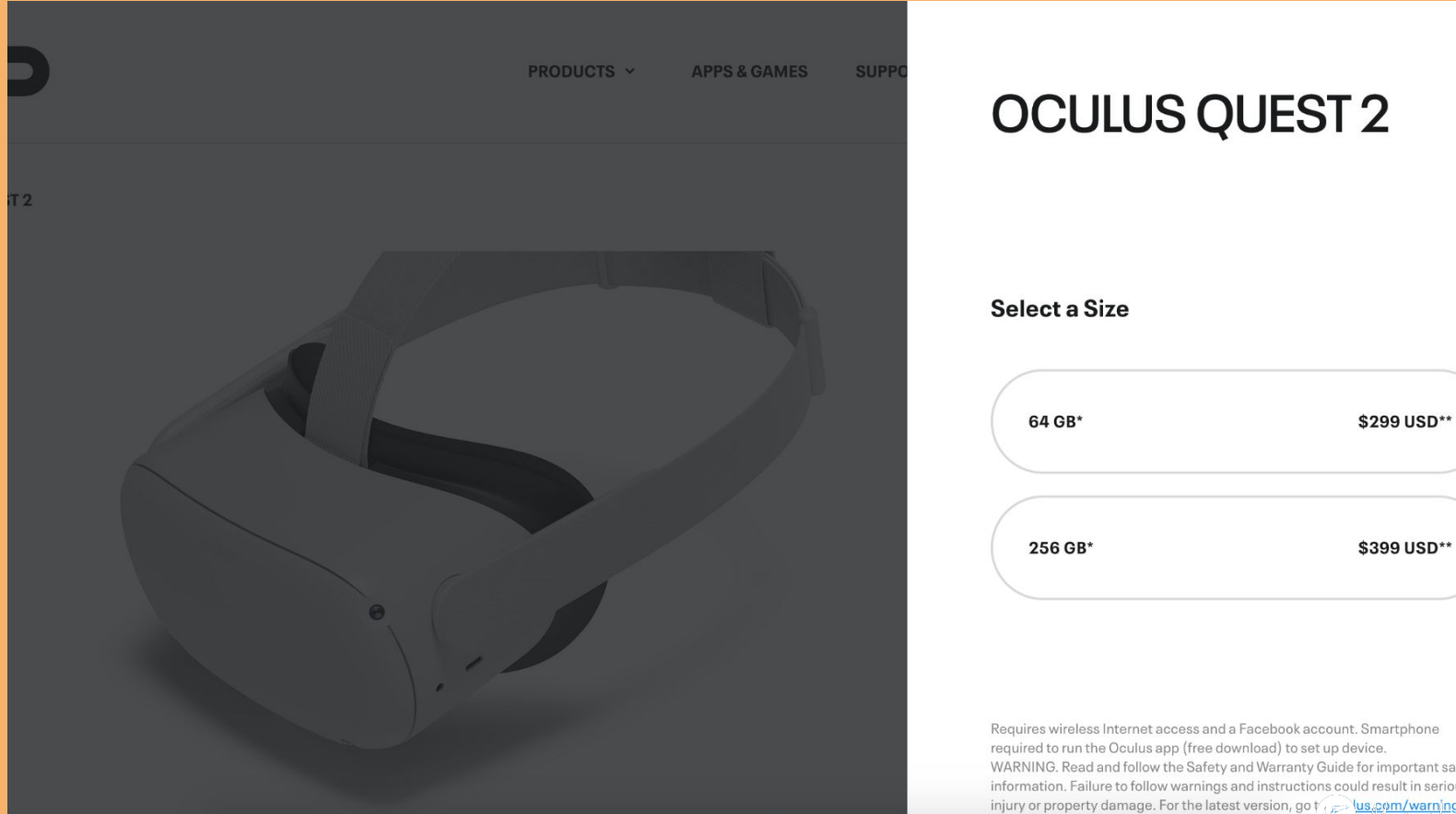
Standalone VR headsets - no need for computer.

Tethered VR headsets - needs a VR-ready computer (expensive!)

Oculus Quest 2 - Standalone VR headset



Oculus Quest 2 - Standalone VR headset



The image is a screenshot of the Oculus Quest 2 product page. On the left, there is a dark grey navigation bar with the Oculus logo and menu items: 'PRODUCTS', 'APPS & GAMES', and 'SUPPORT'. Below the navigation bar is a large, high-quality image of the Oculus Quest 2 VR headset, shown from a three-quarter perspective. The headset is white with black accents and a black strap. On the right side of the page, the product name 'OCULUS QUEST 2' is displayed in a large, bold, black font. Below the product name, there is a section titled 'Select a Size' with two pricing options, each enclosed in a rounded rectangular button. The first option is '64 GB*' for '\$299 USD**'. The second option is '256 GB*' for '\$399 USD**'. At the bottom of the page, there is a small text block containing a disclaimer: 'Requires wireless Internet access and a Facebook account. Smartphone required to run the Oculus app (free download) to set up device. WARNING. Read and follow the Safety and Warranty Guide for important safety information. Failure to follow warnings and instructions could result in serious injury or property damage. For the latest version, go to [oculus.com/warning](https://www.oculus.com/warning)'.

PRODUCTS ▾ APPS & GAMES SUPPORT

OCULUS QUEST 2

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DecaGear - Standalone VR headset (+- \$450.00)



Pico Neo 2 - Standalone VR headset (\$700 to \$900.00)



HTC Vive_Tethered VR headsets



HTC Vive_Tethered VR headsets

Products

Experiences

Support

Viveport

Enterprise



Pro Eye

Designed for studios, home offices and VR users that require immersive experience.

€1,439.00

[Buy Now](#)

[Tell me more](#)



Pro Full Kit

Premium VR for hardcore gaming. Base Station 2.0 + Controller 2.0 included.

€1,219.00

[Buy Now](#)

[Tell me more](#)



Pro McLaren Limited Edition

Fresh colorway for the premium series.

€1,390.00

[Buy Now](#)

[Tell me more](#)



Pro Starter Kit

Immersive VR for hardcore gaming. 2 x Base Station 1.0 + 2 x Controller 1.0 included.

€1,099.00

[Buy Now](#)

[Tell me more](#)

And many, many more!

<https://www.cnet.com/news/the-best-vr-headset-for-2021/> ,
<https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-vr-headsets>

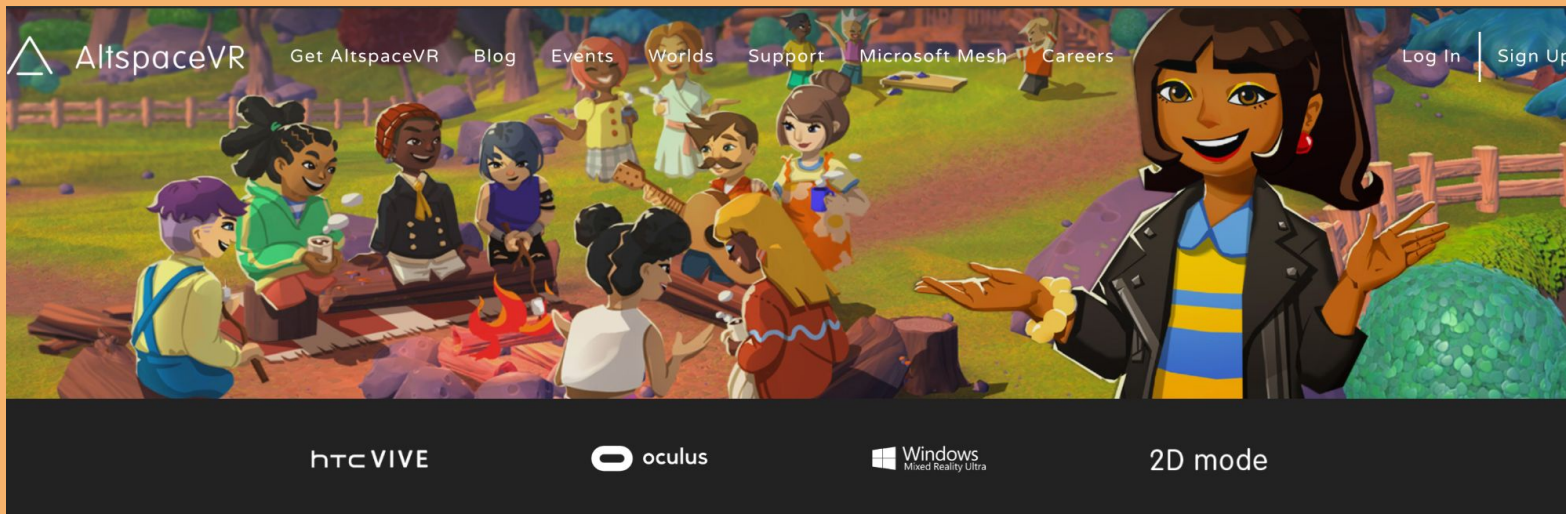
So...how are these shows created? What do I need?

**VR Headset and controllers
Possibly a VR-ready computer**

VR Platforms

where people gather socially, play games and perform theatre shows.

Social VR Platforms - AltspaceVR (PC & mobile!)



The place for events

AltspaceVR is the premier place to attend live shows, meetups, cool classes, and more with friendly people from around the world. All thanks to the magic of Virtual Reality.



Social VR Platforms - AltspaceVR (PC & mobile!)



Social VR Platforms - AltspaceVR (PC & mobile!)



*BRCvr 2020 - WORLD



Street



Vista Roof



Office



Zen Zone



Prime Game Night



Social VR Platforms - VRChat (PC)



Social VR Platforms - VRChat (PC)



Social VR Platforms - NeosVR



Social VR Platforms - NeosVR



And many, many more platforms!

<https://ryanschultz.com/list-of-social-vr-virtual-worlds/>

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Performing in VR - Performance challenges/ adjustments

- Your whole body may be seen. Perform with your whole body, not just your voice (basically, like an actor on stage).
- Controllers in your hands - digital puppeteering! Technical/ finger dexterity.
- Voice modulator (I play two major characters one male and one female, plus some aliens) When working with voice modulators, you need to be aware of how the piece of software works, adjust your delivery (annunciate clearer, speak slower , lag etc).
- I wrote several articles about my experience as an actor performing in Virtual Reality.
<https://medium.com/@marindabotha>

Questions?



VO ATLANTA SPEAKER

MARINDA BOTH A

8th Annual
Voiceover Conference
April 19-25, 2021
Virtual
VOATLANTA.ME



<http://marindabotha.co.uk/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/marindabotha/>



<https://twitter.com/MarindaBotha6>



[marinda_vrmeerkat](https://www.instagram.com/marinda_vrmeerkat)



<https://medium.com/@marindabotha>