We Made Ourselves Over & Film

Blast Theory's approach to film is driven by its expertise in context led interaction and participatory experiences.

The team has delivered ambitious film projects for cinemas and for mobile, developing work for diverse contexts from the Venice Biennale to the Sundance Film Festival. Most recently, Blast Theory has presented a live feature film at the Toronto International Film Festival cinema. The project took audiences on a journey across Toronto: choreographing seven actors, a live narrator and the film crew to deliver a single, continuous 90 minute Steadicam shot streamed live to audiences in the cinema and online.

2015 also saw Blast Theory launch the Karen app. Over seventeen episodes, the app invites audiences to become protagonists in the life of its lead character, Karen. Each episode adopts the conventions of FaceTime; using full-screen interactive video to engage with Karen and explore her world. Part funded by 539 backers on Kickstarter, and with 15,000 downloads in the first six months, the app uses a unique platform developed by Blast Theory for delivering interactive branching video on iOS and Android. Karen has also grown expertise within Blast Theory in scripting, shooting and post-producing film for non-linear platforms.

The films of *We Made Ourselves Over* will combine a cinematic ambition, casting the landscape of the city in a visionary new light, with innovation in form and distribution. The films will act as the starting point, the provocation and the means for a dialogue with audiences that is at the heart of the work.

From Georges Méliès to Ridley Scott, film has led the way in bringing science fiction worlds to life - pushing the limits of what is possible to show on screen with each generation, and provoking popular debate about our greater fate. Alongside this, the explosion in the popularity of YouTube has created a space where commercial content co-exists with material from activists and amateurs. Media theorist, Henry Jenkins, describes YouTube as embodying "a particular opportunity for translating participatory culture into civic engagement." In this space, the boundaries between what is real and what is fiction are often ambiguous, with content constantly re-contextualised by the platform and its audiences.

It is within this context that Blast Theory will produce *We Made Ourselves Over* - creating five interlinked films and a smartphone app which allows you to interact with the characters from those films. Building from an inclusive research process with academics and diverse communities in Hull, each film will blur the distinctions between news and drama, between advertising and home movies, to reveal the story of a character in 2097 and the dilemmas they face. Each film will feature spectacular motion graphics and effects to reimagine the city as never before. An experienced effects team with a track record of work in television and feature films will use 3D compositing and camera tracking to embed environments and characters into the world of the film and bring the future city to life.

For each character, their dilemma will reflect on a different aspect of the world as it's lived in 2097 - embodying questions of population growth and migration, changes in climate, new forms of community and culture, and the changing face of the city. These films with combine storytelling with the principles of speculative design to feed a global conversation about our collective future.

The films will be short, shareable and provocative. Online, the films be the starting point for a conversations on social platforms, with Blast Theory actively encouraging the films' re-use and redistribution. The project's digital strategy will engage YouTubers and target

conversations with diverse online communities to encourage, sharing, cross-promotion and dialogue.

These activities online will also act as an entry point for downloading the app. The smartphone app will leverage the unique interactive video platform developed for Karen, allowing audiences to make FaceTime calls to characters from the films. Each call will itself form a unique personalised interactive film for your mobile phone, providing an intimate, first person window into 2097. It will bring you face to face with each character, allowing you to give opinions and advice, and ultimately make decisions which impact their world.

In Hull itself, the film production will engage residents, professionals, students and the media: telling a public story of the films' creation in the city. Schools and community groups will be brought early in to the process: defining characters, drawing up city plans and creating skylines which inform the production design and stories of the films. Residents will be invited to nominate and document locations for filming, with roles in the cast being drawn from local residents. Local professionals will be recruited to join the shoot, sharing knowledge about the latest on-set techniques for camera and object tracking. Students from the University of Hull will be invited to take part in asset development: producing 3D models and following each stage of compositing and post-production.

Over ten weeks in the summer and autumn of 2017, pop-up screenings across Hull will target diverse audiences within the city. A programme will be co-ordinated with Hull City of Culture to maximise the visibility of the project, for example, linking screenings with the Freedom Festival and with Hull Fair. These screenings will respond to the site in their approach. In some locations the screen will act as an enigmatic, interactive billboard, triggering the play back of films as passersby approach. In others, the screenings will be participatory and social, with the films acting as a provocation for discussion.

The project will contribute to the city as a site of innovative production in film. It will grow engagement among diverse groups in the city at each stage, and will be designed to have a reach that extends far beyond the city in its conversations with audiences across the globe.