



**REALTA' VIRTUALE: NONNY DE LA PEÑA**  
***"Greenland Melting"***

***English Version***

- 1) I'm here with a piece called "Greenland Melting" which is a documentary that deals with the most significant subject I've ever had to deal with, which is climate change. It's such an important piece. It takes a lot of responsibility. Even because it goes beyond mystifying the science, letting the viewer see what a scientist sees: they can see the instruments, they can see how the work is made, they see the computers, they see the boats, and I think it really helps to understand how all this works.
- 2) What kind of approach did you have on merging this two kind of things... environmental stuff with VR?

One of the things I wanna talk about is "what does it mean to have an embodied experience"? We're not discussing about seeing a story through your eyes, in a frame; your body comes along. In this particular case I needed the embodied experience to understand this bigger story. Other pieces I worked on were hunger or Syrian refugees or domestic violence. And now we get people, we can be in the room with the story happening and we can feel it. [you can empathize with it] Yes. Someone said to me, about the piece on the domestic violence, "wow! I've never been in the room with someone carrying a gun, before". That was a different kind of story. Now I'm trying to get you to understand a bigger one, something bigger than the individual. So how do you face something as significant as that, using your whole body, and that's when I came up with the idea about having the glacier coming at you, in order to let you understand what melting could look like, and get to you the sense of the scale of it. We're also always trying to understand

melting from what's happening above, but what about what happens below? Which is even more important. But it also requires to you to be with the scientist, conducting their work, to understand how important it is.

- 3) Tell us about your experience with virtual reality.

I've been doing virtual reality for ten years. I had the first virtual reality piece at a film festival in January 2012. And I also started 3D printing my own goggles, because I wanted the possibility of walking around with it. Until two years ago I was in my mother's garage 3D printing goggles, with all the equipment: I had this 100000\$ motion tracking system I had to use... So, I've been doing VR a long time now. Especially considering the life span of VR. But to come here, and see how that is an accepted form of art now, it's thrilling. The early days I was treated like a criminal. VR journalism? They told me I could never do that, and that could never work. I even lost my job as a researcher because of that. [Well, you're having your payback, now] It's pretty amazing, yeah. I have a team now, we're at our third job developing for Google... It's pretty exciting.

- 4) As the Writers Guild, we're interested in the writing part of your work. What kind of method did you use in order to imagine and write down what were you going to translate into virtual images? Did you find any difficulties in it?

See, I'm a member of the Writers Guild. In Los Angeles. I worked as a fiction writer, but I still wasn't happy and I went back to making documentary films. Anyway... there were a lot of complications with this piece. We thought we were gonna capture one thing and then it wasn't done right and we... you know, the weather got screwed up... So, there were a lot of goals we had at the beginning that sometimes we had to adjust to what we could actually capture. When you're also working with holograms you can't even cut the speech or dissolve the hologram, so you have to work in full chunks of narration. It's a very difficult mean to work with. But like anything else we wrote a script, we made changes, we tried different things. [so they were wide-scripts, open to any kind of changes and always thought through the eyes of the person who was going to watch] Yeah. The way I always describe it to the people is by telling them "close your eyes; close your eyes for a second. Now feel how your body feels in space and start there". That's what you need to be thinking when you're gonna make a story happen around somebody. It has to start on the feeling of the whole body. The body is there, not only the mind. So you have to think about what the body can experience, not only your eyes.

- 5) Development of VR. Bringing forward the cinema in Festivals. How do you see the VR going in the future?

I'll just say at first that when radio came it didn't eliminate newspapers. Television, films, we've seen these new medium come into play and people have embraced it without

necessarily killing off the ones who there were before. So I think that it's absolutely right to treat Virtual Reality as an equal partner in this storytelling medium and I think coming here, with the respect that this Festival is using on us, it's the first time I've seen something done with such dedication, in this incredible island... these kind of things are very unique and it shows that this is starting to be treated as a true storytelling art form.

*Lorenzo Righi*