

traces

The Grief
Processor





synopsis

Traces: The Grief Processor is a multi-user interactive VR experience inviting you to poetically explore your grief—whether from the loss of a friendship, a home, a dream or a loved one—in a personalized and introspective way. Led by a ritualist and shaped by the creator's personal journey, the experience unfolds within a dreamlike forest, where each step gently unveils a new facet of grief. In this space, grief is not just something to overcome but rather something to be acknowledged, expressed, and integrated into the fabric of life. A playful yet profound documentary-based odyssey, *Traces* guides its participants through the universal complexities of loss, helping them emerge with a renewed sense of emotional insight, resilience and connection.

Location-based free-roaming 25 min. VR experience for 2 to 4 simultaneous users.

meet the creator

vali fugulin

writer, creative director



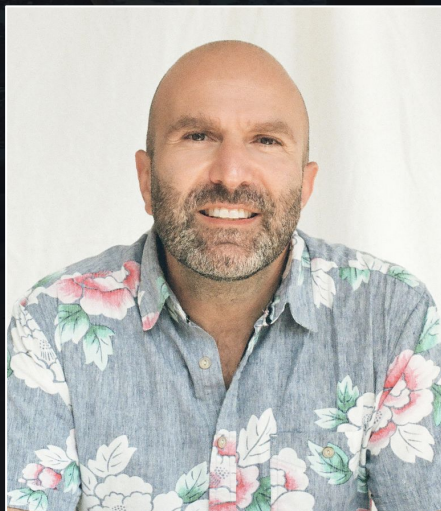
Vali Fugulin is a director specializing in interactive experiences, digital documentaries, installations, and content-driven video games. With a documentary-driven perspective, her work emphasizes on social impact and explores innovative storytelling approaches to engage audiences more deeply. Through the use of innovative technologies, her projects offer immersive experiences that intersect art, technology, and social transformation. Her digital works are featured in museums, public spaces, and online platforms.

During her two-year residency at the National Film Board of Canada's Interactive Studio, Vali created the groundbreaking youth serious game *I Love Potatoes*, which earned multiple international accolades, including the NUMIX Grand Prize in Canada.

Since then, she has continued to push boundaries with acclaimed interactive projects, including *SuperSymmetry*, an interactive knitting platform; *My Camera and Me*, a virtual filming experience with iconic cameras that shaped cinema history; *Tout Garni*, a year-long interactive saga by twelve talented illustrators; Montreal's version of the acclaimed *A Mile in My Shoes* exhibit for the MEM ; and *The Awakening of the Sleeping Machines*, an AR quest for the Musée Électropolis in Mulhouse. Vali is currently launching *Traces: The Grief Processor*, a multi-user VR project set to have its world premiere at SXSW as part of its selected lineup.

meet the producer

ziad touma
producer, couzin films



Founder of Couzin Films and based in Montreal, Ziad Touma is an award-winning producer, director and writer working in film, television and XR. Ziad produced nine feature films and directed multiple television series. His latest interactive VR series, *The Passengers* (2021), that he directed and co-produced with Les Produits Frais in France, was selected in competition at over a dozen festivals including SXSW, Tribeca, Cannes XR, NewImages, Taipei, Sandbox, Kaohsiung, etc., was nominated at the International VR Awards and Stereopsia, and won the Canadian Screen Award for Best Immersive Fiction.

The Judas (2012), an ARG (Alternate Reality Game) that he directed and coproduced with Kngfu for Radio-Canada, won Canadian Digi and Boomerang Awards, including Best Interactive Series and Best Online Game. Ziad's latest interactive VR production *Traces: The Grief Processor* (2025) by Vali Fugulin, is world premiering in competition at SXSW.

Ziad has also produced eight feature films, including *The Thawing of Ice / La fonte des glaces* (2024) by François Péloquin (Official competition at the Austin Film Festival), *Evergreens / Sapins* (2023) by Stéphane Moukarzel (Feature Audience Choice Award at the San Diego IFF), *Ghost Town Anthology / Répertoire des villes disparues* (2019) by Denis Côté (Official Competition at Berlinale, San Sebastian, Karlovy Vary), nominated for 11 Iris prizes; and the documentary *City Dreamers / Rêveuses de villes* (2019) by Joseph Hillel (RIDM, FIFA, DOXA, ADFF).

director's statement

XR experiences have the power to evoke magic, wonder, and awe, but they also have the potential to forge deep connections and offer an intimate exploration of the human soul. My passion lies in diving into the depths of the human spirit. During the pandemic, as I grappled with profound grief, I found myself yearning for connection, yet unsure how to express my sorrow. In response, I envisioned a playful yet meaningful experience, using VR mechanics—a “serious game” that would allow us to bring grief into the light, to set it in motion, and explore it together in a way that is both engaging and deeply resonant. And, if I may say, to approach it not from a place of tragedy, but with a sense of shared humanity and resilience.

My personal experience of grief and its expression became the foundational layer of this narrative, creating a sensitive framework for participants to share their own stories surrounding grief. Users are also guided by the voice and wisdom of Stéphane Crête, one of Canada's renowned grief celebrants and thinkers.

Traces embodies a new genre of documentary storytelling in XR—an immersive experience in which you become the protagonist. It pays tribute to all forms of grief, whether from friendship, love, ideals, or the loss of a loved one. Users embark on a real-time exploration using their own shared mementos (photos, sounds, words), enabling collective expression and reflection. This participatory, immersive, multiplayer documentary fosters hope and the creation of personal meaning in our own reality, enhanced through XR technologies.

– Vali Fugulin

credits

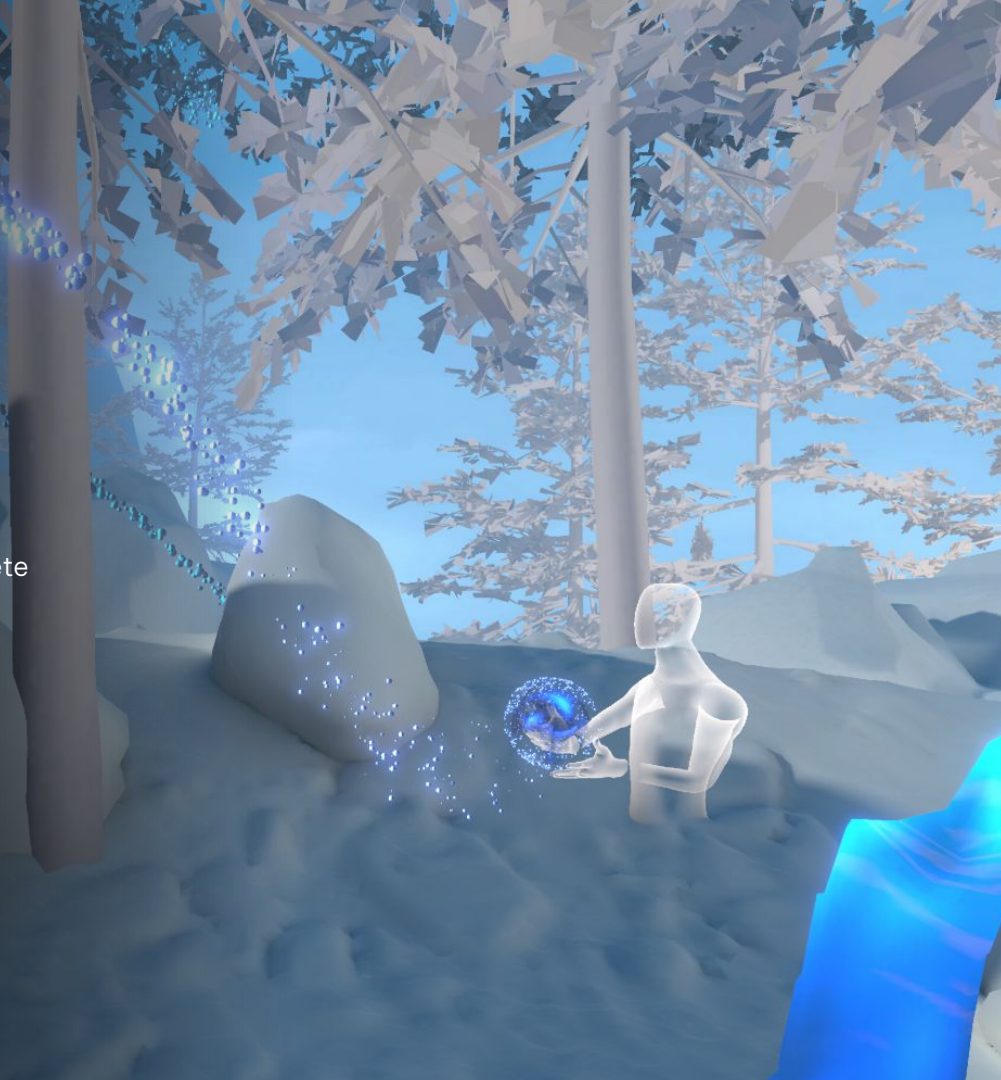
An interactive VR Experience by Vali Fugulin

Produced by Ziad Touma for Couzin Films

With the financial participation of SODEC

Developed at Atelier Grand Nord XR

Producer:	Ziad Touma
Writer and Creative Director:	Vali Fugulin
Narrators:	Vali Fugulin & Stéphane Crête
Scriptwriting Consultant:	Joanna Murphy
Ritual Consultant:	Stéphane Crête
Production Manager:	Solen Labrie Trépanier
Associate Producer:	Christine Tannous
Art Director:	Anel Medina
Technical Director:	Louis Thériault-Boivin
Lead Programmer:	Camilo Vides Pérez
Programmer:	Jérémie Roy
3D Artist:	Audrey-Ann Whittom
Sound Designer:	Vincent Cusson



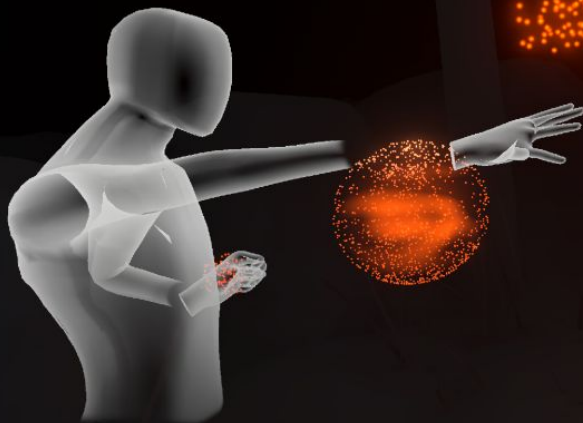
how to see it

SXSW XR Experience Exhibition

Fairmont Austin | 101 Red River St. Austin, TX 78701

Press Preview: March 8 | 11:00am – 6:00pm

Open to Public: March 9 – March 11 | 11:00am – 6:00pm



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