

** Will print automatically! If it doesn't, click [here](#). **

CRAIN'S

NEW YORK BUSINESS

CRAIN'S
NEW YORK BUSINESS

Entire contents ©2013 Crain Communications Inc.

Tribeca Film Festival: Lights, camera, interaction

Exhibits explore how technology can reshape storytelling and engage the audience.

ARTICLE COMMENTS

BY [THERESA AGOVINO](#) (STAFF/123/THERESA-AGOVINO)
APRIL 7, 2013 5:59 A.M.



[/apps/ibcsi_d#/storyimage/CN/20130407/MEDIA_ENTERTAINMENT/304079981/AR0/Ingrid-Kopp.jpg?w=100](#)

RELATED NEWS

Powerless,
indeed/[/article/20130407/REAL_EST](#)
Insurers stick restaurants with Sandy
tab/[/article/20130405/HOSPITALITY_](#)

musings included in a documentary.

The aim of the exhibits isn't to find the next Jennifer Lawrence or Daniel Day-Lewis. The project, called Storyscapes, was designed to showcase ways that Web-based interactive or cross-platform approaches can be used to tell a tale.

"I'm interested in the storytelling, and film is one way to do it," said Ingrid Kopp, director of Digital Initiatives at the Tribeca Film Institute, the nonprofit affiliate of the popular festival. "What we are doing is showing the full spectrum of how stories can be told."

Storyscapes is TFI's latest attempt to study how technology is changing the film industry. It grew out of a two-year initiative between TFI and the Ford Foundation to support filmmakers working on social-media projects that go beyond traditional screens. Six of those documentaries will be shown at the festival, which runs from April 17 through April 28. There also will be workshops and panel discussions about new filmmaking trends.

"As a film festival, we have to be part of the conversation about how technology is changing and how we [filmmakers] use it creatively," said Jane Rosenthal, one of the festival's founders.

Going to the Tribeca Film Festival? Get ready for your close-up.

For the first time in its 12-year history, the festival will showcase five interactive exhibits that incorporate audiences. So those longing to channel their inner Luke Skywalker will have an opportunity to act out a *Star Wars* scene, while others can share their innermost thoughts to a robotic therapist and have their

Daily Alert

A summary of the day's top business stories, including exclusive reports by the staff of *Crain's New York Business*.

Enter your email address

Subscribe

VIEW SAMPLE(MISC/EMAIL/SAMPLESDAILY.HTML?
IFRAME=TRUE&WIDTH=755&HEIGHT=450) |
NEWSLETTER&HTTPS://HOME.CRAIN'SNEWYORK.COM/CLICKSHARE/NEWSLETTERCE

Business Lists(/businesslists)

Top Professional Sports Teams List
(http://www.crainnewyork.com/section/business_djoPage=view_html&djoPid=8875)

New York Area's Highest-Paid
CFOs(http://www.crainnewyork.com/section/business_djoPage=product_details&djoPid=8879&djoXis=15)

MOST POPULAR LATEST NEWS

Insurers stick restaurants with Sandy
tab/[/article/20130405/HOSPITALITY_TOURISM/1](#)

Storm a wake-up call, business leaders
say/[/article/20130404/REAL_ESTATE/130409926](#)

Journalism's decline boosts i-
schools/[/article/20130405/MEDIA_ENTERTAINME](#)

Bronx thoroughfare to get a
makeover/[/article/20130405/REAL_ESTATE/1304](#)

Gelman heads to
SKDKnickerbocker/[/article/20130404/BLOGS04/1](#)

Distinguishing features

The increased emphasis on nontraditional filmmaking is one way the festival—which was started by Robert De Niro and Ms. Rosenthal after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks to bring people back downtown—can set itself apart from others. Over the years, it has experimented with its size and breadth of offerings in an effort to find its niche in the crowded film festival circuit, and the mammoth event has been criticized in the past for lacking a distinct personality. This year, the festival will screen 89 feature films—the same number as last year—at theaters in lower Manhattan.

"To me, focusing on technology is a sign that the festival is forward-thinking," said Josh Braun, co-president of Submarine, which is representing six films at Tribeca.

Even without the new programming, the festival highlights how much technology has transformed filmmaking. At least 10 of the movies that will be shown were made using funds raised through the Internet. And for one movie, called *Tricked*, director Paul Verhoeven wrote only the first four minutes, and used crowdsourcing to find 85 different writers to finish the rest.

Much of the experimentation with technology at Tribeca this year, however, is meant solely for education. None of the Storyscapes exhibits were designed for theatrical release. Each already existed, but festival sponsor Bombay Sapphire Gin paid an undisclosed amount to underwrite new elements of each especially for Tribeca.

In fact, some question whether these new interactive methods of storytelling will ever find a way to make money. With funding from the National Film Board of Canada, Hugues Sweeney and his team video-recorded people talking about their insomnia. For Tribeca, they used some of those experiences to create *A Journal of Insomnia*, which invites festivalgoers to sample someone else's specific struggle with sleeplessness via the Internet. He was uncertain if it would have attracted independent financing or if viewers would pay to watch it.

"We are still looking for the economic model, and there is no magic recipe," Mr. Sweeney said. "We wanted to build an audience."

Drawing interest seems to be the easy part. All of the Storyscapes initiatives triggered significant outside participation. In one, a team created a multimedia archive of people's Superstorm Sandy experiences, which will offer festivalgoers a chance to add their own recollections. Meanwhile, thousands of people have added their imprint to *The Exquisite Forest*. Started by a Google creative director and an independent filmmaker, it is a user-generated online gallery of animation. Its popularity already has led to having it on display at the Tate Modern in London, and wannabe artists will be able to add to it at Tribeca.

'Luke, I am your tabby'

Similarly, when Casey Pugh put out a call on the Internet for people to re-create a 15-second portion of *Star Wars* in any way they wanted, he got 900 responses, with fans using everything from their cats to liquor bottles as stand-ins for characters. The film now has a cult following on YouTube. *Star Wars Uncut* will be shown at the festival, and people also will get a chance to act out a scene.

"People really just want to be part of the process," Mr. Pugh said.

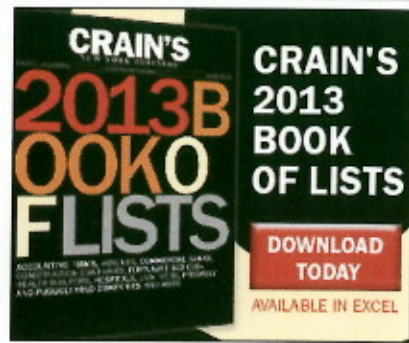
That's what Alexander Reben hopes. He will bring to the festival about 20 cardboard robots that ask pointed questions, in hopes that people will divulge some interesting stories. At the end of the festival, a film will be created from the footage.

Experts say that there always will be people who simply want to sit back and watch a film, but that finding ways to engage an audience in the process is critical for the new generation.

"This generation has been brought up on being able to control the medium where they get their information," said Albie Hecht, founding director of the Macaulay Honors College New Media Lab at the City University of New York.

SIDEBAR: What to watch at the Tribeca Film Festival

There are 89 feature films set for screenings at the Tribeca Film Festival. Here are some with big names attached that are generating buzz.



#HTTP://OASCENTRAL.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/REALMEDIA/ADS/CLICK_LX_A ENTERTAINMENT/TRIBECA-FILM-FESTIVAL-LIGHTS-CAMERA-INTERACTION/L21/1556847980/MIDDLE2/CRAINCNY_OH_2013ROL_ROS_3C X

Job

JOB:HTTP://JOBS.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/A/JBB/POST-JOB/ Board(HTTP://JOBS.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM)

Chief Operating

Officer(HTTP://JOBS.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/A/JBB/JOB-DETAILS/825582)

New York, NY - Port Authority of New York & New Jersey

Director of Legal

Projects(HTTP://JOBS.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/A/JBB/JOB-DETAILS/825433)

New York, NY - Robert Half Legal

Deputy Chief Asset Management

Officer(HTTP://JOBS.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/A/JBB/JOB-DETAILS/825257)

New York, NY - Nyc Department of Citywide Admin. Services

VICE PRESIDENT OF SUPPLY

LOGISTICS(HTTP://JOBS.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/A/JBB/JOB-DETAILS/821953)

Jamaica, NY - Mta, New York City Transit

EVP, State Marketing

Strategy(HTTP://JOBS.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/A/JBB/JOB-DETAILS/821531)

New York, NY - Nys Center For Recruitment & Public Service

See All

Jobs(HTTP://JOBS.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/A/JBB/FIND-JOBS)

Post a job for

\$199(HTTP://JOBS.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/A/JBB/POST-JOB)

Jobs(HTTP://WWW.SIMPLYHIRED.COM/) by

SimplyHired(HTTP://WWW.SIMPLYHIRED.COM/)

Crain's Connects

(HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Like 3.7k (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANIES/CRAINSPRINTING/WWW)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Follow @crainsnewyork (HTTP://WWW.CRAINSNEWYORK.COM/CONNECTS)

Before Midnight. The third chapter in a popular saga of two lovers, played by Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy, who met on a train in Europe when they were young in the first installment and reunited years later in the second. Distributor: Sony Pictures Classics

Big Men. A documentary produced by Brad Pitt that explores the toll of oil exploration by big corporations in Africa. Distributor: In the market for one

Bridegroom. Former President Bill Clinton will introduce this timely documentary about the ongoing debate over the right of same-sex couples to marry. Distributor: In the market for one

Byzantium. The latest film by *Interview With the Vampire* director Neil Jordan, which has the undead wreaking havoc on mere mortals. Distributor: IFC Films

Gasland Part II. The follow-up to the Oscar-nominated *Gasland*, which continues to explore the controversy around hydraulic fracturing. Distributor: HBO

I Got Somethin' to Tell You. Oscar winner Whoopi Goldberg makes her directorial debut with a documentary about the late comedian Moms Mabley. The presumably wealthy co-host of *The View* generated controversy by using Kickstarter to help raise funds for the movie. Distributor: In the market for one

In God We Trust. A documentary about swindler extraordinaire Bernie Madoff's longtime personal secretary, Eleanor Squillari, and her obsession with the case. Distributor: In the market for one

Lenny Cooke. A documentary about one of the most hyped basketball players ever, who was supposed to be an NBA star but never played in the league. It is the first documentary by brothers Bennie and Joshua Safdie, whose fictional films like *Daddy Long Legs* have won critical praise and been shown at other festivals, such as Cannes. Distributor: In the market for one

Mistaken for Strangers. This documentary, which follows the rock band The National on the road, will open the festival. It's directed by Tom Berninger, a roadie with the band and the younger brother of its lead singer. Distributor: In the market for one

Reluctant Fundamentalist. The latest film from director Mira Nair (*Monsoon Wedding*, *The Namesake*) who adapts the best-selling book about how a young Pakistani-born man's cushy life is upended after 9/11. Distributor: IFC Films

A version of this article appears in the [April 8, 2013, print issue/news/current-issue/archives/20130408](#) of *Crain's New York Business* as "Lights, camera, interaction".

[MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT/\(NEWS/INDUSTRIES/MEDIA-ENTERTAINMENT\)](#) [NY NY/\(TOPICS/1993/NY-NY\)](#)
[NEW YORK/\(TOPICS/2202/NEW-YORK\)](#) [TRIBECA/\(TOPICS/2263/TRIBECA\)](#)

PREVIOUS ARTICLE



[Journalism's decline boosts j-schools](#)

[/article/20130405/MEDIA_ENTERTAINMENT/130409809](#)

Crains recommends

[Powerless](#)
[indeed\(http://www.crainnewyork.com/article/20130407/F](http://www.crainnewyork.com/article/20130407/F)

[Big trouble, little Chinatown](#)
[bank\(http://www.crainnewyork.com/article/20130407/FIN](http://www.crainnewyork.com/article/20130407/FIN)

[Yet another steakhouse shuttering on 2nd](#)
[Ave.\(http://www.crainnewyork.com/article/20130402/RE/](http://www.crainnewyork.com/article/20130402/RE/)

[Court Square boom now in session in](#)
[Queens\(http://www.crainnewyork.com/article/20130407/](http://www.crainnewyork.com/article/20130407/)

How corrupt is New York?

From around the web

[My Favorite Restaurants in NYC](#)(<http://heidklum.scl.com/category/lifestyle/my-favorite-restaurants-in-nyc/>) Heidi Klum

[Box office: 'Evil Dead' has a bloody good start at No. 1 with \\$26 million](#)(<http://www.hitfix.com/news/box-office-evil-dead-has-a-bloody-good-start-at-no-1-with-26-million/>) HitFix

[Kevin Smith On Bruce Willis Outburst](#)(<http://www.uinterview.com/videos/kevin-smith/>)
Uinterview

[\[what's this?\]](#)

Comments

[POST A COMMENT](#)

Be the first to comment!

[Sign in\(https://home.crainnewyork.com/clickshare/logout.do?](https://home.crainnewyork.com/clickshare/logout.do?)

[CSRResumeURL=/clickshare/authenticateUserSubscription.do?">CSRResumeURL=/clickshare/authenticateUserSubscription.do?](#)

[CSAuthReq=1&CSTargetURL=http%253A%252F%252Fwww.crainnewyork.com%252Farticle%252F20130407%252FMEDIA_ENTERTAINMENT%252F30407">CSAuthReq=1&CSTargetURL=http%253A%252F%252Fwww.crainnewyork.com%252Farticle%252F20130407%252FMEDIA_ENTERTAINMENT%252F30407](#)
[or register\(https://home.crainnewyork.com/clickshare/addAccountShort.do?">or register\(https://home.crainnewyork.com/clickshare/addAccountShort.do?](#)