

## **Contrast VR Completes Its Second Original VR Documentary, *Oil in Our Creeks***

*Oil in Our Creeks' World Premiere will be at the Vancouver International Film Festival*

DOHA AND SAN FRANCISCO (October 4, 2017) – Contrast VR, Al Jazeera Media Network's new immersive studio, has today completed *Oil in Our Creeks*, the studio's second full-length virtual reality documentary detailing what happened to a small town in Bodo City, Nigeria, after an oil pipeline burst in 2008. The film was directed and produced by Contrast VR Editorial Lead Zahra Rasool and co-produced by Uzodinma Iweala, author of *Beasts of No Nation* and Editor-in-Chief of Ventures Africa. The film was painted and animated by VR artist Angela Haddad of One Third Blue. The film is the second virtual reality documentary in a series of Contrast VR Originals examining pressing global and social issues.

The film will have its world premiere on October 6th at the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF), one of the top five largest film festivals in North America. VIFF screens films from more than 70 countries, and *Oil in Our Creeks* will exhibit at the festival's VIFF VR HUB. Rasool has also been chosen to share her industry insight on the "VR News and Documentary Best Practices" panel at VIFF's VR/AR Day in the Expanding Frontiers in Storytelling series, which highlights key VR and AR insights from the most respected futurists and VR creators, companies, and technologists in the world.

*Oil in Our Creeks* is an immersive VR film produced in collaboration with Al Jazeera English (AJE) Online. The documentary follows the story of Lessi Phillips, who was only 16 years old when a pipeline running under the creeks of the Niger Delta burst in her village, pouring oil into the swamps for 77 days. The oil spill devastated the local fisheries and farms, and plunged a once-thriving community into a downward economic spiral. The film follows Phillips through Bodo City almost 10 years later, as she shows viewers how the environmental disaster impacted her community and how the youth work to revive hope.

"We hope that this documentary puts viewers right in the middle of the pain and resilience of a community impacted by the world's need for oil," said *Oil in Our Creeks* co-producer Uzodinma Iweala. "The Niger Delta is a complicated region with a simple problem: The people who live there don't have a chance to tell the story of the environmental devastation that oil extraction has caused."

*Oil in Our Creeks* is the first virtual reality documentary to fuse 180-degree present-day landscape shots with 180 degrees of animation to create an immersive 360-degree experience. All of the illustrations were hand painted and scanned over the 360 footage.

"*Oil In Our Creeks* required the most post-production work so far," describes editor Maria Fernanda Lauret. "Every single element was individually animated—every palm tree, grass, bush, and character. It was necessary to do some rotoscoping, which meant that I had to create

masks around the two characters and track their motion, adjusting the mask around them frame by frame—about 300 times throughout a scene. The story’s visual and spatial assets make this film a complete and incredible VR experience.”

More information is available at [contrastvr.com](http://contrastvr.com).

### **About Contrast VR**

Contrast VR is Al Jazeera’s immersive media studio, specializing in the production of compelling 360-degree video, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) content. The studio also collaborates with existing departments across Al Jazeera Media Network to produce best-in-class 2D and 3D content. Contrast VR produces unique documentaries, videos, and live streams that push the boundaries of narrative storytelling while taking viewers directly to the front lines of the biggest news events in the world. Learn more about the studio at [contrastvr.com](http://contrastvr.com).

### **About Al Jazeera Media Network**

Al Jazeera strives to deliver content that captivates, informs, inspires, and entertains. Launched in 1996, Al Jazeera was the first independent news channel in the Arab world dedicated to providing comprehensive news and live debate. It challenged established narratives and gave a global audience an alternative voice—one that put the human being back at the center of the news agenda—quickly making it one of the world’s most influential news networks. Since then, it’s added new channels and services, with more than 70 bureaus around the world, while maintaining the independent and pioneering spirit that defines its character. Each subsidiary follows the same principles—values that inspire it to be challenging and bold, and provide a “voice for the voiceless” in some of the most underreported places on the planet.

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