

Indiana University Bloomington

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IU collaborators screening 'Humanexus' at Cannes Film Festival

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Film will return to Bloomington for Sept. 8 screening

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BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- An information scientist, an artist and a musician at Indiana University got together to create a short film about the ways humans have spread information throughout history, and now the film will be presented at the world's most prestigious film festival, the May 14 to 25 Festival de Cannes.

"Humanexus: Knowledge and Communication Through the Ages," was first shown publicly in early 2013 at IU's Grunwald Gallery of Art and has since been viewed at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland; at the annual meeting of the world's largest and most prestigious general scientific society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science; and at film festivals in Germany, India, Spain, Taiwan, Sweden, Indonesia, the Bahamas, Northern Ireland and Canada.

During Festival de Cannes, the film will be showcased at three venues: the AVIFF-Art Film Festival Cannes, which promotes contemporary art in the field of video art film; the Emerging Filmmaker Showcase at The American Pavilion, which is the center of activity for the American film community at Cannes; and at the Festival de Cannes' Short Film Corner, considered an essential point of rendezvous for short-film producers and directors.

The 12 1/2-minute animated film traces the evolution of human communication from cave scrawls to Twitter feeds in a blend of aesthetic form and intellectual content that informs on and inquires about the quantity and quality of humanity's collective knowledge and how that knowledge has, is and will be exchanged.

The film will again be screened at IU on Sept. 8 at a free event at **IU Cinema** that will be open to the public.

The work is a collaboration between Katy Börner, the Victor H. Yngve Professor of Information Science at the School of Informatics and Computing and director of the **Cyberinfrastructure for Network Science Center**; Norbert Herber, IU Department of Telecommunications senior lecturer and sound artist and musician; and Ying-Fang Shen, a former IU School of Fine Arts associate instructor and Cyberinfrastructure for Network Science Center visiting artist who is now an assistant professor at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Shen, the director of the film, earned an MFA in digital art from IU Bloomington in 2009. She used the multimedia and software platform Adobe Flash to create a two-dimensional animation that she describes as a collection of memory pieces organized according to time sequences but selectively pieced together in a fashion similar to how human memory works.

In addition to the film being viewed at three different Cannes venues, the AVIFF-Art Film Festival on May 20 will host a 90-minute live interview with Börner, the producer, and Herber, the sound artist, as they also present **"The Making of Humanexus."**

"Scholarly papers, books and large-scale visualizations that explain patterns and trends in scholarly communication can help us see our world with new eyes," Börner said. "The Humanexus film aims to make us feel the enormous progress and associated challenges so that we change our actions toward more sustainable futures."

Funded by the National Science Foundation, "Humanexus" allowed Herber to explore the film's theme through the sounds of communication technologies, from Indiana limestone to analog circuits, a 56K modem and computer startup chimes, all of which were processed and layered in various ways to create a unique sonic reflection of the devices and networks portrayed in Shen's animation.

"I have attended screenings in Bloomington and at other universities, and the film is always received well. Colleagues here at IU tell me that 'Humanexus' has made a tremendous impact on their students," Herber said. "I am very curious to see how it affects the broad audience I hope to find at Cannes. 'Humanexus' was intended to start conversations; that's what I'm looking forward to most of all."

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