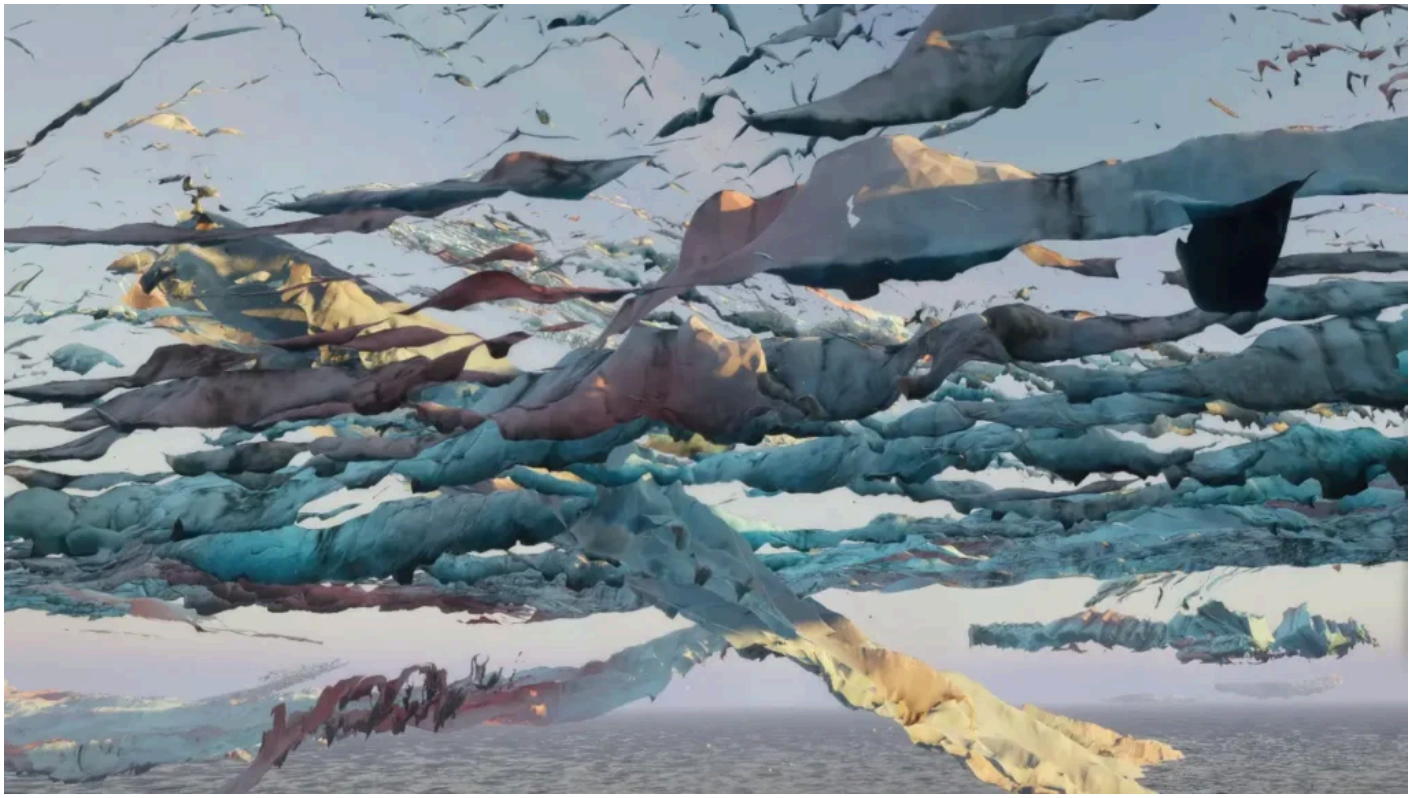
XR MAGAZINE

At Venice Immersive, THE WHITE SABOTEUR Turns Every Visitor Into the Author of the World's Disappearance

Aug 21, 2026 4 min read



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Selected for Venice Immersive 2026 as a World Premiere at the 83rd Venice International Film Festival, THE WHITE SABOTEUR (LE SABOTEUR BLANC) is an ambitious new XR installation by French visual artist Barthélemy Antoine-Lœff and digital artist Hugo Arcier, challenging the capitalist consumption of nature.



The experience transforms gaze into an instrument of destruction. As participants' eyes wander across a fragile world of virtual icebergs, their gaze alone accelerates the melting of the cryosphere. Like reality, the world of THE WHITE SABOTEUR is persistent: each visitor inherits a landscape shaped by everyone before them, further degraded with every encounter. By the end of the exhibition, nothing remains but an endless sea and chaotic weather systems.

> "Data tells us that the cryosphere is disappearing, but it doesn't make us feel its loss. THE WHITE SABOTEUR transforms that reality into an intimate experience: every gaze melts a little more of the world, forever. That's the

> emotion that matters to me, because it's what stays with us." – Hugo Arcier, co-writer and director

> "There is something terrible, tragic, and paradoxically sublime about watching a world disappear. I wanted the visitor to no longer be merely a witness, but to become its author against their will. It is an ambivalence that places the visitor in an uncomfortable position, and one I fully embrace: it is precisely what we are doing, on a much larger scale, to the real world." – Barthélemy Antoine-Loeff, co-writer and director

Developed in close collaboration with renowned glaciologist Dr. Heidi Sevestre and researcher Léo Decaux, THE WHITE SABOTEUR is grounded in scientific research and empirical data. Its virtual icebergs are reconstructed from photogrammetric data collected from specific glacier regions, creating unique digital representations of real ice formations.

> "Scientific knowledge about glaciers remains largely inaccessible. Beyond statistics and models, sensory experiences allow people to connect emotionally with these distant ecosystems, keeping them close to their hearts. THE WHITE SABOTEUR is a project of public interest, fostering a meaningful understanding of the disappearance of ecosystems upon which we all depend." – Dr. Heidi Sevestre, Glaciologist

THE WHITE SABOTEUR - 4min Presentation

Risette



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The installation unfolds as a diptych. Outside the headset, a paired projection reveals the hidden consequences of each visitor's actions. As glaciers disappear within the virtual world, their fossilised remains accumulate on the screen, creating a parallel landscape shaped by every interaction.

Without narration or instruction, THE WHITE SABOTEUR invites visitors to explore at their own pace. Time passes faster inside the virtual world, intensifying the sense of accelerating ecological collapse. Participants discover the unsettling satisfaction of consuming the landscape, yet remain powerless to reverse its destruction. The work deliberately embraces the solitary nature of VR, confronting each visitor with their own digital footprint and ethical choices.

Using field recordings, seismic data captured in Greenland, and working with a live choir recorded in Germany, sound artist Olivier Girouard recreates the textures of snow, cracking ice, and Arctic winds, heightening the tension between the beauty of the environment and its inevitable disappearance.

Rather than offering passive spectacle, the artists pose a simple question: Would you still choose to enter a fragile world, knowing that your presence alone guarantees its

destruction? Through this intimate encounter, THE WHITE SABOTEUR expands the conversation around climate anxiety, critiquing last-chance tourism and our relentless appetite to consume both the natural world and the technologies through which we experience it.

2023 / *Inside Venice Gap Financing 2023: THE WHITE SABOTEUR (Risette)*



THE WHITE SABOTEUR will premiere at Venice Immersive, the XR section of the 83rd Venice International Film Festival, from 2–12 September 2026. Produced by Pierre-Arthur Goulet / Risette (France), the project was co-produced by Michael Geidel / Actrio Studio (Germany), Hugo Arcier / N°130 (France) and Fabienne Giezendanner / Zéro de Conduite (France), with the support of the CNC – Immersive Experiences Creation Fund, the City of

Paris, Région Hauts de France – Pictanovo, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Film- und Medienstiftung NRW.

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