



NEWS RELEASE

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Space Needle Launches New Virtual Reality Installation: The VR Bar
Seattle's symbol of the future offers ticketed guests free 360-degree virtual reality experiences, including bungee jumping off the Space Needle

SEATTLE – Thursday, October 26, 2017 – The Space Needle has launched a free virtual reality (VR) installation, The VR Bar, that offers guests four extraordinary ways to experience Seattle's most iconic landmark. In partnership with Panogs and Graffix, the Space Needle developed a sleek bar that gives visitors the virtual experience of walking the Space Needle's outer Halo, flying a seaplane above Lake Union, soaring over Seattle, and bungee jumping from 520' in the air. Included with the price of admission, The VR Bar is available to all guests who visit the Space Needle's Observation Deck.

"Since the Space Needle opened for the 1962 World's Fair, the tower has symbolized innovation and endless possibilities," said Space Needle Chief Marketing Officer Karen Olson. "Today, we're taking that pioneering spirit above and beyond with digital experiences designed to give guests new and exciting ways to interact with Seattle's most iconic landmark."

Panogs, a leading photographic agency that focuses on VR storytelling, refers to the project as one of its most technological challenges to date.

"In less than 30 days, our team was set with the task of developing an authentic and thrilling bungee jump experience," explained Gavin Farrell, Panogs co-founder. "Two of our biggest challenges were navigating the best way to record footage on such a uniquely designed structure, and how to keep the cameras stabilized during the bungee jump fall. While drones are typically used to capture aerial footage, our team dropped a camera from the Space Needle's 520' Observation Deck, which captured a more realistic descent."

In addition to Panogs working with a mechanical engineer to design the camera drop-system, the company also partnered with a gimbal design specialist from Advance Visuals to develop AutoGimbal, a gimbal specifically designed to stabilize the cameras during the free fall. The AutoGimbal measures angular velocity 800 times a second, and the information is used to calculate the amount of motion in the opposite direction. This allowed the camera to remain compass-locked during the free fall with all potential spin and other movement distractions being completely absorbed by the AutoGimbal.

Once the 360-degree videos were completed, Graffix—a design and build fabricator of signage and branded environments—customized a one-of-a-kind VR installation for the experiences. Also focusing on The VR Bar's user interface and software development, Graffix created a user experience that directly aligned with the Space Needle's brand and vision.

“We were challenged to create a unique interactive exhibit that would facilitate a virtual reality user experience in an environment where there are a varied set of users,” said the Graffix President Chris Richardson.

The VR Bar is part of the Space Needle’s larger initiative to enhance guests’ experiences using technology. In the past few years, the Space Needle has launched a series of digital experiences including augmented reality, virtual reality, interactive experiences, and mixed reality technologies. Visit <http://www.spaceneedle.com/wow/> for more information on the Space Needle’s digital experiences.

About the Space Needle

The [Space Needle](#), one of the most recognized landmarks in the world, is in the midst of a multi-year venture focused on preservation and renovation of the 55-year-old icon. The renovation will update the structure’s physical systems and elevate the visitor experience by dramatically enhancing the view with floor-to-ceiling view glass on each level, an open-air observation deck with glass benches over the outer halo of the structure, and a first-of-its-kind rotating glass floor revealing downward views of the structure never seen before.

About Panogs

[Panogs](#) is a photographic agency focused on virtual reality storytelling and next generation image capture technologies. From filming in virtual reality from the summit of Mt. Everest for Sports Illustrated, to shooting spherical gigapixel images from the top of One World Trade Center, Panogs has executed projects in some of the most extreme and technically challenging conditions on the planet.

About Graffix

[Graffix](#) is a design/build fabricator of interior and exterior signage and branded environments. With an evolving 30-year history beginning in the commercial graphics arena, Graffix has expanded its services into the architectural business markets where innovation and creativity collide to develop high-quality custom signage solutions. They seamlessly manufacture, fulfill, and install complete front and back of house signage and environments including: signage, wayfinding, wall graphics, and decor, communication systems and menus, fixtures and any identity elements for each environment.

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