Virtual Reality Documentation of Salak Yom: Creating 3D and Virtual Reality Applications to Communicate Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Values

AWARD AMOUNT: $6,000

The SVA Robert Lemelson Fellowship allowed me to complete the research activities proposed in the fellowship application. This involved planning and executing a one-month research trip to Thailand to document the Salak Yom festival using 360 video. During May, June, and July of 2017, I coordinated and planned with my Thailand-based research partners to determine what technology and assistance would be of most interest to the community and researchers. While I originally proposed 360 video and 3D scanning, my partners were more interested in 360 video, aerial videography, and traditional interviews. Based on these discussions, I used fellowship funds to purchase a 360 camera, a drone, and to update my laptop computer for light video editing in the field. During this time, I also acquainted myself with the operation of the 360 camera and drone prior to the fieldwork itself. In August I traveled to Thailand for a one-month research trip to document the Salak Yom festival using 360 video and aerial videography, as well as in traditional video interview format as requested by my project partners. The fellowship funds allowed me to purchase tickets for the
flights from Vancouver to Chiang Mai and paid for all expenses related to food, accommodation, and local transportation while in the field. I was also able to pay for a local research assistant who provided invaluable expertise on the festival itself and served as an interpreter. Upon returning home in late September 2017, I organized and cleaned up all files. I have been working remotely with my Thai partners to share the raw materials with the community. We are continuing to edit videos, translate interviews, and determine the best way to share the materials with the community and broader audiences.

Testimonial about Benefits of Fellowship

The Lemelson Fellowship has been an integral part of shaping my PhD research. I knew I was interested in investigating the use of 360 video for cultural documentation, preservation, and the communication of traditional knowledge and values, but this fellowship offered me the opportunity to test my ideas in a practical and meaningful way. I was able to gain experience using these new visual technologies while contributing to an ongoing documentation and preservation project. After completing my research trip as an SVA Robert Lemelson Foundation Fellow exploring 360 video, I have since begun working with United Nations Environment on a series of 360 videos about their projects on Sustainable Production and Consumption.