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### Using Your Phone to Participate in Movies



BY KAT ASHARYA | FRI JAN 21, 2011 2:01 PM

Sundance Film Festival is spotlighting a film with a mobile twist -- theatergoers can actually participate in the movie, using their smartphones to navigate through heist scenes that takes place throughout various locations in the city.

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U.K.-based art collective Blast Theory, which designed the location-based app for the movie, "A Machine to See With," said players register online and enter their mobile phone number to receive directions to a designated street corner. When they arrive, their phones will ring, giving them messages that lead them -- as protagonists -- through the city and into a heist, where they must deal with a bank robbery and its aftermath.

Along the way, they must deal with other players, watch out for traps and make ethical decisions that help determine the course of the experience.

"The work mixes thriller cliches with the reality of the urban environment and explores the tyranny of choice and the financial crisis," the company said in a statement. "A Machine to See With" will run throughout the course of the festival, slated for January 20 through 30 and taking place in Park City, Utah.

Blast Theory's work is part of a larger "New Frontiers" program at Sundance, which spotlights cutting-edge intersection of film and mobile technologies to create art and entertainment. New Frontiers also features "Pandemic 1.0," another

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entertainment experience that blends film and smartphones to immerse players in a story about a mysterious virus that begins to affect the adults in a small rural town in a quest for survival.

"As filmmaking rapidly evolves through the creative marriage of technology and storytelling, New Frontiers opens a window into the future," said Robert Redford, founder and president of the Sundance Institute, which organizes the film festival. "It's a thrill for me to provide these unique artists with a new platform, a departure from their traditional art venues, and to watch Festival audiences challenge their preconceived notions about visual expression."

Explorations of technology and cinematic entertainment have emerged as a priority for film festivals as technologies like geolocation services and multimedia smartphones rise in usage, expanding the possibilities of entertainment.

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