Chapter 5
Towards a Fulldome Manifesto: Tour d’Horizon for the Immersive–Inclined

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ABSTRACT
The time for a Fulldome Manifesto has come because fulldome as an immersive, surround, communal medium is happening now. It comes as a vast vessel and in new form, with deep changes in the production and perception of 360-degree media. Within seconds, and without changing seat or body, one can switch from visiting a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple to being lured onto The Red Light District on a custom, generative, real-time responsive, science-fiction planet. Fulldome’s mere scale can provoke profound wonder and interconnectedness and encapsulate the intersection of all media disciplines, unlike any other multimedia vessels humans have built so far. Like the membrane of a cell, fulldome houses the cross mingling of desires, projections, and technological abilities. In Tour d’Horizon For The Immersive Inclined, authors venture Towards a Fulldome Manifesto—exploring fulldome as a medium, venue, and genre while pointing to its promise for the advancement of immersive media.

INTRODUCTION
With media expanding from square screen to the world around us, a vivid projected multimedia arena has found a way to immerse us not only in worlds out beyond in deep space, but also in our own inner worlds. Technological evolution has caught up with this spherical, multisensory venue to emerge as a medium, and soon one to host humans as they transcend perception, time, space, and habitats of consciousness. The dome in the 21st century is associated with sober science visualization, psychedelic experimentation, future-city dreaming, planetariums, Burning Man, and Las Vegas-scale entertainment. This medium has emerged as an interdisciplinary hotbed for DIY culture, citizen science, technologists, futurists, and free-thinking storytellers, cultivated in science centers and planetariums among star-gazers.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-2433-6.ch005
Towards a Fulldome Manifesto

This piece has been written as a Manifesto underway; “Towards” indicates that we explore core building blocks of the fulldome medium, which shape where we are with the medium in contemporary times and what is on the near horizon. Being delivered as a “Manifesto in the making” allows for the switching of viewpoints from generalist to practical, from radical to informative, at times inspirational, sometimes satirical—and with the accompaniment of anecdotal evidence from the authors’ experience.

The growth of such a medium is perpetual and ongoing (Figure 1). Here the authors cull from history to cast an evolution of the captured image from cave paintings, to imprinting images deep within the psyche of an audience by pairing tech with technique. Enjoy this tour of the discipline coupled with a tour of the mind, as small and large-scale fulldome experiences are used to paint a vision for how this medium is finding its way into a community near you; and how visioneers are engineering their use for profound impact.

Picture was taken at the Jena FullDome Festival, with artist Alexander Stephan experimenting with 3D effects for fulldome shows.

Why is diving deep into the world of fulldome an Alice-in-Wonderland-esque eye and mind-opening endeavor?

This burgeoning medium invites future butterflies to come out from cocooning. Giants and giant-themed entertainment domes are to soon hit mainstream accessibility. Wellness domes, which cure wear and fatigue, aren’t far away either. From petite single-user experiences projected inches from an individual’s eyes, to massive gatherings hosting thousands under one sphere, from 360-degree projected macro-mites or mega-structure vessels embracing the multitudes, immersive dome experiences are bubbles of indefinite opportunity! Mix in some healthy utopian pragmatism and this piece is a testament to its evolution!

A SMALL SPARK IN THE MIND LEAPS TO A GIANT SPARKLE ON THE DOME

… and a giant sparkle on the dome leaps to the mind. Immersion in the dome can be as poetic as “a sight, an emotion … this wave in the mind, long before it makes words to fit it,”[1] which, according to Virginia Woolf (1931), is how consciousness shall be defined. Or it can be to gross scale what lurks
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