

C//C

2026



EMPOWERING IMMERSIVE CREATIVITY

KEY TAKEAWAYS

CYCLE is a VR poem where dance, poetry, visuals and interaction connect the spectator to the different cycles in their life, while exploring personal and cosmic perspectives.

Matunda Groenendijk &
Amit Palgi



FOREWORD HELEEN ROUW

Programme director CIIC

When I look back on the 2026 edition of the annual CIIC event, one feeling prevails: how good it felt to see such a broad and diverse gathering of people. Now the programme is up-and-running, we're delighted that there is such interest in being a part of it.

From artistic makers to serious gamers; researchers and teachers in vocational, higher and academic education; people from the museum and healthcare sectors; representatives from a range of ministries – everything came together in one location. And that's exactly why we're here as a programme team: to make connections across sectors, sectors that don't necessarily otherwise come together.

Of course it was great to catch up with people. But perhaps even more importantly there was room to meet new people, have discussions you wouldn't normally have and enter into collaborations you wouldn't previously have thought of - which is precisely what makes it so invaluable.

We very consciously focused on this in the afternoon programme. By choosing different directions and perspectives within the tracks, we wanted not only to inspire people but also galvanise them. So rather than just listening also participating, putting our heads together and exploring where new opportunities lie.

This document outlines what was produced within the different tracks. It shows just what can be achieved in a single afternoon when people really get stuck into an issue together: they come up with solutions — for the distribution sector, for developments in healthcare, for inclusivity in design, for working with municipalities and other clients. It felt to me like an invitation to carry on the discussions we started here and continue building on them, leveraging the possibilities CIIC has to offer.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for their contributions, both the team who organised the day and each participant.

Thank you.

CIIC 2026 EMPOWERING IMMERSIVE CREATIVITY

This document bundles the core insights, cases and outcomes from CIIC 2026. On 16 April, makers, researchers, organisations and policymakers in the area of immersive creativity came together for a day programme where diverse domains — from artistic practice and training to care and public applications — could share perspectives, try out ideas and explore workable possibilities.

The five thematic tracks

The programme was split into five thematic tracks:

Track 1

Immersive Technologies as a Training Method

Track 2

Artistic Development & Distribution

Track 3

Immersive Experiences in the Public Domain

Track 4

Healthcare & Patient-Centered Immersive Experiences

Track 5

Designing for Inclusivity

Each participant chose one track, and each track consisted of three steps: inspiration (international examples and current insights), exchange (dialogue about shared challenges) and application (concrete opportunities for collaboration). This document follows the same format of inspiration, exchange and application: for each track we present key insights, concrete cases, key lessons and direct recommendations to build on.

In other words, this document not only reports on what was discussed, but above all aims to encourage follow-up action — from small-scale experiments to structural collaborations — so that the insights gained have a real impact in practice, policy and research.

TRACK 1 – IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGIES AS A TRAINING METHOD

Track leader:

Erik-Jan Bijvank (Scopic Labs)

Speakers:

Matthew Hall (Arbor XR)

Facilitator:

Roland Boer

Track reporter:

Sorcha Ní Bhraonáin

Why are IX pitches often met with a resounding ‘wow’ but fail to move beyond this to real adoption as a training method?

IX can propose novel creative environments to enact experiential learning. However, while these technologies often evoke initial enthusiasm, they fail to be adopted on an organisational or institutional level. The presenters and participants looked into the practical barriers — scalability, implementation, teaching methods — and debated when immersion adds genuine training value and when traditional methods are fine

‘The wow that goes nowhere’

Erik-Jan Bijvank (Scopic Labs) framed the problem as a pattern of “the wow that goes nowhere”: impressive demos that fail to translate into organisational

use. Matthew Hall (Arbor XR) urged reframing the value proposition to cover the whole onboarding lifecycle (e.g. decentralised training that reduces travel and time costs). Both speakers went beyond the novelty factor to address demonstrable operational benefits.

Platforms vs. experiment

Group discussions revealed a tension between bespoke, artisanal IX work and the demand for scalable, standardised platforms. Business participants favoured off the shelf solutions for large corporate academies and routine procedures, while education and research professionals argued that standardisation doesn’t work for complex, high stakes interpersonal or clinical scenarios requiring contextual nuance, judgment and embodied learning responses.

The track therefore delineated two training categories:

- Tactical/operational tasks — where repeatable simulations and scale matter;
- Experiential/clinical learning — where customised, context rich simulations are essential..

IX is most effective for embodied, experiential learning: it allows safe



rehearsal of dangerous or inaccessible situations, trains bodily regulation and reflexive responses through repetition, and supports ‘learning by doing’. These benefits depend on designing experiences around clear learning objectives and assessment models.

Barriers to implementation

Implementation barriers are cultural and organisational as much as technical. Common failure modes include purchasing hardware or software without training instructors, poor cross-departmental communication and unrealistic expectations about immediate returns. Resistance arises from fear, uncertainty and lack of clarity about when IX is the appropriate modality. Stakeholders need to be educated about IX affordances and instructors should participate in design processes so that training goals and technological capabilities align.

The ‘backwards design’ approach

Design and pedagogy must evolve together. One way to do this is a ‘backwards design’ approach: start with learning outcomes, then map how immersive affordances meet those outcomes. This includes rethinking assessment because measuring competencies and behaviours in virtual environments requires new evaluation methods tied to intended outcomes.

Finally, the group urged a pragmatic view: IX is not a universal solution but a

powerful component when matched to specific learning needs. To move beyond one-off pilots organisations must demonstrate cost-benefit for targeted use cases, train facilitators, adopt appropriate levels of standardisation (where it serves scale) and preserve customisation where fidelity matters.

Key takeaways

- Define the learning outcome first using backward design; choose IX only if its affordances directly map to those outcomes.
- Segment use cases: use standardised XR for repeatable procedural training; use bespoke immersive designs for high-stakes, interpersonal or clinical scenarios.
- Measure cost-benefit across the full onboarding lifecycle (travel, time, retention, remediation) to build a business case.
- Involve instructors and L&D as co-designers to align pedagogy, assessment and technology from the start.
- Train the trainers: allocate budget/time for instructor upskilling and integration planning, not just tech procurement.
- Create clear assessment strategies for competencies demonstrated in virtual environments (behavioural metrics, scenario-based evaluation).
- Weigh standardisation against customisation: standard platforms enable scale; customised content preserves contextual fidelity where necessary.

TRACK 02 — ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT & DISTRIBUTION

Track leader:

Paulien Dresscher

Speakers:

Avinash Changa (We Make VR)

Babette Wijntjes (Vedette)

Vincent Slangen (ENTR)

Facilitator:

Kersti Vervloet

Track reporter

Hilmer Thijs

What if the biggest challenge for immersive isn't creation but everything that comes after?

As the field of IX matures, the conversation is shifting toward the systems that determine whether that work can actually live, travel and endure. How do immersive works move through the world, beyond festivals, museums and theatres?



Building the conditions for longevity

With IMPRES, Avinash Changa addressed a core vulnerability of immersive work: its dependence on fast-changing technology. Where film and music benefit from stable formats, immersive experiences often disappear as systems evolve. IMPRES proposes a standardised approach to preservation and distribution, allowing works to remain accessible — and economically viable — over time. In this context, preservation becomes an enabling layer rather than a retrospective one.

Where IMPRES focuses on time, ENTR focuses on place. In his presentation, Vincent Slangen explored the development of dedicated environments

for immersive work, from mobile VR setups to a large-scale VR museum in Amsterdam. This highlights another dimension of distribution: it is not only technical, but spatial and social. Where audiences encounter immersive work fundamentally shapes how it is experienced, understood and valued.

Following the talks, participants discussed various statements in smaller groups.

Developing a shared vocabulary

When we speak about immersive experiences, do we mean IX or XR? Are they interchangeable, or culturally defined? These questions directly



influence how we understand each other and what solutions we can imagine. The same applies to the concept of distribution. Usually framed as a technical issue — hardware, software, platforms — distribution also means ticketing models, onboarding, accessibility, mediation, cultural context and the design of environments in which audiences feel comfortable engaging.

Between integrity and adaptation

Does adapting work across platforms dilute its essence (the artist's intent) or does it open up new possibilities? Some participants emphasised the risk of compromise, while others framed adaptation as an extension of the creative process. Rather than being external to the work, distribution becomes part of how it develops over time. A similar discussion unfolded around scaling. For some, impact lies not in reach but in depth: in creating meaningful experiences for specific audiences. In that context, niche is not a limitation but a deliberate position.

A shared next step

The IX field needs continuity, exchange and collective learning. And perhaps most importantly: it needs a language that allows that collaboration to happen more effectively.

Key takeaways

- Distribution should be considered from the very start of the creative process, including aspects such as portability, versioning and presentation context.
- Shared language is needed to meaningfully address questions and challenges in IX, but a field that is still evolving can benefit from ambiguity as long as it remains productive.
- Investment in infrastructure must go beyond technology, addressing the human and spatial conditions that shape audience experience.
- Rather than relying on a single model, the future of immersive distribution will likely combine existing cultural institutions with new, dedicated venues, each contributing to how the medium takes shape.

TRACK 03 — IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Track leader:

Ilse Leeninga (Innovally)

Speakers:

Thomas Le Gras (STIPO)

Facilitator:

Nel Mostert

Track report:

Viveka van de Vliet

How can IX contribute in a public context to more citizen participation, dialogue and decision-making around urban and social issues?

Immersive experiences (IX) are often dismissed as a hype or trick, an image that track leader Ilse Leeninga disputes. “We have long since passed that phase. In reality, immersive technologies add value and offer opportunities.”

Insights through dialogue

Some examples: Waterlicht is a ‘virtual flood’ where visitors walk through an undulating light landscape that shows the height the waterline could reach without dykes. The Smog Free Tower purifies the air while making a visual statement about pollution. STIPO, an organisation dedicated to improving cities, enables citizens to participate in

urban design using extended reality (XR). All are examples where social issues and participation come together through immersive installations or interventions that actively involve people with their environment.

Democratising decision-making

The impact of IX depends very much on who is taking part and how the process is set up. When residents, policymakers and designers come together in a shared immersive environment, perspectives become clearer and the process more egalitarian. This can help democratise and accelerate decision-making. Thomas Le Gras (STIPO) showed how this works in practice: residents enter a neighbourhood via VR and work together on scenarios for housing, greenery and mobility. Sharing different perspectives within one experiential space creates greater understanding of spatial choices and increases the sense of ownership.

Risks and opportunities

During the session it became clear that there are still practical barriers. Participation on a large scale remains a challenge: not everyone has digital skills and with VR participation is by definition limited. This raises the question how immersive processes can become more accessible without becoming more

Immersive Technologies as a training method

Cool! I can practice my skills
without doing any harm!



superficial.

This calls for careful consideration: When does emotional involvement become manipulation? How do you maintain the balance between steering and exploring openly? And how do you prevent certain groups being ignored?

Conclusion

Experiences of people within this track show that IX in the public domain has the potential to deepen participation and decision-making, but only when carefully designed and embedded in social and institutional contexts. The value of IX lies not in the technology itself, but in the way it enables a change of perspective and brings people closer to each other's worlds.

As one participant summarised it, "Immersive technology is not there to convince others but to help understand one another better."

Key takeaways

- Broad participation is a challenge. This has to do with the digital skills of residents but also factors such as engagement and technological limitations.
- It is therefore important there is broad representation at the design stage of IX for the public domain in order to ensure transparency and accessibility.
- Ethical frameworks are essential to avoid manipulation and exclusion.
- The value of IX in the public space lies in mutual understanding, democratisation, dialogue and shared experience.

TRACK 04 — HEALTHCARE & PATIENT- CENTRED IMMERSIVE

Track leader:

Dr. Wouter Sluis-Thiescheffer
(HAN University of Applied Sciences)

Sprekers:

Remco Hoogendijk
(Sint Maartenskliniek)
Alex Tavassoli (Enliven Empathy)
Roos Meerman (Fillip Studios)
Mike Verhiel (Psylaris)

Facilitator:

Allard Dericks

Track report:

Nils Adriaans

How can immersive technologies support patients throughout the care journey, with a focus on experience, autonomy and guidance?

Opportunities and focus areas

Track leader Remco Hoogendijk kicked off the session by guiding participants through the patient journey: perception – recognition – intervention – involvement – care and healing – long-term health management. IX is currently to be found mainly in the mid-stages of the journey in small-scale but effective ways. But little is happening at the journey's start (what is the patient's

action perspective?) or the end, which remain uncharted territory.

Following talks by Mike Verhiel, CEO Psylaris ("my vision is to revolutionise the accessibility of mental healthcare – with IX you can enormously reduce waiting times remotely"); Alex Tavassoli, founder of Enliven Empathy ("three years of regular therapy can sometimes be done in ten minutes using VR"); and Roos Meerman, Artistic Director Fillip Studios, who tries to enrich care with sensory healing (for example, by creating alternatives to the 'repair house'), there was a group discussion.

Organisation and infrastructure as decisive factors

Scalability calls for orchestration. Healthcare institutions need a single connecting point of contact — an IX liaison who links up technical, clinical and organisational responsibilities. Another barrier many mentioned is that the right technical infrastructure is often lacking. Raising the additional question, who does the technical management of IX within a healthcare institution? European collaboration on open standards and local production of hardware can reduce dependence on American tech giants and accelerate adoption.



Youssef Louakili
Director-General for Culture and Media at the
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
(OCW)

CLIC
2023

Implementation, financing and scaling up

Adoption in practice requires investments no one wants to fund alone. Public-private partnerships and subsidies can accelerate the first adoption phase. When it comes to structural integration, it is vital facilities and staff can work internally with IX methodologies: train-the-trainer models and certification of facilitators can make IX reproducible within organisations without the need for constant external control.

Development principles and design practices

Bring together education, the creative sector and healthcare practice early in the process, so that training courses meet real care needs. To overcome resistance, the healthcare sector needs a few examples to get used to and thereby gain experience. Technology alone won't transform healthcare

Empathy as a clinical variable

Immersive resources have the unique ability to create emotional recognition where e-learning and role-playing can't. As participant Suzanne Visser (Dutch Digital Design and New Dutch Wave) puts it, "With IX, we can make a healthcare provider actually feel what a patient is going through. Whether that's what it feels like to walk into a consulting room with PTSD or as a child to be in the middle of an acrimonious divorce. And that allows us to provide much more targeted treatment. In my view, empathy is no longer a soft skill but a clinical variable that we can really focus on — for training, prevention and therapy."

Key takeaways

- There are opportunities for IX applications at the start (patient perspective) and end (long-term) of the care process.
- Scalability calls for orchestration: an IX liaison point is needed in healthcare institutions to connect technical, clinical and organisational elements.
- Early collaboration: bringing together education, the creative sector and healthcare practice early in the process ensures both relevant training and acceptance.
- Empathy as a clinical variable: IX can create genuine emotional recognition, making empathy measurable and usable for training, prevention and therapy.

TRACK 05 — DESIGNING FOR INCLUSIVITY

Track leader:

Regina van Tongeren
(Unapologetic Impact & AI-Brainlab.nl)

Speakers:

Corine Meijers (Studio Biarritz)
Danny van Zuijlen (Studio Immersief)

Facilitator

Adda van Zanden

Track reporter

Busra Erkara

Who is the default?

After an introduction to the topic by track leader Regina van Tongeren, the track started with a presentation by Corine Meijers, founder of Studio Biarritz. Speaking of her practice, Meijers said, "I don't have a strategy for how to be inclusive, I just do it." Her work approaches subjects like heritage and intergenerationality, gender/orientation bias, non-human entities and neurodivergent inclusion, with the utmost respect and care while making the experiences readable and transferable via XR. For example, 'Lesbian Simulator' walks the player through some of the biases and challenges one experiences as a lesbian, from a lack of proper media representation to the unsavoury

What if, in an era when inclusivity and ethical innovation dominate tech debates, we viewed inclusivity not as an obligation or threat but as a creative force?

*Immersion:
It's not about technique, it's about the effect*



experience of outright discrimination. Immersive technology not only makes such experiences visible, but also palpable.

Design exercises

Following Corine Meijers's talk, participants moved into a series of speculative design exercises. Each challenge invited them to step outside familiar perspectives: design for a gender identity that isn't your own or creating an immersive experience in which a non-Western or underrepresented cultural perspective is not just an afterthought but the foundation.

What began as an individual exercise quickly evolved into collective brainstorming sessions, with participants critically reflecting on representation, bias and the assumptions embedded within design processes. The resulting concepts ranged from gender-neutral retail experiences to immersive storytelling rooted in Senegalese family histories, illustrating how XR can make perspectives and lived experiences beyond our own both tangible and emotionally accessible.

Red card

As ideas began to take shape, the 'red card' was introduced: a reflective tool designed to challenge the groups' concepts and assumptions. Participants were asked questions such as: Could this experience harm anyone? At what point does empathy turn into appropriation?

These 'red card' interventions helped participants recognize how their perceptions can rely on stereotypes, Western perspectives and simplistic representations, leading them to critically rethink and refine their perceptions.

Intersectionality

In the final part of the track, participants were invited to 'mix it up' and explore what emerges at the intersection of multiple themes, such as non-human and heritage. Danny van Zuijlen emphasised through his cases how important it is to put language first when working with vulnerable or historically marginalised perspectives, quite literally in exhibition copy, interface design and all surrounding XR materials. For example, one of the cases presented, 'Layering Histories', set out to find a responsible and "multi-voiced way" of retelling colonial stories using Dutch colonial archives in Borneo. This shift toward intersectional thinking sparked unexpected connections between systems, stories and materials.



Conclusion

Inclusivity is an active design practice rather than a fixed framework: one that begins with defining who and what is centred; is tested through rapid and critical prototyping; and is continuously challenged through reflection, feedback and intersectional thinking. Across the various exercises, from 'red card' moments to speculative XR concepts, participants explored how empathy can be expanded without becoming appropriation, and how diverse perspectives can shape more grounded and responsive design outcomes.

Key takeaways

- Define the 'default' explicitly and let it guide every design decision.
- Use critical checkpoints such as the 'red card' to test impact, power dynamics and blind spots.
- Put affected communities' language and perspectives first in all XR and design outputs.
- Mix themes and perspectives early to generate less predictable and tokenistic outcomes.
- Treat inclusivity as an ongoing process of testing, learning and adjustment, rather than a final state.



OVERARCHING INSIGHTS

The value and power of applying IX in a range of domains is clear. At the same time, maintaining a critical eye, daring to switch perspectives and utilising unexplored areas all remain important. Pretty well everyone calls for more co-creation and recognises the importance of interdisciplinary collaborations as a sustainable interconnected ecosystem.

As was said in Track 1: "If immersive technologies are presented as ways to bring innovation into training and education, interdisciplinary collaboration is essential and the expertise of L&D professionals, educators and researchers must be integrated." Or as a Track 3 participant argues: "If you want to make improvements to a neighbourhood, you bring residents, policymakers, architects and other stakeholders together in an immersive visualisation where the various different arguments within a narrative have equal voice and are accessible to everyone. This helps democratise technology and speed up planning and design processes."

Key takeaways

- Define measurable goals in advance (learning outcomes, behavioural change, satisfaction) and design from back to front.
- Involve a broad group in the creative process to make sure the IX meets the needs in practice, and ensure inclusiveness and accessibility.
- Build for interoperability and consider distribution from the start of the manufacturing process.
- Document and share learnings publicly in order to accelerate knowledge sharing.



Join us

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Join our growing network and seek out new collaborations. Want to stay up to speed with all the developments within CIIC? Become a (free) member of our [community](#), sign up for the [newsletter](#) or [contact](#) the team direct.

“THE FUTURE
ISN'T ABOUT
WHAT WE
BUILT, IT IS
ABOUT HOW
THOUGHTFULLY
WE CHOOSE TO
BUILD IT.”

Paul Skinner (Tellart)

Colophon

Our thanks to all the participants, speakers and partners.

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