

ALJAZEERA  
**CONTRAST**

**For Immediate Release**

Friday, December 13, 2019

***Still Here*, an immersive multimedia installation by Emmy-nominated, storytelling and innovation studio Al Jazeera Contrast to premiere at Sundance Film Festival**

**Formerly imprisoned women collaborate to explore urgent issues surrounding incarceration, erasure and gentrification**



Le'Asha Julius plays Jasmine Smith, a woman returning to Harlem after being locked up for 15 years

(Washington, D.C.) – Storytelling and innovation studio Al Jazeera Contrast, part of the digital division of Al Jazeera Media Network, announced today that *Still Here* will premiere at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival in the New Frontier program.

The visceral experiences of over twelve formerly incarcerated women who have re-entered society are at the core of *Still Here*, which was conceived as an interactive audio, VR and AR experience by Al Jazeera Contrast head and lead creator **Zahra Rasool** and journalist **Sarah Springer** along with a team of creatives from the New York City community.

Told cinematically and through the lens of a fictional character named Jasmine Smith, who returns to Harlem after 15 years in prison, the narrative is crafted together with women who have spent time in prison and are part of Women's Prison Association (WPA). *Still Here*

represents a pioneering transmedia approach to storytelling and signifies a new direction in collaborative and community-centered, immersive journalism.

Rasool, an emerging force in immersive journalism, commented, “Providing direct access to personal stories and voices that matter is at the heart of our mission, and we are thrilled that the Sundance Film Festival recognizes the importance of inclusion and the necessity to democratize the creative process and push the boundaries of traditional narratives.”

“As a digital news media organization, we are charged with a responsibility to bring the world’s most pressing and crucial stories to life in compelling and impactful ways. This first-time selection by the Sundance Film Festival is an honor and signifies a new level of international recognition for the groundbreaking content the Al Jazeera Contrast team are creating.” said **Carlos Van Meek**, Director of Digital Innovation and Programming, Al Jazeera Digital.

Al Jazeera Contrast’s *Still Here* follows on the heels of multiple international awards received since the studio launched in 2017, including an Emmy nomination this year in the Outstanding New Approaches: Current News category alongside *The New York Times*, *Time Magazine* and the Center for Investigative Reporting for [Yemen’s Skies of Terror](#). Rasool’s team is the only all-female news team specializing in immersive technology and the nomination marked the first time Al Jazeera Digital has been recognized in the News and Documentary Emmy competition. [Yemen’s Skies of Terror](#) was produced in collaboration with [local talent](#), and tells the story of war from the perspectives of three children as they attempt to rebuild their lives amidst great personal loss. The 6 minute 30 second immersive documentary won the [Online News Association’s Excellence in Immersive Storytelling Award](#) in 2018 and has been screened at the Sheffield Doc/Fest, Melbourne International Film Festival, and several other festivals worldwide.

Since 2007, the New Frontier exhibition at the Sundance Film Festival has provided the highest level of curation in the emerging field, incorporating fiction, non-fiction and hybrid projects to showcase emerging media storytelling, multi-media installations, performances and films.

*Still Here* will be on view from Friday, January 24–February 2, 2020 at New Frontier at The Ray  
The Box at The Ray, 1768 Park Ave., Park City, UT  
Press hours on request and subject to capacity  
Please contact [denise@lynwinter.com](mailto:denise@lynwinter.com) for further details and to schedule interviews with **Zahra Rasool**, lead creator of *Still Here* and **Elaine Daly** and **Tamanika Evans**, two of the formerly incarcerated women whose experiences inspired *Still Here*

### **STILL HERE TRAILER**

To view the *Still Here* trailer, please click on the link below:  
<https://vimeo.com/364096655/87bb12d4a5>

## **STILL HERE CREDITS**

### **Lead Artists**

Zahra Rasool  
Sarah Springer

### **Creative Directors**

Zahra Rasool  
Viktorija Mickute

### **Director, 360°Video**

Naima Ramos-Chapman

### **Writers**

Naima Ramos-Chapman (360°Videos)  
Carvell Wallace (Audio AR Story)

### **Inspired By**

Aisha Radellant  
Cecile Davidson  
Elaine Daly  
Jennifer Montano  
Kamilah Newton  
Keisha Badger  
Shawn Shields  
Tamanika Evans  
Tiajuana Wilkinson  
and others

### **Cast**

Le'Asha Julius, JASMINE  
Keith Buxton, MICHAEL  
Marion Green, UNCLE MAXIE  
James Brown-Orleans, Homeless person (Voice, AR)  
George Bennet Watson, Uncle Maxie (Voice, AR)  
Crystal Arnette, Colleen (Voice, AR)

### **Key Collaborators**

Maria Lauret  
Alan Bucaria  
Fred Ritchin

### **Producers**

Zahra Rasool  
Viktorija Mickute

## **About Al Jazeera Contrast**

Established in May 2017, Al Jazeera Contrast is Al Jazeera Media Network's Emmy-nominated immersive storytelling and media innovation studio, which uses cutting edge technologies to push the boundaries of traditional narratives and amplify stories of underrepresented communities. Grounded in the principles of co-creation and collaboration, the studio's editorial process involves collaborating with people hit hardest by conflict and inequality who are connected to the stories they are telling. Believing that diversity in the media and storytelling is a social justice issue and vital for authentic storytelling, Al Jazeera Contrast has appointed 29-year-old media innovator Zahra Rasool to lead an international team from uniquely different backgrounds. Al Jazeera Contrast is part of the digital division of Al Jazeera Media Network, one of the largest and most diverse, global operations broadcasting news to over 400 million households in more than 150 countries. Learn more about the studio at [www.contrastvr.com](http://www.contrastvr.com).

Image credit, cover page: *Still Here* poster, courtesy AJ Contrast.

### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

For further information and assets, and to schedule an interview with Zahra Rasool, contact:

**Lyn Winter, Inc.**

Lyn Winter, [lyn@lynwinter.com](mailto:lyn@lynwinter.com)

Denise Sullivan, [denise@lynwinter.com](mailto:denise@lynwinter.com)

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