

# Stage a 360° Experience

## Time:

20 minutes for each scenario, with debrief time

Try this fun activity to play with the concept of a 360° experience without using any technology! The purpose of this exercise is to experiment with staging a scene in 360°, and to explore the experience of an audience member.

This activity is adapted from WeHeartDrama's "[Reimagine the Space - An Immersive Improv Exercise](#)," and combines two concepts relevant to 360° video:

- *Immersive Theater*: In immersive theatre, the audience is part of the action and plays a role in how the story unfolds by choosing to focus on particular actors or elements of their surroundings. The audience is not simply sitting in their seats and consuming a production in front of them - they are in the middle of it. 360° video is the same!
- *Experience Prototyping*: In [The Storyteller's Guide to the Virtual Reality Audience](#), Katy Newton and Karin Soukup suggest using "experience prototyping" (a [concept](#) developed by researchers at IDEO) when planning a VR story project to get a chance to see how viewers might engage with your an immersive story.

In this activity, send one or two people out of the room — these people will be the "audience." Inside the room, the "actor" group should briefly discuss how they will transform the room into a different, imagined space — for example, a museum, a doctor's office, a cafe, an airport, etc. The actors may make minimal changes to the physical space (for example, moving chairs) but the bulk of the space should be constructed through their actions and interactions.

When the "audience" comes back in the room, ask them to sit or stand in a particular place in the room (this would be where you would place the camera if you were actually filming). You might choose the center or a corner, sitting or standing. Once the audience member(s) are in place, let the improvised scene unfold around them. The actors should stay in the space for at least two minutes until, individually or together, they come up with a reason for leaving, and the scene concludes.

Run through a few different scenarios with the group, where each scenario is a little different — experiment with more or less action, more or less dialogue, different positions for the "viewer," etc. Debrief each experience:

- What did it feel like to interact with the space? How did you imagine it might be arranged?
- Were there areas of the space where most of the activity seemed to take place? What would it take to cause someone experiencing the space to look in a different direction?

- If your imagined space was real, what details might have helped bring it to life for a viewer? What details could help someone make meaning out of their surroundings, and/or to understand the story if they were immersed in this environment?
- For the student viewing the action in the middle of the improv team’s “imagined space,” what was it like to have this perspective? How did it feel to be in the center of activity as you were viewing the action around you? Did you experience FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) as you were deciding which direction to look?
- What lessons will you take away that will be helpful when you start planning and filming a video?