

## Conservation International Virtual Reality Project 'My Africa' to Premiere at Tribeca Film Festival

*Academy Award Winner Lupita Nyong'o Narrates Stunning Portrait of East Africa*



Arlington, Va. (March 8, 2018) – Conservation International's newest virtual reality project, "My Africa," has been selected to premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival, April 18-29, in New York. Narrated by the Academy Award-winning and Kenyan-raised actress Lupita Nyong'o, "My Africa" transports viewers to Kenya, where a community is reknitting the bonds that have long enabled people and wildlife to coexist.

"My Africa" will be released worldwide in seven languages on April 30, immediately following its run Tribeca Film Festival Virtual Arcade, April 20-28. The project was produced by Passion Pictures in association with Vision3 and with the support of The Tiffany & Co. Foundation. Additional support for distribution was provided by glassybaby.

The project opens with iconic wildlife scenes: Viewers stand in the midst of a thundering herd of wildebeest migrating across the Mara River, in front of a lioness as she captures her prey, and later, with an inquisitive baby elephant in a community-led sanctuary in Northern Kenya.

But "My Africa" is ultimately a story about people. A young Samburu woman named Naltwasha Leriye, narrated in English by Lupita Nyong'o, takes viewers through her community's daily life,

tending livestock, digging "singing" wells deep into dry riverbanks and rescuing a baby elephant orphaned by a poacher's gun.

Directed by four-time Emmy winner David Allen, the project was captured with virtual reality cameras in the Namunyak Wildlife Conservancy in Samburu County of northern Kenya at the [Reteti Elephant Sanctuary](#), the first elephant orphanage in Africa owned and operated by the local community. In a region where conservation has traditionally been pursued by wealthy outsiders, Reteti and the surrounding Northern Rangelands Trust offer a different model — one grounded in local leadership and traditional knowledge.

"My Africa is about a path forward for saving the miracle that is Africa — the last place on Earth where significant numbers of the world's largest land animals still roam," said project Executive Producer and Conservation International CEO Dr. M. Sanjayan. "If we are going to save nature in a crowded world we need to entirely rethink how we go about it. This film shows a new way, one that unites, rather than divides, people from wildlife. Today, conservation is not about building fences but rather breaking down barriers, so that local communities benefit when nature thrives."

"Tiffany is proud to continue our support of Conservation International and further our wildlife conservation efforts with the release of My Africa," said Anisa Kamadoli Costa, Chairman and President of The Tiffany & Co. Foundation. "We believe people need to experience what is at risk of being lost in order to understand what needs to be protected. By transporting viewers to the majestic wildlife and natural landscapes of Kenya, we hope to inspire audiences to become more passionate advocates for conservation."

Tiffany & Co. also contributes to wildlife conservation in Africa through the company's charitable *Save the Wild* collection.

The project comes at a critical time for East Africa's wildlife. Poaching, land degradation and climate change threaten the long-term survival of many of the region's most iconic species and strain the resources that people need to survive. In "My Africa," viewers glimpse a path forward: a place communities work for the long-term success of the species and reap the benefits, including increased stability, opportunity and improved livelihoods. Here, in Northern Kenya, is a new economy, one that enables people and nature to thrive together.

"My Africa" is Conservation International's third virtual reality project, following "Valen's Reef" and "Under the Canopy." The virtual reality approach, says Sanjayan, is bringing the nature documentary into the 21st century and aimed at growing new levels of support for conservation. "Virtual reality can give viewers that in-depth experience that is so needed to build empathy and, we hope, inspire action."

Audiences are responding and taking action. Conservation International's first two virtual reality projects have earned more than 3 million views to date. "Under the Canopy" helped the organization, with the backing of SC Johnson, protect 10,000 acres in an acre-for-acre match program to conserve the Amazon rainforest. Those acres will now kick off the [world's largest tropical reforestation effort](#), taking place in the Brazilian region of the Amazon.

Viewers who catch the project during its run at the Tribeca Film Festival will also experience "My Africa: Elephant Keeper," a groundbreaking live-action and tactile mixed-reality experience hosted in the Virtual Arcade April 20-28. Created by Adam May and produced by Conservation International and Vision3, the experience puts viewers in the shoes of a keeper at the Reteti

Elephant Sanctuary caring for the newest arrival, a "baby elephant" named Dudu.

The Reteti Elephant Sanctuary featured in "My Africa" opened in 2016 with the support of glassybaby. In 2017, glassybaby was awarded with Conservation International's Global Conservation Hero award in honor of its commitment to Reteti and their support for conservation efforts across the globe.

#### **Assets for media use\*:**

Website: <https://www.conservation.org/stories/vr/Pages/My-Africa-Virtual-Reality-Film.aspx>

YouTube trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CHZ-88EKsA>

Images: <https://ci.tandemvault.com/lightboxes/ZnpNkvB5v>

#### **About Conservation International**

Conservation International uses science, policy and partnerships to protect the nature people rely on for food, fresh water and livelihoods. Founded in 1987, CI works in more than 30 countries on six continents to ensure a healthy, prosperous planet that supports us all. Learn more about [Conservation International](#), the groundbreaking "[Nature Is Speaking](#)" campaign and its series of virtual reality projects including "Valen's Reef" and "Under the Canopy." Follow Conservation International's work on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

#### **About The Tiffany & Co. Foundation**

Established in 2000, The Tiffany & Co. Foundation provides grants in environmental conservation, working to preserve the world's most treasured landscapes and seascapes. The Foundation supports organizations dedicated to the stewardship of natural resources in the areas of responsible mining and coral conservation. For more information on The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, please visit [tiffanyandcofoundation.org](http://tiffanyandcofoundation.org).

#### **About Passion Pictures**

Passion Planet, established in 2011, has swiftly secured a stellar reputation for innovative and inspiring science and natural history documentaries. After a prolific 20-year career as a leading producer in his field, multi Emmy-award winning David Allen now heads up a large team of leading creatives, producers and experts across Planet's specialist output. Passion Planet has already garnered 13 international awards, including a Wildscreen Golden Panda and two Emmys. For more, go to [passion-pictures.com](http://passion-pictures.com).

#### **About Vision3**

Vision3 are industry leaders in 3D production for Hollywood Feature Films, award winning Natural History large format documentaries, and innovative virtual reality and augmented reality experiences.

The London-based company was formed in 2008 and is the recipient of eight Lumiere Awards from the International Advanced Imaging Society, including best Stereography for WB's "Gravity." For more, go to [vision3.tv](http://vision3.tv).

#### **About glassybaby**

Inspired by the healing light of a candle in hand-blown glass, glassybaby is a social enterprise founded by three-time cancer survivor, Lee Rhodes. Handmade in Seattle, Washington and Berkeley, California, the votives are crafted in over 250 different colors and each given a unique

name and meaning. Glassybaby donates 10% of all revenue to help people, animals, and the planet heal. To date, the glassybaby family has donated over \$8 million. For more, [glassybaby.com](https://www.glassybaby.com)