

Hostile Terrain 94: An Interactive Documentary for Mobile

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Using photogrammetry, volumetric video capture, and 360-photos, we are building an interactive documentary experience for cellphones to pair with Hostile Terrain 94’s physical installations. Our goal is to push audiences closer to the stories and lived experience of the millions of migrants who have endured the harsh conditions of border crossing, while also memorializing the thousands that have lost their lives on their way to a better one.



Fig. 1. *Hostile Terrain 94 installation*

I. HOSTILE TERRAIN 94

Hostile Terrain 94 (HT94) is a participatory art project sponsored and organized by the Undocumented Migration Project (UMP), a non-profit research-art-education-media collective, directed by anthropologist Jason De León. The exhibition is composed of ~3,200 handwritten toe-tags that represent migrants who have died trying to cross the Sonoran Desert of Arizona between the mid-1990s and 2019. These tags are geolocated on a wall map of the desert showing the exact locations where remains were found.

Originally planned to travel to 150 locations throughout 2020, HT94 is moving to a digital-only format for many of its exhibits with partner institutions due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Learn more about Hostile Terrain 94 [here](#).

II. HT94 MOBILE EXPERIENCE

We are building the “digital layer” to Hostile Terrain 94’s toe-tag exhibit. We set out to create an Augmented Reality (AR) experience that could be used at the physical installations. Due to COVID-19’s impact on these installations, we pivoted to create an experience that could run on web-browsers and be accessed anywhere. This will allow us to expand the project’s reach and safely distribute it.



Fig. 2. *Screenshots from the Hostile 94 mobile experience*

Viewers can use web-browsers on their Android or iOS devices to access an interactive five-chapter experience. In each of these chapters, audiences will be transported to the desert via 360 photos and will then hear first-hand accounts from migrants or humanitarian volunteers, represented by archival photos and volumetric captures, “hologram-like videos.” Viewers will navigate through the story by selecting chapters from an interactive map, clicking through the 360-environments, and exploring 3D-models of real-life items left behind by migrants and found in the Sonoran Desert.

At the end of the experience, viewers will have a chance to add their voices to a memorial to the thousands who have died as a result from policies that push migrants to the harsh conditions of the desert.