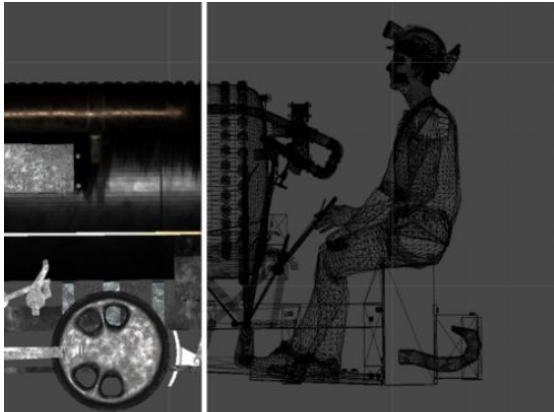


The gallery at artsPlace on Saturday morning was bursting at its seams. Innovate Canmore and The Canmore Museum partnered up to feature, animator and designer, Jerry Auld's, *Virtual Reality Experience!* People of all ages were flowing into the theater to see and interact with the showcasing, where they had the opportunity to dive back into time and walk through an old Canmore coal mine.

Users put on a headset and used a handheld computer mouse, to experience miners working up close and in 3D! Participants walked around on tracks and paths that matched the old Canmore coal maps and jumped out of the way of moving minecarts in a virtual world! Others observed the experience on a computer located nearby while Jerry gave a behind the scenes look into the software, Blender, he used to recreate this accurate view into the past and answered audience questions.



How real was it? Well the McKendrick brothers, Myles and Carson said, 'It was fun and I would like to do it again because it feels like a different world!' and, 'I almost fell over it was so real! I thought I was really going to run into those big yellow tanks.' Duncan McCaid said, 'It's fantastic! Weird in that I felt out of balance! I was standing still but it felt like I was actually moving! It feels so realistic!' and Dr. Dave Flowers claimed, 'It was really well done! The applications are phenomenal!'

The theater was full of curiosity and excitement! For some children and adults this was their first ever experience with virtual reality. The time flew by and after the event Jerry reflected and said, "One aspect that I enjoy about public venues - apart from just conversing about the stuff we do with interested folks - is the ability to watch the reactions of people to your work in real-time. We spend months building this stuff, closeted away, often only testing with a small group, so it is satisfying and instructive to see how people are experiencing the finished project."

If you didn't get a chance to try out the VR mining experience, or did and want to try it out again, you can! Visit the Canmore Museum & Geoscience Centre where technology and history become one!

-Abra Mueller

Innovate Canmore Ambassador Program Coordinator