

XR Women Global Announces 2025 Award Honorees and Celebrates Emerging Student Leaders

XR Women Global honors 2025 award winners and rising student leaders at AWE, spotlighting innovation, impact, and inclusion in immersive tech.

LONG BEACH, CA, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At a lively and celebratory ceremony held during the Augmented World Expo (AWE), [XR Women](#) Global presented its 5th Annual XR Women Awards, recognizing three leaders who are advancing the field of immersive technology through innovation, creative leadership, and social impact.

The awards, presented in the categories of Innovation, Trailblazer, and Real World Impact, are designed to highlight the work of women making meaningful contributions to the XR industry.



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These awardees exemplify what is possible when talent, purpose, and technology align”

Karen Alexander

2025 Award Recipients

Innovation Award: Jocelyn Tan, CEO of Sisu VR, was recognized for her pioneering work at the intersection of immersive technology and ethics. In addition to holding patents for voice-activated communication tools and wearable tech, Tan has authored peer-reviewed research and developed XR-based training solutions for corporate

and emergency-response contexts.

Trailblazer Award: Celeste Lear was honored for her contributions to XR music and storytelling. A virtual DJ and experienced audio engineer, Lear’s work includes the ACT NOW series developed in partnership with the United Nations, which brought attention to global environmental and cultural themes through immersive experiences. Lear is a passionate advocate for using immersive media to promote sustainability.

Real World Impact Award: Diana Njeri, Director of XR Girls Africa, was recognized for her leadership in expanding access to XR tools and education for young women in rural Kenya. Through mentorship and entrepreneurial programming, she is opening new pathways for professional development and economic participation for young women, including creating and selling goods in a marketplace, mushroom farming, and hosting immersive events for a global audience.



XR Women Student Chapter Leaders

Recognizing the Next Generation of XR Talent

The ceremony also included recognition of outstanding student leaders from XR Women's campus chapters:

Jenna Watts, a graduating senior at Ringling College of Art & Design, was recognized for her leadership as president in establishing the Ringling chapter and for helping to organize the Thrive in 2025 Symposium, a multi-day event focused on the future of immersive technology.

Vida Villanueva was announced as the incoming President of the Ringling College Student Chapter.

Ned Shoaiei, a graduate student at Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD) and president of the XR Women Student Chapter at SCAD, was commended for her persistence and dedication in launching the SCAD chapter and her commitment to creating programming that benefits both students and the broader XR Women community. Valentina Rosas, Chapter Co-President, Chloe Lo, and Riya Parikh also participated in the ceremony and supported XR Women at AWE.

Martin Murphy, who serves as Drs. Joel and Gail Morganroth Endowed Head of Virtual Reality Development and incoming Head of the Game Art Department at Ringling College, reflected on the program's value: "XR Women provides our students with real opportunities to build confidence, develop professional skills, and make meaningful industry connections."

XR Women has also partnered with the Rutgers University Institute for Women's Leadership by hosting interns. Lana Huang, a former intern from IWL, will rejoin the organization as a volunteer data analyst over the summer.

XR Women is thrilled to unveil our newest initiative, the XR Girls Africa Student Chapter, proudly anchored in Kenya and passionately led by Diana Njeri. This chapter marks a significant milestone in our global mission: to unite learners across continents, spark collaborative

innovation, and open doors for immersive technology education in every community, everywhere.

About XR Women Global

Founded in 2020, XR Women Global is a nonprofit network of nearly 1,500 members from over 60 countries. The organization offers weekly programs in virtual worlds where members gather to share knowledge, showcase projects, and build professional networks. In addition to its virtual events, XR Women fosters opportunities for students through its Student Chapter programs and internships and hosts occasional in-person gatherings, including the annual Awards Ceremony and educational symposia.

Membership is free and open to anyone who supports the growth of an inclusive XR ecosystem.

XR Women Global is incorporated in the State of Delaware as a nonprofit organization, with 501(c)(3) status pending. The Board of Directors includes Dr. Karen Alexander, Julie Smithson, Sophia Moshasha, Tricia Blake, Ginna Lambert, Christine Hobbi, Robin Moulder, Laura Kusumoto, Amy LaMeyer, and Judith Okonkwo. Additional leadership team members include Paige Dansinger, Tracie Yorke, and Alison Morano.

Karen Alexander, PhD

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