

Summer Glau THE HUMAN PRESERVATION PROJECT Interview

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Initially inspired by the unique world portrayed in 5 Gum's TV commercials and launched with mysterious coded messages, The Human Preservation Project (at www.SurvivalCode.com) is an Alternative Reality Game, starring Terry O'Quinn (Lost, Hawaii Five-0) and Summer Glau (Firefly, Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles), that delves audiences further into the World of 5 through a transmedia experience. The journey is an online sensory test and a call to action, with the simple mission of stimulating your senses, as players access over 20 original games, puzzles and challenges to solve. As they unlock these sensory testing facilities, players can access digital pages of a new graphic novel that tells the World of 5 mythology.

During this exclusive phone interview with Collider, actress Summer Glau talked about how she got involved with this unique project, why she felt to connected to the character, the process of shooting something like this, that she hopes to continue telling this story, how loyal she is to the fans who have been so supportive of her entire career, and how sci-fi has given her the best characters to play. Check out what she had to say after the jump:

CR : How did you get involved with The Human Preservation Project?

Summer: I read the treatment and I read their description for the character of Natalia Suttinger, and it just really felt like there was a connection for me. That's how I always choose my roles. I really like playing women that are strong and empowered and complex. This new character that they added to the story just felt right for me and I was passionate about it

CR : For people who don't know what an Alternative Reality Game is, can you explain what it is, and would you say that it's easy for someone without past experience to get involved with this?

Summer: For me, I hadn't explored this kind of world before. I got on the site and became a member, and I'm playing the game as well. It's just a beautiful Alternate Reality. It's the World of 5. What I really think is exciting about it is that each person has their own experience. They travel through the game, making their own choices and decisions, and unlocking things, as they go along. There's really no end to what you can find in this world and what it makes you think about and how it makes you feel. When I heard the idea, I didn't know a whole lot about it, but I thought, "This is the future, and this is a great way of getting a product out there and getting people involved in a more emotional way." I learned a lot, and I thought it was exciting. And, I love all the hidden clues. I love the idea that I can walk into a store and find 5 Gum, and there might be some hidden clue there, that would teach me more about how to play the game. It's an element of excitement that I think is really smart and innovative.

CR : How does your character fit into the story and world of this game?

Summer: She's a young, passionate, neuro-scientist. In the previous story, Terry O'Quinn's character has discovered an ice fly. When you put together the videos that have been released, of my character, you realize that she has a connection to this ice fly, and the ice fly is a very important symbol to all the players of the game. It's a message that she's sending out to the players of the game, that we need to stay in touch with our senses. She respects technology and is very passionate about it. She's a scientist, but she also has a message that she's trying to send, and that's her part of the story. She's very brave and very independent and headstrong, and she really thinks that she's going

to be able to get this message out to all the players. So, she's connected to the ice fly and believes that, if people will listen to her message, then she can save the fate of what's going to happen in the future. I found that the material really struck a chord with me because I feel the same way. She talks to her father and she talks about all the beautiful, simple things in life, that they used to do, and all of her precious memories with him, and how people are losing sight of that. Her message is to use technology for good, but also to stimulate your senses and always be in touch with your senses because, otherwise, we don't have anything to live for. I really liked the message. It rang true for me.

CR : What was the process of making this like? Is it something that you're able to do relatively quickly?

Summer: It was quick and was so different from anything else I've done because I've never addressed the camera directly, and that was strangely personal for me. Usually, you're supposed to ignore the camera, and it's more of a voyeuristic thing. People are usually looking in on your story, but my character was trying to send a message out to everyone. It was exciting and it was really fast. We shot quickly, but it felt very personal for me, and I liked the challenge of getting to look directly into the lens and talk to everyone and anyone who joins the game. I had a great time.

CR : Knowing how devoted genre fans are, and that you've had such support from them, do you feel like they've really played a part in keeping you visible as a geek icon?

Summer: I wouldn't be where I am without the support of the people that have been following my work, since I first started. For some reason, we made a connection, and they've been there for me and been so loyal and always want to support whatever I'm working on. They follow me into different genres, and into this new adventure. It's a very special fan set, and I'm very loyal to them as well. I'm very grateful. I think they're going to have a lot of fun with this project, when they dive into this world that we're creating and stories that we're telling.

CR : When you do a project like this, it depends on getting the word out to people. Has having that supportive fanbase really helped with that as well?

Summer: Absolutely! The people that watch the kind of work that I've done are really willing to open their minds and be creative, which is what this project is all about. It's about thinking outside of the box and not marketing the way that we used to and trying new avenues, using mixed media and hiding clues for people to find. I've always found that the people that watch my work tend to be the kind of people that are really looking for something special and different, and they're very creative people. I think they're going to enjoy this 'cause that's what this is all about. That's what this World of 5 is all about. It's about being creative and opening your mind and thinking outside of the box.

CR : Were you able to give input into the creation and development of your character, or did you just go with what you were given because this was such a new experience for you?

Summer: Well, it was both. It changed. Because we shot it quickly and because of the way that they were releasing the videos, I was flexible when we got on set. I've never done anything like this before, and I think that might have actually helped me. It's exciting when you can get your adrenalin going and you don't really know what to expect. But, as far as the character, I got a lot of inspiration from the writers and from the story that was already set up. I watched all of the stories that they had already shot and I drew a lot of inspiration from that. It was an adventure for me. In the end, it was inspiring and helped me really get into character. The idea that I didn't know how many

people were going to come search for me, because I was hidden inside the game, was fun. I enjoy seeing how many people come to search for my character and try to unlock her story. It's been going really well. I've been so pleased.

CR : Did this give you a new understanding and appreciation for people who have played these kinds of games for so long?

Summer: Yes. I'm a beginner. I know I'm in there, but it's not easy for me to find myself. I was really inspired by the creativity, when they were teaching me how to play the game and were showing me how they had set it up. It's so beautiful. The world that they created is limitless. You feel like you're just swept up into a different world, and it really does make you think about the message of the story. We need to stay in touch with our senses, think outside the box and think for yourself, and not just let technology think for you. It's been really interesting. I love the experience, and I hope it keeps going. It's mesmerizing. I wanted to get into this world because I feel like it's the future and it's a really, really smart way to reach out to people, in a fresh, new light. I'm proud of my part in this world.

CR : Is this something you'd like to explore further, in the future? Are you hoping to do more of this?

Summer: Yes, I'm hoping to continue telling Natalia's story because I was really inspired by her and I hope that we can do more with it. I think that it's such a new idea and such a new way of marketing that there's no telling where we can go with it. I'm excited. This has been something that I've wanted to try, and I see that it's working and it's really making people notice, in a new way. So, I want to keep going with it. I really love the character, and I'm really attached to her. I hope people are enjoying it.

CR : Did you grow up with a love for sci-fi that attracted you to these roles, or has it been a coincidence, that that's where the strong roles have been?

Summer: When I first signed on to play Natalia, it was all because of the character. If I feel like there's a connection to the character, then I know I can do it and that I'll be inspired. But, I grew up with my mother reading science fiction to us, a lot. I think the escapism and the limitless imagining that I did, as a child, draws me to these kinds of things. It inspires me, more than maybe other stories do. Especially when I first came to L.A. and started acting, it just was a natural fit for me. I don't say that I'm only going to do these kinds of roles, but I am very specific about the kinds of girls I want to play. Sci-fi has just given me the best characters. I love how empowered Natalia is, and I feel like, looking back on my career, that's what I've tried to convey. Natalia is strong and she's passionate about her work, but she's a daughter and she loves her dad, and she's sentimental. There's a tenderness to her, but there's also an incredible strength. That's what I look for, and that's what I like.

Taken from Collider's website:

<http://collider.com/summer-glau-human-preservation-project-interview/132535/>