Shifting creative gears in a timeless trailer

Giving people “the space to create” sounds a bit slippery, especially when you are talking about virtual spaces. Nervous bosses might worry that creative spaciness might mean doodling on coffee shop napkins rather than delivering on deadlines.

But for the makers and users of the SHIFT workflow collaboration products, virtual spaces for secure sharing of creative projects are palaces of productivity. Throw in an impressively equipped Airstream as a creative studio in the physical realm, and you’ve got the best of both worlds.

The synergy is no accident. SHIFT’s brand concept is to connect the world’s largest content creators with the increasingly mobile freelancers and production houses who help power the industry—and mobility of the mind and body has long been a central Airstream theme as well.

SHIFT put together its Creative Fund program to award promising new filmmakers significant cash grants, contacts with expert partners, and studio space to complete a short film—and part of that winning package was two weeks of access to their sweetly outfitted mobile production trailer, a 2018 25-foot Flying Cloud with goodies galore.

Kai Pradel, SHIFT’s CEO, explains how the Airstream was used by 2018 winners: “The Airstream was used on two Creative Fund shoots in Los Angeles, for the short films ‘Pioneers’ and ‘Bad Assistant.’ Both of these films required a

By Tom Bentley
couple days of filming in the deserts of Southern California, and for these remote locations especially the trailer is a huge asset.

“As the only source of power for miles around, the Airstream was used as a production hub, charging station, footage transfer station, costume preparation area, and overall air-conditioned refuge from the heat. For the days when our filmmakers were closer to civilization, the trailer usually served as a private space for the actors to come back to and relax in between takes.”

The Flying Cloud modifications were done by Colorado’s Timeless Travel Trailers, a rush job that took a mere two months because SHIFT needed the rig for a trade show. Starting with just a shell, Timeless installed all the electrical work, put in custom cabinetry, and laid vintage flooring made from reclaimed snow fencing.

“SHIFT was an exciting opportunity to bring together the modern and homey in a creative open floor plan that not only showcases an innovative new product but also becomes home to the flow of creative juices,” says Darcy McDonough, project designer at Timeless.

“The collaboration with SHIFT was delightful, and we are thrilled with the finished product. We cannot wait to see what comes of the stories told from the open road.”

Creating compelling stories is what SHIFT software is all about. The platform is used by media and entertainment companies, advertising agencies, and production houses to securely create, share, and collaborate on creative work.

“Our software is not only a literal space for creators to collaborate, but we also worry about technical, security, and workflow headaches so our customers don’t have to,” says Pradel. “The concept of developing other places to create flowed from that—including physical spaces like an Airstream that can serve as a mobile movie set.”

But the Flying Cloud doesn’t sit idle if no Creative Fund winners are using it. Besides being a mobile set, it’s also SHIFT’s mobile ambassador. “The Airstream was the centerpiece of our booth at the 2018 National Association of Broadcaster’s trade show, and we bring it regularly to industry events and screenings around

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This 25-foot Airstream became a mobile production studio for winners of the SHIFT Creative Fund program, aligning perfectly with SHIFT’s creative work software.
Los Angeles,” says Pradel. “The screens we outfitted both on the inside and outside of the Airstream allow it to serve as a mobile demo station to show off our SHIFT products outside of the office.”

SHIFT is hoping to select a new round of Creative Fund winners in 2019. “Resources—whether monetary or expertise—are another thing that frees creators up to dream big,” says Pradel. “The Creative Fund is our way of giving back to the creative community and connecting up-and-coming talent with the resources and mentorship they need to build their careers or pursue a passion project."

The company also hopes to get the Airstream on the road this year to visit clients and show off the new SHIFT products.

“Airstream is an iconic brand, and we love the simplicity and enduring timelessness of their design,” says Pradel. “As a company similarly obsessed with good design and streamlined functionality, it was a no-brainer. Everyone who sees the Airstream seems to have their own story about their experience with the brand—a favorite childhood memory, a road trip with friends. It certainly seems to resonate with creative people!”

This comes as no surprise to Airstreamers, who already see in their trailers the “space to create” their dreams.

Learn more about SHIFT at shift.io.

Like many other companies, SHIFT discovered that an Airstream can be a functional workspace as it also inspires and refreshes the people who use it.