VIDEOGAMES TRANSFORMED

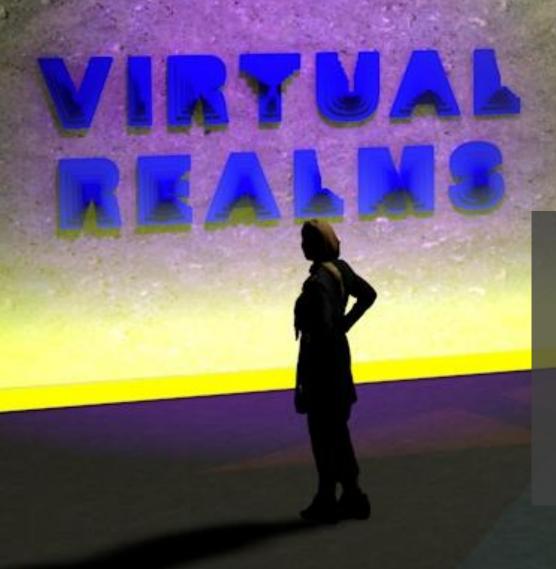
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June 2021

An immersive exhibition redefining videogame creativity





Virtual Realms presents six new interactive experiences conceived by leading videogame developers, working in partnership with media designers. Curated by the celebrated game designer Tetsuya Mizuguchi, in collaboration with the Barbican Centre, this exhibition reimagines videogame creativity and reshapes how we can play together across virtual and physical realms.

Guest Co-Curator:

Tetsuya Mizuguchi is an award winning Japanese video-game designer, producer and media artist. He has led the creation of boundary pushing games and media projects investigating multi-sensory experiences. At the core of his work lies the experience of synesthesia, the crossing of the senses.

Recent examples of his work include the award-winning virtual reality (VR) games *Rez Infinite* (2016) and *Tetris Effect* (2018), paired with the *Synesthesia Suit* (2016) - a multimodal suit allowing its wearer to experience music not just through their ears but also through their sense of touch and sight.





'By creating these exciting new collaborations, Virtual Realms offers game developers a unique opportunity to break free from the constraints of consoles and formal game playing and really push the boundaries of how video games can be experienced together. This exhibition paves the way for a future where the world of the videogame spills out beyond the screen.'

- Tetsuya Mizuguchi, Co-curator

Six Immersive Realms

Each of the commissions, or realms, is the outcome of a unique collaboration between a leading game developer and an acclaimed media design studio. Through these partnerships, *Virtual Realms* expands and transforms the videogame medium and opens up new ways to experience this rapidly evolving artform.

The realms - SYNESTHESIA, UNITY, PLAY, CONNECTION, EVERYTHING, NARRATIVE - present six distinct experiences that draw on the themes in the developer's gameography. From playful adventures in uncharted virtual worlds, to meditative reflections on life itself, the commissions form experimental installations that reimagine videogames within a physical, communal environment.



Enhance (game developer):

Tetsuya Mizuguchi began designing games at Sega and rose to prominence with the success of *Sega Rally* (1995). Leading the United Game Artist division, Mizuguchi published a series of games with an emphasis on music, including *Space Channel 5* (1999) and *Rez* (2001).

Rez (2001) explored the synchronicity between music, visuals, gameplay, and vibration feedback to create a sense of synesthesia, the crossing of the senses as pioneered by Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky.

In 2014, Mizuguchi founded Enhance where he continues to research synesthesia and create highly unique, sense-stimulating experiences in the form of videogames and media art.

Rhizomatiks (media designer):

Rhizomatiks is a Japanese artistic research collective dedicated to the creation of projects at the crossroads of art and technology. Established in 2006, the group has a multidisciplinary membership ranging from visual arts, media art, animation, architecture, design, and computer science.

Collaborating with creatives such as Björk and Elevenplay, Rhizomatiks produce immersive multimedia commissions, often involving motion capture and sensors to translate performance and movement into virtual environments.

Mizuguchi and Rhizomatiks collaborate closely through the SynesthesiaLab research group to explore the creative potential of Synesthesia.

Click <u>HERE</u> to preview Rhizomatiks' dance performance project *border* (2015) in collaboration with dance company ELEVENPLAY.



The commission: *Rezonance*, 2021

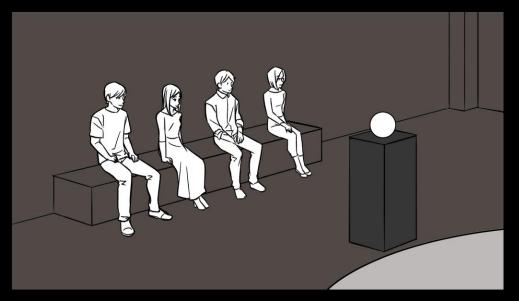
The experience of synesthesia, wherein the senses cross or become blurred, is the focus of research and inspiration for the creators at Enhance. Within the realm of SYNESTHESIA, your senses will be transported to new dimensions; where sounds can be seen, and visuals felt.

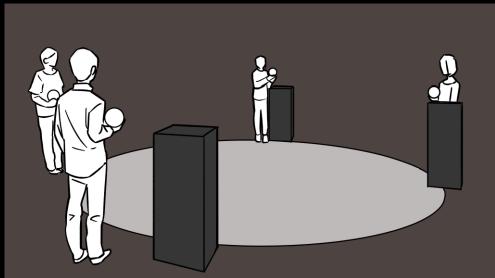
Entering the SYNESTHESIA realm, you become a part of the pulsing rhythmic beat, and a 'traveller' on the *Rezonance* journey. For those travellers performing with the haptic spheres, you carry in your spheres the seeds of life. When holding the spheres, move and interact together to sculpt the light and shape the sounds to the rhythm; your performance will create a synesthetic metamorphosis for everyone in the space to experience.

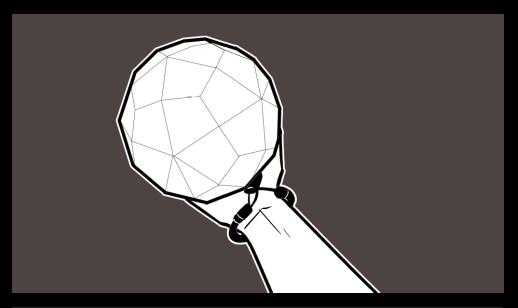


Rezonance, 2021:

Visitor Experience Storyboards









Rezonance, 2021



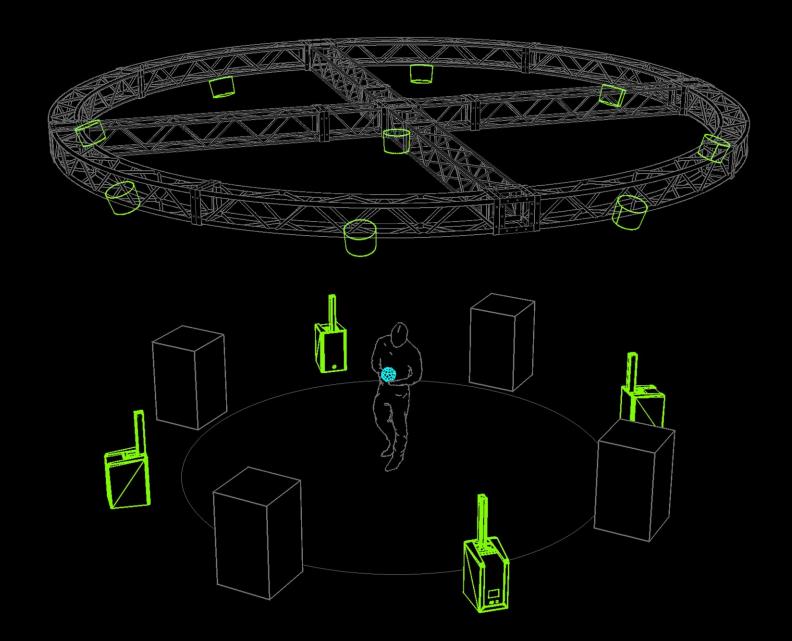






Rezonance, 2021:

Spatial layout





David OReilly(game developer):

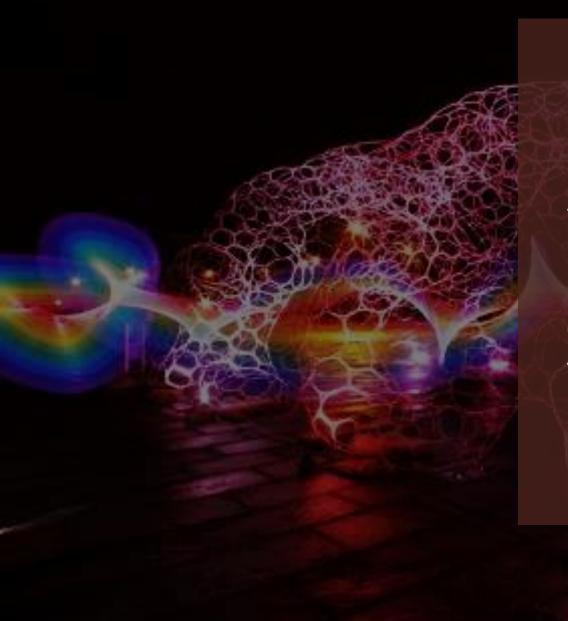
David OReilly is an artist who creates music videos, animated shorts and has written for *South Park* and *Adventure Time*. OReilly developed the 'Alien Child' game video sequences for the Spike Jonze film *Her* (2013) which spurned his interest in videogame development.

OReilly's first game *Mountain* (2014) is a 'non-playable' game where users inhabit the role of an inert mountain and contemplate the sublime geographical mass.

Counter to the non-interactivity of *Mountain*, his next game, *Everything* (2017), empowers players to embody and explore the existence of all living and non-living forms, jumping from one perspective to the next.

Click HERE to preview game play trailer for Everything

onedotzero (media designer):



onedotzero is a digital arts consultancy and studio. They curated the international onedotzero festival from 1997 to 2009, showcasing artists working across film, animation, music, videogames, and digital design.

A highly collaborative practice, onedotzero have previously worked with United Visual Artists to create audience reactive sound and light installations (*Triptych*, 2007) and interactive sound installations with Yuri Suzuki (*Meet d3* installations, 2016).

Through their own creative projects, along with a myriad of festivals and curatorial commissions, onedotzero have been at the vanguard of the digital revolution in media arts.

The commission: *Eye*, 2021

The EVERYTHING realm celebrates the capacity of videogames to generate expansive universes and give shape to the infinite potential of our imagination.

Eye is a unique reactive environment based on the concepts of OReilly's game Everything (2017). Rotate the three oversized controllers to play with the 'flow', 'scale' and 'warp' of the shifting kaleidoscopic formations on the screen. The patterns of living and non-living forms are continuously being generated; no mandala created will ever be seen again.

Eye takes you on a visual journey through time, from the Big Bang through to the end of the universe. With soft spongey seating to lounge on and a synchronised soundtrack from the London Symphony Orchestra, sit back and bathe in this psychedelic wonder.









Media Molecule (game developer):

This UK based studio's first title, *LittleBigPlanet* (2008) provided players with the tools to create levels, characters, and stories, as well as the ability to share these online for others to play, democratising the videogame format.

Emboldened by the talent and ambition of the *LittleBigPlanet* user community, Media Molecule created *Dreams* (2020), a digital toolset to be used across 3D modelling, animation, audio, narrative and level design. All creations are shared with other users in the 'Dreamiverse', giving makers total freedom to create and publish their work.

For a preview, click <u>HERE</u>.



Marshmallow Laser Feast (media designer):

Marshmallow Laser Feast are a London-based experimental multimedia design studio established in 2011.

Their collective practice exploits cutting edge technology to enrich a connection with the natural world and introduce tactility within the digital.

In their previous work, Marshmallow Laser Feast have made users' breath visible in virtual reality (*We Live in an Ocean of Air*, 2019), and created moss-covered headsets for a 360 degree immersive experience of British forests' fauna (*In the Eyes of the Animal*, 2015).

Click <u>HERE</u> to preview MLF's installation *Forest* for the STRP Biennale in Eindhoven.

The commission: *Dream Shaping*, 2021

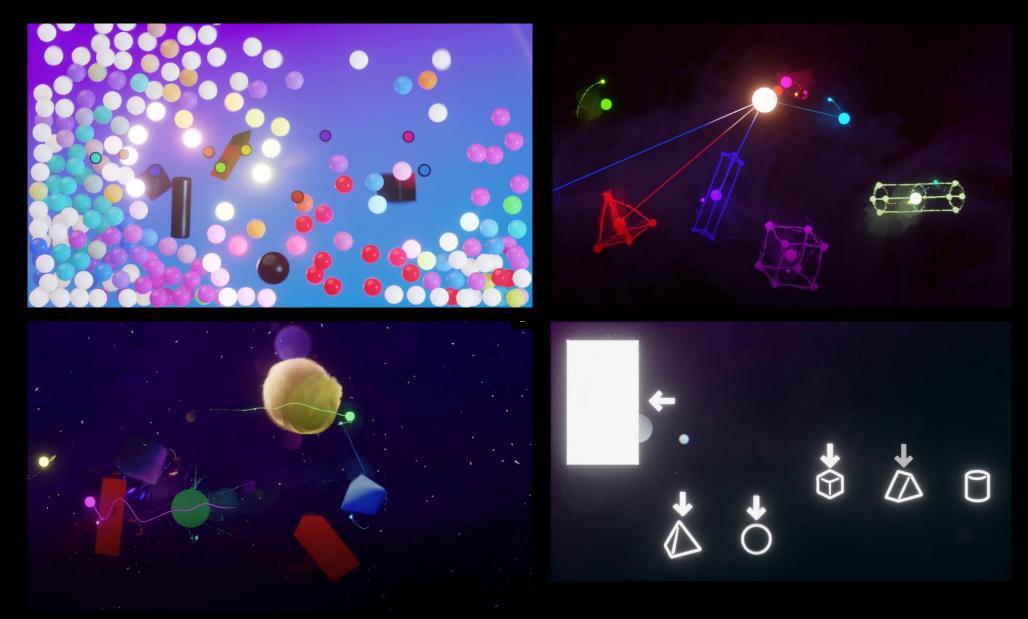
The realm of PLAY celebrates the joyful and performative sensibilities that videogames inspire in us, their players.

Dream Shaping has been created in *Dreams* (2020), Media Molecule's vast digital toolset that empowers makers to build and share their creations whether games, music, art, or animation.

In *Dream Shaping*, your helmet connects you to the virtual world of *Dreams*, while the oversized soft shapes in the play-space are your props. Moving through the three acts of play, you will be transported from a multicoloured ball pit to the creation of the universe, and back. Sharing shapes and experimenting with movements around the space will create a spectacle within both the physical and virtual worlds.

Dream Shaping, 2021:

Key visuals



Dream Shaping, 2021



Dream Shaping, 2021









Hideo Kojima, founder and creative director of KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS, is an auteur of videogames. His games are shaped by his lifelong interest in cinema, combining cinematography, nuanced characters, and complex stories to encompass challenging philosophical and political themes.

KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS' latest release *Death Stranding*, is a culmination of all these elements. Set in a post ecological disaster-struck United States, the game is populated by characters played by Hollywood actors including Norman Reedus, Léa Seydoux and Mads Mikkelsen. The game strives to create new forms of gameplay, encouraging players to connect and collaborate to rebuild civilisation.

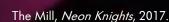
For a preview of *Death Stranding* click <u>HERE</u>

The Mill (media designer):

The Mill is a visual effects and creative studio established in 1990 in London, with studios in the US, Europe, and India. The Mill were the first European VFX company to work purely digitally and came to prominence for their Oscar winning digital effects work on the Ridley Scott film, *Gladiator* (2000).

While the studio's background is in cinema, The Mill have worked on projects across advertising, gaming, music and digital interactives, bringing their high production values, ambitious creative vision, and cinematic legacy, to each project.

Preview of *Neon Knights* by The Mill <u>HERE</u>

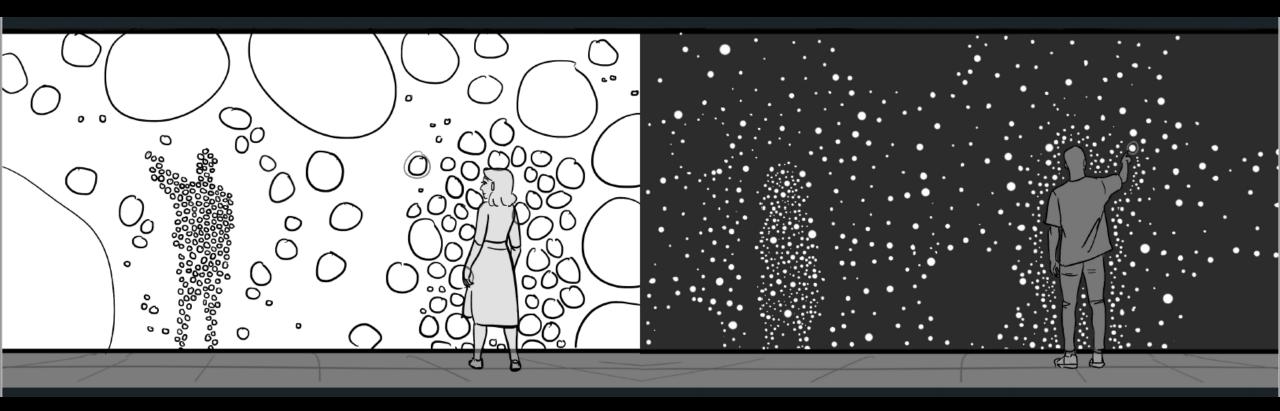


The commission: *WALL*, 2021

The key theme of human connection in KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS' game *DEATH STRANDING* (2019) has been reimagined for the *WALL* experience. The wall divides two opposing worlds - one alive with biological cells, and the other flowing with galactic energy particles - explore these two spaces and find ways to communicate between them.

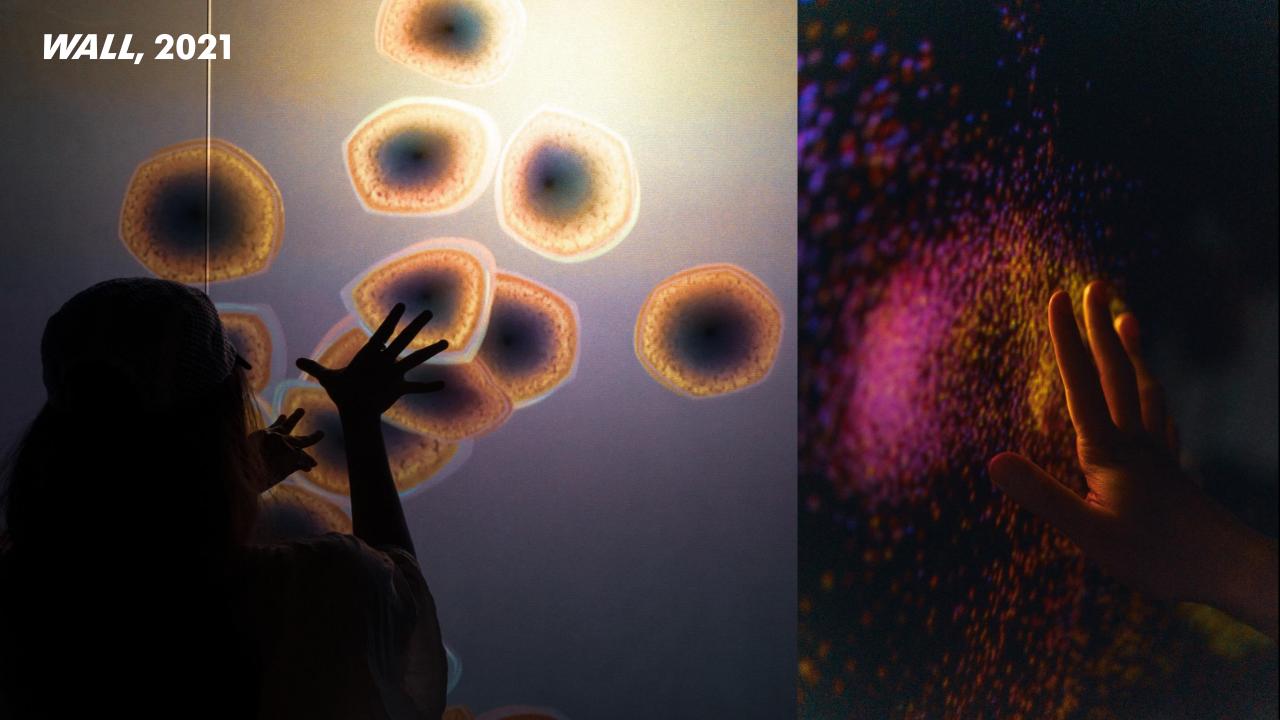
As you approach the wall, the cells and cosmic particles will respond to your presence, dividing and clustering as you grow nearer, and creating mesmerising patterns with your every movement. Amongst your interactions and imprints, traces of other silhouettes will emerge, and snapshots of past interactions replayed. These signs of life within or beyond the wall hint to the structure as a channel of communication between different spaces and time.

WALL, 2021:
Commission storyboards

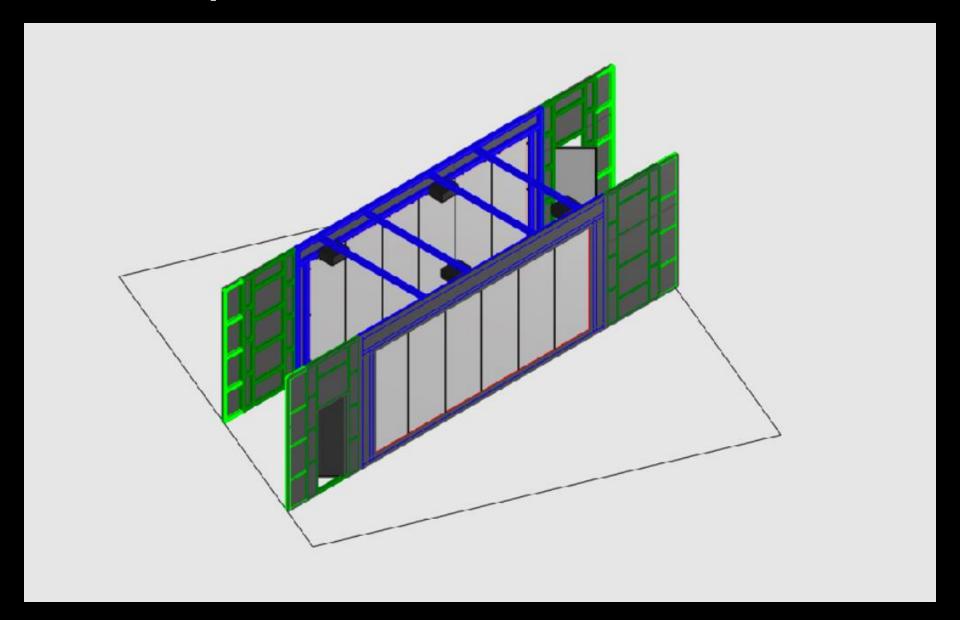


WALL, 2021





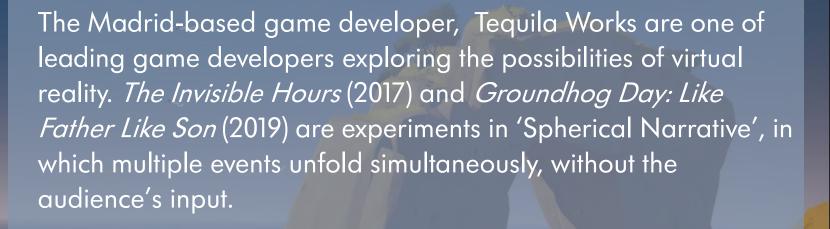
WALL, 2021:
Commission structural layout





Tequila Works x The Workers

Tequila Works (game developer):



The studio is best known for their adventure game, *RiME* (2017). In *RiME*, players control a young boy marooned on a deserted Mediterranean island. The game eschews traditional narrative and delivers the story of discovery and loss through environmental storytelling.

For a trailer of *RIME* click <u>HERE</u>



The Workers (media designer):

The Workers are creative technologists, who design interactive experiences that traverse the real world and virtual world simultaneously. Their projects engage playfully with cultural institutions, subverting traditional formats of museum interpretation to create new forms of engagement.

Their previous interactive web project, *After Dark* (2015), allowed visitors to explore the Tate galleries at night via remotely controlled robots. In *Immersive Dickens* (2018) the team collaborated with immersive theatre pioneers Punchdrunk to create an alternative, location-specific audio guide to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Click <u>HERE</u> for a preview of *After Dark*, robots visit the museum at night.

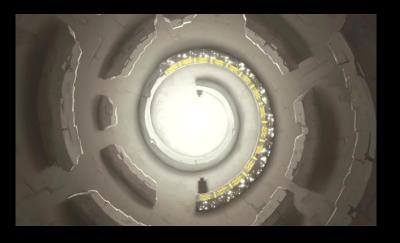
The commission: Book of Sand, 2021

The NARRATIVE realm showcases the power of videogames to tell stories and create new forms of fiction. Step into the mysterious Mediterranean world of Tequila Works' game *RiME* (2017) to begin the next chapter of this ever-evolving tale of discovery and loss.

Inspired by Jorge Luis Borges's novella of the same name, *Book of Sand* explores the notion of an infinite story with neither 'any beginning or end'. Follow the lead of the spotlights - stepping into the light to trigger changes on screen such as the crumbling of statues or shifting night into day. Depending on your choices and how you collaborate, each rendition of the narrative will be different.







Book of Sand, 2021:

Key visuals





Book of Sand, 2021



Book of Sand, 2021



Book of Sand, 2021:

Concept render





thatgamecompany x FIELD.10

thatgamecompany (game developer):

thatgamecompany experiment with forms of gameplay and aesthetic.

The tgc developed their first game, *Cloud* (2015), while still at the University of Southern California. *Cloud* is inspired by the experience of cloudgazing; players can manipulate cloud formations and create thunderstorms.

The team went on to produce three games for the Sony PlayStation culminating in *Journey* (2012), an exploration game that invites collaboration between anonymous players online.

thatgamecompany focus on crafting an emotional journey within their games, leaving players feeling a sense of transformation and unity.

Launch trailer for *Journey* HERE

FIELD.IO (media designer):

FIELD.IO are a creative studio based in London and Berlin who create immersive audio-visual experiences that blur the boundary of digital art and design. Directors Marcus Wendt and Vera-Maria Glahn lead a team that specialise in applying generative design and machine learning to their projects.

Whether creating Kinect sculptures whose sound and movement responds to the audience via generative algorithms (*Spectra-3*, 2016), or producing speculative visualizations of the impact of artificial intelligence on humanity (*Second Nature: Hidden Layer*, 2018), FIELD's work invokes digital technology and design to generate an artistic expression of the human experience.

To preview Second Nature: Hidden Layer, 2018, click HERE

The commission: Together The distance between (us), 2021

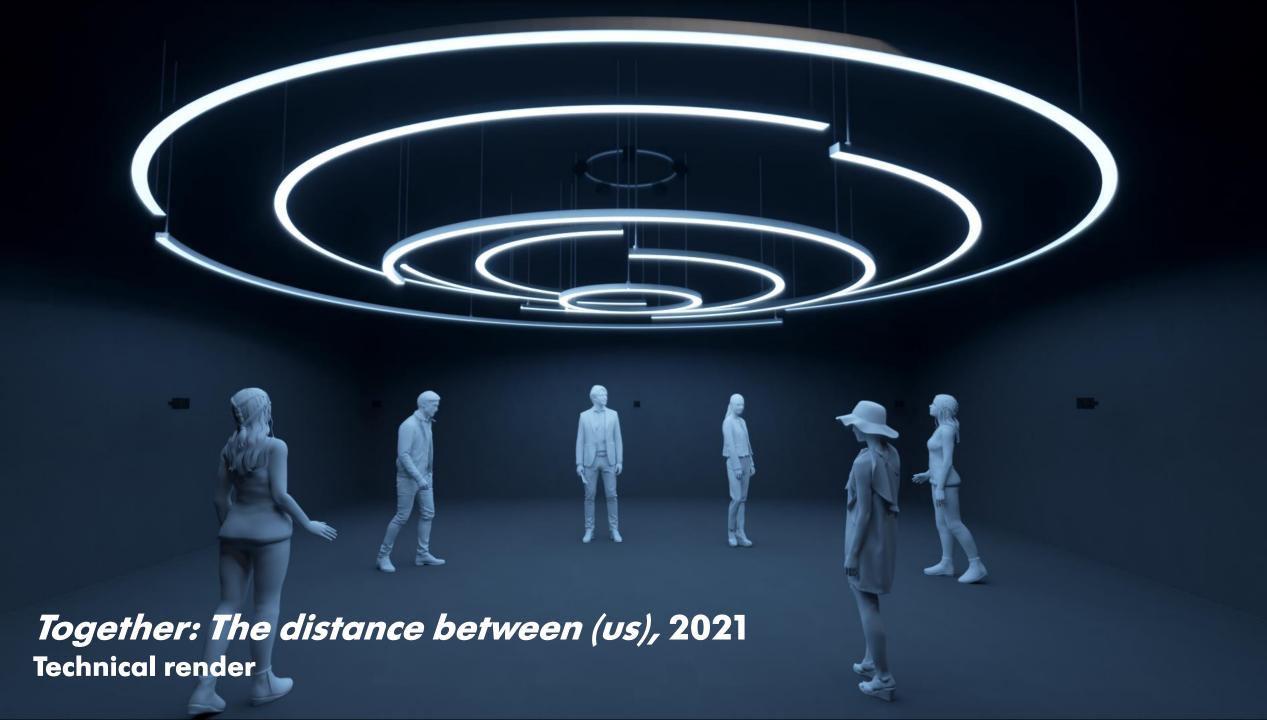
In the UNITY realm, the dreamlike world of thatgamecompany's *Sky: Children of the Light* (2019) has been transformed into an immersive spatial environment. As you move beneath the circular light sculpture, music and audio fragments from the game Sky are triggered, and a choreography of light sequences unfold.

Together: the distance between (us), invites everyone to become a player in the all-encompassing generative instrument. Explore the relationship between movement, light, and sound and use your presence to influence the composition of the space. In keeping with the emotional arc found across thatgamecompany's oeuvre, by working together and collaborating, the fragments of light and melody will build, culminating in a collective crescendo and a moment of unity for all to experience.

Together: The distance between (us), 2021









Introductory spaces

In advance of visitors entering each commissioned artwork, they can explore playfully designed introductory spaces with information about the work and its creators. These introductory spaces will provide context to visitors who are not familiar with the commissioned studios, or even videogames at all.

The biographical and contextual information will be conveyed in a combination of wall texts and video clips. Each commission introduction will include two videos displayed on separate screens or monitors running as continuous loops. The first will feature a voice-over providing biographies on the collaborating studios, along with key visuals.

The second video will feature a recorded discussion between the game developers and media designers, focused around the commissioned work, and the curatorial framework of Virtual Realms.



Commission Entrances and Introductory Spaces





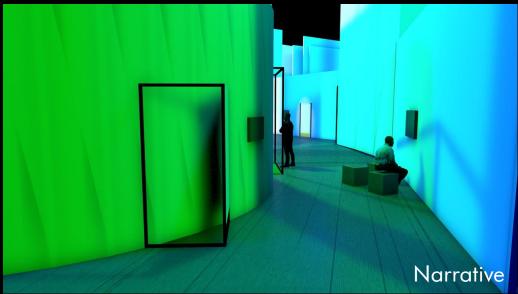




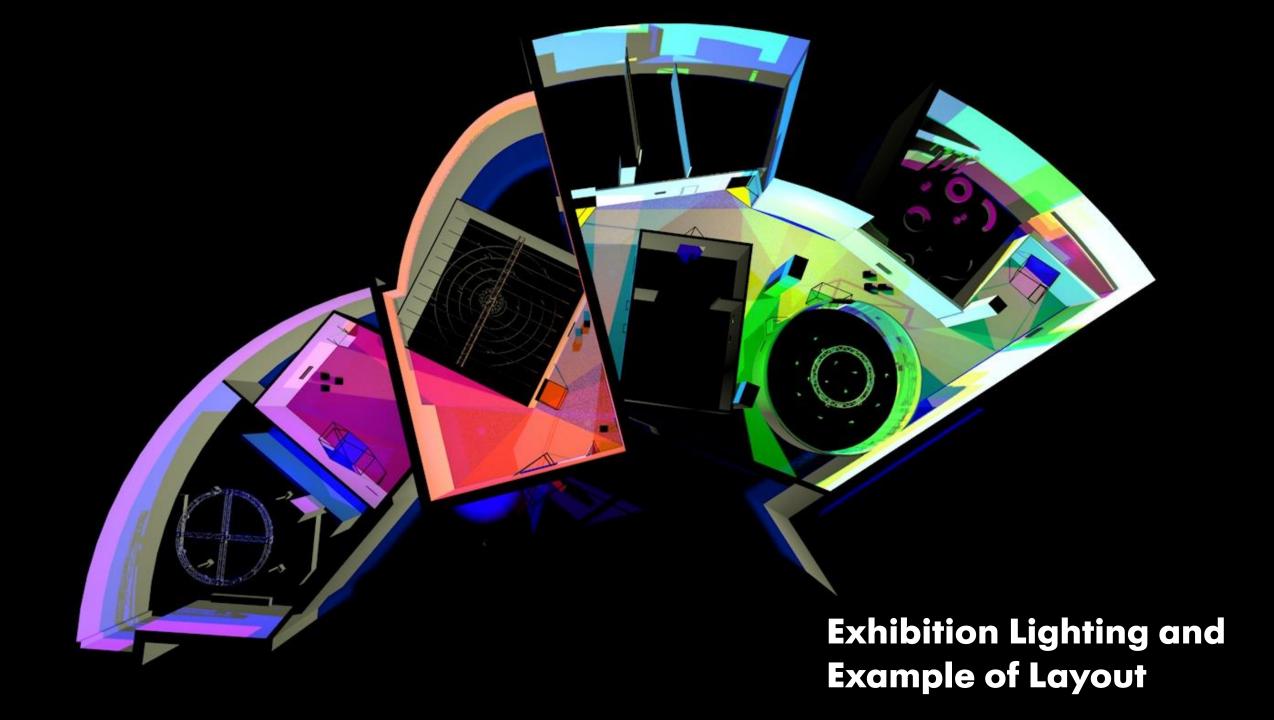
Commission Entrances and Introductory Spaces

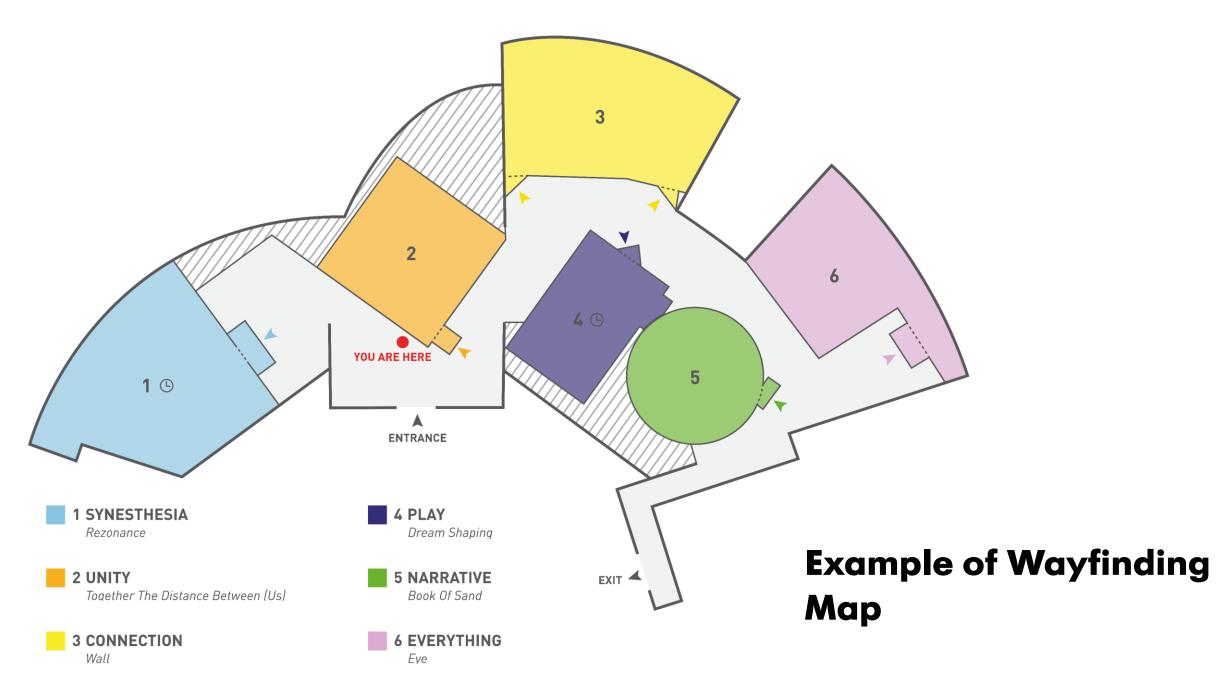












Video Stills









Exhibition booklet



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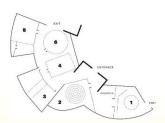
Exhibtion Events 30th May - 4th October 2020



Virtual Realms VideogamesTransformed

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30 May — 04 Oct ARTSSCIENCE MUSEUM PLAY

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Commission Title Title Media Molecule & Marshmallow Laser Feast

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SYNESTHESIA

Commission Title Title Enhance & Rhizomatics

The realm of Play celebrates the sportive, playful, and performative sensibilities that videogames inspire in their players.

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EVERYTHING

Eye David OReilly & One Dot Zero

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CONNECTION

Commission Title Title
Kojima Productions & The Mi

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NARRATIVE

Commission Title Title
Tequila Works & The Workers

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Exhibition catalogue



Front Cover



Back Cover



2014: by

Tokyo, Japan Known for: Creating synesthetic games and beyond:

research with the Synesthesia Lab.

Key games: Rez Infinite (2016). Lumines Remastered (2018), Tetris Effect (2018) Spotlight on: Rez Infinite (2016), the

musical rail shooter that explores the synchronicity between music, visuals, gameplay, and vibration feedback to create a sense

AS: When interpreting flux as a physical installation, the core element of synoptics was key. In designing synesthesis in a spatial envisonment, I knew both audio and visuals were important, but also the integration of haptic technology, as was done with the original flux.



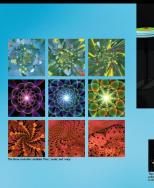


Eye, 2021 David OReilly and onedotzero

The EVERYTHING realm celebrates the capacity of videogames to generate expansive universes and give shape to the infinite potential of our imagination.

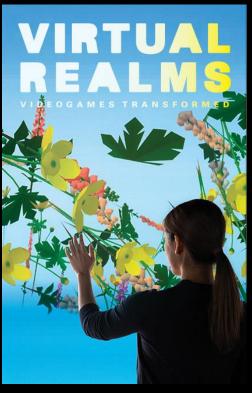
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Example of Exhibition Marketing







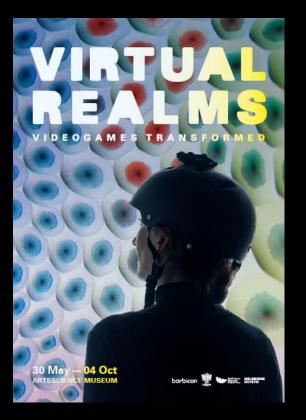


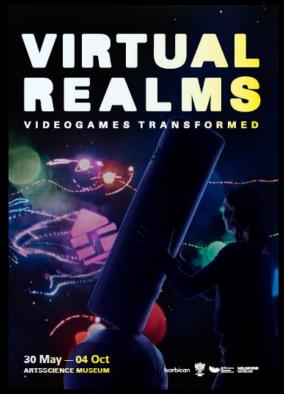


Example of Exhibition Marketing









ArtScience Museum Key dates

Press released finalised 6 May

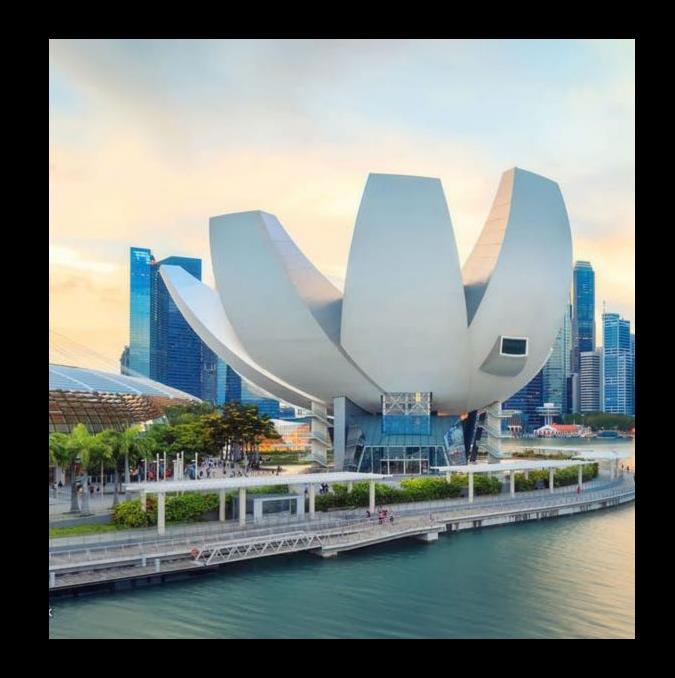
ASM and Barbican press release shard 12 May

Artist share announcement in their channels 13 May

ArtScience Museum Exhibition Dates
12 June 2021 – 9 January 2022

Virtual Press Conference 9 June 2021

On site media preview day 10 June 2021



Tour Dates

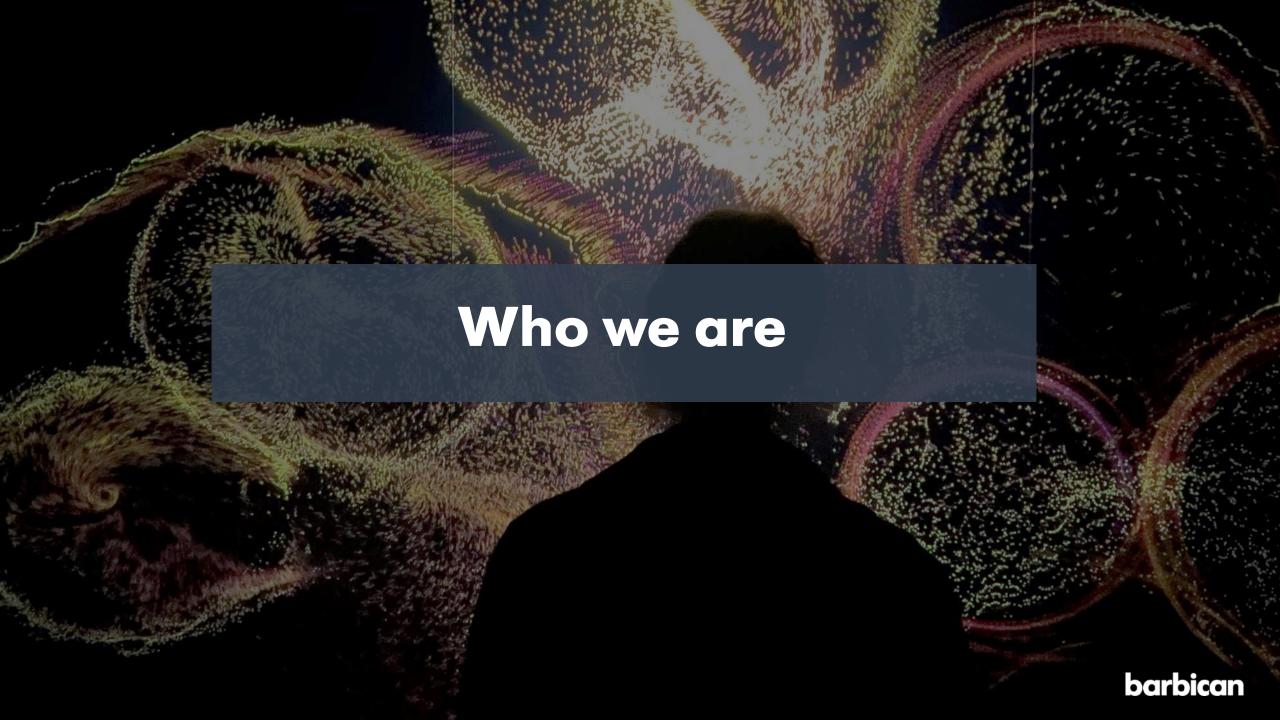
Western Australia Museum, Welshpool 5 March 2022 – 5 June 2022

Melbourne Museum, Melbourne 22 October 2022 – 12 March 2023

Tour to be continued until 2026







Barbican International Enterprises is a world leading creator of exhibitions and experiences that aim to reframe visitors understanding of familiar subjects and explore some of the most challenging and inspirational topics in the world today.

With a focus on contemporary culture, emerging technology and digital creativity, BIE create holistic environments in which contemporary art, immersive experiences, historical artefacts, design, videogaming and music can provide the platform for a creative exploration of essential narratives

Through our programme visitors explore contemporary art, design, film, animation, music and video games

We create unique collaborations across art, science, technology, and popular culture providing an unparalleled platform for new voices and perspectives

Our exhibitions offer an immersive and experiential experience to actively engage broad audiences

We seek out opportunities to collaborate, developing joint ventures and working with major partners across the arts and creative industries



A more than human







Our Time on Earth



5 million visitors in the first ten years

• Worldwide - Over 4,973,035 visitors have visited a BIE exhibition in the world since 2010/11

• At Barbican, 329,342 have visited a BIE exhibition in the Barbican Centre, London

• Since 2010/11, BIE has been to 54 venues across 27 countries and still growing...

• A BIE exhibition occupies between 700m2 and 1500m2



Kunsthal, Rotterdam

Guandong Science Centre, Guangzhou Miraikan, Tokyo

Tekniska Museet, Stockholm

Plaza Carso, Mexico City

Fundación Canal, Madrid

CCBB, Brasilia

Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow

Le Lieu Unique, Nantes

Forum Groningen, Groningen

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