

Public Art Commission, Huxley Building, University of Brighton

University of Brighton, Brighton Digital Festival and Brighton & Hove City Council

Proposal: Bio-encounters

By Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould

This new project proposal for the Huxley Building Public Art Commission is a development on two previous telematic public art installations by Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould: Screen Machine in 2016 and Peoples Screen from 2015, originally commissioned by Public Art Lab Berlin for the Connecting Cities network of urban screen projects. In this new project entitled 'Bio-encounters' Sermon and Gould have considered the technical and conceptual aspects of the former works to develop and propose an original site-specific interactive telematic art installation, linking live audience groups between indoor and outdoor entrance areas at the Huxley building. This new installation pushes the playful, social and public engagement aspects of their work into new arts and science realms in an attempt to address the pharmacy and biomolecular themes of the commission. The proposed project picks up on the need for a shared visual language and experience that allows a diverse public audience to physically engage with the current research and taught subjects in the Huxley Building through improvised performative interaction as their means of visual dialogue. Using a tried and tested telematic concept and technique, the installation takes live oblique camera shots from above the screens of two separate audience groups connected over a networked video link. Both groups are located on large green-screen floors, and are then combined via a chroma-key video switcher in a single composited image displayed simultaneously on each screen. As the merged audiences start to explore this collaborative, shared telepresent space they discover the ground beneath them, as it appears on screen as a digital backdrop, locates them in a variety of surprising and intriguing anamorphic biomolecular environments. These backgrounds directly reference their scientific and social settings, containing converged scenes from these communities in a three dimensional ludic landscape.

Our intension is to provide the audience participants with the opportunity to direct and change the outcomes of this installation through an open system of interaction. These unique transitory outcomes will rely entirely on the roles and performances the public participants bring to these public screens and the experiences they choose to live out. Contextualized by a diverse array of interactive backdrops, our aim is to allow these public audiences the opportunity and agency to engage within these biomolecular and pharmacological environments. This 'fluxus happening' will include the widest range of participants of all ages, from those who work and study there to those passing by, to create a fusion of scientific discoveries and street stories as its long-term legacy. This biomedical-embodied experience will provide the opportunity to better understand the contribution biomolecular sciences have on our changing lives and provide a virtual bio-playground to build confidence, cohesion and inclusion by overcoming scientific language barriers. Our practiced-based research approach in the lead up to the installation will allow local participants and Huxley Building users an opportunity to input on the development of a fused social and scientific virtual environment that they will engage within.

With the support of the University of Brighton and the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences, it is our intension to work with staff, students and local community groups throughout the development of this project. This would involve promoting the project to people of all ages through public talks and lectures about our work to build interest and involvement from these groups. We would then present workshops and group meetings to discuss and imagine a digital ludic landscape drawn from the research, teaching, local interests, memories and stories. These contributions will then inform the design of the anamorphic environment and animations that make up the biomolecular and pharmacological montage that would provoke interactions and scenarios drawn from a cultural and scientific mash-up of motifs.

This installation offers an open-system of interaction and any particular narrative sequences or rule-based scenarios that emerge will be purely intuitive and improvised. Fundamentally there are no right or wrong ways to interact. The background scenes, contexts and interactive animations will provide a platform on which the public can respond, play and create by stimulating and provoking a response in what is a vacant space of potential. The concept and structure of the installation is an open framework, where the artwork itself emerges only through the participation of users and through their lived experience at a given moment in space and time. Bluntly put, the intuitive experience through this interface is the artwork. Our overarching objectives are to explore the potential to generate benefits, in terms of awareness and inclusion through new visual translations that extend across cultural and scientific barriers via a networked interactive art installation. This research is inspired by observations and methods drawn from practice-based telematic art and aims to address the social and cultural challenges of reaching a diverse audience. The project will generate impacts building confidence, awareness, wellbeing, skills development and knowledge exchange through new creative engagement opportunities for the communities taking part.

Outline Budget:

Video and Computer Equipment:

2 x Panasonic AW-HS50 Video Mixer chroma-keyer	£ 6600.00
2 x HD Sony video camera and wide-angle lens	£ 2400.00
2 x Blackmagic HDMI to SDI	£ 200.00
1 x Blackmagic SDI to HDMI	£ 100.00
1 x 18" LCD preview monitor	£ 100.00
2 x Bracket for camera	£ 200.00
2 x 30 metre SDI cable	£ 100.00
Cables: HDMI, SDI, DVI	£ 200.00
2 x 50" LCD Screen	£ 8000.00
2 x wall mounting for LCD Screen	£ 600.00
1 x Mac Mini and screen	£ 500.00

Electrical requirements:

Power and video cabling installation	£ 2000.00
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Installation on site:

2 x Green-screen floor 8 x 8 metre	£ 3000.00
Fitting and installation of screens and camera	£ 5000.00

Public Engagement:

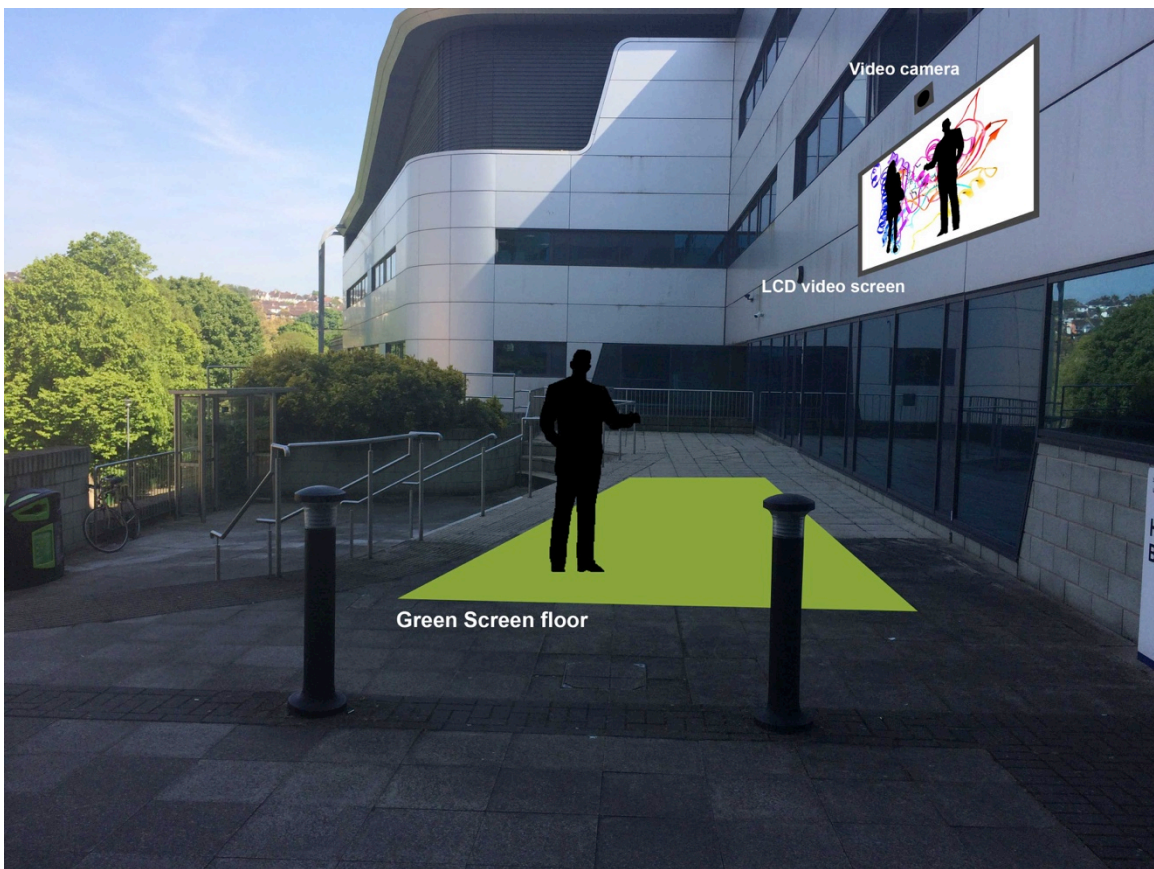
Workshops and lecture programme	£ 500.00
Marketing and publicity programme	£ 500.00

Total: £ 30,000.00

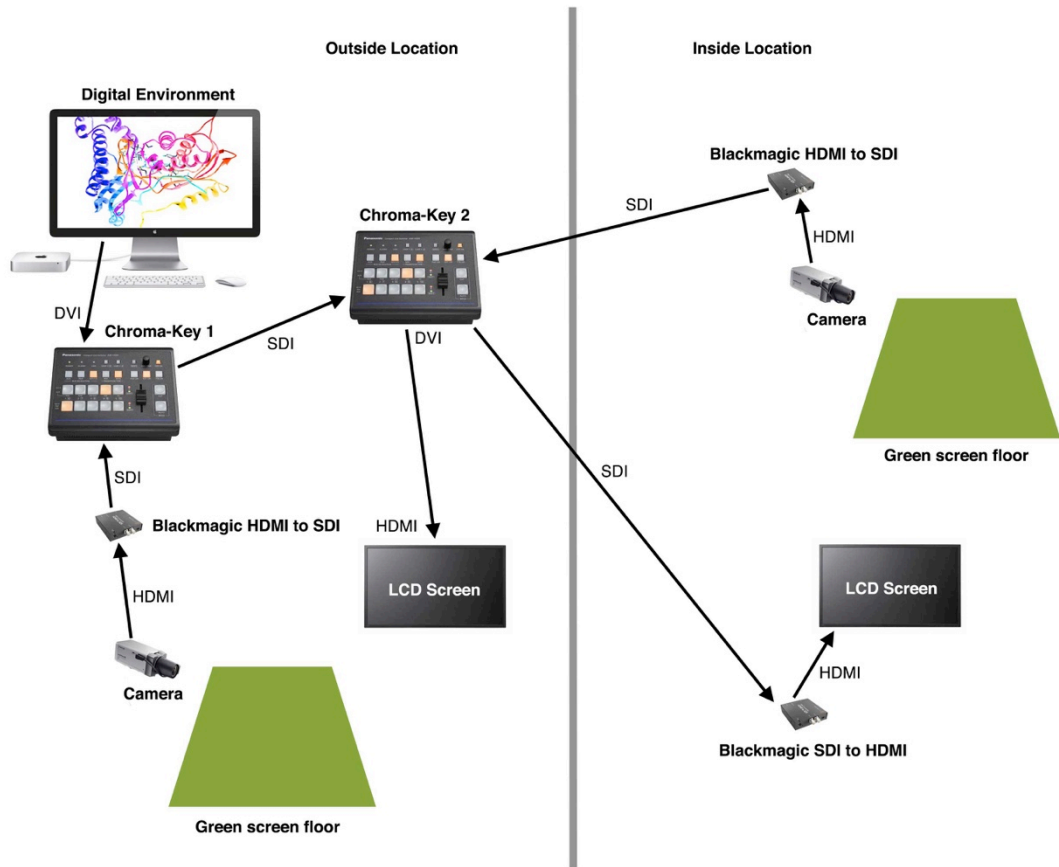
Four Supporting Images:



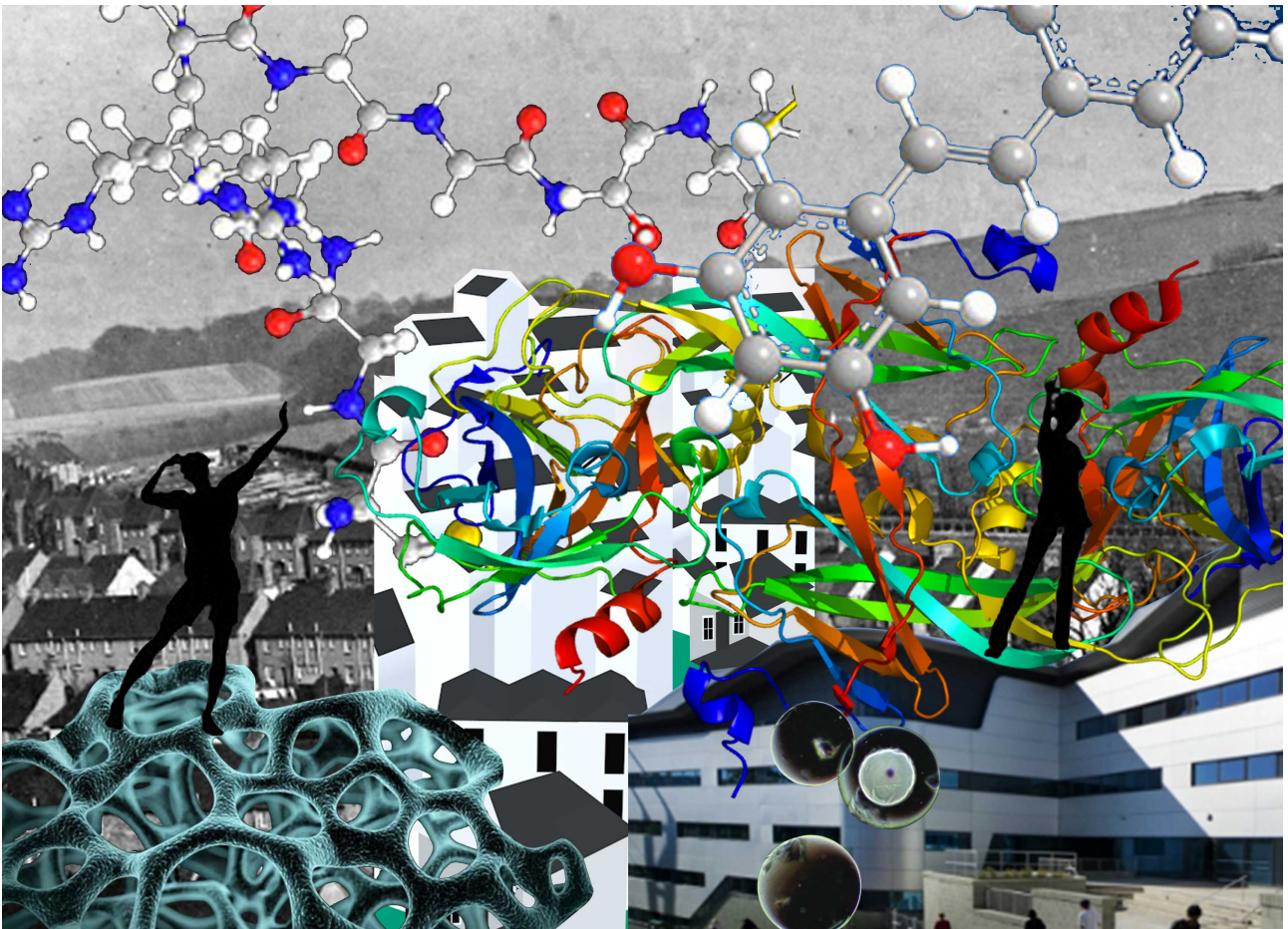
Inside location: Huxley Lecture Theatre Entrance



Outside location: Huxley Building Main Entrance



Video connection flow diagram



Digital environment sketch

Biographies:

Paul Sermon - Professor of Visual Communication

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Artists website: <http://www.paulsermon.org>

Paul Sermon joined the University of Brighton as Professor of Visual Communication in the School of Art on September 1st 2013. Paul was previously Professor of Creative Technology at the University of Salford and has worked for over twenty years as an active academic researcher and creative practitioner, primarily in the field of interactive media arts. Having worked under the visionary cybernetic artist Professor Roy Ascott as an undergraduate Fine Art student at the Newport School of Fine Art in the mid 1980s, Paul Sermon went on to establish himself as a leading pioneer of interactive media art, winning the prestigious Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica in Linz, Austria, shortly after completing his MFA at the University of Reading in 1991. An accolade that then took Paul to Finland in the early 1990's to develop one of the most ground breaking telepresent video installations of his career *Telematic Dreaming* in 1992. This early success then led to an invitation by Professor Jeffrey Shaw to undertake a residency at the internationally renowned ZKM Centre for Art & Media in Karlsruhe in Germany, where he produced his second ISDN videoconference installation *Telematic Vision* in 1993. Whilst living in Berlin from 1993 to 1999 Paul Sermon then took up the post of Dozent at the HGB Academy of Visual Arts in the former East German city of Leipzig and from here he went on to develop a portfolio of interactive telepresent video installations and telematic encounters that he continues to exhibit internationally. Further accolades during this period included the 1994 IMF Sparkey Award from the Interactive Media Festival in Los Angeles as well as interactive art commissions for the Millennium Dome Play Zone. Paul moved back to England in 2000 to take up a post at the University of Salford as well as becoming an honorary Professor for the MA Media Art Histories at the Danube University Krems, Austria and continues to visit and contribute to this programme once a semester.

Dr Charlotte Gould - Principle Lecturer

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Artists website: <http://www.charlottegould.org>

Charlotte Gould has developed a number of web-based interactive environments that explore user identity and the notion of a floating narrative. She is currently developing location specific work in which the user becomes an active participant in the narrative and explores methods of user driven content. The work seeks to identify a counter culture, and provide an alternative aesthetic that questions the predominance of digital realism and explores the conventions and politics of embodiment in multi-user virtual environments. Through her work she encourages creative play and looks at the way the audience can experience the urban space through telepresent technology. She has undertaken illustration and animation commissions from a range of companies including the BBC and Manchester Art Gallery. Charlotte received her PhD in Interactive Works for Urban Screens: A practice based study into building new ways of engaging communities in urban space through interactive artworks for urban screens from the School of Arts & Media, University of Salford in 2015. She graduated with a BA Honours Degree in Graphic Design from Chelsea School of Art in 1990 and was awarded an MA in Creative Technology from the University of Salford (2003). Charlotte Gould is Deputy Head of School for Teaching and Learning in the School of Art at the University of Brighton.