

# Contagion Prototype

Contributed by Lizzie Muller  
Wednesday, 20 September 2006  
Last Updated Monday, 23 October 2006

By Gina Czarnecki

October 4th 2006 &ndash; October 15th 2006A compelling interactive artwork that explores the parallels between biological infection and the spread of information, knowledge, rumour and myth. The Contagion Prototype presents work-in-progress for an international exhibition in 2007.

Led by award winning artist Gina Czarnecki, Contagion adopts scientific models of epidemiology and creates a rich and complex visual system, in which the visitor's movements generate and influence the evolving imagery.

Visitors to the prototype exhibition will encounter three intriguing projected images which are influenced by their movements in the space. They are invited to play with the images to create beautiful patterns. In Contagion the visitors themselves become the subject of the imagery they view, as a sensor-driven tracking programme identifies and records individuals' movements and characteristics in the space. This data is then processed to form the basis of the projected imagery. The connection between the images leads participants to question their perception of what they see, and their effect on the evolving imagery. Contagion asks participants to contemplate their own role within the complex system of cause and effect created in the installation. Contagion explores the rhetoric of surveillance, military and medical imagery. At the same time it offers a beautiful, visceral interface of spreading and mixing colours, allowing participants to play and paint with light.

Beta\_space presents the second stage prototype of Contagion, which is work-in-progress for an exhibition to be premiered in the UK during 2007. This prototype gives audiences in Sydney a chance to participate in research for the project. Their responses will help shape and create the final form of the work.

## Contagion Collaborators

Gina Czarnecki is an internationally renowned artist whose work intersects multiple genres, disciplines and platforms. Addressing issues surrounding the convergence of biology and technology she confronts systems of classification and identification. Through micro editing she constructs contemplative spaces with strong visual aesthetics. Recent works include: award winning film, *Nascent*, Multi Media collaboration, *Devolution* (Australian Dance Theatre / Louis Philippe Demers robotics expert) and *Spine*, a giant outdoor projection for AVO6 Festival, Newcastle, UK.

Tim Kreger leads the management and design of the programming and interface development for Contagion, including research, hardware development and the integration of all programming elements into the piece. He is a performer, software developer and programmer with an in-depth knowledge of a broad range of programming languages to provide user interaction/navigation and VR solutions for various requirements and projects including immersive VR environments, museum/gallery kiosks, live performances etc.

## Producers

Forma is one of Europe's leading production agencies for innovative inter-disciplinary art, based in Newcastle, UK. It commissions, tours and publishes work worldwide, managing large-scale and technically innovative productions and creating rich dialogues between artists, audiences and places. [www.forma.org.uk](http://www.forma.org.uk)

## Scientists

Dr Keith Skene is a lecturer in Environmental and Applied Biology at the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Dundee. His areas of expertise are forensic science, conservation biology, global warming, ecology and botany. Skene has collaborated with Gina Czarnecki on past projects.

James Fielding works as Surveillance Manager at the Communicable Diseases Section of the Department of Human Services at the State of Victoria, Australia. His work focuses on the statistics of outbreaks and spread of disease.

Dr Stephen Corbett is Acting Director at the Centre for Population Health, Sydney and Conjoint Associate Professor at the School of Public Health, Western Clinical School, University of Sydney. He is a leading expert in the environmental aspects and modelling of communicable diseases, and is the author of numerous articles and publications on Public Health issues.

Professor Nick Crofts is a public health practitioner who has contributed substantial research on the spread and control of blood-borne viruses among injecting drug users. Since 1990, he has worked extensively on all aspects of harm reduction, specifically control of HIV associated with drug use, in almost every country in Asia. He is now Director of

## Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre in Fitzroy, Australia

### Facilitators

Julianne Pierce is a Media Arts Producer and Curator, and presenter of the Deep End Download on-line arts and culture segment on ABC Radio National. She is Director of digital media project agency FIMA Projects and is Visual Arts Co-ordinator for the Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts 2008.

Lizzie Muller is a curator specialising in intersections between art, science and technology. She is facilitating an audience-centred design process for Contagion, including prototype development, evaluation and research.

### Made with the assistance of

Professor Ernest Edmonds, Professor of Computation and Creative Media at the University of Technology, Sydney  
Brandon Siang Kuang Tay (RMIT) Photographic image alignment / MSP tests 2006,  
Rob Stewart (Victorian college of Arts.) Programmer for visualisation of the first stage 2005  
IS Pty Ltd Future programming for image based recognition and identification system

### Funders

Contagion is funded by The Wellcome Trust and Arts Council England.  
With additional support from Art and Innovation Award, Arts Victoria, Melbourne City Council Art Project Grant, and an artist residency at Experimedia at The State Library of Victoria, 2005-7.

The Wellcome Trust is the most diverse biomedical research charity in the world, spending about £450 million every year both in the UK and internationally to support and promote research that will improve the health of humans and animals. The Trust was established under the will of Sir Henry Wellcome, and is funded from a private endowment, which is managed with long-term stability and growth in mind.