

## Minutiae - {tree}

Contributed by Lizzie Muller  
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An interactive installation that allows you to choose the evolutionary path of the beautiful and mysterious &ldquo;foraminifera&rdquo;, exploring the growth, transition and ultimate extinction of entire species.

By Catherine Watling

with Paul Pearson, Helen Coxall, Chris Rogers and Matt Clarke

Minutiæ is a collaboration between Interdisciplinary Artist Catherine Watling and Micropalaeontologists Professor Paul Pearson and Dr. Helen Coxall from the School of Earth, Ocean and Planetary Sciences at Cardiff University. Their muse is the beautiful collection of single-celled microfossils foraminifera, whose intricate structures reveal hidden secrets of evolution and allude to the origins of complex life on earth.

Using images of the single-celled microfossils foraminifera, produced with the Electron Microscope, Minutiæ {tree} generates animated sequences which visualise current scientific theories of over 15 million years of &lsquo;foram&rsquo; evolutionary history.

Minutiæ {tree} is the last in a series of process based artworks from the Minutiae project. Previous works include Minutiæ {01}, a series of stereogrammes and site specific projection at fo.am, Brussels in 2003 and Minutiæ {03}, an experimental installation at the 2005 Signals Short Film Festival, Colchester (UK). Minutiæ was also recently presented at the 2006 International Symposium for Electronic Arts in San Jose, California. Co-authored (Pearson/Watling/Coxall) elements of the Minutiae project have been submitted for publication in scientific journals and Minutiae {tree} will be available as a fully interactive online artwork and scientific resource on [www.catherinewatling.com](http://www.catherinewatling.com) by July 2007. The final Minutiæ installation will premier at the Babylon Gallery, Ely (UK) as part of the Enter Festival, Cambridge (UK) in April 2007.

Minutiæ is supported by Arts Council England, Cywaith Cymru, Artworks Wales, Cardiff University, The Royal Society of Great Britain and Signals Media Arts and is assisted by the Junction (Cambridge) and the University of Technology (Sydney). With bespoke software development by Chris Rogers and audio by Matt Clarke.

## Collaborators Biographies

Catherine Watling specialises in inter-disciplinary artwork with a special interest in art/science based research. Her work predominantly focuses on the alternative use of digital tools to create interactive experiential environments. Her scientific research explores theories of evolution, scale, species diversity and Palaeoclimatology. Interdisciplinary projects include 'Kilwa', a dual-screen installation exploring the intersection between art, science and archaeology resulting from a period as attached artist at the Kilwa Archaeological Survey 2003, Tanzania, Africa, '1000 words'; a video artwork exploring the concept of 'Choice' for disabled young people living in respite care and 'The White Canary'; an installation/play exploring the Antarctic experience in collaboration with theatre company Pursued by a Bear, Interplay Theatre and The British Antarctic Survey.

Professor Paul Pearson holds a chair in palaeoclimatology in the School of Earth, Ocean and Planetary Sciences at Cardiff University. He leads the palaeoclimate / palaeoceanography research group, which studies records of climate change from deep-sea cores. He is director of the Tanzania Drilling Project, an initiative funded by the Natural Environment Research Council to investigate climate history in East Africa since the time of the dinosaurs. He is a leading taxonomist of fossil foraminifera (a group of marine plankton) and has published many papers on the chemical analysis of foraminifer shells to extract palaeoclimate information.

Dr Helen Coxall is a Royal Society University Research Fellow in the School of Earth, Ocean and Planetary Sciences at Cardiff University. She is an expert on the taxonomy, evolution and palaeoecology of fossil foraminifera (microscopic marine plankton) and conducts research into climate dynamics in the early Cenozoic period, (20 to 65 million years ago). She has sailed as a scientist on geological research cruises to the Pacific Ocean and near Antarctica and has worked in various North American institutions, including the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the University of Rhode Island, USA.

Chris Rogers is currently Arts and New Technology Programmer for the Junction in Cambridge. He has been with the organisation in various roles for the past six years, working with artists on both an administrative and creative level. Responsible for establishing the organisation's Arts and New Technology Laboratory (a development space for artists), his interests lie in trying to incorporate interactive and time based media into traditional performance contexts. He is a Max/MSP user, and in addition to coding interactive interfaces for several installation works performs regularly, including shows with the likes of Keith Fullerton Whitman and the Dead Texan.

Matt Clarke is co-founder of UK video based arts collective TriggerSet [www.triggerset.co.uk](http://www.triggerset.co.uk). TriggerSet specialize in VJ events and multimedia video art installations including performances at the 2006 Creamfields and Global Gathering festivals (UK). Matt Clarke trained in art and design at Suffolk College continuing as a freelance multimedia designer, working alongside Quay Interactive and Creative Code for clients such as City and Guilds and Anglia Television. He has also tutored groups of various ages and abilities in multimedia design and basic music composition skills as part of his work at Signal Media Arts as multimedia technician and post production coordinator.

