

# VIRTUAL REALMS

VIDEOGAMES TRANSFORMED

Tour pack

barbican



MELBOURNE  
MUSEUM

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# Introduction

# VIRTUAL REALMS

VIDEOGAMES TRANSFORMED

*Virtual Realms* is made up of 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, this exhibition reimagines videogame creativity and reshapes how we can play together across virtual and physical realms.

The realms - **SYNESTHESIA, UNITY, PLAY, CONNECTION, NARRATIVE, EVERYTHING** - showcase six of the key themes found across the videogame medium. The videogame developers presented in this exhibition are celebrated for the ways in which they experiment with their realm theme throughout their gameography and creative design. Each realm is the product of a collaboration with six cutting-edge media design studios, which bring their expertise in creating interactive immersive experiences.

*Virtual Realms* invites audiences to experience videogames transformed: from an explosion of your senses in **SYNESTHESIA**, created by **Enhance** and **Rhizomatiks**; to discovering moments of **UNITY** in light and sound, in a commission developed by **thatgamecompany** and **FIELD.IO**; a joyous celebration of interactivity in **PLAY** lead by **Media Molecule** and **Marshmallow Laser Feast**; sublime **CONNECTIONS** with other players through a cognitive wall, in an installation from **KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS** and **The Mill**; a never-ending 360-degree visual **NARRATIVE** developed by **Tequila Works** and **The Workers**; and a psychedelic reflection on the nature of **EVERYTHING** in the universe, conceived by **David O'Reilly** and **onedotzero**. Your journey through this exhibition will introduce you to new ways of approaching and enjoying videogames today.

# Quick Facts

<b>Hire fees</b>	Upon application
<b>Duration</b>	3 months +
<b>Dimensions</b>	approx 1,000 – 1,500 m <sup>2</sup> ceiling height varies per commissions - 4-6m required
<b>Duration of install/de-install</b>	14 day install and 7 day de-install
<b>Number of staff travelling for install/de-install</b>	5 staff members (4 technical crew and 1 Exhibition Manager) 4 technical staff for 14 day install and 7 day de-install, Exhibition Manager to oversee the whole install and de-install process. (Venue to cover cost of flights, accommodation, per diem, visas for all 5 staff members).
<b>Transport</b>	We request that one way (incoming) transport is covered by the venue. Transport for the exhibition is part sea, part air freight (estimated 2 x 40ft Hicube sea containers, palletised and crated).
<b>Storage Requirements</b>	approx. 70 m <sup>3</sup>
<b>Additional Info</b>	Exhibition tours with all AV equipment for six commissions, exhibition design and marketing package

# Venues

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Dates</b>
ArtScience Museum	Singapore	12 June 2021 – 9 January 2022
Western Australia Museum, Perth	Australia	26 April 2022 – 22 May 2022
Melbourne Museum	Australia	22 March 2023 – 22 May 2023

# 1 SYNESTHESIA



SYNESTHESIA Key Visual. Courtesy of Enhance

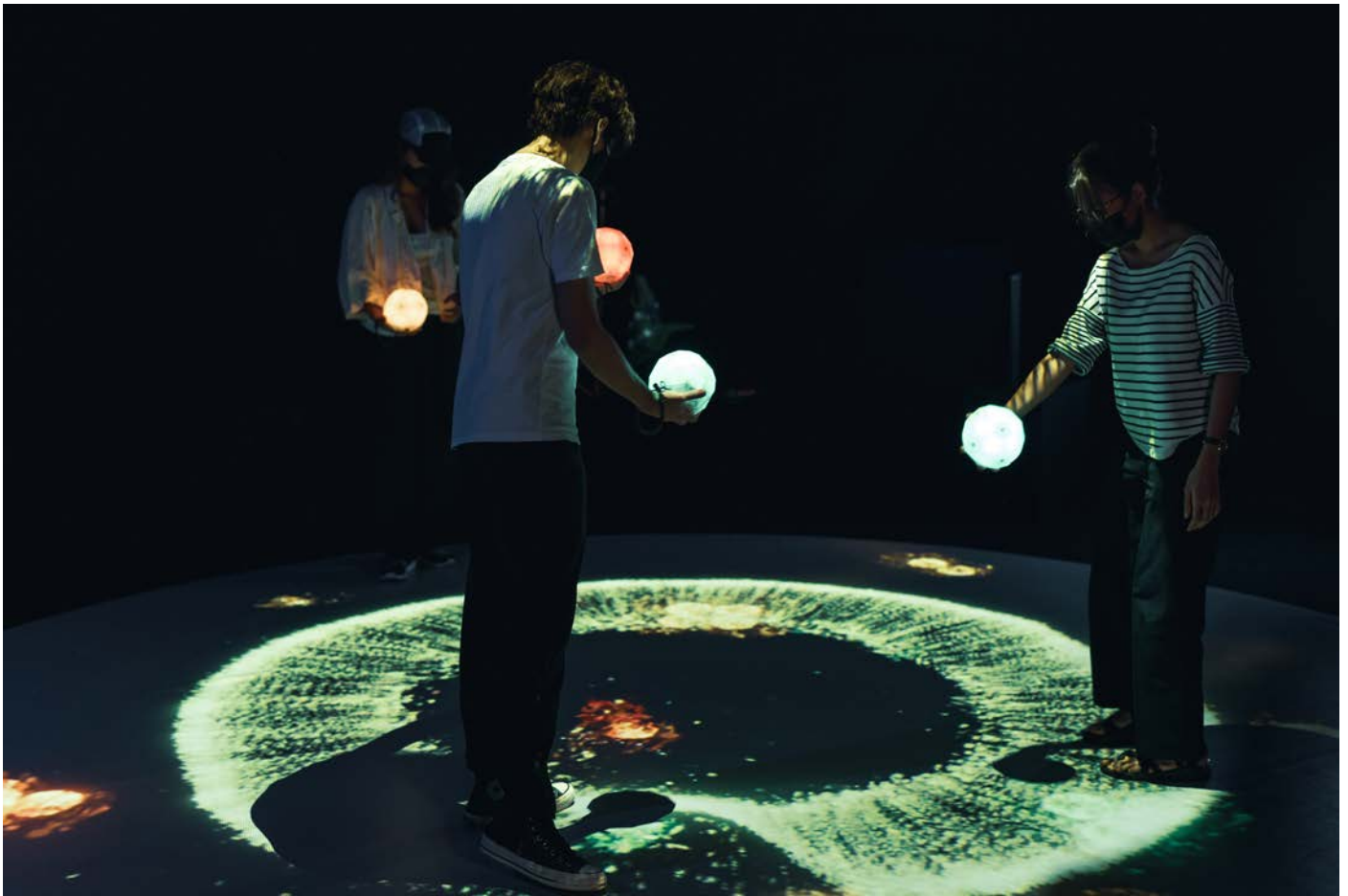
## **Rezonance, 2021** **Enhance and Rhizomatiks**

The experience of synesthesia, wherein the senses cross or become blurred, is the focus of Enhance's game *Rez Infinite* (2016) and their ongoing research. Within the realm of SYNESTHESIA, your senses will be transported to new dimensions; where sounds can be 'seen', and visuals 'felt'.

Once you enter the SYNESTHESIA realm, you will become part of the pulsing rhythmic beat and a 'traveller' on the Rezonance journey. For those travellers performing with the haptic spheres, you will carry in your spheres the seeds of life. Whilst holding the spheres, move and interact with others to sculpt the light and shape the sounds. Your performance will create a synesthetic metamorphosis for everyone in the space to enjoy.

Commissioned by Barbican International Enterprises and made possible thanks to the support of HP Inc.

# 1 SYNESTHESIA



Rezonance, ArtScience Museum, Singapore, 2021. Photo by Ajam Sali.

## Enhance

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

*Rez* (2001) explores the synchronicity between music, visuals, gameplay, and vibration feedback to create a sense of synesthesia — the crossing of the senses.

In 2014, Mizuguchi founded Enhance, the Tokyo-based studio from which he continues to research synesthesia and create highly unique, sense-stimulating experiences in the form of videogames such as *Rez Infinite* (2016) and other media.

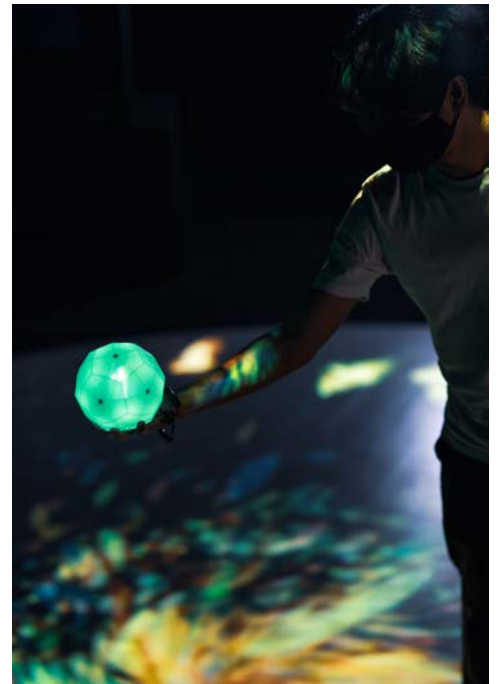
## Rhizomatiks

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 cross-disciplinary membership ranging from visual arts, media art, engineering, animation, architecture, music, design, and computer science.

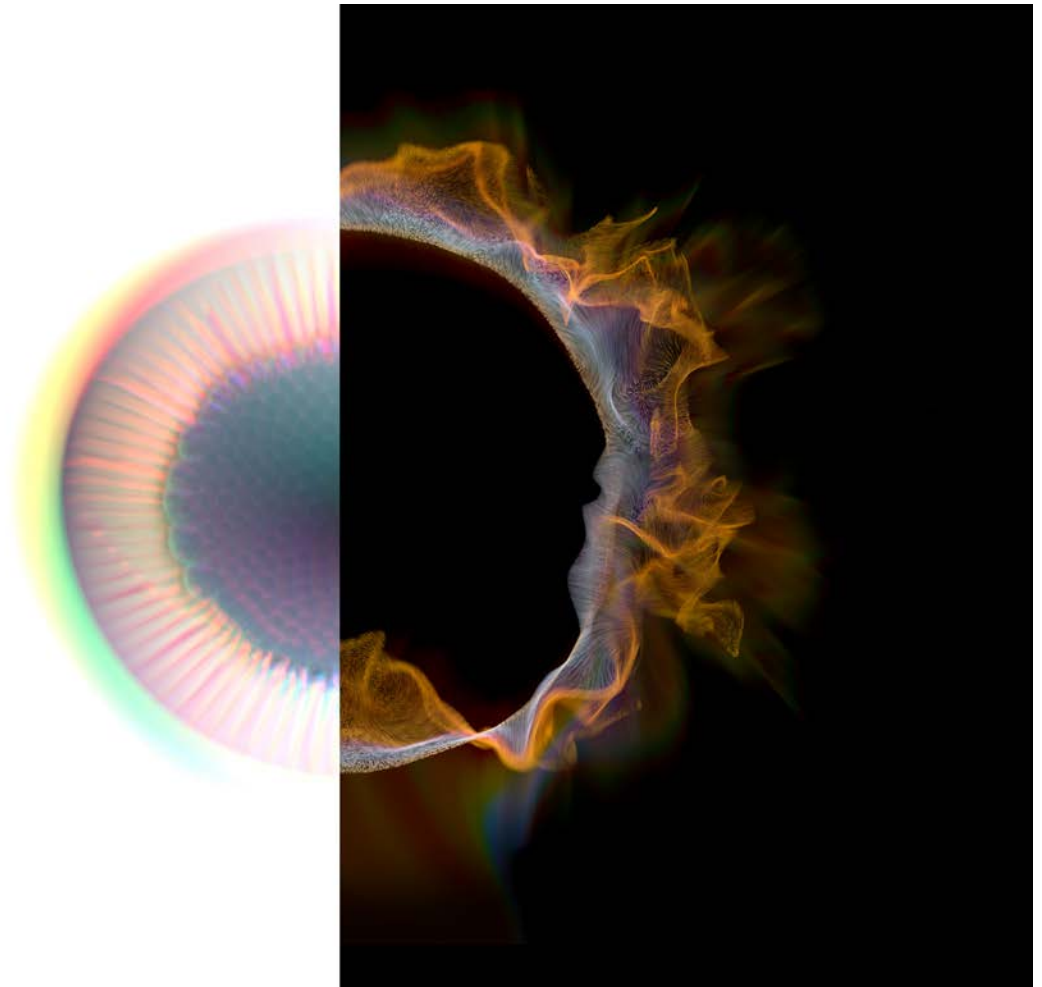
Collaborating with creatives such as Björk and Elevenplay, Rhizomatiks produce immersive multimedia commissions, often involving motion capture and sensors to trigger interaction with virtual environments.

Enhance and Rhizomatiks collaborate closely through the Synesthesia Lab research group to explore the creative potential of synesthesia.

# 1 SYNESTHESIA



## 2 CONNECTION



CONNECTION Key Visual. Courtesy of KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS and The Mill.

### **WALL, 2021** **KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS and The Mill**

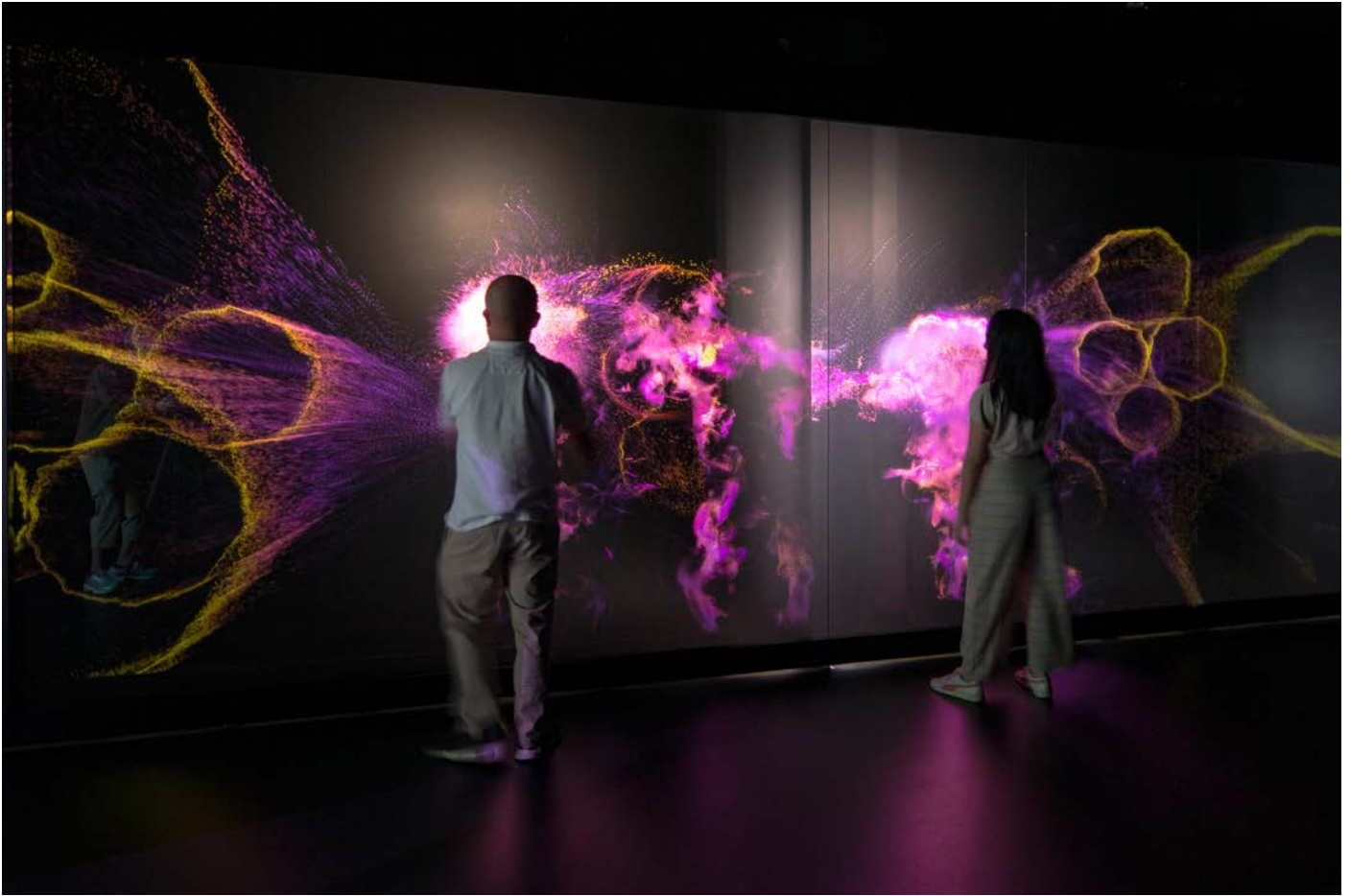
The key theme of human connection in KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS' game *DEATH STRANDING* (2019) has been reimagined for the *WALL* experience. The wall divides two opposing worlds – one alive with biological cells and the other flowing with galactic energy particles. Explore these two spaces and find ways to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

As you approach the wall, the cells and cosmic particles respond to your presence, dividing and clustering to create mesmerising patterns. 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.

Commissioned by Barbican International Enterprises and made possible thanks to the support of HP Inc.



## 2 CONNECTION



WALL at ArtScience Museum, Singapore, 2021. Photo by Marina Bay Sands.

### **KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS** **Game Developer**

Hideo Kojima, founder and game creator of the Tokyo-based KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS, is an auteur of videogames. His games are shaped by his lifelong interest in film, combining cinematography, nuanced characters, and complex stories to encompass challenging philosophical and political themes.

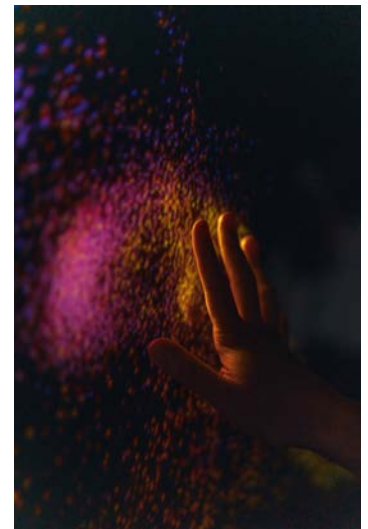
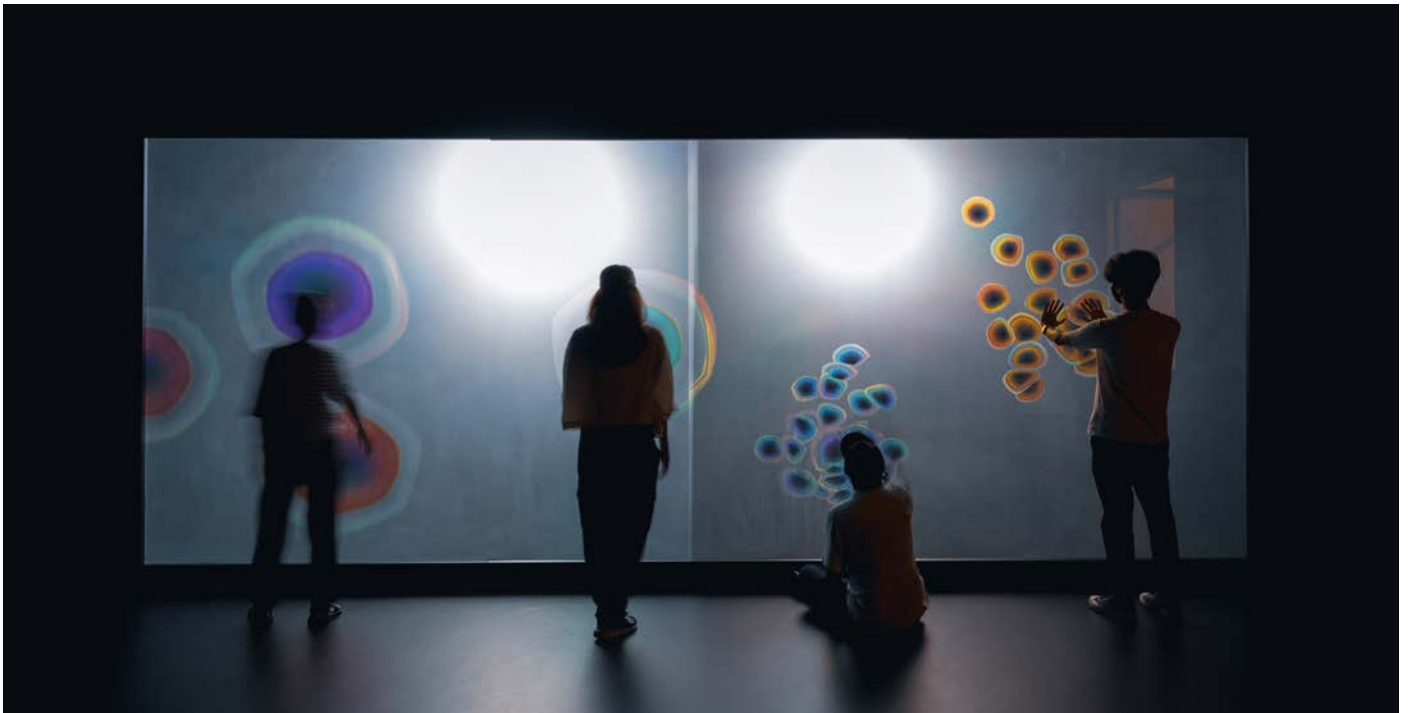
KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS' latest release *DEATH STRANDING* (2019), is a culmination of all these elements. Set in the near future, mysterious explosions have rocked the globe, setting off a series of supernatural events known as the Death Stranding. The game is populated by characters played by Hollywood actors including Norman Reedus, Léa Seydoux, Mads Mikkelsen, and Lindsay Wagner. The game strives to create new forms of gameplay, encouraging players to connect and collaborate to rebuild

### **The Mill** **Media Designer**

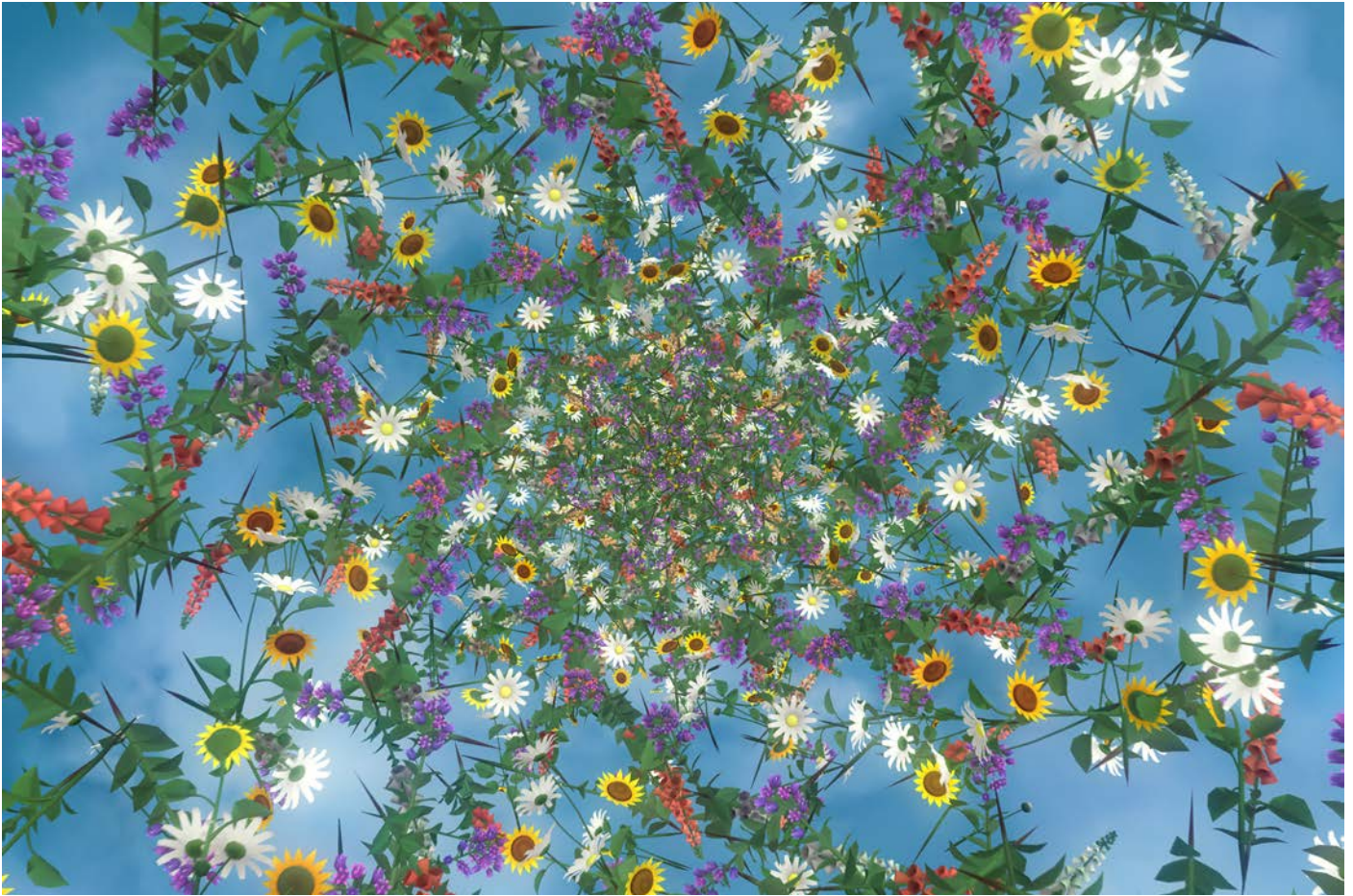
Established in London, The Mill is a creative production partner that has been operating since 1990, with a legacy in visual effects, interactive and video content production. The Mill was the first European visual effects company to work purely digitally and came to prominence for their Oscar-winning digital effects work on the Ridley Scott film, *Gladiator* (2000).

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

## 2 CONNECTION



# 3 EVERYTHING



EVERYTHING Key Visual. Courtesy of David O'Reilly.

## **Eye, 2021** **David O'Reilly and onedotzero**

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 O'Reilly's game *Everything* (2017). Rotate the three oversized controllers to play with the 'flow', 'scale', and 'warp' of the shifting kaleidoscopic formations, or mandalas, 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 spongy seating to lounge on and a synchronised soundtrack from the London Symphony Orchestra, sit back and bathe in this psychedelic wonder.

Commissioned by Barbican International Enterprises and made possible thanks to the support of HP Inc. and London Symphony Orchestra. *Eye of The Dream* originally a co-production of the Berliner Festspiele / Immersion / The New Infinity and Planetarium Hamburg.

### 3 EVERYTHING



Eye at ArtScience Museum, Singapore, 2021. Photo by Marina Bay Sands.

#### **David O'Reilly** **Game Developer**

David O'Reilly is an Irish artist currently based in Los Angeles who creates music videos, animated shorts, and has written for *South Park* and *Adventure Time*. O'Reilly developed the 'Alien Child' videogame sequences for the Spike Jonze film *Her* (2013) which spurred his interest in videogame development.

O'Reilly'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 following 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.

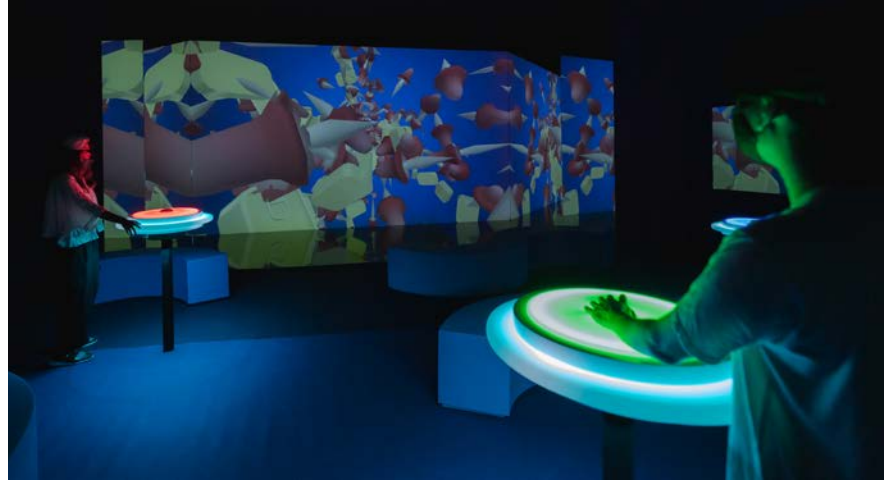
#### **onedotzero** **Media Designer**

onedotzero is a London-based design consultancy and studio that creates digital experiences and immersive environments. They organised the international onedotzero touring festival from 1997 to 2012, showcasing work across film, animation, motion graphics, audio-visual, videogames, and digital installation.

A highly collaborative practice, onedotzero have previously worked with artists including Troika, United Visual Artists, and Yuri Suzuki, creating audience and sound reactive installations. They have also worked extensively with an array of brands, musicians, and museums.

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.

### 3 EVERYTHING



## 4 NARRATIVE



NARRATIVE Key Visual. Courtesy of Tequila Works.

### **Book of Sand, 2021 Tequila Works and The Workers**

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' novella of the same name, *Book of Sand* explores the notion of an infinite story with neither 'any beginning or end'. Step into the spotlights 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.

Commissioned by Barbican International Enterprises and made possible thanks to the support of Epic MegaGrant.  
RiME © 2017 Tequila Works.

## 4 NARRATIVE



*Book of Sand* at ArtScience Museum, Singapore, 2021. Photo by Ajam Sali.

### **Tequila Works Game Developer**

The Madrid-based game developer, Tequila Works, was founded in 2009 by Raúl Rubio and Luz Sancho.

Tequila Works are one of leading game developers exploring the possibilities of virtual reality. *The Invisible Hours* (2017) and *Groundhog Day: Like Father Like Son* (2019) are experiments in 'Spherical Narrative', whereby multiple events unfold simultaneously, without the audience's input.

The studio is best known for their adventure game, *RiME* (2017). In *RiME*, players control the actions of 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.

### **The Workers Media Designer**

The Workers are creative technologists who, from their studio in London, design interactive experiences that traverse the physical and virtual worlds. 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.

## 4 NARRATIVE





## 5 PLAY



PLAY Key Visual. Courtesy of Media Molecule.

### **Dream Shaping, 2021**

#### **Media Molecule, Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe and Marshmallow Laser Feast**

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 again. Sharing shapes and experimenting with movements around the space will create a spectacle within both the physical and virtual worlds.

Commissioned by Barbican International Enterprises and made possible thanks to the support of Vicon. DREAMS™ © 2021 Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe. Published by Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe Ltd. Developed by Media Molecule.

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## 5 PLAY



*Dream Shaping* at ArtScience Museum, Singapore, 2021. Photo by Marina Bay Sands.

### **Media Molecule** **Game Developer**

Media Molecule was founded in Guildford, UK in 2006 by Mark Healey, Alex Evans, David Smith, Kareem Ettouney, and Siobhan Reddy.

Their 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, thus democratising the videogame format.

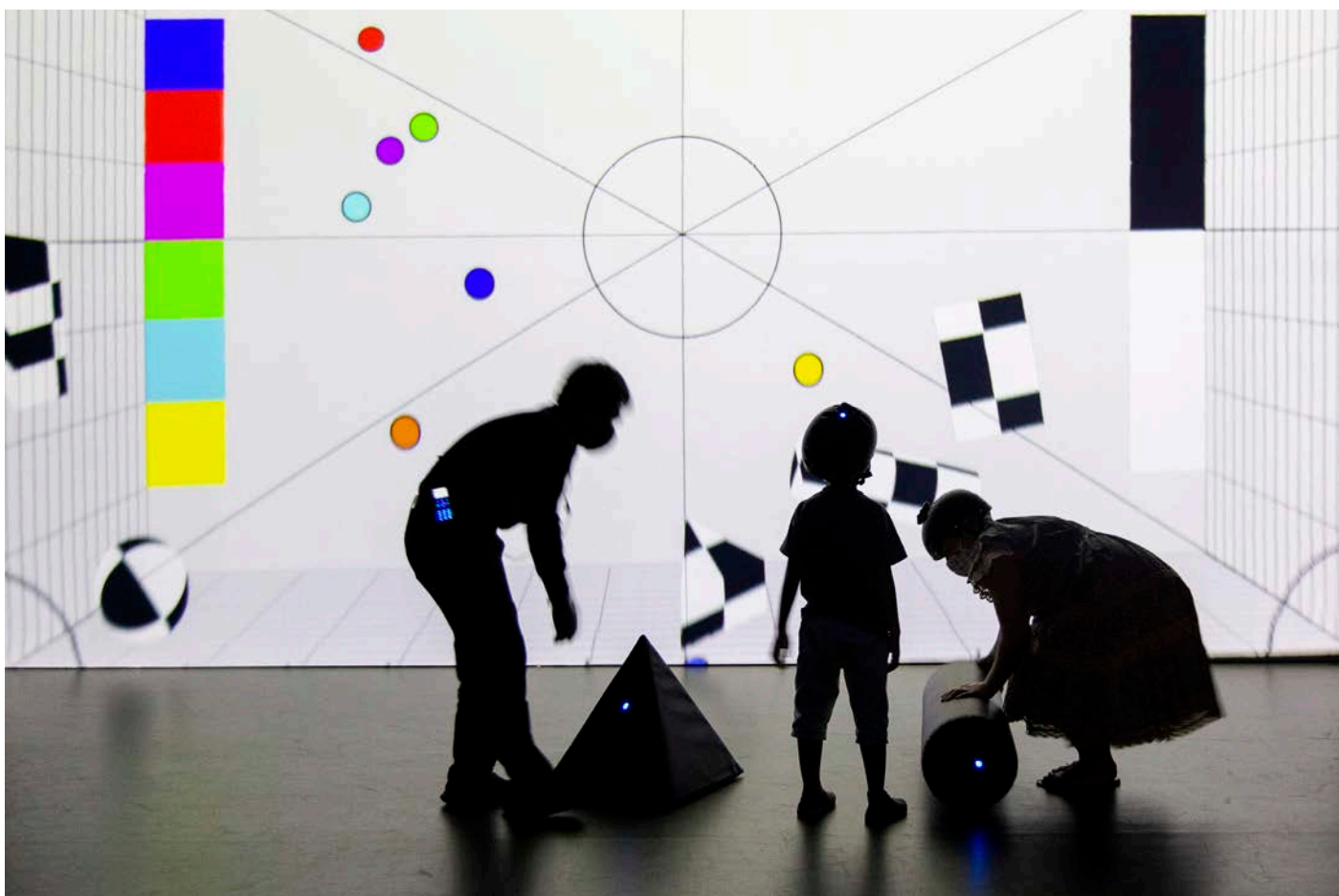
Emboldened by the talent and ambition of the *LittleBigPlanet* user community, Media Molecule created *Dreams* (2020), a digital toolset to be used across 3D modelling, animation, audio, narrative, and level design. All creations are shared with other users in the 'Dreamiverse', giving makers total freedom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

### **Marshmallow Laser Feast** **Media Designer**

Marshmallow Laser Feast is a London-based creative studio who explore multi-sensory experiences. They investigate the world beyond our senses and find ways to introduce tactility to the digital. As a creative team, they search for new collective artistic experiences in cultural spaces, festivals, and installations.

In their previous work, *We Live in an Ocean of Air* (2018), Marshmallow Laser Feast made users' breath visible in virtual reality. For *In the Eyes of the Animal* (2015), they created an immersive experience in a forest that transports visitors to the sensory perspectives of different living species including frogs, dragonflies, and owls.

## 5 PLAY



## 6 UNITY



UNITY Key Visual. Courtesy of FIELD.IO.

### **Together: the distance between (us), 2021 thatgamecompany and FIELD.IO**

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, you will witness the build-up of fragments of light and melody which will culminate in a collective crescendo and a moment of unity for all to experience.

Commissioned by Barbican International Enterprises.

## 6 UNITY



Together: the distance between (us) at ArtScience Museum, Singapore, 2021. Photo by Ajam Sali.

### **thatgamecompany** Game Developer

Founded by Jenova Chen and Kellee Santiago, the California-based thatgamecompany experiment with different forms of gameplay and aesthetic.

The pair developed their first game *Cloud* (2005) while still at the University of Southern California. *Cloud* is inspired by the experience of cloud gazing; players can manipulate cloud formations and create thunderstorms.

The team went on to produce three games for the PlayStation culminating in *Journey* (2012), an exploration game that invites collaboration between anonymous players online. thatgamecompany's most recent game, *Sky: Children of the Light* (2019), is self-published. And evolves many of the concepts that were introduced in *Journey*, inviting players to work alongside each other to restore light to the world.

### **FIELD.IO** Media Designer

FIELD.IO is a creative studio located in London and Berlin who creates 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 kinetic 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.IO's work invokes digital technology and design to generate an artistic expression of the human experience.

## 6 UNITY



# 7 Exhibition Spaces

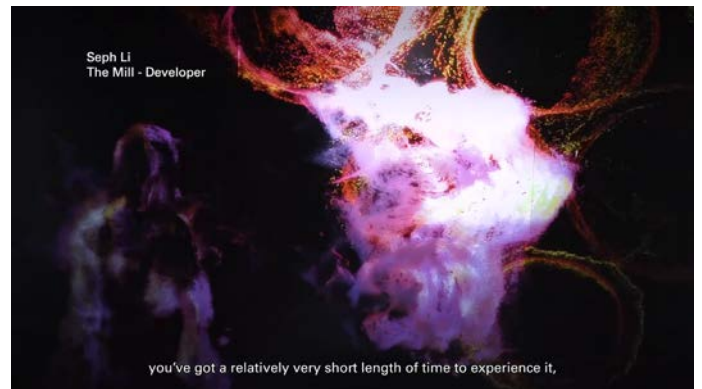
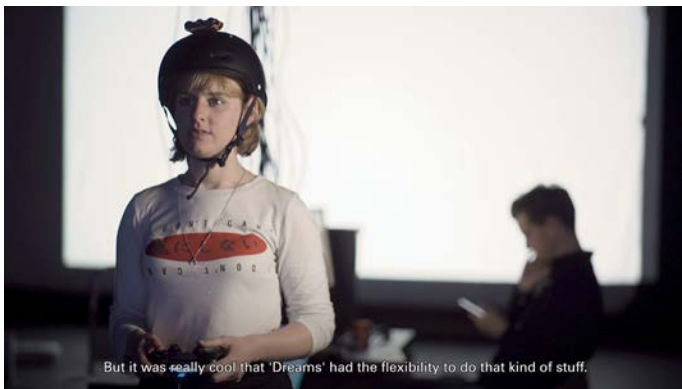


# 7 Exhibition spaces

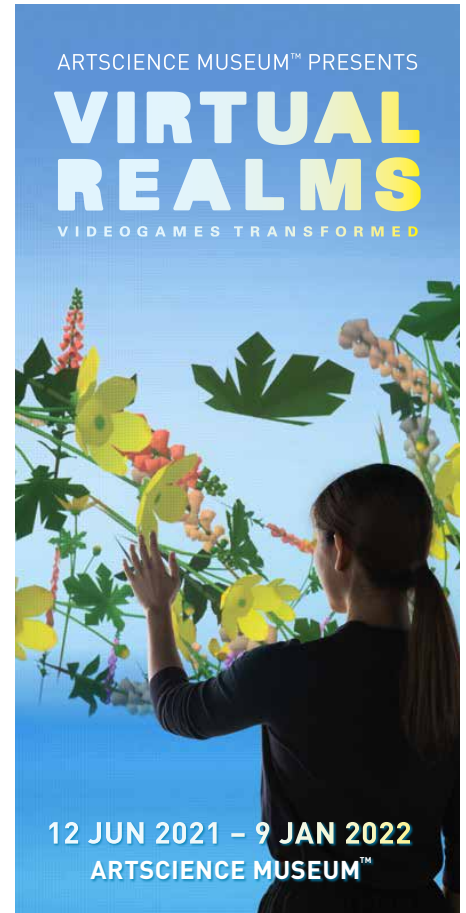




# 8 Video Content



# 9 Sample Marketing



**Virtual Realms Videogames Transformed**

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 Mizumoto, in collaboration with the Barbican, this exhibition reimagines videogame creativity and explores how we can play together across virtual and physical realms.

The realms – **SYNTHESIA, UNITY, PLAY, CONNECTION, NARRATIVE, and EVERYTHING** – showcase six of the key themes found across the videogame medium. The videogame developers presented in this exhibition are celebrated for the ways in which they experiment with their realm theme throughout their gameography and creative design.

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**Exhibition Dates**  
20 May – 10 October 2021

**Logos:** barbican, MUSEUMS, CREATIVE VICTORIA, ArtScience Museum MARINA BAY SANDS, a different kind of museum.

**VIRTUAL REALMS**  
VIDEOGAMES TRANSFORMED

ENGLISH  
12 Jun 2021 – 9 Jan 2022

**Room 1: SYNTHESIA**  
Entrance and Rezonance

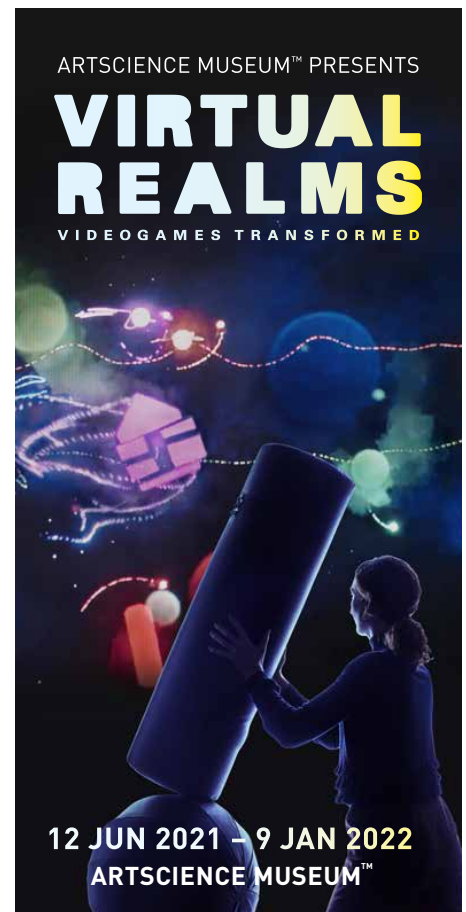
**Room 2: UNITY**  
Disagreements and Field 0

**Room 3: CONNECTION**  
SOLIMA PRODUCTIONS and The Mill

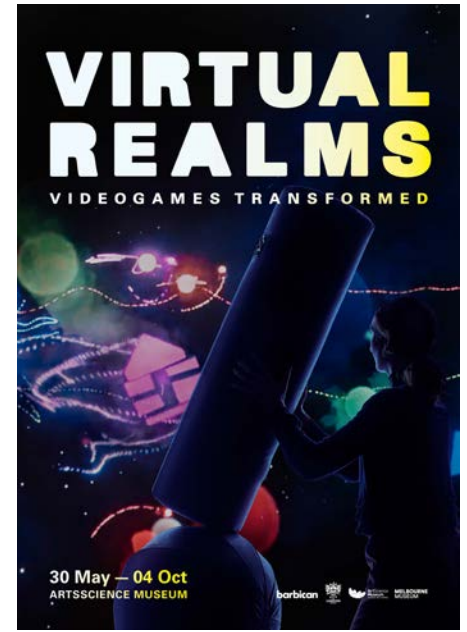
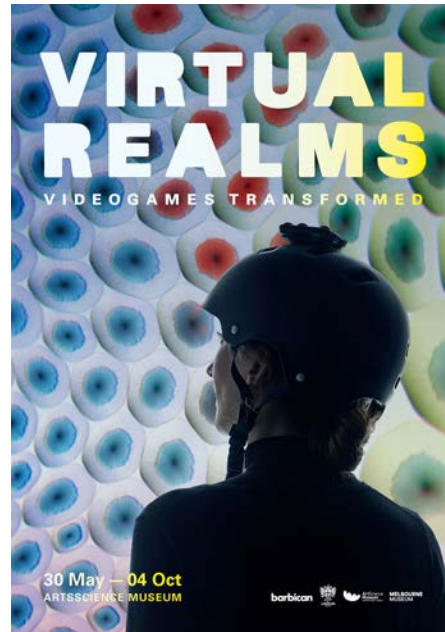
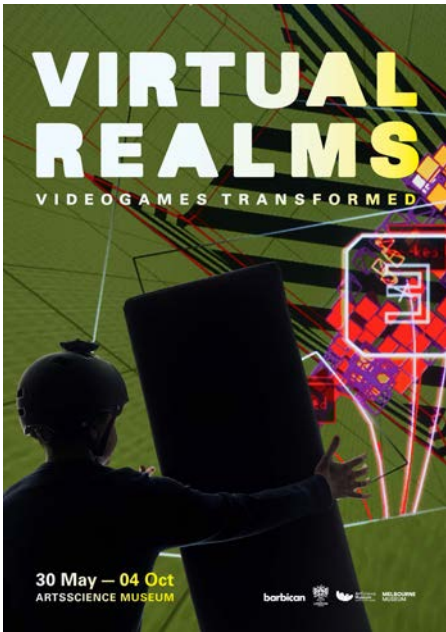
**Room 4: PLAY**  
Mecha Melodic, Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe and Eleonora's Last Ride

**Room 5: NARRATIVE**  
Tequila Works and The Workers

**Room 6: EVERYTHING**  
David O'Reilly and Straylight



# 9 Sample Marketing



# 9 Sample Marketing

