

PRESS RELEASE

Arts Council are backing strategically important disability arts project in Shoreham by Sea, West Sussex

Artist, Malcolm Buchanan-Dick and Sensable Media director, Dr Sue Orton-Flynn, have won an award of £56,000 from Arts Council England, South East for their ground breaking work in the field of disability arts and the application of creative technologies. They have been working for many years on adapting equipment to empower people using video technology in collaboration with Entelechy Arts and Sussex University's INTERACT lab.

Working with Worthing based medical engineer, Dr Rolf Thomas, Malcolm and Sue will research and develop devices which enable disabled artists access via switches to video technology. Using an interactive, multi-sensory environment, Malcolm will work with disabled artists using the new switch devices, to inspire and develop new artwork. The team intend to establish themselves in the new Shoreham Ropetackle Centre due to open in June 2006.

Malcolm says,

"This is a marvellous opportunity for us to focus our time and energy into something we are passionate about. Through our own various disabilities we have a profound understanding of the importance of access to creativity, technology, and different forms of self-expression. With this funding we will be able to work with organisations to adapt and develop new and exciting technologies, making our contribution to disability arts in the future."

A further £3000 has been awarded to this work by West Sussex County Council, enabling the development of a project with young disabled children and their parents. Using an interactive environment in a creative way, they plan to engage the youngsters in stimulating activities designed to nourish the senses and involve their parents.

The research and development phase of the project will start from April and the team are interested to hear from disabled artists, particularly switch users, who find technology like video cameras, difficult to use by themselves. They would also like to hear from arts' organisations that may be interested in becoming partners in the project and testing the prototype devices

A database of technology and people will be started, as a national information point for disabled artists and arts organisations working with technology. If you would like more information please contact either Sue or Malcolm on 01273 453430.

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Notes to editors:

Web: <http://www.sensable.co.uk>

Sue Orton-Flynn has a PhD for her research in interface design for accessibility and has lectured for many years in design for accessibility to post graduate students. Sue currently second supervises PhD students at Brighton University and runs a busy web design and ecommerce business, Stockashop Limited. <http://www.stockashop.co.uk>
Sue can be contacted by email: sue@sensable.co.uk

Malcolm Buchanan-Dick is a renowned installation artist and has won many awards for his work. Currently, he is working with renewable energy sources in order to power his installations in remote locations. Malcolm uses combinations of found objects e.g. a slot machine, harmoniums, organ pipes, and digital media, in his installations. The pieces are often playful and always engage the viewer with interactions and responses. Malcolm is currently working on two public art commissions : Enham Alamein in Hampshire, and Sevenoaks Library in Kent, and a project and exhibition at the Museum of London.

More of his work can be seen at <http://www.purelure.com>
Malcolm can be contacted by email: malcolm@purelure.com

Rolf Thomas currently designs medical devices for ophthalmic surgery and recently received his PhD from Loughborough University for his research into Mechatronics in Medicine.

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Submitted by Sensable Media, 22/03/06