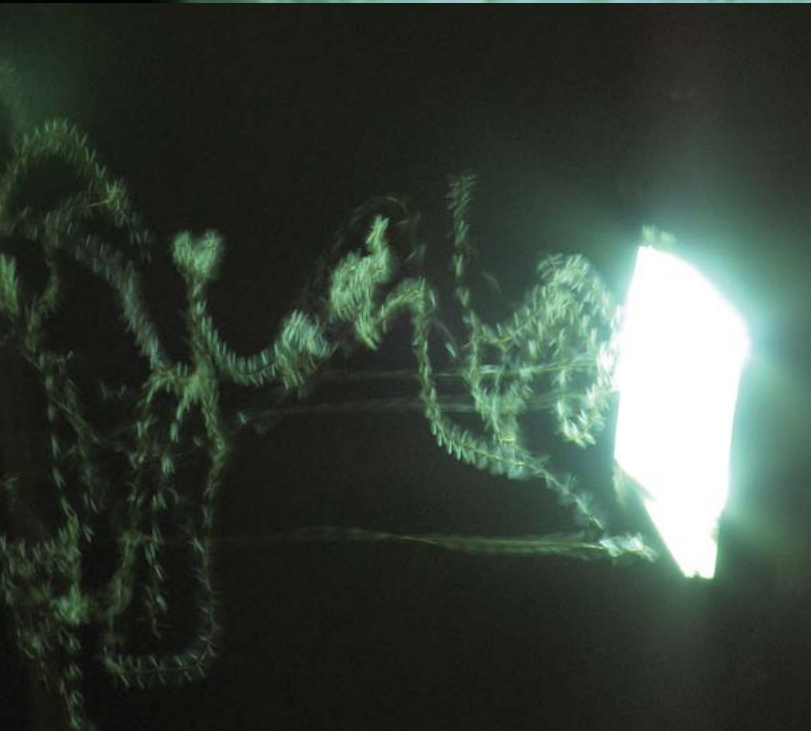


# IMMERSION: ELECTRICAL EMPATHY

15 & 16 JUNE 2007, PERFORMANCE SPACE @ CARRIAGEWORKS



## IMMERSION: ELECTRICAL EMPATHY



Producers: Sam James, Gail Priest  
Collaborators: Cicada, Scott Morrison, Peter Newman, Jason Sweeney, Ai Yamamoto  
This project was produced by Performance Space @ CarriageWorks and was assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

## PERFORMANCE SPACE PRESENTS

# IMMERSION: ELECTRICAL EMPATHY

*Immersion: Electrical Empathy* has two main threads of exploration: one is the ongoing development of each artists material in an intensive environment; the other building a collaborative, audio-visual event which is a group composition. Unlike sound and image nights in which artists present their solo material discretely, we are interested in exploring areas of transition and bleed between each artist's work in order to draw out the performative essence of the media. We have chosen artists who have experience in theatre and installation and whose practices illustrate a need to emulate and create visceral experiences through electronic means. We aim to structure a holistic work weaving together a series of live triggered, intuitive responses to a loose thematic of water and its natural association to fluidity, submersion and sensory saturation.

Sam James Et Gail Priest

Two 45-minute sections with a 15-minute interval

## ARTIST STATEMENTS

### Sam James

These animations move between realism and escapism. With the intrusion of the constructed world on nature, hybrid forms evolve. Amongst the digital realm forms can take any escapist direction; digitally they are remade from old forms. An object is attracted to an environment, an environment joins with another environment, an object with another object. The object/animal movements are often mechanical. The animals themselves are bizarre and unrepeatable but the system that controls them is rigid. I am trying to draw subconscious relationships between ordinary objects and places. It is what we watch or look for in any kind of art or entertainment—a fusion of the escapist dream with something from the real world. A lamp can be an animal, a friend, an association to a special person, or a time and place strongly remembered —objects can never just be inanimate.

Sam James has worked since 1995 as a theatre designer and has designed projections and spaces for most of the contemporary performance companies in Australia. He mainly collaborates with independent dancers and performers, making dance films. In 2006 he won Best Australian Dance film at the Australian Dance Awards with choreographer Julie-Anne Long and is currently working on an ABC Dance film commission with Rosie Dennis to make a short film *Quietly Collapsed*.

[www.shimmerpixel.blogspot.com](http://www.shimmerpixel.blogspot.com)

### Gail Priest

In my work I seek to find the slippage between music and noise. Recording extended instrumental and vocal improvisations and violations, I use loop editing, multiple filters and effects to extract hidden essences, broken melodies and shattered rhythms. The aim is to create atmospheres that are unsettlingly familiar and comfortingly alien. Through *Immersion* I have been

exploring different compositional processes of working with and against the provocation of the vision. One piece is semi-improvised, accompanied by vision, in another I carnivorely feed on and manipulate content from Scott, and the final piece with Sam is composed to work intricately with the image, which is then tweaked and spatialised live.

Gail Priest is a Sydney-based sound artist, writer and curator. Originally trained in the performing arts the core of her practice is in sound design for dance and contemporary performance, frequently playing the soundscapes live. She also performs live electro-improvisation at events in Sydney and nationally and has received several commissions from ABC Radio. She has a debut CD *Imaginary Conversations in Reverberant Rooms* which was included in this year's *Transmediale*. [www.snagglepussy.net](http://www.snagglepussy.net)

### Scott Morrison

My interest lies in developing and exploring the synergies of audiovisual content. I control the parameters of the video signal via patch-based software (Isadora). Shying away from the notion of VJ, I'm more intrigued in what happens when audio is treated the same way as video. For *Immersion*, this approach is expanded by having the audio sent from my video signal to the audio artists, allowing them to manipulate my improvised edits in real time, and their synthesis in turn, will also affect my video signal. The idea is to abstract the synergy of material that the audience is seeing and hearing.

Scott Morrison is a video and sound artist. His performances include Electrofringe festival, Stonefest at the University of Canberra and ReelDance's *DanceTracks* at the Sydney Opera House Studio. His video work has been exhibited nationally and internationally including *Transmediale*, Berlin; *Images Contres Nature*, Marseille; *Institute of Modern Art*,

Brisbane and RawSpace. He completed a Bachelor of Arts in Digital Arts with Honours in 2004 through the Centre for New Media Arts, ANU. He is currently undertaking a Masters of Philosophy at COFA, UNSW.

### Peter Newman

I compose highly textural sound-driven audiovisual works for live performance, installation and screening. These works explore the musical qualities of composed sound in a symbiotic relationship with moving image, often in a multi-speaker, multi-screen environment. My music is often concerned with drawing a sense of musicality from non-musical sources (such as field recordings and sound captured from video). In a performance context, I utilise a software-based framework for structured improvisation which I have been developing for several years, with which I have performed and exhibited widely. For *Immersion* I will contribute prepared video and perform live audio in collaboration with the other artists.

Peter Newman is a musician and time-based artist living in Sydney. He has performed or exhibited his sound and video work around Australia including Museum of Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Artspace, PICA, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, pelt, FirstDraft, Phatspace, the NOWNow Festival 2006, Electrofringe 2005, Sydney Big Day Out 2004/2006 and Gwangju Biennale, Seoul. He completed a Bachelor of Electronic Arts (Honours Class 1) at UWS in 2004 and has since taught experimental video subjects. He is also a co-founder of experimental audiovisual DVD label Demux.

### Jason Sweeney

For *Immersion* I wanted to put aside my laptop and work with pre-prepared remixes of sounds and musics from the Pretty Boy Crossover "archive". So I chose a whole lot of recent guitar chord progressions, voices, dots and loops. I also have a collection of recordings from the recent violent storms that swept across NSW. These too become layers with their own warning signals. Then I wanted to take it all below the surface and see where the bubbles rose up. Some of it contains air, some of it sinks to the bottom—content to swim in a watery world. To playback the sounds, I have a series of pre-prepared mixes on a wav player that I have "mini-soundtracked" to thematic video sequences by Sam. To accompany this 'live' I have a digital delay pedal to create surfaces and improvised loops to underscore the prepared mixes and as source sounds.

Jason Sweeney is a transient musician/sound artist, performance maker and writer. He records and releases music internationally with Pretty Boy Crossover, School of Two and Mist Et Sea. He co-founded performance ensemble Unreasonable Adults in 2002 who recently

toured to UK's SPILL Festival of Performance in London and were in residence at Nadine, Brussels. His live and web-based work have been presented across Australia and includes work for Chunky Move, pvi collective and Tanja Leitke. His own short experimental film, *Disappointment*, for Feast Queer Festival 2006, is screening internationally.

[www.soundlikesweeney.com](http://www.soundlikesweeney.com)

### Nick Ritar Et Kirsten Bradley (Cicada)

Cicada's visual works often draw upon imagery from the physical world to produce minimal abstract environments alluding to digital simulation.

For *Immersion*, I am manipulating a live camera trained upon physical objects on a rotating platter, and layers of clips prepared by Kirsten to create two dark melancholic worlds, which are accompanied by Ai's soundscapes.

Cicada is a collaboration between artists Kirsten Bradley, Nick Ritar. They work together exploring landscapes—urban, natural, sonic, constructed and imagined. Large scale installation performances include: *MOB*, Melbourne's Meatmarket; *Re\_Squared* for *Primavera* 2003; and *Amensal* for Australian Network for Art and Technology's *Luminosity* program. Cicada has also created video design for performance including, *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, *Beasty Girl* and *3 Feather Nest*. Cicada has participated in the residency program at IASKA in Western Australia, and Kirsten is currently taking part in the BANF residency program.

### Ai Yamamoto

My music style varies from soft melodic and shimmering abstract melodies to dark explosive tones. My main area of interest is the dramatic structure and flow of music as well as gentle melodies with abstract textures which bring an atmospheric sound scape to my compositions.

Ai Yamamoto has been based in Melbourne since the end of 1999. She began composing and producing music in 2000 and since then she has performed at major festivals and events including What Is Music, Liquid Architecture, UnSound and Electrofringe. She has also created and collaborated on video works and installations including *360 Degrees—Women in Sound*. Her work has been included on several CD compilations and her solo CD *Euphonious* is out on Bus Records. She has also been working on side projects with MC Raceless (Curse ov dialect) and with Lawrence English (Room40) creating abstract drone electronica.

**Thank yous** Hedge, Jasper Streit, Alex Davies, Richard Manner, Vic McEwan, Rosie Dennis, Fiona Winning, Tallulah Kerr, Julieanne Campbell, Michelle Outram, Caitlin Newton-Broad Et Sally Breen.