

PRESS RELEASE

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DOGS' EARS

by Julie Freeman

THE CONCEPT

Playful, fun and thought provoking, Dogs' Ears is a visually arresting, online installation commissioned by the ICA from critically acclaimed [cross-media artist Julie Freeman](#). A witty and subversive take on the video chat room, the work explores both the beauty and language of the dog ear and the future of arts patronage in the digital era.

THE WEBSITE

Presented as a video chat website, visitors can log in, browse dogs for free and instant message with them online. But if users want to experience 'live chat' with a dog, then they will need to make a small donation – either to the charity [Hearing Dogs for Deaf People](#), who helped source some of the dogs, or direct to the artist to fund the next stage of the project. **Dogs' Ears will go live on 23 May.** <http://www.ica.org.uk/dogsears>.

THE DOGS



VICTOR

ANDREA

PASCAL

Dogs' Ears features 20 canine pin-ups from around the world. Once the 'conversation' has started, each dog responds in its own language, whether it is an English 'woof woof', a Chinese 'wang wang', the Russian 'gav gav' or the universal twitch and flap. See the Dog Biographies overleaf for more info. JPEG stills are available on request.

MUSIC FROM DOGS' EARS

If the online financing scheme is successful, Freeman will develop the work further; mapping the movement of the dogs' ears and using the coordinates to compose music. The exquisite individual flapping motion of different dog ears will be analysed and translated into unique musical outputs that will form part of a sonic installation, as well as being available for download.

OWNERSHIP

The site will have three tiers of membership so people can contribute depending on pocket size. All full members would become co-owners of the music created. 'I like the co-operative ownership model,' says Freeman. 'When there is no one owner, it makes the creator more important, even if they don't exclusively 'own' the work – historically this

has always been acknowledged in the art world, but seems to be fading, with commercial collectors becoming just as, if not more important than the artist. In the past, artists might have one, very rich patron; now, with the Internet, they can have thousands of patrons who want to support their work.'

FOLLOW US ...

On Twitter where we'll be Twoofing about life behind the scenes of Dogs' Ears. Check the Dogs' Ears blog at <http://dogsears.wordpress.com/> for updates.

www.twitter.com/PascalChien. www.twitter.com/AndreaRublev. www.twitter.com/VictorBernstein

ARTIST STATEMENT

'I've always been interested in how technology is seductive, how it can present truth and lies with equal gravitas. It can also help us to learn about the world in new ways, exposing hidden systems and beauties. My work uses digital technology to help people engage with and appreciate natural phenomena. In this sense the technology is a vehicle rather than an end in itself. I am interested in how biological systems can be represented as sound, animation or three-dimensional objects. My working practice dictates that outcomes are never predictable, so when I start projects I feel I am constructing open structures and frameworks which allow for the free flow of ideas and content into the work.'

ABOUT JULIE FREEMAN

Julie Freeman' work spans visual, audio and digital artforms and explores the relationship between science, nature and how humans interact with it. For the past 12 years her work has focused on using electronic technologies to 'translate nature' – whether it is through the sound of torrential rain dripping on a giant rhubarb leaf; a pair of mobile concrete speakers who lurk in galleries haranguing passersby with fractured sonic samples or by providing an interactive platform from which to view the flap, twitch and prick of dogs' ears.

She is currently artist-in-residence at the Microsystems and Nanotechnology Centre at Cranfield University where she is creating works that aim to increase public understanding of self-assembly and organising processes at the nanoscale and their potential social impacts and consequences. In 2005 she launched her pioneering digital artwork The Lake, which used hydrophones, custom software and advanced technology to track electronically tagged fish and translate their movement into an audio-visual experience. The work was developed over three years and supported by Tingrith Coarse Fishery and a £96,000 fellowship from NESTA (The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts).

For more see www.juliefreeman.co.uk.

INTERVIEWS, FEATURES AND REVIEW

For further information about Dogs' Ears and upcoming related events at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, or if you are interested in featuring Dogs' Ears, or would like to arrange to interview the artist, contact Karen McCarthy on 020 7617 7291 or 07769 614948 or email karen@thewayyousayit.com.



VICTOR BERNSTEIN

Irish-American, New Yorker, Cocker Spaniel-Poodle cross.

'Vic' is the esteemed 'method' muppet trainer to the stars, whose clients include Kermit, Fozzy, Miss P (the one and only). He used to walk the boards but his incessant pipe smoking reeked havoc with his voice and the woofing had to stop.



PASCAL LE-CHIEN DE RIMBAUD

Collie. French, currently based in Charleville-Meziers.

Pascal is a graduate of the prestigious Ecole d'Articulation D'Oreilles in Paris and is a four-times gold medal winner of the International Earobics Challenge and the only dog to have won consecutive honours in all three categories (Pricking, Cocking, Flapping).



ANDREA RUBLEV

Saluki-Whippet Cross. Moscow, Russia.

Andrea has a boyfriend and a very opulent lifestyle. She likes to nibble on a little Beluga caviar for a light lunch and has 75 sapphire, ruby and diamond encrusted collars in her collection, although here she appears 'au naturel'. Her life in Moscow is one, long round of glittering cocktail receptions and her favourite sound is the clink of champagne flutes under a tinkling chandelier. She has everything a babushka could dream of, but chatting with strangers is what really gets her going: under her cool exterior she's straining at the leash.
