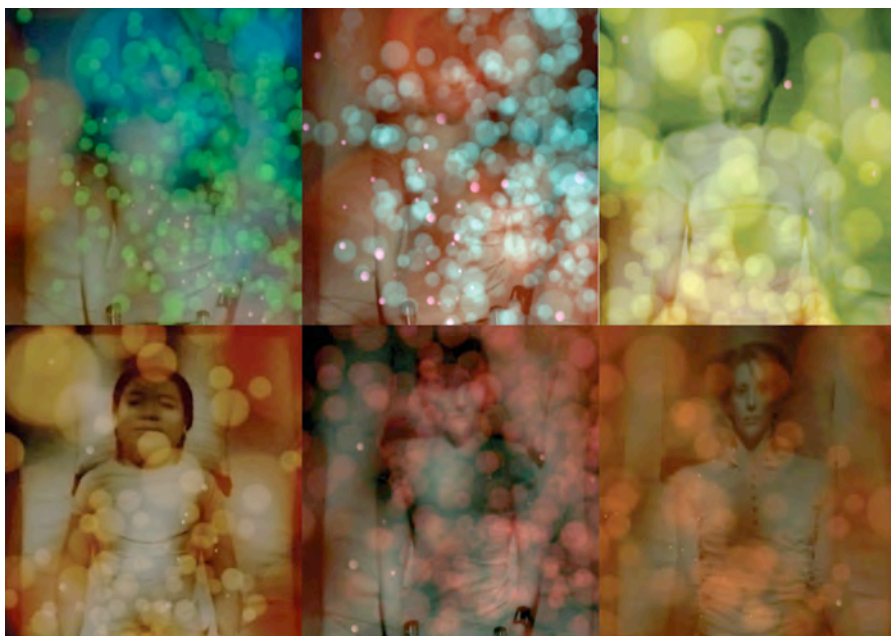


# The Heart Library Project: St. Vincent's

Level 4, Xavier Building,  
St. Vincent's Public Hospital,  
Victoria St, Darlinghurst  
New South Wales, Australia



*Official Launch: Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009, 6.30pm*

*7<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> July 2009*

*Tuesday to Sunday, 10am – 5pm*

*Thursdays, 10am – 7pm*

## Introduction

Where a traditional artwork has the capacity to solicit an emotional response in the viewer, in George Khut's *The Heart Library Project* – you the viewer – through your emotions have the capacity to influence the appearance of the artwork itself.

*The Heart Library Project* celebrates the human body as a felt experience - a body informed by life experiences, worldly relations and personal motivations.

You are invited to explore interactions between your emotions and heart rate with an interactive artwork, and share your experiences and reflections with other visitors in the form of a hand painted experience map.

Subtle shifts in heart rate, from one beat to the next can reveal the influence of our autonomic nervous system responses (fight-flight/rest-digest) and breathing on our heart rate – a phenomenon referred to as *heart rate variability*.

Contrary to common beliefs, a healthy heart does not function like a metronome, but instead varies slightly from one beat to the next. Heart rate variability decreases with age, and low heart rate variability is often (but not always) an indicator of physical or emotional stress.

Heart rate variability can be increased in the short-term by gentle relaxed breathing, and reduced by mental stresses, such as mathematical problems, challenging or unfamiliar situations.

In Khut's work, these changes are reflected back to you as changes in the colour, texture and sound of the work, representing our physiology as something enchanting and deeply entwined in the dynamics of our mental and emotional life.

In *The Heart Library Project* biofeedback section, these changes can be observed as:

- Cooler colours, soft, muted sounds, objects falling away or down for *decreasing* heart rates; and
- Warmer colours, crackly/tingly sounds, and objects moving forwards or floating upwards for *increasing* heart rates.

By voluntarily imagining or remembering certain experiences – exciting or stressful, peaceful or quiet – you can learn to affect the appearance of the artwork.

Following your interaction with the biofeedback artwork, you are invited to share your experience with other visitors by contributing a personalised *experience-map* and video interview.

The map you create can describe your experience through lines, colours and words marked onto a printout of an outline of a generic form of the human body. Here you can locate the various emotions and feelings you experienced during your interaction with the artwork, around, across and inside your body.

You can offer an interpretation of your experience-map to the artist and other exhibition visitors, in the form a short video interview – recorded via overhead video camera (where only your hands and the drawing will be visible).

The resulting collection of experience-maps and video interviews will be incorporated into a continually evolving collection of body-focused experiences and reflections, transforming the exhibition into an informal research space, celebrating and exploring the diversity of our lived experience of our bodies.

### **Disclaimer:**

*The Heart Library Project* presents a reflection of your heart rate patterns and nervous system reflexes transformed with multimedia design tools into interactive *artwork*.

The colours and sounds you observe are the product of a process of creative interpretation and expression.

The work makes NO claims to offer an actual diagnosis of the state of your health, nor indicate the colour of your 'aura', soul or personal essence.

What it does offer you is a situation for exploring and appreciating your ability to influence your heart rate via mental and emotional foci, and to spend some time 'inside' – in quiet appreciation – free from external judgments, diagnoses and performance expectations.

For more information, team member biographies and videos, please visit the website:

[www.georgekhut.com/heartlibrary](http://www.georgekhut.com/heartlibrary)

## Credits

George Poonkhin Khut:  
Concept, art direction and sound

David Morris-Oliveros:  
Computer programming - visuals

Jason McSweeney:  
Computer programming - analysis

Caitlin Newton-Broad:  
Concept development

Annie Laerkesen:  
Exhibition technical production

Frank Maguire:  
Heart-sensor fabrication

Kaeko Tanigawa:  
Design consultant and fabrication  
assistant

Naomi Derrick & Julia Landrey:  
Body-mapping interviews

## Acknowledgements

*The Heart Library Project: St. Vincent's* has been generously supported by the following organisations and individuals: the Australian Government through the Australia Council its arts funding and advisory body; dLux Media Arts; St. Vincent's Campus Art Committee; Fraser Studios and Queen Street Studios; Xenian Living Light; UTS Gallery; UTS Creativity & Cognition Studios; Lizzie Muller & Kathy Cleland; Campbelltown Arts Centre; MIC Toi Rerehiko, Auckland; Lisa Colley and The Arts & Health Foundation; Bill & George Studio, Redfern; and Totugua Studios, St. Peters.

*Special thanks to David Morris-Oliveros and Jason McSweeney for their patience and generosity; Katarina Cvitcovic, Kim Vaughan and Garry Nicholls for making this exhibition possible in the first place; and all the volunteers who have helped to realise this project: Rhys Cumpstone, Naomi Derrick, Kaeko Tanigawa, Steve Evans, Somaya Langley, Bec Dean, Julianne Campbell, Khahien Hyunh and Sam James.*