

# First Contact



First Contact is an interactive audiovisual installation

Designed to be experienced either individually or in groups of up to eight people

# Rumours...



*Rumours are spreading. They talk of strange creatures inhabiting the night.  
What are they? Where do they come from?  
You are the first person to encounter this previously unknown life form.  
How will you make first contact? How will it respond? How will you?...*

# Lights in the sky...

High above you looms a large alien being, measuring over six metres across. It looks a bit like a spider, or an octopus, or something... It senses you are close. Its eight long limbs glow softly.

Attached to the end of each limb there is a thin cord, reaching down towards the ground. You reach out and pull on the nearest cord. As you do so, the limb begins to illuminate, waves of colour pulse along its length. At the same time, the creature begins to emit strange, unfamiliar sounds – perhaps it is trying to talk, or perhaps to sing? It reminds you a little of whale-song.



# User Experience

The sheer scale of the piece, the beauty of this strange object pulsing with patterns of light, the otherworldly sounds it emits as it looms above the audience, is striking in itself. There is a palpable 'wow' factor to be observed. The mechanics of what is happening under the skin are hidden from the observer. This does not look or feel like any other 'audiovisual' installation. It does not feel like a piece of technology, more like a piece of sculpture.

The real magic though, comes when the audience has a chance to interact with the piece. Each of the individual cords that dangle before the audience triggers a unique sequence of light patterns, video sequences and sounds. These are not simply on/off triggers – they are subtler than that. The lighting and sound respond to how far and how quickly the cords are pulled. Each cord effectively controls a musical instrument and light show. These individual 'instruments' have been designed to look and sound good in isolation. But each one also makes up a part of a larger composition, in the same way that rhythms and melodies performed on individual musical instruments combine to form a complete piece of music.

In a fascinating self-organising process, strangers begin to perform together as they become aware of their contribution to the ensemble. There is no barrier to entry, as the only 'skill' required to participate is the ability to pull on a cord. This is a group interactive experience; people are creating a unique sound and light show for each other and for those around them. Perhaps after experiencing this shared process of creation, people may be less likely to want to be mere consumers of entertainment.



# The Creators

First contact is a truly international artistic collaboration. It was originally conceived by multidisciplinary artist Philip Mayer from the UK. The project was co-created by Philip Mayer and audiovisual / interactive artist Pedro Zaz from Portugal, in collaboration with tensile sculptor Du Gonçalves from Brazil.



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