

Project details

Project title	<i>Cosmoscope</i>
Researcher	Dr Nick Rothwell
Start Date	2015
End Date	2017



Cosmoscope was an interdisciplinary art and science project led by Simeon Nelson of the University of Hertfordshire researched and produced in collaboration with programmer Nick Rothwell, composer Rob Godman, psychologist Monia Brizzi and a team of physicists. It culminated in a large sound and light sculpture made of 52 laser-cut steel 3D Platonic elements bolted together into a spherical geometry. Emergent sound and light patterns propagate through it via 1700 integrated LEDs and 16 loudspeakers.

This project links biology, earth science and astrophysics. It looks at the human psyche and body in our terrestrial and cosmic environment, seeing psyche and body made of parts that are, in turn, part of a larger whole, seeing each level as part of a higher level and consisting of lower levels. It was premised on the idea that is not possible to fully explain phenomena at particular levels without recourse to the whole.

Cosmoscope situates humans at the midpoint of the quantum and the cosmological scales, asking: what is our place in the Universe? What does it mean to reimagine oneself in this widest system of meaning?

Funding

- Wellcome Trust funding: £150000 (Large Arts Award 2015).
- Production by Artichoke UK for Lumiere festivals, Durham and London.

Outputs and outcomes

- New Scientist interview, January 2018:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__G6yMeM1-s
- Cosmoscope research symposium, University of Hertfordshire, 23rd June 2017 (Nick Rothwell's contribution from 2:50:00):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3qFgKTIsGk>
- Cosmoscope Linear Render with Audio, Rob Godman, 8th September 2018:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNdRK70XuB8>
- Cosmoscope 2-Minute Timelapse, Rob Godman, 8th September 2018:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1d7O9BP_s_M
- Visual Illusion and Cosmoscope, Newsflare, 18th November 2017:
<https://www.newsflare.com/video/167710/entertainment-arts/visual-illusion-and-cosmoscope-durhamlumiere-2017>

Impact and Recognition

The final sculpture was exhibited at Lumiere Durham in November 2017, Lumiere London in January 2018, and the Watts Gallery, Surrey in April-June 2019.

The aim of Cosmoscope was to reach beyond the traditional science audience by creating a spectacular art installation at a well-attended light art festival. By featuring Cosmoscope as part of Lumiere, a large, outdoor public art event, Cosmoscope was seen by an audience of 245,000 over four days in Durham, and 1,200,000 audience in London.

Reviews and Press

- [*Cosmological questions. The Psychologist*](#) (The British Psychological Society), April 2018.
- [*Trip to the Light Fantastic. \(London Lumiere review\)*](#) Daily Mail, 13 January 2018.
- [*City in Different Light. Al Jazeera*](#), 20 January 2018.

- [*See inside the universe in this stunning light sculpture.*](#) *New Scientist*, 18 January 2018.
- 37,451,472 mentions across print, online and broadcast titles - Durham Lumiere