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CURIOUS COUPLINGS AT GLAMOROUS LAUNCH

The scene was set at the swanky Dome Bar in Surry Hills, Sydney - opulent chaise lounges, chandeliers & floor-to-ceiling baroque nude portraits. In the intimate corner bar, couples sat with drinks in hand, impressing their passions upon each other. The bell rang, those on the inside moved onto the next table, taking their place for their next speed date. But not everything was as it seemed – for a start, the ‘couples’ were world-renowned scientists and artists, introduced to spark the possibility of merging their professional interests, with the support of the Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT).

For the past decade, ANAT has been at the forefront of supporting collaboration between the arts and sciences, most effectively through a residency program placing artists within science organisations both within Australia and internationally. Seven such partnerships were announced at the Launch on August 17th: four which will be delivered under the auspices of the Synapse initiative, which ANAT runs with the Inter-Arts office of the Australia Council for the Arts, and three to be delivered with Arts Victoria, specifically for Victorian participants. Such partnerships are critical in promoting innovation in industry, with concrete benefits accruing to both parties. The successful projects for 2007 are:

- **Kirsty Boyle (NSW) + Dr Lijin Aryananda of the Artificial Intelligence Lab (Switzerland)**
- **Madeleine Flynn & Tim Humphrey (VIC) + Dr Shane Grey of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research (Australia)**
- **Tina Gonsalves (QLD) + Professor Rosalind Picard of the Affective Computing Group, MIT (USA), Emeritus Professor Chris Frith of the Wellcome Trust Centre for Neuroimaging (UK), and Professor Hugo Critchley of the Brighton & Sussex Medical School (UK)**
- **Greg Hooper (QLD) + Professor Jason Mattingly of the Queensland Brain Institute (Australia)**
- **Frances d’Arth (VIC) + Dr Chris Fluke of the Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing, Swinburne University (VIC)**
- **Leah Heiss (VIC) + Dr Peter Binks and Dr Bob Irving of Nanotechnology Victoria (VIC)**
- **Chris Henschke (VIC) + scientists from the Australian Synchrotron (VIC)**

ANAT’s role in supporting art/science practice is also evident with the relaunch of the Synapse online database of international art/science collaborations, which can be found at www.synapse.net.au. A resource for researchers and the science and arts industries, the database contains up-to-the-minute information about the myriad projects being undertaken in this rapidly advancing arena. The Synapse site also links to a discussion list of all things cutting edge in the world of art and science, beginning in October with Oron Catts (from SymbioticA, winners of the 2007 Golden Nica for Hybrid Art, Prix Ars Electronica) who will be focusing on Bioart practice.

Mistress of Ceremonies duties at the launch were ably undertaken by ABC science broadcaster and all-round spunky science chick, Bernie Hobbs, who played no small part in setting the scene for the successful, albeit curious, couplings which followed the formal launch business!

For more information on the residencies, visit www.anat.org.au and visit the database at www.synapse.net.au. For more information on the program please contact Program Manager Vicki Sowry on ars@anat.org.au.



ANAT is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts <http://www.ozco.gov.au> its arts funding and advisory body, by the South Australian Government through Arts SA <http://www.arts.sa.gov.au> and the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.