



Astronomical delight: stars shine in soap opera

It may sound like a strange way to explore astronomy, but the formation of the Universe contains complicated storylines that are perfect for a soap opera. This is why artists Nicky Forster and Willoh S Weiland have created their 'online cosmological drama', *Void Love*.

The artists will screen the pilot episode of their sound and video work on 31 May 2009 at Head Quarters, a presentation space for cross disciplinary art practice in Melbourne. Subsequent episodes will be available online.

"Surely there is no greater melodrama than the unfolding of the Universe itself," Forster said.

Completed during the International Year of Astronomy, *Void Love* was inspired by research done at Swinburne University of Technology's Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing. The work is the result of a four-month residency based at the centre.

The 'Synapse' residencies, presented by the Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts, support intensive partnerships between media artists and scientists in research settings both in Australia and internationally.

Void Love will be narrated by Australian recording artist Kamahl. Its plot centres on a woman awakening from a coma to explore what is known and unknown about the formation of the Universe.

After basing artwork on astronomy research, Forster and Weiland admitted it was a challenge to understand the breadth of the material.

"At first, it was like being on an astrophysics bootcamp," Forster said. "The beauty of astronomy is that regardless of how difficult it gets, it remains endlessly fascinating."

Dr Christopher Fluke, Swinburne astronomer and scientific partner on the project, thinks it has enormous potential. "There is a very long history of people telling stories about the night sky, which has motivated many new discoveries in astronomy. *Void Love* is a great way to continue that tradition."

Event details

What: Screening of *Void Love*'s pilot episode

When: Sunday 31 May 2009, 6.00pm to 7.30pm

Where: Head Quarters, 55 High St, Northcote, Melbourne, Victoria.

Further episodes will be broadcast online from August 2009. To receive email alerts when episodes become available, visit www.voidlove.tv.

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