

Centre for Creative Technologies

Open Studio: *Within Reach*

26th - 28th March 2026

Studio 3, O'Donoghue Centre, University of Galway.

Featuring work by PhD researchers Hua-Chun (Fionn) Fan, Jen Hesnan, Hermano Luz Rodrigues, Alaz Okudan, Rocío Romero Grau.

Curated by Kate McSharry



OLLSCOIL NA
GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY
OF GALWAY

Ionad do Theicneolaíochtaí
Cruthaitheacha
Centre for Creative
Technologies

Thursday 26th March

Open 12-4pm

Official Launch 1pm - All welcome.

3-4pm - Enter *Sonic Proxemics*, a playful interactive audio encounter shaped by proximity and movement. 10-minute sessions, max 4 participants. First come, first served.

Friday 27th March

Open 12-4pm

3-4pm - Enter *Sonic Proxemics*, a playful interactive audio encounter shaped by proximity and movement. 10-minute sessions, max 4 participants. First come, first served.

Saturday 28th March

Open 12-4pm

Roundtable 12pm-1.30pm - Moderated by Kate McSharry.

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Open Studio: *Within Reach*

In a world where technology is ever-present, touch elicits and grounds new affective experiences with the digital realm. *Within Reach* welcomes visitors to engage with the creative practices of current PhD researchers at the Centre for Creative Technologies, and trace what resonates between us through interactive, playful and critical means. This Open Studio will stage encounters where theory and practice establish a test-site, exploring varied approaches to emerging creative technologies.

The relational process is intrinsic to experience. Through active engagement with the research and work presented, we remain open to dialogue and are encouraged to ask how we can best engage with creative technologies and imagine future possibilities. If we reduce the horizon of our perspective, by way of hesitating to engage with technology, we limit the ways in which the world, knowledge, and experience can touch us. In paying attention to how our bodies and actions are entangled with technologies, we can lean into this pursuit to understand our resonating existence more consciously, creatively and critically.

These exchanges provide space to collectively define new frameworks, shaping the environment as it unfolds through drawing connective lines and recognising intention. Acknowledging this gesture towards transformation, the rhythms we generate through movement, and the politics of visibility, we can seek a tangible way to understand the materiality of technology. Minerals, earth, water, and bodies involved in extractive processes that technology requires, situate these infrastructures in the present. Through conversation and participation, we can recognise the deep connections between environment and technology, reminding us of our responsibility to interrogate how we engage with these threads of becoming.

By facilitating a space for interaction and reflection we can learn together, embracing fragments to map constellations and understand the impact of being connected. *Within Reach* invites us to see how fields of interest inform each other and question how creative technologies are encountered. Through this engagement an awareness of the evolving dynamics of human and nonhuman collaboration is established, illuminating how these interactions resonate with our lives.

Sonic Proxemics: The Hidden Symphony of Intimacy and Playful Politics

Hua-Chun (Fionn) Fan

The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped our sense of personal space, revealing how proximity reflects comfort, trust, and relationships. Building on Edward T. Hall's proxemics model, this project examines desire, loneliness, and emerging spatial relations, using immersive theatre to re-examine interpersonal boundaries in post-pandemic public life.

Through sound-responsive sensor wearables — Proximity Wings — the research explores how technology can mediate closeness and the anticipation of trust through shared sonic experience. Sound becomes not only an aesthetic layer, but a relational force — gently modulating intimacy, awareness, and social dynamics.

The study also considers how behaviour shifts when a non-human agent — a robot dog — enters the space, inviting reflection on how we feel, respond, and care.

Developed in Ireland, the Proximity Wings later travelled across borders. The films presented here capture moments of playful encounter, where musicians, architects, dancers, and theatre-makers transformed proximity into shared discovery.

 Every sound in these films originates from the Proximity Wings and is gently sculpted in post-production — flowing through overture, interlude, and finale.

 Curious to “hear your distance” from others? Join the Interactive Session from 3pm.

▪ Play in order:

1. Summer Resonance | Sonic Proxemics _The Hidden Symphony of Intimacy and Play

(2025. 4:12)

2. More-than-Human | Sonic Proxemics #ft. Shep (2025 Oct. 2:57)

3. Mountain Resonance | Baden•Austria | Wing no.1 (2025 Jul. 1:48)

4. Urban Echos I: Timeless | Tokyo•Japan | Wing no.4 (2025 Aug. 2:23)

5. Urban Echos II: Modern | Tokyo•Japan | Wing no.3 (2025 Aug. 2:17)

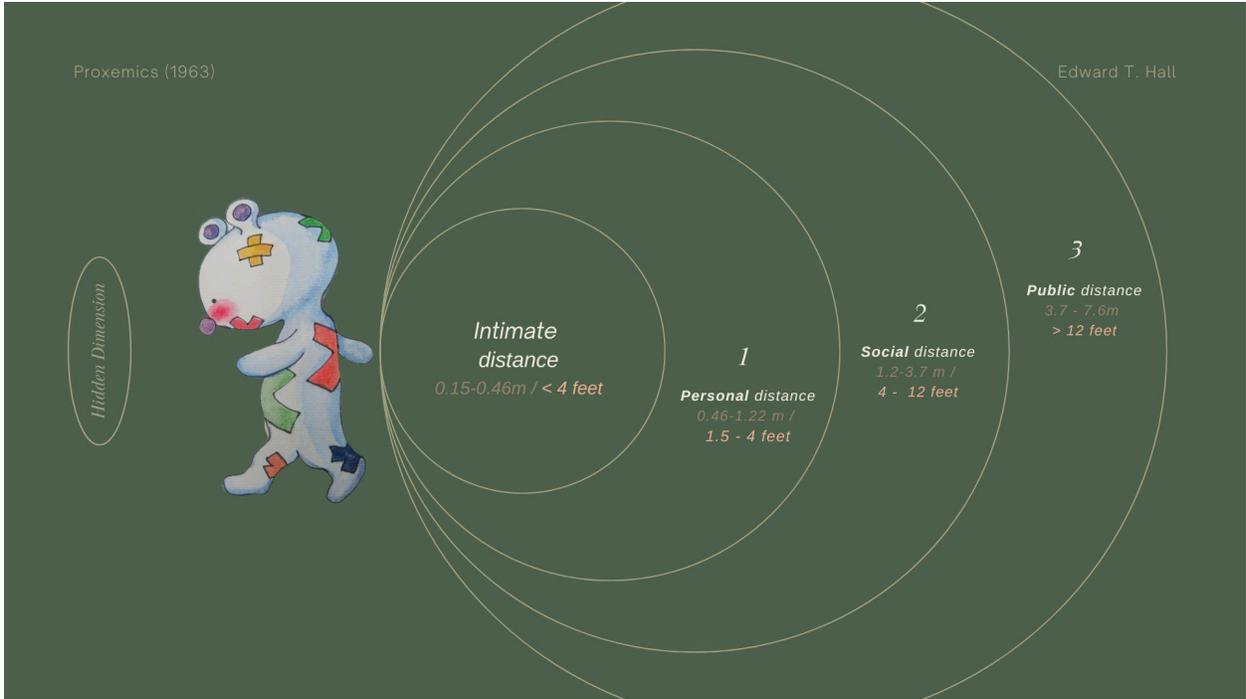


Image Courtesy of Hua-Chun (Fionn) Fan

I am not a Tech(y) Person. How might we sustain creative learning environments for children and young people to thrive with emerging technologies?

Jen invites you to play with technology and to develop discourse through peer-led creative engagement.

Jen Hesnan's doctoral research explores the provision of inquiry-based creative learning environments that support children and young people to engage in human-centred learning in order to play with emerging technologies for the development of real-world soft-skill outcomes.

Research suggests that there is growing concern among policymakers, parents, and educators regarding the well-being of children and young people in relation to consumer-based technologies. New innovative technological applications are emerging at an unprecedented pace. This acceleration has contributed to an increasingly visible gap between the realities of technological change and the capacity of education or youth sectors to uphold the rights of children and young people when engaging in new technologies, as articulated in the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 25 (GC25) in relation to the digital environment. The title, "I am not a Tech(y) Person," reflects the self-perception barriers commonly expressed by education providers across Irish non-formal and formal education sectors.

This six-year part-time research project at the Centre for Creative Technologies in partnership with the Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board aims to understand thematic discourse at all stakeholder levels. Supporting the future navigation narrative of digital transformation whilst maintaining a focus on creativity, youth participation, and the human rights of children. The research has a particular focus on access to creative technology learning environments for children and young people from marginalised, disadvantaged backgrounds. Currently at the stage of a focused, systematic, thematic review of European and Irish Policy. Examining systematic enablers and barriers of thematic discourse across key themes of creativity and digital transformation in the context of youth participation within a European and Irish context. Subsequent phases of research will see the development of creative living lab environments. Inviting stakeholders to play with purpose, generating discourse that supports experimentation within the context of technology-enhanced learning, through creativity, play, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.



Image Courtesy of Jen Hesnan

UNTITLED (DIEL PHOTO STUDIES - BACKYARD)

HERMANO LUZ

This work is a study on embedding a dynamic day–night cycle in entourage¹ visualization. The premise is that a viewer can manipulate the specific time-of-day lighting within an otherwise static photograph. In other words, while the physical objects depicted remain fixed, the lighting conditions shift. Although such interactivity in atmospheric simulation is readily available and widely utilised in 3D rendering engines, this work experiments with that type of temporal manipulation to photograph imagery.

“Backyard” presents a Hopper-esque photograph of a person in a Galway home backyard waiting for clothes to dry. The viewer engages with a physical dial (rotary encoder) to gradually change the lighting conditions of the image in real time, adjusting the perceived time of day.

¹ Entourage denotes the contextual figures and elements (such as people, trees, and street furniture) that accompany representations of the built environment.



Image Courtesy of Hermano Luz

Failing Small

Alaz Okudan in collaboration with *James McDermott*

Large-scale AI operations require large-scale datasets. Datasets containing billions of items cannot be sourced at a human scale. The web is scraped to collect as much information as possible to train models that can learn from the world and attempt to replicate it. This process extracts information without consent while capturing unwanted data alongside the data that is sought after. Dirty data that contaminates favourable information becomes the culprit behind hallucinating, biased, and struggling AI models. On the other hand, what is deemed as dirty may contain marginal, repressed, and unwelcome voices.

Failing Small places what can be considered as "dirty" and undesirable data at the centre of a non-commercial generative AI model that does not claim to create truthful representations of the world and therefore has no interest in being large-scale. We trained a VAE (Variational Autoencoder) on a small dataset consisting of darkroom test strips, which are small pieces of photographic paper used in the darkroom to determine the correct exposure time before committing to a larger print. Test strips are inherently failed, imperfect fragments with fluctuating exposure and contrast values that represent unintelligible sections of wider compositions. They exist as deliberate and necessary failures that guide the path toward the successful print. Once the correct exposure is determined, the test strip is discarded, having served its purpose. Instead of discarding them, we wanted to give them a further purpose.

Our AI model, being trained on failed images, generates low-quality images that reflect but do not replicate the ambiguous nature of its training data. In contrast with large-scale operations that depend on systematically refined images obtained through questionable means, our model—built upon deliberately imperfect images, sourced at human scale and limited in scope—offers an alternative to prevailing data collection methods that exploit human labour and employ covert data harvesting techniques.

This work continues to evolve as the training dataset slowly expands with new images from the darkroom.



Image Courtesy of Alaz Okudan

Visualization and musification of brain activity

Rocío Romero Grau – Open Studio 2026, Centre for Creative Technologies.

Grau's project interrogates the growing presence of consumer neurotechnologies in everyday life by repurposing domestic EEG headbands to question how technologies shape ideas of attention, cognition, and self-optimization. Developed through an iterative artistic research process, the work examines the aesthetics, technical possibilities, and cultural narratives surrounding contemporary neurofeedback devices.

Neurofeedback operates here as both research method and artistic medium. By measuring brain activity through electroencephalography (EEG) and translating it into real-time audiovisual feedback, it makes otherwise invisible mental processes perceptible, inviting participants to sense, question, and gently modulate their mental states.

At the core of the project lies a phenomenological approach to attention that resists its reduction to quantitative metrics. Attention is explored as a lived and embodied process emerging through perception, imagination, and creative agency.

Using generative computational techniques, brain activity is transformed into live visuals and music. Visitors are invited to visualize and musify their own brain activity in real time, playfully exploring how much control we truly have over our "mental gestures," and experiencing data not simply as information, but as a shared, creative encounter between self, others, and the surrounding world.



Image Courtesy of Rocío Romero Grau