



## PRESS RELEASE

# WHAT IF... Science Gallery exhibition to explore the hopes and fears of emerging technologies

WHAT IF... we could farm medical products on our bodies? WHAT IF...meat could be grown in laboratories without harming animals? WHAT IF... we lived in a society where our every thought was public? These are just some of the questions asked in the upcoming exhibition at Science Gallery, which probes the space between reality and the impossible and where designers meet scientists to explore the future.

WHAT IF... has been curated by leading London based design duo Anthony Dunne (Head of the Department of Design Interactions, Royal College of Art, London) and Fiona Raby and features a range of works by designers who have explored everything from using animals as life support machines, through to what happens in a society where machines can read your every emotion.

On show in the gallery will be a diverse range of work including *The Race* by Michael Burton which looks at how people and their non-human cells can coexist and scrutinizes our inadvertent creation of superbugs like mRSA through the misuse of antibiotics and James King's *Dressing the Meat of Tomorrow* looks at recent advances in tissue engineering which enable us to grow meat without the expense, cruelty and traditions of rearing the whole animal.

Speaking about WHAT IF... Science Gallery director Michael John Gorman said "WHAT IF... is a provocative exhibition as it really challenges you to think about both the huge potential and sometime frightening possibilities of technology and science. WHAT IF... encapsulates the vision of Science Gallery by showing what happens when designers engage with emerging trends in technology."

Explaining the background to the WHAT IF... exhibition curator Fiona Raby said, "Usually when we discuss big issues we do so as citizens, yet it is as consumers that we help reality take shape. It is only when products are bought that they enter everyday life and have an effect. The act of buying determines the future. By presenting people with hypothetical products, services and systems from alternative futures people engage with them as citizen/consumers."

Co-curator Professor Anthony Dunne, an Irish born designer and the head of the Department of Design Interactions at the Royal College of Art, London, said "There are no solutions here, or even answers, just lots of questions, thoughts, ideas and possibilities, all expressed through the language of design. They probe our beliefs and values, challenge our assumptions, and encourage us to imagine how what we call 'reality' could be different. They help us see that the way things are now is just one possibility, and not necessarily the best one."



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WHAT IF...opens in Science Gallery, Pearse Street, on **October 8th and runs until December 13th**. It is open Tuesday-Friday 12:00-20:00 and Saturday-Sunday 12:00-18:00. Admission is free but with a suggested donation of €5.

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS OR HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES FROM THE WHAT IF... EXHIBITION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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## **ABOUT SCIENCE GALLERY**

Science Gallery is a world first - a new type of venue where science and art collides. Since opening in early 2008 over **250,000 people** have visited Science Gallery. Science Gallery aims to involve, ignite and transform curious minds through science - creating dynamic intersections where science and art collide. Science Gallery activities include exhibitions on themes ranging from light to the science of fashion, public experiments, challenges, festivals, debates and workshops. Science Gallery is an initiative of Trinity College Dublin located in a cutting edge building on Pearse Street, Dublin. To find out more check out [www.sciencegallery.com](http://www.sciencegallery.com)

## **About the Department of Design Interactions, Royal College of Art, London:**

The majority of the artists and designers contributing to the WHAT IF... exhibition are connected to the Department of Design Interactions, Royal College of Art, London. The Department of Design Interactions is not simply concerned with acquiring or refining a specific set of skills. Essentially, the Department is interested in the social, cultural and ethical consequences of emerging technologies, and this means asking probing questions through design. To this end, Dunne and his team encourages students to consider the implications, as well as the applications, of new technologies, and thus to seek fresh approaches to interaction design – approaches that are meaningful and relevant today. The emphasis is now on designing interactions of all kinds – not just between people and digital technologies, or even other emerging technologies, but also between people and possible futures, and between design and other fields of art and science. In short, Design Interactions is a fertile way of thinking about the life around us, within us, and in the future beyond us. Website: [www.rca.ac.uk](http://www.rca.ac.uk)