

# Future

# Sessions

For immediate release

## **FutureEverything launches FUTURE SESSIONS: Trust in invisible agents – a rich and diverse programme of ideas, art, talks and workshops exposing the unseen currents of the Internet of Things**

**Manchester, Wednesday 21 (Whitworth Gallery) to Thursday 22 (The Bright Building) March 2018**  
**[futuresessions.org](http://futuresessions.org)**

As computing dissolves into the everyday, we find ourselves surrounded by millions of connected, intelligent objects. Scattered throughout the city, a bin, lamppost or coffee cup can be a computing device, a sensor or actuator. Invisible agents monitor and influence our lives, largely unexamined and unchecked. **Future Sessions: *Trust in invisible agents*** is a unique programme of thinking and art created by FutureEverything that wants to understand who and what influence these invisible agents have on our daily lives.

Future Sessions is a new type of event for FutureEverything. An alternative to the prestigious city-wide ‘festival as laboratory’, Future Sessions has been designed as a one-day, affordable event, with carefully curated activities to engage the audience in a deeper experience in the subject matter. With art, ideas and invention casting an eye to the future asking us to think about four key themes connected to the invisibility of the Internet of Things (IoT); **visibility, transparency, responsibility and trust**. Future Sessions features some of the most eminent practitioners and thinkers from the arenas of design, urbanism, art and academia, as well as a packed programme of workshops and fireside chats. Our thinkers, creatives and artists include;

**Alexandra Deschamps-Sonsino // Arthur van der Wees // Ben Cerveny // Usman Haque // Natalie Kane // Peter Evans // Matthew Edgson // Helen Knowles // Ismail Ertürk // Alison Powell // Drew Hemment // Mara Balestrini // Lucas Gutierrez // Seth Scott and Guillaume Dujat // Anne Beswick // Joe Beedles // Sean Clarke // Tobias Revell // John Davies**

With the emergence of AI and embedded intelligence digital urban infrastructures are becoming increasingly intelligent but also invisible, and this world of invisible systems is far from a harmonic utopia; rather the Internet of Things and the Smart City is a complex landscape of actors, riddled with crisis in visibility, responsibility and agency.

It is not easy to know what devices are gathering what, where is it coming from, and how and by whom can be put to use, and when systems fail, it is not clear who is accountable. Opaque algorithms take decisions affecting users without always revealing the basis for those decisions. And multiple incidents have also been produced by “the secret lives of systems”, where intelligent objects develop activities that go beyond their declared functions and goals. The drive for digitally infused urban environments has too often focused on top-down systems design, leaving

communities disconnected from the ownership of the technologies they use, and the data they create.

Drew Hemment, founder FutureEverything comments: “Complex systems pose profound questions on the way we want to live and be governed. New technologies implemented in the city change and shape the interactions and lives of residents and people who work and play there. With “Trust in Invisible Agents” we want to explore how to make invisibility compatible with transparency, accountability and responsibility, essential values that will need to be foregrounded in the years to come.”

Future Sessions will also be showcasing art commissions and in-conversations with **FAULT LINES** artists **Ling Tan**, **Naho Matsuda** and **Kasia Molga**, which each respond to the development of smart cities and the Internet Of Things. Ling, is one of seven artists selected as part of FutureEverything’s talent development and commissioning scheme **FAULT LINES**, and she has been collaborating with the young people of Manchester, to enable them to express their relationship with the city via big body gestures expressed wearing technology worn on the body. Ling’s art commission, **SUPERGESTURES**, will premiere at the Future Sessions launch party.

Naho Matsuda, whose piece, *every thing every time*, was the first **FAULT LINES** commission to launch last year, is going to have her ‘in-conversation’ whilst performing reflexology. Naho makes the connection between reflexology and IoT, she says; “reflexology is part of traditional Chinese medicine in which areas of the hands, feet and head are understood to be connected to specific areas of the body. Organs, bones and muscles can be relieved of pain, tensions and can be energised through massaging the sensory points. I want to explore the holistic approach of Chinese medicine and the tradition of reflexology massage salons in Taipei and create a comparison, connection and analogy to the evolution of the Internet of Things. My aim is to engage and challenge the audience with concepts of the IoT through locating it in the context of holistic Chinese medicine. This will be an embodied experience where you get your feet massaged whilst listening to a lecture on the IoT.”

Taking place at the **Bright Building, Manchester Science Park**’s brand new state-of-the-art workplace, **Future Sessions** is the culmination of **Every Thing is Connected**, a three-day ‘conference-as-lab’, which **FutureEverything** is delivering on behalf of **Manchester City Council**.

The day will be preceded by a **launch party** in the recently opened Great Hall at the Whitworth Art Gallery - an evening of audiovisual performances featuring local and international artists curated by **Sean Clarke** of **Test Card** – the main in-house project at [Texture](#), a creative event space in the Northern Quarter.

Sean says; “Working with custom made technological interfaces and found objects as instruments, **Seth Scott and Guillaume Dujat** will open up the evening with a special performance that embodies a physicality with electronic music, so impressive you won’t be able to take your eyes off them.”

Next up, **Chromatouch & Coral** will showcase new research in collaboration with Gravitational Wave researchers at University of Birmingham, with a synth connected a Michelson interferometer; not sonifying data, but using direct control voltage information to make music.

Chromatouch [Leon Trimble] is a digital artist who works in audio visual performance, specialising in immersive video and audio synthesis. Coral Manton is an interdisciplinary artist, technologist and researcher at I-Dat.Org For this piece she has visualised a ripple in spacetime/gravitywave which she will modulate live in Touchdesigner to complete the immersive audio visual performance.

From a table full of instruments to the depths of computer software, for the next act invited along one of the cities most exciting audiovisual performers **Joe Beedles**. Recently returning from his China residency, Joe has regularly taken part in Test Cards over the last few years, as well as performing at the likes of Algorave and Splice. Exploring ideas surrounding club music abstraction and the

threshold between the real and the simulated. Joe's current focus is in generative systems which explore human/computer improvisation through custom-built Max MSP patches.

Joining these three fantastic local acts, we are extremely excited to be welcoming Argentinean digital artist and industrial designer **Lucas Gutierrez**. Recently performing at festivals such as **MUTEK** and **Sonar+D**, Lucas performance focuses on blending his own audio compositions with 3D content that he manipulates live through real time software.

The **Test Card** project has always put an emphasis on supporting our artists with the best lighting and sound production available, throughout the night the sound will be provided by a special Nova system and a state of the art projection system, there might even be a few extra guests. Future Sessions is supported by Arts Council England, Innovate UK, Manchester City Council and Manchester Science Partnerships

[www.futuresessions.org](http://www.futuresessions.org)

**ENDS**

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[IMAGES](#)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **FutureEverything**

FutureEverything are cultural facilitators at the intersection of art, design, science and digital. Established in Manchester in 1995, FutureEverything pushes creative boundaries and stimulates new ways of thinking, working across a diverse range of sectors, disciplines and audiences. It is characterised by thought leadership, innovation, creativity and desire to make an impact on the world. Digital transformation and emerging technology are core to this mission.

At the heart of FutureEverything's new 4-year vision is a bold idea that many more citizens should be able to access and contribute meaningfully to participatory digital arts and culture. Our collective responsibility to reach as wide an audience as possible in the fractured, unequal society of Britain in 2018 has never been more pressing. The arts are a lens to help people view, reflect, understand and act. Delivering deep and meaningful engagement through art experiences and events, enriching people's lives and enabling communities to deepen their knowledge on art, society and technology, is central to this.

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### **The launch party artists**

#### **Lucas Gutierrez**

Lucas Gutierrez is an Argentinean digital artist and industrial designer based in Berlin. He is currently working on several video art projects, lectures, workshops and real-time audiovisual performances

that are related to the new paradigms of Digital Culture. His most recent talks and performances were in Sonar+D and MUTEK (Argentina/Mexico), exhibitions at XS Warsaw (Poland) Aperto Raum and CTM / Transmediale Vorspiel (Berlin, Germany). [Lucas Gutierrez — Live AV from Lucas Gutierrez on Vimeo.](#)

### **Joe Beedles**

Joe Beedles is an audiovisual artist that explores ideas surrounding club music abstraction and the threshold between the real and the simulated. Joe's current focus is in generative systems for live performance providing audiences with compelling, highly-detailed compositions, emphasising magnified yet obscured soundscapes. Stroboscopic lights and projected audio-reactive geometry and video footage of the surrounding environment is abstracted in reaction to the audio component in a pseudo-synesthetic fashion.

### **Chromatouch & Coral**

Leon Trimble is a digital artist who works in audio visual performance. He specialises in immersive video and audio synthesis. He has built a 360 degree projection dome with surround speaker array and runs it as a venue at English summer festivals with an exciting programme of music and visual artists.

Leon is working with the Gravitational Wave researchers at University of Birmingham (UoB) Astrophysics and has built a synth to connect to a Michelson interferometer, not sonifying data, but using direct control voltage information to make music.

Coral Manton is an interdisciplinary artist, technologist and researcher at i-dat.org For this piece she has visualised a ripple in spacetime/gravitywave which she will modulate live in Touchdesigner to complete the immersive audio visual performance."

### **Spektra**

A collaborative project from leading local artists Nicole Gordon and Jon Marks. Using audio-reactive processes and generative algorithmic techniques, they present an exploration into darkness and light and will be performing live at the event alongside Seth Scott + Guillaume Dujat.

Nicole Gordon is a Mixed Media & Light Artist based in Manchester, UK. Having graduated from the Manchester School of Art, Nicole has found audience working with the medium of light to create outstanding installation pieces. She is interested in creating installations focusing on the viewer's perception of light and space. Nicole attempts to push boundaries by combining light, reflection, and technology to transform the way we perceive depth within a space.

Nicole was one of the curators of the successful audio-visual night in Manchester, Hold Tight. She has also worked independently with the likes of Meat Free & High Hoops over the past few years, and collaboratively as SPEKTRA for Hidden, Mayday, Drøne, and most recently Robert Henke's Monolake Surround Performance at Test Cards 2nd Birthday.

Jon Marks has been in the industry since 2012 creating innovative visuals and stage design concepts for music venues and art installations across the UK. With a passion for engineering, Jon's strengths lie within the realm of 3D modelling software and has also worked together with leading mapping software MadMapper. His recent focus in coding provides a mixture of analogue and digital techniques to control and transform different light forms.

Formally under the name Lucem Visuals, Jon has worked within the Dub Scene for the likes of Outlook, Sub Faction & Pangaea Festival. After moving to Manchester in 2016, Jon began working with Void Sound Systems and then with Hidden Nightclub where Jon and Nicole initially met and SPEKTRA was formed.

### **Seth Scott + Guillaume Dujat**

Seth Scott is a sound designer and composer whose work explores relationships between sound and space. With particular focus on urban and architectural spaces, he engages a variety of media, including interactive and locative technologies, to uncover, fix, test, and reconfigure the aural environment. Guillaume Dujat is a sound artist and electroacoustic composer whose interests include field recording, sound design and multichannel audio. A French national raised in Beijing, Guillaume is currently working towards a PhD in Composition at the University of Manchester. Individually the pair have produced work for the Barbican Centre, The Whitworth Collection, Bloomberg Space, Art Night, and South London Gallery. They met on an artistic residency in the summer of 2016, and have developed their collaborative practice since.

### **The FAULT LINES artists**

#### **Ling Tan**

Ling Tan is a designer, maker and coder interested in how people interact with the built environment and wearable technology. Trained as an architect, she enjoys building physical machines and prototypes ranging from urban scale to wearable scale to explore different modes of interaction between people and their surrounding spaces. Her work falls somewhere within the genre of wearable technology, Internet of Things(IoT) and citizen participation.

She is currently working at [Umbrellium](#) in London to understand social wearables through community participation where she leads and produces projects such as [WearON](#), an open source prototyping platform for wearables and [WearAQ](#), a series of wearable tools for exploring air quality issues through people's subjective perception. She participated as artist resident in various festivals such as Fak'ugesi African Digital Innovation Festival 2015 where she engaged with residents of Johannesburg to map out their perception of safety through using wearables as an expressive and social interface. Through the work she explores the complex issues surrounding the safety of the city, touching on demographics, race, gender and the subjective experience of the city through people. As an artist, she is currently supported by [FutureEverything](#)'s FAULT LINES programme and [Barbican](#) and [The Trampery](#)'s alt.barbican programme. She has worked with museums such as Wits Art Museum, South Africa and Watermans Art Centre, UK. Her works have been exhibited in shows such as Utopian Bodies: Fashion Looks Forward (2015) and featured in magazines and websites across the globe such as Dezeen, Wired and Fast Company.

#### **Helen Knowles**

Helen Knowles has a BA Hons from Glasgow School of Art and MFA Fine Art from Goldsmiths University. She lectures widely around the UK and abroad. Recent shows include; Mothership, Sawmills Gallery, London, Gender Generation, Royal College of Art, Between the Lines, GRAD,London, UnderConstruction,Moscow (2016), Collaborate, Oriel Sycarth, (2015), PrivateView:PublicBirth, GV Art, London (2013), Goldsmiths Women's Library (2013), Life Is Beautiful, Galerie Deadfly, Berlin (2012); Digital Romantics, Dean Clough Gallery (2012) and Walls are Talking,Whitworth Art Gallery (2010). Her work is held in private and public collections including The Whitworth Art Gallery, Gallery Oldham, Tate Library and Archive, The National Art Library, Joan Flasch Artist Book Collection, Museum of Motherhood, NY, Birth Rites Collection and MMU Special Collection. Residencies include; Jodrell Bank Science Centre and Arboretum (1999-2001) and Gatley Primary School, Creative Partnerships (2010). In 2013, she was artist-in-residence at the Santa Fe Arts Institute in New Mexico, where she spent time with Native women and midwives, in and around the Pueblos. A recipient of awards from Arts Council England and The Amateurs Trust, in 2012 she won the Neo Art Prize, Great Art Prize for two works from the Youtube Portraits Series. Currently Knowles is touring her new video work The Trial of Superdebthunterbot to law schools, film festivals and institutions nationally and internationally. In January 2017, she will be exhibiting The Trial of Superdebthunterbot at the Zubludowicz Collection. She is the curator of the Birth Rites Collection.

### **Kasia Molga**

Kasia is a Design Fusionist, Artist and Creative Technologist, working on the intersection of art / science / engineering using imagination as unifying vehicle. She examines our - human - altering perception of "nature" in this constantly growing and increasingly technologically mediated urban environments. She promotes the concept of "collaboration with nature", particularly being interested in living species and entities - such as a plant, bacteria, soil or air - as equal co-designers of our future cities. Through her projects she seeks best ways of connecting users/viewers on intimate and emotional level to these complex issues.

Kasia has exhibited internationally, among others: Ars Electronica 2012 (Linz, Austria), TRANSNATURAL (NL), Meta.Morf (NO), V&A (UK), ISEA (Istanbul, Turkey), Translife Media Arts Triennial (Beijing, China), MIS (Sao Paulo, BR), Dutch Design Week (NL), MOMA (NY); and received many international awards, grants and accolades such as Ars Electronica Honorary Mention, Wellcome Trust, Network for Innovation in Culture and Creative in Europe Award, Creative Industries NL, Creative Works London. Her work attracted attention of international press and has been featured in The Guardian, BBC, The Washington Post, The Huffington Post, Metro International to mention a few. Kasia is a co-founder and principal invigorator of World Wilder Lab, previously being one of the core members of Protei. She lectures and presents regularly and holds MA in Interdisciplinary Design Studies from UAL. Additionally Kasia is a licensed Scuba Diver, avid traveller, aerial photographer and spent her childhood sailing on the merchant navy vessels.

### **Naho Matsuda**

Naho Matsuda graduated from the MA Interaction Design at Goldsmiths in 2016. Her own practice investigates the social and cultural issues found within contemporary technological practice through a range of design outputs, processes and methodologies. With a particular interest in social engagement and interactive experiences, her transdisciplinary approach uses a diversity of media including performance, objects, installation, print and writing.

### **Peter Evans**

Peter Evans is a multi-disciplinary artist and can best be described as a specialist in non-specialism, working across art forms in his practice and as a technician highly regarded as someone who finds solutions to problems, rather than ways of describing them differently. Well travelled with both his own work and as an installer, he has done residencies and exhibitions in many countries including China, Japan, Finland and the USA. He studied Visual Performance at Dartington College of Arts and acquired an MRes in Digital Media at Newcastle. Articulate and capable he is an insightful and natural researcher which serves both aspects of his work well. This perseverance most likely comes from a commitment to skateboarding since 1988. He is self-reflexive and understands that knowing when you are wrong is a greater opportunity for learning than when you are right. He has a desire for dialogue and engages deeply with any subject matter presented to him. Occasionally he finds time to make music manipulating an array of electronics, preferring hardware to software, croissants to coffee and acronyms to anagrams.

### **Chomko & Rosier**

Chomko & Rosier is an art and design studio creating interactive experiences, installations, products and infrastructures for the public realm. The London-based studio was founded in 2014 by Matthew Rosier and Jonathan Chomko, with backgrounds in architecture and interaction design respectively. The studio's focus on the experience of a place is an expression of this collaboration. The studio's work has been installed nationally and internationally, and recognised as a Design of the Year by the London Design Museum. Their past clients include the UK Space Agency, Historic Royal Palaces, British Council, New Scientist, Illuminating York, Watershed and Media Ambition Tokyo.

### **The Future Sessions thinkers**

### **Usman Haque**

Usman is founding partner of Umbrellium (formerly [Haque Design + Research](#)) and founder of Internet of Things data infrastructure and community platform Pachube.com, (acquired by LogMeIn Inc in 2011, where he launched the Urban Projects Division). Trained as an architect, he has created responsive environments, interactive installations, digital interfaces and dozens of mass-participation initiatives in cities throughout the world. He has taught in the Interactive Architecture Workshop at the Bartlett School of Architecture, London and in 2008 received the Design of the Year Award (interactive) from the Design Museum. Twitter: [@uah](#).

### **Ben Cerveny**

Ben is co-founder and President of Bloom Studios. He has worked for over 20 years on user interaction and experience design, concept prototyping, and strategy in the context of media applications, operating systems, web services, ubiquitous computing, and massively multiplayer games. Most recently, he was an advisor and strategist at Stamen Design, a leading visualization design studio. Previously, he was the founder of the Experience Design Lab at frogdesign, an international product design company, and a lead game designer and platform development strategist at Ludicorp, makers of Flickr. He is also the founder of the Amsterdam-based research foundation VURB, which investigates digital urbanism, and is constantly engaged in the investigation of innovative ways to improve the flow and play of a user's relationship with task or information.

### **Mara Balestrini (ES)**

Mara is a Human Computer Interaction (HCI) researcher and a technology strategist. She is the CEO of [Ideas for Change](#), a think tank and consultancy firm advising cities, businesses and institutions on impact innovation. She is also a Senior Research Fellow at the [Fab Lab Barcelona](#) where she coordinates [Making Sense](#), a European project that seeks to empower citizens through personal digital manufacturing applied to the design of environmental sensors; and co-founder of [SalusCoop](#), the first Spanish cooperative for citizens' health data. Mara co-directs the [Master in Design for Emergent Futures](#) (MDEF) at the [Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia](#) (IAAC).

Mara earned a PhD in Computer Science from the [Intel Collaborative Research Institute on Sustainable Connected Cities](#) (ICRI-Cities) at University College London (UCL). She also holds a BA in Audiovisual Communications and a [MSc in Cognitive Systems and Interactive Media](#). She is Senior Faculty at the [IAAC](#) and a visiting lecturer at the [the Royal College of Art](#) (RCA).

### **John Davies (UK)**

John Davies is Chief Researcher in BT's Future Business Technology Research Practice. His interests include the application of semantic, Internet of Things and data analytics technologies to smart cities, business intelligence and information integration. He leads BT contribution to the HyperCat IoT interoperability project and is Project Director of the Stride smart transport collaborative project.

He has previously coordinated a number of European collaborative research projects. Currently chairman of the Web Intelligence, Mining and Semantics (WIMS-15) conference, he is a Fellow of the British Computer Society and a chartered engineer and has published many books and papers in his areas of expertise.

### **Tobias Revell**

Tobias Revell was born in a Hampshire town built around a system of roundabouts in late 1986. His second ever memory is gazing at a tropical fish tank in the bar of a Welsh bed and breakfast while the room crowded with adults watching the fall of the Berlin Wall on the one small television available. His first memory involves filling the doors of a Porsche with sand. He holds a BA Hons. (1st) in [Design for Interaction and Moving Image](#) from the London College of Communication and an MA in Design Interactions at the Royal College of Art from which he graduated in July 2012.

As well as being an internationally exhibiting artist, he's Course Leader of [MA Interaction Design](#)

[Communication](#) at the London College of Communication and Senior Lecturer in Critical and Digital Design for [Information and Interface Design](#) and [Interaction Design Arts](#) and a founding member of research consultancy [Strange Telemetry](#). He is one half of [Haunted Machines](#), a research and curatorial project curating [Impakt](#) festival 2017 in Utrecht, NL. He is undertaking a PhD in the [Design Department](#) at Goldsmiths, University of London.

### **Alexandra Deschamps Sonsino (UK)**

Alexandra Deschamps-Sonsino is an interaction designer, product designer, entrepreneur and public speaker based in London. She was named 1st in a list of 100 Internet of Things Influencers (Postscapes, 2016), 2nd in Top 100 Internet of Things Thought Leaders (Onalytica, 2014) and in the Top 100 Influential Tech Women on Twitter (Business Insider, 2014). Her work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the London Design Museum, the Dublin Science Gallery, the Vienna Technical Museum and other galleries around the world. She was part of the Mozilla Leadership Network Advisory Group, is on the advisory board of the [Virt-EU](#) project. She is also an advisor to many internet of things startups.

### **Matthew Edgson - Superflux (UK)**

Matthew is a designer and filmmaker. He holds a BA in Design from Goldsmiths University of London and recently spent time on the same course as a visiting tutor. As a designer at Superflux, he is working on the studio's research and consulting projects. Matt recently exhibited a long gestating project 'Building The Cinematic' at the London Festival of Architecture 2017. Matthew's practice interrogates modes of visual communication; a particular fascination of his lies in the construction and production of images and how these are subsequently consumed. Because of this, he mainly see the world through a camera lens (preferably a Nikon 35mm f/1.4).

### **Drew Hemment (UK)**

Drew is an artist, curator and academic researcher. He is Founder and Creative Director of FutureEverything, and a Dundee Fellow, Reader at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee.

Over 20 years, his work in digital culture and innovation has been covered by New York Times, BBC and NBC and recognised by awards from the arts, technology and business sectors, including Lever Prize 2010 (Winner) and Prix Ars Electronica 2008 (Honorary Mention). Projects include the emoto data visualisation of the London 2012 Olympics and Open Data Cities / DataGM, the Greater Manchester Datastore.

Drew is a member of the Manchester Innovation Group and the Editorial Board of the Leonardo journal of art, science and technology. In 1999, awarded a PhD at Lancaster University, in 2009 elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts (UK), and in 2010 an Eyebeam resident (USA).

