It's all about you
At the centre of George Khut’s art is your body. Not an idea, a representation or a theory of a body, but your lived, sentient body. His artworks are all about you.

Khut specialises in audiovisual installations that create possibilities for sensory immersion. His most recent artworks incorporating biofeedback technologies—Drawing Breath (with John Tonkin) and Cardiomorphologies—use the participating audience’s physiological data to animate the works’ sonic and visual elements. Drawing Breath translates the participant’s breathing into an oscillating soundscape.
and a delicate animation of thread-like particles that explode and converge with each breath cycle. Cardiomorphologies focuses on the heart and breath rate of the participant, reflecting them in a series of chromatic patterns and shifting sounds.

To take part in these installations is to enter into a matrix of dialogues: between you and the computer, between you and the artist, and ultimately, and most potently, between you and yourself. Despite the complexity of this matrix the experience is one of absorbing clarity. Khut uses a highly refined audiovisual style, which serves to focus the participants' attention on the subtleties of the physiological changes that drive the artwork. The result is a synaesthetic augmentation of the body in which the breath and the heartbeat can be simultaneously seen, heard and felt.

This feedback loop encourages participants to experiment with their breathing and move towards an awareness of the interconnection between their physical and psychological states. For Khut biofeedback technologies are tools for interpreting our ‘bodymind’, which inhabits and knows the world through physical presence, perception and action. His intention is to create artworks through which participants can experience their embodied subjectivity and learn to consciously influence aspects of the self that may otherwise be thought to lie beyond our control.

In this, Khut’s practice is clearly aligned with the field of Somaesthetics described by Richard Shusterman, which asserts the role of the body in the creation and appreciation of "body art" which embodies and reflects the artist’s and the viewer’s body and mind. The experience is one of absorbing clarity, focusing the participants’ attention on the subtleties of the physiological changes that drive the artwork. The result is a synaesthetic augmentation of the body, in which the breath and the heartbeat can be simultaneously seen, heard and felt.

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Drawing Breath (Triptych), created for Strange Attractors, also offers a meeting point for people at the exhibition. Influenced by the work of audience theorist Beryl Graham that posits dialogue between people as a powerful aspect of contemporary interactive work, Khut has created a piece that brings participants into a body-mediated conversation. Three participants at a time can interact with the artwork, creating new layers of sonic and visual complexity as their breathing rates converge. The work draws participants together through shared breath and collaborative attempts to sculpt their audiovisual environment. In Drawing Breath Khut is experimenting with the social aspects of the bodymind phenomenon in art—how one body can communicate with and be influenced by another.

Khut’s biofeedback work is difficult to categorise. At recent exhibitions of his work, particularly outside the art gallery context, audiences have asked ‘Is this art?, ‘Is this a scientific experiment?, ‘Is this psychology?, ‘Is this a medical treatment?’. Interestingly this confusion does not seem to diminish the audience’s desire or ability to engage with the experience. In fact it appears to free some participants up to engage with the work in a


[2]在最近为“混乱与艺术”提供的讲座中，伊丽莎白·格雷厄姆指出感觉、激情和“混乱原则”是美学体验的核心，艺术作为一种身体艺术。

way that they would not be able to if it was clearly defined as 'art'.

One way to understand Khut's practice is as a series of correspondences between different cultural and intellectual traditions. He has been influenced by Eastern philosophies of embodiment and related practices of meditation and martial arts, though he rejects their tendency to fit the person to a mould. He has also been strongly influenced by Western somatic practices such as Feldenkrais. He is drawn to science as a system of enquiry that questions assumptions and leads to new understandings, but he works against the idea of the objectified body produced by scientific discourse. His art is a meeting point of different ways of thinking about the body in the world.

Lizzie Muller
Sydney/February 2006

Lizzie Muller is a Sydney based curator, writer and researcher in the field of art and technology. She has collaborated with George Khut in the development and exhibition of the biofeedback installation *Cardioformologies*.

2. In recent public lectures on 'Chaos, Territory and Art,' Elizabeth Grosz has placed sensation, affect and the 'pleasure principle' at the heart of aesthetic experience, describing art as an 'intensification of the body.'

Opposite page: Drawing Breath v.2, biofeedback installation, 2004
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