

SCIENCE

GALLERY

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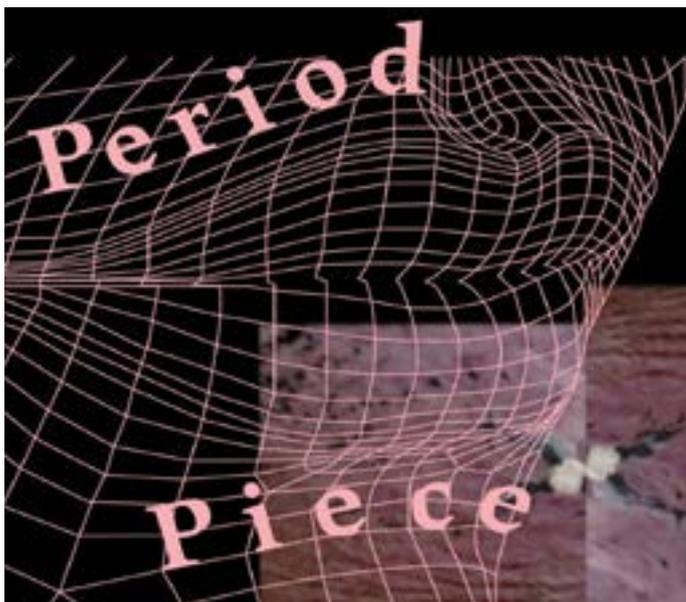
GALLERY

STORIES

RESEARCH

PERIOD PIECE: BREAKING STIGMATIZED FEMALE ISSUES THROUGH SCIENCE AND ART

Period Piece seeks to provoke critical dialogue about shifts in contraceptive technologies and constructions of the 'natural' around women's bodies from the rise of the pill to the emergence of period tracking apps. Through an audio-visual installation juxtaposing a biometrically-derived choral composition with holograms and film footage, artist Dr. Alana Harris invites visitors to listen and view the inside biorhythms often hidden by secrecy and taboo.



Graphic from Period Piece

WHO?

- ▶ Dr. Alana Harris, History Lecturer at King's College London
- ▶ Science Gallery London
- ▶ Ion Marmarinos, Classical composer

WHAT?

Dr Alana Harris is a Lecturer in Modern British History at King's College London. Her research interests broadly span issues related to British identity in the nineteenth and twentieth century, encompassing gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality and religiosity.

Stemming from her own experience and interest in the history of sexuality and religion, Alana created the artwork Period Piece through collaborative conversations between herself, classical composer Ion Marmarinos and contemporary artist and designer Stephanie Bickford-Smith. The piece itself digitises four women's menstrual cycles, collating data of their fluctuating basal body temperature throughout their cycles and translates them into an musical and audiovisual arrangement. In this way, Period Piece allows the viewer to explore the narrative of the cyclic rhythms of the female body - bringing to light our true understanding of them, and the disparities that exist among each woman's body.

Period Piece was originally showcased as part of Science Gallery London's BLOOD exhibition. It has since evolved into a multitude of workshops for young women, facilitating conversations surrounding sexual health and contraception. Additionally, it has led to the cultivation of new research for Dr. Alana Harris.

WHAT THEY SAID?

'Are young women today – and perhaps even their male friends – more confident in their conversations about women's health? How well do we understand, even now, the cyclical patterns and biometric indicators of our fertility? What implications would better knowledge have for our contraceptive choices?'

'The creative process behind Period Piece has helped us to investigate these questions – not only in responses to the installation itself, but also in the creative process of putting it together.'

'In the research I have done around Period Piece, and the conversations it has stimulated, there is a new preparedness to debate and discuss new forms of fertility tracking and contraception.'

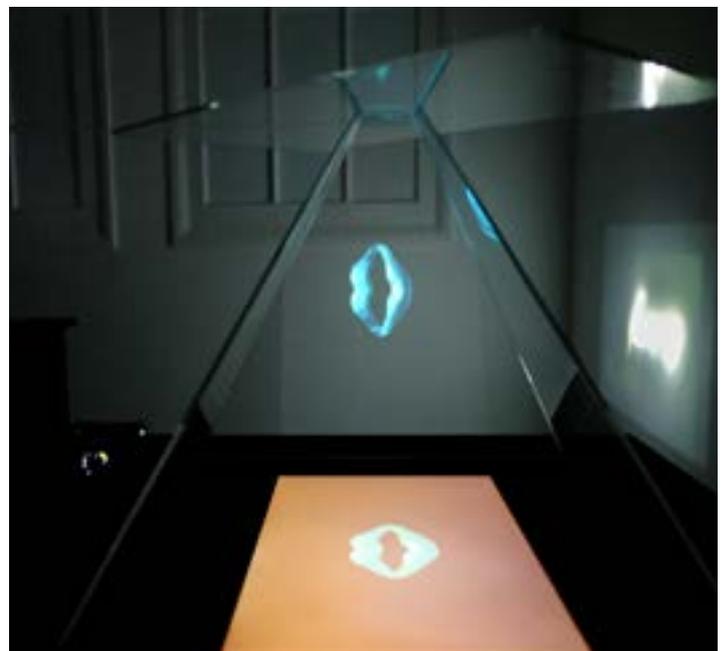
- Dr. Alana Harris

WHAT WERE THE BENEFITS AND IMPACTS?

- ▶ Increasing scientific literacy
- ▶ Interdisciplinary collaboration
- ▶ Reaching new minds



Images from the installation of Period Piece



LINKS

Read more about the piece on Science Gallery London's page:

<https://london.sciencegallery.com/blog/period-piece-telling-menstrual-tales>

<https://london.sciencegallery.com/blood/events/period-piece/>

Sources: Science Gallery London website and documentation
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