



**INDRA'S NET**  
**Collaborative installations by**  
**visual artist Susan Haire and composer Stephen Dydo**

*Indra's Net is an infinite lattice of jewels with each jewel reflecting all the others.*

*Indra's Net* makes particular reference to Dydo and Haire's continuing examination of the interconnected and interdependent nature of all things, drawn from Buddhist thinking and modern physics, embracing the meeting of science and religion. This exhibition includes works from *Reflection*, their solo show at Peterborough Cathedral, 2012, which ranged across the entire Cathedral and included 18 installations. *Reflection* then toured to Western Connecticut State University honouring a visit by the Dalai Lama.

For nearly 40 years the Dalai Lama has had discussions with the world's leading scientists, including and especially with prominent subatomic physicists. His book, *The Universe in a Single Atom*, fruitfully links science and Tibetan Buddhism. He ends the book by saying: *Since the emergence of modern science, humanity has lived through an engagement between spirituality and science as two important sources of well-being...(but) with many finding the two to be incompatible. Today... science and spirituality have the potential to be closer than ever, and to embark upon a collaborative endeavour that has far-reaching potential to help humanity meet the challenges before us.*

A myriad of multi-faceted reflections and distortions manipulating light and sound form an important element of this exhibition. The sonic elements by Dydo have been written specifically for each work. Short melodic fragments are repeated, mirrored, stretched and condensed into multiple reflections of themselves. It is the very reflections that occur in this multi-sensory experience that bring forth the exhibition's approach to the underlying concepts of *Indra's Net*.

Three works in this exhibition emulate the structure of Indra's Net, **Indra's Net I** and **II** and **Fragments and Reflections**. In **Indra's Net I**, 600 convex, mirrored sunglass lenses each reflect the viewer and the view in miniature simultaneously; the central diamond shape represents a jewel and the lenses that expand outwards from it are double mirror images from side to side and up and down. The music similarly reflects itself with melodic images mirroring each other in inversion. In **Indra's Net II** and **Fragments and Reflections** a mirror or a rock fragment hangs on every node of the wire structure.

Long before Haire came across Indra's Net, she read the following, and the poem below, in Bill Viola's *Writings 1973-1994: As I was walking home one rainy evening in New York City...I held up my glasses to clean them...and I instantly noticed the image of...headlights passing through all the tiny raindrops clinging to the surface of my lenses...I could clearly see within each droplet a perfect little image of the street with the lights and the cars passing by...I realized in fact that every drop of water, even the falling rain, was doing the same.*

*Know the world is a mirror from head to foot,  
In every atom are a hundred blazing suns.  
If you cleave the heart of one drop of water,  
A hundred pure oceans emerge from it.  
If you examine closely each grain of sand,  
A thousand atoms may be seen in it.  
In its members a gnat is like an elephant.  
In its qualities a drop of rain is like the Nile.*

*The heart of a barley-corn equals a hundred harvests,  
A world dwells in the heart of a millet seed.  
In the wing of a gnat is the ocean of life.  
In the pupil of the eye a heaven:  
What though the grain of the heart be small  
It is a station of the Lord of both worlds to dwell therein.  
Mahmud Shabistari (15<sup>th</sup> century), Gulshan-i-raz*

As a contrast to the metallic, reflective materials used for *Reflection* Haire wanted **Fragments and Reflections** to be organic, chaotic, nurturing and enfolding. The wire, which intertwines freely, echoes

the mesh of Indra's Net and binds the rock fragments, cradling them in a protective way. These rock fragments are a reminder of ancient rock spirits such as those of the American Indians and the *Apus*, the mountain gods of Peru. Dydo wrote music for **Fragments and Reflections** containing internally reflective melodies along with Tibetan Buddhist chant. The chant, sung in a Connecticut monastery by Geshe Dhargye, wishes us a long and thoughtful life.

**Ubique: Space, Sound, Light** (wooden boxes, mirrors, apple, integral music, candle) is to be viewed with your eyelevel on the rim of a box. The music in the middle box is just within audible range and can only be heard with ear your close to box. Although miniscule we are a part of the interconnectedness of everything which reaches through the vastness of space and the universe, like light waves that travel outwards indefinitely. And as well as being vast *Indra's Net* is empty with the gaps between the strands occupying most of the space taken up by the net. Jim Al-Khalili said in *Atom* (BBC 4) that *if all the space inside the atom could be removed, then the seven billion people on earth would fit inside an apple.*

**Enfolded Light** with its shattered DVDs was inspired by the ideas of physicist David Bohm who had a long friendship with the Dalai Lama. Any broken piece of a holograph contains the information of the entire image. For Bohm this symbolised his view of a '*holistic understanding of reality*' and his notion of the implicate order in which the entire universe is enfolded into each part. The explicate order is the material world and everything we perceive but the implicate order gives rise to it and connects everything. Bohm compares the implicate order to the ocean with the explicate order merely being the foam on the surface of the waves.

**Enfolded Light, Death and Looking Beneath the Surface** were all shown in Peterborough Cathedral and at Western Connecticut State University, Danbury. After Peterborough Cathedral Dydo's music for **Death** (for percussion, men's voices, and the voices of the clergy reciting the last rites) was revised. What we hear now includes a chant for successful transition to the next life, recorded by Tibetan monks at Sera Mey Monastery, now in India. In the Cathedral **Ascension** (retitled **Looking Beneath the Surface** when shown in a Buddhist context at Danbury) reached 30m high up to the top of the tower. A monumental work as a whole, what is shown here formed the bottom section which intentionally had a more intimate quality.

The two paintings on the long wall of The Cello Factory embrace the vastness of Indra's Net. **Ten Thousand Currents**, influenced by a Chinese treatise *The Mustard Garden Manual of Painting*, was in a solo exhibition of three large paintings and a series of eight loud speakers which together formed a linear progression filling a 30m gallery. The watery synthesis of computer and recorded sounds heard here was incorporated in the speakers above this painting. **Desertmusic** was shown in Haire's solo exhibition, *Constellations*, and was made for a gallery space near the top of the town of Rye, in Sussex, from where the flat landscape could be seen stretching endlessly into the distance. At a later exhibition Dydo created a composition using computer-generated vocal sounds to emphasize the sense of desolation evoked by the painting.