

As our lives become increasingly virtual AR GIFT (DATUM) offers the opportunity to bring depth to our connected relationships, across time and space.

Whether a quick thank you or a special present this platform enables fast and beautiful gift giving within the blended environment of AR (physical and virtual), enabling action on environmental sustainability and yet enhancing and extending the unique intimacy of gifting.

AR GIFT (DATUM INNOVATE UK) is a mobile app/web-based gifting platform enabling the user to choose, customise and send an AR gift to a friend/colleague, wherever they are in the world, eliminating unsustainable physical gifting practises.

These virtual gifts exist on the platform as AR assets, both ready-made and customisable, which are sent by the gift giver and collected by the recipient at a time and location of the gift givers choice. Each bespoke choice by the gift giver is an intimate act in itself.

The platform is responding to the need for intimate gifting (thank yous, get well wishes, birthday greetings or condolences) into our connected world, local to local and local to global, brought to the forefront in our times of global pandemic lockdowns, isolation and quarantine.

It is in direct response to the growing need, through social distancing, for deeper remote intimacy interactions, and the post-lockdown requirements for collective and intimate experiences that are conducted in a safe and responsible manner. While at the same time, this platform encourages ethical consumer behaviour and runs alongside the re-opening of sustainable commerce post pandemic.

AR GIFT Team - body>data>space (BDS Creative Ltd)

Ghislaine Boddington - Creative Director

Tadej Vindis - Lead Producer

Nick Rothwell - Technical Lead

Ivor Diosi - XR Developer

The first commission output for AR GIFT is Donate Yourself, an Augmented Reality experience co-created by artist Stacey Pitsillides with Ghislaine Boddington and the body>data>space collective. It blends sound and 3D visuals to spark debates about our organs, tissue and body data, accessed by the public through augmented reality via QR codes.

This new work was encountered in several ways. It premiered as a walking tour around the Ouseburn Valley area of Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK (29th October – 30th November). There, on this trail of five locations, you found the Donate Yourself banners and, by scanning the QR codes on these banners with your mobile phone and listening to the audio stories, you will take part in an inspirational journey. The work also was shown in Oxford, London and Cambridge across November / December 2021 and is still touring.

The digital objects that you encounter will be seen through your phone imposed on the landscapes behind and, with the audio in your ears, stories of care, trust, immortality, consent and futures will unfold, exploring the important role our bodies play in scientific discovery.

Each experience questions how we see our body after death; as a collective source of knowledge for humanity, as a material to explore our biological make up, or even as a way of immortalising ourselves in cells.

These AR sound and visual objects examine diverse perspectives on what donating parts of yourself mean to different people. See lungs breathing posthumous digital data, view eyes blooming up above us and neurons radiating from a petri dish, hear the unfolding audio stories as you walk, imposed on the real world around you.

What role can our bodies play in scientific discovery?

Could we see ourselves as a collection of cells?

Does donating organs or tissue make you immortal?

This sci-art project shares artistic interpretations of scientific imagery with the audience, from interviews with experts from the Human Cell Atlas research initiative and visual/written data from a series of artists workshops which are expanded through this unique digital experience. Gathered from a range of communities Stacey Pitsillides and body>data>space created this AR experience to help us all consider the legacy of our bodies in this digital age.

AR GIFT (DATUM) is created and produced by body>data>space (BDS Creative Ltd). The project was developed as part of DATUM R&D, an Innovate UK funded project with partners ZU-UK (Lead Partner), body>data>space and University of Greenwich (Innovate UK Sustainable Innovation Fund: Round 1 (Temporary Framework) 2020), and in further partnership with CLEI Co-creating Liveness in Embodied Immersion, BHRE Business, Human Rights and Environment, and LETS Law, Emerging Technologies & Science Strategic Research Groups at University of Greenwich.

Donate Yourself - co-created by Stacey Pitsillides with body>data>space (2021). A One Cell at a Time commission with the Human Cell Atlas research initiative:

The digital AR experience has been designed and co-created between Stacey Pitsillides and the body>data>space team using the body>data>space AR GIFT development project: Ghislaine Boddington (Creative Co-Direction), Tadej Vindis (Project Development and Production), Nick Rothwell (Sound Design and Technical Development) and Ivor Diosi (AR Development and 3D Animation). With research and insights from Holly Standing and Luke Sellers. Donate Yourself is produced for One Cell at a Time by Dominic Smith.

Donate Yourself is created as part of the AR GIFT development project at body>data>space, supported by Innovate UK and the University of Greenwich (2021-22).