

# BLAST THEORY

## The new media challenge

Blast Theory, the world's most provocative new media performance company, crosses the boundaries between traditional performance and virtual reality.

The English group will be resident in Adelaide from January through to March 2004 working with the 2004 Adelaide Fringe, the SA Film Corporation and the Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) to develop a game specifically for Adelaide.

Blast Theory has been identified as a group that can offer enormous benefits to the Australian new media community. With an international reputation, it develops interactive performance works that directly engage with emerging technologies, popular culture and the urban environment. The group has developed sophisticated and engaging performances that take place in a cityscape—many of them medium-sized cities, such as Sheffield, England.

Teamed with the Thinkers in Residence program, the project will create development opportunities for artists with wireless and internet technologies and advance the development of cultural content for wireless applications.

The program will give Australian emerging and established new media arts practitioners the opportunity to participate in the Blast Theory masterclass and an interactive game performance.

The Adelaide residency will culminate in a public performance, which will combine theatre with computer gaming, remote telecommunications and virtual reality. This performance will showcase Adelaide and its capacity in technology and the arts to the world.

The performance at the 2004 Adelaide Fringe will be interactive with players on the ground and on the internet. Structured like a game, each player is given a task to accomplish and is aided by players on the internet. The proposed Adelaide performance is based on the previous Blast Theory work *Can you see me now?*

For two days, players from anywhere in the world were able to play online against members of Blast Theory.

Tracked by satellite, Blast Theory appeared online and next to virtual players on a map. On the ground, handheld scanners showing the positions of online players guided Blast Theory in tracking them down.

The Adelaide performance will take place in the grounds of the University of Adelaide—a safe environment for the game/performance, as players can move around without negotiating car or pedestrian traffic.

Developing innovative content for the project and utilising the appropriate communications devices, the performance reaches a broader national and international audience through its engagement with the internet. Web users become participants and players in the live performance.

The aim of the project is to develop strong links with industry partners, who will provide the infrastructure and hardware to support the masterclass and performance outcomes.

The Blast Theory residency, masterclass and public performance will utilise the mNet wireless test-bed, which is situated along North Terrace.

Artists working with digital media are quick to use emerging mediums and technologies. A new generation of communications, network infrastructure and delivery systems, such as broadband, offers artists a unique opportunity to be involved in the development of these systems. Engaging Australian artists with these technologies, and developing ongoing collaborations between the commercial developers of the infrastructure and the cultural sector are driving factors of the Blast Theory project.

You can find out more about Blast Theory at <http://www.blasttheory.co.uk>

