

## CASE STUDY 3

# JANE GAUNTLETT

## SWCTN IMMERSION FELLOW

**Jane Gauntlett** is a SWCTN Immersion fellow exploring the impact of storytelling, shared experience and human connection. She works as a writer, director, producer and lecturer in interactive audio, interactive theatre, game, 360 film, VR, MR.

Jane Gauntlett's immersive work has a core central theme derived from a desire to deliver personal narratives and perspectives (both her own and others), not necessarily designing for empathy but more about generating a human connection; visualisations which provoke a different layer of thought and understanding.

In common with many of the SWCTN fellows, Jane's introduction to immersion was through theatre, specifically linked to Battersea Arts Centre and the experimentation of Shunt Vaults, Coney and Punchdrunk. Combined with a personal coping mechanism to deal with aphasia brought on by a brain injury in 2007 - pre-recording her own side of personal conversations and arguments - she created what became a series of works, "In My Shoes", as explorations of interactive story-telling and immersion.

Using a pair of donated Vuzix video goggles, and for a budget of around £50, Jane sought to recreate in vivid detail her experience of an epileptic seizure on a train from Oxford to London. The participant is given items to place them as "Jane", including her pen, bag and notebook, with other props creating the environment e.g. the smell of the train, the coolness of the window, the metallic taste of water.



Whilst quickly and cheaply made the work delivered huge impact, with its power specifically in showing a perspective which had not been seen before.

This piece has been widely shown, including in Parliament and at the UN, and is still touring now. Importantly it also reflected her personal view back into a medical environment, altering her therapeutic relationships to become more collaborative rather than consultant / patient.

A second linked In My Shoes project recreated her experience of an epileptic seizure in a restaurant. Much more about a social environment, rather than the physical environment of the train, this was in many ways an experiment in public interaction.

Again, the work has delivered impact at a global level, being experienced by more than 18,000 people, from pharmaceutical conferences to passing kids in a café in Sheffield during DocFest - who were moved by their own familial link to epilepsy.

Jane's current project, TrueLove, shifts the exploration of personal connection from factual to fictional; from facilitating and representing existing stories to an original creative process.

TrueLove is a dark comedy about the diversity of human interaction and the impact of technology on future relationships. The work uses story, touch, taste, smell, interactive theatre and Magic Leap mixed reality headsets. Participants become the protagonists exploring the dynamics of their personal connections, guided through a series of virtual environments, interactive visuals, directional audio and live performance.

Whilst working with the latest technology Jane's starting point remains with audio and experience. Having defined the narrative her next decision is which is the "best platform" to deliver, and if designing a VR or CGI project, being able to answer the question of "why use this format"?

As demonstrated by her work, Jane regards immersion as about audience experience - not a technology or delivery platform. Immersion is a human connection it is about total engagement and focus, creating insight, empathy and understanding through a personal relationship.

