



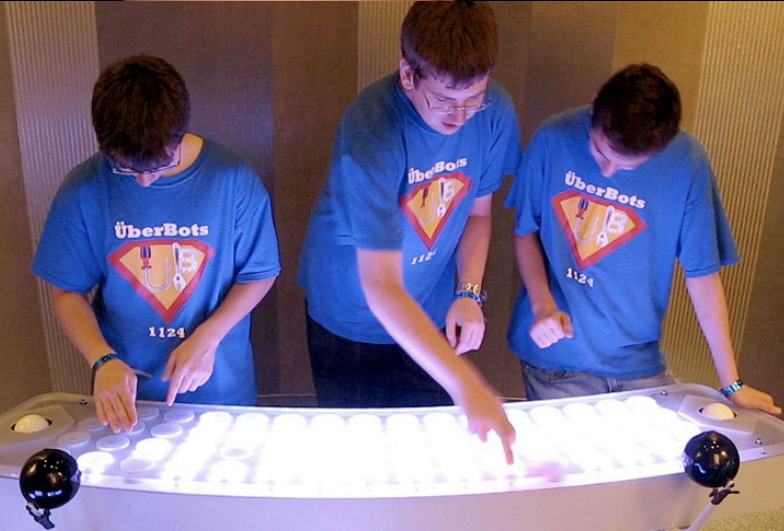
# Company Profile 2012



# We are about Interaction.

**Aesthetec Studio is a Toronto-based interaction design and technology company that creates engaging experiences.** From museums to art galleries, exhibit booths to innovative products, Aesthetec finds creative solutions to address user interaction and technological challenges for a wide range of clientele including museums & science centers, cultural institutions, retail and hospitality spaces, advertisers, artists and designers.

Beyond just being the "technical gurus", the studio's mission is to focus on aesthetic, usability and maintainability issues, making sure that the project looks as good and works as well as imagined. Drawing on artistic practice of creating compelling installations, Aesthetec delivers for its clients an opportunity to present their audience with a unique spectacle of clever interactions and cutting-edge technologies that are easy to maintain.

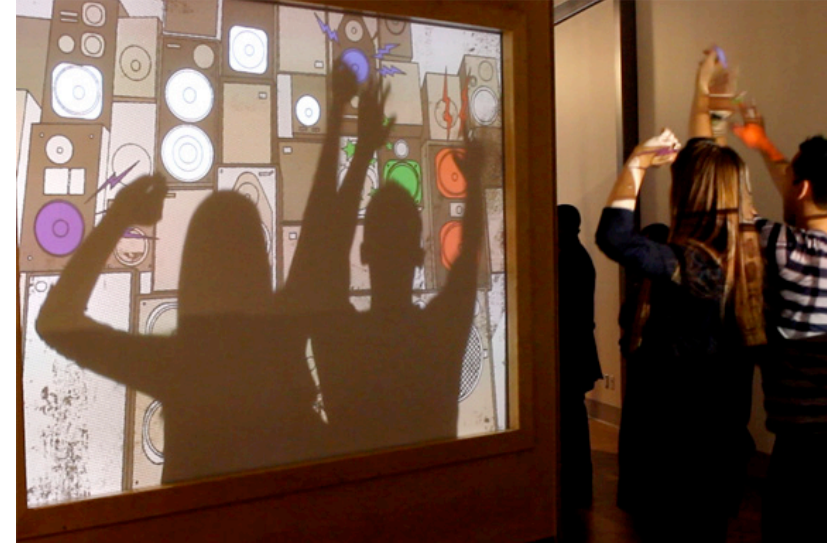


# What We Do.

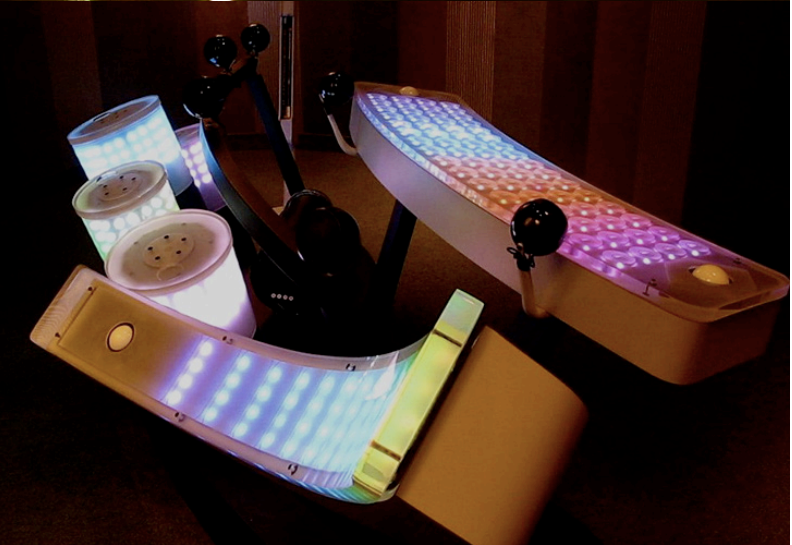
The studio excels at creating customized software and hardware that allows for human-computer interactions beyond the capabilities of existing off-the-shelf products. This approach enables Aesthetec to tailor one-of-a-kind interactive experiences for each client's unique needs. While the studio works with a wide range of technologies, Aesthetec's value comes from the ability to find the right technology to enhance the client's project in a creative and successful way.

Services include:

- Interactive installation from concepts to production
- Interaction design including experience, user interface, graphics, motion and game design
- Technology consulting and system design
- Custom software development for all platforms and devices
- Custom hardware development, bespoke electronics and firmware
- On-site installation and exhibit maintenance
- Project integration oversight







# What We Have Done.

Aesthetec Studio was founded, and is owned and operated by Mark Argo and Ann Poochareon. While the company was officially formed in late 2007, Ann and Mark have been making interactive artworks since 2002. They have been developing a studio practice that weds critically-designed concepts with state-of-the-art technology.

Aesthetec has worked on major museums in Asia (Museum of Siam, Thailand), the United States (Connecticut Science Center), and most recently Telus Spark in Calgary, Canada's first new science centre in over 25 years (open to the public in October 2011). As lead interactive team for Telus Spark, Aesthetec oversaw the design of all interactive exhibits across four major galleries in the new science centre, developed and installed all electronic components, created a handful signature installations, and acted as technical liaison between exhibit fabricators and the museum staff.

In April 2012, Aesthetec partnered with TIFF Kids International Film Festival to create Toronto's very first TIFF Kids digiPlaySpace—a digital playground for kids to promote creativity and self-directed learning—at the prestigious TIFF Bell LightBox in downtown Toronto.

Other works include one-of-a-kind interactive donor recognition at University of Waterloo Engineering department, interactive media solutions for luxury real-estate sales centers in the Middle East, data visualization for a CBC national health campaign, prototype work for conceptual products, research and development work with artists and dancers to realize their visions, as well as technical consulting on national advertising campaigns.



# Our Team.



## Mark Argo

### **Principal & Creative Director**

Mark is an artist and technologist who has worked extensively in creative applications of software, hardware and networks. His work has been exhibited internationally across Asia, Europe and North America, and has been featured in major technology magazines such as Wired and Linux Journal. Mark was a resident artist at the Fabrica Communication Research Center in Treviso, Italy for 2005-2006, recipient of the MobileAsia competition's grand prize in 2006, and founded Aesthetec Studio in 2007 to develop interactive experiences for museums and science centres.



## Ann Poochareon

### **Principal & Studio Director**

As co-founder of Aesthetec Studio, Ann directs operations as well as produces projects for the company. In 2007, Ann managed and oversaw all of the interactive productions, and consulted on new media directions for Thailand's national "Museum of Siam". Prior to founding Aesthetec Studio, she was a resident artist at the Fabrica Communication Research Center in Italy and co-curated an interactive art exhibit in Seoul, Korea for Fabrica. She has exhibited internationally in the U.S., Italy, France, Austria, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand. Ann received her Bachelor degree in Computer Science from DePaul University in Chicago and her Masters degree from the Interactive Telecommunication Program at New York University.



# Adam Carlucci

## **Exhibit Developer**

Adam is a Toronto-based artist, programmer, musician and electronics experimenter. His work centres on the creation of dynamic, interactive, and social environments that engage and provoke users. By separating traditional media from their usual context, his work creates unique experiences with an approachable aesthetic. Adam has been featured in several Canadian publications including the Toronto Star and CBC Radio. He graduated from the New Media program at Ryerson University.



# Erika Kiessner

## **Sr. Exhibit Developer**

Erika specializes in making compelling, interactive experiences and devices. Prior to joining Aesthetec, Erika has worked for the Ontario Science Centre on their award winning Agents of Change project developing environments for visitors to explore science from a creative angle; and for the Franklin Institute Science Museum helping them design and develop new exhibition halls. As a respected thinker, Erika has presented widely at museum conferences and has published in Museum magazine. Her personal interests lie in using sensors and electronics to create experiences that are both physical and digital, educational and whimsical, natural and magical.



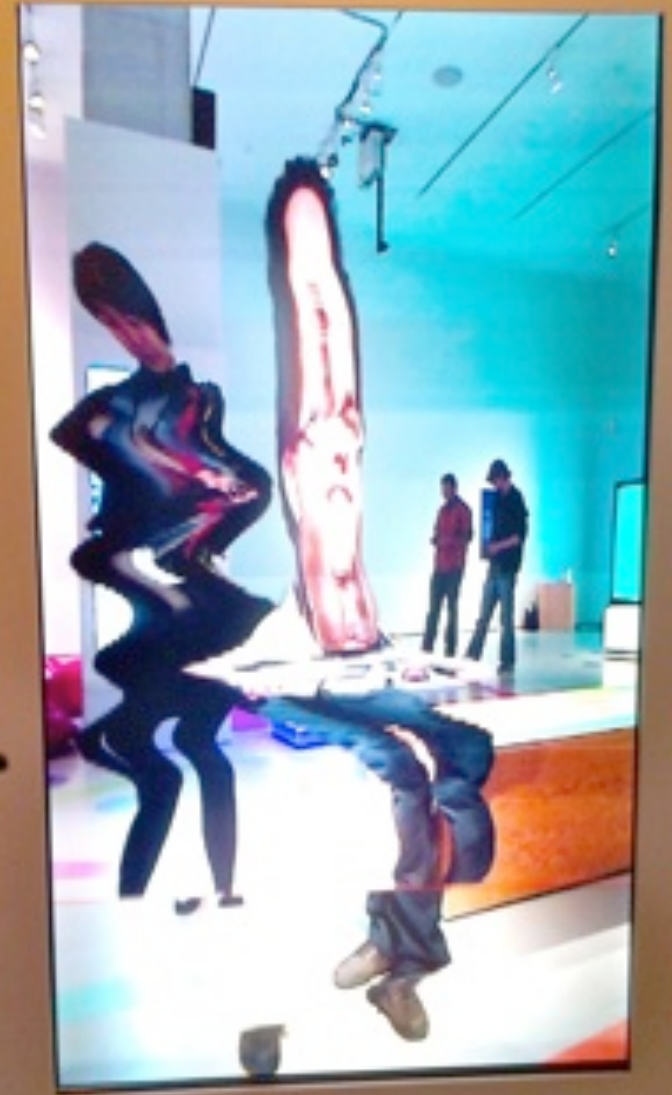
# Selected Work:

## TIFF Kids digiPlaySpace

2012 - Toronto, Canada

In April 2012, Aesthetec partnered with TIFF Kids International Film Festival to create Toronto's very first TIFF Kids digiPlaySpace—a digital playground for kids to promote creativity and self-directed learning—at the prestigious TIFF Bell LightBox in downtown Toronto.

The digiPlaySpace was opened during the TIFF Kids Film Festival, from April 10-22, and was attended by more than 5,200 people in the 12 days period. The space featured several interactive installations for kids, a giant green screen studio, stop-motion animation workshop run by filmmakers, as well as a Maker Zone—where kids can learn about new tools such as 3D printing, DIY electronics and robot making.



*Magic Mirror*





Light Loops

Aesthetec consulted the TIFF Kids team on the content curation and space planning for the digiPlaySpace, as well as provided four featured installations. Three of the installations were specifically created for the event:

- **Magic Mirror** - a screen that distorts live images of people, resembling a fun-house mirror
- **Sing & Paint** - an interactive canvas where visitors make their own digital paint using their voice
- **Light Loops** - a set of touch sensitive light drums that lets visitors jam together



Sing & Paint

# Telus Spark

2011 - Calgary, Canada

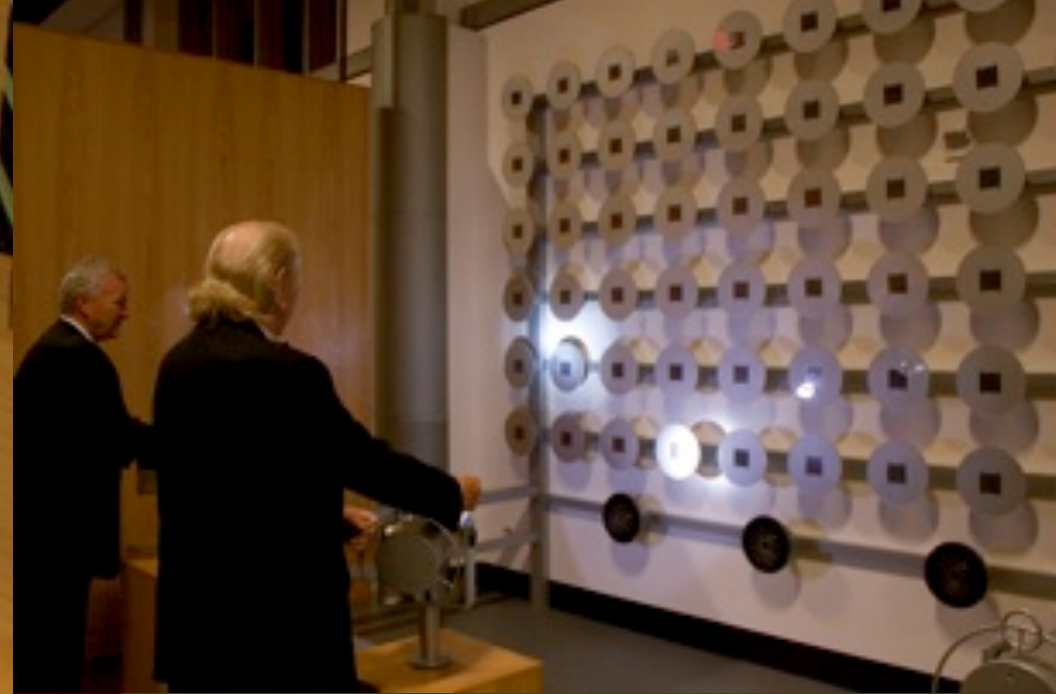
Opened to the public in October 2011, TELUS Spark is Canada's first new purpose-built science centre in more than 25 years. An impressive building of 153,000 square feet in size, TELUS Spark features four main exhibit galleries, a Creative Kids museum, and Calgary's first HD Digital Dome Theatre.

The new facility aims to go beyond the definition of a traditional science centre - creating a number of protracted activities and experiences designed to build a strong and long-lasting community around the institution.

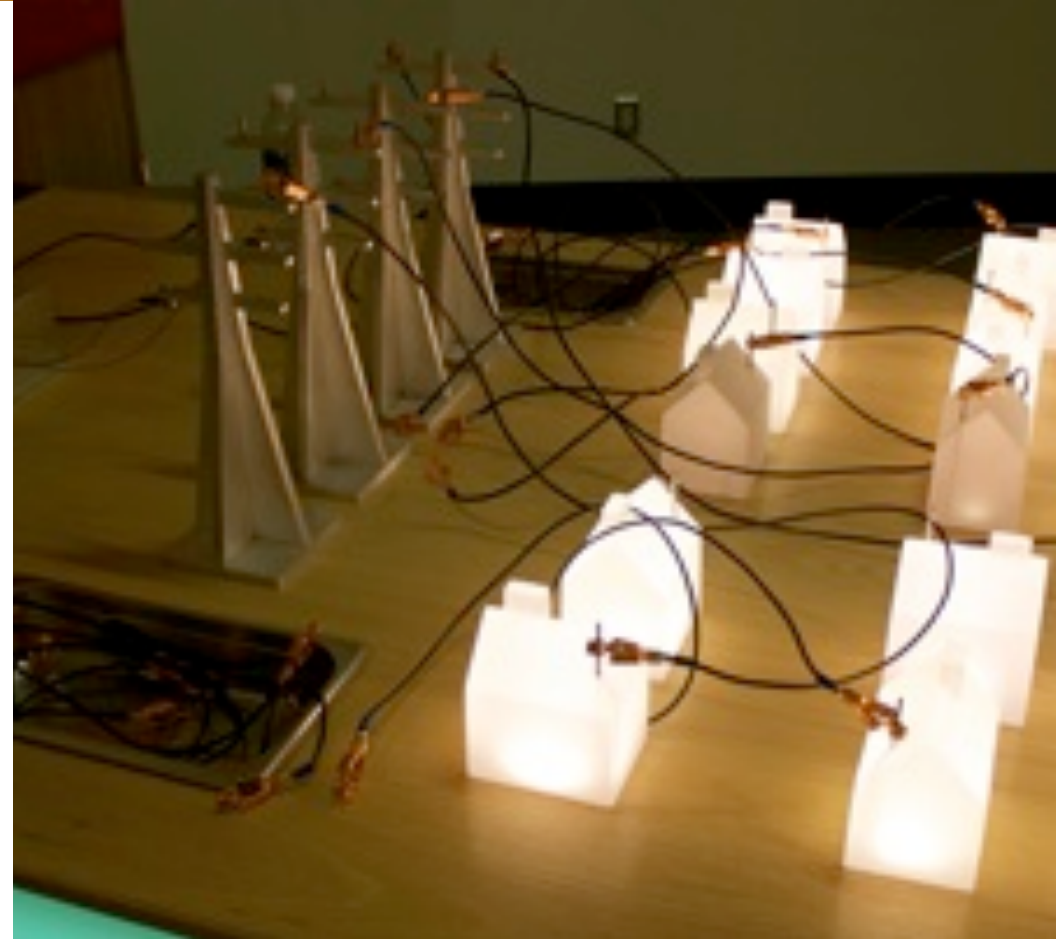
Aesthetec was involved in the exhibit design and fabrication process for the four exhibit halls for all of 2010 and 2011. During the design phase, we created several working prototypes, many of which became permanent and featured exhibits in the galleries.



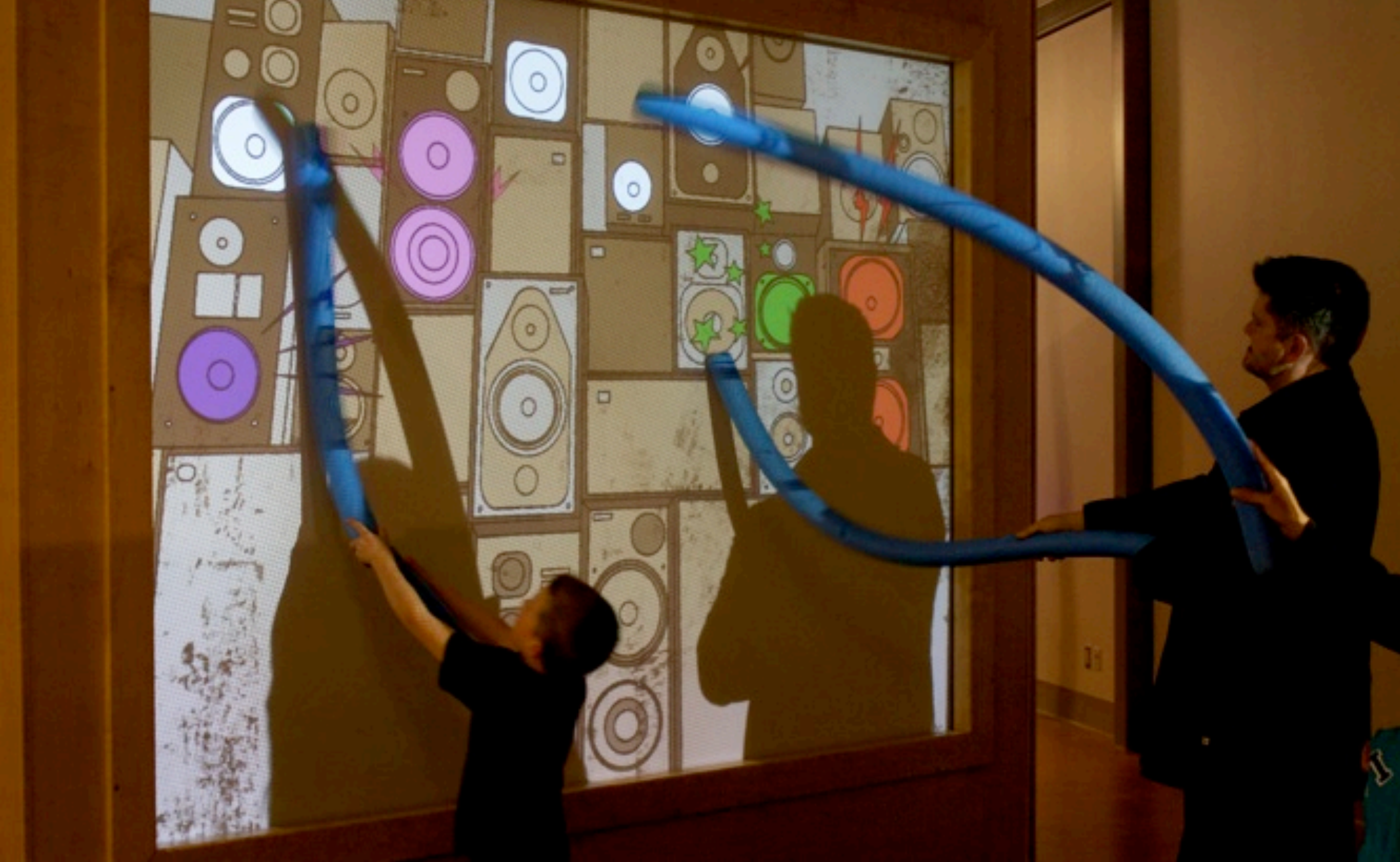




In addition to individual exhibits, we also created a system of customized electronics to power over 27 exhibits across all four halls. Our system of custom electronics standardizes components that are needed to drive communication between bespoke sensors, displays, and computers, in turn making it easier for the science centre to maintain these exhibits in the long term.







*Shadow Rock - visitors jam on drums and guitar sounds together using their shadow*





*Generator* - a flywheel generator that translate visitors' cranking action into electricity to power a LED persistence-of-vision display



# Donor Alcove, University of Waterloo Engineering

2011 - Waterloo, Canada

Aesthetec Studio was commissioned to design and build a very unique donor recognition structure for University of Waterloo's Engineering Department's "Vision 2010" fundraising campaign. Housed in the brand-new, state-of-the-art facility, Engineering 5, the Donor Alcove is designed to celebrate the engineering disciplines and reflect the architectural design of the building itself.

The semi-circle all-aluminum frame holds 14 columns of clear acrylic name plates. Each column is controlled by robotic servo motors which are attached on both ends. This allows the columns to rotate according to programmed animations. The top rail of the frame is also fitted with 11 sonar sensors for presence detection. As the viewer stands in front of the columns to read the names of the donors, the columns respond by turning towards the viewer. When no one is around, the columns turn and twist in pattern, as if they have a life of their own.







For this project, Aesthetec provided a turn-key solution to the client. The Vision 2010 Donor Alcove was custom designed and built in less than 90 days.

# Sound Playground, Connecticut Science Centre 2009 - Hartford, USA

Opened to the public in June 2009, the new Connecticut Science Center houses an impressive array of digital interactive exhibits that let the visitors explore all areas of science.

Sound Playground is a set of interactive sculptures that you can use to compose music with friends. Four colorful digital instruments are presented: a 'rhythm' sequencer with 64 touch-sensitive key controls, a 'melody' fret board with 13 touch-sensitive frets, 'harmony' wheels whose tops spin to make, well, harmony, and an upright bass. The exhibit is meant for several people to play together.







Aesthetec worked with AV&C, a New York-based cutting-edge technology integration company, to build the sculptures using customized LED and sensor controls. The exhibit employs several hundred RGB LEDs, touch sensors, and Ethernet controllers, which were all designed specifically for the museum application.



# Museum of Siam

2008 - Bangkok, Thailand

Situated in the heart of old Bangkok, Museum of Siam creates an experience where visitors could understand the how the identity of Thai people, their customs, beliefs and civilizations have developed over millennia of continuous habitation in the region. Employing various interactive techniques, the Museum engages the visitors to investigate, play games, interact and discover the history and story of Thailand.

Aesthetec designed, produced, and installed over 28 interactive exhibits in the 20-room museum. We created a wireless management system, customized hardware and software to run these exhibits entirely on the Mac OS-X. Most of our customized hardware is modularized, swappable, easy to configure and replace.





Our role also included consulting the designers on interaction scenarios and media directions, sourcing technologies and equipments, providing drawings and budget estimation, overseeing installation process, as well as quality control to make sure the end results are as intended.

Working closely with the architects and designers to build this museum from the ground up, Aesthetec was able to integrate appropriate technologies into the interaction design at a very early stage—an approach which made the interactive exhibits flow seamlessly with the content, and became an integral part of the museum.





# Get In Touch.

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