

World-renowned artist unveils first UK solo show in Dundee

By **Joe Birchenall** on Tuesday 25 November 2014

- Share
-
-
-

Most computer monitors have a two million pixel resolution. Some of the pieces in Jim Campbell's first solo UK exhibition have just 50.

In a world that's all about high definition and crystal clear resolution, the renowned American artist uses some of the most cutting-edge technology to produce images that toe the line between recognisable and totally indistinguishable.

Look at Jim's immersive LED light sculptures from certain angles and they'll look more like stars thrown randomly across the night's sky, but stand in just the right place and you'll instantly start to recognise moving bodies within.

It's a welcome change from the constant pursuit of higher definition that plagues us today, and an evocative one at that - even if it is tricky to put your finger on exactly why.



(STV Dundee)

▶ via STV

The award-winning 58-year-old San Francisco artist has exhibited work on some of the world's biggest stages, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Smithsonian Museum of American Art and Madison Square Gardens.

That he has chosen to unveil his first solo exhibition in the UK at [Dundee Contemporary Arts](#) is a huge coup for the city.

His installation, **Indirect Imaging**, features six different works made from simple films where the subjects, which range from flying birds and stretching pets to walking commuters, are reduced to their essential details.

Hear from the man himself and get a first look at the exhibitions in the video below.



Joseph Birchenall

 [via YOUTUBE](#)

Jim experiments with our ability to perceive images by reducing the resolution and clarity dramatically, adding a third dimension and often removing the screen altogether.

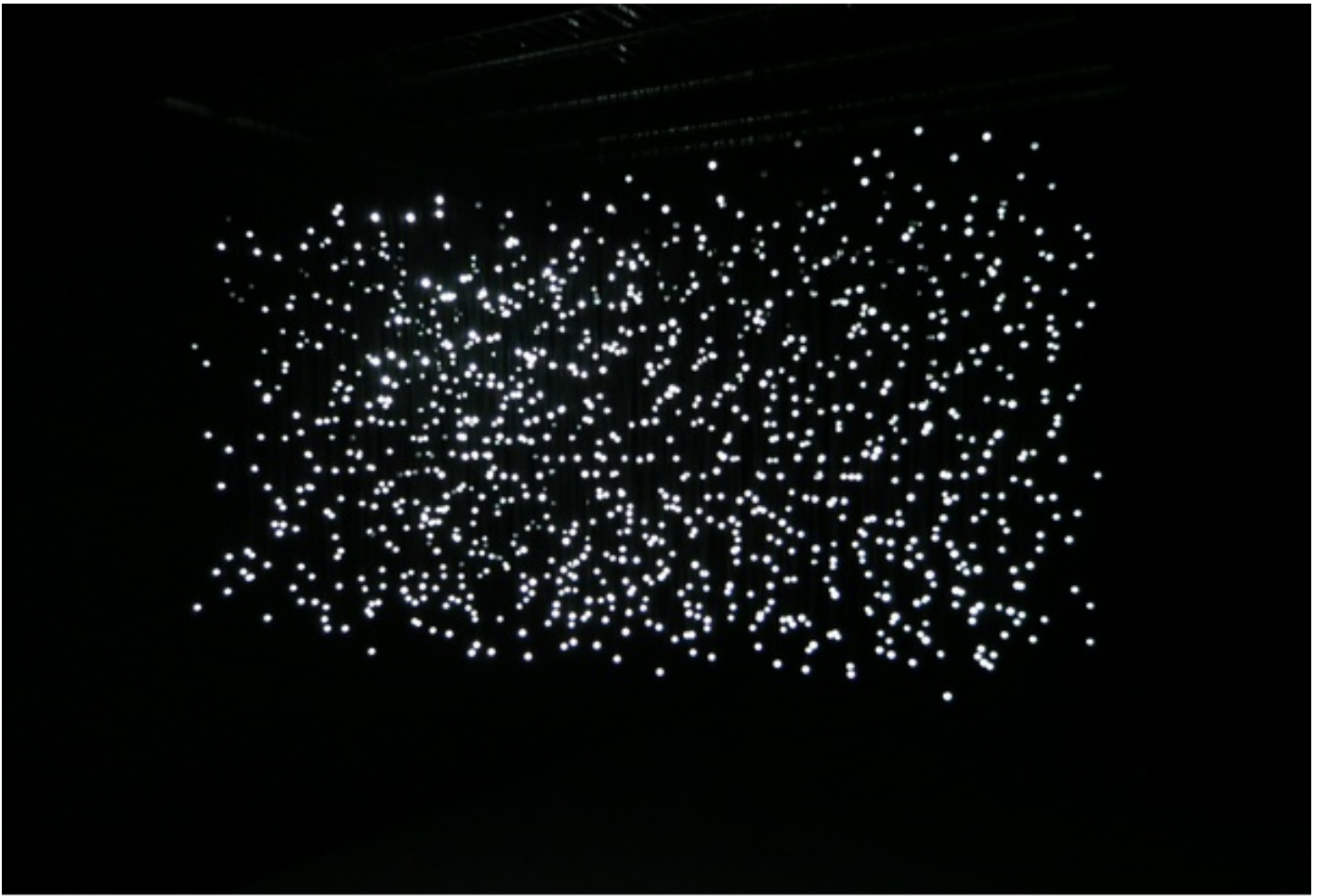
This means each installation can look very different depending on the angle people view it from.

"I work with light and I work with pixels; I create these large scale installations, both in 2D and 3D, that use little lights that are part of a larger image," Jim told STV Dundee.

"You see these works and at first they're abstract because they're such low resolution - anywhere from 50 pixels to 1000 pixels, but even the 1000 is very low resolution as a computer monitor has two million.

"So I create these images that are right on the borderline of being able to perceive what they are.

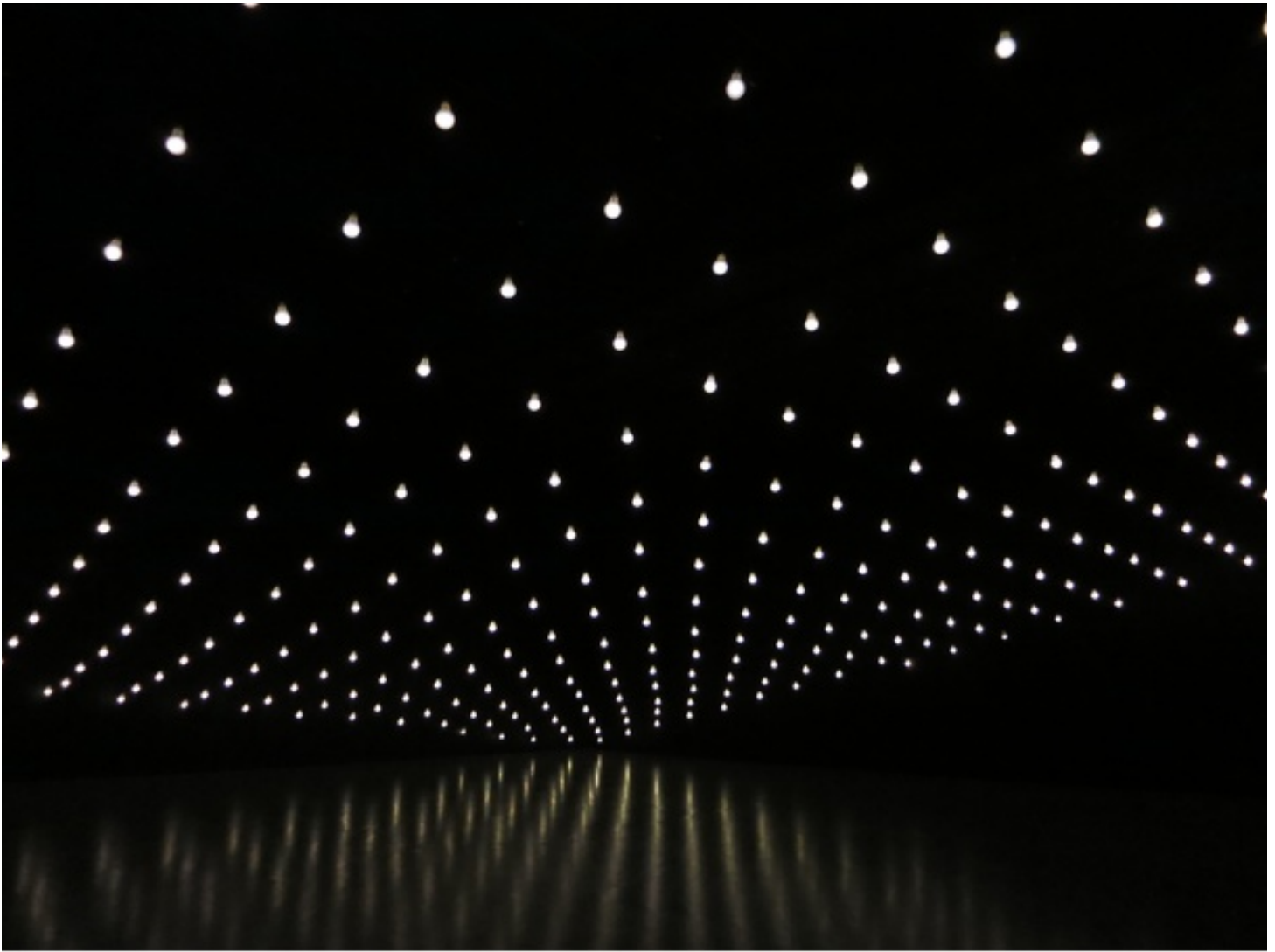
"There's a full colour work here, there's some black and white work and then there's an image that you actually get to walk inside. It's only 300 pixels, but you can immerse yourself in the middle of this image made out of light bulbs. "



(STV Dundee)

▶ via STV

Both the Exploded View (above) and the Titled Plane (below) installations look different depending on the viewer's position and angle.



(STV Dundee)

▶ via STV

Titled Plan is one of two installations that people can walk inside and is one of two larger installations at the DCA.

"Tilted Plane is very low resolution, it's only 300 pixels and the light bulbs are actually going on and off," said Jim.

"Like the other works the [bulbs] are displaying 256 different grey levels, but the birds were black so they end up being black.

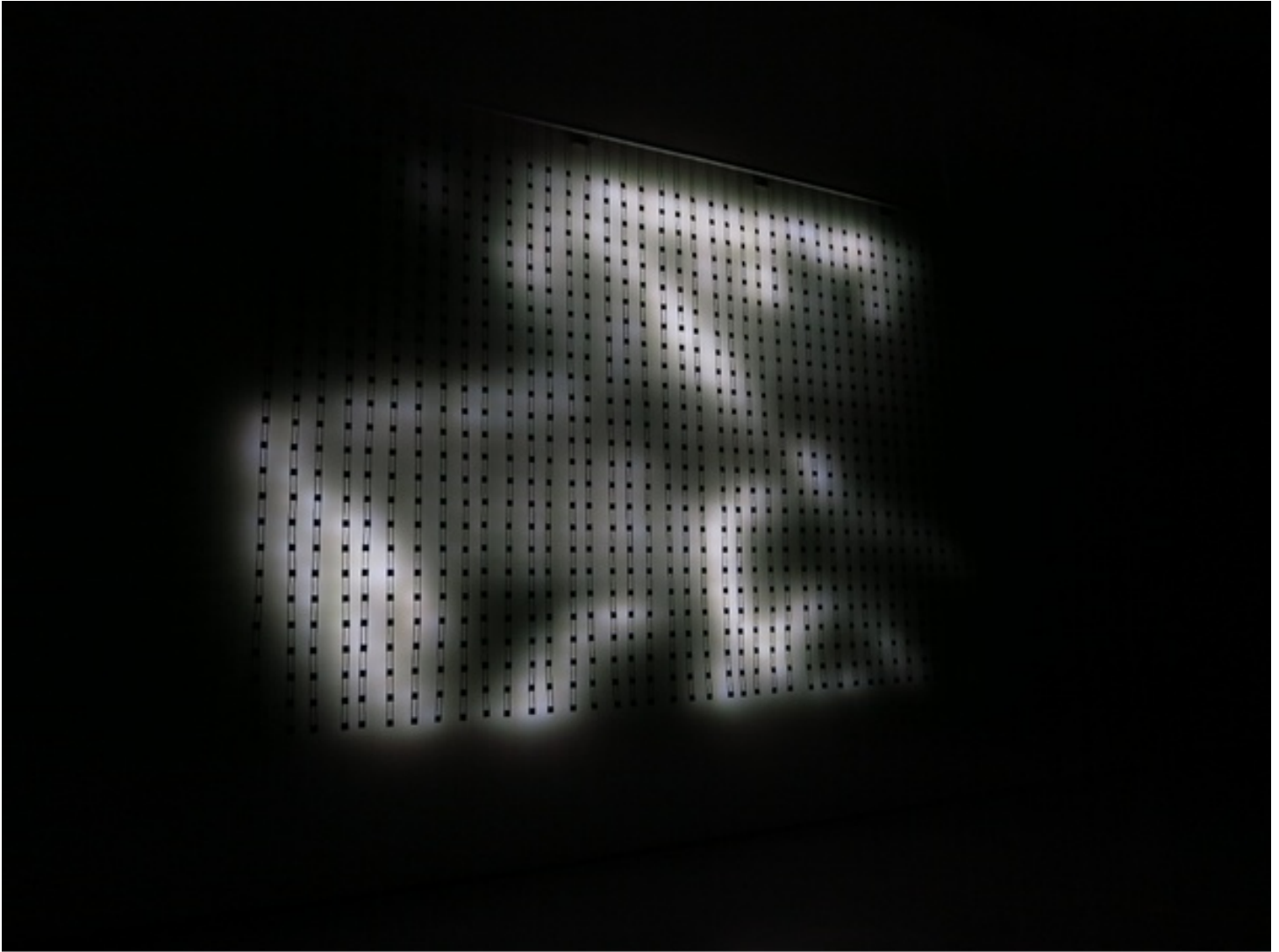
"What I like about the work or what I think is successful at least for some people is that when you go inside you're not really using your eyes, you feel the birds.

"They really are there, they really are going by and if you step back and look then you can see them, but when you're in the middle of the image you can't see them - you feel them."

The other large installation is the **Last Day in the Beginning of March**, which fictionally tells the story of Jim's brother's last day of life.

It is a rarely shown work made up of twenty-six light bulbs suspended from the ceiling illuminating the floor below, each creating a circular pool of light.

Each bulb is connected to an electronic circuit which triggers an annotated 'memory' of a specific event during that fateful day. Each memory is 'remembered' by the viewer's movements within the exhibit.



(STV Dundee)

▶ via STV

Graham Domke, DCA's exhibitions curator, said Dundee's reputation as a technologically and culturally significant hub meant exhibiting Jim's work here was very appropriate.

"It's a natural fit for the DCA space to show quite immersive works that you walk amidst and it's the perfect exhibition for us at this time of year," he said.

"It's definitely a sensory [exhibition], there's a lot of space between the works and there are moments in the works when it's just you and an LED light flickering.

"But the ideas that this artist espouses are quite emotional and they're not detached in any way, which you often associated with technical art.

"He manages to find a kind of presence, a kind of ghost in the machine."

Indirect Imaging runs until January 25 and it's already proving popular with Dundonians.