



**Children are never world-weary
on *The Oort Cloud and Blue Mountain*
by Hazel Lim-Schlegel**

The Oort Cloud and Blue Mountain was created by Hazel Lim-Schlegel and Andreas Schlegel for the Gallery Children's Biennale. Buttons at the bottom of the work activate movement, lights and sounds above. Inspired by science-fiction environs, nature and Vasily Kandinsky's *Blue Mountain*, the couple's interactive installation has been embraced by children and adults alike.

I captured this image in a relatively quiet moment during the preview of the Gallery Children's Biennale. Andreas and I are always heartened and delighted whenever we see reactions to our art like those of the children in this photo. We believe children have a unique sense of wonder and want to ignite this curiosity through our work.

We have received feedback from well-meaning adults that the installation could be improved by placing its interactive components higher up the wall. Many children (and adults) have to sit, kneel, squat or bend to trigger the sensors on these elements, making it tedious to look up and observe which parts of the installation have been activated.

This physical response was unplanned, however on hindsight, we realised that it invites the exact outcome we hope to achieve. While *The Oort Cloud and*

Blue Mountain was created for children, adults are encouraged to engage with the work too. In positioning themselves near the buttons and modules at the bottom of the work, they are compelled to gaze up at the wonders above.

This experience reminds me of a chapter in French philosopher Gaston Bachelard's book *Poetics of Space* where he writes about doorknobs. As adults, we seldom perceive a doorknob as we did as a child because of the different height at which we view it. As children, the doorknob (especially if it has a keyhole) is not simply a handle for opening or closing a door, but a whole other world you can peer into.

This photo of children figuring out what the buttons do perfectly reflects the objective of *The Oort Cloud and Blue Mountain*: to stimulate curiosity and expand the horizons of our imaginations.