



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Sensational international “techno-touch” Gallezeum wins place at UK’s leading innovation show

A unique international museum experience, which allows people of all ages and abilities to “touch” and learn about rare and priceless objects from around the world, has won a place at the UK’s top technological innovation showcase – Innovate UK 2017, at the National Exhibition Centre on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> November.

The annual showcase of top cutting-edge ideas brings the brightest and boldest UK innovators together to inspire businesses, individuals and government to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

**Gallezeum** (The Touch and Discover Collection) enables everyone to access artworks from around the world from the comfort and convenience of their local museum, library or college.

The brainchild of Stoke-on-Trent based artist, teacher and inventor Christopher Dean, it takes Virtual Reality into new realms of the senses. You don't just see ancient sculptures, contemporary vases and famous paintings, **but you can feel them too.**

Chris’s company, Touch And Discover Systems Ltd, is one of just 100 companies nationwide to be selected as one of the best innovative ideas on the market.

Chris has taken Haptics technology, used in the aerospace and manufacturing industry, to deliver a truly tactile and entertaining cultural experience – partnered with top international industry Haptics experts **Virtualis** – art and industry working in harmony.

For the first time it provides a safe and secure shared space, a worldwide digital publishing platform, for international galleries and museums, historic attractions and universities worldwide to reach ever wider audiences.



Manchester Museum is already using the technology to help people explore its collection and just this summer the collaboration won an international Jodi award for Digital Accessibility for All. The unique technology also won EU Erasmus funding in 2016 for its work on Inclusive Technologies in Museums and also the Zero Project in 2014 (A United Nations Initiative For a World Without Barriers) Awarded for being an Innovative Practise.

Chris said Gallezeum is all about breaking down the glass barriers between people and art.

““Artworks are all too often shut away behind glass to protect them. But everyone wants to touch great artworks and historic objects; fossils, sculptures, crowns and ancient pots. With this boundary-breaking virtual reality technology in their hands the cultural explorer connects with the history and culture of the whole world. This technology puts the world’s collections right there in front of you,” he said.

“Gallezeum offers enormous opportunities for galleries and museums worldwide to reach new audiences with their collections. It also offers a superb opportunity for business investors to enter the highly prestigious arena of international art and culture,” Chris said.

Innovate UK Chief Executive, Dr Ruth McKernan said: “Innovate 2017 will be an ideal platform for Touch And Discover Systems Ltd to showcase their game-changing innovation to national and international businesses and investors. I congratulate Touch And Discover Systems Ltd on their success in winning a place. They are an excellent example of the strength of UK innovation.”

Physiotherapist and culture enthusiast Andy Mackenzie from Cheshire will be at Innovate UK demonstrating the technology live.

“Gallezeum has been a revelation. As a visually impaired person, it allows me to feel the shape and texture of valuable and rare artefacts, to get a sense of them as real objects. The audio interpretation provides extra texture and detail to this fascinating experience. This really will open up a world of new opportunities for people like me,” he said.

## **Ends**

Exhibition delegates, investors and journalists are invited to come and take a tour of Gallezeum at Innovate UK and to meet Chris and a group of blind and partially sighted culture voyagers.

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Innovate UK - For more information and ticket information, please visit the [INNOVATE 2017 website](#).