

patient blood or tissue samples are analyzed. Our guests were quite impressed with our flow cytometry facility. They were taught how single immune cells, due to their unique biological features, can be selectively sorted and analyzed from a mixture of blood or tissue cells. In addition to fluorescent and magnetic cell sorting, the visitors were fascinated with our microscopy facility, pipetting robots, and DNA sequencing. During the tour, we explained the complexity of the immune system that is capable to defend against pathogens but also cause autoimmunity

in some individuals. We also provided insights into our recent research, and discussed the underlying mechanisms that cause chronic inflammatory diseases and therapeutic approaches commonly used for patient treatment.

The children were particularly excited with the hands-on experiments: they analyzed their own blood under the microscope (Figure 6) and searched for rare white blood cells. It was not only the children who showed enthusiasm for their first experiments by learning to pipette microbeads for magnetic cell sorting; the

adults were also eager to isolate their own DNA from oral mucosa.

All our visitors left the event full of impressions about immunology and immunological research. We are already looking forward to opening our doors again next year on June 9.

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Day of Immunology in Australia and New Zealand

Our countries might only have a small population, but with two Nobel Prize winning Immunologists, Frank MacFarlane Burnet and Peter Doherty, Australia and New Zealand continue to produce world leading immunology research. Geographically our land mass easily covers continental Europe which is a lot of space to share immunology with the public!

Day of Immunology is celebrated by each local branch of the Australasian Society for Immunology (ASI), which encompasses eight Australian States and territories and New Zealand. They host a variety of events including public lectures, laboratory discovery tours, student workshops, a touring photography exhibition, a vaccination café, immunology baking competitions and much more.

Every year the build up to the 29th of April is always an exciting time for me. Curating art exhibitions, preparing events, planning radio show interviews and other news items, whilst always tweeting! There is a buzz in the air!

In this article I will focus on two novel and innovative events which have dramatically gained momentum in the past two years.

“Snapshots of the Immune System” art exhibition

It has always been one of my personal ambitions to curate a photography exhibition because it combines a few of my

favourite interests – art, science, and promoting immunology to the public. In 2016 I started the “Snapshots of the Immune System” art exhibition with the idea of taking science into public spaces. That year the event was held in a converted warehouse café and in 2017 the exhibition was held at the Stables of the historical converted art precinct “The Melbourne Meat Market” in North Melbourne (Figure 1).

This year the response to bringing art and immunology together continues to be phenomenal. Forty-four researchers from around Australia and New Zealand contributed “artworks” with a total of 48 images exhibited. This year the exhibition extended beyond microscopy to also include 3D printed models of Mucosal-Associated Invariant T-cell Immune

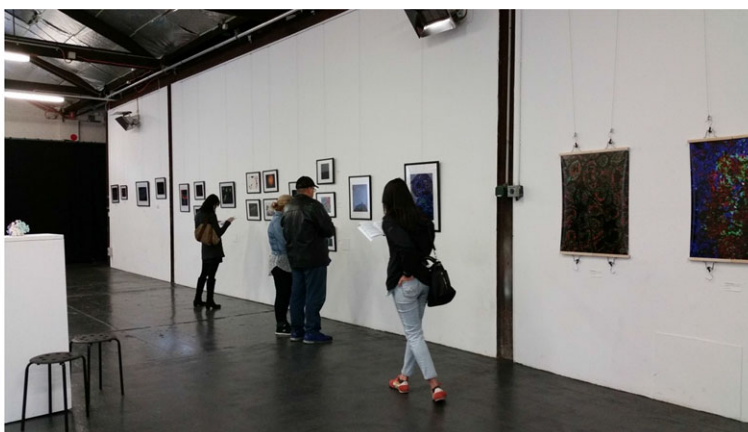


Figure 1. “Snapshots of the immune system” art exhibition where microscopy becomes abstract art, The Melbourne Meat Market, North Melbourne, Australia, 2017.



Figure 2. Students have a closer look at the immune system in the Monash Immersive Visualisation Platform, Clayton, Australia, 2017.



Recognition, Pleurotolysin, and virus particles (Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute, Australia).

I was also fortunate to collaborate with the Monash Immersive Visualisation Platform, the “CAVE”. This platform consists of computer screens covering 360 degrees; when standing in the centre of the circular space it gives the feeling that you are standing within the images. Members of the public and high school students from the John Monash Science School visited the CAVE exhibition and were immersed in the immune system (Figure 2).

The exhibition travelled to multiple locations around Australia for Day of Immunology events during April and May.

Vaccination café – helping out the herd with a double shot!

The concept behind the vaccination café is to provide educational information on how vaccines work and the benefits of

Figure 3. A shot of coffee after your influenza shot! What a nice way to help out the herd. The Melbourne Vaccination Café, Australia, 2017.

vaccination to the community. Attendees get a “double shot”, a coffee and a seasonal influenza vaccination. They also meet friendly scientists who are excited about discussing how the immune system works (Figure 3).

In 2013, in association with the Royal Institute of Australia the first vaccination café was held in Adelaide, South Australia. Since then the Vaccination Café has crossed state borders into Melbourne, Victoria, and it has gained momentum with the Mayor of Melbourne opening the 2017 event. It was held in the centre of the city on a Friday allowing people to drop by for their vaccination before, during

and after work. This year a number of local non-profit immunisation specialists (Vaccin8@work, Immunisation Coalition, North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network and City of Melbourne), provided over 500 seasonal influenza vaccinations and whooping cough boosters to the members of the public. This was a huge increase on last year's 220 vaccinations. An infant clinic hosted by City of Melbourne was also available on the day.

With social media, Europe, Australia and New Zealand are not that far away, so why not continue the conversation online? Check out our social media channels (Australasian Society for Immunology- Twitter:

@ASImmunology Facebook: ASImmunology; Day of Immunology- Twitter: @DayofImmunology Facebook: Dayofimmunology Instagram @doiaus), say hi and share some of your immunology research with us!

Every year my Australian and New Zealand colleagues are excited to bring immunology to the public. I can't wait to see what is installed for Day of Immunology 2018!

Dr Gabriela Khoury

Day of Immunology Coordinator and Social Media Manager for the Australasian Society for Immunology.