



**30^e Festival International
d'Arts Numériques**
18 > 21 Mars / Maison de la culture
Nuit des Arts Électroniques
21 Mars / La Coopérative de Mai

Expositions
19 Mars > 4 Avril

VIDEO²⁰¹⁵
FORMES
Clermont-Ferrand

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Director of publication : Loiez Deniel • **Editor in chief :** Gabriel Soucheyre

Proofreading : Evelyne Ducrot, Anick Maréchal, Gilbert Pons, Gabriel Soucheyre.

Coordination & lay out : Éric André Freydefont

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La Diode - 190/194 bd Gustave Flaubert - 63000 Clermont-Ferrand, France • tél : 04 73 17 02 17 •

videoformes@videoformes.com • www.videoformes.com •

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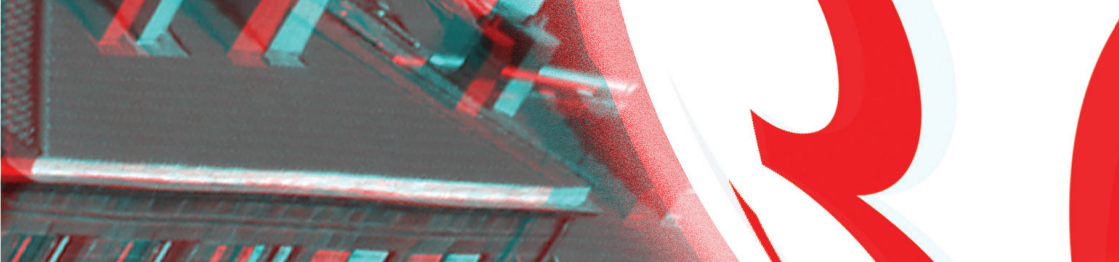
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Contacts

videoformes@videoformes.com

Tél. : +33(0)4 73 17 02 17



VIDEOFORMES 2015 • Editorial

A 30th edition, like a manifesto

Urged to make budget cuts in cultural programs in order to support the war effort, Churchill was said to have replied: "Then why are we fighting?" Internet prank, the rumor questions.

30 years, no small matter!

It's a choice, an initiative, a desire that has been validated, comforted with time.

And passed on. On the ground, helped by proximity, action then experience have been shared, solicited and also supported, questioned, encouraged... On the national and international stage, it was ironically easier to attract the attention of renowned artists and the youngest generation. The role of "mentoring" that some carried out, Nam June Paik, bonds of friendship with Gary Hill, Bill Viola, John Sanborn, Steina Vasulka were enough to establish the good reputation of an event that took care to present the artists it supported and to welcome everyone: professionals, the "general public", young audiences.

It wasn't easy to convince the cultural policymakers at all levels, but the role played by VIDEOFORMES on these stages ended up persuading them, also helped by the advent of an art, video art, institutionalized in educational programs; and as for digital art, the wave has pushed on and questioned everyone. The motto? Think global, act local! And it worked.

Even if we are by nature and mission disposed to observe and anticipate the future of contemporary art creation, the numbers call out to us. And if we start to measure the progress, visit the archives,... and be astonished once again: the first exchanges of images on a network (1989, la Pomme sur le Dôme) long before Internet (Transpac), the first collaborative experiments (1998, the *Forum des Désirs* by Ghislaine Gohard, with Tamara Laï, Guy Naozec...); an experimental social network (the Digital Club) long before the arrival of Facebook and others...; a quarterly review *Turbulences Vidéo*, today in digital form; an art gallery of time (Chapelle de l'Oratoire), a place for experiments and collaborations with artists as well as territorial and international partners; digital archives that make up year after year a heritage of mostly independent creations; a program of residences between local artists and the rest of the world; a commitment to teach images with original proposals for young people; and... and... too many things, too many adventures to list them all here comprehensively.



VIDEOFORMES 2015 • Introduction

The proposals for this thirtieth edition will remain faithful to the original idea: explore, observe, choose, produce (sometimes), make the link between the works and the audience notably by inviting artists who make a mark on this fast-expanding artistic field, facilitate questions and debates in panel discussions.

From its origins, video art experimented and developed many artistic forms: installations, happenings, performances, network art... and little by little it surrounded, like a virus, the traditional fields : dance, theater, poetry, literature without mentioning cinema and television. The digital "revolution" amplified in an exponential way the hybridization of artistic fields, writings and works produced for more than a decade.

If the approximately 68 videos in competition encapsulate the current production, the emphasis will be put on a collection of performances, whether it be for the Night of Electronic Arts (XVIIth edition) or for a special evening in which a large part is devoted to collaborative experimentation, for images as well as for sound creation.

Many productions will make their world première in Clermont-Ferrand: John Sanborn and his mega installation V+M that deals with what troubles our world, love and war, José Manlius and his sensorial propositions, Vessels by Gregory Robin and Annabelle Playe (artists in residence).

And if we had to prove that contemporary artists are on the same wavelength with their times, the philosophical and societal dimension of the work by Gérard Chauvin and Lanah Shaï questions genre and identity.

On her own, Catherine Ikam could represent the spirit of this 30th edition: her work *Faces*, co-signed with Louis Fléri, is the picture of current research in immersive and interactive works and her other piece, *Digital Diaries*, a three-dimensional work, sums up with its view of the last 30 years from the dawn of video art on the public stage. What should leave a mark is likely the emphasis on performances in all genres, the beginning of a collaboration-exchange with Transcultures that will lead us to participate in the program of Mons Capital European of Culture with Transnumériques in November and the Grand BYOP (Bring Your Own Projector), the manifesto in images and sounds of the dynamic and creativity of actors present in our area.

Loïez Dénier & Gabriel Soucheyre



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VIDEO_AGE

par Stéphane Troiscarrés

A vast corpus of video art critique exists that details its subjects and concerns. Personalities and themes are commented upon, but much more rarely is the question of video or animated images approached in the form of a discretization of time and of space.

That is to say in the form of a set of images video recorded concatenated units in order to produce continuations of morphological and semantic connections that create meaning. The theoretical radicalness that strips affect and hagiography from video enables the approach to the question in a mathematical form that calls to mind the informational, energetic, and spatial nature of image sequences connected to results that are more or less meaningful or more or less random.

This formal position might seem sterile if the combinations that this causes were not so vast... Indeed, the videographer who is relieved from the discourse is then free to find in the abundance of possible combinations the unexpected interpretations all of which are possible worlds; the multitude of choices make the author responsible for the direction he will have chosen. Far from relinquishing the demands of the artist and the singularity of his vision, this method causes many more significant risks than the egotistical immobility of the conventional author.

Multiplicity causes an extraordinary ontological risk, it's like being at the edge of a galaxy gazing at millions of light years that submerge us and

choosing one star out of all of them.

That is how I interpret the *Video_Age* project that came from the experience of the procedural montage called *Cage Suite*.

VIDEOFORMES and **Grand Canal** are two pioneering institutions of video art in France who have amassed a collection of historical works... All these works are available beyond the patrimonial intent. How to reactivate them and give them a new historical perspective if it is not to re-inject them into a contemporary project?

Gabriel Soucheyre, Alain Longuet and I joined together after the "*Cage Suite*" project in order to experiment with a new context for these images.

I could have shown them in the places they were shot to show the work of time and space. I could have redone similar shots in order to show the transformation of the cultural field. I preferred to apply a theoretical formalism and manipulate them as if they had been a collection of digital spaces that I put in relation with functions to the nth degree.

That is how I produced 45 minutes in which the

images slide over each other and provoke unexpected connections. The images accumulate, produce improbable bijections, and disrupt temporalities in the daydream of all possible worlds.

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TRANSCULTURES@

VIDEOFORMES 2015

par Julien Delaunay

Founded in 1996 in Brussels, Transcultures is historically the first interdisciplinary center for digital cultures in Belgium. It also has strong international recognition; its productions and artists are shown regularly around the world. After settling in 2008 in Mons where Transcultures started the festival City Sonic¹, in 2003, sound art has become a strong component of the inter and interdisciplinary fields that Philippe Franck and his team defend. But Transcultures has also reinforced the digital dimension, refusing new ghettos and opening up as much as possible to the “traditional” cultural sphere. For its thirtieth edition, Vidéoformes has invited the dynamic Belgian structure² to present a selection of digital and audio-visual works (exhibition *Gif Art*, performances and video selection). Works from Vidéoformes will then be presented at the end of November in Transnumériques, the Biennial of digital cultures that will be, with City Sonic, an important event of Mons 2015, European capital of culture, which was chosen on a slogan “when culture meets technology”, and which could also summarize the position of Transcultures.

¹ - A book – *City Sonic, sound art in the city*, directed by Philippe Franck has just been published in a French-English version by Editions La Lettre Volée (Brussels). See also the website www.citysonic.be and the City Sonic CD compilations produced by Transcultures.

² - In 2014, Vidéoformes had already welcomed projects by Gauthier Keyaerts (in collaboration with François Zajéga for *Fragments #43-44*) and Thomas Israël (with his solo performance *Skinstrap*), other artists supported by Transcultures and the Numediart research institution at the Université de Mons, regular partner of the Center for sound and digital cultures.

Vidéoformes and Transcultures share a proto-digital art history, one coming from video and the other from audio-visual and theatrical hybridities. Both structures, who are part of RAN (Digital Arts Network that regroups around fifty international festivals, centers, research labs, art schools... initiated and coordinated by the Center for the Arts in Enghien-les-Bains, and of which Transcultures is a founding member), have evolved by defending digital cultures all the while remembering points of reference that led to their current development. Another common feature between the Clermont and Mons outposts is the strong taste for otherness and singularity that are, in these normative times, synonyms of resistance for an alter culture which must also update its modes of operation.

Last October, Gabriel Soucheyre was invited to Mons to present a digital selection from Vidéoformes during the event Vice Versa (from research to digital creation) organized by Transcultures within the framework of the "Quinzaine numérique" of the Walloon-Brussels Federation. He and Natan Karczmar (founder of Vidéocollectifs, international initiative of video exchanges that has been supported by both Transcultures and Vidéoformes) also met with the teachers at the Visual Arts School Arts. This school is a regular partner of Transcultures, notably for its program of conferences/encounters/workshops "Digital and sound emergences"³. The director of Vidéoformes also saw Jacques Urbanska, artistic co-commissioner of this first edition of Vice Versa, multi-artist who is also in charge of network/media arts projects for Transcultures. Within this framework, he coordinates the Transnumériques Awards⁴ that promote different network art forms (installations, performances, GIF,

memes, geo-localized systems,...). They decided to launch a joint call for projects and present the first stage in 2015 in Clermont-Ferrand. This year, the Transnumériques Awards are highlighting the GIF (animated images most often in a loop). "If GIFs from the beginning of the web were very simple, we are now observing a new generation of artists who appeared at the end of the 2000s and who have stretched the topical and esthetic range" remarks Jacques Urbanska. GIFs have been the subject of many online exhibitions⁵, but have also found their way into contemporary art galleries in the past few years. "The GIF particularly interests us through what it generates in terms of meeting points of a certain culture for which it has become, if not the emblem, at least an exercise in style..." point out Jacques Urbanska and Philippe Franck who had already presented an exhibition at the Maison Folie de Mons during the festival VIA in Mons. The exhibition was called spamm.be (from the name of the website launched at that time) and was about network arts which also awarded the Art(s) & Network(s) prize to Jim Punk, Fabien Zocco, as well as the project m0us310n.net / mon3y.us. The exhibition Gif Art for Vidéoformes extends this approach with a new selection of works in this format and three awards will be publically announced on the evening of March 21st.

The Transcultures selection at Vidéoformes

For Philippe Franck, "we can find in these uncontrolled network arts, which fly out from all directions and force us to rethink the mode of production and distribution, an energy and expansion that remind us, in a different technological, societal and cultural context, the explosion of video art in the 80s and 90s". A form

3 - The partnership Transcultures has with several Belgian art schools (Arts, La Cambre, Saint-Luc Bruxelles,...) as well as French schools (ENSA Nice-Villa Arson, ENSA Bourges, ESAD Strasbourg,...) has enabled dozens of student projects to be technologically supervised and then presented in the associated festivals City Sonic and Transnumériques; some have even been shown abroad.

4 - Formerly called "Mobile Awards-Art(s) & Network(s)".

5 - Transcultures also launched in 2013 the site spamm.be which, in a partnership with spamm.fr run by the artist-activist Systaime (spamm.fr had its first well-received offline exhibition at Transnumériques in 2012 at Galeries-Bruxelles), proposes works of net/web art from Belgian and international artists including a series of animated GIFs, but also a corpus of critical and theoretical texts on the different forms of network arts that the Transnumériques Awards also promote.

that he knew well at that time when working with the combo Hanzel & Gretzel⁶ which was often selected in video art festivals, then starting in the 2000s, with Régis Cotentin whose work is supported by Transcultures, including installation and performance forms. We find three phantasmagorical films (with music by Scanner, *Paradise Now*, *DJ Olive* and *Jean-Paul Dessy*/Musiques Nouvelles) from the French director in the Transcultures video selection for this edition of Vidéoformes, as well as works, in a very different esthetic, from the Belgian-Portuguese visual artist Natalia de Mello who plays with technoid culture with a scathing low-tech humor. There are also four short videos from the young visual artist and Brussels post-rock musician Stéphanie Croibien whose poetic and sensual world is lined with a certain melancholy, as well as two intriguing and just as uncategorizable works from the partners Jacques Urbanska and Paolo Dos Santos (Swiss-Portuguese director, actor, and performer).

Christophe Bailleau, invited by *Paradise Now*⁷ to produce the live soundtracks for the Bring your own projector evening on March 20th at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture of Clermont-Ferrand, is also here with *Sérotones* and *Fumigènes* that both play on vibratory and subtle relations between still yet changing images of a strange everyday life, and interlacing electronic music textures. This dynamic connection image-sound that applies complementarities more than simple collage would be one of the common themes in this heterogeneous selection that also reflects an often exhilarating hybridity and – says Philippe Franck – an “obstinate refusal for house arrest” that is dear to Transcultures since its origins.

A French actress, performer, and director who is

6 - Daniel Mangeon, who passed away in 2000 and whose meteoric and subliminal work continues to be defended by Transcultures.

7 - Hybrid Brussels musician, collaborator with poets (including Gerard Malanga and Ira Cohen), videographers, choreographers, directors and other sound researchers.

settled in Brussels and very transcommunitarian in a country where culture, although thoroughly mixed, is institutionally split, Ariane Loze⁸ personifies artistic freedom that is at the heart of the Transcultures commitment. Her *MOWN* (*Movies of my own*) in which she performs every role in front of and behind the camera, are examples of the contextual dimension that Transcultures explored through its projects and festivals (City Sonic with its sound installation journeys metamorphosing places in the center of Mons each summer is a resonant example) and which also undoubtedly explains the dissemination of her projects that are highly adjustable and adaptable to different presentation frameworks and which also provide for these stages to complete their production.

The duo made up of Christophe Bailleau and Philippe Franck who, in addition to their activities at Transcultures and *manège.mons*, has been quite active since the 80s in the field of sound and inter-media creation, is invited to create a concert-video on March 19th that goes through impressionist tracks, post-folk fragments and electro chiaroscuro pieces that interact with images, snapshots of a crazed surreality that all have been produced by the two associates. Pastoral like Gauthier Keyaerts aka The Aktivist, 48 Cameras, Steve Kaspar, Isa Belle + *Paradise Now*, Supernova, Maurice Charles JJ... and other adventurous Belgian sound artists who are defended by Transonic, a “label for music and other sounds” launched by Philippe Franck (with Gauthier Keyaerts), on which City Sonic compilations can also be found.

In addition to audio and paper publications that Transcultures produces or to which this “nomadic center” collaborates, it is also very much involved on the web with its dedicated sites, but also by supporting a monitoring platform *arts-numeriques.info* (a breeding-ground for news, calls for projects, documents, and

8 - We also see her in the video by Jacques Urbanska and Paolo Dos Santos, *Ball Bunny Girl*, in the selection Transcultures@Vidéoformes 2015.

articles that Transcultures wishes to develop and open up even more to the community) initiated by Jacques Urbanska.

Convinced that the current artistic production chain can not overlook both the reflection dimension (including publications, organization of debates, conferences, symposiums and de-compartmentalized encounters and other “open-source think tanks”) and an awareness/mediation – that also is to be reinvented – with digital tools but also the uses and imagination that they generate, Transcultures has developed a workshop program “Creative Kids” in Mons (notably with the Mons FabLab that Transcultures is a part of), but also in Brussels, in Wallonia and in the north of France, proposing throughout the year, short and adapted workshops⁹ given by creators to a young public as well as publics described as “blocked” or “disadvantaged”. In Philippe Franck’s opinion, we need to first identify then link and undoubtedly reinvent all these “transcultures” not only artistic, but also societal, economic, and technological. It’s a little bit of this great connective and libertarian adventure that is there for us to see and listen to at Vidéoformes 2015 through the forms that favor the intimate encounter to the overall show.

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9 - These customized workshop programs are called “Digital Kids”, “Sonic Kids”, “Digital Nomades”... according to whether they are more centered on new sound or digital practices, or if they seek out specific communities.

V+M BY JOHN SANBORN

by John Sanborn

Power, Myth, Desire

The ultimate strength is the capacity to love.

The story of Venus and Mars has fascinated poets and philosophers for millennia, as the couple is the mythic example of balance between opposing energies – beauty and brutality, male and female, Chaos and Eros; grace and strength.

Their story is timeless. Venus is the goddess of love and beauty. With exquisite features and magical smile Venus attracted many suitors – gods and mortals alike. But Venus was married to the graceless and ignorant Vulcan, the god of fire. One day, true love appears in the form of Mars, the god of war – but known for defending the peace. Their attraction was instantaneous and comprehensive. Their adulterous affair gives evidence to the ultimate power of desire and the triumph of love – and their story is the stuff of myth.

They find peace and comfort in their deepening relationship, as they discover new ways in which they compliment each other; trading values and viewpoints until they are united in purpose and dream.

Their love reigns, until they are discovered by a jealous Vulcan and exposed to the ridicule and denunciation of the other gods on Mt. Olympus.

They are banished and disgraced. But all is not lost – championed by Cupid they are reunited – sustained by a connection that transcends convention. The child of their love is the beautiful Harmonia – who unites the forces of nature.

In myth, only Venus dominates Mars, who yields his strength to their bond. In the presence of Venus, Mars is often seen disarmed and relaxed, but the illicit nature of their affair also suggests that emotional peace is impermanent.

V+M is a mythic retelling of their story that goes beyond the heteronormative code by featuring male-male and female-female versions of Venus and Mars, in order to get to the essences that describe the balance of power in relationships, the nature of myth making and the origins of desire. Beyond gender, what brings us together – and what forces us apart?

The objective is to define and describe what are the attributes that make “Venus” and “Mars” such powerful characters. The work explores their nature, and asks us why these figures have endured and have such influence on our individual sense of self-image.

V+M operates on an intimate, emotional level, but it also addresses the scale of archetypes to influence current culture, for better and worse. We find *V+M* in politics, fashion, and war. We are fascinated by the duality they represent and we find ways to both adhere to and defy convention in order to model their love in our own lives.

V+M invites the viewer to get lost in the natural laws that govern this story, filled with sensual stimulation – but at the same time, pay attention to the gestures, sounds and feelings of this reimagined couple and their story. The dance movement is intense and carnal and the text is a blend of street slang and poetry. The music is founded on the arcane textures of the cello, but mixes in urban electronics, and contemporary sound design to orchestrate in operatic terms the vibrant attributes of Venus and Mars.

The work proceeds around the 3 groups of 3 screens, mixing and collaging the story of Venus and Mars in a non-linear but cogent order. The work is composed of 12 scenes, which traces their origins, profiles each character, expounds on their denunciation, and listens to the consequences that stemmed from their powerful but illicit romance.

There is a contemporary but eternal lesson here, not stated explicitly but embedded into the style of storytelling and the abstraction of the installed work. The work is intended to be felt by the body as well as absorbed by the mind, in ways *V+M* uses the attributes of the characters to tell their story. The work combines elements of grace, power, rules, rigor, magic and the ability of video to visualize alternate philosophies at work.

V+M always returns to the themes of power, myth and desire.

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VESSELS

by Gregory Robin
& Annabelle Playe

par Gregory Robin & Annabelle Playe

« Vessels » is a collaboration between Gregory Robin (filmmaker) and Annabelle Playe (musician, singer, and visual artist) on a set in which their respective disciplines intersect

The vessel is what transports, but it is also the body and what moves inside us, such as blood vessels.

"Vessels" propose a poetic area at the center of movement through a dynamic relationship between images, music, and voices. The voices are vehicles for a voyage that is internal, geographical, and sidereal.

It is a round trip between what moves around inside us and what carries us further, questioning our view of what is around us, and the way in which we position ourselves in our physical and intimate geographies.

The images, essentially made up of seascapes filmed on the Opal Coast, are systematically inverted during editing, blurring the view that we have of what is around us. They are filmed by Gregory Robin in a classical manner, then taken apart and reworked like the sound composition in collaboration with Annabelle Playe, who brings her musical ear and her sensibility

for visual art: repetition of a pattern, developments, breaks and continuity, variations, stretching, nuances. The dynamic editing of the images interacts with the music in a contrapuntal, harmonic, or dissonant way.

The music, starting from a system that mixes analogic synthesizers, filters, and computers, alternates between electronic and electroacoustic. Sounds from different sources are processed and mixed in with analogic sounds.

"Vessels" is a journey toward the informal, the unadorned light of images calling upon us to listen, and bringing us back immediately at the end of the voyage.

© Gregory Robin & Annabelle Playe, 2015 –
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Art as a sign of a new ethic!

par Les quantiques

José Man Lius (from Latin: Join) is an interdisciplinary video artist based in Paris who works on hybridization and the relation to moving images in space to create perceptive and immersive experiences. His diversified work adopts forms that decompartmentalize Art and its relation to life.

"The superposition of cultural mixtures" of his origins (West Indies: Afro-Indo-European) and the influence of the theories on "mixed-race thought" by the historian Serge Grusinsky led José Man Lius to question the body, the flow of images, and the process of metamorphosis according to a protocol that reveals a paradoxical vision.

Signalétique: sign of a new ethic (2003). *Self-portraits* (2008), *Absence of man's command of his environment* (2010), *Fountain man* (2011), *Blue Man* (2012) create the signs of a "contemporary mythology" that takes into account the interaction between Art, new technologies, scientific revolutions, impact with *Resonance* (Nassim Hamein, astrophysicist) and ancestral immaterial knowledge.

In this quest for quantum meaning, José Man Lius puts the perception of depth and extension of the body to the test in environments with new experiments in a given context.

Intrusion (2012), shows the subaquatic and toxic beauty of plastic particles that float in the ocean.

José Man Lius invites the public to rediscover reality, focusing on the infinitely big to the infinitely small, on the confrontation with space-time, on forces of nature, to nano-technologies.

Bio Vs Ogm (2013-14) questions the world perceived through our body and the invasive osmosis in nature with the help of scarification and taxidermy. The living organism becomes a print-drawing-sculpture, testimony of genetic manipulation, of standardization, and of new consumption patterns.

The notion of creation evolves little by little towards the predominance of the project and the functioning of the film author-director-producer who tends to free himself from the context.

At the festival VIDEOFORMES 2015, José Man

Lius will unveil the first part of an immersive work entitled *Lux Vox Corpore* (Light Voices Bodies). An interdisciplinary evolutive video project that is interactive – lyrical – architectural. The interest of this project is to allow the public to participate in the experience of climate change by becoming part of the work.

Immersion: multi-track video projection – a maze of hanging mobile mirrors that refract the moving image – Tragedy – Lyrical opera – Murmuring of stranger who move around the space – Bodies in movement – Performance of choreographers. It's also a new interactive experience in which the body of the spectator becomes part of the work.

The content of the work inspired by the “hours” of Greek mythology interprets in a “poetic way the cycle of seasons”. “*Lux Voce Corpore*” is a protean work in which processes never stop mixing, intersecting, and complementing one another. Thanks to this process, the artist denounces human activity that threatens the balance of nature by taking us towards an awareness of the mutations of society, hyper-consumerism or even globalization.

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In praise of sensitive technology

Interview with Catherine Ikam by Paul Ardenne (exerpts)

Paul Ardenne: In the presentation of one your works – *Valis*, in Paris at the Centre Pompidou, in 1987 – you quote this phrase by Philip K. Dick, “Reality is what refuses to disappear when you stop believing in it.” And yet, beginning in the 1980s, your work seems to suggest that reality needs to be taken on by the image – notably electronic – and complexified, replayed via visual simulacra, virtually and no longer according to the traditional criteria of realism. In short, “to disappear”...

Catherine Ikam: I've always liked playing with the appearance of things. I wondered what image of ourselves the different technologies surrounding us reflect back. Is it the construction or destruction of our identity? At first, I worked with video. I used it like a distorted mirror, for its potential to create a discrepancy with reality: presence/absence, pause, discontinuity, time lag; fragmentation in space, change of scale. I created an exhibition in 1980 at the Centre Georges Pompidou that was a piece revolving around expectation: a game visitors played with themselves in search of their identity as the cameras presented it, fragmented in the installation space or with a time lapse. That same year, in 1980, I discovered the work of Philip K. Dick, which had a big influence on me. He describes a universe where you can no longer distinguish between illusion and reality, where the memories that warrant our experiences are totally artificial. I started working on

a video adaptation of his novel *VALIS* (“Vast Active Living Intelligent System”), which is an astonishing metaphor for what the Internet turned out to be a few years later.

The exhibition at the MEP is presented as a retrospective covering over a quarter century of your artistic work. Could you specify the major themes?

The main theme is identity, the way we perceive ourselves through the prism of technology that allows us to revisit different archetypes. There's this quote by Emmanuel Levinas that seems very accurate, “The face that looks at me affirms me”. We exist in function of what we look at. It's the face-to-face encounter that makes us exist. Face to face with the other that could be our own face. Face to face with our desire to be deluded... In *Identité III*, each visitor is filmed from different angles using cameras fitted with lenses of varying focal lengths and then faced with his or her own fragmented image magnified on nine screens. Further on, *Elle* and *Oscar*, virtual characters that possess artificial intelligence with unpredictable moods, await the visitor for an unlikely encounter that's different every time.

What's the operating principle of *Elle* or else of the interactive faces like *Oscar*? Is it a real interactivity, or simply a formal game between the viewer and the

animated piece?

Starting in 1990, it became possible to model more and more believable faces using human faces, and I became fascinated with that. I thought it was interesting to work in the margins of the living and the artificial. When does a human face stop being human and become a model you can reproduce ad infinitum? What parameters of artificial intelligence must these models have to create the illusion they possess intentionality and autonomy?

The issue isn't technological prowess but the emotion these artificial characters awaken within us. That comes from the fact that the real time interaction lets you create the illusion that an encounter has taken place.

All of your work talks about the body: that of the viewer, that which the work stages. It also talks about the face too, the seat of identity that you reduce to the point of creating "replicants", in the words of Philip K. Dick, that can't be distinguished as human or machine. Identity blurring?

The first short story I read by Philip K. Dick, *The Variable Man*, which Peter Földes recommended to me, tells the story of earth getting invaded by automatons that are more and more perfected in their semblance. The last 'model' is in the form of a little boy with a teddy bear missing an eye. These little boys arouse pity in humans and through that, they manage to invade the earth and populate it with androids that wipe out any trace of life. It's also the theme of *Blade Runner*, where we find flesh and blood beings that are almost capable of feelings, but not empathy.

I feel nostalgia for these intermediary beings that are the angels of our time.

There's something which remains problematic in interactivity: the relationship of immediacy that's obligatory in a work of art, the challenge of memory. Are we not, in front of your works, condemned to the instant, deprived of history?

I don't think so. First of all there's the question of our relationship to the temporality of the works. That starts with the video feedback that projects what the camera is filming onto a screen, then there are the time delay devices. Next comes the interactive works in real time, in other words where the delay of response between the action and reaction is below our threshold of perception. What I mean is that interaction isn't an end in itself. What counts is the content of a work, the emotional charge or the magic it's capable of generating. No technological device, no matter how entrancing, is self-sufficient.

For me, the absence of perspective, of historical depth seems linked to the era we live in, it needs the immediacy you're talking about, more than the use of technology, no matter what that might be. It's the opposition that Gilles Deleuze talks about in *A Thousand Plateaus*, between the smooth and the striated. For me, smooth is flattening out perspective, the impeccable surface of all these advertising images. The striated is the strata of our history with its accidents and ruptures.

Regarding this, I recently felt the need to delve back into my own history. I looked for photos, bits of film and video, voice recordings... all sorts of odds and ends lying about my studio in Montreuil that I'd forgotten about and that, in 2005, were very present in my life. For example, that particular afternoon near 1982 where Jean-Paul Fargier and I were playing around with a handheld camera when Allan Kaprow came along, took the camera and made an impromptu happening.

Last year in Fresnoy, you presented a monumental interactive work calling on multiple parameters of utilisation and, this time, bits of human memory: post cards, photographs, visual references to the past... What place does this creation – on display at the MEP exhibition – hold in the continuum of your work?

Digital Diaries is a work about memory, about the passage of time. It's memory that's become a space, a landscape, a sort of laminated continuum made up of photos from childhood – mine and others as well – of encounters – some of them recorded and others that didn't happen – and many faces you glimpse by chance over the course of life.

Next to these illusory faces, there are others whose traces make up the virtual landscape of *Digital Diaries*, faces encountered here and there, but that slip out of reach and can't be grasped, very different from the smooth and integral aspect of those that never existed. As if the creation of the ones formed a kind of talisman against the disappearance of the others. What's important for me in this installation isn't the interactivity but the immersion in a kind of Palace of Memory that's like being in a forest where you feel a little lost, like Tom Thumb.

More technically, we created a 3D database comprised of about 500 elements, photos, video, text, voices and sounds. Each element that's part of a family is assigned a position in the 3D database. This database, that we're able to navigate around in, is progressive and animated by a continual movement in real time. A system of stereoscopic projection and glasses lets us see it in 3D.

Technology as a means of presenting life in a variety of forms, in a way...

Fragmentation of form, discrepancy of time, simulation, histories to be lived, frozen mirrors,

distorted mirrors. What's important for me isn't to favour one form of technology over another but to find dream paths, in the Aboriginal sense, a kind of magic. Like Nam June Paik said, "There is no rewind on the betamax of my life."

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SCREEN CLOTHES

or screen clothes and prejudice

By Lanah Shaï & Gérard Chauvin

SCREEN CLOTHES is a video installation that questions us on our individual freedoms in the face of **globalization**. What place can an individual demand when confronted with a world order that drowns personal identity in stereotypes, and that generates in return conservative reactions and traditionalist demands for recognition?

We can see that secular powers are regaining strength, whether it be on women's rights, discrimination towards alter-sexualities, censures put on bodies, desires, thought, and art. The old demons of moral order resurface against a world, commercial, and financial order that considers the individual as a production and consumption unit with no real identity.

The different performances shown in *SCREEN CLOTHES* give a voice to individualities. Whether it be the poem about the ordeal of Sahar Gül, a young Afghani woman who was tortured by her in-laws, or the one about Lanah Shaï that speaks of difficulties living with her trans-identity in a fiercely binary world, or the performances by Agnes Bttfn and

Gérard Chauvin about questioning censure and the body's place in the public sphere that is based on the permissive model of art history.

All these subjects are echoes to the violent events of our era, replacing the human element and its fundamental freedoms in the face of censure, pressure and threats. The decline of rights is never very far from the oppression of laws. From this fragile dividing line, people who are non-conformist, in the minority, or dominated can fear regressive upheaval as it often happens in periods of crisis.

Like a polyglot crowd, words, faces, and bodies express themselves by rooting out "screen clothes" like beings seeking to make their uniqueness

and message known. This sample of humanity spreads their words which get lost in the collective and universal brouhaha. Clothes as a sign of membership become the screen of a more profound identity, of an individuality that expresses itself.

This installation questions us on the urgency to rethink the place of the individual that is confronted with exogenous forces who would like to define their existential legitimacy. The real, authentic and unaccompanied being, who faces the diktats of societies, thought systems, and traditions, is obliged to engage in a desperate and solitary resistance in order to exist.

The videos and poetry of this installation, on the path towards politically committed art, are a testimony and act of resistance to imposed silence, censure, prejudices and totalitarian threats... It is a little scrap of humanity at war that expresses itself in *SCREEN CLOTHES*, a scrap of our own humanity.

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