Adrien M & Claire B

Last minute

Installation experience

Overview — updated October 2023

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inspiration / expiration

One day in May 2021, at low tide, I scattered my father's ashes into the sea not far from the Mont-Saint-Michel Bay, where he grew up.

In the pale light, the black headed sheep graze and bleat among the grasses watching our small group of people. We walk in silence, hands behind our backs, through the salt-meadow. A stream of green water runs gently towards the sea as wavelets tremble across its surface. The sky is streaked with thin cirrus clouds. Birds (wagtails perhaps?) sing in the crisp wind, their feet tracing tiny signs in the grey clay sand. By a cairn of granite stones, we take turns in sending the white ashes up into the brisk air, infinitely delicate clouds floating away.

Is etched into me the bracing beauty of that moment, the light of that minute stretched to infinity when my father's atomised body encompassed the world, the dust of his body mixing with the earth, wind and water. My father is the land, my father is the sea, my father is the wind, and his drawing is prolonged by an airplane's trail across the clear sky. My father has become vast, limitless and without time. He has suspended himself in the present.
I am pregnant, and as life within me assembles itself into a new body, life has left another. Mirrors of each other, a body comes together as another comes apart. A father has left just as a son is about to arrive. Vertigo.

Adrien and I wished to create a dream-like voyage from this intimate experience. A last-minute voyage, one undertaken just before the threshold is crossed. The starting point for this project, this immersive installation, is therefore the end. That last minute before death… or before birth.

We composed this symbolic and pivotal experience of a before and an after, of a body about to pass through to the other side, by placing ourselves among the elements, where matter resides. We wrote the story from the vantage point of a particle: being droplet, burning blaze, flying smoke, shivering ash, vibrating earth, slipping air, trickling rain, rising wave.
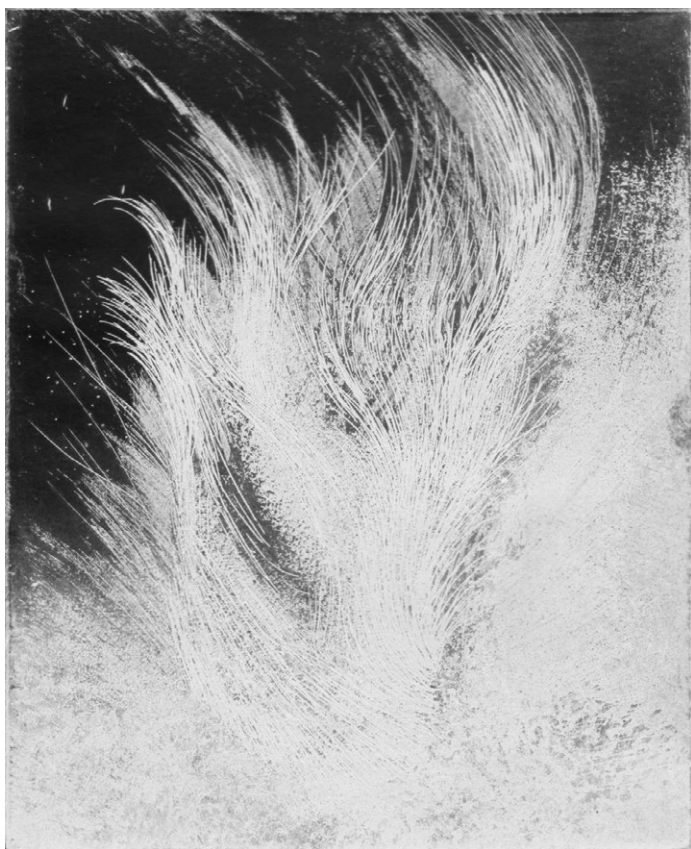
We hope that the small group of people who -during 30 minutes- will live this last drawn-out minute together grasp the ritual nature of the experience. A ritual to take care of our bereavements, our births and our metamorphosis.
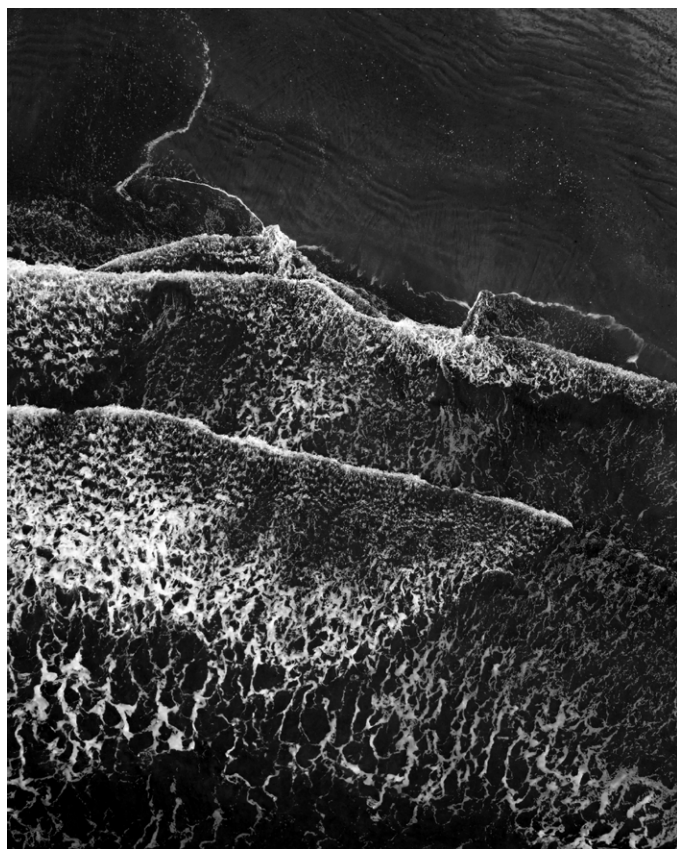
Claire Bardainne

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Droplet
photograph of a clay water droplet poured into water
image excerpt from the project *Last minute*

Fire
engraving (drypoint, etching and aquatint)
preparatory study for the project *last minute*
Claire Bardainne, June 2021

Water
drone footage
image for the project *last minute*
Adrien Mondot, February 2021

Summary

This work is at the crossroads of the living arts, performance art and installation work. It allows audiences to engage collectively and intimately in a dynamic and lively relationship with a space in transformation. Here are the experiences it encompasses:

An immersive experience
The audience in movement is immersed in images and spatialised music, in a large room where particles are projected onto the floor (20 to 50 people for 150 to 500m²). A tall and transparent screen rises at the heart of the space, a vertical prolongation of the image.

A sound and image performance
The images and the music (composed by Olivier Mellano) are subtly intertwined into a narrated visual symphony lasting approximately 30 minutes, allowing the music to be seen and the images to be heard. The projection, in black and white, draws on elemental imagery (fire, water, wind), and its progression borrows from physical phenomena (flows, spirals, waves, dispersion). Images are created by blending the motion of computer-generated particles with edited real-world videos.

An interactive experience
A static score (identical at each performance) is combined with a dynamic score (unique to each performance) which involves the audience: the images are altered by the presence and movements of the public by means of a network of infrared cameras and fine signal analysis, offering many ways for audience and score to interact.

A symbolic transformation
The narrative thread is one of metamorphosis, and it is the body of the audience itself that is at the heart of this transformation: consumed by fire, ashes dispersed by wind and rain, regenerated by water, the end becoming the origin in a perpetual loop.

Key word
immersion
metamorphosis
body
death
birth
elements
black & white
experience
symbolic
movement
particules
score
30 minutes

Research images for *Last minute,*
January 2022
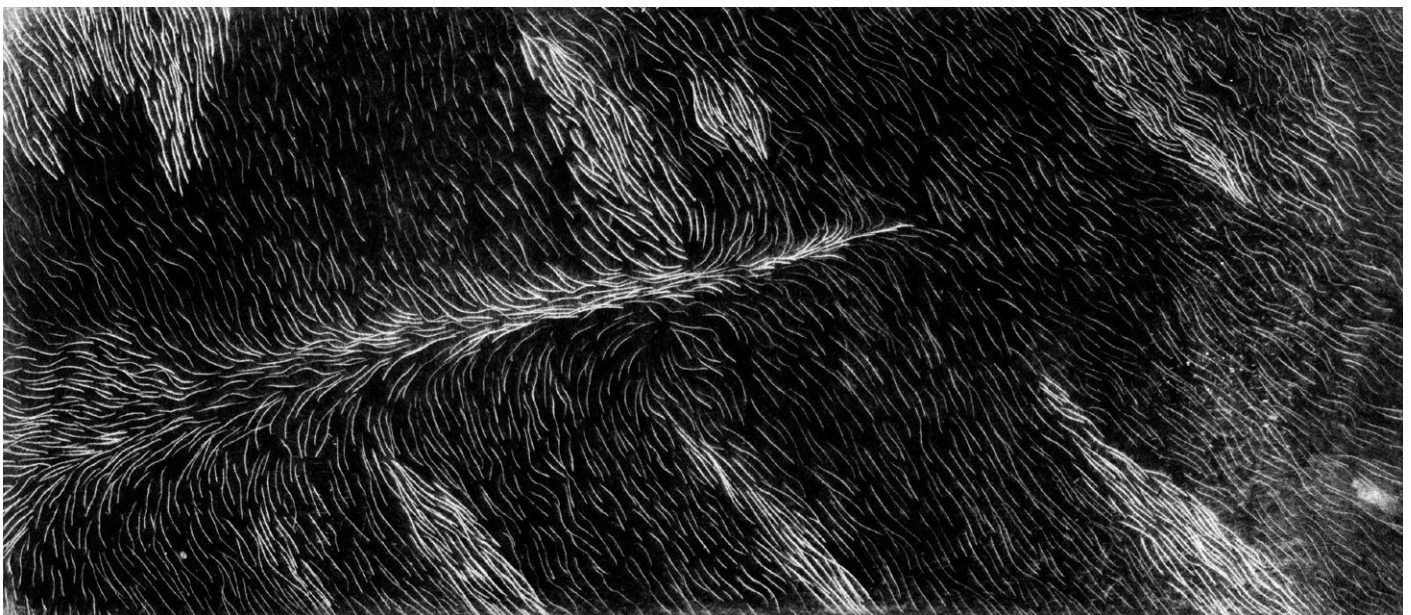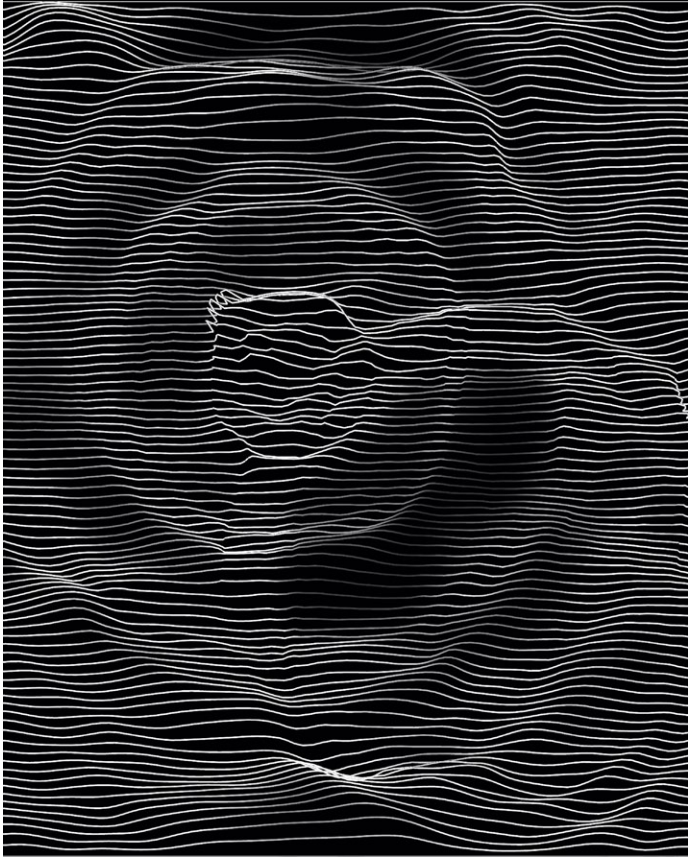
Researching water
textures for *Last minute*.
Computer generated
image using eMotion
(membrane) and drone
footage.

Detailed description

Background and intentions : a relationship with technologies intertwined with craftmanship and at the service of new rituals.

We use computers, video-projectors or augmented reality devices to create symbolic experiences of living, to play with different ways of being in the world, to arouse a sensitive attention to beings and things. We put digital tools at the service of the living, to make theatre, to create live moments shared by the living. We believe that poetry, beauty and metaphor are powerful keys, and it is with this intention that we use technologies. To disorient, cause reality to waver, fashion a symbolic theatrical experience.
Gatherings, festivals, shows, ceremonies, and all iterations of collective living that rely on the imaginary, the poetic, the symbolic and the sharing of emotions are for us an antidote to the fear of the other and the deconstruction of our social bond.
The project *Last minute* is a way of participating in the creation of new ways of being together, **new rituals**, in tune with contemporary social issues.

We're looking at how technologies can be used to build imaginary futures that are desirable, human and alive. We're looking at how to make it possible to use technological tools in the service of poetic, non-productive experiences, while at the same time using these same techniques to create an opposite socio-political arrangement. We want to work with these paradoxes and ambivalences associated with technology, as forces that must be articulated.
With this in mind, we aim for **the greatest possible technical sovereignty**. We build custom computers and software architectures. And the eMotion software, which Adrien Mondot has been developing since 2006, is at the heart of the making of *Last minute*'s images.

We also like to mix our digital work with **delicate craftsmanship**, the work of hands: drawing, lithographic printing, folded paper for Claire Bardainne, juggling that forms the basis of Adrien Mondot's relationship with movement.
For this project, the technique of engraving proved to be a preparatory research medium for Claire Bardainne. The copper plates, cut with drypoint or a chemical process, are inked. This practice, which is closer to sculpture than to drawing, looks at space, at the depth of strata. The lines carry movement and energy, but are also inscribed in time and embody a process of transformation of matter. The engravings were part of the process of creating the project: they acted as preparatory drawings, embodying the successive transformations of the elements - water, clouds, fire - their creation being in itself a metaphorical experience of transformation.

Music and synaesthesia

This writing between image and sound is part of a long-term collaboration with Olivier Mellano.
He signed in 2016 the music/sound score for the visual arts exhibition *Mirages & miracles*, the site-specific installation *The shadow of the vapor* in 2018, the stage performance and pop-up book in augmented reality *Acqua Alta* in 2019, and *Core* in 2020. For each project, renewed technical issues invite us to rethink our musical approach to images.

For this project, Olivier Mellano created a 30-minute piece of music. Based on this score, we built a symphony of forces applied to the images, finely tuned to the musical energy, allowing us to «see the music» and «hear the images».

Software architecture: image partitioning and motion flow

All the projected images are assembled by a conductor, the software Millumin, which superimposes the different layers of pixels involved in the composition of the work:
- videos taken from natural elements (landscapes filmed with a drone, fluid movements filmed with a close-up camera)
- motion flow analysis of these videos
- multiple particle systems, generated mainly by eMotion software
The score is executed in real time by the Vezer software, which also sends the music.
This software architecture responds to a challenge related to computing and writing: combining a static (recurring) and dynamic (offering unique variations for each performance) score.
The dynamic score is based on a subtle and sensitive interaction system, based on the flow of movement, or optical flow. The main aim of this interaction is to give audiences a feeling of belonging to the image environment, so that they become an integral part of it, and are in a permanent relationship with it. We are not looking for a spectacular effect, nor encouraging the production of gestures. The dramaturgy of the installation does not depend on the interaction but, in each of the transitory states, the interaction evolves with the environment.
It is this general organisation that gives the piece the feel of a large-scale interactive installation, while at the same time providing a legible narrative with a beginning and an end.

The body plunges into the image

The audience's body is an essential component of the experience. Strolling around barefoot in this sensitive and responsive environment, the public is invited to experiment with different postures : sitting on the carpeted floor, standing still or in motion. The body in dialogue with the image, set in motion by immersion and interactive images, carried along by a narrative, is the main actor in this dance of transformation. A simple gesture, a stillness, a step, a sophisticated movement will all coexist without hierarchy in this space and give it meaning.

Collaborations : possible performances in the installation

This artwork can accommodate danced performances, for performers, dancers, circus artists to inhabit the space and embody a relationship to the image that is singular, inspiring, infectious. These performances are subject to specific collaborations with local presenter, and therefore need to be re-invented for each new venue.
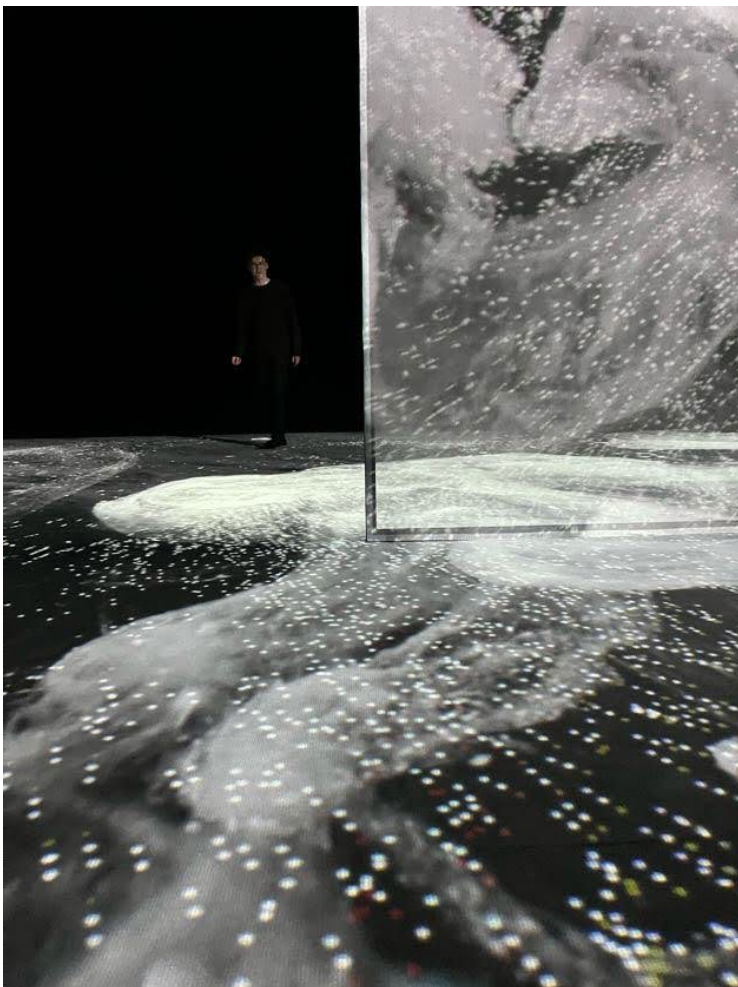
Research images for the
project *Last minute*,
June 2021
Crest — Villa Aphéa

Prototype for installation
with 120m² image on floor
and 40m² vertical surface.
The image on the floor
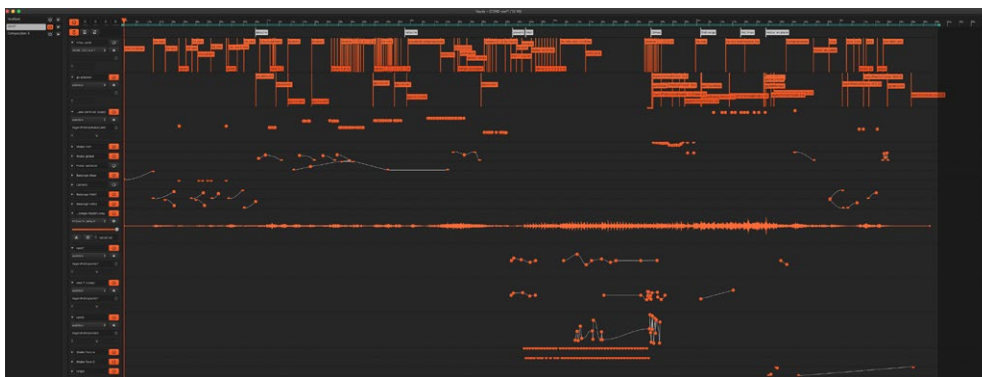gathers videos and gene-
rated particles.
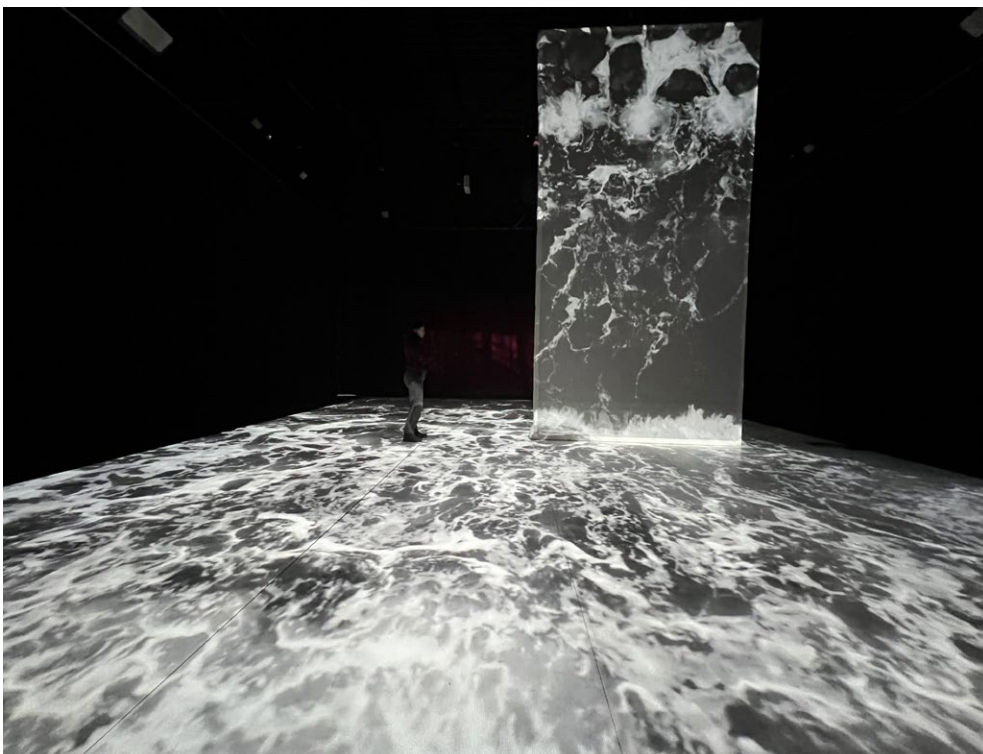
Research images
January 2021
Crest — Villa Aphéa
The size of the screen is
3m x 6,50 m, to emphasize
the vertical dimension.

Research images for *Last minute*,
January 2022.
Crest — Villa Aphéa

Example of score with the
software Vezer
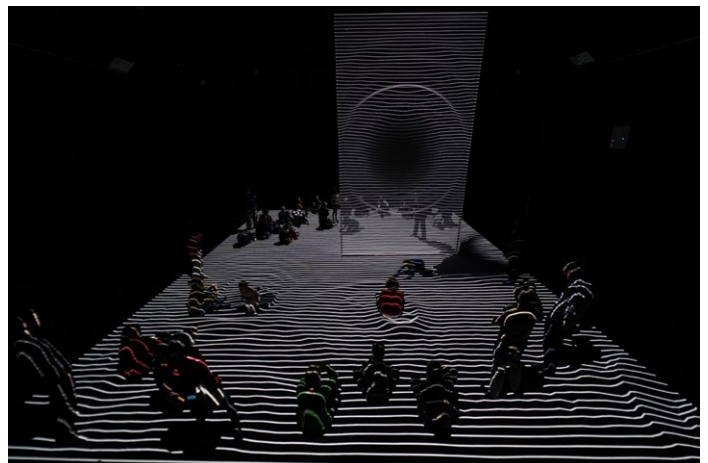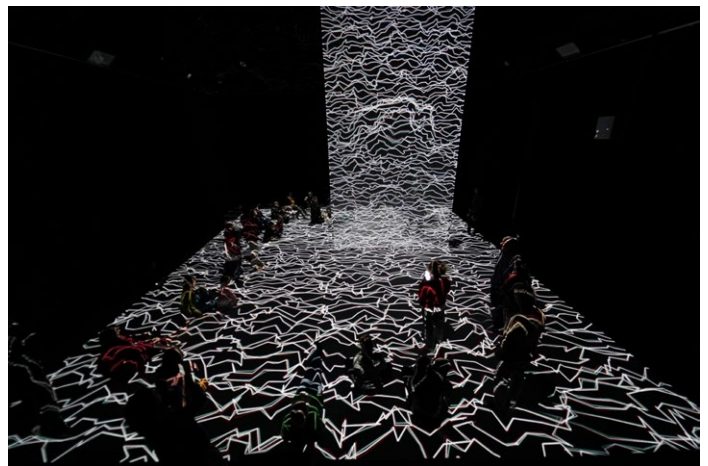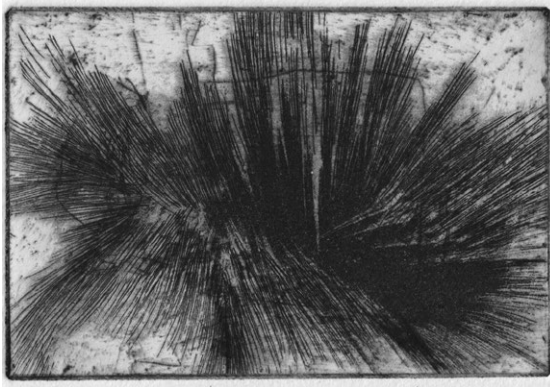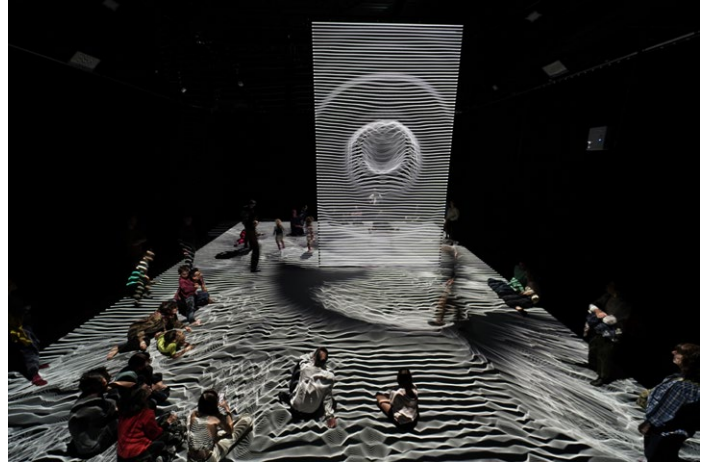
Propagation, maelstrom, shower, flame — various
states of matter

Claire Bardainne, June 2021
engraving (drypoint, etching and aquatint)
preparatory study for the project *Last minute*

Public screening
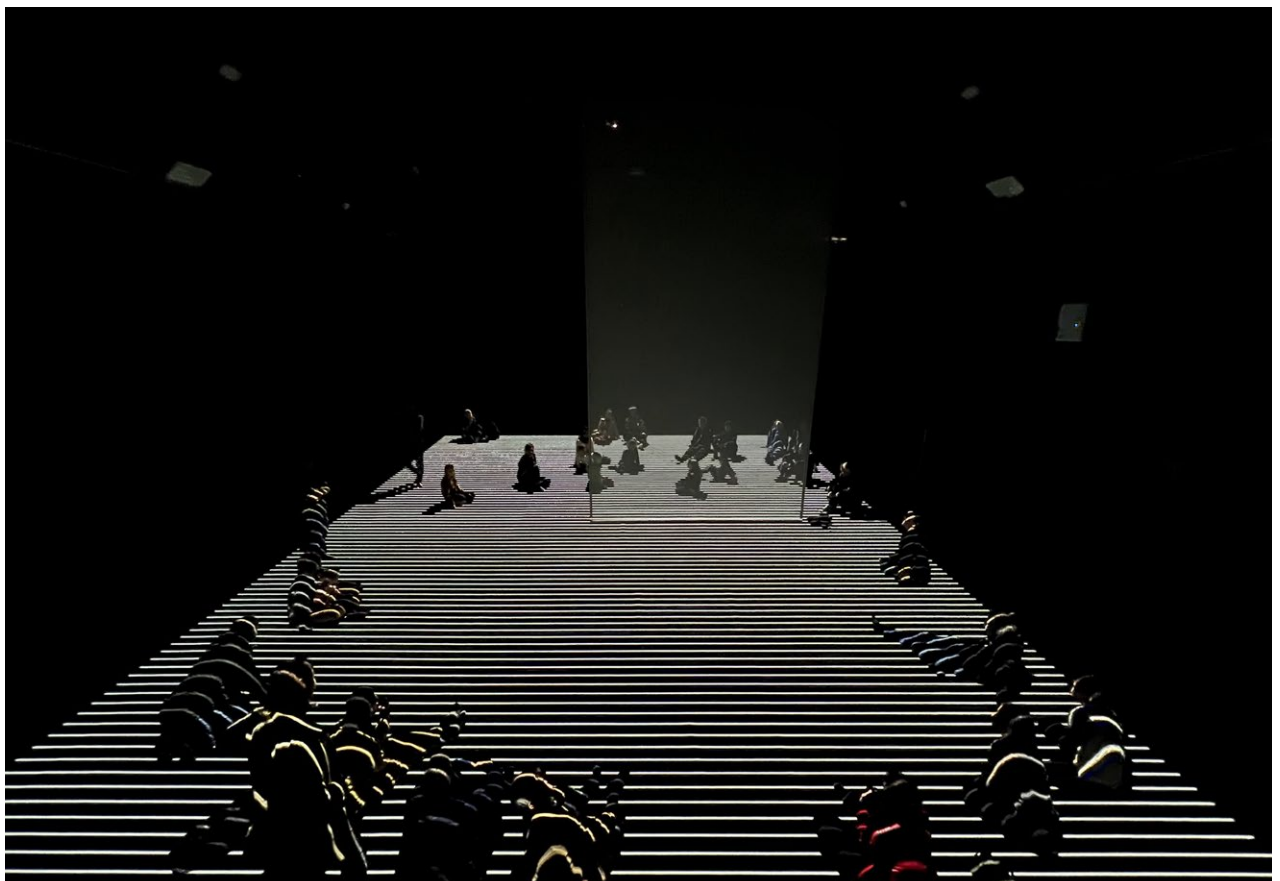September 2022
Crest —Villa Aphéa

Public screening
September 2022
Crest —Villa Aphéa

Public screening
May 2022
Montpellier — Halle Tropisme

Team and partners

Creative team

Adrien M & Claire B
Creation 2022

Concept and artistic direction: **Claire Bardainne, Adrien Mondot**
Music score and sound concept: **Olivier Mellano**
Computer design and development: **Adrien Mondot, Loïs Drouglazet**
Outside eye: **Stéfanie James**
Technical management: **Jean-Marc Lanoë**
Technical direction: **Raphaël Guénot**
Administration: **Marek Vuiton assisted by Mathis Guyetand**
Production and booking: **Joanna Rieussec**
Production: **Margaux Fritsch, Delphine Teypaz, Juli Allard-Schaefer**

Production
Adrien M & Claire B

Coproduction
Les Champs Libres, Rennes (FR)
Théâtre-Sénart, Scène Nationale, Lieusaint (FR)
Chaillot - Théâtre national de la Danse, Paris (FR)

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DRAC Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes : plan de sauvegarde du spectacle vivant 2020-2021
DICRéAM – Centre National du cinéma et de l'image animée

The Adrien M & Claire B Company is accredited by DRAC Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region and is supported by the City of Lyon (FR).

Adrien M & Claire B's project

Our company project is built around values, imaginaries and practices that bring together artistic intentions, as well as human, technical, social and environmental ones. These are the key themes that underpin each of our projects:

Collective intelligence and the value of working together, the group as a driving force for organisation and structuring, but also for innovation and fulfillment, by listening to the strengths and complementarities of different relationships to the world, making it possible to re-invent a way of (well) being together.

Crossing disciplines, hybridisation, breaking down boundaries, collage. Embodied in the very nature of our creations, which mix image, body and space, real and virtual. But also in the tools and methods of our creative process, blending professions, thoughts and postures.

Technical sovereignty, autonomy, digital ingenuity, craftsmanship, the appropriation of tools, the freedom to divert them, DIY.
We're looking at how to make it possible to use technological tools in the service of poetic, non-productive experiments, even though these same techniques can be used to implement an opposite socio-political arrangement. We're looking at how technologies can be used to build imaginaries of the future that are nourished by utopia. We want to work with the para-doxes and ambivalences associated with technology, as forces that must be articulated. Sobriety applied to technological tools, a usage reduced to its ingenious essence seems to us to be the only possible way of constructing meaning with technologies. Gentle forms of technocriticism such as the slow movement, radical slowness, contrary to what is induced by the use of technologies, and low tech are part of this search for technical sovereignty. These approaches are part of an economy of life that consists of doing «as much as possible with as little as possible against the energies in place», optimising resources and their use, while maximising poetry. They shape our horizon.

Attention to the living and the gymnastics of wonder, through a theatre of attention to beings, human and non-human as well as to things, a poetic action working towards an open conception of ecology.
Sensitivity to life and movement has been at the heart of our creative work for the past 10 years. We strive to give life to the inanimate, tirelessly questioning the singularity of the living.
This research has led us to take different paths, borrowing from dance, circus, theatre and the visual arts. We use a vocabulary that is specific to new technological tools, but we always try to marry it with the potential of performing arts, and to affirm the encounter with body and matter.
We use computers, video-projectors or augmented reality devices to create symbolic expe-riences of living, to play with different ways of being in the world, to arouse a sensitive atten-tion to beings and things. We put digital tools at the service of the living, to make theatre, to create live moments shared by the living. We believe that poetry, beauty and metaphor are powerful keys, and it is with this intention that we use technologies. To disorient, cause reality to waver, fashion a symbolic theatrical experience. It is in this interstice and intersec-tion that we work, and develop a language that belongs to us.

Artists biographies

Adrien M & Claire B

Claire Bardainne and Adrien Mondot have been artistic directors of Adrien M & Claire B since 2011. Together, they create shows and installations in the visual and performing arts.

Claire Bardainne is a French visual artist with a background in graphic design and scenography, born in 1978 in Grenoble. A graduate from the Estienne School and Paris Arts Déco School, her research focuses on the imaginary realms conveyed by pictures and graphics, especially in their space-constructive capacity.
She co-founds in 2004 the BW studio, focused on visual identities, multimedia graphics, exhibition and space graphics. In 2007, as part of the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology at Toronto University, she launches her project *Wicklow* blending drawing, micro-edition and performances. In parallel, she crosses her own graphic work with the theoretical work of researchers in imaginary sociology at the Ceaq (Sorbonne, Paris), a laboratory oriented on new forms of sociality and contemporary imaginary. She then publishes the essay *Récréations. Galaxies de l'imaginaire postmoderne* (CNRS Éditions, Paris, 2009) with Vincenzo Susca, dedicated to the imaginary of technologies and contemporary media.

Adrien Mondot is a French multidisciplinary artist, computer scientist and juggler. Born in 1979 in Grenoble, he is interested in movement, and works at the intersection of juggling art and computer innovation.
Initially a researcher in computer science, he worked for 3 years at INRIA in Grenoble, where he imagined and designed new tools for graphic creation that broke free from reality. During that same period, he developed a street theatre practice with juggled and improvised musical performances and started developing his own software, eMotion, still in use today. Discovered in street festivals, he founded his own performing arts company in 2004 named Adrien M in order to take part in the Jeunes Talents Cirque operation, of which he was the winner that same year with Convergence 1.0.
For him, it's a question of closely blending the digital arts, sound, juggling and movement, exploring the links between technological innovation and artistic creation. Using the tools he has developed, he breaks free from the rules of weightlessness and time, blurs the lines, and plays with circus art and computers to create magical, choreographic and poetic illusion.
Over the years, he collaborated with several artists including Kitsou Dubois, Stéphanie Aubin, Ez3kiel. He also organised unruly residencies to meet new collaborators, nourishing his own research studies. He participated in Wajdi Mouawad's Ciels, which premièred at Avignon Festival in 2009. That same year, he received the Grand Jury Prize for his performance Cinématique at the Dance and New Technologies international competition organised by the festival Bains Numériques (Enghien-les-Bains, France).

Claire Bardainne and Adrien Mondot meet in 2010 at the Centre des Arts in Enghien-les-Bains, and again around the creation of a new interactive digital installation *Sens dessus dessous* created for the Théâtre Auditorium de Poitiers, France.
In 2011, they join forces and found the company Adrien M & Claire B. All work is created as a duo and the company is directed as a pair. Pivotal to their research is their wish to transcend the spatial boundaries of stage and the time limits of performance. They strive to create living art: mobile, handcrafted, ephemeral, responsive.

Together, they sign in 2011 the creation of *XYZT, Abstract Landscapes*, an interactive exhibit. That same year, they write a conference-performance entitled *Un point c'est tout* and sign the digital scenography of *Grand Fracas issu de rien*, directed by Pierre Guillois.

In 2013, they create *Hakanaï*, a choreographic show for one dancer in a cube of moving images.

In 2014, they co-sign the performance of *Pixel* with Mourad Merzouki (CCN Créteil and Val-de-Marne/Cie Käfig). In 2015, they create *The movement of air*, and receive the SACD Digital Creation award of the year.

In 2016, Éditions Subjectiles publishes *Snow does not make sense*, the first monograph dedicated to Adrien M & Claire B's work. The book includes six drawings in augmented reality.

In 2017, a new series of installations inhabited by digital animism sees the day, it is entitled *Mirages & miracles*.

In 2018, they are commissioned by la Fondation d'entreprise Martell to create *The shadow of the vapor*, a monumental and site-specific installation.

In 2019, they create the *Acqua Alta* project that consists of three experiences: a pop-up book in augmented reality; a visual theatre performance that intertwines movement and living digital images; an immersive experience in a virtual reality headset. That year, they also co-sign a concert-show entitled *Équinoxe* with the music band Limousine.

In 2020, their exhibition *Faire corps - Adrien M & Claire B* is presented at the Gaîté Lyrique in Paris, bringing together new and old artworks around an immersive and interactive journey. At the invitation of the Lyon Opera Ballet, they create with dancer Tyler Galster a solo piece called *Vanishing Act* in 2020.

In 2021, in collaboration with Brest Brest Brest, they create *Fauna*, a series of 10 large posters for the public space to be discovered with an application of augmented reality.

In 2022, they designed the immersive installation-experience *Last minute*, like a ritual of metamorphosis, with music by Olivier Mellano.

For the 2022 Avignon Festival (Nuit immersive Tracks Adami), they collaborated with Jann Gallois | Cie BurnOut on the creation of a short performance piece: *Just your shadow*.

In 2023, Adrien Mondot initiated the *Synesthesia* cycle, a series of performances based on the encounter between projected images animated live by Adrien Mondot and a solo musician. Its fist incarnation is entitled *Piano piano* and was created with David Babin - known as babx, composer, pianist and poet. In 2024 will appear *Encyclies*, with pianist and singer Nathalie Morazin.

Today, the company Adrien M & Claire B counts around 30 collaborators, with several performances, exhibitions and installations touring internationally simultaneously. In France, its headquarters are based in Lyon (Rhône) and its research-creation studio is based in Crest (Drôme) at Villa Aphéa.

Overview of Adrien M & Claire B's projects, 2021 — duration : 5 min 25
vimeo.com/amcb/overview

Company website
adrienm-claireb.net

Claire Bardainne
and Adrien Mondot
at la Gaîté Lyrique
in 2020.

Photo @ Voyez-vous
(Vinciane Lebrun)

Olivier Mellano

Composer, musician

Olivier Mellano is a French musician, composer, improviser, writer and guitarist, born in Paris in 1971.
He has played in over fifty groups since the beginning of the nineties, including Psykick Lyrikah, Mobiil, Bed, Laetitia Shéri and Dominique A. He alternatively works on pop-rock projects and compositions including symphonic orchestra, 17 electric guitars, harpsichord, organ, voice or string quartet.

His musical work has appeared in cinematic, theatrical, dance and literary contexts.
He also likes to write, he published his first book in 2008.

Olivier Mellano offers a composite work that is generous and demanding. It draws on the legacies of Carlo Gesualdo, Henry Purcell, Benjamin Britten, Gavin Bryars, Moondog and Gyôrgy Ligeti. Through his compositions, he reveals a unique musical aesthetic which breaks down stylistic hierarchies. He weaves sonic material volcanic or ethereal, he tests the strength of baroque harmonies with sonic fire, he infuses orchestral and chamber ensembles with new energy by combining electric guitars with classical voices. Luminous, sacred elements pulse at the heart of his uncompromisingly free and savant compositions. The wide-ranging nature of his works, from ambitious pop music to unabashed contemporary music, reveals his kinship to a new generation of composers which includes Nico Muhly, Bryce Dessner and Jonny Greenwood.

Artist website
oliviermellano.com