

REMEDIOS' TERRARIUM

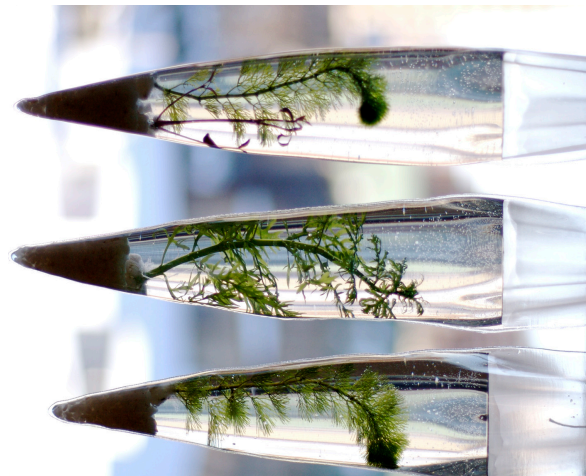
Remedios Terrarium is a responsive environment, a group show, and a conversation made public. It's a set of diverse responses to the fable of autopoiesis, imagining living systems as palimpsests of organic plants, woven textile, filament, air, projected video, sound, sensor data, and occasionally, people.

It's a group show in which individual creators and collectives affiliated with the Topological Media Lab (TML) have responded to a call about the themes of a terrarium and delicate life, of the Gallery as a vessel made porous mixing outside and inside, of matter in constant alchemical transformation.

Our goal is not to make objects or even particular pieces of media, but events. Certainly in the course of making an event, we produce objects and media and, most importantly, some latent behavior, but all as elements conditioning an event. Its continuously evolving responsive environment changes weather and behavior according to the hour and the day, and according to what's happening inside or outside its porous boundaries. We arrange our objects in a physical space to leverage the unbounded corporeal intuition that visitors bring with them, so the Remedios Terrarium is an architectural experiment as well as an event.

The Remedios Terrarium is also a set of conversations, articulated in things and events. It's a philosophical investigation carried out in the form of material experiments made of experimental modes of matter. We create things, media instruments, and kinetic plants, "spoken" from diverse perspectives. We can be noisy, divergent, and even contentious, but making and exhibiting Remedios Terrarium — the 100 day long event — requires us to create a common boundary object together. As you walk about the Gallery, you'll encounter individual and collective echoes of questions and speculations reaching ten years back: How can we make compelling events without convention? What makes some events dead and others live? What is a gesture when we do not assume bodies a priori? How do conventions and bodies come into being or dissolve in the continuously flowing world?

— Sha Xin Wei



AQUATIC PLANT CELLS BY THE CELL SCULPTURE GROUP

THE TOPOLOGICAL MEDIA LAB

Computer-driven media are changing our environment, delivering images, sound and kinetic objects with ever greater density. Given that increasingly complex information technology verges on the limits of intelligibility and manageability, we face the challenge of building and inhabiting our spaces in ways that can make sense to us individually and collectively. How can we build rich responsive environments for shelter, sociality or play? How do people experience computer-mediated environments that now include not only virtual reality games and experimental theater, but also classrooms, airports and public spaces? In short, how can we build a world that is not complicated but rich?

In order to answer these practical and conceptual challenges, the Topological Media Lab was established in 2001 to experimentally explore gestural, performative, and embodied use of hybrid computational-physical materials. The experimental aspect of this work proceeds at two scales. The micro scale concerns topological responsive media, which includes time-based media and computationally-augmented fabrics. The macro scale concerns the architecture of responsive media spaces, which includes augmented reality, sensor-based interactive environments, projected and ubiquitous media. Dr. Sha and TML researchers investigate how we build, inhabit and use sensate or active matter. By this we mean combinations of computational and physical materials sensitive to environmental features or activities, responding by changing their form or appearance. We say material because the emphasis is not so much on objects or devices, but on continuous substrates.

The experimental approach is based on a critical, theoretical project that treats the world as a continuous ontology. Prof. Sha's theoretical work explores the limits of discrete representation, finding alternatives to linguistic-semiotic analysis in the form of non-metric topological, dynamical, potential-theoretic and other material patterns. This theoretical project is informed by a material and social phenomenology. This investigation is substantively based in a fusion of computer science, science studies and critical studies of new media.

Intertwining scientific work with cultural practice gives meaning and context to guide the research. Prof. Sha and associates collaborate with fellow creators such as the sponge and FoAM art research networks to materialize these ideas as artifacts, installations and public conversations such as the TGarden responsive media spaces, and the series of video Membranes and the Ouija improvisatory movement experiments. We describe some of TML's principal inter-related areas of research: gesture and performance, realtime media choreography, active garments, responsive media, and soft architecture. In 2007, the TML's two major axes of research are movement-based installation-events, and poetic architectural interventions in the built environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gallery Staff
Lynn Beavis, FOFA Gallery Coordinator

March 17 to April 4, 2008
Vernissage March 20, Dusk (19h06)

FOFA Gallery
Concordia University
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Topological Media Lab
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THE FORCE THAT THROUGH THE GREEN FUSE DRIVES THE FLOWER
DRIVES MY GREEN AGE; THAT BLASTS THE ROOTS OF TREES
IS MY DESTROYER.
AND I AM DUMB TO TELL THE CROOKED ROSE
MY YOUTH IS BENT BY THE SAME WINTRY FEVER.

THE FORCE THAT DRIVES THE WATER THROUGH THE ROCKS
DRIVES MY RED BLOOD; THAT DRIES THE MOUTHING STREAMS
TURNS MINE TO WAX.
AND I AM DUMB TO MOUTH UNTO MY VEINS
HOW AT THE MOUNTAIN SPRING THE SAME MOUTH SUCKS.

THE HAND THAT WHIRLS THE WATER IN THE POOL
STIRS THE QUICKSAND; THAT ROPES THE BLOWING WIND
HAULS MY SHROUD SAIL.
AND I AM DUMB TO TELL THE HANGING MAN
HOW OF MY CLAY IS MADE THE HANGMAN'S LIME.

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MARCH 17 - APRIL 4

VERNISSAGE
MARCH 20

Remedios' Terrarium
Topological Media Lab



From The Poems of Dylan Thomas, published by New Directions, 1955

SUMMARY & CREDITS

Main Gallery

Cell Sculpture

Patrick Harrop; Gregory Rubin, JC Nesci, Candace Fempel, Evan Marnoch, Dirk Blouw, Jean-Sebastien Rousseau; Flower Lunn
Welded PVC plastic, mono-filament, fabric, water, plants
Description: A net of transparent cells fills the airspace at diverse heights.

Calligraphic Video Projection

Jean-Sebastien Rousseau (Michael Fortin)
Max / Jitter, OpenGL, projectors, Mac G5 computers, cameras
Description: Multiple streams of camera input transmute to responsive video projected onto the surfaces of the Gallery, providing weather.

Sound Field

Timothy Sutton
Max / MSP, Logic, microphones, Mac G5 computer, hardware sound processors, speakers
Description: Ten channels of synthesized and transmuted sound form a palpable dynamical field.

Dynamic Light Field

Harry Smoak
Lighting instruments, DMX dimmers, LAN interface, Max, Macintosh computer
Description: 1. A row of luminous pattern at the base of the south wall refracts activity from the sidewalk. 2. An array of lights build and respond to conditions in the gallery.

Electrified Flight Sensate Weaving

Marguerite Bromley (XS Labs); Elliot Sinyor, Doug van Nort + IDML McGill; WYSI-WYG group TML
20' wide, 4' high Jacquard-woven fabric, conductive thread, custom electronics, Arduino micro-processor, speaker, Mac Mini computer
Description: A 20' wide weaving diverts flow around a corner of the gallery. It sounds as a visitor approaches or touches a pattern.

Black Box

Suitcase

Elena Frantova, Timothy Sutton (Lenka Novak, JS Rousseau)
Suitcase, plaster sculpture, electronics, sound.
Description: An old suitcase contains a doll-sized TML, with plaster figures illuminated by dynamic lights. Multi-channel, algorithmic sound playback system.

Cone Sculpture

Lenka Novak
Mono-filament, cast glass, projected video.
Description: Seven glass disks are suspended from cones of monofilament. A projection of a river textures on to the monofilament.

General

Plant Systems

Flower Lunn
Plants, moss, soil, wood, string, aquaria, water, pumps, gro-lights, timers
Description: Arranged moss clusters at the base of the vitrine. Water plants float in the cell sculpture. Soil-based plants climb trellis made of string and plastic tubing.

Vitrine Corridor

Louis-Andre Fortin, Flower Lunn, Nadia Frantova, Elena Frantova, Timothy Sutton
Cut and printed paper, found objects, plasma display, subwoofer, microphone, sound processing system.
Description: A line of still images from the official TML documentation videos forms a vector from Mackay Street end through 3 sections of the vitrine. The actual, messy history lies on the floor as found objects and images from the lab. Microphones and moss cluster at the air gaps between the vitrine's glass plates, absorbing air, sound, moisture. Low sounds permeate the space.

Sebald Cabinet

Mark Sussman, Ayesha Hameed
Wooden cabinet, television set, speakers
Description: This cabinet, augmented by recorded sound and video, references a series of table-top theater pieces by Mark Sussman and colleagues in Great Small Works based on the writing of W.G. Sebald.

Documentation Pedestal

David Jhave Johnston
Cabinet, PC computer, Display monitor

Events

Remedios Terrarium Event

Sha Xin Wei, Morgan Sutherland, Emmanuele Thivierge (Yon Visell)
Max / C, Mac G5 computer
Description: The Gallery's weather constantly evolves according to pre-composed tendencies as well as activities inside and outside the space.



Vernissage March 20

Lynn Beavis, Josée-Anne Drolet
Thursday March 20, 18h00 - 20h00

Touch2 March 20, Dusk (19h06)

Design & Coordination : Josée-Anne Drolet
Choreographer: Soo-yeon Cho
Dancers: Soo-yeon Cho, Kiani dal Valle
Video & Projection: Jae-Ok Lee
Real-time video design : Jean-Sébastien Rousseau
Set design & Construction : Josée-Anne Drolet, Pascal Simard, Jae-Ok Lee
Costume design : Josée-Anne Drolet, Jae-Ok Lee
Touch1 video : Desh Fernando and Touch Creators
Touch1 sound design : Timothy Sutton
Touch2 sound editing : Soo-yeon Cho
Touch2 sound sources : Timothy Sutton, Freida Abtan, Akumu
Lighting : Harry Smoak
Technical consultation : Harry Smoak, Jean-Sébastien Rousseau
Description: A 6 minute version of the Touch1 dance video of two dancers will be projected onto west wall. At dusk, Soo bursts from a paper structure on the west wall. She and Kiani dance among the suspended cells and the Tapestry, leaving visual traces on the wall.

SHA XIN WEI

<http://sponge.org> • <http://topologicalmedialab.net/xinwei>

Sha Xin Wei's art work ranges from video and sound installations that respond to gesture or movement to complex, collaboratively-built events. These works explore the relations people create with one another in the presence of dense, continuously evolving responsive media.

Since 1997, Sha has worked with the art research groups, Sponge, which he co-founded in San Francisco, and with FoAM in Brussels. Major series of environmental projects include the TGarden play spaces (1997-2001), Hubbub public speech-painting (2002-2004), and the Sauna urban immersion installations (with Sponge, 2003-2004). In 2004, Sha embarked on a series of "software" projects exploring fields of gesture and subjectivity using sensate, gestural, media-saturated fabrics. These works have been recognized and supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, Creative Work Fund, LEF Foundation, the Fondation Daniel Langlois, FQRSC among other cultural agencies. Sha was supported by an Individual Artist grant by the Fondation Daniel Langlois in 2004, and his most recent work in this area, WYSIWYG sounding tapestries, was funded by Hexagram in 2006. Sha has also created a series of responsive video installations, including a 42 channel multi-perspective video installation called Slip/Enter, with Tirtza Even; the responsive Van Nelle Fabriek membrane installation in Rotterdam DEAF 2005, and the IL Y A series of installations entangling historical with present day people in movement.

Dr. Sha has degrees in mathematics from Harvard and Stanford Universities. He is Canada Research Chair Media Arts and Sciences at Concordia University, and Associate Professor in the Faculties of Fine Arts and Computer Science. He is writing a book on poiesis and enchantment in topological matter.

Selected Works:

"Ouji Experiment on Collective Gesture in Responsive Media Spaces," Concordia University July 2007.
"Cosmicomics" responsive video-sound installation, Elektra Festival Montreal 2007.
"Membrane Van Nelle Fabriek" responsive video-sound installation Dutch Electronic Art Festival Rotterdam 2005.
"Frank's Ears," speech-painting installation, Georgia State University 2003.
"Sauna02" outdoor interactive immersion machine, with sponge, The Lab, San Francisco 2002.
"Hubbub Study" speech-driven dynamic typography, Technopoetry Festival Atlanta 2002.
"Plaza Teleopolis" speech & animated glyph projection, San Francisco Exploratorium 2nd Wednesdays 2002.
"Slip" multi-perspective video installation, with Tirtza Even, Postmasters New York City USA 2001.
"TG2001" responsive environment, with TGarden Consortium, V2 Rotterdam Netherlands 2001.
"TG2001" open lab, with TGarden Consortium, Ars Electronica 2001 Linz Austria.
"TGarden" responsive environments: fabric, sound and projected video, Medi@terra 2000 Athens Greece, with FoAM and sponge.
"TGarden," responsive space, Siggraph 2000, New Orleans, with FoAM and sponge, 2000-2002.
"m2" installation/performance/concert at The Lab, San Francisco, with sponge. Documented as interactive cdrom, 1998.

