

Vegetal Experience: SERRA

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Synthesis Residency on Responsive Environments for Improvisation

Serra is driven by the rhythms of humans and plants; Sha and Khinitrian developed the concept during the reading seminar *Plant Thinking : A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (by Michael Marder), that they organized between the Topological Media Lab in Montreal and Synthesis Center in Phoenix, AZ in 2014.

In recent years, time-lapse photography has become the preferred research tool for penetrating the mysteries of the plant world. It acts as a magnifying glass, opening a door to understanding an intelligence that is not our own. In Serra, the extreme slow motion of the dancer's movements and the accelerated movement of the plants results in a meeting that crosses the boundaries of time and space. The time-lapse and acceleration techniques serve to create temporal "lenses" that reveal the subliminal actions of humans and the inner world of plants, all orchestrated within a highly original choreography.

The pre-recorded images and those captured live during the performance will be transformed by instruments developed with a customized program, based primarily but not exclusively on Max/MSP. We will thus be able to replace the "present" with the "recent past," or the "distant past"

with the same temporal sequence in real time. Since each pixel lives in a memory buffer independent of each other, the projection surface defies the properties of the screen, transporting us into another representation of time, a more fluid time. At other moments we will use the parameters of human movement to modify the pre-recorded images of plants, using the techniques of "granular synthesis" to create a powerful dialogue between these two worlds—and an ultra-sensory experience for viewers.

With this work we are expanding the horizon, exploring the outer limits, the fragmentation of human anatomy, while revealing that of plants at the same time. To this end, we are constructing a set of instruments that will shape the morphology of the body. Based on velocity, extensions of movement will manifest themselves through the distortion, separation or continuation of the bodies. Viewers will be able to see, for example, the movements of the dancers reflected in the growth of plant tendrils or roots.

Researchers

Todd Ingalls
Oana Suteu Khinitrian
Sha Xin Wei
Julian Stein

Associate Research Professor, realtime media | AME
Visual Artist Montreal, concept
Director of Synthesis, concept | AME
Media System Lead, sound | Synthesis

Collaborators

Ginette Laurin
Gabriela Reyes Fuchs
Marylène Bastien
André Houle
Connor Rawls
Evan Montpellier
Peter Weisman
Megan Patzem
Chris Zlaket

Artistic Director, Choreography | O Vertigo
Director of Photography, Mexico City
Costume and set design
Technical Director, O Vertigo
AME Student Researcher
TML Media Artist
AME Technical Director
Technical Assistant | Synthesis, AME
Technical Assistant | Synthesis, AME

O Vertigo Dancers

Audrey Bergeron
Sophie Breton
Charles Cardin-Bourbeau
Christine Daigle
Louis-Elyan Martin
Robert Meilleur
James Phillips
Stéphanie Tremblay-Abudo

Student Dancers

Eleanor Hanafin
Felix Cruz
Katie Dorn

