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Touch and Go is published in collaboration with Watermans and Goldsmiths College in occasion of the Watermans' International Festival of Digital Art, 2012, which coincides with the Olympics and Paralympics in London. The issue explores the impact of technology in art as well as the meaning, possibilities and issues around human interaction and engagement. *Touch and Go* investigates interactivity and participation, as well as light art and new media approaches to the public space as tools that foster engagement and shared forms of participation.



TOUCH AND GO

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LEONARDO ELECTRONIC ALMANAC, VOLUME 18 ISSUE 3

Touch and Go

VOLUME EDITORS

LANFRANCO ACETI, JANIS JEFFERIES, IRINI PAPADIMITRIOU

EDITORS

JONATHAN MUNRO, ÖZDEN ŞAHİN

Watermans International Festival of Digital Art, 2012

Touch and Go is a title that I chose together with Irini Papadimitriou for this LEA special issue. On my part with this title I wanted to stress several aspects that characterize that branch of contemporary art in love with interaction, be it delivered by allowing the audience to touch the art object or by becoming part of a complex electronic sensory experience in which the artwork may somehow respond and touch back in return.

With the above statement, I wanted to deliberately avoid the terminology 'interactive art' in order to not fall in the trap of characterizing art that has an element of interaction as principally defined by the word interactive; as if this were the only way to describe contemporary art that elicits interactions and responses between the artist, the audience and the art objects.

I remember when I was at Central Saint Martins writing a paper on the sub-distinctions within contemporary media arts and tracing the debates that distinguished between electronic art, robotic art, new media art, digital art, computer art, computer based art, internet art, web art... At some point of that analysis and argument I realized that the common thread that characterized all of these sub-genres of aesthetic representations was the word art and it did not matter (at least not that much in my opinion) if the manifestation was material or immaterial, conceptual or physical, electronic or painterly, analogue or digital.

I increasingly felt that this rejection of the technical component would be necessary in order for the electronic-robotic-new-media-digital-computer-based-internet art object to re-gain entry within the field of fine art. Mine was a reaction to an hyper-fragmented

and indeed extensive and in-depth taxonomy that seemed to have as its main effect that of pushing these experimental and innovative art forms – through the emphasis of their technological characterization – away from the fine arts and into a ghetto of isolation and self-reference. Steve Dietz's question – *Why Have There Been No Great Net Artists?*¹ – remains unanswered, but I believe that there are changes that are happening – albeit slowly – that will see the sensorial and technical elements become important parts of the aesthetic aspects of the art object as much as the brush technique of Vincent Willem van Gogh or the sculptural fluidity of Henry Moore.

Hence the substitution in the title of this special issue of the word interactivity with the word touch, with the desire of looking at the artwork as something that can be touched in material and immaterial ways, interfered with, interacted with and 'touched and reprocessed' with the help of media tools but that can also 'touch' us back in return, both individually and collectively. I also wanted to stress the fast interrelation between the art object and the consumer in a commodified relationship that is based on immediate engagement and fast disengagement, touch and go. But a fast food approach is perhaps incorrect if we consider as part of the interactivity equation the viewers' mediated processes of consumption and memorization of both the image and the public experience.

Nevertheless, the problems and issues that interactivity and its multiple definitions and interpretations in the 20th and 21st century raise cannot be overlooked, as much as cannot be dismissed the complex set of emotive and digital interactions that can be set in motion by artworks that reach and engage large groups of people within the public space. These interactions

generate public shows in which the space of the city becomes the background to an experiential event that is characterized by impermanence and memorization. It is a process in which thousands of people engage, capture data, memorize and at times memorialize the event and re-process, mash-up, re-disseminate and re-contextualize the images within multiple media contexts.

The possibility of capturing, viewing and understanding the entire mass of data produced by these aesthetic sensory experiences becomes an impossible task due to easy access to an unprecedented amount of media and an unprecedented multiplication of data, as Lev Manovich argues.²

In *Digital Baroque: New Media Art and Cinematic Folds* Timothy Murray writes that "the retrospective nature of repetition and digital coding—how initial images, forms, and narratives are refigured through their contemplative re-citation and re-presentation—consistently inscribes the new media in the memory and memorization of its antecedents, cinema and video."³

The difference between memorization and memorialization may be one of the further aspects in which the interaction evolves – beyond the artwork but still linked to it. The memory of the event with its happening and performative elements, its traces and records both official and unofficial, the re-processing and mash-ups; all of these elements become part of and contribute to a collective narrative and pattern of engagement and interaction.

These are issues and problems that the artists and writers of this LEA special issue have analyzed from a variety of perspectives and backgrounds, offering to the reader the opportunity of a glimpse into the complexity of today's art interactions within the contemporary social and cultural media landscapes.

Touch and Go is one of those issues that are truly born from a collaborative effort and in which all editors have contributed and worked hard in order to

deliver a documentation of contemporary art research, thought and aesthetic able to stand on the international scene.

For this reason I wish to thank Prof. Janis Jefferies and Irini Papadimitriou together with Jonathan Munro and Özden Şahin for their efforts. The design is by Deniz Cem Önduygu who as LEA's Art Director continues to deliver brilliantly designed issues.

Lanfranco Aceti

Editor in Chief, *Leonardo Electronic Almanac*
Director, Kasa Gallery



1. "Nevertheless, there is this constant apparently inherent need to try and categorize and classify. In *Beyond Interface*, an exhibition I organized in 1998, I 'datamined' ten categories: net.art, storytelling, socio-cultural, biographical, tools, performance, analog-hybrid, interactive art, interfacers + artificers. David Ross, in his lecture here at the CAD-RE Laboratory for New Media, suggested 21 characteristics of net art. Stephen Wilson, a pioneering practitioner, has a virtual – albeit well-ordered – jungle of categories. Rhizome has developed a list of dozens of keyword categories for its ArtBase. Lev Manovich, in his *Computing Culture: Defining New Media Genres* symposium focused on the categories of database, interface, spatialization, and navigation. To my mind, there is no question that such categorization is useful, especially in a distributed system like the Internet. But, in truth, to paraphrase Barnett Newman, "ornithology is for the birds what categorization is for the artist." Perhaps especially at a time of rapid change and explosive growth of the underlying infrastructure and toolsets, it is critical that description follow practice and not vice versa." Steve Dietz, *Why Have There Been No Great Net Artists? Web Walker Daily* 28, April 4, 2000, <http://bit.ly/QJEWIY> (accessed July 1, 2012).
2. This link to a Google+ conversation is an example of this argument on massive data and multiple media engagements across diverse platforms: <http://bit.ly/pGgDsS> (accessed July 1, 2012).
3. Timothy Murray, *Digital Baroque: New Media Art and Cinematic Folds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 138.

Touch and Go: The Magic Touch Of Contemporary Art

It is with some excitement that I write this preface to Watermans International Festival of Digital Art, 2012. It has been a monumental achievement by the curator Irini Papadimitriou to pull together 6 groundbreaking installations exploring interactivity, viewer participation, collaboration and the use or importance of new and emerging technologies in Media and Digital Art.

From an initial call in December 2010 over 500 submissions arrived in our inboxes in March 2011. It was rather an overwhelming and daunting task to review, look and encounter a diverse range of submissions that were additionally asked to reflect on the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Submissions came from all over the world, from Africa and Korea, Austria and Australia, China and the UK, Latvia and Canada and ranged from the spectacularly complicated to the imaginatively humorous. Of course each selector, me, onedotzero, London's leading digital media innovation organization, the curatorial team at Athens Video Art Festival and Irini herself, had particular favorites and attachments but the final grouping I believe does reflect a sense of the challenges and opportunities that such an open competition offers. It is though a significant move on behalf of the curator that each work is given the Watermans space for 6 weeks which enables people to take part in the cultural activities surrounding each installation, fulfilling, promoting and incorporating the Cultural Olympiad themes and values 'inspiration, participation and creativity.'

Some, like Gail Pearce's *Going with the Flow* was made because rowing at the 2012 Olympics will be held near Egham and it was an opportunity to respond and create an installation offering the public a more interactive way of rowing, while remaining on dry land, not only watching but also participating and having an effect on the images by their actions. On the other hand, Michele Barker and Anna Munster's collaborative *Hocus Pocus* will be a 3-screen interactive artwork that uses illusionistic and performative aspects of magical tricks to explore human perception, senses and movement. As they have suggested, "Magic – like interactivity – relies on shifting the perceptual relations between vision and movement, focusing and diverting attention at key moments. Participants will become aware of this relation as their perception catches up with the audiovisual illusion(s)" (artists statement, February 2011). Ugochukwu-Smooth Nzewi and Emeka Ogboh are artists who also work collaboratively and working under name of One-Room Shack. *UNITY* is built like a navigable labyrinth to reflect the idea of unity in diversity that the Games signify. In an increasingly globalized world they are interested in the ways in which the discourse of globalization opens up and closes off discursive space whereas Suguru Goto is a musician who creates real spaces that are both metaphysical and spiritual. *Cymatics* is a kinetic sculpture and sound installation. Wave patterns are created on liquid as a result of sound vibrations generated by visitors. Another sound work is Phoebe Hui's *Granular Graph*, a sound instrument about musical gesture and its notation.

Audiences are invited to become a living pendulum. The apparatus itself can create geometric images to represent harmonies and intervals in musical scales. Finally, Joseph Farbrook's *Strata-caster* explores the topography of power, prestige, and position through an art installation, which exists in the virtual world of Second Life, a place populated by over 50,000 people at any given moment.

Goldsmiths, as the leading academic partner, has been working closely with Watermans in developing a series of seminars and events to coincide with the 2012 Festival. I am the artistic director of Goldsmiths Digital Studios (GDS), which is dedicated to multi-disciplinary research and practice across arts, technologies and cultural studies. GDS engages in a number of research projects and provides its own postgraduate teaching through the PhD in Arts and Computational Technology, the MFA in Computational Studio Arts and the MA in Computational Art. Irini is also an alumni of the MFA in *Curating* (Goldsmiths, University of London) and it has been an exceptional pleasure working with her generating ideas and platforms that can form an artistic legacy long after the Games and the Festival have ended. The catalogue and detailed blogging/documentation and social networking will be one of our responsibilities but another of mine is to ensure that the next generation of practitioners test the conventions of the white cube gallery, reconsider and reevaluate artistic productions, their information structure and significance; engage in the museum sector whilst at the same time challenging the spaces for the reception of 'public' art. In addition those who wish to increase an audience's interaction and enjoyment of their work have a firm grounding in artistic practice and computing skills.

Consequently, I am particularly excited that the 2012 Festival Watermans will introduce a mentoring scheme for students interested in participatory interactive digital / new media work. The mentoring scheme involves video interviews with the 6 selected artists and their work, briefly introduced earlier in this preface, and discussions initiated by the student. As so often debated in our seminars at Goldsmiths and

elsewhere, what are the expectations of the audience, the viewer, the spectator, and the engager? How do exhibitions and festival celebrations revisit the traditional roles of performer/artist and audiences? Can they facilitate collaborative approaches to creativity? How do sound works get curated in exhibitions that include interactive objects, physical performances and screens? What are the issues around technical support? How are the ways of working online and off, including collaboration and social networking, affecting physical forms of display and publishing?

As I write this in Wollongong during the wettest New South Wales summer for 50 years, I want to end with a quote used by the Australia, Sydney based conjurers Michele Barker and Anna Munster

Illusions occur when the physical reality does not match the perception. 

The world is upside down in so many alarming ways but perhaps 2012 at Watermans will offer some momentary ideas of unity in diversity that the Games signify and *UNITY* proposes. Such anticipation and such promise!

Janis Jefferies

*Professor of Visual Arts
Goldsmiths
University of London, UK*

23rd Dec 2011, University of Wollongong, NSW, Australia

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1. Stephen L. Malnik and Susana Martinez-Conde, *Sleights of Mind: What the Neuroscience of Magic Reveals about our Everyday Deceptions* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2010), 8.

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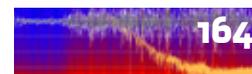


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SCENOCOSME: BODY AND CLOUDS

by

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Anaïs met den Ancxt

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ABSTRACT

As media artists, we explore the capacities of technologies in order to draw sensitive relationships through artworks that are based on the enhancement of sensory experiences. Our works spring from hybridization processes between the living world and technology which inspire us to invent new sensitive and poetic languages. Our artworks explore and engage elements of reality which are invisible or we cannot perceive with our normal senses. We use the idea of the cloud as a metaphor of the invisible. The cloud has an unpredictable form, since it is in an indeterminate status of metamorphosis, and its processes escape human perception. Our interactive works create sound and visual languages, translating the exchanges between living beings, the body and the environment.

Akousmaflore,
Scenocosme,
sensitive and interactive musical plants
(plants, interactive device, audio system).

Exhibition at BIACS3 – International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Sevilla (Spain) – 2009.

Credit: Scenocosme.

"All the time in contact with the environment, the skin resounds motions of the world. The skin does not feel without feeling itself. 'Touch, is to touch ourselves, says Merleau-Ponty [...] things are the continuation of my body and my body is the continuation of the world which surrounds me [...]. The touch and the contact must be understood as the other side of one another' (1964, 308). The object touches us when we touch it, and it dissipates when the contact ends."¹

— David Le Breton, *La Saveur du Monde*, 2006

As interactive artists, we explore the capacities of technologies in order to develop sensory relationships that are rooted in specific stagings where the human senses are augmented. Our works spring from possible hybridizations between the living world and technology and this is a meeting point that pushes us to develop sensory and poetic languages.

MYSTERIOUS CLOUDS

We suggest to seek out the hidden, to feel elements of reality which are invisible or to which we are insensitive. We use the idea of the cloud as a metaphor of the invisible because it has an unpredictable form, it is in an indeterminate status of metamorphosis, and because its process escapes our perception. Various natural and artificial clouds surround us (climatic, biological, energetic or electromagnetic). Through our artworks, we wish to evoke invisible energetic clouds (electrostatic) that follow living beings like unpredictable shadows. Sometimes, these clouds happen to cross paths and by doing so they exchange pieces of information. We interpret these invisible links through sonorous and visual stagings. If we take as an example the energetic clouds of living beings, the physical boundaries of their bodies can become permeable through the usage of sensory technology and we take advantage of this permeability in order to design extraordinary relationships between humans, living beings and the surrounding environment.

The Cloud is a virtual and poetic projection of the invisible that is mysterious: almost similar to a continuous veil between the body and the surrounding world. The Cloud with its undefined outlines shrouded on the world renders reality as not fully intelligible. This lack of intelligibility is a source of inspiration for us, since we don't want to measure invisible data. We seek to develop and create languages that by celebrating undefined borders provide multiple layers of interpretations. By sketching the outlines of invisible clouds that surround us, we leave a great space for the imagination. Our approach could be compared with the "continuous mystery" describes by John Ruskin. "Mystery includes not only the partial and variable kind that clouds and mists serve so well, but also the kind that is continuous, permanent, and that corresponds, *in all spaces*, to the infinity of things."² According to John Ruskin, "WE NEVER SEE ANYTHING CLEARLY. [...] [S]o that there is literally *no* point of clear sight, and

Kymapetra,
Scenocosme,
interactive artwork with stones
(stones, water, basin, interactive device, audio system).
Exhibition at The OCT Shanghai Suzhou creek / Shanghai (China) – 2011.
Credit: Scenocosme.



there never can be."³ "For the fact is that there is no absolutely clear and distinct perception: what matters is knowing where the mystery begin, 'with the point of intelligibility [varying] in distance.'"⁴

The Interactions we offer to the public in our works *Akousmaflore*, *Lights Contacts*, *Escales tactiles* or *Fluides*,... make invisible exchanges visible through sensory experiences. Rather than revealing their technological complexity, they use the artworks' aesthetics to open up everyone's imagination. Between the reality and our perception of it there is always a 'blind spot,' which stimulates the imagination.

INVISIBLE EXCHANGES: TO INVENT LANGUAGES

When we create interactive works, we create sonorous and/or visual languages. They translate the exchanges between living beings and between the body and its environment. We suggest interrelations where

the invisible becomes perceptible and our sensations are augmented.

As artists we focus our attention on the spectator's body because of the body's ability to build relationships with the surrounding environment. Our installations create dramaturgic spaces, as Erving Goffman describes them, in which the body comes in to play and becomes a communication tool. The fleetingness of a caress, the thickness of a presence, the intensity of a contact... All of these different gestures and postures can generate in our artworks sonorous reactions from plants (*Akousmaflore*) or from stones (*Kymapetra*). Also, the interaction by physical contact between two or several people is transformed in to light and sounds (*Lights Contacts*).

With *Akousmaflore* we created an interactive hanging garden composed of living musical plants, which react to the gentle touch by the audience. By 'feeling' the energetic clouds of human bodies, each plant reacts

to touch in a different way producing a specific sound characteristic to that specific interaction. Through *Akousmafiore*, we created an hybrid system of communication between plants and people that through digital technology makes the exchange of energy audible. Plants are natural sensors and are sensitive to different energy flows and the sound emitted by the plants in our artwork displays the effects of random data flow and plant interaction. The data is modified as the spectator meanders around and touches the plants, resulting in a random musical universe. This artwork proposes a specific vegetal language which is expressed through sound compositions and that embodies a character, a behavioral feed back or an influence of the plant on the reactions, the feelings and the actions of the spectator.

The installation *Lights Contacts* explores further this approach and sounds and lights are generated by the contact between human bodies. Here we created a sensorial experience that makes audible and visible the bodies' energetic (electrostatic) contacts with one another. This convivial space activates extraordinary meetings, exchanges and sharing opportunities. The flashes of light and the sound vibrations are a fragile reflection of the electrostatic exchanges between spectators who barely know one another.

Akousmafiore,
Scenocosme,
sensitive and interactive musical plants
(plants, interactive device, audio system).
Exhibition at BIACS3 – International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Sevilla (Spain) – 2009.
Credit : Scenocosme.

Sound textures evolve as an integral part of people's behaviors and the energy's intensity of their bodies. As artists we study the modalities in which sensory experiences can influence relations between spectators. We explore its power of retroaction, and how it can change common understanding of touch between people by transforming the feeling of a caress and make that gesture feel like playing a music instrument.

In order to explore further artworks that raise questions of proximity, we have created a show titled *Tactile Sensations* with the K-Danse company. It is a sensorial experience with a choreographic staging of touching between two dancers. One circular reactive



Escapes tactiles,
Scenocosme & Compagnie K. Danse,
interactive dance performance
(fabrics, interactive device, lights, audio system).
Presentation at Le Cube/ Centre for digital art – Paris (FR) – 2011.
Credit: Scenocosme.

dance floor mat creates a close relationship between the dancers and the audience surrounding it. This is a space of meetings and clashes, similar to a ring or an arena. The interactive device is based on a reactive costume with various sensitive zones. The mat reacts differently with sounds and lights varying in intensity according to the location of the contact with the dancer's body and to the 'quality' of the touch: strong or soft.

The choreographic composition between the dancers is a visual and aural score based on touch. The performance investigates the many levels and meanings of touch and its social construction: memory, behaviors and emotions such as desire and revulsion. The performance is developed and made more clearly perceptible to the audience by ensuring that each moment the dancers touch each other this gesture produces a specific sound connected to the meaning, timing and quality of this touch.

Souffles,
 Scenocosme,
 interactive artwork installation evolving with the rhythm of spectator's breathing
 (metal structure, circular screen with rotative video, beamer, interactive device, blur).
 Exhibition at La Chapelle des Capucins / centre d'art contemporain – Embrun (FR), 2011.
 Credit: Scenocosme.



Ecorces,
 Scenocosme,
 interactive artwork : interrelations between human heat and
 wood material (wood, thermal camera, interactive device,
 audio system). Exhibition at centre culturel Bellegarde – Tou-
 louse (France) – 2012. Credit: Scenocosme.



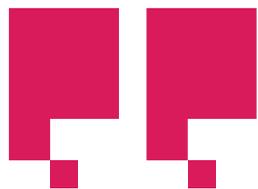
Fluides,
 Scenocosme,
 liquid interactive installation
 (water, glass, interactive device, lights, audio system).
 Exhibition at Festival International EXIT – Paris (France) – 2011.
 Credit: Scenocosme.



Sphèraléas,
Scenocosme,
interactive artwork,
(fabrics, wood, metal, interactive device,
lights, audio system).

Exhibition at Share Festival/ Festival internazionale di arte e cultura digitale/ Turin (Italy) – 2009.

Credit: Scenocosme.



Most of our artworks are 'mediators' between spectators in order to gather them, to stimulate relationships, exchanges, beyond basic connections.



With the artwork *Fluides*, we choose water as a sensitive unifying thread, which gathers the electrostatic energies of bodies. These energies are transformed into infinite, sonorous, colored and luminous fluid landscapes. In this artwork the energetic clouds are liquefied. According to the intensity of the energy and the audience's interactions the artwork manifests itself as sound waves that appear and disappear on the surface.

The body itself becomes a continuous sensorial interface with the world: through lungs and through the skin, which act as a protective and porous border. As David Le Breton writes: "[I]t (the skin) is alive in the way it breathes, exchanges with the environment, smells, translates moods through its texture, its heat, its colour. Between the outside and the inside, it allows a way through for stimulation and sensing. As a separation process, it fences in the individuality, but at the same time, it is a place of exchange with the world; heat, light, pleasure or pain passing through it." By visualizing the biological interrelations of the body with its surroundings, spectators are invited to think about their physical and symbolical relation to the

world. These interrelations can be seen in our creations *Soufflés* (Breaths) and *Ecorces* (Barks).

Soufflés (Breaths) is an interactive and collective artwork where the breaths of the audience gradually reveal the narrative of a generative circular video. The video shows sequences of landscape video loops shot in the South of France. *Soufflés* as an artwork can be interpreted as the continuous exploration of the territory surrounding our body through in-take and out-take. The exploration of the principles of breathing has allowed us to present the atmosphere as a shared territory that we forget that we modify with even our simplest and most basic activity: breathing.

Ecorces suggest a sensory interrelation with wood and materials made of wood. The artwork through touch, body heat and breath gradually reveals the intimate nature of wood as a material.

This intimacy is explored through the virtual and it becomes the representation of the internal workings and psychological hidden corners of each person. "Ecorces" refers to the skin of a tree, which like that

of humans, is a skin made of multiple successions of physical and symbolic layers.

MEDIATORS ARTWORKS: SOCIAL VISION OF INTERACTIVITY

When we conceptualize our creations, we try to always take into account the place occupied by the spectators in order to create an intimate environment. We pay particular attention to the 'règle du jeu' (rules of the game) which are at the basis of the interaction between the spectators and our installations. By focusing on the rules of the game it becomes necessary to ensure a smooth dialogue between all engaged participants: human beings, objects, and other living beings. We focus on the relationships that individuals can develop and suggest with our artworks new possibility for interaction.

Most of our artworks are 'mediators' between spectators in order to gather them, to stimulate relationships, exchanges, beyond basic connections.

With *SphèrAléas* spectators enter in a half-spherical structure. Inside the dome they are required to sit around a 'heart,' which is materialized by a hemispherical mirror. In this space the spectators can manipulate sensitive devices in order to create symphonies of visuals and sounds. The audience's interactions are interpreted by a software which produces in real time sound and 3D visual compositions of a virtual universes.

Like for the learning of a musical instrument, people must take time to experiment with it. The spectators also have to operate collectively, they must pay particular attention to each other in order to compose a melody. By manipulating the sensors, spectators can

Lights Contacts,

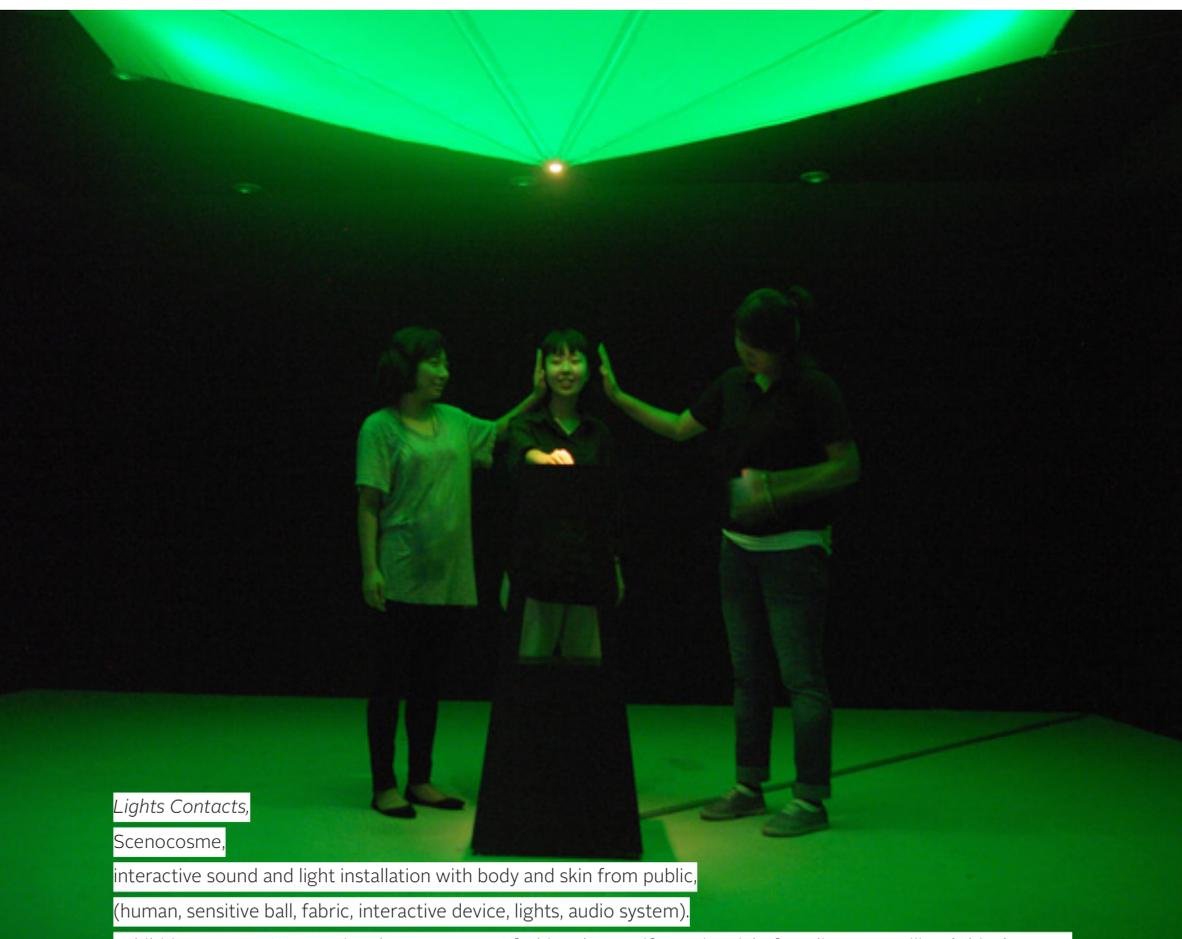
Scenocosme,

interactive sound and light installation with body and skin from public, (human, sensitive ball, fabric, interactive device, lights, audio system).

Exhibition at NAMOC – National Art Museum Of China /TransLife – Triennial of Media Art – Beijing (China) – 2011.

Credit : Scenocosme.





Lights Contacts,

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interactive sound and light installation with body and skin from public,
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Credit : Scenocosme.

continuously intervene on the whole structure playing with the different variables: order, side-by-side positioning, overlapping, speed, rhythm, and harmonic pitch... People chooses and assign roles as if they were in an orchestra. The conductor guides the musicians, and coordinates the organization of visual and sonorous objects. This collective performance is a social experience: one that is intimate and ephemeral. The circular staging has been created to favor the audience's immersion and implication. *SphèrAléas* calms and hypnotizes; and visitors enjoy experimenting with the artwork, sometimes for several hours at a time.

Lights Contacts is perhaps one of the most representative artworks of the interactive approach we adopted. The artwork creates unpredictable links between friends and strangers. This is a tactile installation based on light and sound. The audience's bodies are transformed into real sonorous human instruments.

One person is invited to put his/her hand on a small shiny metal sphere. If the person stands alone, nothing happens, the artwork does not react. Someone else has to be invited in and has to touch the first person's skin. Each touch generates sounds and lights, which vary according to the length of the contacts or the number of people that join in. The installation generates a space where proxemics distances are reduced or broken. According to David Le Breton, "in our societies, the body designs the limits of 'I,' it embodies the individual. The border of the skin is doubled by a non less present symbolic border which distinguishes itself from the others and builds a personal sovereignty that no one could cross without its approval."⁶ In this artwork where the energy (electrostatic) of the contacts with the other are rendered visible, the distances between known and unknown are shortened, and people's hierarchical positions and social distances are banished for the duration of the engagement. *Lights Contacts* creates a transgressive space-time where social relations are suddenly pushed aside, inverted. Here energetic clouds take form of 'proxemics clouds' which, by becoming sensed and made tangible, allow to play with the distances between bodies.

Through our poetic interpretation of invisible mechanisms, technology allows us to draw sensory interactions linked to living beings and their unpredictability. More than the sensory interrelations, our artworks play with the public by creating an augmented separate world using technology and people's voluntary and involuntary. More than physical and behavior relationship, our artworks are source of meetings and dialogs. In *Light Contacts*, visitors create human chains, they interpret sounds and direct themselves into actions and games which lead others to engage.

Our artworks' experience happens through instants of emotional sharing, social and verbal exchanges. Visitors play the game of the interaction by suddenly abandoning social conventions and sharing new spaces for personal narratives and shared engagements with total strangers. ■

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