

Souffles 2

Interactive installation evolving with the rhythm of the breathing of the spectators.

Scenocosme : Grégory Lasserre & Anaïs met den Ancxt

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Pavillon Grappelli, espace d'arts numériques - Niort (Fr)



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Souffles is an interactive and collective artwork in which the spectators breathing gradually reveals the statum of multiple video landscapes. These landscapes are composed of sequences, loops of images gathered during production times across different territories. Both generative and interactive, this video installation evolves through the rhythms of respiration.

*«Air is the last common property of the collective.
Everyone has an equal right to it.
It is not distributed in advance;
the poorest may even help themselves.»*

*Elias Canetti, à propos d'Hermann Broch
La Conscience des mots, 1984*

Exploring the principle of breathing allows us to evoke this common territory that is the atmosphere. We share this territory, but we alter it while forgetting that we alter it through our various activities. There is an interrelation between breathing, acting upon the environment, and breathing in the “feedback” of those actions. Taking the time to breathe thus becomes a symbolic way of regaining awareness of natural rhythms (biological, seasonal, for instance) in contrast with the race for productivity, which is energy-hungry and a cause of environmental degradation. Finally, becoming aware of one’s own breathing is also an invitation to focus, or even to meditate.

Moreover, in «In the bubble, de la complexité au design durable (2008)», John Thackara reminds us that in order to live sustainably, we must give more value to the here and now, citing Ezio manzini: *«Slowness is indispensable to quality (...) in order to appreciate quality, I need time. When I drink a glass of wine, I take the time to look at it, to smell it, to taste it, and to appreciate what time has brought to it»*.

Breathing, the guiding thread of this creation, can be interpreted as the continuous exploration of the territory surrounding our bodies. As Elias Canetti said of the writer Hermann Broch, we could consider each person to be a form of atmospheric unity: “the multiplicity of our world also largely consists in the multiplicity of our breathing spaces.” The project is therefore conceived as a “respiratory c(h)oeur” both chorus and heart in its form and in its content, in its construction as well as in its staging. A living work, rhythmically animated by diverse breaths, by associated respirations, binding individuals together.

Scenography of the artwork

An interactive ritual stages the spectators-visitors in order to collect their breathing. They are invited to take the time to deposit their breaths into a receptacle. A sensor analyzes, in real time, the spectators' moments of respiration. Throughout the exhibition, these moments reveal the different layers of the interactive film. Here, breath is interpreted as a drop of developer falling, spreading out, then fading away.

These "drops" thus reveal a film unfolding in the background of the first film. These fragments of images gradually form a story. They are the building blocks of a narrative that takes shape progressively through the spectators' interventions. Each exhibition time thus reveals a different story.



The spectators' breaths reveal the landscapes of the artwork.

In this project, we propose to develop the notion of interrelations between nature and human beings through a symbolic action. This takes the form of a simple gesture: breathing, which crystallizes a relationship with the environment and its agents. The spectator thus participates in a symbolic staging that associates ritual with interactivity.

The ritual intersects with the question of interactivity, which here consists in conceiving and inventing new relationships that take into account not only myself and my action through the machine, but also myself, the action, and others. Together, the attention paid to one's own breathing and to that of others generates an effect of focus, even meditation, encouraged by the visual and sound feedback of the breaths thus combined.

The layers of landscapes are superimposed through the spectators' breathing, but the degree of transparency varies according to the intensity of their breaths. In this way, improbable and ephemeral landscapes are gradually revealed through the interactions.

More information and videos : www.scenocosme.com/soufles_2_e.htm



Generative scenarios

The artwork is composed of about fifty landscapes combined generatively and randomly. This choice reflects our intention to offer a creation in constant renewal. Spectators thus experience unique and ephemeral moments.

The countryside suddenly gives way to a highway, a tulip field emerges in the middle of a city... This juxtaposition of videos highlights transformed landscapes or unbalanced territories. Fiction sometimes intersects with reality.

Some landscapes were filmed several times at different moments.

Example : A view of Lake Serre-Ponçon, a deep blue in midsummer, can be superimposed in the installation with a view of the same lake but dried up and deserted in the middle of winter. During this season, the winds regularly raise immense clouds of sand and dust. Born from a dam, this artificial lake gradually fills with sediments over the years. Little by little, these sediments are silting up the lakebed. When the dam is drained in autumn, it reveals a lunar-like landscape, in stark contrast with the image held by tourists during the summer season.

Several types of scenarios have been developed. Thus, urban and rural landscapes, highways and rivers, intensive agricultural fields and wild meadows... overlap with one another.

The mirror-men

Mirror-men occasionally appear in the panoramic views. They offer perspectives invisible to the camera, becoming openings, windows onto another landscape. Their faces reflect another background: cracked earth beneath our feet, the image of a factory behind, the sun rising on the horizon. At times, they generate windows of transparency onto another landscape.



Producing the artwork: taking time to stop and look around

The first stages of this creation were planned during various itinerant residencies.

During these residencies, we carried out visual recordings while traveling across different territories. The collection took the form of long loops of images filmed with a 360° rotating device. From our own times of observation, we captured selected scenes in these landscapes. These extended panoramic shots were applied to micro-landscapes of daily life.

The idea was to take the time to look around oneself, not only straight ahead. We then edited a collection of video loops to construct multiple narratives that unfold through the exhibitions.

The birth of the artwork: art and sustainable development

This creation was part of the project *Haut-Bas*, supported and co-produced by two centers for contemporary and digital arts: Fées d'Hiver and ZINC. The aim of the project was to offer, through artistic creation using “new media, new technologies,” a sensitive perspective on the elements of our environment. The A.G.I.R. program sought to support and experiment with relationships between art and sustainable development that is, to promote conditions for producing a cultural project of artistic creation in connection with stakeholders and themes of sustainability.

Several residencies

This work was created during several residencies, first in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, then in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region, at the invitation of the cultural department of the city of Niort.

The second version of this work was created in 2017 :

Souffle 2 : www.scenocosme.com/souffles_2_e.htm

The scenography is composed of high-definition video projections displayed frontally.



The first version of the work was created in 2011:

Souffle 1 : www.scenocosme.com/souffles_e.htm

The scenography consisted of a circular screen at the center of which a “beacon” projected 360° filmed landscape images.



Scenocosme : Grégory Lasserre & Anaïs met den Ancxt : www.scenocosme.com

The couple artists Gregory Lasserre and Anaïs met den Ancxt work under the name Scenocosme. They live in the Rhone-Alpes region in France. Their singular artworks use diverse expressions: interactive installations, visual art, digital art, sound art, collective performances etc.... Scenocosme mix art and digital technology to find substances of dreams, poetry, sensitivity and delicacy. These artists overturn various technologies in order to create contemporary artworks. Their works came from possible hybridizations between the technology and living world (plants, stones, water, wood, humans,...) which meeting points incite them to invent sensitive and poetic languages. The most of their interactive artworks feel several various relationships between the body and the environment. They can feel energetic variations of living beings and design interactive stagings in which spectators share extraordinary sensory experiences. Their artworks are exhibited in numerous museums, contemporary art centres and digital art festivals in the world.

They have exhibited their interactive installation artworks at ZKM Karlsruhe Centre for Art and Media (Germany), at Daejeon Museum of Art (Korea), at Museum Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (Canada), at National Centre for Contemporary Arts (Moscow), at Contemporary Art Museum Raleigh (USA), at Bòlit Centre d'Art Contemporani (Girona) and in many international biennals and festivals : Art Center Nabi / INDAP (Seoul), BIACS3 / Biennial International of Contemporary Art of Seville (Spain), Biennial Experimenta (Australia), NAMOC / National Art Museum of China / TransLife / Triennial of Media Art (Beijing), C.O.D.E (Canada), Futuresonic (UK), WRO (Pologne), FAD (Brasil), ISEA / International Symposium on Electronic Art (2009 Belfast, 2011 Istanbul, 2012 Albuquerque, 2013 Sydney), EXIT, VIA, Lille3000, Ososphere, Scopitone, Seconde nature (France)... during important events : World Expo (Shanghai), Nuits Blanches (Toronto, Halifax, Bruxelles, Brighton, Amiens, Segovia, Bucharest), Fête des lumières (Lyon)... and in various art centers : MONA (Australia), MUDAC, Fondation Claude Verdan (Lausanne), Musée lanchelevici (Belgium), Kibla (Slovenia), Banff Centre (Canada), Villa Romana (Firenze), Utsikten Kunstsenter (Norway), Watermans (UK), Centre des arts d'Enghien-les-Bains, Gaîté Lyrique (Paris) etc.

Full biography : www.scenocosme.com/PDF/scenocosme_BOOK_EN.pdf

Wikipedia : <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/scenocosme>

Previous exhibition of souffles 1 et 2

Centre d'art contemporain Boris Bojnev - Forcalquier (Fr)

Centre culturel Espace Bonnefoy - Toulouse (Fr)

Les Capucins - centre d'art contemporain - Embrun (Fr)

Orangerie du château de la Louvière / Curator : Lucie Bisson - Montluçon (Fr)

Château du domaine du Restinclières - Prades-le-Lez (Fr)

Musée de la brasserie / Comines Ville Ouverte - Comines (Belgium)

L'Angle - espace d'art contemporain / Curator : Marion Dupressy - La Roche-sur-Foron (Fr)

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