Estudis Escènics International Symposium

Live Art and Uncertain Technologies

3 and 4 October 2024 | *Institut del Teatre* | *Barcelona*

Programme

Thursday 03.10.24 | Technology as a body

GROUND FLOOR FOYER

9:30   **Welcome**

SCANNER ROOM

10:00   **Opening by Marc VILLANUEVA and Xesca SALVÀ**
Tecnologies incertes (Uncertain technologies) | (CAT)

Uncertainty characterises the relationship we have with technology, or that we want to have. From artistic creation, digital technologies pose questions about agency, presence, interaction, communication or perception: fundamental questions for Live Art, which digital media do not exhaust, but rather amplify and re-contextualise. As with divination, with technology we seek more questions than answers, more uncertainty than accuracy, more mystery than judgement.

11:00   **Lecture** | Lena NEWTON
Who laughs last on the hybrid stage? | (ENG)

Lena Newton is a theatre-designer and professor of Theatre Design at Düsseldorf Kunstakademie. For many years she has made video and other forms of tech central to her practice. Since 2007, she has designed stage sets and videos for theatre performances by Susanne Kennedy, Sebastian Baumgarten, Lola Arias, andcompany&co, Eric de Vroedt, Davy Pieters, Boogaerdt/VanderSchoot, and Nicole Beutler, among others. The talk explores questions that open up our understanding of the use of tech in theatre and live performances. Lena investigates the challenges and possibilities of tech in the theatrical space. How can we productively collaborate with each other in using tech in the making of plays and performances?

12:00   **Break**

AUDITORIUM

12:30   Presentation

Nil MARTÍN and Bani BRUSADIN
Una epidèmia de ball a les pantalles:
Presencialitats especulatives i noves performativitats als escenaris
digitals (A dance epidemic on screens: speculative presentialities
and new performativies on digital stages) | (CAT)

One of the fundamental values of Live Art is the meeting of a group of people
in the same here and now. Conversely, digital spaces and social networks are
often discussed as paradigms of disembodiment. But is this really how it is? We
speak of "speculative presentiality" as what happens when an effect of shared
space and time — of co-presence — is created, despite being in different space-
time dimensions. This presentation proposes a brief qualitative collection of the
presence of the body and its performativity in a deeply digitised context.

Maria Mercè SAUMELL
Tot convivint amb robots: **School of Moon** *(2016) de Shonen*
(Coexisting with robots: Shonen's School of Moon [2016]) | (CAT)

The Shonen company's "School of Moon" is a choreographic show for boys and
girls, between five and seven years old, recruited on site, in each place where
the show is performed, after a period of rehearsals and familiarisation between
children and machines. Two adult dancers also participate, and together they
form what Cuong Castaing calls "a disturbing community". The narrative of
this piece is divided into three parts or periods that develop like tableaux vi-
vants: the first corresponds to the human era (a community in which children
interact with robots), followed by the post-human era, and, finally, the non-hu-
man era, in which we only see robots on stage.

Jaume FERRETE
Laringe, oscilador (Larynx, oscillator) | (ESP)

"Laringe, oscilador" is a collective vocal practice that transfers to the body de-
vices and strategies specific to sound synthesis, such as the oscillator. The char-
acteristics of these devices clash with the specificities and limitations of the
body. Thus, the voices become collective and hybrid and can incorporate partial
bodies, technical objects, ways of, devices, metaphors, and models. Drawing on
research experience based on practice, Ferrete emphasises the socio-technolog-
ical, trans-individual, hybrid and not exclusively human nature of acts of vocal
production understood as acts, as well as the materialities that arise from them.

Citlali HERNÁNDEZ
Prácticas corporales en el territorio digital de internet
(Body practices in the digital territory of the internet) | (ESP)

Through an artistic perspective, this presentation seeks to develop some of the
particularities of the Internet understood as a territory-tech assemblage and
how, in its uncertainty, specific body practices take place that materialise bodies
and constitute subjectivities. It is based on ongoing doctoral research that seeks
to transfer the research concepts to the body, and from the body back to the

theoretical sphere. This process has been set up as experimental, and although it has not pursued specific dance techniques, it has remained close to some of the languages of choreographic thought, physical theatre, and expanded dance. It intertwines body study theories with the practice of electronic art and performance to explore the construction of subjectivities in hyper-connected life.

14:00   Break

SCANNER ROOM

15:30   Installation | FRAU Recerques Visuals
LOUQSOR/ANDROMÈDE. Viatges viscuts, paradisos descrits
(LOUQSOR/ANDROMÈDE. Journeys experienced, paradises described*) | (CAT)

This installation is based on diaries and memoirs written during Aurora Bertrana's 3-year journey through French Polynesia aboard the ships Louqsor and Andromede. Through her writing style, Bertrana created precise and complex images with the simplest of words, and made the reader see what they had not and perhaps would never see. Based on video, this piece evokes the images that could be cast into the imagination of early 20th-century readers, suggestive images and, however descriptive they may be, abstract in the imagination of those who do not know what they are reading.

*The piece can be seen, with continuous showings and free entry, from 12.30.
 At 15.30 there will be a short presentation by the artists and a full screening.

16:30   Workshop | Jorge CABALLERO and Anna GIRALT
El cos com a eina de creació audiovisual amb intel·ligència artificial
(The body as an audiovisual creation tool with artificial intelligence) | (CAT/ ESP)

This activity draws on Artefacto's research into the creation of synthetic audiovisuals using deep learning algorithms, questioning the limitations of text as the sole engine of creation, as well as the restrictions of these creations within the confines of the diegetic space. It also questions the limits imposed by algorithms and the possibility of creating in real time, while seeking to overcome the conceptual barriers between thinking, writing, processing and creating images. This activity seeks to open the debate towards new uses of artificial intelligence, challenging the forms of symbiosis between text and image and exploring the body's potential as an engine of creation.

17:30   End of day

Friday 04.10.24 | Technology as transformation

GROUND FLOOR FOYER

9:30 **Welcome**

AUDITORIUM

10:00 **Presentations**

Núria NIA
Estadis de fluïdesa per a línies de temps no divergents
(Stages of fluidity for non-divergent timelines) | (CAT)

The online subject is a combination of hybrid layers between what is biological and what has been transformed with cables, satellites and connections. A hybrid subjectivity, undergoing its own virtual representation through screens, avatars or a deconstruction of the being in data. Today's hybrid performing and performance arts, which can take place on a physical plane, a virtual plane or a combination of both, open up new expressive routes inseparable from thought: each artistic incursion allows us to trace a path beyond the so-called technological disruptions, which open up a field of creative options yet to be discovered.

Álvaro PASTOR
Augmenting reality: On the shared history of perceptual illusion and video projection mapping | (ENG, prerecorded intervention)

Perceptual illusions based on the spatial correspondence between objects and displayed images have been pursued by artists and scientists since the 15th century, mastering optics to create crucial techniques such as the linear perspective and devices such as the Magic Lantern. This presentarion argues that contemporary video projection mapping inherits, and further extends, this drive to produce perceptual illusions in space, by incorporating the required real-time capabilities for dynamically superposing the imaginary onto physical objects. It also highlights critical milestones which have been reached during the last decades, onn the path towards the creation of all encompassing, untethered, synthetic reality experiences available to the plain senses, where every surface becomes a screen and every object is open to perceptual manipulation.

María GARCÍA VERA
Translació de codis i tecnologia en les arts escèniques: interaccions entre el cos i la imatge cinematogràfica
(Code translation and technology in the performing arts: interactions between the body and the cinematic image) | (CAT)

This interdisciplinary study examines the convergence between cinema and theatre through the optic of the applied arts. Through the exploration of intermediality, there is an analysis of how the inclusion of cinematographic technologies in theatre modifies spatial perception and redefines the relationship between the actor's body (present body) and the projected image (virtual body). The film-essay "Bellas Artrópodas" acts both as a case study and a methodological tool, using/editing techniques and adapting cinematographic methods to

the performing framework and vice versa. The hybridisation of media not only expands the expressive possibilities of theatre, but also poses critical questions about presence and absence in the digital era.

Ferran UTZET
Sobre la idea d'immersió (On the idea of immersion) | (CAT)

Undoubtedly the concept "immersive" has made fortunes. But it is surprising that the term is also used to highlight the modernity of theatrical productions. If we leave aside epic theatre and its derivations, the goal of stage creators has almost always been to make the audience forget that they are in the theatre. The current idea of immersion is part of the unstoppable gamification of the collective experience, where both exhibitions and escape rooms seek to place the spectator at the centre of the experience as the video game does. This presentation reflects on some of the benefits that theatre can take from video games, assuming that the theatrical form will remain essentially unchanged but that it will adopt some strategies of this language, as it did before with cinema. It includes references to the exhibition "The Other Side", curated by Enric Puig Punyet and Ferran Utzet at the Santa Mònica arts centre in February 2024.

11:30   Break

SCANNER ROOM

**12:00   Lecture | Chris van GOETHEM
Nothing is new, even if it's just invented** | (ENG)

The relation between performing arts and technology is ambiguous, performing arts are progressive and conservative at the same time in the use of technology. Artists are often early adaptors but use artistic-technical concepts that are centuries old. We will look at some high-end new technologies that have their origins in the Industrial Revolution or before. Automation, mapping, 3D projection or streaming are all new technologies with a long history in a distance past. Based on the results of the European Canon project, we will trace them back to the initial concept that is on the basis of the contemporary "invention". We will see how history serves as inspiration for innovation, why things didn't happen and how performing arts practitioners adapt to new technologies.

**13:00   Projection with commentary
Estampa: Friccions (Frictions)** | (CAT)

Estampa is an artistic collective of programmers, filmmakers, and researchers based in Barcelona. Their practice is based on a critical and archaeological approach to audiovisual and digital technologies, placing particular importance on working with archives and the tradition of experimental audiovisuals. Since 2017, one of their main lines of work has been the investigation of the uses and ideologies of artificial intelligence, which they have reflected in a series of projects that engage with technology from its various aspects — technical, material, and discursive — and in a situated manner, paying attention to seemingly erroneous functions and understanding it as a situation of interaction between different agencies.

14:00   Break

15:30 | **Lecture | Kris VERDONCK**
Between body and object | (ENG)

Over the course of history, the relationship between man and machines has repeatedly been compared to his relationship with God. The essence of godliness is to have control over everything, to achieve omnipotence. The human, as an imperfect, unpredictable, uncontrollable and mortal being, longs for the domain of the perfect, the controllable and the immortal. The human longs for the mechanical. When the differences between people and things, between "subject" and "object", disappear, when the boundaries between the museum and the theatre vanish, when things are no longer simply dead and people are no longer simply alive, the white cube and the black box become interchangeable. The result may well be an infinite Beckettian grey, where everyone and everything is lost, where the notion of truth is non-existent.

16:30 | **Closing forum based on a genealogy of waiting and asynchrony**, **led by Clara LAGUILLO and other participants of the symposium** | (different languages)

Using some initial confessions-reflections on untimeliness and latency, links will be made between certain forms of performativity and the uncertain technologies that are the focus of the symposium. Thus, and based on an initial genealogy, a dialogue table will be activated with the participants, who will have been asked a preliminary question that can become a common thread. If necessary, responses from other attendees will also be added, and, by way of closure, we will try to outline ideas that we collectively consider relevant to the symposium.

17:30 | **Installation**
FLUX, by Júlia ROSSINYOL and Mercè LLEDÓS | S2 corridor (opposite the Scanner room)

Plants are part of complex communities, where they communicate with each other in order to survive, defend themselves or ensure a range of resources for their growth. "Flux" is a visual interpretation of the channel through which vegetal data circulates. A representation of the code that plants could be using to send messages to each other, through a succession of points of light on a 24-metre floating line. "Flux" is the final project by Júlia Rossinyol and Mercè Lledós, students on the Postgraduate Degree in Staging and Digital Technology.

18:00 | **End of day**

Biographies

Bani BRUSADIN is a curator, educator and researcher trained in communication studies, cultural production and creative activism. Since the early 2000s, his work has been concerned with unconventional communication and artistic tactics, technological dreams/nightmares, planetary-scale infrastructures, and all possible feedback loops between them. He currently works as curator of the 5th Industrial Art Biennial in Istria (Croatia). Since 2022, he has curated the DONE programme, a research project of the Foto Colectania foundation in Barcelona. In 2024, Bani collaborated with Medialab Matadero, and, between 2022 and 2023, he worked as a member of the curatorial team of transmediale 2023.

Jorge CABALLERO, who specialised in engineering and audiovisual communication, with a Master's Degree in Interactive Media, is carrying out a doctorate on cinema and artificial intelligence. He is a professor at Pompeu Fabra University and the Autonomous University of Barcelona, and co-founder of GusanoFilms and Artefacto. His productions have been recognised at international festivals and have been supported by important institutions. Artefacto, founded together with Anna Giralt, is a cinema and technology research and production centre based in Barcelona, which promotes the creative use of technology in cinema.

Jaume FERRETE VÁZQUEZ (jaumeferrete.net) works as an artist, teacher and researcher around the notion of voice through performance, listening sessions, archives, workshops, conversations, sound works and websites. He has collaborated with multiple institutions (MACBA, MNCARS, MUAC UNAM, Secession, UOC, BAU, UPV/EHU, TEOR/éTica...) and has received multiple awards (Generación 2016, Becas Leonardo Fundación BBVA, Estancia artística AMEXCID, OSIC...). Currently, he is developing a doctoral research project (BAU) on synthetic voices and performance.

FRAU Recerques Visuals is a studio created by Helena Pielias and Vicenç Viaplana Ventura. They develop their own and collaborative projects, working for artists, companies and cultural institutions. They offer workshops, advice and art mediations. Their research covers history, philosophy, literature, fine arts and contemporary art, using visual languages such as digital art, video art, performing arts, performance, graphic design and installations. Helena, trained in fine arts and digital video, has worked in public administration and museums. Vicenç, with training in audiovisual communication and digital arts, has worked with contemporary theatre companies.

María GARCÍA VERA is an actress and stage creator, who graduated in Acting from the Institut del Teatre and in Cinema from the Paris 1 Sorbonne University. She also has a PhD cum laude from the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona with the first Applied Research thesis approved in Catalonia. Her research concerns the translation of codes between cinema and theatre from the perspective of the actress. Founder of the company Los Detectives, she has an extensive career in both theatre and cinema. Since 2020 she has been teaching on the Postgraduate Course in Staging and Digital Technology at the Institut del Teatre and since 2018 at the Unverstity School of Arts ERAM (attached to Girona University).

Anna GIRALT GRIS is a filmmaker and researcher. Co-founder of Artefacto. Her work uses technology to analyse the most hidden layers of power relations to create new meanings. She has directed and produced films that have been selected and awarded in festivals such as CPH:DOX, Visions du Réel, HotDocs, SXSW and IDFA, among others.

Chris van GOETHEM started in 1983 as a technician in a rental company. By self-education he became a stage manager and travelled around Europe. Later he moved on to work as consultant, educator and finally researcher in technical theatre. He teaches History of Technical Theatre and Research skills at the stage management and technical theatre department of RITCS (EHB) and is guest lecturer in several programmes in Europe. He researches the history of technical theatre and was part of the "Changement a vue" and the "Fading lights" research projects (Stockholm University of the Arts) and led the Canon of Theatre Technical History project.

Citlali HERNÁNDEZ is an industrial designer (UNAM) and a graduate of the University Master's in Digital Arts (UPF). She completed the Diplomado Transdisciplinario en Investigación, Experimentación y Producción Artística TRÁNSITOS in Mexico (CENART) and the Fab Academy study programme in Barcelona. Doctoral student at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya with the thesis "Body, Technology and Performativity. The body in new media art practices". From a transdisciplinary vision, her artistic work explores the materialities of performance and its entanglements with cables, pixels and circuits to think about the body as a field of potentialities. She has been given several artistic production grants to reflect on the body, digitality and identity on the Internet. She is professor of interaction applied to the arts and design, professor on the Postgraduate Degree in Staging and Digital Technology at the Institut del Teatre, and is part of the artistic collective Axolot.cat, where he coordinates the meeting *Híbrides: Small Embodied Data*. www.turbulente.net

Clara LAGUILLO ABBAD has a PhD in Philosophy (UAB, 2018). Her field of research addresses temporary discomforts in the context of digitisation. Since 2019 she has coordinated and taught on the Master's Degree in Digital Art Curatorship (ESDi-URL). She also teaches at the CITM (UPC), and is co-coordinator and teacher of CursO at EINA. Between 2021 and 2023 she co-coordinated the programme (creating) Situations for the Santa Mònica centre d'arts. She has taught classes at the UAB, the UB, Blanquerna and Universidad Nacional de La Plata. With an interest in the practice of curating, she has participated in processes of curatorship and mediation, documenting and cataloguing, programming and mounting exhibitions. Her professional priorities include attention to interpersonal care.

Júlia ROSSINYOL and **Mercè LLEDÓS** are two artists trained in graphic, audiovisual and space design. They met last academic year doing a Postgraduate Degree in Stage and Digital Technology at the Institut del Teatre, and together they designed the light installations "Baucis" (Off Barcelona Llum 2024) and "Flux", and exhibited for the first time at the Festival Embassa't 2024.

Nil MARTÍN is a graduate in Communication and the Cultural Industry at the UB with an Outstanding Award, a Diploma in Acting at Eòlia CSAD, and trained in dramaturgy, stage creation and contemporary dance. Winner of the Best Final Degree Project Award in Contemporary Theatre Studies (Teatre Lliure, Màster CRIC and CBTBarcelona, 2022) for the project "Another now, another here: speculative presences in

Live Art", supervised by Bani Brusadin. Co-organiser of the though actions of L'Última Merda Col·lectiu, at the Mostra Igualada, FiraTàrrega and the CCCB. Speaker at the Escola de Pensament of the Teatre Lliure (with Joana Masó and Marina Garcés) and the European programme Digital Leap (Institut Ramon Llull, Erasmus+). He is responsible for the performing arts section of the podcasts "Plaersdemavida" and "Tardeo" (Radio Primavera Sound), and contributes to the programme "Plaça Tísner" (Betevé).

Lena NEWTON, born in Munich, Germany, is a theatre designer based in Rotterdam. She studied at Hochschule für Bildende Künste Dresden, Gerrit Rietveld Academy Amsterdam and Piet Zwart Institute Rotterdam. In Lena Newton's work, video and film are integral to the development of her stage concepts. Since 2007, she has designed stage sets and videos for performances by director Susanne Kennedy at the National Theatre The Hague, Volksbühne Berlin and Münchner Kammerspiele. The productions "Fegefeuer in Ingolstadt" and "Warum läuft Herr R. Amok?" were invited to the Berlin theatre festival 'Berliner Theatertreffen' in 2014 and 2015. Her set design for "Drei Schwestern", at Münchner Kammerspiele, was nominated for "Stage Design of the Year" by the journal "Theater Heute" in 2019. In Germany, Lena Newton has worked with theatre directors Sebastian Baumgarten, Lola Arias and with the collective andcompany&co. In The Netherlands, she has worked with directors Sarah Moeremans, Eric de Vroedt, Davy Pieters, with the performance duo Boogaerdt/VanderSchoot, and with the choreographer Nicole Beutler. Since 2019, Lena Newton has been a professor at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany.

Núria NIA trained in cinema, digital art and communication, and is a PhD student in Fine Arts at Barcelona University. Her artistic practice starts from the audiovisual medium to combine with other forms such as performance or installation, activating mixtures of contexts and diverse practices that nurture theoretical and artistic research on topics such as digital bodies, digital work, the image-screen, the performed archive, and collective thinking. She teaches on the Master's Degree in Digital Art Curatorship (ESDI Ramon Llull), on the Bachelor's Degree in Animation, Design and Digital Art (CITM UPC), and works on the intersection between art, education and mediation with projects such as Art i Escola (Museu de Granollers and ACVIC), Bòlit Mentor (Bòlit Girona), Flipart (Diputació de Barcelona), CCCB School in residency, Internet Universe (CCCB and Diputació de Barcelona) and Fotoveu (Granollers Town Council). She combines artistic practice with research, production, and audiovisual directing. She is currently a resident artist at Fabra i Coats Fàbrica de Creació.

Álvaro PASTOR is an architect and cognitive scientist. His research focuses on human memory and neurodegenerative processes using immersive media. He is a professor on the Bachelor's Degree in Video Game Design and Development the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya - BarcelonaTech (UPC) and Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications Studies at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. He designs and develops virtual reality applications for use in research in clinical psychology in the Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychobiology at Barcelona University. He is currently linked to Learning, Media and Entertainment Research Group and the XR-Lab of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

Xesca SALVÀ (scenographer) and **Marc VILLANUEVA** (director and dramaturge) share an interest in the ideas of play, experience and intimacy. They have conceived and developed projects separately and together, such as "Prospective Actions", an interactive installation about scenography and social movements, or "Understory", an ecosystem of pieces about life on a microscopic scale and everything that sustains it. They coordinate the Postgraduate Degree in Staging and Digital Technology at the Institut del Teatre.

Mercè SAUMELL, born in Barcelona, with a PhD in History of Art from the UB. She has taught at the Universities of Salamanca and Girona and, since 2001, has been professor at the Institut del Teatre in Barcelona where she has also been responsible for Cultural Services (2009-2016). She teaches on the Official University Master's Degree in Theatre Studies (MUET9, has supervised different doctoral theses and post-doctoral supervisions. She has participated in diverse accredited research groups (CSIC, EU Socrates Programme, GREGA UB Grouo, HERA Project University of Oslo, Universidad Católica de Santiago de Chile...). She is a member of the IFTR (International Federation for Theatre Research) and co-directed its World Congress in Barcelona in 2013. She has formed part of the project "Independent Theatre in Spain: 1962-1980", led by the Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid. She has published articles in national and international academic journals. She is the author of books such as "El teatre contemporani" (2006), "La Fura dels Baus en quarantena. 40 anys de trajectòria grupal: 1979-2019" (2019) and "El papel de las mujeres en el teatro" (2019).

Ferran UTZET is a stage director, dramaturge and curator. The last exhibition he curated (together with Enric Puig Punyet) was "The Other Side", at the Santa Mònica arts centre. In theatre, the most notable recent shows he has directed include "La Nostra Ciutat", by Thornton Wilder (2023) at the Teatre Lliure, "Esperant Godot", by Samuel Beckett (2020), at the Sala Beckett, and "Sopa de Pollastre amb Ordi" by Arnold Wesker (2018, Butaca Award for Best Production of the Year). He has been extensively involved in actor training, running courses and workshops in different centres around Spain and abroad. Before all of that, he studied mathematics.

Kris VERDONCK studied visual arts, architecture and theatre. His creations are positioned in the transit zone between visual arts and theatre, between installation and performance, between dance and architecture. He wrote and directed theatre plays and dance performances and music productions, and produced media installations, sculptures and video works. He is artistic director and founder of A Two Dogs Company, and was affiliated as a teacher / lecturer with several institutes: Giessen institute (D), KASK (B), AHK (NL), Cuny (USA)... In 2024 he was fellow at BRIAS, Brussels institute for advanced studies. His books include "Listen to the bloody machine" (Marianne van Kerkhoven en Anoek Nuyens) and "Machine made silence" (Peter Eckersall and Kristof Van Baarle).