last minute

immersive installation

note of intent — updated 01-03-2022

première May 2022

Adrien M **&** **Claire B**

inspiration / expiration

One day in May 2021, at low tide, I scattered my father's ashes into the sea not far from the Mont-Saint-Michel Bay, where he grew up.

In the pale light, the black headed sheep graze and bleat among the grasses watching our small group of people. We walk in silence, hands behind our backs, through the salt-meadow. A stream of green water runs gently towards the sea as wavelets tremble across its surface. The sky is streaked with thin cirrus clouds. Birds (wagtails perhaps?) sing in the crisp wind, their feet tracing tiny signs in the grey clay sand. By a cairn of granite stones, we take turns in sending the white ashes up into the brisk air, infinitely delicate clouds floating away.

Is etched into me the bracing beauty of that moment, the light of that minute stretched to infinity when my father's atomised body encompassed the world, the dust of his body mixing with the earth, wind and water. My father is the land, my father is the sea, my father is the wind, and his drawing is prolonged by an airplane's trail across the clear sky. My father has become vast, limitless and without time. He has suspended himself in the present.
I am pregnant, and as life within me assembles itself into a new body, life has left another. Mirrors of each other, a body comes together as another comes apart. A father has left just as a son is about to arrive. Vertigo.

Adrien and I wished to create a dream-like voyage from this intimate experience. A last-minute voyage, one undertaken just before the threshold is crossed. The starting point for this project, this immersive installation, is therefore the end. That last minute before death… or before birth.

We composed this symbolic and pivotal experience of a before and an after, of a body about to pass through to the other side, by placing ourselves among the elements, where matter resides. We wrote the story from the vantage point of a particle: being droplet, burning blaze, flying smoke, shivering ash, vibrating earth, slipping air, trickling rain, rising wave.
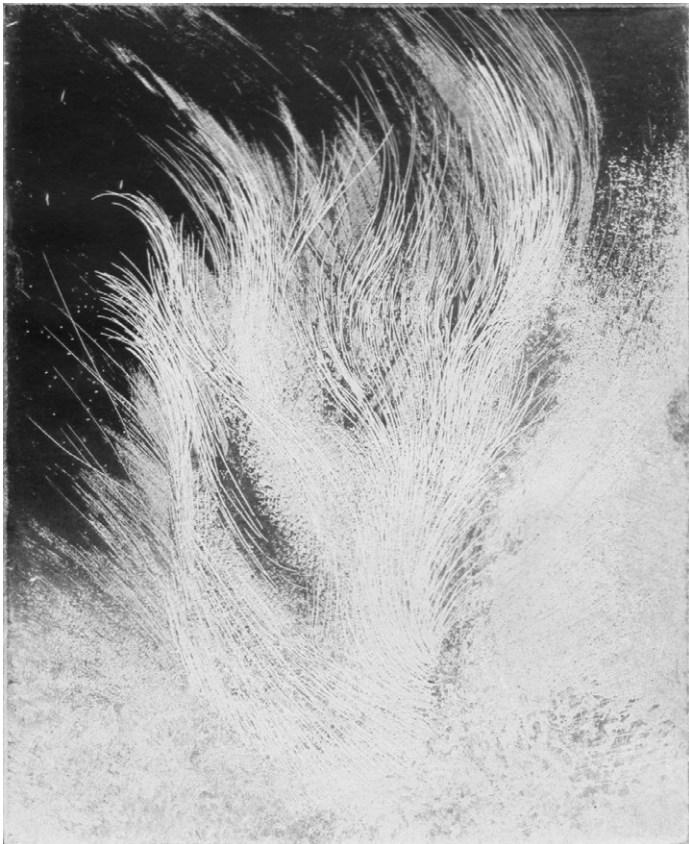
We hope that the small group of people who -during 30 minutes- will live this last drawn-out minute together grasp the ritual nature of the experience. A ritual to take care of our bereavements, our births and our metamorphosis.
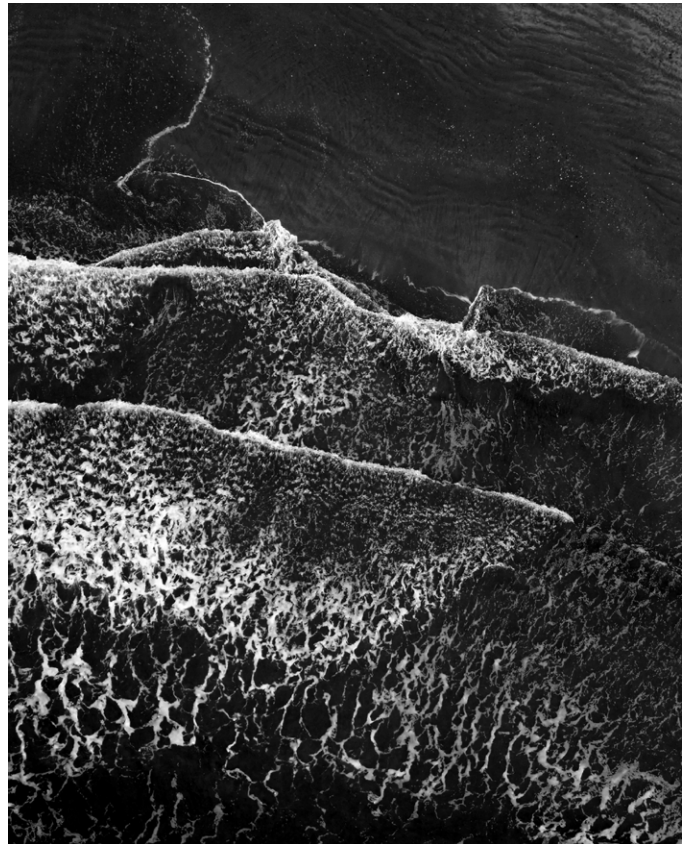
Claire Bardainne

Fire
engraving (drypoint, etching and aquatint)
preparatory study for the project *last minute*
Claire Bardainne, June 2021

Water
drone footage
image for the project *last minute*
Adrien Mondot, February 2021

Summary

This work is at the crossroads of the living arts, performance art and installation work. It allows audiences to engage collectively and intimately in a dynamic and lively relationship with a space in transformation. Here are the experiences it encompasses:

An immersive experience
The audience in movement is immersed in images and spatialised music, in a large room where particles are projected onto the floor (30 to 50 people for 200 to 500m2). A tall and transparent screen rises at the heart of the space, a vertical prolongation of the image.

A sound and image performance
The images and the music (composed by Olivier Mellano) are subtly intertwined into a narrated visual symphony lasting approximately 30 minutes, allowing the music to be seen and the images to be heard. The projection, in black and white, draws on elemental imagery (fire, water, wind), and its progression borrows from physical phenomena (flows, spirals, waves, dispersion). Images are created by blending the motion of computer-generated particles with edited real-world videos.

An interactive experience
A static score (identical at each performance) is combined with a dynamic score (unique to each performance) which involves the audience: the images are altered by the presence and movements of the public by means of a network of infrared cameras and fine signal analysis, offering many ways for audience and score to interact.

A symbolic transformation
The narrative thread is one of metamorphosis, and it is the body of the audience itself that is at the heart of this transformation: consumed by fire, ashes dispersed by wind and rain, regenerated by water, the end becoming the origin in a perpetual loop.

Performances in the installation
This artwork can accommodate danced performances, for performers to inhabit the space and embody a relationship to the image that is singular, inspiring, infectious.

Key word
immersion
metamorphosis
body
death
birth
elements
black & white
experience
symbolic
movement
particules
score
30 minutes

Research images for the project *last minute*, January 2022

Detailed description

Artistic and technical intentions for this project

This project was born from many desires, and unfurls over several research directions:

1. Extend the experience that was undertaken with the project *Faire corps*

In 2020, we presented the exhibit-experience *Faire corps* at La Gaîté Lyrique in Paris (France). It included several of our installations created since 2010: the corpus of work *XYZT Abstract landscapes,* the large-scale installation *The shadow of the vapor* (main piece of the itinerary) and a site-specific creation *Core*.

The audience's body was an essential component of the experience. They strolled around barefoot in a sensing and reacting environment, they were invited to experiment with different poses : sitting on the carpeted floor, standing still or in motion all the whilst influencing the motion of the projected images. The body of the audience becomes part of the work, as well as being its sensor head.

In a separate room, *Core* a work custom-made for the exhibition with musician Olivier Mellano, offered a 5-minute, 360° immersive experience, a contemplative symphony of music and particles.

With *last minute*, we wish to merge these propositions:
- keep the feel of a large-format interactive installation while providing a clear narrative with a beginning and an end,
- extend the concept of an immersive music/image score from 5 to 30 minutes, allowing the audience to move around and dance collectively whilst keeping the feel of an "immersive-show".
It is a challenge that is all at once technical and dramaturgic: combine a static score (repeat) and dynamic (unique at each performance).

This research led with composer **Olivier Mellano** forms part of a continuing and long-lasting collaboration. He signed in 2017 the music/sound score for the visual arts exhibition *Mirages & miracles*, the site-specific installation *The shadow of the vapor* in 2018, the stage performance and pop-up book in augmented reality *Acqua Alta* in 2019, and *Core* in 2020. For each project, renewed technical issues invite us to rethink our musical approach to images.
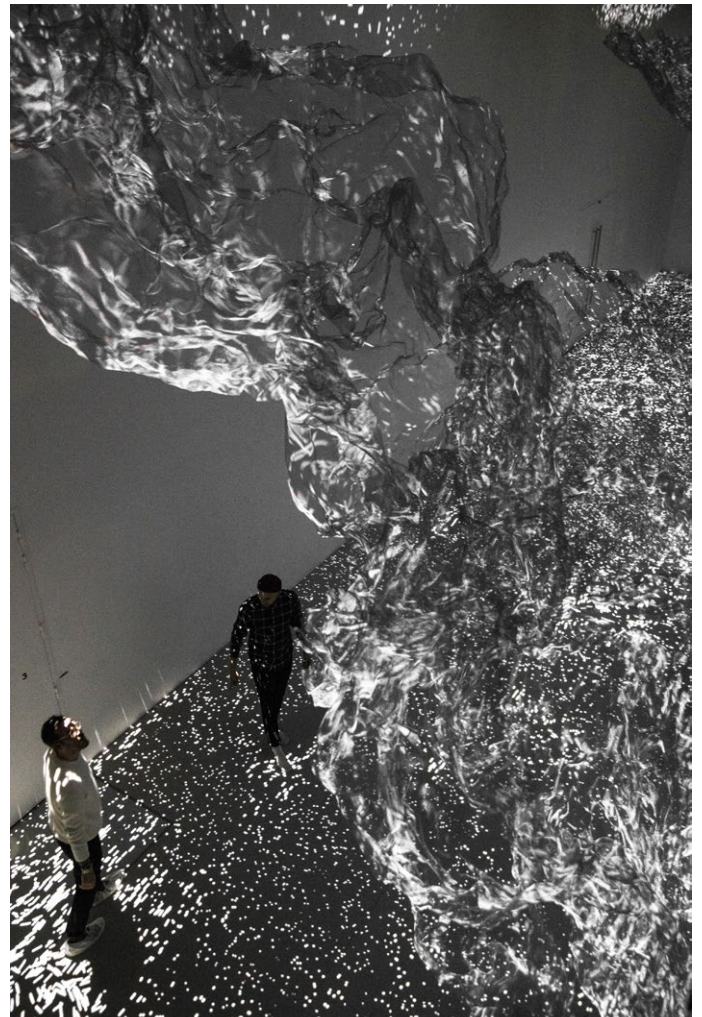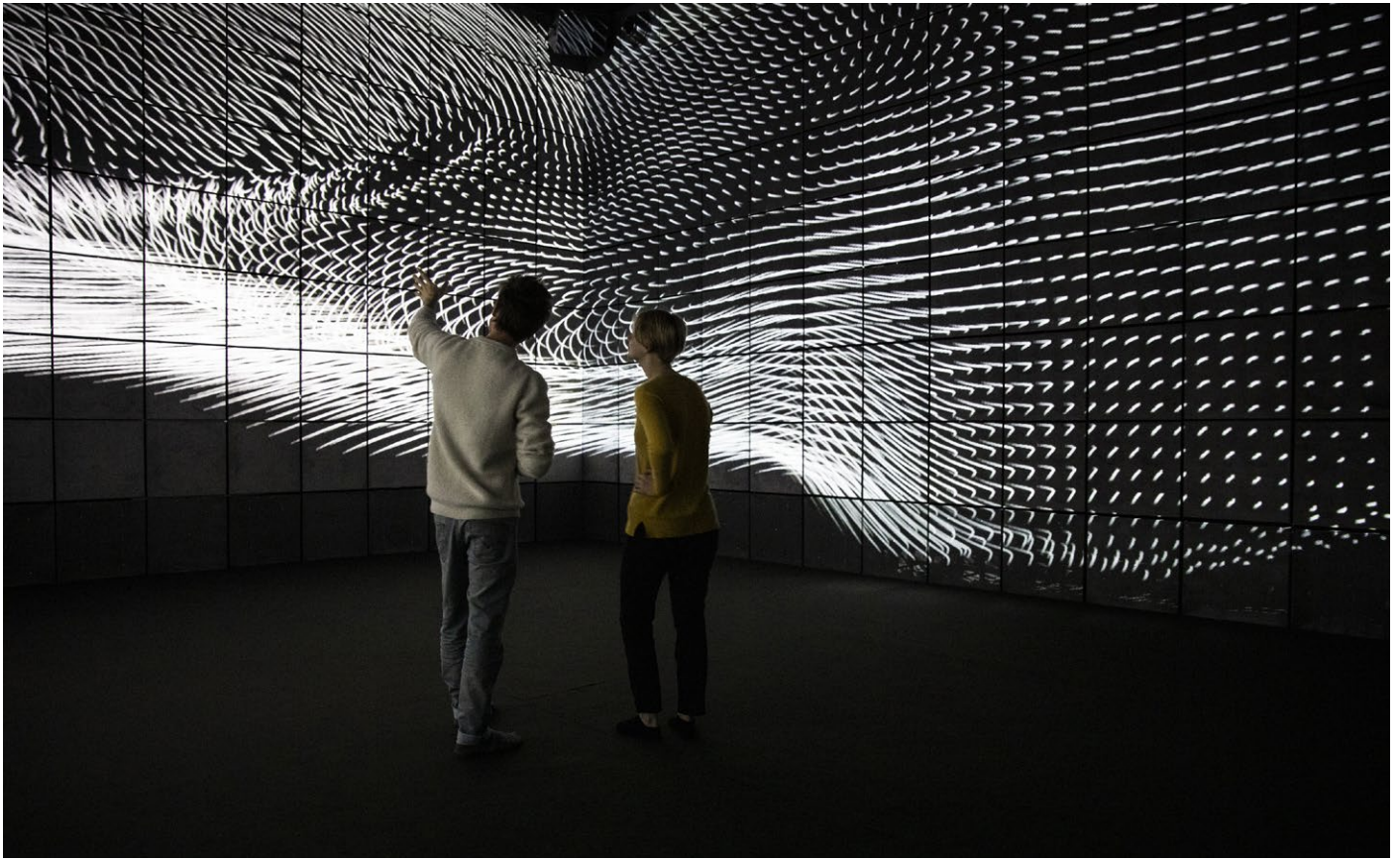
Images from
the exhibit-experience
Faire corps
Adrien M & Claire B
2020 at la Gaîté Lyrique

Dance performance in
Faire corps, 2020,
by dancers of the Fearless
Rabbit company (Rémi
Boissy).

2. Imagine a collective ritual

Since March 2020, we have collectively suffered the loss of gatherings, especially those bearing symbolic meaning: parties, shows, ceremonies, and all so-called non-essential aspects of socialising which are built on imaginary, poetry and ritual.

We wish to conceive this project as an answer, an antidote to this era. We feel the need to participate in imagining new ways of being together, new rituals to meet today's societal challenges.

A ritual has a social role, because it is cathartic. The aim is to share feelings, through a set of shared codes. It is a practice with a symbolic nature, intended to engage the participants' emotions at the service of a common expectation.

In this research, we use the tale as a resource for a dramaturgical construction. We collaborate with storyteller Stéfanie James to help us in this narrative without words, made of images, sounds and bodies in movement.

3. Explore further what makes dance

This new creation is deeply rooted in our company's long-term artistic project, a place where body and image enter into dialogue.
Immersed and set in motion by interactive images and carried forward by the narrative, we wish for the audience's body to become the principal subject of this dance of transformation.

Simple gestures, a stance, a step, or sophisticated movements will all coexist without hierarchy. Much like a moment of collective dancing, one we hope to draw forth.

We also envision the potential for guided, dancing tours and performances in this space with dance and circus artists.

Research residency
June 2021
Prototype for installation
with 120m2 image on floor
and 40m2 vertical surface.

Research images for the
project last *minute*,
January 2022.
Crest — Villa Aphéa
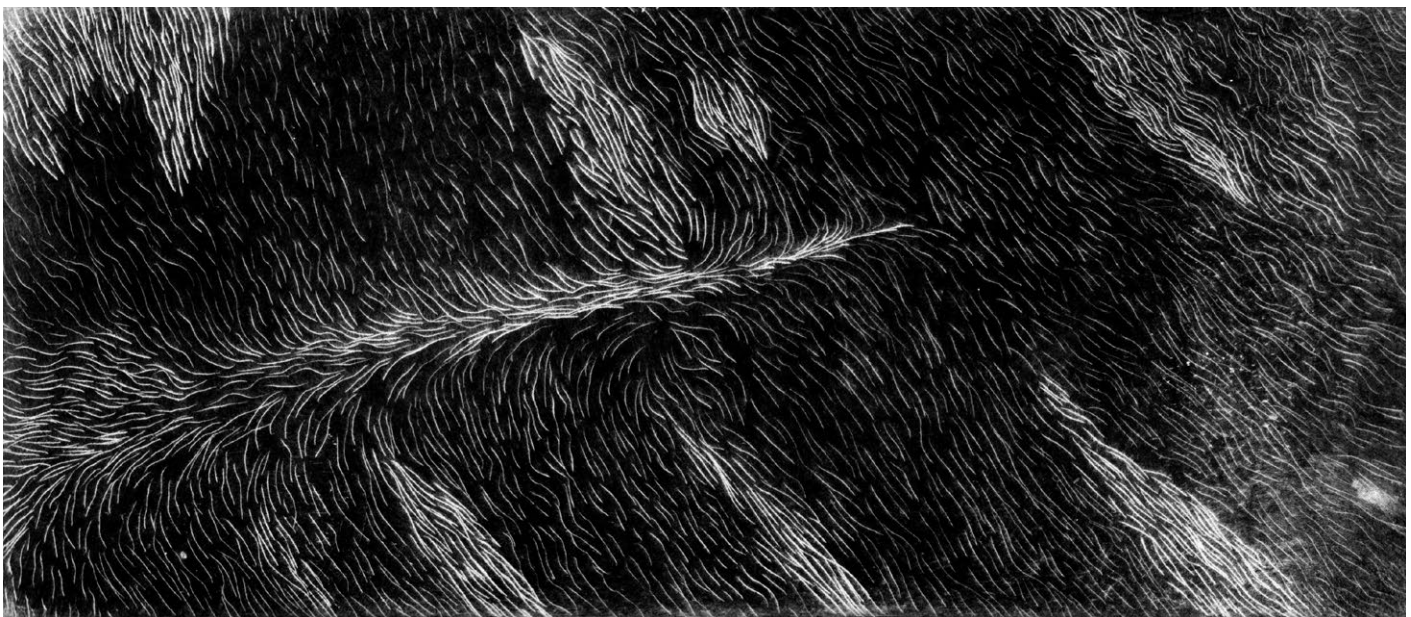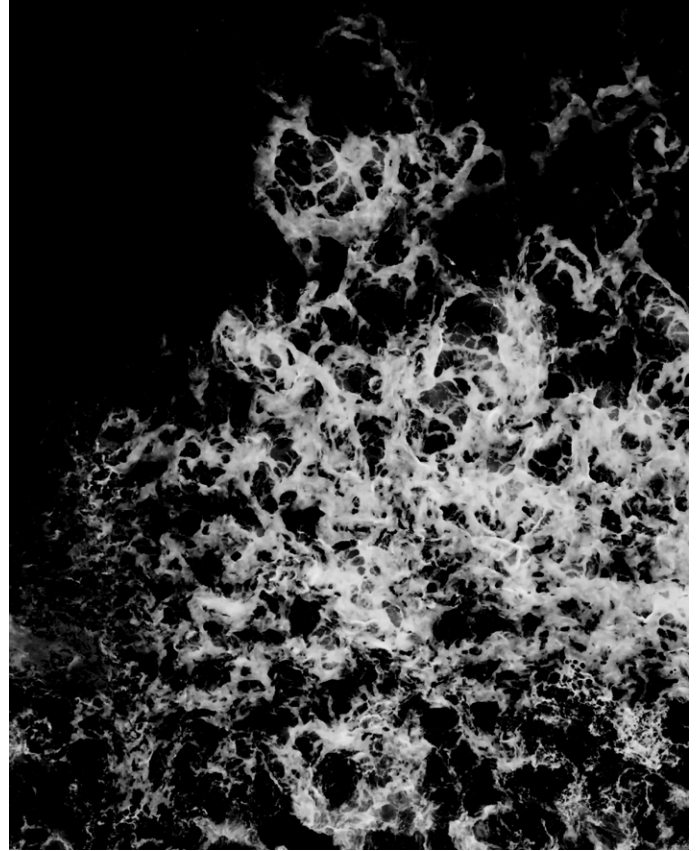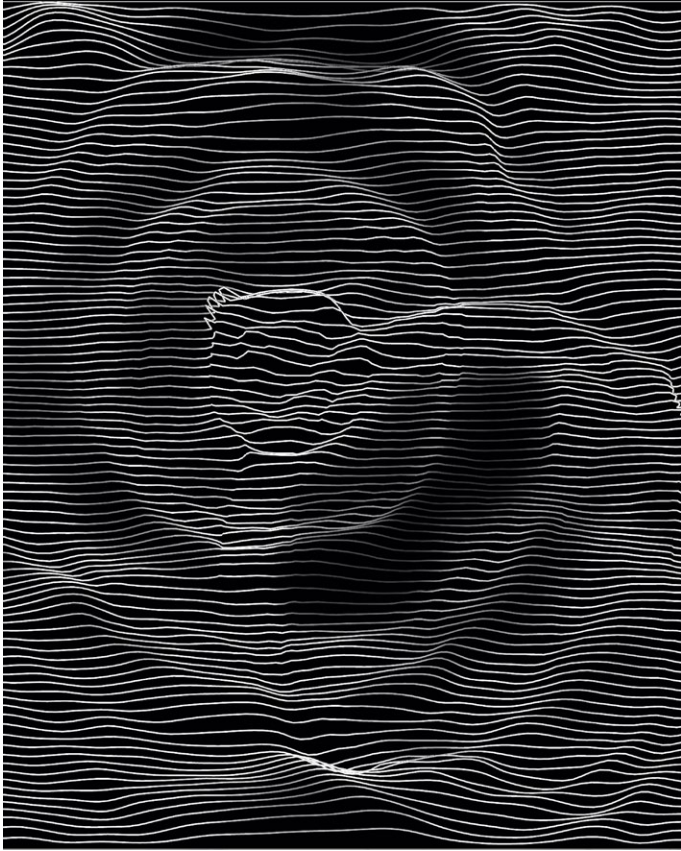
Researching water
textures for project
last minute.
Computer generated
image using eMotion
(membrane) and drone
footage.

4. Think a relationship to technologies that is intertwined with craftmanship and at the service of symbolic experiences.

In all our projects, we use computers, video-projectors or augmented reality devices to create symbolic experiences of living, to play with different ways of being in the world, to arouse a sensitive attention to beings and things. We put digital tools at the service of the living, to make theatre, to create live moments shared by the living. We believe that poetry, beauty and metaphor are powerful keys, and it is with this intention that we use technologies. To disorient, cause reality to waver, fashion a symbolic theatrical experience. In this crack and intersection, we work and unfold our own language.

We also like to blend our digital work with delicate craftsmanship, the work of hands: drawing, lithographic printing for Claire Bardainne (*Mirages & miracles*), juggling that established the relationship to movement for Adrien Mondot, paper folding (Pop-up book *Acqua Alta - Crossing the mirror*).

By incorporating the physical in our relationship with technology, we seek to participate in the creation of stories about a future that is desirable, human and alive.

In *last minute*, it is engraving –a technique that Claire Bardainne discovered in Spring 2021- that was a preparatory research tool and experiment.

Gaston Bachelard, on engraving. In Paysages by Gaston Bachelard & Albert Flocon (1950).

In losing color —the most potent of all sensual attractions— the engraver retains one great opportunity: he can and must discover movement. Form is not enough. A passive copying of form alone would make the engraver nothing more than a lesser painter. But in the forceful world of engraving, line is never mere profile, sluggish outline, arrested form. The least line in an engraving is a trajectory, a movement.

Links to afore mentioned videos:
- Full-length video of installation *Core, 2020* — duration : 5 min 36
vimeo.com/amcb/core

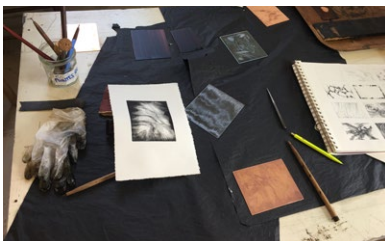- Video trailer for exhibition-experience *Faire corps, 2020* — duration : 1 min 58
vimeo.com/amcb/fairecorps

State of play of our computing research for *last minute*, 2021 — duration : 7 min 53 (in French)
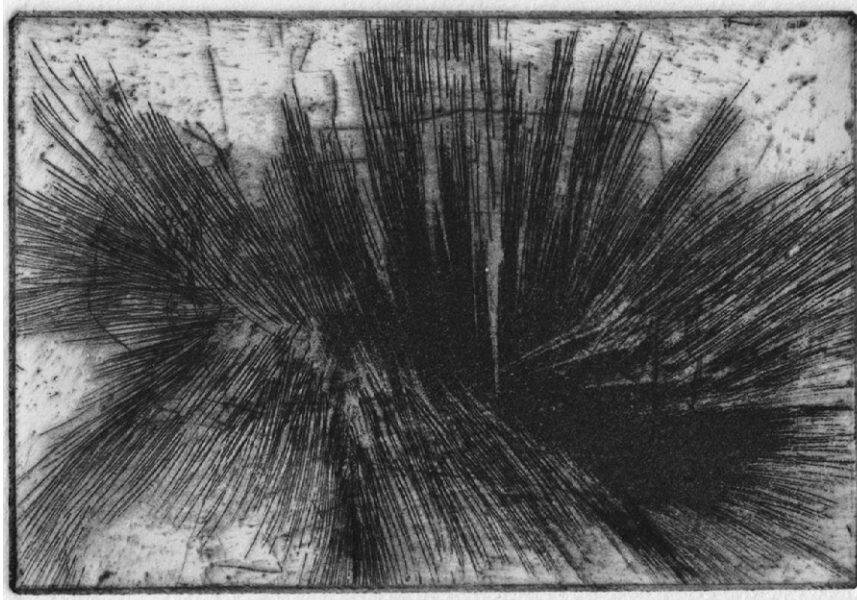**vimeo.com/amcb/lastminute**
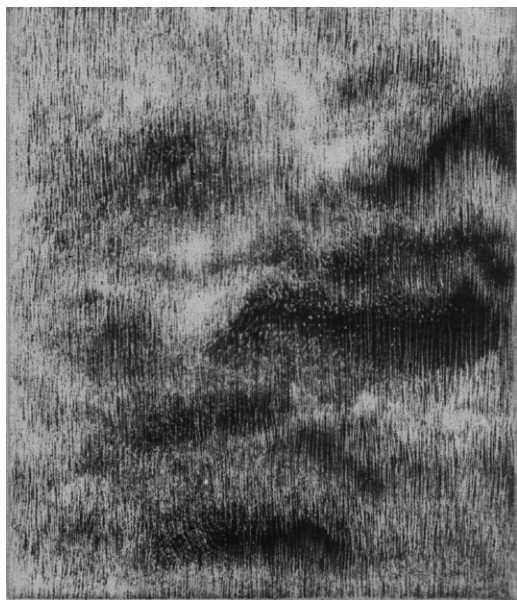
Overview for Adrien M & Claire B projects, 2021 — duration: 5 min 25
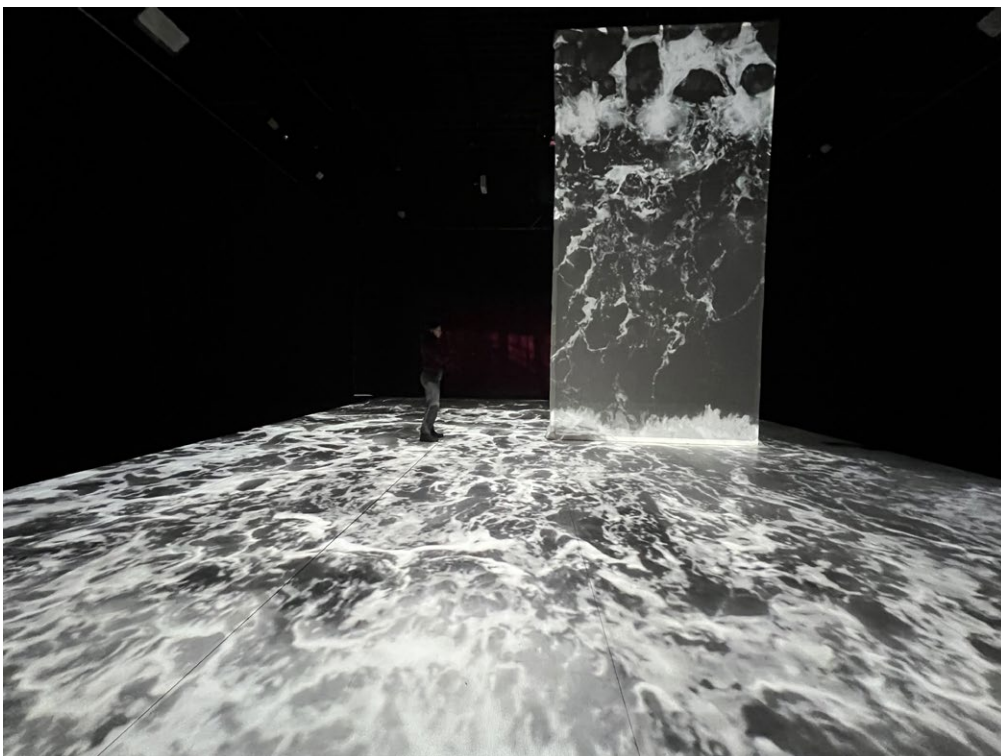**vimeo.com/amcb/overview**

Researching engraving at the studio of artists Muriel Moreau and Didier Hamey, in Saou (France), June 2021

Propagation, maelstrom, shower, flame — various states of matter
Claire Bardainne, June 2021
engraving (drypoint, etching and aquatint)
preparatory study for the project *last minute*

Research images for the
project last *minute*,
January 2022
Crest — Villa Aphéa

Team, partners and provisional calendar

Creative team

Adrien M & Claire B
New work 2022

Concept and artistic direction: **Claire Bardainne, Adrien Mondot**
Music score and sound concept: **Olivier Mellano**
Computer design and development: **Adrien Mondot, Loïs Drouglazet**
Outside eye: **Stéfanie James**
Technical management: **Jean-Marc Lanoë**
Technical direction: **Raphaël Guénot**
Administration: **Marek Vuiton**
Production and booking: **Joanna Rieussec**
Production: **Margaux Fritsch, Delphine Teypaz, Juli Allard-Schaefer**
Outreach development: **Johanna Guerreiro**

Production
Adrien M & Claire B

Coproduction
Les Champs Libres, Rennes (FR)
Théâtre-Sénart, Scène Nationale, Lieusaint (FR)
Chaillot - Théâtre national de la Danse, Paris (FR)

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DRAC Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes : plan de sauvegarde du spectacle vivant 2020-2021
DICRéAM – Centre National du cinéma et de l'image animée

The Adrien M & Claire B Company is accredited by DRAC Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region and is supported by the City of Lyon (FR).

Provisional touring dates

May 2022 Halle Tropisme in Montpellier (FR)
April-September 2023 MALVA, Lahti Museum of Visual Arts Malva in Lahti (FI)
April-May 2023 Théâtre-Sénart, Scène Nationale in Lieusaint (FR)
June 2023 Chaillot - Théâtre national de la danse in Paris (FR)
November 2024 to February 2025 (tbc) Les Champs Libres in Rennes (FR)

Artists biographies

Adrien M & Claire B

Established in 2011 by Claire Bardainne and Adrien Mondot, the company Adrien M & Claire B creates work that brings together the visual arts and the performing arts. Their shows and installations immerse the body in images, they blend sensitive and handcrafted art with digital devices.

Claire Bardainne is a French visual artist with a background in graphic design and scenography, born in 1978 in Grenoble. A graduate from the Estienne School and Paris Arts Déco School, her research focuses on the imaginary realms conveyed by pictures and graphics, especially in their space-constructive capacity.
She co-founds in 2004 the BW studio, focused on visual identities, multimedia graphics, exhibition and space graphics. In 2007, as part of the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology at Toronto University, she launches her project *Wicklow* blending drawing, micro-edition and performances. In parallel, she crosses her own graphic work with the theoretical work of researchers in imaginary sociology at the Ceaq (Sorbonne, Paris), a laboratory oriented on new forms of sociality and contemporary imaginary. She then publishes the essay *Récréations. Galaxies de l'imaginaire postmoderne* (CNRS Éditions, Paris, 2009) with Vincenzo Susca, dedicated to the imaginary of technologies and contemporary media.

Adrien Mondot is a French multidisciplinary artist, computer scientist and juggler. Born in 1979 in Grenoble, he is interested in movement, and works at the intersection of juggling art and computer innovation.
Initially a researcher in computer science, he founds his own performing arts company in 2004 named Adrien M. That same year, he is discovered at Jeunes Talents Cirque with *Convergence 1.0* and starts developing his own software tool, eMotion, still in use today. Over the years, he works with several artists including Kitsou Dubois, Stéphanie Aubin, Ez3kiel. He also organises unruly residencies to meet new collaborators, nourishing his own research studies. He participates in Wajdi Mouawad's *Ciels*, which premièred at Avignon Festival in 2009. That same year, he receives the Grand Jury Prize for his performance *Cinématique* at the Dance and New Technologies international competition organised by the festival Bains Numériques (Enghien-les-Bains, France).

Claire Bardainne and Adrien Mondot meet in 2010 at the Centre des Arts in Enghien-les-Bains, and again around the creation of a new interactive digital installation *Sens dessus dessous* created for the Théâtre Auditorium de Poitiers, France. In 2011, they join forces and found the company Adrien M & Claire B. All work is created as a duo and the company is directed as a pair. Pivotal to their research is their wish to transcend the spatial boundaries of stage and the time limits of performance. They strive to create living art: mobile, handcrafted, ephemeral, responsive.
Together, they sign in 2011 the creation of *XYZT, Abstract Landscapes*, an interactive exhibit. That same year, they write a conference-performance entitled *Un point c'est tout* and sign the digital scenography of *Grand Fracas issu de rien*, directed by Pierre Guillois.
In 2013, they create *Hakanaï*, a choreographic show for one dancer in a cube of moving images. In 2014, they co-sign the performance of *Pixel* with Mourad Merzouki (CCN Créteil and Val-de-Marne/Cie Käfig). In 2015, they create *The movement of air*, and receive the SACD Digital Creation award of the year. In 2016, Éditions Subjectiles publishes *Snow does not make sense*, the first monograph dedicated to Adrien M & Claire B's work. The book includes six drawings in augmented reality. In 2017, a new series of installations inhabited by digital animism sees the day, it is entitled *Mirages & miracles*. In 2018, they are commissioned by la Fondation d'entreprise Martell to create *The shadow of the vapor*, a

Creations

2021
Fauna
Installation / collaboration
(Brest Brest Brest)

2020
Vanishing Act
Show / collaboration (Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon)

2020
Faire corps
Exhibition (La Gaîté Lyrique)

2019
Équinoxe
Show / collaboration
(Limousine)

2019
Acqua Alta
Show + book + VR

2018
The shadow of the vapor
Site specific artwork

2017
Mirages & miracles
Exhibition

2016
Snow does not make sense
Book

2015
The movement of Air
Show

2015
SACD Award for creative interaction

2014
Pixel
Show / collaboration (CCN Créteil)

2013
Hakanaï
Show

2011
XYZT
Exhibition

monumental and site-specific installation. In 2019, they create the *Acqua Alta* project that consists of three experiences: a pop-up book in augmented reality; a visual theatre performance that intertwines movement and living digital images; an immersive experience in a virtual reality headset. That year, they also co-sign a concert-show entitled *Équinoxe* with the music band Limousine. In 2020, their exhibition *Faire corps - Adrien M & Claire B* is presented at the Gaîté Lyrique in Paris, bringing together new and old artworks around an immersive and interactive journey.
At the invitation of the Lyon Opera Ballet, they create with dancer Tyler Galster a solo piece called *Vanishing Act* in 2020. In 2021, in collaboration with Brest Brest Brest, they create *Fauna*, a series of 10 large posters for the public space to be discovered with an application of augmented reality.

Today, the company counts around 30 collaborators, with several performances, exhibitions and installations touring internationally simultaneously. In France, its headquarters are based in Lyon (Rhône) and its research-creation studio is based in Crest (Drôme) at Villa Aphéa.

Claire Bardainne
and Adrien Mondot
at la Gaîté Lyrique
in 2020.

Photo @ Voyez-vous
(Vinciane Lebrun)

Olivier Mellano

Composer, musician

Olivier Mellano is a French musician, composer, improviser, writer and guitarist, born in Paris in 1971.
He has played in over fifty groups since the beginning of the nineties, including Psykick Lyrikah, Mobiil, Bed, Laetitia Shéri and Dominique A. He alternatively works on pop-rock projects and compositions including symphonic orchestra, 17 electric guitars, harpsichord, organ, voice or string quartet.

His musical work has appeared in cinematic, theatrical, dance and literary contexts.
He also likes to write, he published his first book in 2008.

Olivier Mellano offers a composite work that is generous and demanding. It draws on the legacies of Carlo Gesualdo, Henry Purcell, Benjamin Britten, Gavin Bryars, Moondog and Gyôrgy Ligeti. Through his compositions, he reveals a unique musical aesthetic which breaks down stylistic hierarchies. He weaves sonic material volcanic or ethereal, he tests the strength of baroque harmonies with sonic fire, he infuses orchestral and chamber ensembles with new energy by combining electric guitars with classical voices. Luminous, sacred elements pulse at the heart of his uncompromisingly free and savant compositions. The wide-ranging nature of his works, from ambitious pop music to unabashed contemporary music, reveals his kinship to a new generation of composers which includes Nico Muhly, Bryce Dessner and Jonny Greenwood.

Artist website
oliviermellano.com