

Summary Publication

METABODY: Media Embodiment Tékhné and Bridges of Diversity

DAP-Lab (London)

Atmospheres of Chorographic Design

The artistic and technical investigations of the *Design and Performance Lab*, based at Brunel University in London (UK) and co-directed by Johannes Birringer and Michèle Danjoux, have encompassed research into how costumes and specially designed body-worn technologies affect movement expression. They have also addressed the question of designing costumes for use in performative or proactive environments which themselves are conceived as formative, not built or constructed in a stable form.

Within the collaborative pursuit of the METABODY consortium, DAP-Lab's exploration of interactive environments for wearable performance (which had been the focus of its recent dance productions/installations) has linked up with several METABODY research strands:

- architectural kinespheres and interactional skins [LOOP] (Hyperbody, Reverso)
- phantom limbs and neural-network generated creature movement (Stocos, Daniel Bisig) linked to the integration of piezoelectric speakers (film speakers) into costume and choreography
- decomposition of anatomical figuration/doubling through holographic avatars (HOLOStage, TMA Dresden) and networked kinaesthetic interaction (Bodynet Hyperenvironment, TMA Dresden, Reverso)
- mobile sonification (Steim, Marcello Lussana/Palindrome)

We have emphasized the particular affordances and constraints of audiophonic wearable costume-instruments on movement behavior, choreography and characterization (roles) within music-theatre/dance-theatre installations. DAP-Lab now examines the potential extensions of costumes and conductive dresses into participatory constellations (Affording Difference), asking how wearables interconnect with, or depend on, the *atmospheres* or unstable states of performative environments that afford various possibilities of visitor engagement.

Our research productions are expected to go beyond theatre; they are closer to what Claire Bishop (in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, 2012) has theorized as co-productions of (social) situations, and what the METABODY collaborators now refer to as “disalignments” from deterministic grids of perception.

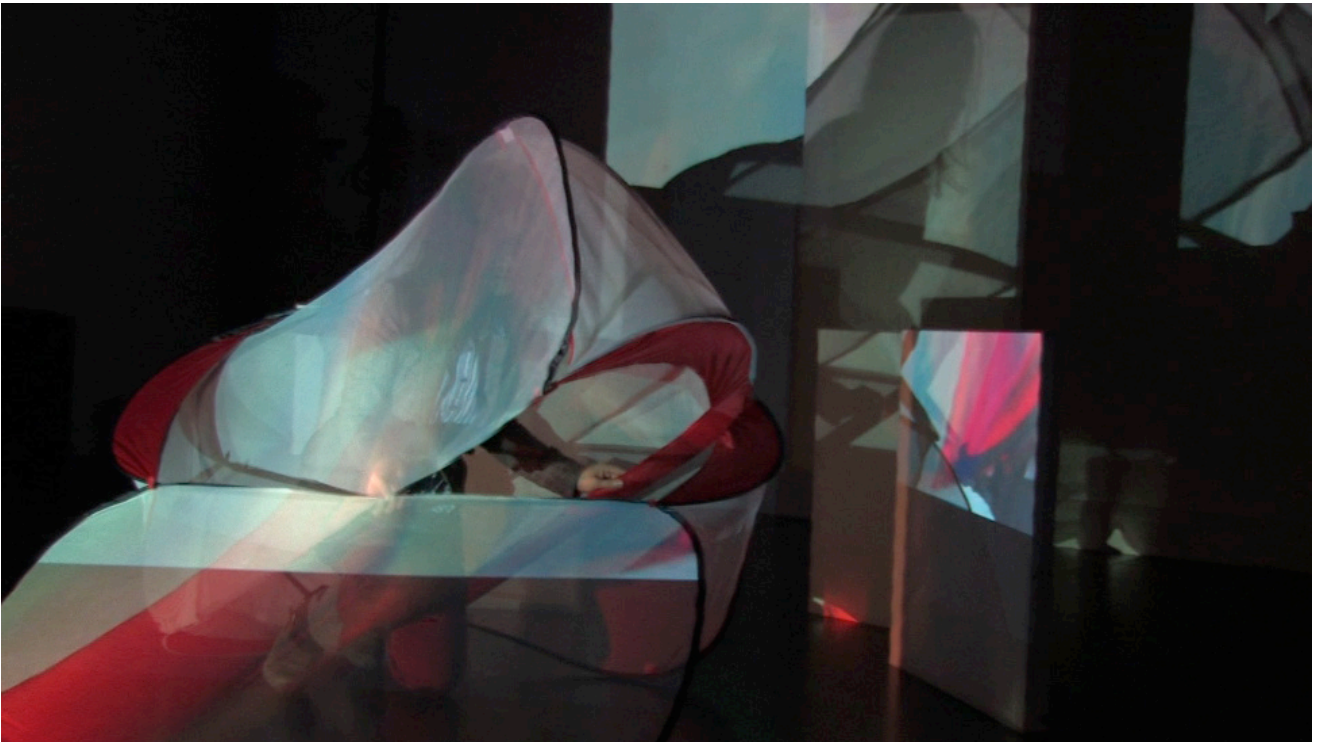
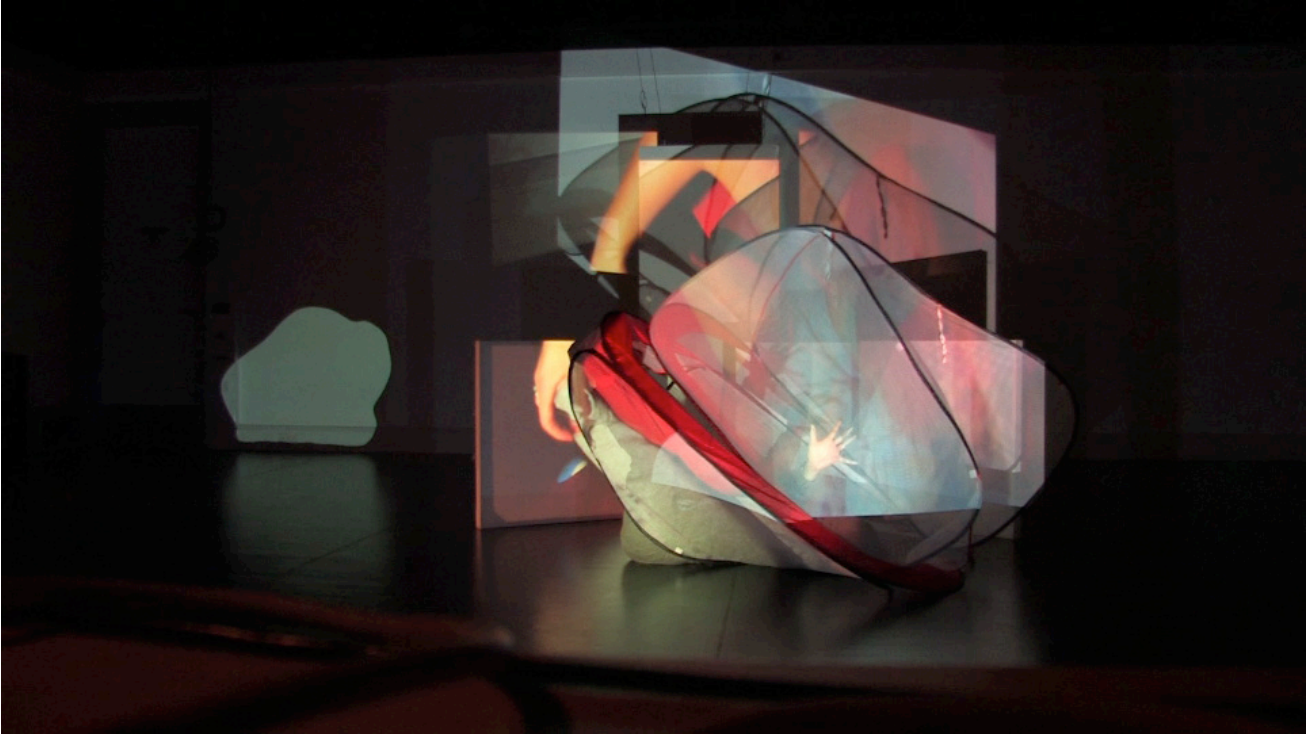
At the same time, DAP-Lab's creations have been part of theatre, dance, performance art and film contexts, operating in a space between art, fashion, technology and the body where differentials of sensory, tactile audibility as well as of disorganizing forces of noise – resisting the permeability of commodified bodies – can be articulated. Costumes and instruments constructed by the DAP-Lab for an actor or participant in an installation therefore should not be considered “wearables” in the sense in which such a term, in techno-fashion or affective computing industries, refers to gadgets and consumer commodity economics.

Rather, we plan to rethink the notion of costume kinaesthetically in regard to *body weather* (Min Tanaka) and atmospheric “wearability” of cloth and skin of architectural structures, including projected or telematic dressing and contours. In tests conducted in late 2014 and early 2015, we experimented with barely audible speaker film worn on hand and shoulder in order to test small resonances between perceiving and responding forces, phonographic acts that pertain to the charging of environments. The architectural atmosphere, which we call “metakimosphere,” includes tactile, textural and kinetic-image qualities and high temperature, housing the visitor inside a tent-like structure that is moveable. The visitors are invited to sleep, feel, sense, move, rest, or do other things, supplied with a camera so they could also document their peripheral vision or record the stuttering voices audible in the boomerang-like envelope. This metakimosphere is imagined as a reservoir of mobile loops (as anticipated for the larger LOOP architecture by the Hyperbody group), except that phonographic movement is here motivated by the aural affects or affective intensity (on a small scale) of the conductivity of voice sounds.

This scenario acts out temporal contours not clearly visible to the participant but driven by tonal refrains (aural loops) and a synaesthesia of white noise which – we suggest – involves varying processes of decomposition that perform a reorganization of sensation and instinct, of temporalities and resonances across the nervous system. The participant’s experience is largely tactile and mental, and DAP-Lab proposes to study such going mental: Going inside, where there is no outside. The noise of this metakimosphere disaggregates the organology of anthropotechnics.



Michèle Danjoux applies BeakhandSpeaker to Miri Lee, STEIM Metabody IMF, Amsterdam, December 2014.



Visitor inside wearable tent structure and immersive projection metakimosphere, February 2015 © DAP-Lab



Inside immersive experience view, Metakimosphere, February 2015 © DAP-Lab

Links:

<http://people.brunel.ac.uk/dap/>
<http://people.brunel.ac.uk/dap/metabody%20archive.html>

February 2015 © DAP-lab