



Focale-Z



Production 2025

Interactive dance / AI generated and live music / digital images, performance

Jean-Marc Matos, Arnaud Courcelle

Focale-Z

A poetic exploration of the Human-Technology relationship, directed by choreographer Jean-Marc Matos (www.k-danse.net/en), and digital artist Arnaud Courcelle, creator of the interactive system, featuring actress-performer Laure Lapeyre.

Focale-Z is a choreographic, musical, and digital poem that offers a personal and collective vision of the aesthetics of the disappearance of the body. The performance also integrates a musical intervention with a generative AI (machine learning trained on 1,400 harmonized classical piano scores, with all parameters adjustable through the gestures and movements of the performer-dancer).

Introduction

The F-Z project is an artistic and poetic reinterpretation of the themes addressed in Alain Damasio's short story C@ptch@ (from the collection "Aucun souvenir assez solide"), while offering a different perspective on the human-technology relationship. Unlike the complete virtualization presented in the story, F-Z creates an eu-topian (neither dystopian nor utopian) artistic experience, staging a creative interaction between humans and an interactive system equipped with "intelligent" optical sensors. In this immersive work, the presence and movements of the performer influence the visual projection and musical composition, opening a space where technology enriches artistic experience while preserving human presence and physical connection.

Artistic context

In C@ptch@, young protagonists face a Machine-City equipped with omnipresent sensors, leading to their dematerialization and complete virtualization. In contrast, F-Z 25 offers an experience where intelligent optical sensors detect subtle movements and intentions of the performer, creating an artistic and sensory interaction.

The dramaturgy, centered on the gradual disappearance of the body, evokes the desire for substitution through virtualization, reflecting contemporary trends towards the Metaverse — a digital world devoid of physical sensations and pain. However, instead of a dystopian vision, this experience offers a more nuanced reflection.

It draws from the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, where the loss of the digital double upon exiting the underworld symbolizes a return to physical reality and a reaffirmation of the importance of tangible human existence.

Technology

The F-Z 25 project's software explores three essential dimensions: visual, musical, and choreographic staging.

Visuals: Motion capture in depth (Z-dimension) creates a partially dematerialized representation of a moving body.

Music: Algorithmically generated sound, influenced by the performer's movements.

Interactive AI Music: A generative AI (trained with 1,400 harmonized classical piano scores) with parameters modifiable through dance gestures.

This combination creates an immersive experience where visual, musical, and bodily elements blend seamlessly into a new form of interactive artistic expression.

Objectives of the Focale-Z project

1. Exploring new artistic expressions: Utilizing intelligent optical sensor technology for innovative choreographic staging.
2. Reflecting on human-technology interaction: Encouraging thought on how new technologies can enhance artistic experiences while preserving humanity.
3. Creating an eu-topian space: A poetic exploration of the body's disappearance in the digital world, free from dystopian connotations.

Reflexive themes

1. Innovative artistic creation: Pushing the boundaries of stage, body, and musical expression through AI integration.
2. Technology and humanity: Questioning how technology can enrich artistic experience while maintaining human connection to the physical world.
3. Exploring eu-topia: Offering a non-dystopian vision of digital transformation.

Support

Euroregional platform Ada ArtEina (Occitanie, Catalonia, Balearic Islands)
Orbe Company (Xavier Boissarie),
co-author of the generative musical AI system (programmed by Arnaud Courcelle)
K. Danse Company (in charge of production)
City of Toulouse & General Council of Haute-Garonne
City of Villeneuve-Tolosane (Toulouse Métropole)
City of Bérat (Haute-Garonne)
INSA Toulouse (Engineering School, INS'ART program)

Artistic and Technological Team

- Jean-Marc Matos: Choreographer exploring the intersection of the physical and digital worlds — live performance, dance, virtual imagery, sound, scenography, robotics, computational composition, VR, telepresence, etc.
- Arnaud Courcelle: Digital artist and musician specializing in performance and improvisation. Develops digital interfaces and software for video projection with human-machine interaction, allowing real-time manipulation of shapes through dancers' movements and musicians' sounds.
- Laure Lapeyre: Actress, performer, and researcher in physical theater and camera performance. Active in theater, dance, and film in Toulouse.

Touring schedule

May 28, 2025 – Sofia, Bulgaria (European Cooperation Project AEPYDEA, France/Bulgaria/Greece, 2024-2026)

April 5, 2025 – Conservatory of Music, Palma, Mallorca, Balearic Islands (Cos(ArtEina2) eurorégional project)

February 15, 2025 – Festival Micro, CC Ernest Renan, Toulouse

May 7, 2024 – First version, Théâtre Marcel Pagnol, Villeneuve-Tolosane (Toulouse Métropole)

February 8, 2024 – First version, INSA Toulouse (Engineering School, INS'ART program)

January 30, 2024 – First version, Salle des fêtes, Bérat, Haute-Garonne

December 10, 2023 – First version, CC Alban Minville, Toulouse

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