

DAZZLE: A Re-Assembly of Bodies is a dance for Virtual Reality, a multi-dimensional practice research project that gives audiences layered viewpoints into a performance event's virtual and physical space. The 45-minute output comprises six scenes created by an ensemble of eight dancers, a creative technologist, a sound artist, and two fashion designers.

Inspired by the 1919 'Dazzle Ball' at the Royal Albert Hall, London, which celebrated the end of WWI, this project looks to the future of live and remote performance enabled by technology. The Dazzle Ball emerged from the aftermath of war and the influenza pandemic. A century later, DAZZLE reimagines this event with an artistic, forward-looking approach honouring the past.

The research incorporates innovations in motion capture, avatar embodiment, and interaction in shared virtual spaces. It creates three immersive experiences for the audience in VR: teleportation, an avatar on stage, and the audience in costume watching the performance. The choreography explores virtual performance production through digital dance duets. The costumes feature zero-waste pattern cutting and bold graphics. The choreography in cycling animations and wearable jewellery replaces everyday controllers to facilitate the free gesturing of hands and feet.

Research Aims:

Examine the tropes of the double in digital dance.

Integrate the artistic movements and cultural and historical references of the Dazzle Ball era (Intangible Cultural Heritage) into the choreography and design.

Test the limits of Extended Reality with current state-of-the-art technology.

Envision the potential of the research by developing and implementing streaming and machine learning tools into the research process.

Gibson's choreography extends her concept of 'Double presencing,' creating numerous examples of the digital dance duet. She considers "avatairing" a verb, drawing on Gregory Ulmer's idea of multilateral experiences that weave into games, algorithmic and generative choreography, and online communities. She references her Amanuensis concept, reassembling bodies in mixed realities. She examines Ascott's 'double consciousness' and 'double gaze,' focusing on inhabiting two bodies and witnessing the self as the other 'beside itself' (Brian Rotman). The dance material and aesthetic design draw on Dazzle naval camouflage, Busby Berkeley, Vorticists, and Semaphore's signalling system.

People

Concept: [Gibson/Martelli](#) & [Puet-Porter](#)

Dancers: Alice Tatge, Emily Coates, Francesca Orlando, Hannah George, Axelle de Groote, Harry Alexander, Hannah Burfield, William Byram, Kaitlin Dodds, Ifigeneia Christodoulou, Isidro Ridout Tavares, Jingyin Cai, Maria Inês Caldeira de Freitas, Alondra Galvan, Genevieve Shultz, Tessa Salomone, Ying Hu, Amy Mauvan, Chloe Saffores, Cleo Tabakian, Raoul Martin, Sandra Francais, Julien Rossin

Sound design: Paul Steinmann

Photography and Graphic Design: Oliver Wrobel

Designer: Malou van der Veld

Dancer Costumes: Luz Mabel Flores

Audience Costumes: [The Dazzle Collective](#)

Graphic Design: Piero Glina

Production Manager: Harry Løvstrøm

Performances/Exhibitions

VR days/ Immersive Tech Week, De Doelen, Rotterdam 30 November - 4 December 2022 (23 performances)

79th Venice Biennale International Film Festival, World Premiere 30 August - 10 September 2022 (67 performances)

MEET Digital Culture Center, Milan, September 20-21 2022

Avignon Festival *Spectacle vivant scenes numériques*, Le Grenier a Sel, 9-10 July 2022

Craft Week, YKK HQ, London 9 - 15 May 2022

Open Rehearsal VPTS, Guildford 14 April 2022

Immersive + 5G Narrative, UKRI/ Digital Catapult Event, VPTS, Guildford 1 December 2021

Residencies

Virtual Production Test Stage (VPTS), Digital Catapult/Target3D, Guildford 2021 – 2022

RSC 'Audiences of the Future' Mocap Lab, DeMontfort University, Leicester 20-24 September 2021

REAL-IN La Friche Belle de Mai, Marseille 19 - 24 July 2021

VR HAM, Hamburg 4-12 June 2021

Funding

EPIC MEGA GRANT

Creative XR (Arts Council/Digital Catapult) 2nd round

Creative XR (Arts Council/Digital Catapult) 1st round

REAL-IN, Dark Euphoria, Creative Europe

AHRC/IRC 'Experience Together Network'

C.Hafner

Presentations/Seminars

Keynote 'Beyond Controllers' MOCO International Movement and Computing Conference Utrecht University, The Netherlands 30 June 2024

The Royal Institution Beyond Conference Panel 21-22 November 2023

Kulture Akademin, Sweden 31 August 2023

London Contemporary Dance School 16 June 2023

University of the Arts 20 February 2023

UK New Artists 28 January 2023

VR Days Vision and Impact 28 November 2022

[Voice of VR](#) Interview Kent Bye October 10 2022

Encoding Embodied Creativity Sept 7 2022

Virginia University/ Hamilton University 15 March 2023

Performance Technology Laboratory, Berlin 9 September 2021

Monica Dantas 30 September 2021

[Quills](#) Oregon Shakespeare Festival 19-20 November 2021

Performance Technology Labs Berlin 13-14 September 2021

Sounds & Screens IAC and KØS Copenhagen 5 October 2021

REAL-IN, Hamburg 10 June 2021

Immersive Days InterArts, Malmo 9 June 2021

DAZZLE: A Re-Assembly of Bodies expands on Gibson's MAN A collection (2014-2020), contributing knowledge to the development of live motion capture dance performance. Participants can embody avatars to explore the interactive experience's physicality in both actual and virtual space, increasing their understanding and perceptions simultaneously immersed in a performance encounter.