# La Maison sensible (The Sensitive House)
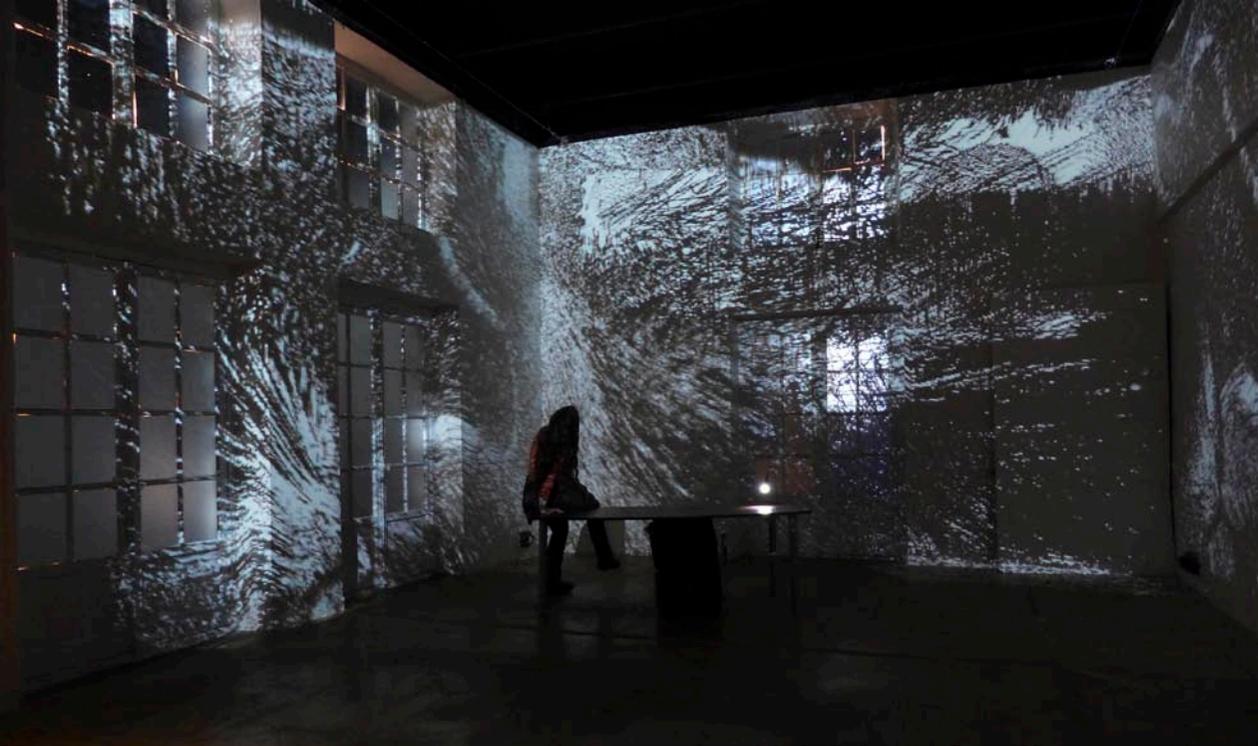
Scenocosme (Grégory Lasserre & Anaïs met den Ancxt)     www.scenocosme.com

Lola and Yukao Meet (Lola Ajima & Yukao Nagemi)     www.lolaandyukaomeet.com

## Intention and scenography

"La Maison sensible" is an interactive installation that augments the physical space and the relationship between an onlooker and a fragile and subtle environment.

We use discrete sensors to transform the walls, the furniture, the floor of an exhibition room staged as a living room, into delicate, sensible, sensitive, and reactive interfaces. The visual and sound environments are produced in response to various types of behaviour of the spectators. Each surface is sensitive: walls, floor, and furniture capture the visitor's behaviour and reveal diverse shades and sound environments according to the qualities of interactions.

When it is empty and silent, the floor and walls of this room are made up of hundreds of thousands of fragile video-projected particles. They are all quiet and nicely ordered. Only a slight breathing motion is perceptible. They slowly and gently draw mesmerizing figures.

**More information and video :**
 **www.scenocosme.com/maison_sensible_e.htm**

## Previous exhibitions of Maison sensible

- E-Fest Digital Arts Festival
  Palais Abdellia / Surface Sensible - Curator : Afif Riahi - Tunis (**Tunisia**)
- Galerija SC / Festival Showroom of Contemporary Sound  - Zagreb (**Croatia**)
- Cité des Arts de la Réunion / Curator : Nathalie Gonthier - Saint-Denis (**La Réunion**)
- Mirage festival / Art et cultures numériques / Techno Fiction - Lyon (Fr)
- Le Lavoir Public / Videophonic AADN - Lyon (Fr)
- Musée de Millau et des Grands Causses - Millau (Fr)
- Abbaye de l'Escaladieu  / Horizons numériques - Bonnemazon (Fr)
- Château éphémère - Carrières-sous-Poissy (Fr)
- Théâtre de l'Archipel Scène Nationale de Perpignan (Fr)- Festival Les Composites / Espace Jean Legendre - Compiègne (Fr)
- Safra'Numériques - festival d'art numérique - Curator : Didier Ringalle
  Centre culturel Le Safran - Amiens (Fr)

 **Support :**

Région Rhône-Alpes [SCAN]  Soutien à la Création Artistique Numérique
Chateau Éphémère - Fabrique sonore & numérique
AADN - Arts et Cultures Numériques

## Interactive scenario

The idea is to create an artwork that is revealed if the visitor enters and inhabits the space being attentive and empathic to what is going on. In this case, "La Maison sensible" turns into a visual and auditor environment that mirrors the bodily behaviours of the visitor by revealing an interactive audiovisual organic space. Slow and gentle visual animations combined with delicately evolving soundscapes show the visitors that the room is in a intimat relationship with them.

Conversely, when a visitor enters the space by talking loudly, or by stamping her feet on the floor, or by touching the furnitures in a non-respectful way, the visual particles will panick, and repel each other like clouds of microorganisms in stress. They then seek refuge in the periphery of the room and wait for the room to be calm and quiet again.

If visitors interact with sensitivity and gentleness and try to establish a dialogue by gently touching, tickling, or stroking furniture or walls, the room will respond by engaging in respectful dialogue through harmonious sounds. If the activity becomes too noisy, the room reaches the limits of its empathic behaviour, and the sound withdraws and fades.

If viewers have abrupt responses, the artwork will freeze in a state of fear or anger. With overly violent actions, the particles disappear. But if they offer it attention, listening, the installation then reveals delicate and soothing soundscapes. When everything becomes quiet, the space is progressively repopulated. When the room is empty, the space has a breathing activity, stable, quiet, almost like sleeping/meditating.

We create an artwork capable of physical behaviours that can induce sensitive and caring behaviour among spectators. This artwork will raise awareness of psychology and personality of inhabited areas, of the traces we leave on the world around us. "La Maison sensible" proposes to go beyond our daily agitated, anxious, or impatient behaviours related to media or technology. The purpose is to allow visitors to take time to communicate deeply with the installation, and stimulate their capacity to listen, and have empathy for a room.

## "La Maison sensible" as a mediator artwork : social and organic vision of interactivity

The artwork is like a biological entity with various and complex connections. Therefore, the place of audience and their relationships are decisive for the evolutions and reactions of the organic space. Interactions does not happen between the visitors and the installation. Dialogues, attention and listening in between visitors also transform the emotional behavior of the space.

In this way, we pay a particular attention to the "règle du jeu" (rules of the game) which is in play between spectators and the installation. This direction to play allows the translation of a dialog between human being and objects and between humans too. We focus on the relationships that individuals can have between them and we suggest new possibilities of meeting and relation. This artwork is a kind of «mediator» between spectators in order to gather them, to link them, to stimulate relationships, exchanges, beyond a basic connexion.

"La Maison sensible" suggests an intimist staging that takes into account the place of the spectators. By picturing the space like a biological body, spectators are invited to think about their physical, emotional and symbolical relation to their environment. Visitors exceed largely the status of triggering elements by appropriating the interaction spaces. They become active "variables" of this organic entity.

## Epidermic interface

The body itself is a continuous sensorial interface with the world. The skin is a protective and porous border. For example, it perceives and emits heat at the same time. As described David Le Breton, *it (the skin) is alive in the way it breathes, exchanges with the environment, smells, translates moods by its texture, its heat, its color. Between the outside and the inside, it allows stimulation and meaning. As a separation process, it fences in the individuality, but in the same time, it is a place of exchange with the world ; heat, light, pleasure or pain pass through it.* (1)

"La Maison sensible" is a endogenous space with a higher level of sensitivity. It is like a body with complex internal relationships in which visitors are the active variables. It has a kind of epidermic interface. "Epidermic" because it suggests an invisible and sensitive dynamic between the bodies and the space, between the bodies and the objects, and between bodies too. It "architectural skin" is emiting and receiving information at the same time. Then, the space is composed by informative cells, which are sensitive to various stimulis. Thanks to their presence and interaction, bodies of visitors are subtly metamorphosing the environment which is then seeking a new stable state.

(1) David Le Breton, *La Saveur du Monde,* Une anthropologie des sens, (Ed Métailié, 2006)

# Empathy

"Empathy" as a psychological concept derives from the German "einfühlung" that were used in philosophical aesthetics on peoples ability to "feel into" nature or works of art and, to be able to experience what the artwork conveyed.(2) Today Empathy is a concept widely discussed among psychologist and in Philosophy of Mind, but is mostly used to describe how we understand other people's minds and emotional states, or simply that we at all understand other living beings as being minded creatures. In other words: What makes us sensitive as a human being to other living beings.

Our approach to apply and make use of empathy in "La Maison sensible" is phenomenological. We draw on phenomenological thoughts from Merleau-Ponty and up to Dan Zahavi, about how perception and embodiment trigger, stimulate and contain/convey empathy. In the phenomenological approach, the perception of other people's expressions, gestures, tone of voice, body language etc. is directly the perception of their emotional states. It is something that affects us directly, since we, as human beings, are sensitive to it.

The question about empathy is, how people understand other peoples emotional states. In our installation we investigate and ask, how we as visitors know the emotional states of a room and, on one hand, how do the visitors empathize with the room through their interaction with it, and on the other hand, how does the room respond to receiving empathy or to the lack of it?

"La Maison sensible" is not an object to be manipulated through simple action/reaction, where people's interactions are mirrored by the installation in a very legible way. "La Maison sensible" is constructed as a sensitive, living organism, that responds emotionally to the visitors. It is fragile, timid and has to be treated with patience, friendly curiosity and empathic care, if a mutual confident relationship is to be established. It is almost like a wild animal that can be tamed.

(2) http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/empathy/

## Stress levels, switch point (loss of empathy) and receiving empathy

Mentalizing is a psychological theory related to empathy.(3) This theory describes how mentalizing (or empathizing, like staying in emotional contact) with others can reach a switch point, if the stress level is getting too high. At one point, the ability to stay in emotional contact is broken, and the understanding of other peoples mind's decreases. On the contrary, if the person experience to get empathy from other people around, the out-coming stress level can get high without the internal stress level reaching a switch point.

## Fight, flight or freeze responses

When this switch point is reached, the common three stress responses will be fight, flight, or freeze. In situations where we perceive physical or mental threats, these occurs. We either fight or flight, depending on whether we judge that we are able or not to out battle the out-coming threat. But when we are overwhelmed by an out-coming threat and fear takes over, we freeze.

(3)http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/chooker/files/hooker_2008_social_cognitive_and_affective_neuroscience.pdf
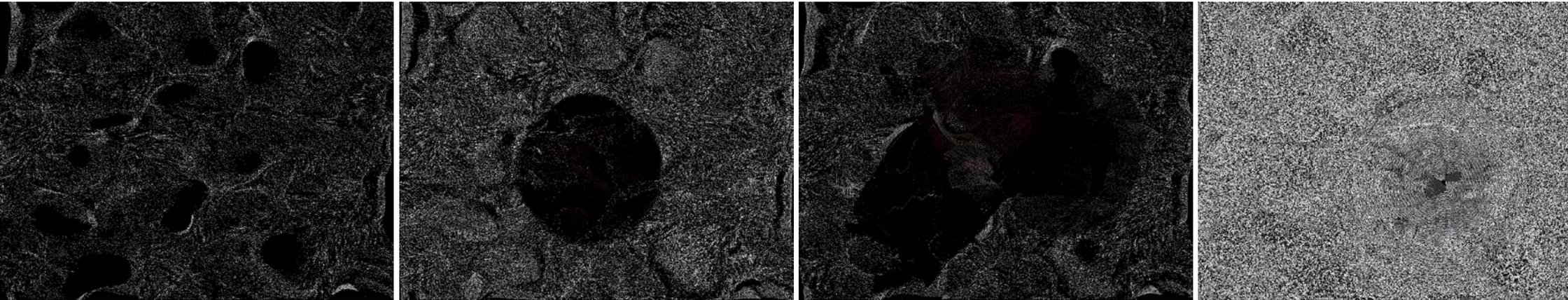


## Bibliography, Sources of inspiration

Litterature:
Serge Brussolo, *Vue en coupe d'une ville malade*, Ed. Denoël, 1980 : *«The day before, she had discovered the remains of a living room where two pink marble men waited, sitting on either side of a chessboard where human skin pieces were jerking. The more we move forward, the more frequent were such inversions. The flowers were plastic, but the wallpaper was woman or child skin, if we relied on its fine grain.» «George went to pick up some debris around a cone, they all showed the same uncertain morphology. The flatiron was rapidly turning into a totally irrational metal bubble, a kitchen stool melted within hours, changing into a strangely phosphorescent puddle. It was as if the molecules separated, moved away from each other, as if their structure, initially compact, became loose and fluid.»*
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Le Petit Prince*, Gallimard, 2007
Boris Vian, *L'écume des jours*, Ed Le Livre de Poche, 2014 :*We could not enter the dining room any more. The ceiling joined almost floor to which he was connected through half-plant half-mineral projections, which developed in the damp darkness.*

Theorical litterature:
David Le Breton, *La Saveur du Monde, Une anthropologie des sen*s, (Ed Métailié, 2006)
Jens Hjortkær,*Toward a Cognitive Theory of Musical Tensio*n. 2012. Ph.D Thesis, Copenhagen University.
Christine I. Hooker, Sara C. Verosky, Laura T. Germine, Robert T. Knight,and Mark D'Esposito, *Mentalizing about emotion and its relationship to empath*y
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

## Technical informations

This artwork is situated in each place, and it has to be adapted to the space in which it is displayed and adapted to the physical, auditory, and visual environment of the space. Such an adaptation requires more human resources than a 'one installation fits all' approach, but has the advantage of offering the visitors an immersive ambient environment in which the digital world perfectly matches the physical one. We will now explain in more details how the installation is technically customized to the display space.

At first, the room is modelised in 3D. During the display, the mapping is calculated in real time with the software of the artwork.

We use several video-projectors, computers, audiosystem to create digital imaging and sound and offer the viewers the illusion of interactive walls, furnitures and floor. The visuals are mapped on the room so that they look as if they were overlaid on the walls and the floor to give a better illusion of particles running on the walls like raindrops or fluid swirls.

We also use sensors sensitive to noise and vibrations, wireless sensor interfaces to capture the interactions of the visitors with the walls, the furnitures, or the floor. Depending on the materials used for the floor and the walls, the sensibility of the sensors used for the the interaction may vary.

Both capture and interactive audio-visuals are situated and adapted to the place of the installation. Sounds are captured through field recording from the building and its environment. Visual mapping is obtained through a 3D model of the space and visual rendering is adapted to the architecture.
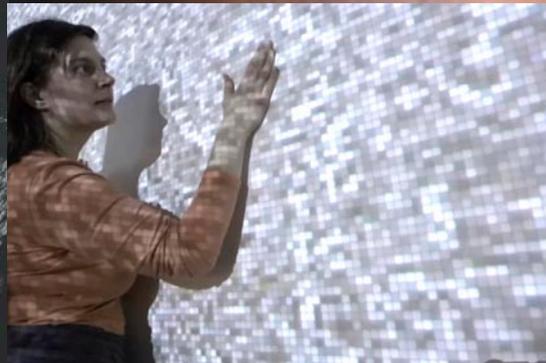
# Scenocosme : Grégory Lasserre & Anaïs met den Ancxt : www.scenocosme.com

The couple artists Gregory Lasserre and Anais met den Ancxt work under the name Scenocosme. They live in the Rhone-Alpes region in France.

Their singular artworks use diverse expressions: interactive installations, visual art, digital art, sound art, collective performances etc.... Scenocosme mix art and digital technology to find substances of dreams, poetry, sensitivity and delicacy. These artists overturn various technologies in order to create contemporary artworks. Their works came from possible hybridizations between the technology  and  living world (plants, stones, water, wood, humans.,..) which meeting points incite them to invent sensitive and poetic languages. The most of their interactive artworks feel several various relationships between the body and the environment. They can feel energetic variations of living beings and design interactive stagings in which spectators share extraordinary sensory experiences.
Their artworks are exhibited in numerous museums, contemporary art centres and digital art festivals in the world.

They have exhibited their interactive installation artworks at ZKM Karlsruhe Centre for Art and Media (Germany), at Daejeon Museum of Art (Korea), at Museum Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (Canada), at National Centre  for Contemporary Arts (Moscow), at Contemporary Art Museum Raleigh (USA), at Bòlit Centre d'Art Contemporani (Girona) and in many international biennals and festivals : Art Center Nabi / INDAF (Seoul), BIACS3 / Biennial International of Contemporary Art of Seville (Spain), Biennial Experimenta (Australia), NAMOC / National Art Museum of China / TransLife / Triennial of Media Art (Beijing), C.O.D.E (Canada), Futuresonic (UK), WRO (Pologne), FAD (Brasil), ISEA / International Symposium on Electronic Art (2009 Belfast, 2011 Istanbul, 2012 Albuquerque, 2013 Sydney), EXIT, VIA, Lille3000, Ososphere, Scopitone, Seconde nature (France)… during important events : World Expo (Shanghai), Nuits Blanches (Toronto, Halifax, Bruxelles, Brighton, Amiens, Segovia, Bucharest), Fête des lumières (Lyon)... and in various art centers : MONA (Australia), MUDAC, Fondation Claude Verdan (Lausanne), Musée Ianchelevici (Belgium), Kibla (Slovenia), Banff Centre (Canada), Villa Romana (Firenze), Utsikten Kunstsenter (Norway), Watermans (UK), Centre des arts d'Enghien-les-Bains, Gaîté Lyrique (Paris) etc.

Full biography : www.scenocosme.com/PDF/scenocosme_BOOK_EN.pdf                    Wikipedia : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/scenocosme

# Lola and Yukao Meet (LYM) : Lola Ajima and Yukao Nagemi : www.lolaandyukaomeet.com    contact@lolaandyukaomeet.com

Artists Lola Ajima and Yukao Nagemi make the audio- visual duo Lola and Yukao Meet (LYM)
They live and work in the Paris region and in Denmark. The performances of Lola and Yukao explore the association of free hand drawing through interactive digital graphics with organic soundscapes combined with voice and cello compositions. Ambitious, beautiful and inspirational, their performances opens the way to a new approach for live digital graphics where the graphic artist can combine imaginative graphical expression with music performance and sound art.

Lola Ajima is the artist name of an independent singer, bass/cello player and composer. With her former bands she explored the dream pop industrial sound. She also composes sound scapes for the Berlin-based dance company Rorstromsk and soundtracks for short movies. Yukao Nagemi is the artist name of a graphic artist and scientist. He works on interactive digital environments for live drawing and painting, and has his own artistic activity in black and white expressive graphics. His scientific activity is oriented towards real-time video-scenography for the performing arts, media façades, and augmented reality.

Château éphémère / Fabrique sonore & numérique Carrières-sous-Poissy (Fr)

Abbaye de l'Escaladieu / Horizons numériques - Bonnemazon (Fr)

E-Fest Digital Arts Festival / Palais Abdellia - Tunis (Tunisia)

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