

The Body is Infinite/ Body Intelligence Ontohacking Sex-Species and the BI r/evolution in the Algoricene

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Abstract

Body Intelligence is the body's capacity to vary, understood as fluctuating field whose primordial sense is proprioception, inherited from 4 billion years of bacterial sex and symbiogenesis. Ontohacking/metaformance techniques to unfold BI are proposed in face of a millennia old tendency to reduce sensorimotor plasticity, linked to systems of domination and exponentially expanding in current hypercolonial, transhumanist dystopias of control and AI.

Keywords: *Age of algorithms; Body Intelligence; Metaformance; Metahumanism; Ontohacking*

Introduction

The paper proposes both a radical questioning of transhumanist colonialism, and a metahumanist alternative to critical posthumanistic approaches that pose limitations when facing the new challenges of autonomous algorithms. I will offer (evolving along lines I have been promoting since around 2002) the shift from a performative (queer-posthumanist) politics operating inside the frame of representation and linguistic discursivity, of biohacking, genderhacking or bodyhacking, to a *metaformative* (postqueer-metahumanist) politics of movement-perception (Val, 2006), an *ontohacking* politics (Val, 2018a) that mobilises plasticity and indeterminacy in how we move, and thus perceive, think, feel and relate.

This is presented as urgent matter in the highly dynamic scenario of autonomous algorithms increasingly managing life on the planet, an *algorithmic governmentality* (Rouvroy, 2012) whose ontological opacity and dynamism pose severe challenges to our common sense and politics, and where power has become the ongoing production/preemption of novelty in a regime of *ontopower* (Massumi, 2015) that exceeds biopolitics and neoliberalism.

The paper thus challenges some established theories and practices in queer, transspecies and other fields by promoting a metaformance pragmatics which is not about dynamic forms or mobile identities, nor about mere dis-identifications, but of the active mobilisation of a *formless body* (Val, 2009), as movement field of quantum indeterminacy. This is part of a

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pluralistic politics that works against dominant alignments across any scale or mode, from institutional macropolitics to micropolitics of everyday life.

I suggest that domination is always an issue of movement reduction, and counteracting it requires to mobilise and think the less reductive expressions of movement. This approach requires a Radical Movement Philosophy, a radical rethinking of movement, perception and the body which I reconceptualise as proprioceptive swarm. The latter is a fluctuating field with its own self-organising BI, Body Intelligence (Val, 2020) that exceeds the narrow spectrum of agency of the rational subject and opens up a broader field of politics of movement, in the Algoricene or Age of Algorithms (Val, 2018a).

The deepest transformation of the body is not in spectacular implants and interventions but in cultivating the most subtle capacity for ongoing variation in movement, reinventing one's multisensory field, as plastic and open entanglement with others and the world. This can be done in the tiniest scales, thus including bodies who may seem incapable of moving in dominant scales. Mine is a neurodiverse proposal that mobilises self-organising and non-rationalistic capacities to move-think, where every type of movement is a mode of thought. Ontohacking means becoming *microsexual* (Val, 2020), where every new composition of bodies (metabody) is a mode of (epigenetic) mutation and thus a new sex of a postanatomical body.

The radical challenges of the Algoricene

The Algoricene is how I name the age of algorithmic reductions unfolding on Earth over millennia (Val, 2018a). It has a first *epoch of static alignments (macrocene)* culminating in biopolitics. We are now in the middle of a second *epoch of dynamic alignments (hypercene)* that started with cybernetics and exponentially expands in current Big Data and AI culture.

The Hypercene poses numerous challenges to our concepts and politics, largely inherited from XIXth Century biopolitical societies, challenges which are yet to be accounted for. These include:

1. **Ontological opacity** of Autonomous algorithms and Big Data systems due to their dynamism, scale, inaccessibility to human comprehension, supervision and traceability, their operation below conscious thresholds, and their autonomous evolution (Hayles, 2018; Massumi, 2015; Mittelstadt et al., 2016; Munster, 2013; Rouvroy, 2013;) associated to a post-cybernetic control, where computation introduces novelty (Parisi, 2013).
2. **Ontological obsolescence** of rights, regulations and common sense, which still linger in the constructs coming from the macrocene. We still seem to believe in stable things, public-private divides, extensive space and so on. The inherited beliefs are inflated and instrumentalised, like in the overexposure of the ego in Facebook, at the service of opaque algorithmic profiles.
3. **Ontopower** as defined by Brian Massumi (2015) is the new regime of preemption of emergence and of capitalization of any previously useless activity by production of new correlations, of dynamic forms in relational data networks. This dynamism exceeds the one of many radical political



movements, like Occupy or queer movements. It also exceeds biopolitics, like does Haraway's idea of a cyborg politics (Haraway, 1991).

4. **Algorithmic governmentality** as increasingly dominant regime implies Hyperdata and hyperalgorithms as the new logic of management of life, from agriculture to communication (Bratton, 2015; Rouvroy, 2013), a regime that exceeds neoliberalism and subjectivity production, shifting to the flexible modulation of data ecologies (Deleuze, 1990; Hayles, 2012).
5. **Hypercolonialism**, as the rise of new empires and the provisional empowerment of older ones through monopolies of tech corporations, is related to an *infrastructural imperialism* (Vaidhyanathan, 2012)
6. **Surveillance capitalism** (Zuboff, 2019) is the provisional new logic of global economy, with new elites of trillionaires, new inequalities, the secrecy of corporations and the all-encompassing privatization of life, matter, commons, *behaviour and emergence*.
7. **We (prosumers) are the products** (Zuboff, 2019). Hypersubjects as profiles performed by autonomous algorithms imply a new mode of *proletarianization* and computational nihilism (Stiegler, 2018) in going from the individual to the *dividual* in the society of (hyper)control (Deleuze, 1990).
8. **The double bind of Hyperracism and Hypernormativity mobilizes** new kinds of standardization and new kinds of algorithmic discriminations (Gebru, 2018; Hao, 2020) along with new proliferations of niches that capture difference (preemptive ontopower).
9. **Affective contagion and affective capitalism** are the mode of propagation of homogeneous gestures in the *panchoreographic* (Val, 2009) and the culture of compulsive clicking with Post-truth as the norm within an affective politics (Gates, 2011).
10. **Hyper- or Neofascism** as epitomized by Trump and, differently but relatedly, by Silicon Valley companies, coexist with Neo-totalitarianisms, as the one epitomized by the Chinese regime and its social credit scoring system. In both cases *hypercontrols* the new regime of all encompassing quantification, as desired condition promoted by nearly everyone, disguised by an allure of *inevitability*, desirability and lack of possible alternatives a tautological *GRINDS condition* (good, revolutionary, inevitable, necessary, desirable, sexy/smart) that confuses effects with causes mobilising a

*conservative disruption, a Coup d'etat against humanity*²and the planet: the dystopia behind the culture of the smart.

11. **Hypercyborg:** we become aggregates of a planetary metabody of computation systems (Margulis and Sagan, 1997; Stock, 1993), oriented by hyperattention affordances, in radical entanglement of strata (nano, neuro, bio, info), of platforms, relational data bases, algorithms, and services, where the relationality of data and algorithms crosses a new threshold.
12. **Exponentiality:** vertiginous acceleration, multiple levels of exponential expansion, acceleration and interconnected layers in micro and macro scales, Big B.A.N.G. of convergent technologies (Ascott, 2001). We seem to be approaching a vortex, a horizon of events, a perfect storm, a singularity: climate change, pandemics, overpopulation, AI... towards an unimaginable Singularity around 2045?
13. **Hypermateriality / hypercorporeality:** Planetary-scale computation systems (Bratton, 2015) are a heavy, unsustainable materiality, of the “cloud” consuming around 4% of energy resources as of 2020³ associated to the paradox that the more immobile the bodies connected the heavier the materiality of the systems, associated to a culture of sedentarism, of narrow bandwidth bodies, part of a sensor society (Andrejevich and Burdon, 2015), raising the crucial question of the body in motion.
14. **Metaformativity:** Hyperreductive perceptual design drives an algorithmic society crucially grounded on a reduction of sensory capacities and spectrums (Carr, 2014; Sadin, 2015). A new movement is needed of neurorights, neurodiversity and plurality of interfaces. The digital doesn't represent a physical world but produces a new kind of narrow world. We need to distinguish narrow-broad rather than physical-virtual.
15. **The process has only started....** but it is already fully operative and *more advanced than one can imagine...* We need yet to understand the algorithmic orgy going on in our pockets and our uneven intimacy with it... Yet, THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES!

Ontohacking sex-gender-race-species-class-ability

I propose that domination is always an issue of reducing movement's indeterminacy, determining it. It is about the emergence of alignments that create fixities, linearities, totalities, and splits. Over millennia a planetary-scale field of alignments has been gradually emerging on our planet that now double-folds in the super-alignments of dynamic

² As proposed by Shoshana Zuboff, see: <https://www.xlsemanal.com/conocer/tecnologia/20210106/capitalismo-de-vigilancia-shoshana-zuboff-seguridad-datos-internet-redes-sociales.html>

³ Please see: <https://theshiftproject.org/en/article/unsustainable-use-online-video/>



algorithms, whose dynamic forms have appropriated, and maybe exceed, the dynamism and creativity of existing horizontal political movements, thus demanding a new politics.

Queer performativity focuses on a politics of representation and linguistic discursivity in which one can subvert speech acts, repositioning oneself in the power matrix, as in the first-person appropriation of the term queer. In turn, postqueer metaformativity (Val, 2006) proposes a movement politics that mobilises sensorimotor plasticity, and thus plasticity in thinking-feeling-relating.

Metaformativity proposes that dualistic conceptions of sex, or of any other kind, rely upon a dualistic way of organisation of movement and the senses which define our own thinking structures and how we relate to the world in the first instance. It does so at a deep level by defining the kinds of perceptions-thoughts we can have. This applies to any kind of categorisation, reduction or domination. A sensorimotor organisation based on fixed points of vision that split us from a world enacts a fundamental dualism not only in the content of what we see but first and foremostly in the structure of how we perceive-think-move. This rigid sensory structure is also the condition of possibility for any further categorisation and quantification. The split from the world is enacted by impoverishing a much larger and less defined field of proprioceptive and multisensory integration. Domination demands this reduction of the indeterminacy at the core of movement and bodies. But domination, far from being a universal condition, blocks evolution as movement of variation, and needs to be overcome.

Ontohacking sex, gender, species, or ability implies a shift from operating on the perceived body by changing its form, to operating on our own sensory architecture, transforming how we perceive. It implies opening up narrow and rigid architectures of perception toward more plastic ones that mobilise the indeterminacy in movement and bodies. My proposal for a Radical Movement Philosophy reconceptualises the body as fluctuating field sustaining always multiple unresolved states: its actuality is its indeterminacy, but along degrees of a spectrum, sometimes narrowing down.

The primary mode of perception proper to bodies and more generally to fields is proprioception, as sensing of its internal fluctuations. Proprioception, the internal sense of movement of a body, is reconceptualised as field perception and as primary evolutionary mechanism from which all other modes of sensing stem, or of which they are extensions (Val, 2020). If I grab an object, I feel its consistency through my own fluctuating muscular tensions. Proprioception affords the most radical undoing of Cartesianism: you feel yourself in the same act of feeling the world, in motion and in transformation. It allows the integration of every other sense in the body's capacity to move. Proprioception is proposed as new plastic paradigm for perception opposing the dominant paradigm based on reduction: the fixed point of vision, on which the now dominant ontologies are based. Proprioception is a self-organising capacity to move which I call BI (Body Intelligence) and the proprioceptive swarm (Val 2018b; 2020).

Sex, species, ability, gender, race or class are colonial chimeras, apartheidisms stemming from the narrow perceptions of perspectival vision. Disaligning from perspective and its aftermaths is what we need, if we are to exceed humanism's colonial architectures. Transhumanism is expanding these architectures towards a hypercolonialism of total control. Meanwhile critical posthumanism does not afford a full and transformative

reconceptualisation and pragmatics of movement and perception that may allow to exceed reductive frames of domination. The latter is the scope of my metahumanistic proposal as relational ontology and pragmatics of becoming.

The body is infinite

The body is infinite!... Not obsolete!⁴ Not everything is possible, but the possibilities are infinite.⁵ I cannot jump to the moon, but the combinatory of my joints is infinite as well as indeterminate—and even more so its qualitative variation. Infinite to the power of infinite. This infinity is both an ontological indeterminacy of the body as fluctuating field, and its capacity for ongoing variation, for unfolding plasticity.

The variation of the body is not to be sought in quantitative expansion of given forms and capacities, but in qualitative transformation. The deepest and most powerful mode of transformation of a body lies in cultivating the ongoing variation of its field (understood as proprioceptive field of multisensory integration and crossmodal plasticity). To reduce the capacity to alter a body to genetics, pharmaceuticals and physical implants is to ignore that a body is a proprioceptive field, and to assume the paradigm given by biopolitics. Anatomy, as *biopolitical technology*, imposes a destiny on the body by reducing it to maps. At stake is to mobilise not (only) new anatomies, but *post-anatomical bodies*. *Not freedom of form, but freedom from form! Form is the oppression of movement.*

Beyond the bio-techno divide

Hatred of the body is often performed through distinguishing the biological body from the technological body. But the bio/techno distinction is obsolete. There is no biological body strictly speaking, nor a merely technological one. Biology is technology at three levels at least: (1) Because technology is always already part of nature. I define technology as any sustained self-organising dynamics of movement of variation, where what is at stake is to distinguish modes and degrees of plasticity in the dynamics. (2) Biology, as a science that attempts to reduce bodies to material quantifiable entities, is itself a biopolitical technology in disciplinary societies. And (3), resonating with Latour, Haraway, Stiegler, and Leroi-Gourhan amongst others: ever since we hominids started using tools, we were already technological, epigenetically co-evolving with our technologies. But we can extend this to all of Nature: technologies of stars, cells or swarms (flows-fusions, folds and flocks) are part of a movement of increasing variation that is evolution.

We need to understand that technologies (whether algorithmic, mechanical, linguistic, architectural, or other) operate as extensions of proprioception, and affect the entire field of the body. *The way classical education or media affect us is not less intrusive or determining than procedures*

⁴ I play here with Stelarc's famous claim the "the body is obsolete." I want to clarify that Stelarc is an admired colleague whom I have invited to take part in events on three occasions: 2007 in Madrid, 2015 in Seoul, and 2020 online. In Seoul I was happy to have him come out as anti-transhumanist in our final discussion. Indeed, his work is neither intentionally philosophical nor intentionally political or even experiential, but poetic. And yet the idea of the body as obsolete can lend itself, and has lent itself, to tragic transhumanist misreadings, and can make the delight of body despisers, a tendency that I wish to undo.

⁵ Rephrasing from Karen Barad, who puts it this way: "Not every intra-action is possible, but the number of possibilities is infinite" (Barad, 2012, 14).



like genetic engineering. Furthermore, these *technes* are not essentially distinct from other *technes* of nature (as in beehives or ant colonies), except by mode and degree of alignments.

Opening up the field of politics

Ontohacking does not oppose other politics but opens up the field of possibilities. One can think of at least a *triple field of politics*. A first level is that of claiming new categories to enter the norm, as in both identity politics and in assimilationism. A second level could be thought as that of performative politics of strategic and mobile identifications and dis-identifications, as in radical queer movements. But this is not enough with regard to the dynamics of current algorithmic control which has appropriated much of this dynamism. A third layer is an ontohacking strategy that mobilises an indeterminate body irreducible to form. Movement traverses the three fields: one can challenge institutions and legal structures, destabilise linguistic performances and mobilise non-verbal variations. At stake is to *look for the movements underlying the structures*. In terms of bodies one can think of a triple field of macro- micro- and meta-politics: affirming existing subaltern anatomies, creating new anatomies, and mobilising a postanatomical body.

Biohacking gender and other modes of gender hacking or body hacking, while being important practices usually imply intervening in a content of perception, in a body as perceived from fixed points of vision while relying upon costly laboratory technologies. Likewise, movements like the Transpecies Society, while defending important claims for a freedom of form, may however be partly reproducing a transhumanistic (quantitative and control-oriented) approach when defending the possibility to invent new senses and species through technological implants. But if the new implant is reproducing a model of quantification, it only extends the regime of domination.

Ontohacking, as a metahumanistic approach, intends that by moving differently we modulate every aspect of the biochemical field of a body. What matters is the degree of sensorimotor plasticity by which every experience is a changing mode of integration of multiple sense modalities, every experience a new sense in variation, and a mode of thought. The more plastic a body is, the greater will be the capacity to sustain indeterminacy, the higher the intelligence. This inverts the predominant tendency to associate intelligence to the capacity for reduction of indeterminacy, for domination and control. Instead, intelligence is the capacity to vary, to sustain indeterminacy as movement of variation.

This has important implications for our relation with technologies. For instance, it will never be just an issue of using digital and social media as they are in order to disseminate an ideological content. This would only reproduce *the intrinsic violence of reductive media by reinforcing narrow ways of perceiving and moving*. It would reinforce a certain kind of homogeneous propagation of contagious gestures, within an affective capital or *panchoreographic* (Val, 2009). The challenge is much deeper. We can still reappropriate these media, but ontohacking them as part of much richer sensorimotor fields that we can activate. This recalls, with a difference, the potential meaning of queer as verb: to queer something rather than to be queer, is to open it up... to what?... to indeterminacy.

Metaformance / Ontohacking technologies

Metaformance is the art and life *techne* of mobilising plastic sensorimotor ratios. In this section, I will expose some examples of the varieties of metaformance and how it can evolve

as long-term projects and as improvisations technologies. I will briefly describe several projects and techniques I have been developing over the past 20 years that aim at mobilising sensorimotor plasticity in different ways.

*Disalignments*⁶ are movement improvisation techniques focusing on proprioception that mobilize the body as diffuse swarm of microperceptions (the proprioceptive/alloceptive swarm) while the residue of conscious awareness is used for the sake of inducing subtle deviations from known patterns, gestures, postures, temporalities, or proximities (Figures 1-2). *Disalignments* explore almost imperceptible micromovements, focusing on the elasticity of internal movement sensations and their alien indeterminacy and opening up a sensory landscape that was not previously there but emerges with the very exploration. The techniques are anti-choreographic, focusing on the ongoing and subtle deviation from any previous pattern, and on letting the body move without a subject guiding it, in excess of decisional trajectories. The quantum field of proprioceptive indeterminacy emerges, and the body moves in excess of any external cues that reduce its orientations. *Disalignments* expand in relation to *Flexinamics* techniques and the other projects I will mention in the following paragraphs, each of them proposing a particular focus on proprio/alloception.

Figure 1. Disalignments workshop in Chile, 2010



Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

⁶ Please see: <http://metabody.eu/disalignments/>



Figure 2. Disalignments workshop in Argentina, 2016

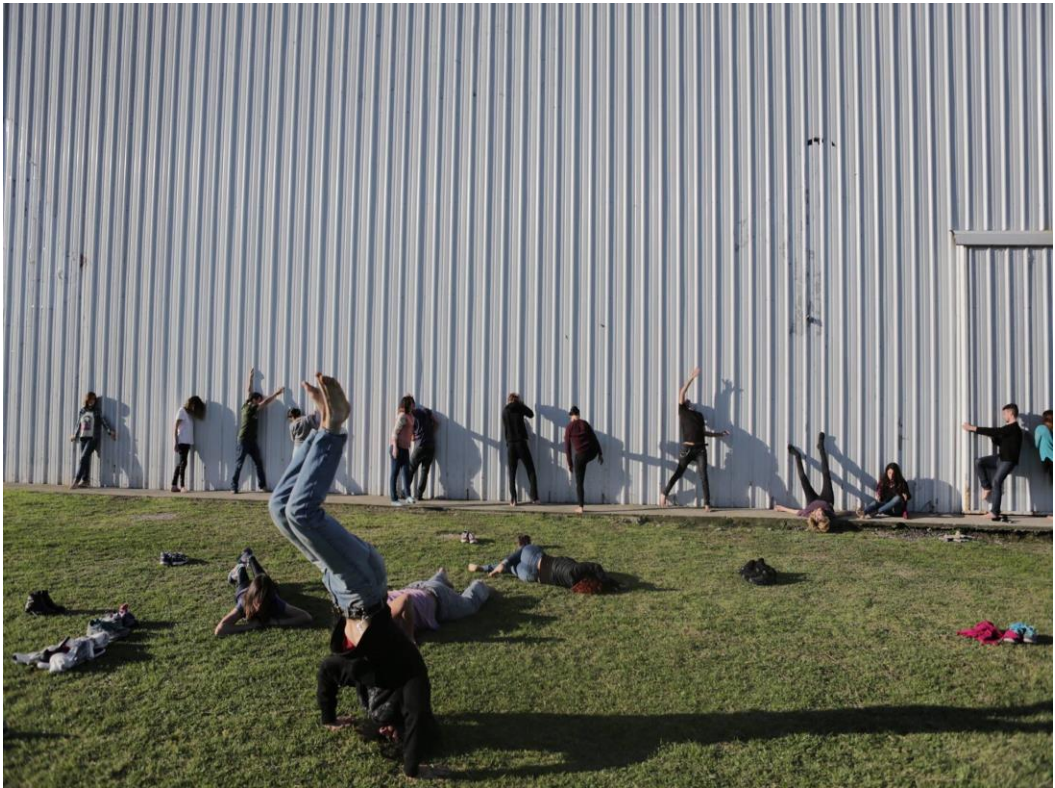


Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

*Flexinamics*⁷ is a technique for building translucent, foldable, flexible, dynamic physical modules or (meta)structures that operate as wearable architectures, bodily extensions that move with the body, as they have their own liveliness, elasticity and resistance, inviting the body to explore unconventional torsions, focusing on the elastic kinesthetic connection to the structures (Figures 3-4).

Flexinamics metastructures expand the sense of proprioception into a larger environment through elastic relations. The fundamental experience they offer is from inside, when you lose a sense of shape. They constitute an emergent physical architecture, an attempt to create a non-Cartesian space, one that is not available to measure and navigate but which co-emerges continually with the movements of the bodies. It is an intra-active⁸ space in so far

⁷ Please see: <http://metabody.eu/flexinamics/>

⁸ Intra-action is a term proposed by Karen Barad (2007). Whereas interaction refers to preexisting entities relating in a predefined space (relative to perspectival-euclidean-cartesian space perceptions based on the artificial construction of external observers), intra-action refers to the co-emergence of the agencies that enter a relation, (relative to accounts of quantum mechanics and diffraction, based on the impossibility of external observers, but grounded on internal observation acts that generate cuts and ontological separability, as dynamic form generation from within, signaling the inseparability of ontology,

as it does not presuppose a given sensory organisation, rather, *the very subject co-emerges with the space along with the changing multimodal sensations and proprioceptions*. The Flexinamic modules can be connected composing larger structures, suspended, in multiple layers, scales and shapes, so that one can intervene with them any indoors or outdoors space, in daylight or in darkness, projecting on them an environment of amorphous digital architectures, light and sound called Amorphogenesis.

Figure 3. Filming with ShuLea Cheang in Madrid, 2018



Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

epistemology and ethics), thus questioning the predefined status of things, entities, spaces or external observers, and pointing to a relational ontology of becoming.



Figure 4. Flexinamics tests in Reverso Centre, Salamanca, 2018



Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

*Amorphogenesis*⁹ is a *metagaming*¹⁰ project in which amorphous digital architectures and spatialised electronic sound are further deformed through sensors disseminated on the body. Metagaming design avoids manual control, representation of Cartesian spaces, or simulation of anthropomorphic avatars, and develops non-linear correlations between the movements of the intra-actor and the deformations of the architecture. Like in Flexinamics, it is about creating a non-Cartesian architecture that emerges with the movement, a non-linear space that is never actualising in an extensive space, never available to navigate.

One is never in control of the space, rather, the intra-actor's sensations emerge in the process, as the body explores subtle and alien changes in tilting and acceleration, which expand proprioception into the digital meshes. Your micro-torsion of an arm and shoulder suddenly connects in alien manners with the torsion of the architecture, which could also be an alien creature, an abstract or amorphous avatar. Metagaming thus subverts and inverts the aesthetics of simulation and control, based on manual control, Cartesian spaces, anthropomorphic avatars and linear relations. In *Amorphogenesis*, the digital architectures are an extension of the body's proprioception as much as the body is an extension of the architectures (Figures 5-8).

⁹ Please see: <http://metabody.eu/amorphogenesis/>

¹⁰ *Metagaming* is not about affording control, rather it is about inviting unpredictable gestures to happen, while constituting an open (neurodiverse) cognitive landscape of amorphous and indeterminate affordances.

Figure 5. Interactive digital architecture



Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

Figure 6. Amorphogenesis tests in Delft, 2014

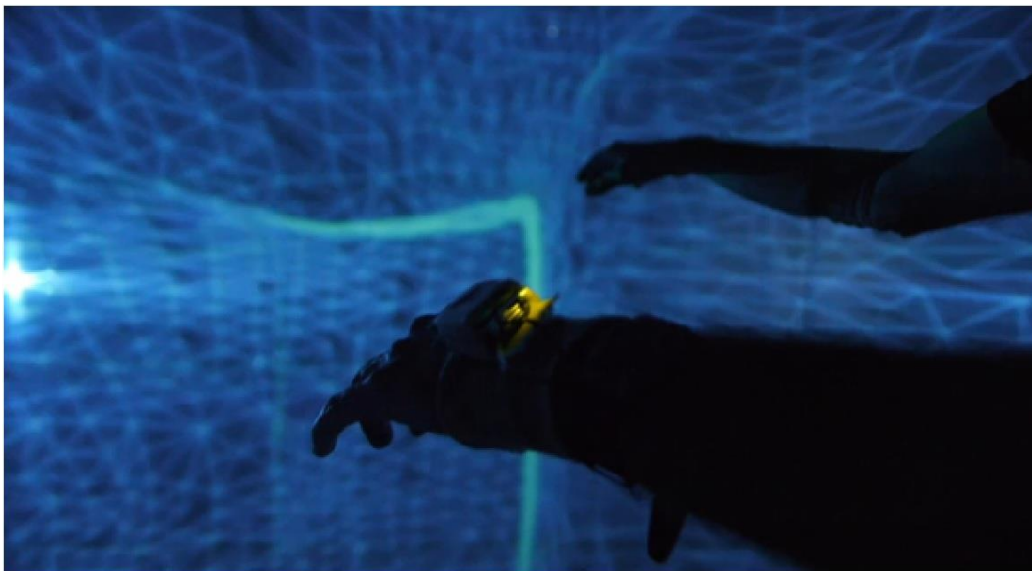


Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

Figure 7. Metatopia in Madrid, 2018

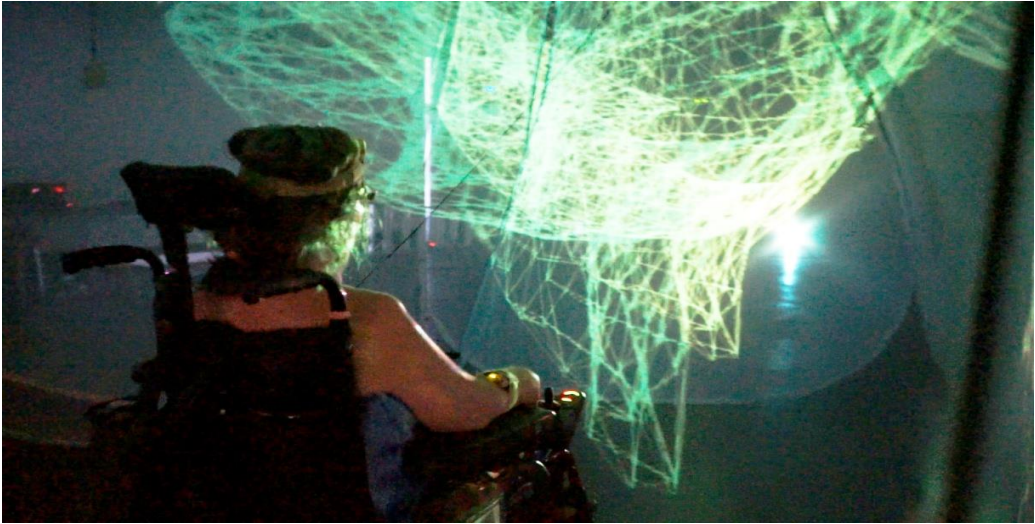


Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

Figure 8. Metatopia in Argentina, 2016



Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

The architectures are projected on the mobile and translucent Flexinamic structures, either indoors or outdoors, thus becoming a nomadic environment which dialogues with other spaces while constituting itself a relational field. The more varied the movements the richer the environment, thus expanding the *Disalignments*, as anti-choreographic improvisational practice, to the digital architectures and sound. *Amorphogenesis* is also a philosophical concept that signifies the ongoing emergence of the amorphous which never actualizes in a form and

connects to another concept and project focusing on undoing anatomy and form: microsexes.

*Microsexes*¹¹ is a metaformance¹² project in which the body perceives itself through surveillance cameras placed on the skin and electronically processed voice. The cameras in close up enact a tactile and amorphous vision that is not grounded on perspective and its parameters of distance, fixity and framing (Figures 9-10). The microcameras become an antiperspectival machine for a formless and post-anatomical body, exposing the way in which dualistic categorizations of the body and sex have historically relied on perspectival vision. Here instead infinite potential sexes proliferate in the mobile and tactile vision that recomposes multimodal integration and proprioception. A tiny movement in the hand becomes a gigantic alien landscape.

The body should not attempt to hold onto the usual proprioception, rather, it should let control go and enter this new scale and relation till it stops knowing what it is looking at (perhaps its hand, or back, or neck, or genital). The body suspends in this alien intimacy till it reconnects with its proprioception through that indeterminate otherness.

Figure 9. Microsexes performance by Jaime del Val, Toulouse, 2011

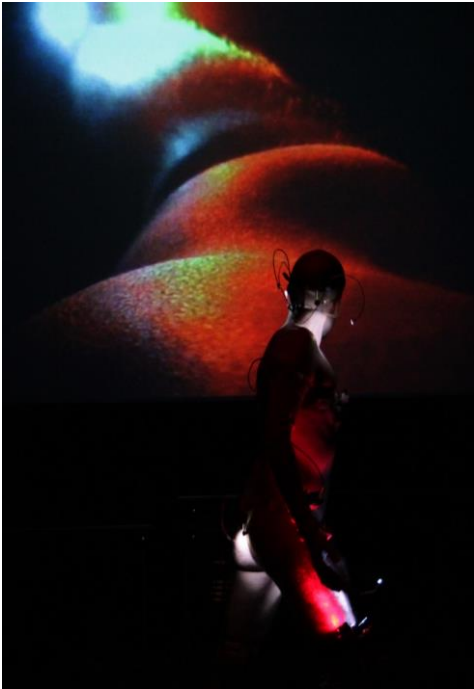


Image: Claude Fournier

¹¹ Please see: <https://metabody.eu/microsexes>

¹² *Metaformance* is a neologism proposed by Claudia Giannetti in 1994, to describe the preponderance of the interface in media culture. I use it to describe the ongoing reinvention and opening up of perception towards greater indeterminacy, focusing not on content but on the disalignments from any fixed perceptual frames.



Figure 10. Microsexes metaformance, Madrid, 2014

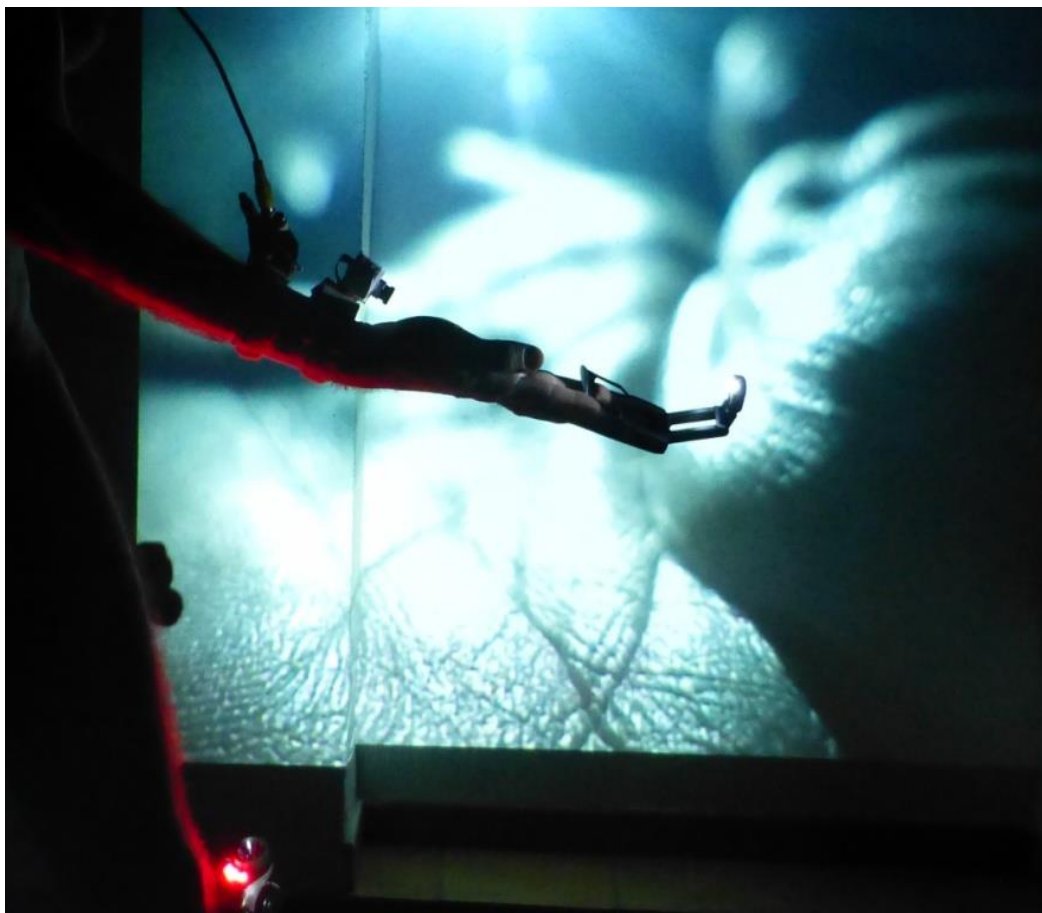


Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

The project has happened as outdoors interventions projected on buildings, as immersive indoors installation, as one to one encounters with the audiences or even in homes, as a sort of private consultation where the performer enacts or mediates the devisualization of the participant's body, enacting a disalignment from centuries long apparatuses of perceptual reduction. Thus, an alien intimacy and sex are generated that renegotiate the boundaries of intelligibility of the body opening them up to indeterminacy.

All of the above constitute layers of *Metatopia*: intra-active metaformative environments¹³ for indoors or outdoors, nomadic spaces of illegible behaviours that may infuse indeterminacy in smart control ecologies of Big Data culture. The experiential is crucial in these projects. The performer and the installation facilitate a deeply transformative perceptual experience

¹³ Please see: <https://metabody.eu/metatopia>

of the audience participants who stop being spectators and become the very substrate of the process of perceptual opening. *Metatopia* works against the spectacular regime of perceptual separations. The ambiguity of sensory perception is the characteristic aspect of these environments, and their focus on proprioception, on plastic multisensory integration, amorphous affordances, and the entangled co-emergence of perception and non-linear space (Figures 11-13).

It is a laboratory for hacking our most basic ontological presumptions about the world, space-time, movement, the body or perception, proposing a blurry, amorphous and plastic sensory environment of which one is part, an autistic world of infinite plasticity that sustains its degrees of indeterminacy by avoiding to establish sensory hierarchies. A sort of microsingularity in times of Technological Singularity blackholes of total control. Singularities are events that create their own space-time or other conditions, but some have a dominant will to impose themselves, while others are open to reconfiguration.

Figure 11. *Metatopia* in Toulouse, 2016



Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

Figure 12. Metatopia in Milan, 2018

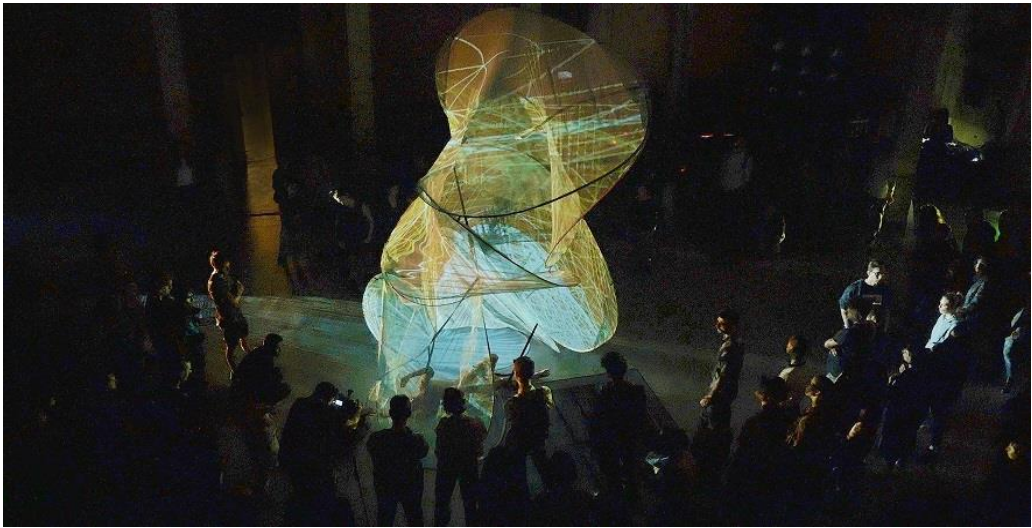
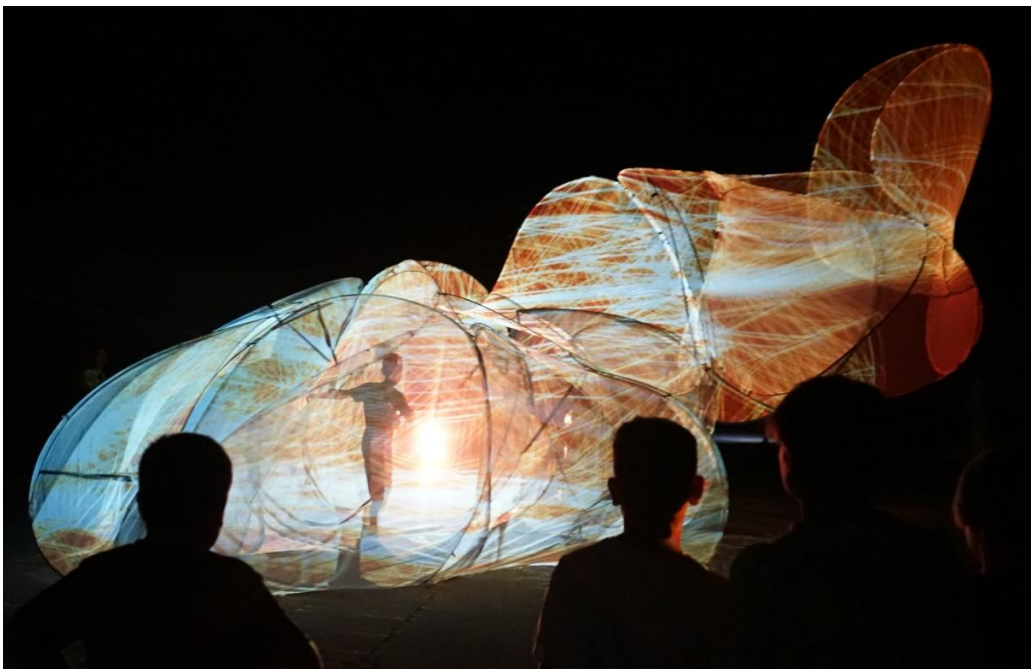


Image: Reverso/Jaime del Val

Figure 13. Metatopia/Barraca of the XXth Century in rural area of Salamanca, 2018



Images: Reverso/Jaime del Val

These practices have evolved since 2001 within my artistic work as *metaformance*¹⁴ techniques: processes of perceptual transformation that deeply involve the audience, avoiding placing them as mere spectators. They are part of the Metabody project¹⁵ and forum¹⁶. Half performances, half installations; sometimes intimate one-on-one encounters, often nomadic and choral, in open spaces: like an alien revival of the Dionysian chorus.¹⁷ They are not merely artistic projects but life technes. They might also be therapy—an ontological therapy, for opening up excessively narrow movements-perceptions-thoughts.

Postscriptum: Viral thinking in the age of pandemics

The COVID-19 pandemic exposes the conflict between two planetary scale metabodies with which we are entangled: the algorithmic, exemplified in the homogenising thrust of viral media; and the bacterial and viral, which is a movement of ongoing mutation and variation, the movement of evolution from which we symbiogenetically stem. When the latter gets disrupted, pandemics arise. The Algoricene or Age of Algorithms is thus an Age of Pandemics (or Pandemiocene).¹⁸

On the other hand, viral media, for instance Facebook, is perhaps the type of pandemic we need most urgently to become immune to—as they mobilise a homogeneous mode of sensorimotor and affective-cognitive contagion that alters everything in our ecologies and bodily chemistries.

We live in a society of narrow-bandwidth bodies, increasingly immobile, clicking on screens. Hopefully, the confinement periods and social distance in the pandemic has made everyone realise the importance of movement, of sensory experience, and of embodied intra-actions. We need to recover a broader-bandwidth body, and take it beyond.

The challenge is not merely in disseminating new contents in the existing frames, new categories in the categorising matrix, new positions in the grids of domination, nor mere disidentifications: but to open up the entire planetary-scale, ultra-heavy infrastructures of world reduction. This can be done at least by moving ourselves in new ways, disaligning, reinventing our relation with the matrix of reduction, for it may take centuries to actually undo the dominant infrastructures themselves. We need though to work at multiple, seemingly contradictory registers at the same time. Our complex world demands a radical pluralism. The repositioning within the grid will have to go along the movements of indetermination for quite some time.

Can we unleash such a contagious sensitivity for mutation, that domination and control reveal their poorness and negativity till they get finally abandoned? Can we unleash across all

¹⁴ Metaformance is a neologism put forward by Claudia Giannetti (1997) since 1994 to describe the characteristics proper to the interface as predominant trope in media culture.

¹⁵ Please see: <https://metabody.eu>

¹⁶ Please see: <http://metabody.eu/forum/>

¹⁷ The ecstatic and nomadic group of dancing and singing bodies from which, following Nietzsche and others after him, Greek tragedy arose; linked to the Dionysian mysteries, a religion of the oppressed and of reunification with Nature.

¹⁸ Please see the report by United Nations on “Escaping the Age of Pandemics”: <https://ipbes.net/pandemics>



bodies an antivirus of ongoing disalignments, as creative force of evolution, that keeps going, growing and counterbalancing the reductive alignments of domination?

The inferiority of domination as freezing the movement of life, evolution and becoming, must be stated. The swarming power of Body Intelligence (BI) needs to be foregrounded in times of the reductionist promises of AI revolutions. Hacking our ontologies and the ontological tradition of fixity implies creating more plastic movement realities. Becoming ontohackers involves a radical movement evolution/revolution/n-volution: a counter-reductive or anti-reductive move. It is about dancing with chaos: a movement r/evolution for ecologies to come... or rather, ecologies in becoming.

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