

**RESPONSIVE
ENVIRONMENTS**
ARCHITECTURE,
ART AND DESIGN

**LUCY
BULLIVANT**

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112-113

EMBODIED INTERFACES FOR DANCE

KINAESTHETIC
PERCEPTION IS ABOUT
APPREHENDING AND
NAVIGATION, ABOUT
HOW OUR BODY
PERCEIVES MOVEMENT
THROUGH OUR HAPTIC
SENSE.



Kinaesthetic perception is about apprehending and navigation, about how our body perceives movement through our haptic sense. In the field of dance, 'THE CHANGING ROOM' (2004), a dance performance incorporating live and virtual spaces, this is fully explored through the complexity of lives lived in the mediated conditions of the technological and at the edge of the real. Created by choreographer Carol Brown (born Dunedin, New Zealand, 1964) in conjunction with the architect Mette Ramsgaard Thomsen (born Copenhagen, Denmark, 1969)⁶⁵ it extends the haptic into another dimension, one in which the image or mirror of the body becomes like another dancer. Few choreographers work with embodied interfaces; their work is more about the visual than an event space of behaviours, and avoids preset interfaces. 'Screen technology has radically altered people's habits', says Ramsgaard Thomsen. 'Young people playing computer games are engaging with a mediated condition. The very ordinariness of it allows us to establish it within other cultural conditions.'

The plot of 'The Changing Room' is quite simple, involving a dresser who acts as a mediator for two characters who experience their changing room as a technological frontier. By opening wardrobes and storage units and changing their clothes, they access a series of baroque assemblages. Moving at the threshold between the virtual and the real, their gestures are tracked by a machine eye. As they do so, a series of screens embedded in the furniture of the room through which a virtual presence is rendered mirrors, extends and distorts their behaviour, allowing them to inhabit unfamiliar dimensions. At times there are pauses when the image disappears. Whether or not a digital element is an extension to a space, or a parallel presence, 'The Changing Room' demonstrates that it is something dancers and audience learn through the culture of the context.

THE CHANGING ROOM

Dance performance incorporating live and virtual spaces

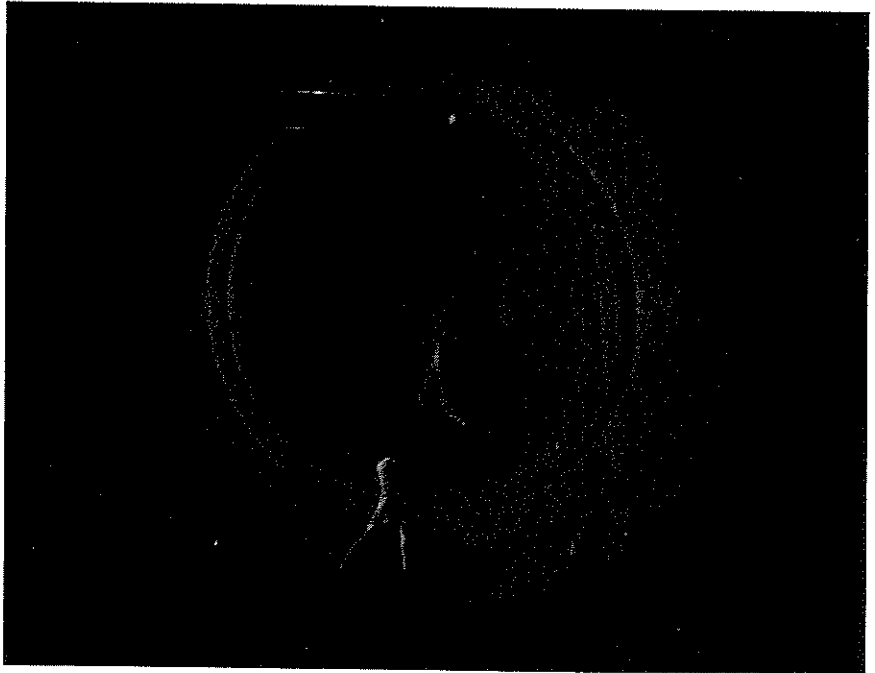
Carol Brown (choreographer) and Mette Ramsgaard Thomsen (architect), 2003-4

Lighting design: Michael Mannion

Music: Jerome Soudan/Mimetic

Staged at the Greenwich Dance Agency, London, UK, 2004

Photos: Mathias Eck

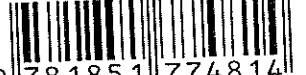


Published in a new, larger format, the latest title in the **V&A CONTEMPORARY** series looks at ground-breaking interior design, art and architecture.

Responsive environments – spaces interacting with people who use them, pass through them or by them – have come to underpin our living and working surroundings. While CCTV and personal devices such as the iPod are now ubiquitous, creative fusions of design and embedded technologies are also appearing in museums, galleries and urban places.

RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENTS tells the story of how an exclusive selection of spatial interactive technologies are being brought amidst a cultural context of growing multidisciplinary approaches to architecture and design during the last 15 years. The book draws on the author's interviews with the designers, architects and artists featured, and sheds fresh light on the way new technologies are being harnessed as well as the experiential effects they create.

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