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Biography

Michael Montanaro is a trans-disciplinary artist who is best known for his work in the field of contemporary dance and mixed media. A graduate of the Hartford Conservatory, he has performed with the Boston Ballet, Les Grands Ballet Canadiens and Le Groupe de la Place Royale where he also served for 5 years as co-artistic director. In 1985 he founded Montanaro Dance, developing a reputation for using cutting edge technology to create theatrical environments for his choreography. Over its ten-year history Montanaro Dance toured both nationally and internationally.

Since 1996 Michael has worked as a choreographer, director and collaborator on numerous projects including the Cirque du Soleil's "Varekai", Opéra de Montréal's multi-media version of "Carmina Burana", the documentary "Montanaro InTime", a full length theatrical work "Frankenstein's Ghosts, and a series of short films entitled "Dances for Small Spaces". He has also been deeply involved in the envisioning, design and creation of numerous research projects dedicated to evolving innovative ways in which new technologies are used to enhance the performative experience within responsive environments. From 1999 through 2014 Michael held the position of *Chair* of the Department of Contemporary Dance, Concordia University.

a *Full Professor*, Michael is also the *Co-Director* of the *Topological Media Lab*, a founding member of Hexagram / Institute for Research/Creation in Media Arts and a member of Milieux – Institute for Arts, Culture and Technology. As co-director of the Topological Media Lab, he is involved in working with many undergraduate and graduate students in the conception, development, creative direction and realization of many of the labs diverse research streams. Michael is currently the Principle Investigator and director of "InTime" - an FQRSC funded research creation project focused on building a large scale interactive installation dealing with the perception of time; the stage direction and a conceptual collaborator on "Practices of Everyday Life – Cooking" an electroacoustic composition / performance piece based on the sonified preparation of a meal by a professional chef/dancer, and a co-applicant/recipient on Michael Jemtrud's FARM LAB's SSHRC Insight Grant ; *Arts and Ideas in Motion*. In 2011 Michael was invited by the *Centre for Music Studies at Cambridge University* as guest lecturer and also spent two separate periods of time at the University of Chicago as a visiting artist. Montanaro is also in the final stages of producing a full-length film version of Frankenstein's Ghosts, which should be released to the public in 2016-17. He is currently involved in the design of interactive media for the Solar Decathlon, Deep Performance Dwelling zero state home completion, China 2018

Research | Creation**Media Choreography - Installation - Responsive Environments****Installations****Installations**

2017 - 2018

"Spiel" –Sight and Sound Festival - Eastern Bloc | Montreal

"Spiel" – Ars Electronica, Linz Austria

"Passing Light" Never Apart Gallery – Montreal Mapping Festival

2015 - 2017

"AQUAPHONEIA" Ars Electronica, Linz Austria; Paris Biennale NÉMO

Living Architectural Systems Group | 6-year SSHRC Partnership Grant with Philip Beesley, Waterloo University

Arts and Ideas in Motion | SSHRC funded Collaboration with Professor Michael Jemtrud and the FARMM Lab McGill University

Since 2013 - The Direction of the Topological Media Lab, its research streams, seminars, outcomes and activities

"InTime" FQRSC funded interactive/responsive media installation on time perception

"Les Persiennes et les Sortilèges" - Nuit Blanche interactive installation - Goethe Institute, Montréal, Québec

2012-2013

"Wunderkammer" - Alkemie Inc. installation stands about 60 x 150 x 45 centimeters high, about the size of an old steamer trunk. It refracts the geometries and materials of the age of iron and crystal and combines the mechanical tropes of Victorian science; 19c theatre techniques (such as Pepper's Ghost superposition) with 21c live computational video and sound processing.

"The Project" - University of Chicago- Logan Centre for the Arts, Continued work on pervasive game play, Creative Director

"Shadowhood" - Open studio Hexagram Black box / collaboration with "mere phantoms"-

October 2012 A two-week workshop combining projection, shadow puppetry and animation techniques.

"Les Persiennes et les Sortilèges" - Nuit Blanche interactive installation - Goethe Institute, Montréal, Québec

"Einstein's Dream" - time conditioning installations, FQRSC funded Research and The Centre for Teaching and Knowledge

2005 - 2006 Work with Topological Media Lab on design of movement based interactive research projects

2005 - 2006 Work with P.K. Langshaw, Concordia University on initial investigation of Algo{rhythmic} Transitions / mixed media and movement- based project dealing with wearable environments.

Performance Performance

- 2017 - 2018 "Practices of Everyday Life | Cooking" - Ars Electronica, Linz Austria
 "Practices of Everyday Life | Cooking" - MilanOltre Festival, Milan Italy
 "Practices of Everyday Life | Cooking" - Kibla Festival Slovenia
 "Practices of Everyday Life | Cooking" - Western Front, Vancouver B.C.
 "Practices of Everyday Life | Cooking" | International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation
- 2015 - 2016 "Practices of Everyday Life" | Cooking – Ars Electronica | Austria
- 2014 - 2015 "Practices of Everyday Life | Cooking" - A taste of what's to come - Premiered SMCQ, Montreal New Music Festival. A performance choreographed around a chef and sonified objects: fruit, vegetables, meat, knives, pots and pans, cutting board and table.
- 2009-2010 "Frankenstein's Ghosts" - Direction - Choreography - Visual Conception. a multi-media and interactive technology-based performance piece.
- 2007-2009 "Dances for Small Spaces AME" - short film CTV television and Bravo!Fact,
- 2004-2005 Dances for Small Spaces "AME" - short film CTV television and Bravo!Fact,
 "Duet" - for members of the Canadian National Skating Team
- 2003-2004 "Three new works" - Cirque du Soleil
- 2002-2003 "Zumanity" - Cirque du Soleil - workshop
- 2001-2002 "Varekai" - Cirque du Soleil - major touring show
- 2000-2001 "Litany" - Danse Encore - a duet - Sylvain Lafortune and Sandra Lapierre
 "Carmina Burana" - Opera de Montreal

- 2000 - 2001 "A Winter's Tale" - Centaur Theatre, best english play award / L'academie
- Québécoise de Théâtre
- 1996 - 1997 "Unplugged" - full evening work / Montanaro dance
- 1995 - 1996 "Gala Metro Star" - Télé Metropole
- 1994 - 1995 "Non Angli Sed Angeli" - full evening multi-media work / Montanaro Dance
- 1994 - 1995 "Time in the Eye of the Needle" –
co-production/ Institute for Studies in the Arts- University of Arizona
- "Circles" - Phoenix Dance Ensemble
- 1993 - 1994 "The River" - Decidedly Jazz, *Calgary*
- 1991 - 1992 "Two Stepping in Brazil"- Danse Partout, Quebec, Canada
- 1990 - 1991 "Zman Doe" - full evening Theatre Version -multi-media work, Montanaro Dance
- 1989 - 1990 "Un Temps Perdu de Zman Doe" - full evening site specific - multi-media work,
Montanaro Dance (Old Port of Montreal)
- 1988 - 1989 "The Audition" - National Film Board
- 1987 - 1988 "The Theory of Everything" - full evening multi-media work, Montanaro Dance
- 1986 - 1987 "Trilogy" - Montanaro Dance, Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers,
Le Groupe de la Place Royale
- "900 Seconds of Eights" - Montanaro Dance
- 1985 - 1986 "East of Egypt" - full evening multi-media work, Montanaro Dance
- 1984 - 1985 "Walking on Glass" - Le Groupe de la Place Royale
- 1983 - 1984 "A Matter of Seconds" full evening multi-media work - Quebec Éte Danse
- 1982 - 1983 "Eclipse in Java" - full evening multi-media work, Le Groupe de la Place Royale
- 1981 - 1982 "Sprung Wooden Answer period with a Latin American Beat" -
Le Groupe de la Place Royal
- 1980 - 1981 "Gestures" - Le Groupe de la Place Royale"

1979 - 1980 "13 Choreographies" - Le Groupe de la Place Royale

"Study" - Le Groupe de la Place Royale

"Jarred" - Le Groupe de la Place Royale

1978 - 1979 "Runaway" - Le Groupe de la Place Royale

"Trio" - Le Groupe de la Place Royale

1977 - 1978 "Bars and Bells" - Le Groupe de la Place Royale

1977 - 1978 "Watch" - Le Groupe de la Place Royale

Film

Film

2011 - 2012 "Dances for Small Spaces - 411" - Global TV. - Bravo Fact
concept, choreography, direction, editing

2009 - 2010 "Dances for Small Spaces - AME" - Global TV. - Bravo Fact
concept, choreography, direction, editing

1995 - 1996 "Montanaro In-Time" - Documentary - co-production - Shanda Productions

1991 - 1992 "Training Film" - multi-media company, *Discreet Logic*

1988 - 1989 "The Audition" - National Film Board / Choreographer

Visual Design

Visual Design

2010 - 2011 "Frankenstein's Ghosts" - multimedia based performance piece.

1994 - 1995 "Non Angli Sed Angeli" - full evening multi-media work - Montanaro Dance

1993 - 1994 "Time in the Eye of the Needle" - co-production-Institute for Studies in the Arts

1990 - 1991 "Zman Doe" full evening multi-media work / Montanaro Dance

1989 - 1990 "Un Temps Perdu de Zman Doe" full evening multi-media work
Montanaro Dance (Old Port of Montreal)

1987 - 1988 "The Theory of Everything" full evening multi-media work / Montanaro Dance

**Music
Composition****Music
Composition**

- 1987 - 1988 "The Theory of Everything" - full evening multi-media work
Montanaro Dance Collaboration with composer Edmund Eagan
- 1986 - 1987 "900 Seconds of Eights"
Montanaro Dance in Collaboration with composer Edmund Eagan
- 1985 - 1986 "Timber" Overtigo Danse - Ginette Lauren
- 1984 - 1985 "Duet" choreographer: Helen Leclair
- 1983 - 1984 "A Matter of Seconds" full evening multi-media work
Quebec Été Danse
- "Eclipse in Java" - full evening multi-media work
Le Groupe de la Place Royal
- 1982 - 1983 Sometime After" - choreographer: Tassy Teekman
- "Groan"- choreographer - Marsha Blank
- "Dernière Paille" - choreographer: Jean Pierre Perreault
- 1981 - 1982 "Sprung Wooden Answer period with a Latin American Beat" Le Groupe de la Place
Royal

**Visiting Artist
Lecturer****Visiting Artist
Lecturer**

- 2012-2013 University of Chicago - Play Symposium
- 2010-2011 University of Chicago – Gray Centre – Logan Centre for the Arts
- 2009-2010 Cambridge University – Centre for Music and Science -Workshop –Residency
University of Chicago – Gray Centre – Logan Centre for the Arts
- 2005-2006 University of Western Australia / WISP Conference –Garth Paine

2003 - 2004 Concordia University – Defiant Imagination Lecture Series

1998 - 1999 University of Calgary

1995 - 1996 University of Arizona – Institute for Studies in the Arts

1983 - 1984 York University – Toronto Ontario

Workshops

Workshops

2015-2016 P.A.R.E. – 3-week workshop symposium - Place | Architecture and Responsive Environments

“Enquentro” - A series of three workshops directed towards exploring the lab's philosophical and physical engagement with various streams of research, techniques and technologies used in the "enchantment of environments and matter" and the expression of that research in the real world.

EdX MOOC | McGill University - The Body Matters | Why Exercise Makes You Healthy and How to Stay Uninjured

Presentation

Presentation

2015-2016 ACUDA - Association of Canadian University Departments of Anesthesia | Presentation

SIMNOVATE - Steinberg Centre for Simulation and Interactive Learning | Presentation

Other

Other

2015-2018 Solar Decathlon | Media Manager for MTL Team competition to build zero state house in China

| Funding | Funding |
|----------------|---|
| 2015 - 2017 | <p>SSHRC Partnership Grant Living Architecture Systems Group -Co- Applicant</p> <p>SSHRC Arts and Ideas in Motion – Collaborative work with FARMM Lab McGill University</p> <p>FQRSC, Research Creation “InTime” interactive/responsive media installation on time perception.</p> <p>ARRE Optimization Grant – Internal</p> |
| 2012 - 2013 | <p>FQRSC , Innovative Projects – Einstein’s Dreams Installation designed to modify perception of time - co-PI</p> |
| 2011 - 2012 | <p>Einstein Sound Orrery, ARRE – internal grant, co-PI</p> <p>Frankenstein’s Ghosts, SSHRC Research Creation grant, co-PI</p> <p>Frankenstein’s Ghosts, Centre for Teaching and Learning, PI</p> <p>Frankenstein’s Ghosts, Office of Research, Concordia University, PI</p> <p>Frankenstein’s Ghosts, Office of Research, Ontario Arts Council, co-PI</p> |
| 2005 - 2010 | <p>Dances for small spaces “411”, Bravo!Fact CTV Television, PI</p> <p>Dances for small spaces “411”, Office of Research, Concordia University, PI</p> <p>Dances for small spaces “411”, Cirque du Soleil, PI</p> <p>Dances for small spaces “411”, Bravo!Fact CTV Television, PI</p> <p>Dances for small spaces “411”, Office of Research, Concordia University, PI</p> <p>Dances for small spaces “411”, Cirque du Soleil, PI</p> |
| 2007 - 2008 | <p>Faculty of Fine Arts, CO2 / Ouija movement experiment initiation grant, co-PI</p> |
| 1992 - 1997 | <p>“Festival of the Arts Hiawatha” funds provided by, Canada Council for the Arts, Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Heritage Canada</p> |
| 1986 - 1996 | <p>“Montanaro Dance”- operating funds provided by the, Canada Council for the Arts, Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Montréal Arts Council</p> |

Teaching

2000 - 2018

Teaching – undergraduate**DANC 201 Creative Process I (6 credits)**

Prerequisite: Appropriate technique course (DANC 205 [210], 305 [310], or 405 [410], as determined by the Department) concurrently; enrolment in the Major in Contemporary Dance, or written permission of the Department. Introduction to the creative process in dance. Students learn to explore, observe, and structure ideas and movements through improvisations and specific exercises which cover such fundamentals as kinetics, rhythm and dynamics, spatial organization, perceptual skills, integration of acoustic, visual and verbal elements, and the use of technology as a creative tool. In addition to the regular studio hours, students must attend two hours of laboratory each week.

DANC 401 Creative Process III (6 credits)

Prerequisite: Appropriate technique class (DANC 205 [210], 305 [310], or 405 [410], as determined by the Department) and DANC 420 concurrently; enrolment in the Major in Contemporary Dance, or written permission of the Department. A continuation of DANC 301 (300). This course enables students to advance their creative process and practice as movement artists through kinetic exploration, improvisation, performance coaching, extended studio projects, and lab reports. Discussion of current artistic issues and cultural manifestations help students situate their own research within a diversity of contexts. Building on initial research carried out in DANC 301 (300), further exploration is conducted into the use of technology within the creative process. In addition to the regular studio hours, students must attend two hours of laboratory each week.

DANC 420 Choreography II (6 credits)

Prerequisite: Appropriate technique class (DANC 205 [210], 305 [310], or 405 [410], as determined by the Department) and DANC 401 (400) or 405 (410) concurrently; enrolment in the Major in Contemporary Dance, or written permission of the Department. Building on initial research carried out in DANC 320, further exploration is conducted into the use of technology within the choreographic process as well as an examination of the role that it plays in all aspects of production. This course expands on various approaches to choreography through movement research, discussion and theory, extended studio assignments, rehearsal management, and production. Students also examine the role of the choreographer in social, political, and artistic contexts. Students are expected to produce work for public performance.

DANC 320 Choreography I (6 credits)

Prerequisite: Appropriate technique course (DANC 205 [210], 305 [310], or 405 [410], as determined by the Department) and DANC 300 or 301 concurrently; enrolment in the Major in Contemporary Dance, or written permission of the Department. Choreography is the art of rendering a concept into the physical design of dance through movement and forms of notation. This course develops personal creativity and broadens the student's physical and expressive potential into public performances. By organizing movement, space, and time into dances, students follow through the stages of originating ideas, developing themes, and rehearsing and performing choreographic creations. The course also explores the role that technology plays within both the choreographic and production processes. Practical exercises provide students with a working knowledge in the use of video, sound manipulation, and stage lighting.

Teaching

2000 - 2018

DANC 398 - Special Topics in Dance | Prerequisite: Written permission of the Department of Contemporary Dance. Topics vary from year to year, taking into account the special aptitudes of instructors and students. Studio: six hours.

DANC 442 - Independent Study | Prerequisite: Written permission of the Department of Contemporary Dance. A student repeating DANC 441 registers for credit under DANC 442.

Masters/PHD thesis supervision

Navid Navab, PhD – co-supervisor

Joseph Thibodeau, PhD - co-supervisor

Doug Van Nort - Banting Fellow – co supervisor

JoDee Allen - SIP / Masters - principle supervisor

Adrian Freed - SIP / PhD - co-supervisor

Academic Service

1998 - 2018

Service to the community – INTERNAL

- Principal Organizer – Physical Lecture Series
- Production Management – Student Performances
- Studio 7 organization and production – student run interdisciplinary performance series

Administrative activities - Departmental committees

- Department Chair / for 15 years
- Faculty Council / 15 years
- Part- time Hiring Committee
- Recruitment Committee
- Full-time Hiring Committee
- Departmental Curriculum Committee

Administrative activities - Faculty and University committees

- University Appeals Board
- Advisory Search Committee for Academic Unit Head - Design and Computational Arts
- Advisory Search Committee for Academic Unit Head - Music Department
- Advisory Search Committee for Academic Unit Head - Department of Creative Arts Therapies.
- Hiring Committee for FFAR
- Faculty Elections Committee

**Academic
Service**

1998 - 2018

- Concordia University Research Committee
- Hiring Committee for technical support – Music, Theatre, and Dance
- Hiring Committee for FFAR – LTA and Tenure Track Positions
- Center for Teaching and Learning Committee / Dr. Ollivier Dyens
- Restructuring Committee for FFAR – Special Topics in Fine Arts
- Founding Member of Hexagram - Centre for Research-Creation in Media Arts and Technologies.
- Committee for the development of Graduate Certificate in Technical Performance
- Committee for the Administrative Restructuring of the Performing Arts

Service to the community – EXTERNAL

- Studio 303 | Advisory Board -Performance space and resource for emerging artists
- Fait Ta Valise – Organization for artists working with underprivileged youth
Jeune Volunteer, Montreal’s chamber of commerce and Quebec Arts Council mentoring program for the support of young artists.

Research Statement**Research Statement****Interactive Technology Responsive Environments**

research that focuses on the natural and artificially constructed relationships between movement, technology, content, context, structure and illusionism.

In order to construct or generate a complete sensorial experience, in a technologically enhanced environment, a balance or experiential symmetry must be struck between interactivity and illusion. As in the real world, where memory and the sensory register are affected by fully embodied experiences, any virtual yet time-based model would need to thoroughly engage the observer/participant's imagination while impacting on their sensorimotor system. In terms of interactivity, sensory adaptation could, in a very real sense, become the common ground for a shared experience between performer and technology.

Situating the performed or observed action squarely in the middle of an artificially produced yet organically adaptive space would initially interrupt and eventually break down the traditional relationships the performer or observer has with the world around them. This would result in a creation built on what is experienced by the performer rather than what is produced for the observer, taking the focus away from the mechanics of the interaction and placing it firmly on the resulting artistic material.

Realizing a balanced combination of illusion and interactivity would also lead to the development of a more reflective rather than reactive sensing environment and produce suitable conditions for the formation of a type of electronic ecosystem. A responsive environment of this type would be made up of interdependent rather than independent technologies, sustainable both inside and outside the live performance arena.

Whether dealing with conventional choreography or with movement created from the physical interaction with a sensing environment, my artistic vision, direction and focus has always been on communication and innovation. Each new work has been the result of a search for a fresh perspective whether it be locked in the question and answer game that exists between content and context or in the delicate balance between the how, what, when, where and why of technologically based performance.

My work with technology has always been part of a collaborative process with artists and technologists more familiar than I with the nuts and bolts, or should I say the 0's and 1's of the trade.

My contribution to the creative process was to understand, make artistic sense out of and create artistic content and context for research into the integration and use of active and interactive technologies within live performance. Refusing to be seduced by technology's capacity to inspire awe and avoiding any opportunity that would make its mechanical underpinning's the focal point of my artistic design, I believed that the best gift I could give to technology was the gift of invisibility or transparency.

**Research Statement
Interactive Technology
Responsive Environments**

In order to fully reap the benefits of technology's contribution to the arts, technology and its creative application must first survive and then outlive its use as gizmo. I discovered early on that the best way to do this was to look at the interactive performance experience, as a series of interconnected illusions that were part of a reasoned existence and as such needed no explanation. This meant that I could deal with an interaction between performer, observer and environment by treating the experience as a whole rather than the sum of its articulated parts.

It soon became clear however that if I was going to deal with interactive performance in this way, I was going to have to define what separated it from other types of interactive art. After close examination it came down to a simple case of relationships. Whereas most interactive art can be viewed as a conversation between the creative artist, the observer and an environment or object; in an interactive performing arts event a large part of the observer's perception, understanding and appreciation is third person reliant. It rests heavily on the performer's interpretation of the artists dialogue as well as the performer's physical and emotional relationship to the environment. Even though the observer and performer have access to the same audio and visual information the observer's physical connection with the material is, experientially speaking, vicarious. Though this separation exists in traditional live performance, the difference is amplified many times over when movement-based work is housed within a technologically enhanced responsive environment. It is here, at the point of divergence between performance and non-performance-based forms of interactive artistic expression, that my interest and current research lie.

Performer or voyeur, the separation runs deep. Taking all this into consideration I believe that placing the emphasis on the dialogue that results from an interaction, as well as on the impact that it has on the performer, will go a long way in reducing the differences that exist between what is experienced and what is observed. Focusing on the outcome of an event provides for a richer experience for performer and observer alike and does not have the expected negative impact of removing causality from the interactive equation, but on the contrary raises its importance and increases its dynamic range.

If successfully rendered these circumstances would place both performer and observer in the same place at the same time, which is in the moment. In an effort to determine ways in which a balance can be struck between what is intended, what is created, what is experienced and what is observed I have begun work on a number of projects that look closely at various methods of initiating performance-based interaction. The exploration of time and its perception will certainly be part of the focus of my research for the next few years.

**Research Statement
Interactive Technology
Responsive Environments**

Process

Rather than choosing a set of traditional techniques, the constructs below are meant to act as methods that will reveal those processes and procedures capable of supporting my creative direction. They are designed to define the parameters within which are devised to work without restricting the creative flow. Since my focus will be on both research and creation I will use these concepts as a means of developing the techniques and creative skills necessary to the full realization of my research.

- Construct an immersive environment based on a combination of familiar action and illusion. Look at how the environment effects integration and interactive possibilities as defined by the media in play. Work towards developing ways in which to harvest the results of experimentation without changing the nature of what they are. When dealing with the interaction between creative disciplines, be cautious not to get caught up in the pattern of cause and effect.
- Define our movement source and look at evolving a reality-based experience towards an enhanced interdisciplinary event. Examine the structures that evolve when disciplines collide. Use the creative directions generated by these collisions and the tension produced by their differences to create material. Allow context to be born of content and vice-a-versa so as to escape the boundaries of expectation. Move beyond the results in order to move beyond the rational or the easily explained.
- Redefine and diversify: A healthy ecology, natural or artificial, is built on a diversification of need and purpose. Create situations that require the disciplines involved in the collaborative process to cross the boundaries of probability towards the creation of a new-shared language. Treat the creative process as a lateral expression of ideas rather than a linear surface on which to inscribe a narrative. Be objective, use rehearsals throughout the creative process to look for inspiration and direction in what is being produced rather than at what was intended.
- Release the action from the traditional connection it has with a series of set responses. Bend and contort reality, through a process of illusion and the manipulation and exaggeration of the works redefined logic. Take the time necessary to explore the chance occurrences that transpire as a result of working outside the boundaries of any one discipline. Be sure to look at detail's capacity and natural ability to define the larger picture.