



NIGHTFIELDS

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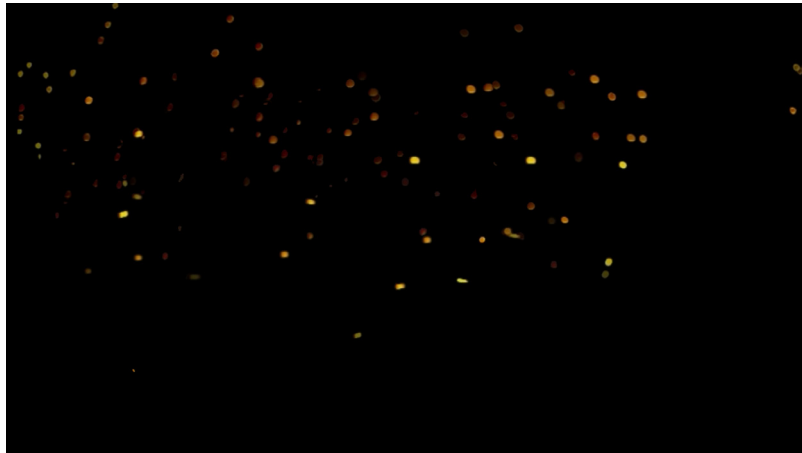


Fig. 1. *Nightfields* (2016), still from audiovisual artwork.

Nightfields explores how motion derived from natural forces can be used to propagate relationships between audio and visual elements in an artwork.

The piece is based on motion tracking data, derived from unseen video footage of a group of leaves blowing in the wind. These natural data profiles are then used to both animate visual elements and trigger audio events, resulting in an audiovisual texture that is continually transforming in a subtle way.

Although non-representational, the work aims at bringing an evocative quality to abstract imagery, as suggested by the title.

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VISUAL ASPECT:

The visual element of the work (the light-spots) was originally inspired by found photographs of fireflies captured at night. These images became fused with various memories and moments experienced by the authors that are intentionally left unstated. Removed from any personal frame of reference or context (with the exception of the title of the work), the memories are reduced to convey only their basic visual essence realised as abstract forms (i.e. circular forms of varying hues and sizes). The forms are then animated using motion data recorded from unseen video footage tracking the movements of leaves in the wind; this is then used to trigger audio events in the overall composition.

AUDIO ASPECT:

The audio for *Nightfields* is a result of generative pointillistic synchronisation. Sounds are triggered when the light spots hit an imaginary 'floor', which is the lowest vertical point of their individual motion trajectory. The sound source for the work was a Berimbau (a Brazilian, single-string percussion instrument, used in the Afro-Brazilian martial art Capoeira).

The sound is formed on the principle that no two recorded articulations of the same sound source are identical - there are always minute variations in the balance of overtones - largely due to tiny variations in microphone proximity, force of articulation and strike position on the string. In the case of *Nightfields*, every light spot is associated with an individual articulation of the Berimbau. There is a sharp attack followed by a long sustain. As the light spots fall, the individual Berimbau samples are released. When this happens en masse, the result is an evolving drone whose various harmonic components emerge and disappear, defined by the combinations of recorded articulations and their relative phases, which is ultimately triggered according to the rhythm of the wind.

CONCLUSION:

Nightfields attempts to bring an evocative quality to abstract artwork by fusing audio and visual forms with motion derived from natural sources. On perceiving the artwork, the viewer is able to focus on and identify the motions of individual forms and also those as a collective group, rather like the experience of watching a mobile controlled by the erratic motions of the wind. By employing natural motion, the work aims at bringing a trace of the familiar to what is essentially an unfamiliar experience.