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Abiogenèse : des étoiles aux momies Julie Tremble

↳ Opening on **November 17** at 6 pm

↳ The gallery is open from Tuesday to Saturday from noon to 5 pm

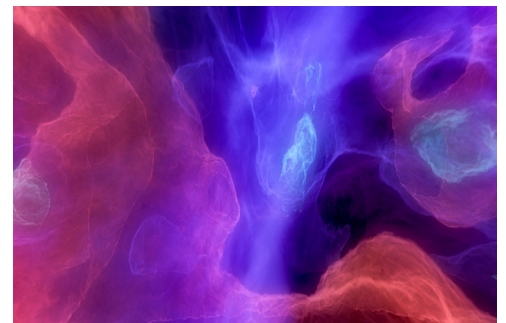
Juxtaposing cinematic realism and science fiction, Julie Tremble puts forth a fascinating corpus of entirely computer-generated images.

Saturated, extremely detailed, realer-than-real representations of planetary or celestial landscapes examine the nature of elemental composition and its role in the creation of all matter in the universe. Rooted in scientific knowledge, the artist proposes a philosophical reflection on life and the future of humankind, exploring different perspectives appealing as much to reason as to technological speculation. A video portrait of actress Luce Guilbeault – an iconic figure of Québec cinema and late 20th-century feminism, who died prematurely at the age of 56 – depicts her at the age of 127, as she would be today. In an introspective monologue, the actress imagined by Tremble, with a superb voice-over by Sylvie Moreau, revisits her life and significant moments in women's history, questioning representation and embodying a hypothetical future for humans – a future confected from scientific and technological advancements that forcefully redefine numerous ethical, political and social issues.

With this project, Tremble proposes a virtual experience that enables us to visualize a future beyond Earth, a sort of life after death. Out of sidereal space, she lays out a site for links between the microcosm

and the macrocosm. By staging a synthetic appearance of life on Earth, the artist questions our humanity, aspirations and quests. Under the veneer of futurism, Tremble examines the present – this precarious moment in which humanity finds itself, in which difficult, often irreversible decisions shall be made in function of what humans identify as priorities, for the benefit of what and of whom.

If humanity succeeds in reversing the natural degeneration of systems and death after maturity, what might the future hold? Different philosophical alternatives address these questions. Transhumanism, while adhering to the values of humanism, recognizes and anticipates radical changes in nature and new forms of life brought forth by science and technology. Posthumanism pushes even further and suggests a posthuman future, a kind of endgame of artificially perpetuated evolution that some even conceptualize as *technological singularity*, where a new intelligent species would permanently supplant



© Julie Tremble, *Abiogenèse : des étoiles aux fossiles* (2022). Video still.

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humans.

Such are the wonderful existential paradoxes evoked by Julie Tremble. One might wonder if technological advancements, space exploration, and the reduction of living or non-living matter to their composition as elements from the periodic table, do not speak more to a struggle against life's limitations than to society's evolution, be it scientific or otherwise. – F.C.

Julie Tremble is a video and animation artist. Informed by cinema, literature and philosophy, since 2014 she has focused on the question of representation in astronomy. From different sources such as scientific articles, educational documentaries, digital simulations, and communication texts from space agencies, she produces videos and animations that blend scientific data, documentary and science fiction.

Julie Tremble holds a Master's degree in film studies from the Université de Montréal (2005) with an undergraduate in cinema and philosophy (2000). Tremble's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at galleries including the Ludwig Museum (Budapest), the Foreman Art Gallery and Sporobole (Sherbrooke), the Fonderie Darling, Galerie B-312, Galerie Joyce Yahouda and Dazibao (Montréal), VU (Québec), and festivals such as Mirage Festival (Lyon), MAPP MTL, the Festival du nouveau cinéma and the International Festival of Films on Art (Montréal), Images Festival (Toronto), Espace [IM] Média triennial and ARKIPEL - Jakarta International Documentary and Experimental Film Festival. She will also present a work at the STUDIOTELUS of the Grand Théâtre de Québec in 2023. In 2013, Tremble was the recipient of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec award for best work in art and experimentation.

Julie Tremble warmly thanks Markita Boies, Ariel Borremans, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, PRIM and Sylvie Moreau.

Description of the works on [our website](#).



An exhibition prepared for Dazibao by France Choinière, in close collaboration with the artist. Dazibao thanks the artist for her generous collaboration as well as its advisory programming committee for its support.

Dazibao receives financial support from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts de Montréal, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications and the Ville de Montréal.

Dazibao acknowledges that we are located on unceded territory of the Kanien'kehá: ka Nation and that Tiohtiá: ke / Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations, and today, is home to a diverse population of Indigenous as well as other peoples.



Julie Tremble, "Abiogenèse: des étoiles aux fossils" (Abiogenesis: From Stars to Fossils), 2022, video still (© Julie Tremble)

Young and Old Forever

Montreal artist Julie Tremble enfolds us in digital antediluvian blanket.

by Edwin Janzen

November 24, 2022 8:30 AM

To know the origins and future – of the universe, our species and ourselves – is a tall order, perhaps an impossible one, but will that ever stop us from trying? Montreal artist Julie Tremble, in her new exhibition at **Dazibao**, an artist-run centre in Montreal, applies herself to these tasks using digital media. The resulting show, *Abiogenèse: des étoiles aux momies* (Abiogenesis: From Stars to Mummies), on view until Jan. 21, consists of a four-channel video installation and a separate single-channel video, undertaken in a spirit at once geeky and blithe, aptly matched to the illimitability of the endeavour.

The idea of abiogenesis – that life emerged out of non-life billions of years ago – forms, for Tremble, the centrepiece of a conceptual playground. Visitors encounter the concept in the first video of the installation, *Abiogenèse: des étoiles aux fossiles* (Abiogenesis: From Stars to Fossils), which presents various digitally generated paleontological forms against a dark background: several seashell-like specimens that rotate



Julie Tremble, “Abiogenèse: des étoiles aux fossils” (Abiogenesis: From Stars to Fossils), 2022, installation view of the exhibition “Abiogenèse: des étoiles aux momies” (Abiogenesis: From Stars to Mummies) at Dazibao, Montreal (© Julie Tremble, photo by Document original, courtesy Dazibao)

slowly, revealing cavities to interior spaces; the skeleton of a scrawny bird with a big beak and a prominent sternum; an animal skull with long, sharp teeth; and various arrays of what seem to be ribs, vertebrae and other bones, set in formation by an unknown but suspiciously curatorial hand. As the implied, simulated evidence of a primeval but fictive world, these items appear almost suitable for museological display.

Three nearby videos enfold the visitor in a kind of digital antediluvian blanket. On a screen to the right, formations redolent of organic tissues gently surge and abate in hues of red, blue, violet and yellow. Though more sophisticated, the effect is like watching a lava lamp: beautiful, humble, endlessly compelling. There’s a sense of drama being played out under a microscope, among the building blocks of organic life, a *Fantastic Voyage* of the primordial past.

On the screen to the left, a glowing planetary sphere passes through various shades of yellowy-gold, blue and white. Occasionally it surges and expands, taking up most of the screen. Between this planet and the organic tissues, the third screen shows a sunrise – or sunset – over a primordial sea. At length, the presumptive “camera” makes a nosedive into the water, revealing a sea floor covered by lichen-like digital textures. We are shown a swollen, burgeoning object seemingly formed of grey stone festooned by similar lichens in yellows and oranges. Eventually, a wider view reveals an entire forest of such formations, illuminated by golden rays of light.



Julie Tremble, "Abiogenèse: des étoiles aux fossils" (Abiogenesis: From Stars to Fossils), 2022, video still (© Julie Tremble)



Julie Tremble, "Abiogenèse: des étoiles aux momies" (Abiogenesis: From Stars to Mummies) at Dazibao, Montreal (© Julie Tremble, photo by Document original, courtesy Dazibao)



Julie Tremble, "Luce RTX3090," 2022, video still (© Julie Tremble)

Sometimes the planet at the left shakes violently, sending tissue-like forms on the opposite screen into a freak-out: flickering and shaking, they fade to white. At these times, eerie blooms of rusty-red fog arise from the sea on the middle screen. As equilibrium is restored in the other frames, the red fog yields to wispy white clouds astride a blue sky.

Across from these developments, in a large alcove, we encounter *Luce RTX3090*, which shows an elderly woman standing on a shore, looking out over a gently lapping digital sea punctuated by rocks and sculpted marble pillars – perhaps the same primordial sea as in the installation. A sun sits low on the horizon. The woman introduces herself as Luce Guilbeault, the iconic Quebec actor and feminist who died prematurely from cancer in 1991. Here, however, Guilbeault tells an alternative tale (narrated by another actor, Sylvie Moreau) wherein an experimental cure for cancer was discovered, together with a solution for aging, permitting her to attain her current age of 127. These advances led, in turn, to longer lifespans, unanticipated overpopulation and drastic solutions, such as setting society's legal age for death at 65.

In her monologue, Guilbeault – half real, half fictional – reflects on her life in film, which, here, in 2062, is yet to end: "It's strange to grow old in cinema," she says in French. "You get older over the years, sometimes quite suddenly, but you can always go back. You take a stroll past your different faces. You are both young and old forever."



Julie Tremble, "Luce RTX3090," 2022, video still (© Julie Tremble)

Perhaps our relationship with the future is not so different than with the past. We unearth an old scroll there, an entombed queen here, a bucket of new fossils – but telling their stories falls uniquely to us. In anticipation of a future, we make plans and predictions, but those are only stories too. Rarely does reality land anywhere near what was planned, and never exactly on the mark. We exist neither in the past nor in the future, but in an immediate, tumultuous present, the narrowest slice of reality, bookended on both sides by ever-vaster reams of science fiction. ■

Julie Tremble, *Abiogenèse: Des étoiles aux momies (Abiogenesis: From Stars to Mummies)* at Dazibao in Montreal from Nov. 17, 2022, to Jan. 21, 2023. An online viewing room with more information about the artist is available [here](#).

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[Julie Tremble](#)

Edwin Janzen

Edwin Janzen is a visual artist, writer and editor based in Montreal. He completed his MFA at the University of Ottawa in 2010 and has published in *Border Crossings*, *Canadian Art*, *Espace art actuel* and other publications.

November 24, 2022 8:30 AM



Vue de l'exposition de Julie Tremble
Tremble
DOCUMENT ORIGINAL

COLUMNIERE

La fiction du réel

Julie Tremble propose une œuvre où astronomie et fiction se rencontrent pour faire une critique de nos valeurs contemporaines

CRITIQUE
NICOLAS MAVRIKAKIS
COLLABORATEUR LE DEVOIR

Cette exposition a les allures d'un conte philosophique, comme on en écrivait au XVIII^e siècle. Elle évoquera à la fois l'atmosphère du voyage interstellaire dans *Micromégas* (1752) de Voltaire, ou des voyages temporels de *L'an 2440* (1771) de Louis-Sébastien Mercier ou bien des *Mémoires du XX^e siècle* (1733) de Samuel Madden...

L'exposition de Julie Tremble se présente comme un voyage symbolique et analytique dans l'immensité du temps et de l'espace. On y verra des images générées par ordinateur montrant ce que certains ont nommé Coaticue, supernova qui serait à l'origine de notre système solaire. Dans une autre vidéo, l'artiste nous dévoile une reconstruction de la Terre il y a 3,5 milliards d'années.

Dans ces œuvres est mis en scène un problème scientifique fascinant, celui du passage du minéral au vivant, tout être étant composé d'éléments chimiques. Mais en fait, Tremble s'interroge bien plus sur les enjeux de la représentation des modèles scientifiques, sur la façon dont ceux-ci sont liés à l'imaginaire d'une époque et à des questions philosophiques. Tremble nous parle plus d'une science habitée, imaginée par la fiction que d'une fiction se basant sur la science.

Dans le parcours spatiotemporel de

cette exposition, une autre vidéo intitulée *Luce RTX3090* semblera cristalliser plus particulièrement ce propos. Elle permettra d'entendre une incarnation numérique futuriste de la célèbre actrice Luce Guilbault (1935-1991). C'est en fait la non moins glorieuse Sylvie Moreau qui joue le personnage que Tremble fait incarner à Guilbault. Il faut dire que Guilbault elle-même avait déjà dit que si quelqu'un devait un jour l'incarner dans un rôle, elle aimerait que cela soit Moreau qui le fasse. C'est ainsi chose faite grâce à un outil technologique, une application, qui s'appelle Live Link Face et qui permet un « doublage » facial virtuel.

Luce Guilbault, 127 ans

Nous sommes en 2062, et dans cette vidéo, c'est une Luce Guilbault âgée de 127 ans, qui nous parle. Dans cette fiction, elle explique avoir survécu à un cancer dont elle souffrait — et dont elle est réellement morte à 56 ans. Grâce à des modifications de l'ADN humain, elle a été guérie de cette maladie et, de plus, le cancer a été complètement éradiqué de la planète. Les gens reçoivent « maintenant » un traitement génétique qui les conserve à l'âge de 25 ans pour le reste de leurs jours. Les humains peuvent donc dorénavant vivre très très très vieux, des centaines d'années... Mais cette révolution médicale a créé une crise sociale majeure. Afin d'éviter la surpopulation de la planète, tous ces éter-

nels jeunes doivent maintenant mourir à 65 ans. À cet âge, leur corps se désagrège, se volatilise dans l'air, devient invisible... Voilà donc un monde « où on a oublié à quoi ressemblent les vieux », à l'exception de Guilbault qui, elle, a refusé le traitement lui permettant de rester jeune, acceptant ses rides et son corps vieillissant.

Comme dans bien des contes philosophiques qui traitent de contrées éloignées ou de temps anciens ou futurs, c'est la satire sociale du moment contemporain où l'œuvre fut créée qui est le vrai sujet de cette œuvre. Julie Tremble en profite pour mettre en scène notre propre époque, notre désir d'avoir 25 ans pour toute notre vie, l'âgisme présent dans notre société où nous sommes morts symboliquement une fois atteint le « troisième âge », âge où l'on devient invisible aux yeux du monde. Elle y traite aussi du geste presque politique et révolutionnaire de clamer son âge sans honte.

N'oublions pas comment notre époque préfère encore trop souvent les vedettes mal liftées, comme Madonna, Donatella Versace ou Mickey Rourke, à celles qui, comme la défunte Vivienne Westwood, incarnent leur âge avec style. Dans la vidéo de Tremble, Guilbault explique comment, en tant que féministe et actrice, elle a revendiqué son corps vieillissant afin de « s'approprier son âme » à travers son corps, afin d'être aussi une femme en dehors du désir des hommes.

Signalons que sur le site du centre Dazibao, on pourra entendre Julie Tremble s'entretenir avec Christophe Malaterre, philosophe, professeur et titulaire de la Chaire de recherche du Canada en philosophie des sciences de la vie. Tremble y parle, entre autres, du fait que les images des astres offertes au public par la science ne sont jamais brutes, mais sont toujours construites, codifiées, interprétées.

Abiogenèse : des étoiles aux momies

De Julie Tremble.
Au centre d'art actuel Dazibao, jusqu'au 21 janvier.