

Cultural Daily

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Gideon Obarzanek and Chunky Move's 'Glow'

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, February 12th, 2014

Although the interface of technology and the human body in motion is *somewhat* rare, it is by no means unprecedented. Ever advancing digital technologies like motion capture have been used for years now in animation. And while I think mo cap was intended to create more true to life representations of human movement, it often came out looking stilted and bizarre. However digital technology is still wide open for exploration with seemingly endless possibilities, especially when the additional elements of dance and film are introduced.



Digital dots dance in Glow

Even though it is not specifically a screen dance film in the traditional way I might define it, the short "Glow," featuring Australia's contemporary dance company Chunky Move, is pretty cool. Created in collaboration between Gideon Obarzanek, Founder and then Artistic Director of the company, and interactive software creator Frieder Weiss in 2005, the film used an infrared camera system to explore the relationship between dance and motion graphics. In what looks to be a technology created for live presentation, Obarzanek was attempting to transform the body into a combination of grotesque and sensual imagery. I have seen numerous explorations of dance and technological effects, but few that I have seen have created effects that are as visually compelling to me as this. Although the resolution of the film is less than perfect, I'm not sure whether that is a function of a bad copy on the web or (more likely) – with technologies changing every six months – because of a lower quality of digital camera. I particularly like the way the effects end up affecting (no pun intended) the choices of movement and the emotion communicated. In the opening moments, the dancer's movement is strangely fast and hyper real, making her look almost like an animated character herself. But as it progresses we see elements of story suggested about relationships and the human condition. *Enjoy.*

[embedvideo id="tnOENE9NAfU" website="youtube"]

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