



## Written on the Body | A Review of 'n + n Corsino | SURF and SURFACES'

Written By Grace Hong 19 January 2016

Category: Review

It is said that 55% of a person's message is communicated through body language, trumping the tone of voice (38%) and the actual words used (7%). A medium of such significance is often ignored by the average person, but not so for French artist duo Norbert and Nicole Corsino—known collectively as n + n Corsino.

SURF and SURFACES presents a total of 7 choreographic navigations from the artists' oeuvre, with works from 2001 to 2014 on show. This is their first solo exhibition in Singapore and the Southeast Asian region, and also the first time their work is offered to private collectors and institutions.

Upon stepping into Ikkan Art Gallery, a red hue envelops the space, transporting the visitor to an otherworldly realm. The red also adds warmth to an otherwise coldness of digital screens, where bodies seem separated from the viewer behind glass—but not for long.

The first work that greets visitors is *Signs, Surfaces and the Instant* (2014), a multi-channel video installation. Through interactive technology, visitors become part of their work—the presence of their bodies causing text in calligraphic script to congregate and transform, creating a dance in language and vice versa. The technique of calligraphy is also highlighted here, as calligraphers are known for the balance achieved between their body and the brush, a heaviness of stroke founded in the weight and pressure applied; a dance relayed by ink.

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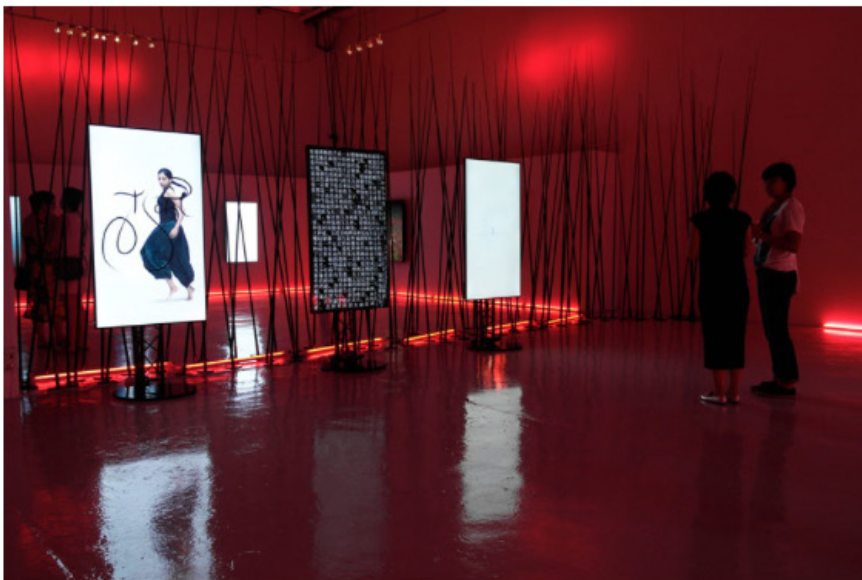
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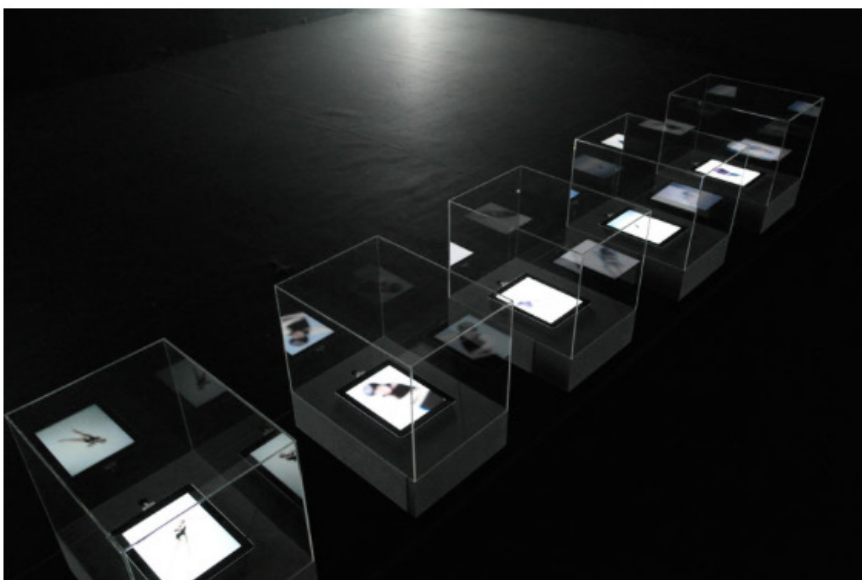
#### Repurposing Nostalgia:

In *MUES* (2011), a five-channel video installation depicts moving bodies that freefall in slow motion and in diverse landscapes. Movement is thus deconstructed into the tiniest of gestures—such as the flick before the swing of an arm captured. Much like sensing movement at the corner of your eye, the work creates a dialogue between the imaginary and the real. Time is also brought into the foray, as the models seem to move in a frequency outside of measured time; an eternity of small gestures that do not reach a climax of action.

In a separate gallery, *Trieste* (2012) was produced as a counterpoint to *MUES*. A series of choreographic sequences are displayed in five tablets enclosed in a transparent box each. The images are also blurred, another level of departure from the viewer. The artists also sought to bring forth the sense of entrapment on the performer.



Exhibition view of SURF and SURFACES at Ikkan Art Gallery. Photo: ArtHop.



*Trieste*, 2012. 5-channel video installation. Installation dimensions variable.

## An Interview with Yen Phang

*Written by Grace Hong*

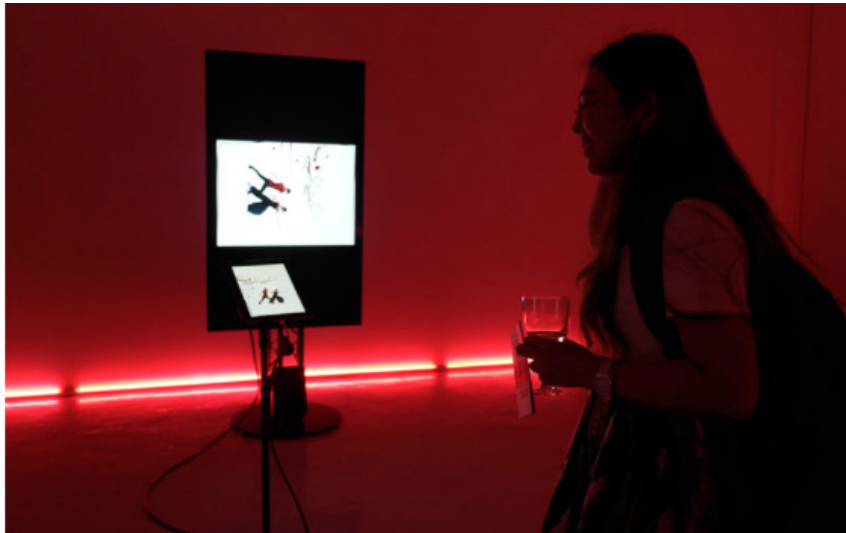
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## 2015: A Year in Review

*Written by Renee Poh*

31 December 2015



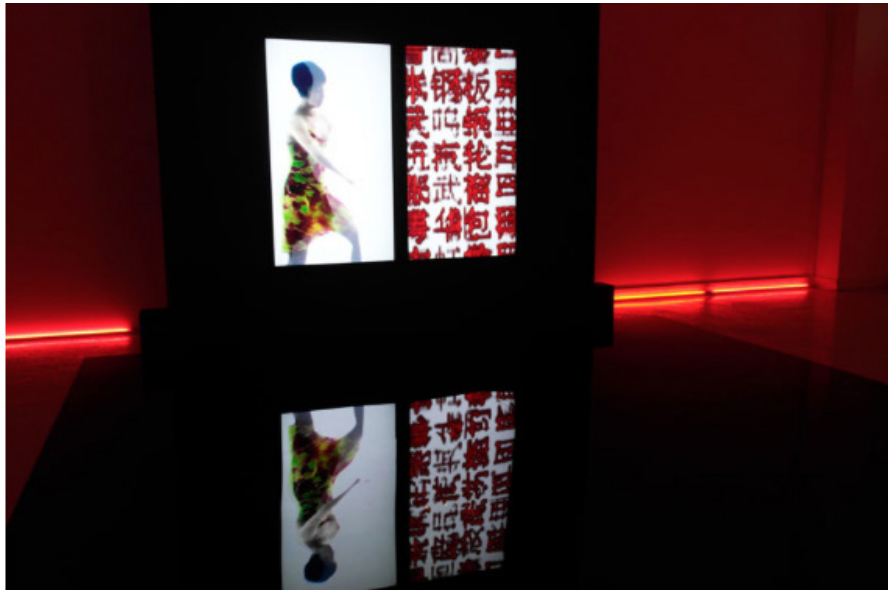
A visitor and *Bangalore Fictions*, 2015. Multi-channel video installation, interactive through iPad. Installation dimensions variable. Photo: ArtHop.



*Textes*, 2011. Chinese (interactive). 3-channel video installation. Installation dimensions variable. Photo: ArtHop.

Back in the main gallery, the works *Bangalore Fictions* (2013) and *Textes* (2011) are presented side by side. The former invites visitors to take their participation further through the iPad, where taps on the screen freezes the dancers in motion or create calligraphy motifs. French and Hindi words are also presented—true to the collaboration between n + n Corsino, Indian dancers and artists. While the male and female dancers are engaged in a dance of Anjum Haan's episodic short stories, the visitor becomes part of the narrative and performance.

Interactive art is above all, fun and *Textes* had visitors in stitches. A 3-channel video installation that displays texts in Chinese, English, and Hindi, the movement of passers-by causes the text to warp and bulge, attaching itself to the silhouette of the viewer. The departure of the viewer also leaves ripples in its wake, as the text return to its former shape. Reminiscent of disturbing a block of Jell-O, visitors at the opening repeatedly walked pass the works, with some even dashing towards it.



*Amorces Intimes (Intimate Beginnings)*, 2014. Dual-channel video installation. Installation dimensions variable. Photo: ArtHop.



*Bamboo*, 2001. Multi-channel video installation. 210 x 700 x 30 cm. Photo: ArtHop.

Separated by black rods that are thin and long, sits the work *Amorces Intimes (Intimate Beginnings)*. The work was first presented in Shanghai in 2004, and alludes to the Confucian thought of infinitesimal beginnings. The dual-channel video installation composes of a woman dancing in the left frame, against textures and patterns on the right. The screens are reflected in the black tiles on the floor, creating a sense of intimacy in the images and its movements.

Perhaps the most eye-catching work, *Bamboo* (2001) is a multi-channel video installation presented through miniscule screens on the thin, long rods which are used in this exhibition as a point of demarcation. The scale of the installation in stark comparison to the size of the screens draws a centre of focus to the images, composed of the kinetics of bodies and landscapes in Vietnam. The screens also move up and down, a reference to "a kind of landscape physiology" that stabs at a suggested harmony between the relief and the human works.

SURF and SURFACES breaks down the popular notions of dance by investigating the body and its memory; dissecting gestures, movements, and its relationship to space. Other fields of representation are also explored, with the artists challenging the construct of dance by examining the essence of movement and its relation to writing. The choice of medium—new media and interactive technology, is also apt for the subject at hand as visitors become keenly aware of their every step and movement, a similar posture the dancer takes when he or she is on stage. For the Singaporean visitor so used to interactive media being reserved for artworks or games targeted at children (ranging from [Art Garden's Funky Forest](#) to the interactive projections we see in shopping malls that result in disappearing graphics when children step on the 'screen'), SURF and SURFACES enthrals visitors once more, a delicate balance achieved between its form and function.

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**n + n Corsino | SURF and SURFACES** is on show at Ikkan Art Gallery from 18 Jan to 27 Feb 2016. Part of Singapore Art Week, the gallery is located at 39 Keppel Road #01-05 Tanjong Pagar Distripark, and is open from Tuesday to Saturday, 12 - 7pm. Admission is free. Click [here](#) for more information.

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