

# mother tree

Sound and light interactive installation  
Selma Bourdon and Julie Machin, 2021

# index



ARTISTIC INTENTIONS  
PROJECT DESCRIPTION  
INSTALLATION VISUALS  
ARTISTS PRESENTATION  
SYNOPTICAL  
WEBSITE & VIDEO LINK

PAGE 3

PAGE 4

PAGE 5

PAGE 6

PAGE 7

PAGE 8

## artistic intentions

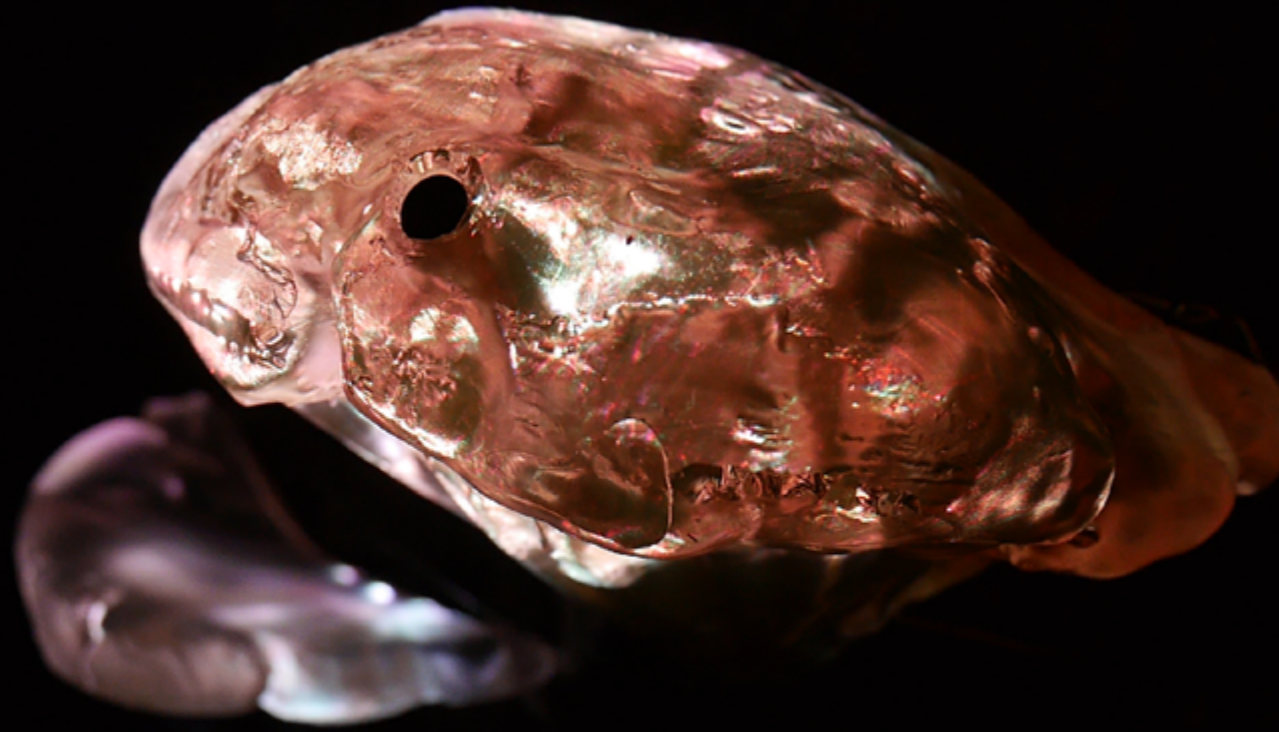
The forest reaches each of us in a deep and visceral way. It revives memories, evokes stories and reveals emotions. The tree is an undeniable link between the earth and the sky, a temple of cosmic sensations, a place of shelter and confidence for our aches, for our words.

At the crossroads between the themes of nature and new technologies, MotherTree is a participative and evolving work. Imagined by Selma Bourdon and Julie Machin, MotherTree is an interactive installation that tends to refocus the plants at the core of the living and the living at the core of the world. By reclaiming the imaginary of tales, orally transmitted stories, we use the voice as a way of mystical communication, of inter-species cooperation from human to outer-human.

Scientific studies have proven that the mycelium (underground fungus) contributes to fungal intelligence (plant sensitivity). This has led us to consider the forest as a whole, a living body, whose «organs» communicate thanks to this subterranean nervous structure. The oldest trees (mother trees) constitute the «nodes» of the global network in the forest, feeding the youngest trees through the mycelium.

Inspired by the lichens and oyster mushrooms that grow in symbiosis on the trunks of trees, MotherTree delimits a sensitive zone on the mother tree that induces the visitor to come and confide in the hollow of its trunk. This interactive device, like a vocal receptacle, takes the form of collars of oyster mushrooms and lichens that lights up and diffuses sound. Using digital technology, in particular sensors and programming, the stories collected are then spreaded and amplified in the forest, like an effervescent, luminous polyphony.

The mushroom collars are made from bio-resin and the lichen collars are made from «fused plastics» from recycled materials. These conscious, innovative techniques adds to a different way of thinking digital creation by taking into account the environmental issues of our time.



## project description

The installation takes place in a natural space, on several trees rather close to each other. The main tree, the most central and/or the largest, is ornated with a collar of luminous mushrooms reacting to the sound of the voice with a light wave. Through a microphone, integrated in the largest of these mushrooms, the device records the voice of the visitors before re-diffusing it in a random way to the other trees, on which are a loudspeaker and a collar of luminous lichens.

When visitors are invited to confide to the mother tree, their voices resonate in real time in the forest. The installation comes to life thanks to the multitude of voices that blend together, from screams to whispers, like an echo in the calm of the forest.

The mushroom collars are made from bio-resin and the lichen collars are made from «fused plastics» made with recycled materials. These innovative techniques are a way of approaching creation by taking into account the environmental issues of our time.

Creation with the support of the Château Éphémère for a one-month residency in 2021.

# visuals



## artists

Selma Bourdon et Julie Machin met in 2017 during their Master Réalisatrice en Arts Numériques and Réalisatrice en Informatique Musicale in Saint Etienne.

They collaborated for the first time in November 2017, presenting «alterIPSE», an interactive installation based on video feedbacks during the «Positive Education #2» Festival (Cité du design, Saint Etienne, France).

Then in February 2018, they met again for the organization of a Digital Arts and Electroacoustic Music Festival, «Variations Numériques» (La comète, Saint Etienne, France).

In 2021, they will join again on the project «MotherTree» initiated by exchanges around themes such as nature, ecology and inter-species cooperation.



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Born in 1993 in Chalon sur Saône, Julie Machin currently lives and works in Lille. Graduated from the University of Plastic Arts of St-Etienne in research and then in Digital Arts. Since 2018, she has been working at Le Fresnoy - Studio national des arts contemporains, assisting and accompanying students in the realization of their projects.

Since 2021 she is part of the Atelier Bouillon within the Tiers-Lieu «Au fil de soi» in Lille. She regularly presents her work in group exhibitions. Recently, her work has also been exhibited at the Château Ephémère (Paris) and at the Nuit des Arts (Roubaix).

Her practice as a multimedia artist oscillates between installations mixing sculpture, video, interactivity and performance. Her work focuses on the sensitive and fragile relationships that make up the living world through a fantasized imaginary coming from a personal poetic mythology. With a certain sense of humor, she transforms matter by making the strangeness of existence palpable. Intimate and polymorphic interpretation of organic objects, sometimes human, animal or vegetable, her work is first and foremost an invitation to contemplation and to listen to our sensibility.



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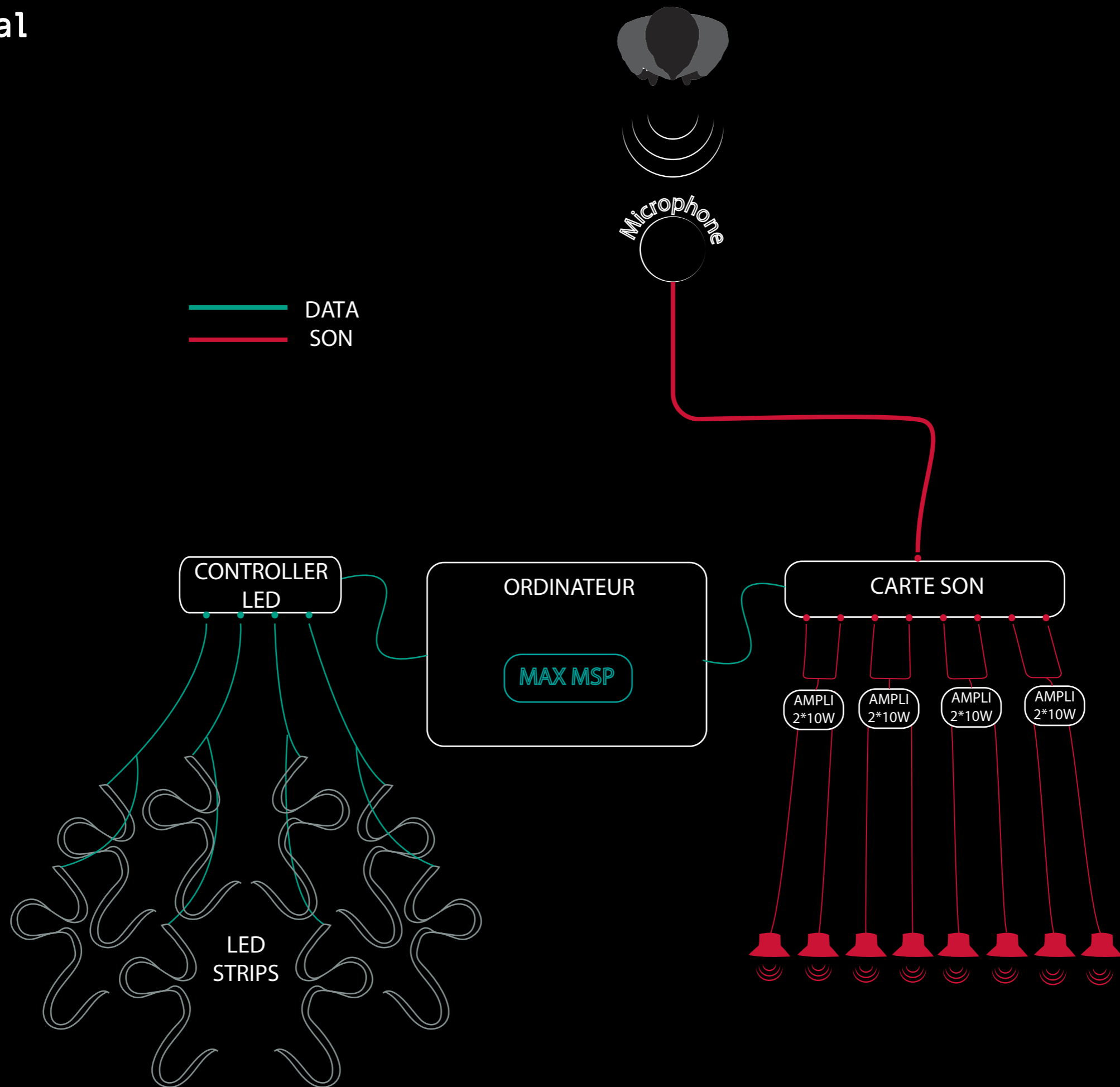
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Selma Bourdon was born in 1994 in El Biar (Algiers, Algeria). After studies in digital graphic design, Selma turned to digital arts with a Master in Digital Creation (Toulouse, Le Mirail), then a Master in Digital Arts and Computer Music (St-Etienne, Jean Monnet).

This multi-faceted artist and technician evolves today in the field of digital arts, scenography and light creation. Her work range from transdisciplinary design (graphic design, digital fabrication, scenography) to digital creation (creative programming, interactivity, generativity, electronics, computer music). She is also a lighting director and creator, and graduated as a sound and light technician (Klaxon Rouge, Loctudy). She works with contemporary dance artists as well as electronic music makers, and is really interested in mixing genres and aesthetics.

Today, she is particularly interested in the possibility of reshaping reality thanks to technology, and in the perceptive links that link sound and visuals, through Digital Art installations, specialized public workshops, or live video creation.

# synoptical





*Julie & Alma*

[WEBSITE](#)

[VIDEO TEASER](#)