

**Artist:** Die Wolke art group

**Performance:**  $\Delta$ topia

Post 1

Date: September 1, 2020



*Image caption: (clockwise from top left:) Dani, Ioannis, Alfonso, Drosia*

$\Delta$ -topia (pronounced Delta-topia) will be a solo contemporary dance and sonic arts performance that will use sensor interfaces to facilitate the electronic interaction between movement and sound, by measuring certain attributes of motion in realtime. The sounds will be recordings of original textual statements on the piece's subject matter, that will be captured through

interviews with other artists during the creative process. On stage, we will use the motion data to modulate, resequence, or otherwise distort them. The resulting displacements, perceived on a semantic (textual) and aural level simultaneously, create the tensions, densities, and perceptual abstractions, around which a time-based performance piece can be constructed. The balance between the conceptual statement and the musicality, so to speak, of the soundfield, will be top priority. The title refers to the distance or difference (the delta) between places.

Die Wolke Art Group is a non-profit research and development organisation dedicated to the performing arts, contemporary dance, video art, mixed media and associated technologies. Based in Thessaloniki, Greece, it is comprised by a rotating and ever-expanding cast of individual artists and technicians. Its chief aim is the research and production of outside-the-box multidisciplinary art, as well as the support of local artistic activity, through promotional events and collaborations. "Die Wolke" means "the cloud" in German. Website: [die-wolke.org](http://die-wolke.org)

There will be four of us working on this project:

Drosia Triantaki is the group's principal performer and choreographer. She is a Folkwang Universität der Künste graduate, and also Die Wolke's founder and art director.

Dani Joss is a sound artist, composer, computer programmer, and general purpose tech person. He curates many of Die Wolke's projects, including the performance programme at Vitruvian Thing, the group's venue. More about him can be found at [danijoss.com](http://danijoss.com).

Alfonso De Grandis is also a sound artist and sound designer. He is a frequent Die Wolke collaborator, mostly working remotely from his London-based studio. He and Dani are also known as Paradigm Weave, a sound arts collective that primarily does installation work. [paradigmweave.com](http://paradigmweave.com).

Ioannis Perisoratis is an architect and electronics technician. He operates a materials and programming laboratory. His

affiliation with Die Wolke sees him being in charge of electronic hardware, as well as sets, 3D printing for costumes, and more. [creativecoding.gr](http://creativecoding.gr)

The development of the piece will take around 8 weeks, beginning now and lasting all the way until the festival (allowing some extra time for corrections and unforeseen circumstances). We will be posting updates on roughly a weekly basis, alternating among the following subjects:

1. Interviews and source material
2. Choreography and Performance
3. Sound design
4. Sensor design
5. Interactive programming

Of course, most of this work will be done concurrently by the different members, so each post will focus on one subject but also include minor updates for the others. We will be using video, images, sound, and text, as appropriate. In November, where everything will come together, the posts will include rehearsal abstracts.

We look forward to working with the Buffer Fringe team towards the realisation of this piece!

Post 2

Date: September 14, 2020



*Image caption: Atopia interview with Alikı Dourmazer*

The Atopia composition process starts with the interview of six local artists. We asked them the following questions:

1. The topos (or place) of a creative act is an important contextual reference, whether it refers to actual geography, the sense of place, or abstractions, and can be used in the sense of origin or destination, memory or imagination, evocation of experience. In the context of a given work, what does place mean for you?

2. How do you perceive displacement (in any context)?
3. What's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word distance?
  - 3b. What's the second thing?
4. Consider spaces:
  - The (one or more) physical spaces hosting the performer's and the audience's bodies
  - A work's setting, as in the space that is set up or implied on (actual or virtual) stage, to be perceived by the audience
  - An abstract "language" space where the "vocabulary" and "syntax" of a specific work resideHow do these different spatial levels interact in your practice?
5. In your work, what would you define as structure, and what as form?
6. How is the virtual world affecting your practice?

Their responses were recorded and will constitute the raw material for the piece, both as abstract sound sources via editing, processing, and interactive/algorithmic arrangement, as well as in terms of content and meaning, through the imagery, ideas, mood, and disposition of the responses.

The first two interviews follow. The rest will be posted gradually, as the piece progresses, along with choreographic, sonic, hardware, and programming developments.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/455087072/e53eb93386>

Video caption: *Aliki Dourmazer Atopia interview*

Video: <https://vimeo.com/453056253/e18bf0a379>

Video caption: Harry Elektron  $\Delta$ topia interview

### Post 3

Date: September 21, 2020

Content: Body interface development

A summary of the function of the interfaces used for  $\Delta$ topia



Image caption: *Body electronics*

To facilitate the interactive aspects of  $\Delta$ topia, inertial and mechanical sensors on the dancer's body – in this case, Drosia's – transmit motion data wirelessly to computers for processing and use for musical control, modulation, or other algorithmic input. A kind of information feedback loop is created as the

dancer further reacts to the sounds, creating fertile ground for improvisation and an experimental method of discovering connections between gesture and sound.

Ioannis Perisoratis developed the interfaces using Arduino boards, RF modems, 9 degree-of-freedom inertial sensors, and even simple potentiometers. Two arm modules are built on orthopaedic braces, allowing for a convenient measuring point of elbow angle, while there are also leg and neck modules. The 3D-printed plastics were designed by architect Ioanna Symeonidou: they serve to support the boards, conceal the batteries, and provide mounting points for the wiring.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/456587007/8aa53a9518>

Video caption: *Dtopia Interface development*

Additionally, we are giving the link of another source material interview, this time by Dimitris Dalezis. Dimitris is a music composer and performer, plays the trumpet, keyboards, and electronics, and has been involved with past Die Wolke art group interactive performance projects.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/455087164/4611097d13>

Video caption: *Dimitris Dalezis Δtopia interview*

Post 4

Date: October 4, 2020

Content: Choreographic development



*Image caption: Drosia Triantaki*

*Topos* means *place*. Place can be thought of as "human memory", as Dimitri Papageorgiou suggested in his interview that we are attaching. Memories profoundly affect the human body, causing different moving expressions, or indeed stillness.

A phrase from his interview that we are working with is "memory is inaccurate": living the present is very different than



mentally restoring it by memory. This is used as a reference in the search for kinetic material, using a method based on transforming everyday movements into dance, through improvisation. Particularly intriguing is the fact that it is possible to have different feelings and sensations, positive and negative valences at the same time, as a result of the effects of memory reconstruction. Two major elements are of concern: the determination of beginning and the end of a movement that is taking place on the body, and the modulation of earlier material as it results from pure recollection, without the use of video references. Of course, further transformations will happen as the sensor interfaces get integrated in the piece.

Following is a rehearsal excerpt, as well as the aforementioned interview in its entirety. The art installation seen at the back, which was made for another project, is by Maria Louvari, who was also interviewed for *Atopia*.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/464654690/68fffb253d>

*Video caption: Atopia rehearsal*

Video: <https://vimeo.com/457207252/c033715c58>

*Video caption: Dimitri Papageorgiou interview*

Post 5

Date: October 26, 2020

Content: Sound and code development

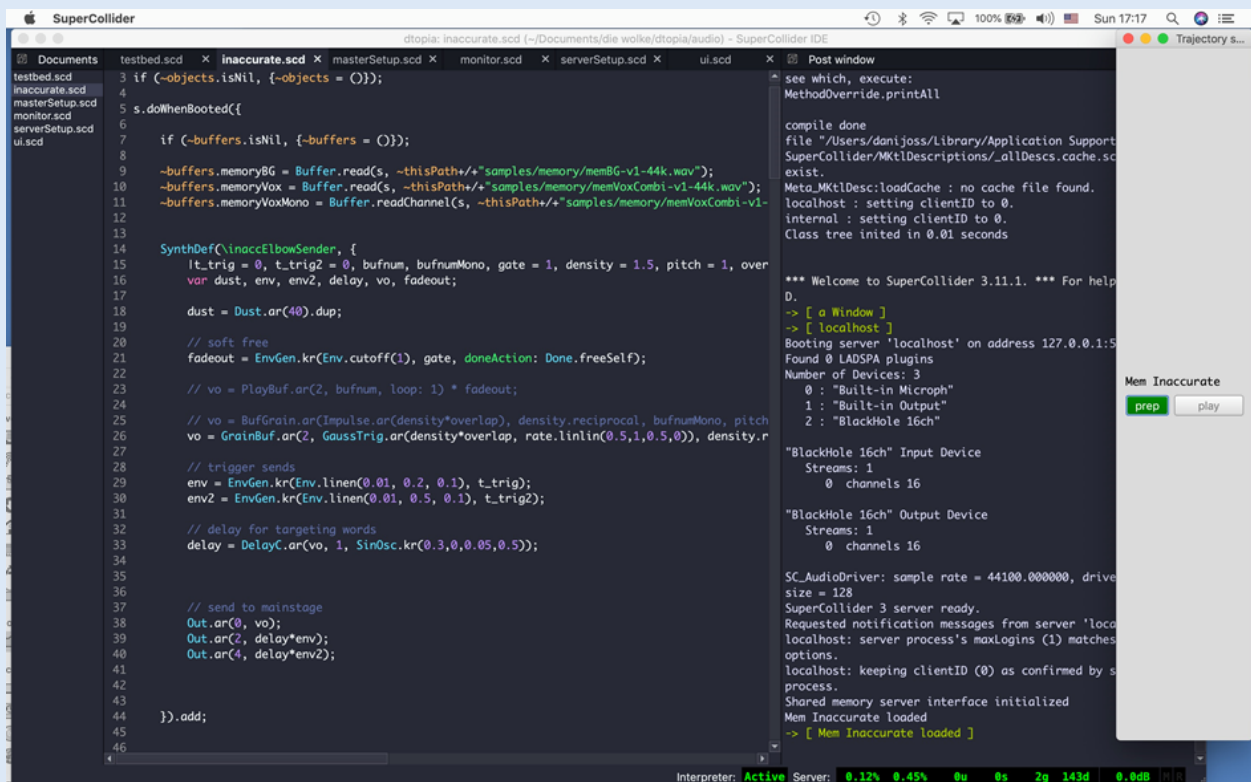


Image caption: Programming in the Supercollider development enviroment

Atopia is moving towards a three-part direction, following the review of the interview material. Not necessarily in order, these are centred around the following themes:

- 1) "Memory is inaccurate", as also explained in our last blog. This piece has been fleshed out substantially since then. Firstly, there is a 5-minute ambient composition that is based around repetition of phrases that are written at

different time signatures, meant to evoke the sense of distance and blurriness. Secondly, abstracts from the interviews of D. Papageorgiou, D. Dalezis, and M. Louvari have been edited into a 5-minute voiceover, while processed in a way that makes them sound old and degraded, after many simulated generations of analogue copying. Thirdly, a program has been written that sets up the voiceover track to play back via a variable speed granular engine and takes information from the wearable sensor system to alter the scanning speed, as well as trigger ghost, distant repetitions of certain phrases, as a response to motion. This part is approaching the point where it can become performable.

- 2) "Time and space". This is based on an image from Harry Elektron's interview, in particular his response to the question about "distance". A composition of small impact sounds exists on the limit of periodicity, often reaching into unstable, disordered stochastics, like an arrangement of appearing and disappearing "dots" of sorts. Abstracts from the Elektron and Tzortzi interviews have been heavily processed into stem tracks. In turn, sensor data will tie these to the dancer's movement, via the acceleration readings. The fixed parts of the composition are nearly ready, whereas the code is in development.
- 3) "Creativity". This part is yet to be developed. The core idea is how the various interpretations of place and displacement result in creative choices.

The piece as a whole is otherwise progressing very well. Within the next couple of weeks the compositions, choreography, and programming should be complete, and the rehearsals will move towards putting it all together. The links below are for the fifth interview, as well as a short sample of the background compositions - i.e. without the voice elements that are generated and modulated by the interactive system, as these can only be captured "live". In future posts we will demonstrate how all these elements combine towards the final performance, both in terms of method and technique, as well as the result on stage.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/471933637/ea95f6b9bc>

Video caption: *Background music sample*

Video: <https://vimeo.com/454418452/a8e3fadd69>

Video caption: *Maria Louvari interview*

Post 6

Date: November 9, 2020

Content: Rehearsals



Image caption: *Rehearsals at Vitruvian Thing*

In the midst of our rehearsal process, much like the rest of Europe, the Greek government announced a nation-wide lockdown that has affected our ability to commute, including going to our own studio. We are making good progress at home with the code, music, and even the choreography, in a somehow more "static" manner. We expect the restrictions to ease next week for the final rehearsal phase, however this means that we don't have any new presentable material in video right now.

The good news is that we got some exciting new sounds from Alfonso, who works remotely from London (in a way, we are all working remotely now), which means we are finished with the music. The codebase is nearing completion as well.

The 6th and final interview follows.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/453056292/30449052db>

Video caption: *Evi Tzortzi interview*