




# Singulars Pluriel

Singulars plural  
immersive and interactive  
audiovisual installation  
Jeannie Brie





*Singuliers Pluriel* (singulars plural) is an immersive audiovisual installation that aims at questioning the reactivation, modification and deterioration processes of memories, through the lens of the vernacular image, my family films. It is a « theater of memory » where the viewer wanders through the memory-images, projected onto the representation of a mental space.



Singuliers pluriel, première version, CCAAM - Vandœuvre les Nancy, mai 2024 | photo © Julie Freichel

# Synopsis

*Singuliers Pluriel (Singulars plural)* is an immersive and interactive audiovisual installation. The visitor enters a somber space where objects, projection screen and speakers mingle. On these screens, a selection of family films of the artist's personal archive is being live-edited.

The installation acts as an autonomous system that writes, in real time, a sound-image and non-linear score. By following mnemonic mechanisms, it activates, repeats and distorts the images and sounds according to what happened, what is happening, and what will happen.

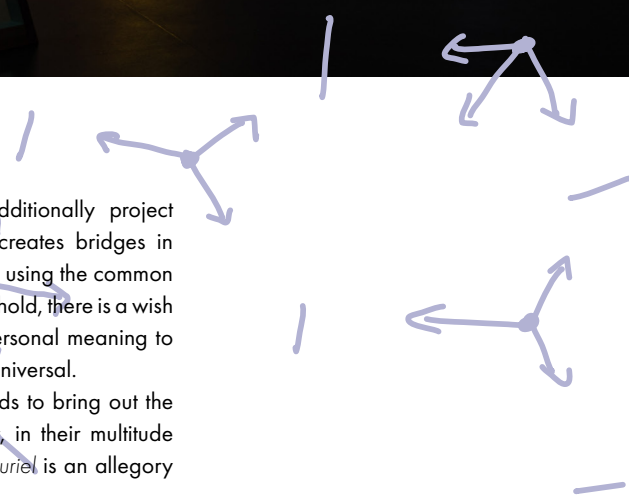
In this metaphor of the brain, the visitor acts as a potential stimuli as their movements act immediately on the editing in progress.

By being immersed in this « theater of memory », the visitor moves around, explores and apprehends the work through their own relation to time and space, as well as their own experiences.

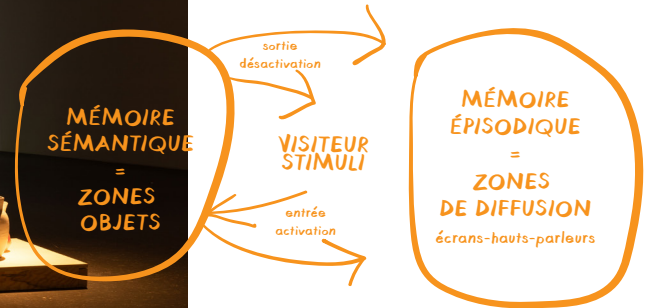
Since everyone can recognize themselves in

a family film, they can additionally project themselves, build ties and creates bridges in this fragmented narrative. By using the common character that family images hold, there is a wish to extract them from their personal meaning to transform them towards the universal.

The installation therefore tends to bring out the thought patterns of memory, in their multitude and immediacy. *Singuliers Pluriel* is an allegory of memory.



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*Singuliers Pluriel* (*Singulars plural*) relies on the relation between episodic and semantic memory. Episodic memory relates to passed personal experiences while semantic memory, less affective, is the actor that concerns general knowledge.

Episodic memory is embodied in different associations of screen and speaker that project, in real time, an edit of a selection of family films extracts.

Meanwhile, semantic memory is represented by object-zones that symbolized the domestic space.

Each object-zone is correlated to a body of distinctive video archives and is connected to the screen-speaker associations that it is closest to. The visitor moves around in this metaphor of the brain. They navigate between episodic and semantic memory and becomes an active stimuli of this temporary mental space.

By getting close to an object-zone, the visitor reactivates the real-time edit of one of the screen-speaker associations connected to this zone. This edit is constituted of three layers of video superpositions. It evolves following principles of the brain's functioning.

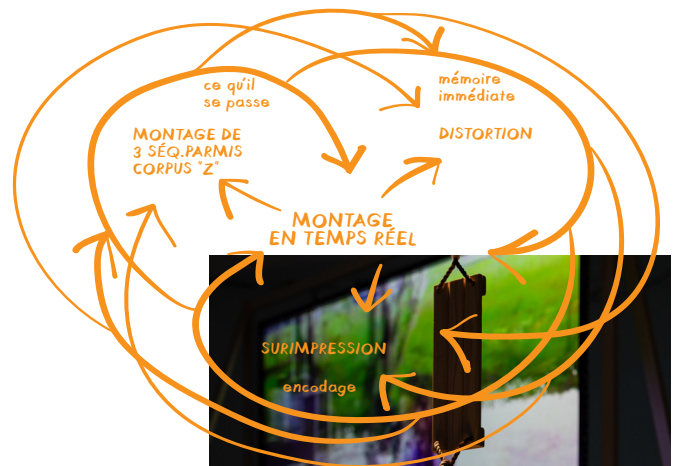
The first layer, « the present time », randomly projects video sequences of the chosen body. It reflects the dynamic and immediate flow of present experiences. It represents the immediacy of perception, which is perceived in real-time by the viewer.

The second layer, immediate memory, applies a visual distortion with a brief delay. It shows the way in which recent images continue to impact our perception, even after their immediate disappearance.

The last layer, working memory, simulates the encoding process, by superimposing at regular intervals, the previously showcased images with a longer delay.

After a certain amount of time, the mechanics of the editing process will stop to maintain a short sequence in quasi-break, then this last image will slowly deteriorate itself to only leave a trace of the « last lived image ». Memory becomes suspended and the editing is reactivated thanks to a new stimuli-visitor.

In this sense, the editing never ceases to be transformed, distorted and renewed depending on the visitor's movements.





Singuliers pluriel, première version, CCAAM - Vandœuvre les Nancy, mai 2024 | photo © J. Brie

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## Technical specifications

### SCENOGRAPHY :

#### • ENTRANCE :

A curtain of layer-effect PVC strips, a synthesized image of the installation is projected onto this curtain.

#### • INSIDE :

Scattered throughout the space are :

> 6 projection screens

Profiled steel structure onto which is stretched an Optiblack projection screen.

This dark canvas produces a dense image and allows equivalent visibility on front and rear. The projection screen is stretched by visible magnets. The screens are hung from 6 wood gantries with symmetrical legs. The screens accentuate that there is no single reading direction, offering an omnidirectional view of the installation.

> 6 speakers

At listening distance. One speaker located closely to each screen.

> 4 object groups

On low pedestals, lit with toplighting

The screens and object are dispersed in such a way that each object is surrounded by 3 screens.

Ip cameras monitor each object zone. They are mounted high and visible.

> 7 ceiling-mounted projectors

The control room is located in a small space made from a false wall of raw plywood, and it is visible and integrated into the overall environment. All the cables are visible and black. They are arranged according to a neural logic, joining and interweaving towards a central line of cables to represent the network-brain. These cables run towards the control room and pass through the wall behind which it stands via a central hole, reinforcing the idea of a connection between the elements of the installation and the visitors' experience.



### TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT :

> 1 main computer : analyses visitor movements via cameras, processes the information received and sends activation signals to the various secondary to coordinate video editing. It also manages the installation's sound and the synthesis of projections projected on the entrance curtains.  
 > 6 secondary computers : each computer handles real-time video editing projected onto a screen.

### SYSTEM :

Computers and cameras are connected in a wired network. Speakers are managed with a sound card. The system is managed by Isadora, enabling real-time video management and interactions with visitors.



# Jeannie Brie

Jeannie Brie is a video and visual artist who graduated in 2014 from ENSAD-Nancy.

Her work mainly takes the form of installations and audiovisual performances. Between real-life shots, archival images and studio experiments, she creates her visual ranges. Real-time video manipulation allows her to develop non-linear narratives in which she questions our relationship to memory and time. Her research explores the relationship between image, sound and movement, leading her to collaborate regularly with numerous artists and musicians.

In 2018, she rediscovers tapes from her family archives, which she questions and reinterprets within the corpus Variations et Souvenirs (variations and memories).

[www.jeanniebrie.fr](http://www.jeanniebrie.fr)



This is the process that Jeannie Brie has applied in her installation. Using a body of images and sounds from her family films, she has constructed a framework of random variations that unfold and intermingle in layers. Taking up the principle

« All my life memories are only durations of images solely corrupted and partly blinded by the black stain that would represent my past presence within them, or my hope of having been there, of remaining there, images ceaselessly unfinished by that imprescriptible bond I call my past. »<sup>1</sup>

Jeannie Brie's work questions the construction of still and moving images, and questions the construction of memories, to the extent that their elaboration seems to go hand in hand. Images and memories that constitute the resource of a long-term work, questioning their reminiscence and the construction of a memory, both individual and collective, all along the line of « a forgetting that brings back memories through a new route ». <sup>2</sup>

The image is said to be a visual representation that « presents itself as a duplication of the real it replaces, the real (it being), as if erased in favor of what becomes its realized image.

In this realization, the image acquires the status of the real, and the latter is like buried, reserved ». <sup>3</sup> This representation, according to Hamelin, becomes the point of emergence of consciousness as a link between subject and object : « Representation, not (representing), not (reflecting) an object and a subject that would exist without it, (but being) the object and the subject, (...) reality itself. » <sup>4</sup>

The image would then no longer be a substitute for reality but reality itself. In this sense, « to make an image is not to illustrate and idea or capture a reality, but to act on reality », <sup>5</sup> as the image from a « sensible mode to that of the understanding, (of) the essence of things, which we grasp a little like a perfume or a flavor ». <sup>6</sup> It is in this sense that the image relates to memory.

Memory, on the other hand, is not a special ability. It is what the brain adds to the surrounding world so it can keep track of things and can restore them through a set of pathways involving as many cerebral structures as there are memory pathways. It records all the events of our daily lives and restores them more precisely through semantic and episodic memory, semantic memory being one of language of knowledge about the world and ourselves, and episodic memory, being one of personally experienced moments.

It is this interweaving of memories, these images-remembrances as Bergson describes them, the contracted folds of our past, which induce the fact that we recall memories as conform to reality.

of memory structures, she sets out to highlight, through *Singulars Plural*, these shifting moments of our memory, ricocheting from screen to screen, offering a variation of the same theme, one of the singular memory and its multiple reappearances and sensory reinterpretations. In this way, she explores not only her own subconscious but also the viewer's, invite them to do the same.

From then on, Jeannie Brie's exploration of her family films transforms itself into a theater of memory, an individual theater that becomes, through its projection into the mental psyche of visitors, an experience of collective memory. It situates them into the evocation of their own memories through an interweaving of sounds, images and vernacular objects, the manifest effect of which is to be a « reservoir of soul moments »<sup>7</sup>, the moment long before what the memory remembers. *Singulars Plural* thus has the property of building a memorial block that invests the viewer's mind and takes the place of memory. By deconstructing and then recomposing various interwoven elements to understand their essence, Jeannie Brie transforms these specific materials into a « narrative of eternity »<sup>8</sup> that allows the viewer to recognize in these chosen extracts a piece of themselves, and to find their place in it, an active place.

Vincent Verlé, Exhibition curator

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1. in Jean-Louis Schefer, *L'homme ordinaire du cinéma*, Cahiers du cinéma et Gallimard, 1980, p 160  
 2. in Jean-Louis Leutrat, *Des traces qui nous ressemblent*, Editions Compact, 1990, p 88  
 3. in Louis Ucciani, « Image et représentation », *Philosophique* [En ligne], n°23, 2020  
 4. in Octave Hamelin, *Essai sur les éléments principaux de la Représentation*, Paris, Alcan, 1925, p 374  
 5. in Cédric Enjalibert, Georges Didi-Huberman, *Les images sont des actes et non pas seulement des objets décoratifs ou des fantômes*, *Philosophie magazine* 16 octobre 2016  
 6. in Gilbert Cohen-Séat, *Essai sur les principes d'une philosophie du cinéma*, PUF, 1958, p 86  
 7. Gilbert Cohen-Séat, *ibid*, p 99  
 8. in Jean-Pierre Esquenazi, *Film, perception et mémoire*, Editions L'Harmattan, 1994, p 39



Above all, I see Jeannie Brie's *Singulars Plural* as an exploration of the limits of concepts where their boundaries become blurred to let reality and experience emerge. She faithfully stages what the brain is doing at any given moment, a material from which she draws her inspiration. Thus, neither images nor films are projected on her screens, but new constructions designed to resonate with the mental structures of visitors, evoking a suspended time and, for an instant, the universal. By simultaneously positioning herself on several levels of analysis, she finely works a material that enables her to shed lights on the development of cerebral memory traces and to transpose these mechanisms into the tangible, before our very eyes.

The installation hinges on a dichotomy in memory architecture, distinguishing episodic memory from semantic memory. The former preserves personal experiences, conferring an intimate dimension to a space shared through lived time. The second involves the sublimation of these experiences, resulting in the emergence of knowledge and concepts charged with a different subjectivity, with form the basis for sharing with otherness.

Using family videos, Jeannie Brie reminds us that « the memory of a certain image is merely the regret of a certain moment. »<sup>1</sup> By inverting the memory structure, we discover concrete objects organizing 'symbolic spaces' (garden, living room), echoing the semantic memories removed from time. Surrounding each space, screens project a temporal breakdown of specific video sequences, creating a new register of dynamic images that evoke processes of memory elaboration such as condensation or displacement.

Through its immersive and interactive nature, the installation invites visitors

to participate physically in the symbolic space, triggering the projection of sequences with a new rendering each time. A subtle revelation takes place in the sensory register of the observer, who realizes that personal myths are merely collective memories. *Singulars Plural's* originality enriches the repertoire of creations that take a cross-sectional look at the human being, staging a transposition of perspectives, from the intimacy of memory mechanisms to the horizons of otherness.

Oliver Aron, Neurologist

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1. Proust, M. & Tadié, J.-Y. *À la recherche du temps perdu*. (Gallimard, 2019).





Singuliers pluriel, première version, CCAM - Vandœuvre les Nancy, mai 2024 | photos © Julie Freichel

> watch :

[www.jeanniebrie.fr/singulierspluriel](http://www.jeanniebrie.fr/singulierspluriel)

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Nancy,

# Singuliers Pluriel

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