

# Glasshouse: A Dance for Virtual Reality

Glasshouse - A three part virtual reality experience for Oculus Quest 2

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## ABSTRACT

Glasshouse is a dance for virtual reality experience in three parts. A near future biosphere where plant and insect life thrive in an ecosystem of integrated biotechnology. Maintained by intuitive glasshouse keepers who farm water and light, biotech agriculture and drone insects work in synergy with ancient flora and heirloom edibles.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

*Glasshouse* is a Dance for Virtual Reality in three parts, housed in an imagined future biosphere where a weather keeper, insects and plant life live in synch with each other. Choreographer Sarah Neville's view of an embodied participatory practice [Neville, 2022], informed by dance knowledge, drives this work. Ecological balance, future weather systems, post-anthropological perspectives paired with interactive gestures, are activated by the participant from within the work.

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\*Sarah Neville is an artist / practitioner whose research is in the area of the transmission and transfer of embodied knowledge in immersive digital simulation environments. Sarah is informed by her background in contemporary dance and movement practices and kept up to date through her networks in the field of human factors. Sarah has an honours degree from Flinders University in Theatre and Film, a Research Masters in Creative Industries from The Queensland University of Technology in new media choreography. Sarah is currently undertaking a Cotutelle PhD at both Deakin University and Coventry University in dance digitisation, investigating how people learn through embodied knowledge in immersive simulation environments and what type of processes are involved. Fieldwork has been undertaken in Australia and Europe across education, healthcare, aviation and rail as well as arts-based practices. In 2021 Sarah was awarded an Arts SA Fellowship to create new dance for virtual reality works.

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## 1.1 Artistic Practice

Neville's view of embodied participatory practice means to actively engage in a virtual reality experience through interaction with others and the environment with a view to facilitating change [Candy, 2010]. *Glasshouse* is experienced through sensorial embodied interactions with digital avatars and entities activated through the participant's movement. Neville's key terms for participatory practice – mindfulness [Varela et al., 2017], wayfinding [Darken and Peterson, 2014], guided movement and digital kinship [Lawler-Dorner, 2018], inform the development of scenario design and are applied as choreographic tools. Choreographic tools evolved from the proof-of-concept work, *Spheres a Dance for Virtual Reality*, and were extended through collaborative practice.

## 1.2 Process

Neville's artistic process is collaborative. The artists developed *Glasshouse* through 1) imagining scenarios through future forecasting workshops [Gaffney and Kuzmanovic, 2013], 2) devising choreographic material and music, 3) motion capture, 4) performance simulations 5) digital design 6) choreographing in virtual reality, 7) trials in-house and 8) public trials. A speculative future formed through intra-relationships [Barad, 2007] built on knowledge and feelings about what motivates us to move.

## 2 PRODUCTION

*Glasshouse* is best experienced as a live performance in a social context. The staging is constructed so that the participant can pre-observe the experience and later debrief with an experience guide. The participant moves through each experience ordered – keeper, insect and plant, with a 10 -15 minute pause between each scene.

### 2.1 Technical Specifications

3 x Oculus Quest, Disposable Viewer Covers, 3 (4m x 4m), 3 power points, 1 experience guide, no direct sunlight

### 2.2 Outcome

Relating to the world through physical experience informs future actions. Dance knowledge, as an extension of embodied knowledge, enables a self-aware and reflective approach on how to move in the world.

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