

# A BRIEF MANIFESTO

## NARRATION: A TOOL FOR CHILD-ORIENTATED ART PROGRAMMING

Capitaine futur has grown by travelling across the world since his inception in 2011 at La Gaîté Lyrique. Independent and down to earth, he is now within the reach of all those who seek him out to expand universes. Over the years, this invisible character has lent his name to increasingly profuse, bold child-orientated arts programming that reinvents forms and meaning through experimentation – a series of successes, mistakes, pitfalls and moments of bliss that have gradually refined its goals and defined its methods.



Archipelago - Artificial Nature [Haru Ji & Graham Wakefield] © Vinciane Verguethen

Capitaine futur has donned different colours and contours as he caroms from one journey to another. His elusive features come into focus and then fade away in visual peregrinations and artistic orientations that stretch to the twelve corners of the universe. This seamless ability to shape-shift is precisely what gives him the intrinsic ability to fulfil the need to write open, collective narratives for children. For the tales that will describe and decipher the world in which they are born, live and will have to shape – in both tangible and poetic terms – have yet to be written.

That is the challenge that lies ahead; we are living in an era when, for what appears to be the first time in history, a generation must pass on knowledge that it itself hastily acquired only a handful of years ago. The connected, observing and conversational technologies that exist in the 21st century did not come with a guide that teaches their ways or a tutorial for gauging their impact. How, then, can we explain to the adults of the future that which is not entirely clear to us today, despite its universally enveloping presence?

The screens, folklore and instruments of the Internet impact every aspect of our reality – connections exist even in places where no cables are plugged in. An imbroglio of issues in a knotted web, this newfound, meteoric complexity does not lend itself to easy comprehension and is met with varying reactions. Some are determined to embrace the present and experiment with avenues for creation, production and transfer using emerging methods and tools. Capitaine futur, the traveller with a thousand stories, unites this group of parents and teachers, alongside researchers in artistic and scientific fields, all of whom aware of the challenge.

How does Capitaine futur go about his task? Through a five-step rhythm that sets the pace, as so:

### 1 – TELL THE STORIES OF OUR TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD

In this era of technical fast-paced technical development, storytelling is a means of contextualising the changes underway that offers an engaging framework for children to learn with and through technology. It's a refuge for the imagination where one can describe the world and make it one's own. As a narrative device and metaphorical tool born from the language of our time, Capitaine futur tells the story of the digital age and demystifies technology via imaginary excursions. He uses narration to structure curation and support arts programmes that play to little ones' biggest abilities, including exhibitions, concerts, workshops, science conferences, projections and more. Continually adjusted based on the topics explored, this narrative framework makes it possible to meet new needs, share knowledge and forge new forms of ties across audiences and generations.



Animate field - Justin Lui © Vinciane Verguethen

## 2 – ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY

"Perhaps children will tell us so much about their own world that it can also be a model for us. We hope so." – Danish artist Palle Nielsen. Viewing children as an audience in their own right, Capitaine futur seeks to redefine their experiences at venues for exploring the world, such as classrooms and museums. Children think critically about the present and are at home with games that involve dreaming up scenarios which often veer in different directions. This gives them the ability to inspire adults, who are easily flustered by the rapid changes spurred on by the digital world. Capitaine futur encourages them to use this superpower – he reassigns roles, inviting children to co-construct artistic and educational content through active intellectual and physical participation in programmes tailored to young audiences. While no one is more serious than a child at play, adults are enjoined to look kindly upon kids' recreation and be humble enough to learn with them.



workshop © Cinekid festival

## 3 – CONNECT TECHNOLOGY WITH EMOTION

The digital world is not devoid of affect; on the contrary, it is teeming with senses, sensitivity and sensuality. Media art is a multi-faceted form that embodies this emotion. Capitaine futur focuses on everyday technologies, helping children to stimulate all five senses while thinking and tinkering. When the adults of tomorrow come into contact with these responsive art installations, they at last have the opportunity to literally lay their hands on works, to absorb ideas, grab hold of reality and fully embrace the world approaching them. As part of this fresh call for interactivity, Capitaine futur is breathing new life into a contemporary art form that elicits intense emotions, via physical participation and a more open dialogue with the works. In an environment where humans and machines coexist, drawing on emotional intelligence appears increasingly vital if we are to better understand the world around us and better define our place and relationships with others – adults and children alike.



Ils traversent les pistes sur des morceaux de tissus pour ne pas laisser de trace - Virginie Yassef © Vinciane Verguethen

#### 4 – EXPERIMENT TO LEARN TOGETHER

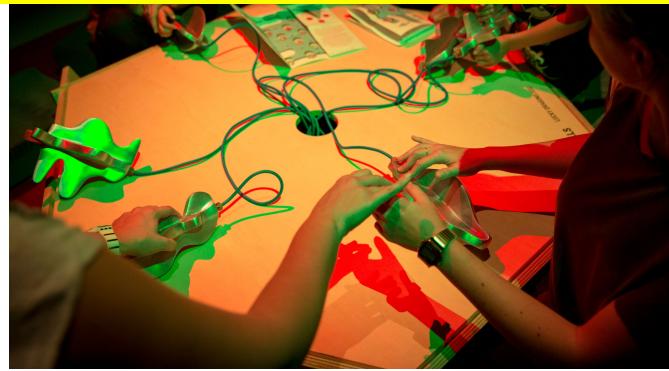
Capitaine futur fosters a new form of interaction with works that combine art and science, in order to promote hybridisation and serendipity on the path to knowledge, rather than imposing erudition that is difficult to question. In a world where humanity's greatest discoveries arise from physical and intellectual voyages and our propensity for wonderment, pedagogy is too often confined to a single theory. Capitaine futur takes the opposite approach: programming that celebrates experimentation. He makes media art a great laboratory that creates a path leading children to multiple forms of knowledge and thought, in which they get to know themselves better to forge their own unique way in the world and meet others.



Capitaine futur's workshop with Benjamin Gaulon © Vinciane Verguethen

#### 5 – FOSTER THE EMERGENCE OF CITIZEN CULTURE

Capitaine futur brings children into contact with artist-researchers who tirelessly create, explore and subvert the technologies shaping the world. He strives to redefine these artists' place in art and teaching institutions as well as society as a whole. As he shakes up the divisions between arts and sciences, teachers and students, and schools and museums, Capitaine futur redefines the ways of being and making together. He seizes on the digital resources and values that are reshaping our relationship with culture, work and creation. The programming shines the spotlight on collective production, the fundamentals of peer-to-peer and open-source solutions that provide open access to knowledge that is continually expanded by the community and spreads as it is shared on the network. Capitaine futur is fostering the emergence of connected citizen culture starting from a very young age and, in so doing, himself becoming an open-source character.



Wave Shells - Lucky Dragons © Vinciane Verguethen