

Soma

/ˈsəʊmə/

Participatory movement and virtual reality experience

Marketing pack & technical rider

soma-project.co.uk



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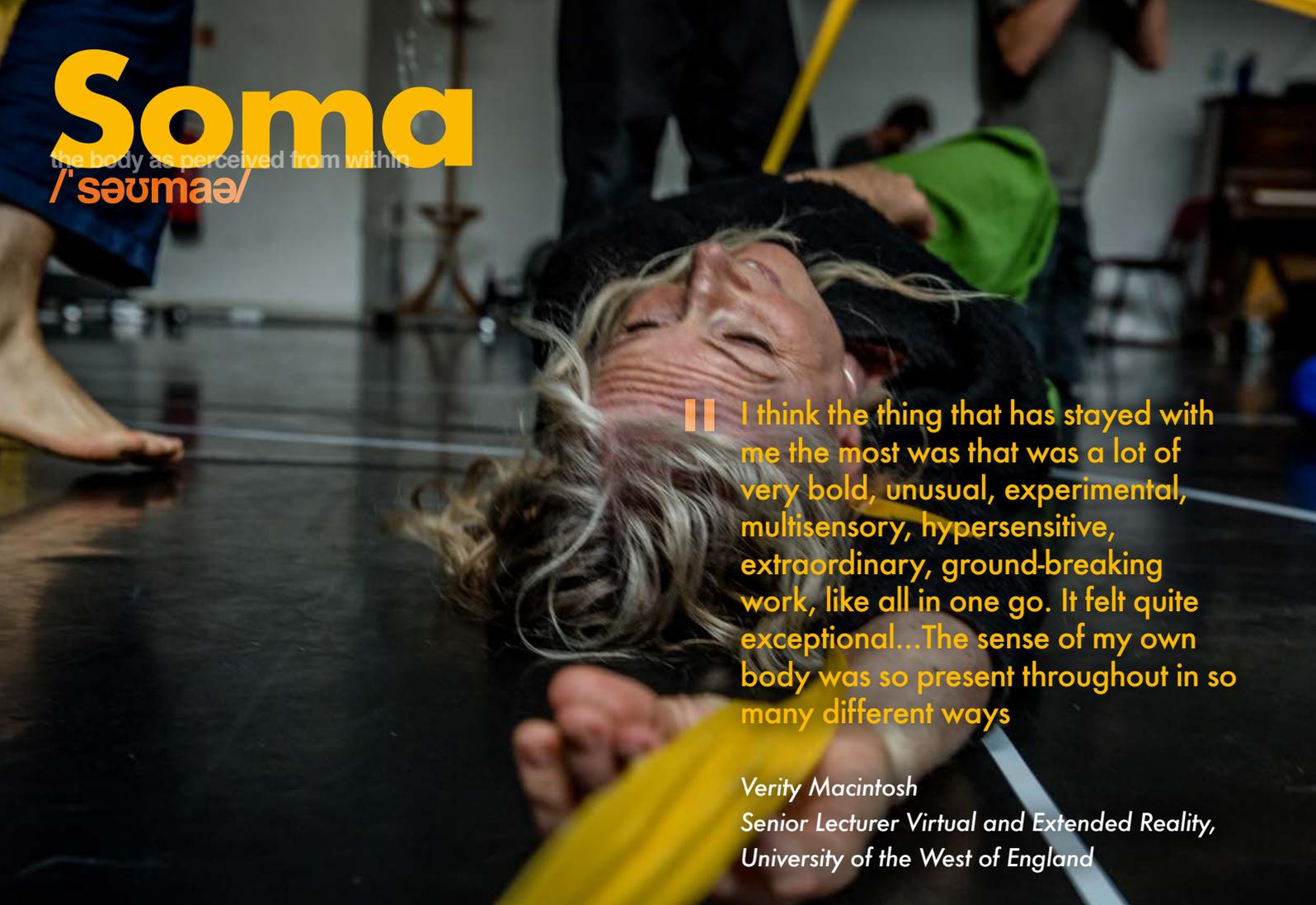
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|| I think the thing that has stayed with me the most was that was a lot of very bold, unusual, experimental, multisensory, hypersensitive, extraordinary, ground-breaking work, like all in one go. It felt quite exceptional...The sense of my own body was so present throughout in so many different ways

Verity Macintosh
Senior Lecturer Virtual and Extended Reality,
University of the West of England

Soma is an hour-long participatory experience that takes participants on a sensory journey and offers them the opportunity to explore different ways of seeing and feeling across physical, virtual and imagined realities.

Soma is led by dance artist and researcher **Lisa May Thomas** and brings together an experienced team of professional dancers whose individual practices contribute to the delivery of the work. Soma combines the skills of creative technologist **Clarice Hilton**, creative technology studio **All Seeing Eye**, and interactive sound and composition designs from **Tom Mitchell** and **Joseph Hyde**. The project has been supported by Arts Council England, Bristol Old Vic, University of Bristol, Brigstow Institute, Pervasive Media Centre, Studio Wayne McGregor, Theatre Bristol and Knowle West Media Centre.

Soma presents a new way of experiencing and integrating VR technologies into performance by going beyond the common use of VR as a form of escapism, and instead showing how technologies can be used as tools that enhance our connection with our bodies, each other and the world around us.

During unprecedented times of climate emergency, persistent individualism and increasingly divisive politics, Soma provides the space and time for us to listen to our own bodies. A vital opportunity for us to experience new ways of being together, heightening our awareness of the environments around us in a way that feels urgent and refreshing.

Audience

- Appropriate for people who have never experienced VR
- No dance or movement experience needed
- Suitable for all ages over 18
- Developed with people with low vision
- Inclusive design adaptable for people with different access needs

As Soma is about deepening our connection with the world around us and with each other it is particularly suitable for anyone interested in: new embodied approaches to technology, how technologies can increase environmental awareness, multi-player VR, expanded ways of experiencing virtual reality.

The work has been designed with great attention to what it feels like to move between technologies and perceive different realities in relation to other people, so is a very good way to introduce audiences to VR who have never experienced it before. People with different access needs have been involved in the development of Soma including people with low vision.

- Mostly it highlighted the real value of use of the body and connection in digital art. The merging of VR and somatic movement and touch was so well done. Really beautiful.

Participant

- My guide was great. They gave me a real sense of somatic power. The way they handled their relationship to the participants was amazing. I felt like they gave me power with those words and really completed the experience for me. I can imagine that staying with me.

Participant

Trailer



Trailer created by Adam D.J. Laity, Jonathan Eve, and Lisa May Thomas

|| To actually be able to visually see this kind of movement and this depth of this object in space and then to be able to manipulate and see it coming towards and away from me and around me, I just thought that was amazing.

Holly Thomas

Visually Impaired Participant and Dancer

Difference and inclusivity are important themes within **Soma**. We have chosen to work with the notion of ‘difference’ and how each participant brings their own experience of ‘reality’, ‘perception’ and ‘body’, which offers new insight into our collective experiences and understandings.

We like the idea that there is no ‘wrong’ or ‘right’ way to experience Soma and there is no fixed piece of choreography or set script to deliver to you. We want to be open to respond to and be part of what occurs in the moment, to celebrate the differences between us and the ways in which difference can create a more diverse and rich collaboration.

The work is underpinned by an ethic of care and trust, accessed through the tools and practices of the dancers. At every step of the experience, each participant has the support and agency to go on the journey that they themselves choose to undertake.

Touring and Tech

Running Time

60 minutes

Company

4 dancers, 1 production manager

Performance space

3 distinct parts in 2 separate locations

1 x space in which participants and dancers meet and can move freely, this can be a public space e.g. a foyer area or an exterior space.

1 x medium to large sized space in which there is blackout and scaffold lighting rig minimum space in between 5 meters height from the floor.

Capacity

4 participants per performance. Up to 6 performances per day. Part 1 can operate as an ongoing performance installation for more audiences to view. VR available as a demo.

Technical requirements

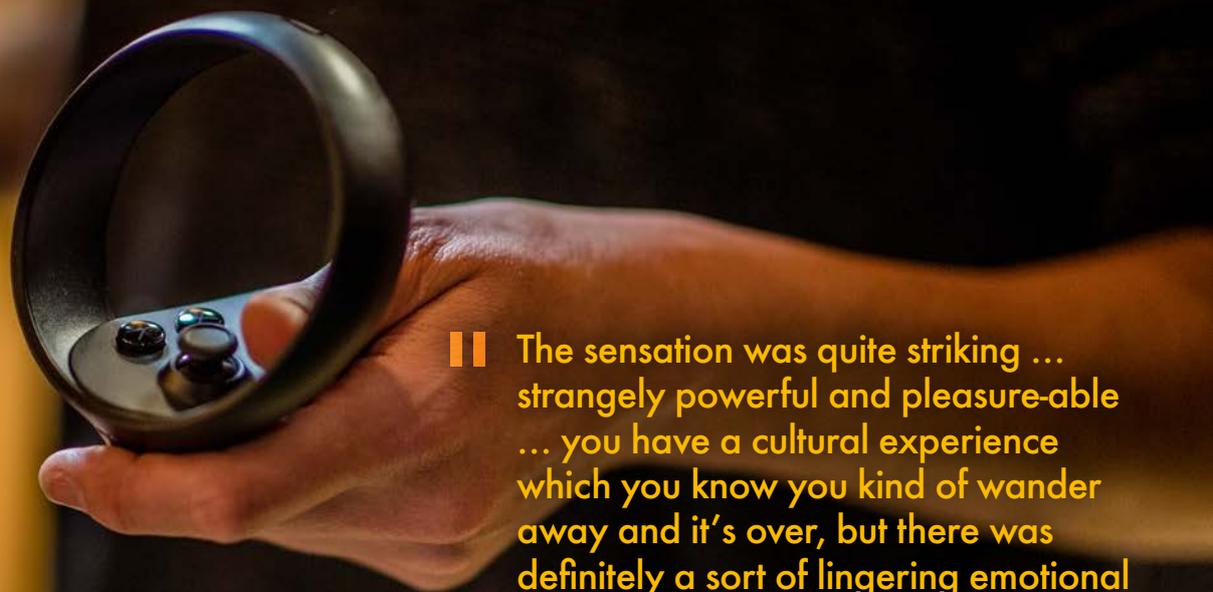
See Technical Rider

Touring period

Available until December 2020

Wrap-around activity

Includes talks, workshops and exhibition material. These activities can be tailored in conversation with programmers and more information given on request.



|| The sensation was quite striking ... strangely powerful and pleasure-able ... you have a cultural experience which you know you kind of wander away and it's over, but there was definitely a sort of lingering emotional impact ... the sum of the experiences were definitely far more than a simple VR journey - and more valuable from my perspective.

*Chris Sharp, Contemporary Music Programmer,
Barbican Centre, London*

Technical Rider

Soma has 3 distinct parts that take place in 2 separate locations

Part 1

A space through which the dancers and participants can walk and move freely. This will need to be an area that can be watched over by ushers. The participants will meet the dancers in this area and will have to have the ability to leave bags/coats and any other possessions behind.

Dimensions

E.g. Foyer area.

Parts 2 and 3: 'The VR/Residue location'

A space into which the participants are led by the dancers and introduced to the VR world.

This space should have complete black out and if needed be divided into 2 areas - the VR area and the residue area.

Dimensions

This spaces needs to be minimum 7-8m width. This could be a square space or longer, e.g rigged studio space.

Must be completely empty and requires 13a power to the VR and Residue control equipment, a lighting/scaffold grid which can support a 40kg projection screen* and lighting fixtures to illuminate it.

*The screen is 4m diameter in an octagonal shape and is suspended parallel to the ground by 4 wires from the grid and is between 2.5m and 3.5m above the floor. The screen is lit from above with enough fixtures to light the entire screen in 2 different states.

Soma will provide

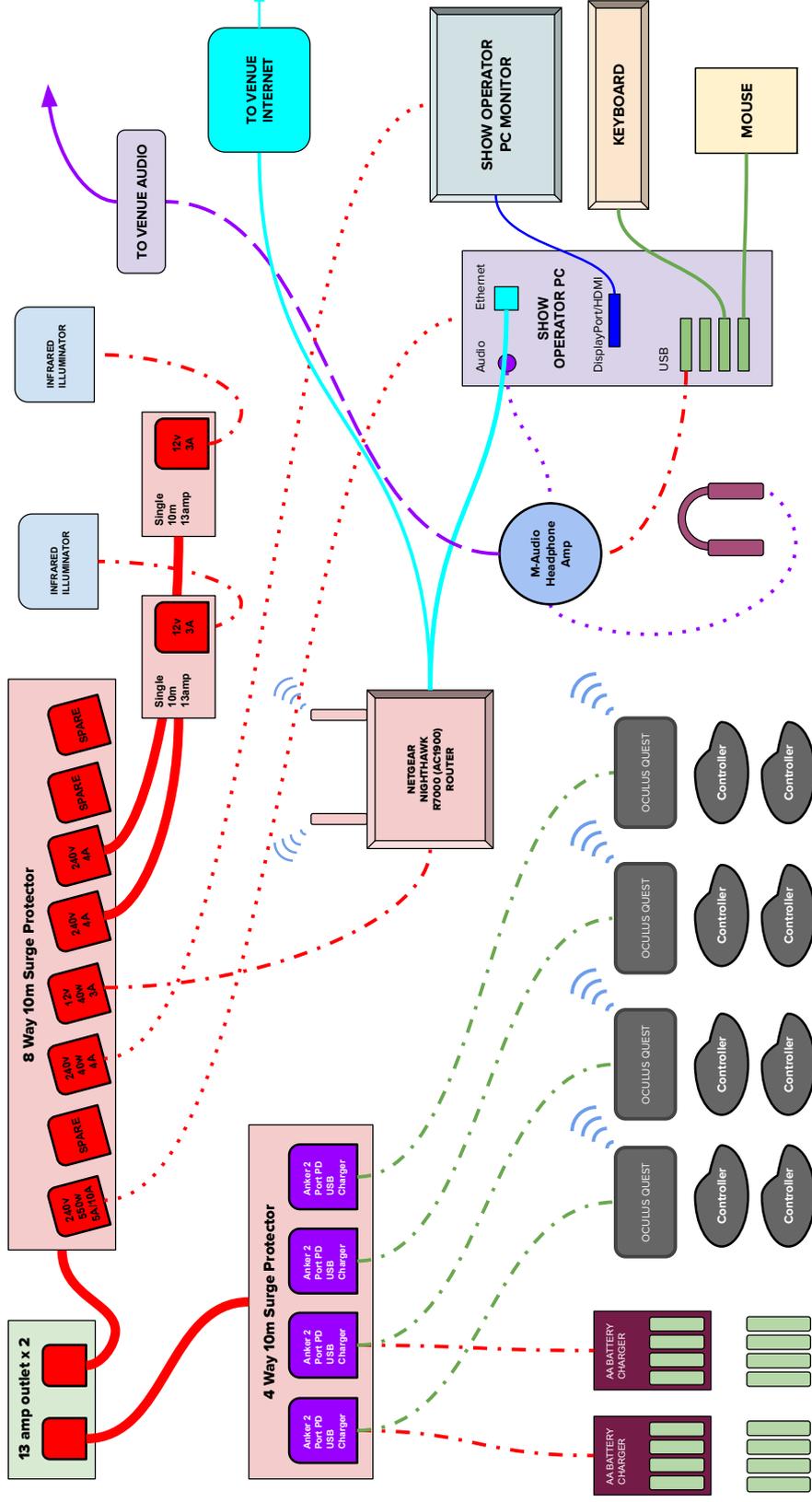
- VR kit for 4 participants.
- 4m x 4m 'Light ceiling' projection screen for the residue space.
- Laptop and dmx interface to control the light of both 'VR' and residue space.
- 8 x micro speakers and control for the audio in the 'residue' space.

Partner venue must provide

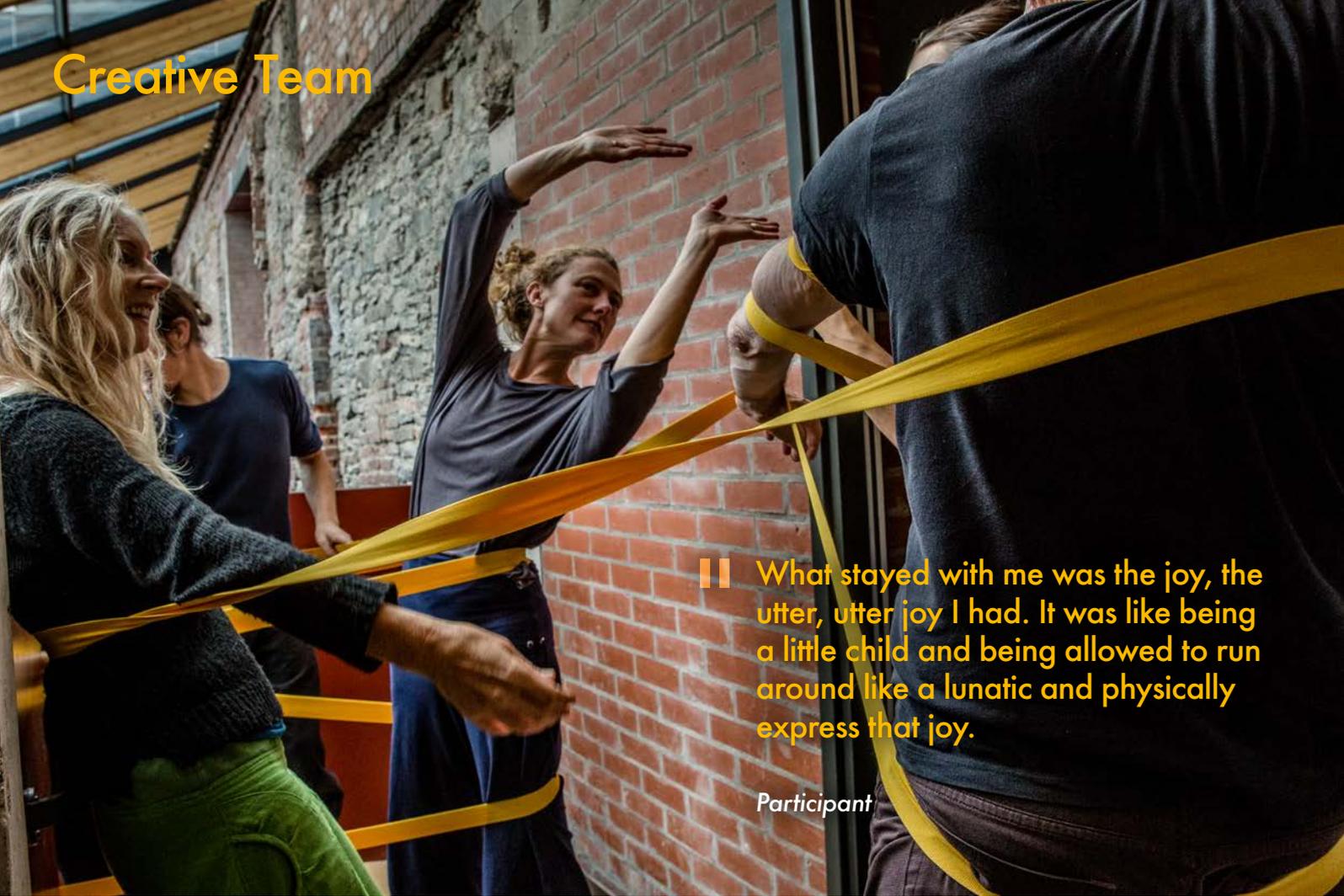
- 2 spaces one with blackout and scaffold lighting rig a minimum of 5 meters height from floor.
- 16 'generic' dmx controllable lighting fixtures with which to light the 'Light ceiling' from above. (fewer maybe needed depending on the distance between the lighting rig and screen).
- Additional lighting fixtures to adequately light the VR space in a natural diffused manner
- PA and speakers for the 'VR' element of the piece.
- 2 x trestle tables of similar on which to charge/store the VR kit.
- 13a extension leads and 4-ways or similar to provide power to the VR control and Residue control equipment.

Technical wiring and setup (VR)

Key	Cables	Length (M)	QTY
---	USBC - USB C	5	4
---	DISPLAYPORT to DP OR HDMI to HDMI	5	1
---	5M & 10M CAT6	5 & 10	1 Each
---	Kettle Lead	5	2
---	3.5mm Jack to Jack	10	1
---	3.5mm Jack to Jack	1	1
---	3.5mm to Phono	5	1
12v	12v PSU 3A	3	1
---	USB A - Micro USB	5	3
Sockets and Chargers			
---	AA (x4) Battery Charger	NA	2
---	Anker 2 Port PD USB-C + USB A	NA	4
---	8 Way Surge Protector	10	1
---	4 Way Surge Protector	10	1
---	Single 13amp Ext.	10	2
---	2600mah AA Battery	NA	24
Hardware			
---	PC (Specs TBC)		1
---	Monitor		1
---	Oculus Quest		4
---	Headphones	NA	1
---	Keyboard		1
---	Netgear Router		1
---	Wired Mouse		1
---	M-Audio H. Phone Amp		1
---	Infrared Illuminator		2



Creative Team



|| What stayed with me was the joy, the utter, utter joy I had. It was like being a little child and being allowed to run around like a lunatic and physically express that joy.

Participant

Lisa May Thomas

Award-winning dance artist and film-maker, **Lisa May Thomas** has worked extensively at the intersection of performance and technology. Her choreography and films have been exhibited and broadcast worldwide at international galleries and on national television. Lisa's PhD at the University of Bristol takes a dance and somatic approach in researching digital technology as a tool to facilitate embodied experiences and explore sensory perception.

Soma presents an opportunity for diverse audiences to experience her most recent work.

Creative & Tech team:

Soma brings together an experienced team of professional Dancers, Sound and Lighting Designers and Creative Technologists. For full credit list, please go to www.soma-project.co.uk

Contact

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