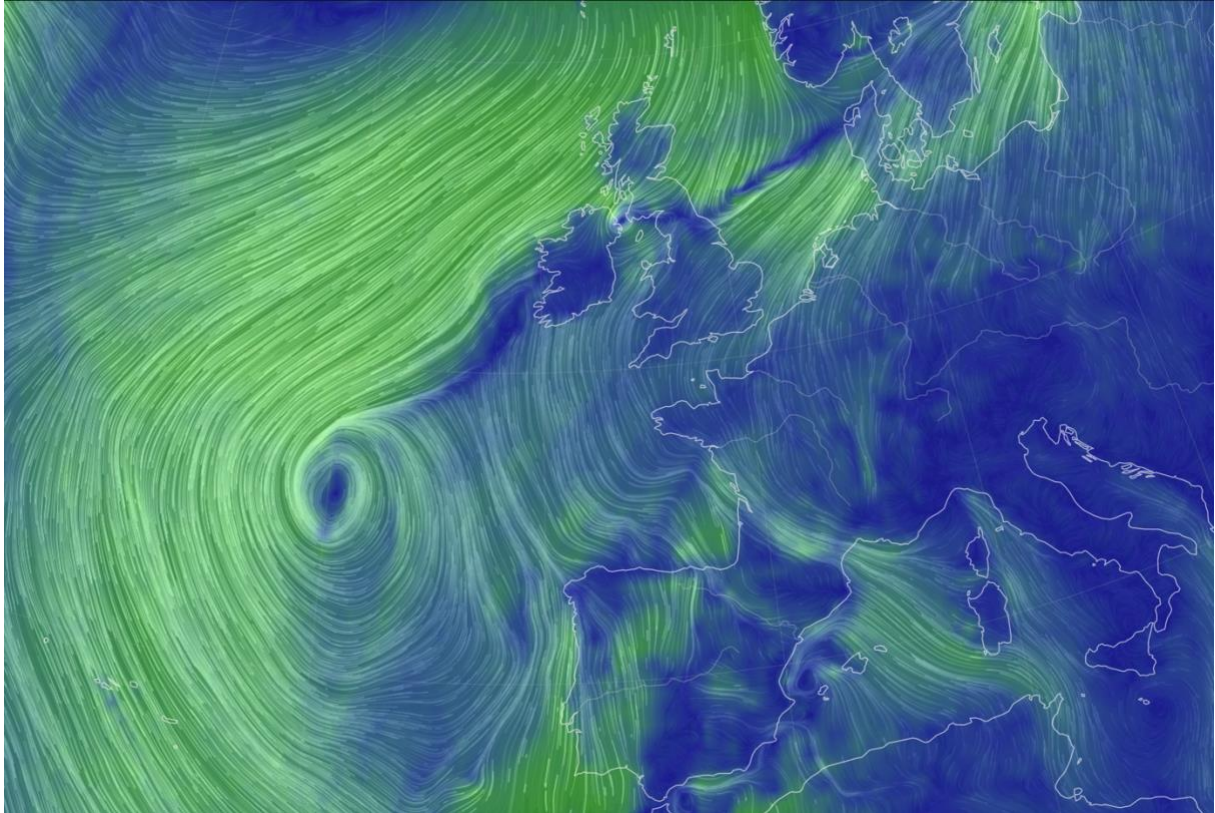


AIR

*A wind-powered sound art project
a deep listening of the landscape and the spirit of the times*

by Virgile Abela



*Where warm and cold air masses meet,
the air flows freely across borders.
Carried by the winds into every corner of life,
air is a memory imbued with the world, laden with stories.*

*It thus becomes the messenger of the spirit of the times and questions our present.
It comes to life as a flow through the ages to reveal, like a vibration,
the poetic potential that is at stake here, waiting to be seized...*



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AIR involves creating art using acoustic signals and climate data captured in real time in one or more landscapes by wind harps, and transmitting them to another installation that recreates an imaginary landscape from scratch based on real landscapes. Its principle is therefore adaptable to any location and any scale.

AIR expands on a body of wind-powered works entitled ZEITGEIST, situated within a contemporary field of sound ecology at the intersection of land art and music. Until now, the ZEITGEIST installations and performances have focused on specific locations such as mountains, rivers or cities. Here, the project presented seeks to take the pulse of a much wider territory, in the form of a network.

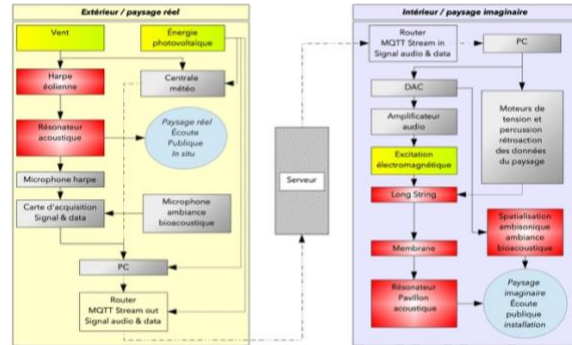


ZEITGEIST#4, festival Horizons-Sancy, 2023

*AIR*_PRINCIPLE :

Outdoors, wind harps sing as the wind blows through them. They all give voice to the hidden murmur of the landscapes that host them, making their vibrations audible. The public is invited to listen to their song on site, where they vibrate, much like a piece of sound land art. They can be grouped together in one place, or be situated far apart. The key here is to draw vibrational information from the atmosphere. Powered by electricity (wired or solar), the harps are equipped with autonomous weather stations, data acquisition cards, microphones, and an internet connection (wired or 4G) to transmit their songs and weather data in real time to a server, entirely autonomously.

Inside an exhibition hall, the audio signals from the harps, along with their bioacoustic environments and climate data, are retrieved from the server to be synthesised in a sound and light installation, in a reverse process: its structure also consists of strings. These are excited by electromagnetism using the electro-amplified signals from the outdoor harps to vibrate a membrane, which is in turn supported by large horns and resonators. An electromechanical system for tensioning and striking the strings, along with a light display, comes to life in response to weather data, adding a spectacular dimension to the work's generative and organic behaviour. Its aim is to bring to the audience's ears the intertwined rumble of scattered landscapes.



SUPPORT:

This project benefits from a pre-prototype developed with the LMA-CNRS, which technically validates the possibility of exciting a string using electromagnetism based on an electro-amplified audio signal – in this case, that of a harp. Furthermore, it draws on the artist's proven expertise in designing robust wind instruments with omnidirectional wind sensitivity, as well as in amplifying the resulting signal.

Finally, this project brings together other institutional and scientific partners necessary for its realisation, such as ESAM Caen-Cherbourg, where the artist is in a research residency. This project is also supported by Station MIR, the]Interstices[festival and the Normandy region, all in 2026–2027

PARTNERS IN EUROPE

This project seeks collaboration with its partners that goes beyond simply hosting a harp on their premises for a fixed period. We wish to promote public experiences centred around each instrument, such as listening sessions, performances, readings, lectures or masterclasses to be devised together, based on the project's key themes:

How can we translate, in space and time, this 'entropic chain of transduction of landscapes into vibration' through the air that carries us?

How can we design an instrument that performs effectively in terms of organology, computing and signal processing, and then share this knowledge?

How can we compose a work that resonates with the climate, within a renewed reflection on sound ecology?

How can we strengthen our sense of belonging to Europe through the air that circulates freely beyond our borders?

How can we create a work based on the idea that the air we breathe is potentially the air exhaled by someone else?

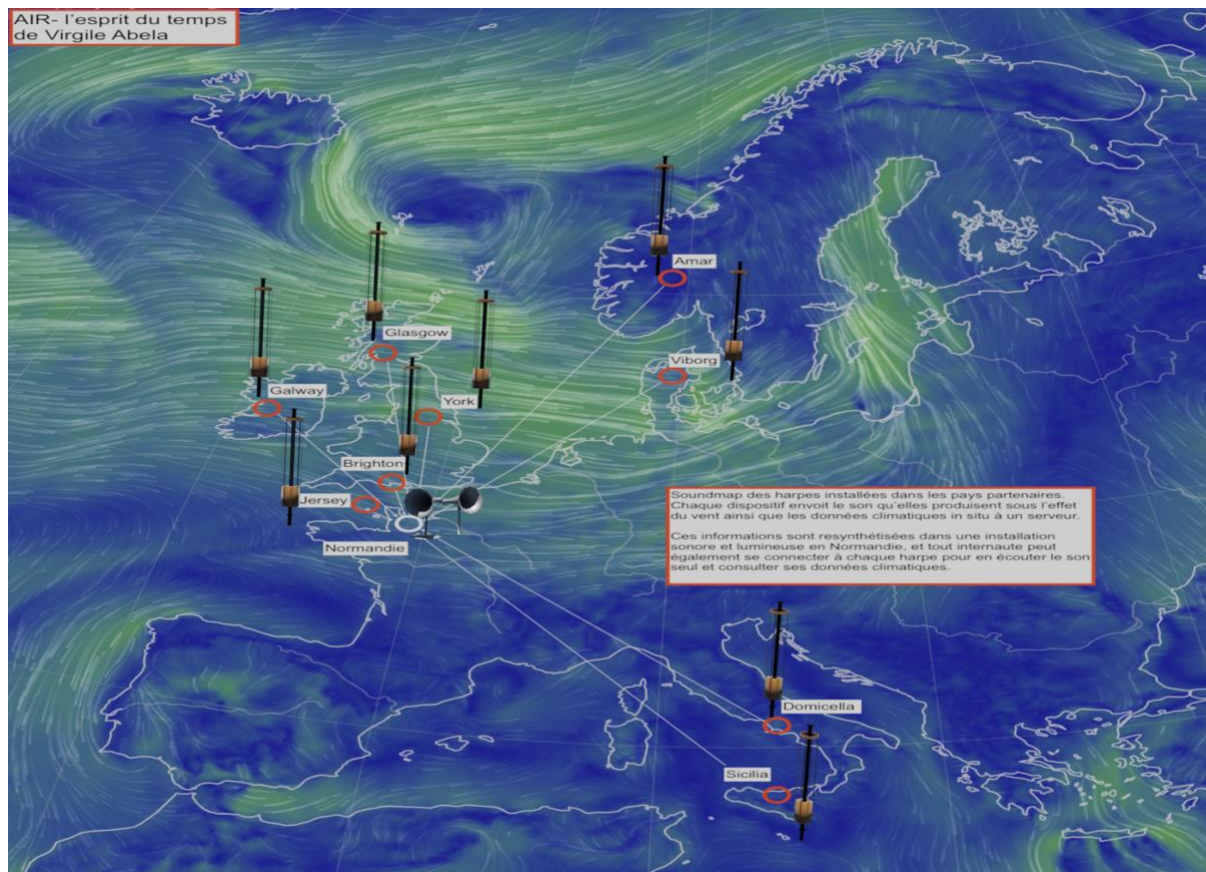
EXHIBITION:

As part of the 'Millennium, European Year of the Normans' initiative, AIR is set to present a public exhibition at the [interstice] festival in Caen from Wednesday 5 May to Sunday 23 May 2027. Wind harps installed in France, Sicily, Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom transmit signals and data from their respective landscapes to the project's server. In an exhibition hall in Caen, the electromagnetic installation synthesises all the landscapes where the harps are located in the partner countries.

THE WORK CIRCULATES AMONG EUROPEAN PARTNERS:

Each partner can host a wind harp outdoors, in an urban or open natural landscape, for a potentially long period. If they wish, they can invite the public to listen to the harp's song in situ, whilst its signals and data are transmitted to a server.

Then, in a second phase, one partner, or several in turn, can host the electromagnetic installation that synthesises all the harps connected to its network via the server, from June 2027 onwards. The public can then experience the electromagnetic synthesis of all the scattered landscapes.



A VIRTUAL SPACE AVAILABLE:

An open-source soundmap accesses data and signals from the server and documents the project. It allows any internet user to connect to it to listen to or use, as they wish, in real time and at any time of day or night, the sound and data from each harp in operation at the partner venues.

Example of a harp installation in CAP15, Marseille - France



16-string wind harp, height 4 metres

Real-time stream of the instrument and the surrounding bioacoustic environment

Dedicated web page with a link to listen to the stream: <https://www.virgileabela.com/air>

VIRGILE ABELA

Self-taught musician, graduated of the Marseille's school of fine arts, Virgile Abela is developing a transdisciplinary body of work in which sound is offered to the viewer as an experience in a poetic landscape. In search of a form of immateriality through the generation of vibratory flows from ecosystemic devices in feedback with the living, he integrates into his work an interest in sound ecology. Since 2017, he has been an artist in residence at the acoustics and mechanics laboratory, national centre for scientific research. Collaborating with scientists, he develops his own real-time electronic sound devices, staged in digital art or land art installations, using data and signals derived from natural phenomena to stimulate and modulate organological excitations, revealing through sound an aesthetic manifestation of his interaction with the vibratory essence of nature. His works have been presented at international events such as]Interstices[, Experimenta, Sonica and Le ManSonore <https://www.virgileabela.com/>

Station MIR, Oblique/s & Virgile Abela

Our collaboration with Virgile Abela began in 2019 with the production of his installation *Acoustic Pendulum*, which was exhibited at the Artothèque Espace d'Art Contemporain as part of the]interstice[festival in 2021, and then in Glasgow in 2022 at the SONICA Biennial, of which we are a partner. From 2023/2024, we embarked on a new co-production process for Infinite Pendulums in partnership with the GMEM; a version featuring four kinetic pendulums synchronised with light and sound was created at the ÉSAM Caen/Cherbourg from 2 to 21 December 2025 for]interstice[1000.



AIR fits perfectly with the development of digital arts and culture championed by Station Mir and Oblique/s. Since the first arts & sciences production in 2016, the creation of the Modular Laboratory at the École Supérieure d'Arts & Médias, the establishment of the national HACNUM network and the HACNUMédia media outlet, we have built a regional hub for artistic creation in digital environments, supported by the General Delegation for Artistic Creation of the Ministry of Culture, and the launch in 2026 of a work-study Master's programme dedicated to digital creation at ÉSAM Caen/Cherbourg. Over the past ten years, Station Mir and Oblique/s have forged numerous peer-to-peer links across Europe, and we now wish to enter a new phase of multi-partner development on a European scale.