



THE WORLD OF VIRTUAL DANCE

WMOVE

MAGAZINE

2015

In Dance

VIRTUAL DANCE

PIONEER KLARK HARVY

**Organizing a
Variety Show**

**Musical Mistress
Diddy Hyun**

The Male Is Here

**DANCING OUTSIDE
THE LINES**

VISIONARY INARRA SAARINEN

THE FABULOUS FLAPPERETTES!

Kamera Klub Exquisite Beauty

December 2015

*Adventure of Grease
Outy's Particles
Nutcracker Ballet
Fusion Dance Crew
Royal Opera House*



DANCE QUEENS is a Group in Second Life for all things **DANCE!**
If you have a suggestion or a request for something you'd like
to see on the blog, drop a notecard into the mailbox at the
Dance Queens Info Center! We'd love to hear from you!

Blog: <http://sldancequeens.blogspot.com.au/>

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Inarra Saarinen: *The Visionary*

by Babypea

In the world of Second Life dance, Inarra Saarinen is a legend. She is one of the pioneers of virtual dance, an icon for blending real life and pixelated movement to music. She has been dancing across the grid longer than many of us have been in Second Life. I have been fascinated by her for so long, and was so happy when she agreed to let me interview her. She is a dancer in real life and has danced professionally all her life, currently dancing in competition ballroom. How did this dancer find Second Life? She blames her other half, in part, for the discovery. "My partner in crime, Espresso Saarinen. And the furies."

With so much to do in Second Life, not to mention the shopping, I wondered how and when she found her passion in virtual dance. "In 2006, I started dancing by myself on a hillside in a theatre bluff I made; a flower dispensed the program. I founded Ballet Pixelle (then known as Second Life Ballet) in 2006 and haven't stopped since.



"My 'aha' moment was when I realized that I could create a never-ending turn and have a young girl transform into an old woman during it."



The unusual thing about Ballet Pixelle, and what makes it particularly unique is, Ms. Saarinen creates all the animations Ballet Pixelle uses for their dances. That is astounding! Plus, they do not use dance HUDs. The dancers really dance with one another. The technical reach of this troupe is beyond my own comprehension. "I create all of our animations — usually by hand using various animation programs and sometimes using motion capture of various kinds. We do not use HUDs, poseballs, movers, or any other synchronizing scripts or devices — the dancers really dance with each other and the music. It is difficult. We do it by lots and lots of practice!"

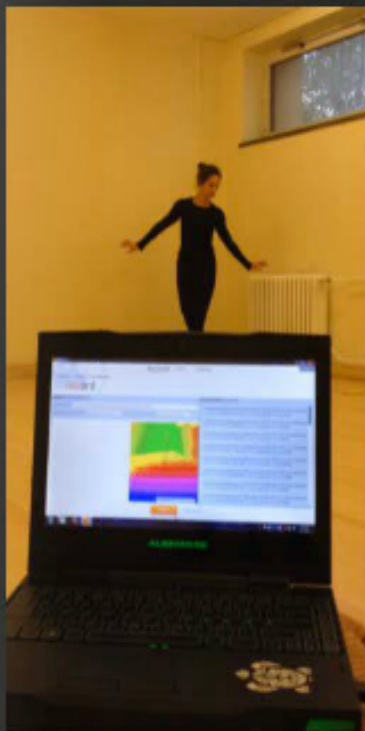
"Also, choreography is about more than synchronized movement. I sometimes use the peculiarities of Second Life in my choreography. In 'Phylogeny', for example, I use the lag to interact with the choreography and offer a new performance each time." A visionary concept from Inarra Saarinen!



Her favorite dance she has ever created:
"Phylogeny" (2008)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Umzv98A5H54>

*Ballet Pixelle, dancing
into the digital future!
...and bringing you
quality dance since 2006
*smiles warmly**



"It is what makes dance dance. We are art not automation. Each performance is different. This is what makes performance different from watching a machinima of the performance." I can only begin to imagine the level of dedication it would take to dance like this. It is overwhelming. It is the purest form of dance expression that I have yet encountered in Second Life. I give a standing ovation to the passion it takes to accomplish such prodigious consummations of artistic achievement.

Each performance not only tells a story, but seeks to explore the endless possibilities as technology continues to develop. They aren't missing a beat. "Ballet Pixelle produces all original ballets, with Saarinen's animations, choreography, and stories. The Company has produced 20 ballets to date."

*Ms. Saarinen's advice to someone new to SL dance:
"Don't assume you know everything or nothing. See the history."*

Ballet Pixelle's Inarra Saarinen will speak at

IMMERSIVE EDUCATION INITIATIVE
IMMERSION 2014

Exploring the impact of new digital technologies on Arts & Culture, Education, Human-Computer Interaction & Business



AUGMENTED REALITY WEARABLE COMPUTING ROBOTICS
NEURAL INTERFACES NEUROGAMES AFFECTIVE COMPUTING
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE VIRTUAL REALITY 3D PRINTING



Los Angeles, CA June 6-8



Inarra Saarinen and
Aiyana Tripsa will
represent Second Life's
Ballet Pixelle at
"Immersion 2014"
in Los Angeles,
June 6-8, 2014

for more information:
[http://summit.immersiveeducation.org/
program_schedule.
html#body](http://summit.immersiveeducation.org/program_schedule.html#body)

Something else unprecedented Ballet Pixelle has established is actually bringing Second Life dance into real life, combining the two to transcend the boundaries of the two worlds. Is Second Life just a game? Many people say Second Life is not real. But Ballet Pixelle challenges that perception, as they bring the two lives together in performance, proving that Second Life is in fact very real. For those who truly love their Second Lives, Ballet Pixelle seems to give us permission to take it as seriously as we do our real lives, as they prove the value and merit of this virtual existence. "Ballet Pixelle's goal is to explore the unique capabilities and interaction of movement in virtual and physical space and blended realities, and investigating and developing an aesthetic and vocabulary of virtual dance -- whether it be by tiger, dragon, bird, or human.

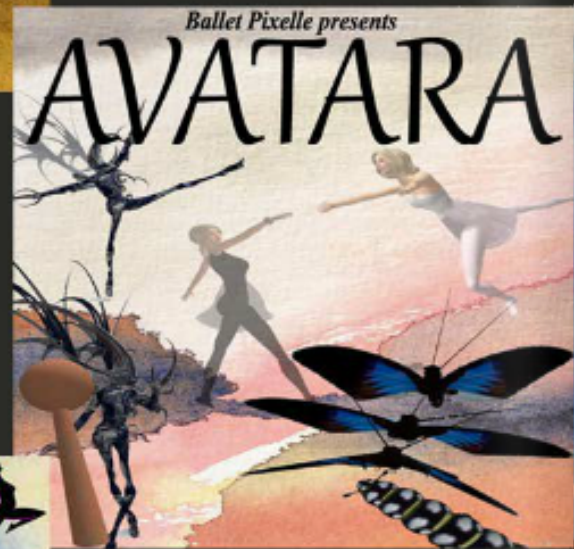


"Beginning with 'Olmannen' (2007), we used non-human (real life controlled dragon) avatars with human ones. In 'Degas Dances' (2009), we had a human avatar dance with a machinima of herself.

"In 'Archidance' (2011), we created graphical dance notation symbols (Labanotation) in 3D and had the dancers interact with them. We showed the first life key dancers and choreographers of the years, and in the final act showed our human avatars dancing with potential dancers of the future -- dancebots.



"In 'Avatara' (2010), choreography was set on both a human avatar and a human, and they danced together.

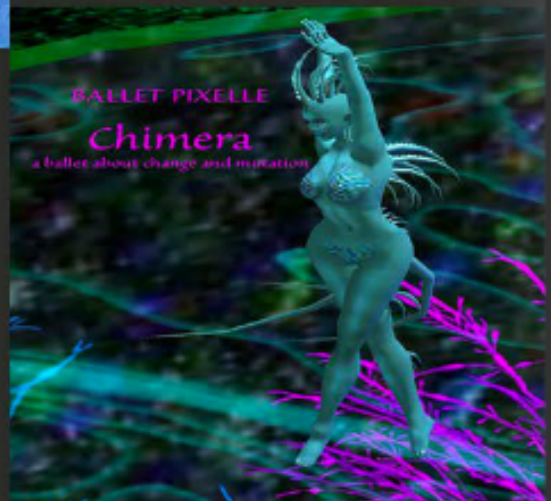


"We have produced classical ('The Nut' 2007), neoclassical ('Les Couleurs de la Danse' 2012) and 'Rhapsody in Red' 2013, and contemporary ('Phylogeny' 2008) dances.



"In 'one nine four two' (2010), multi-media and virtual realities were used to tell a dramatic story of WW II in a small town; these included historical video footage and photographs as well as effects that could only be produced in virtual reality."

"In 'Chimera' (2015), we moved beyond the proscenium stage and danced in hovering globe environments."





How exactly does one take virtual performance into real life? And how have people in real life reacted to Ballet Pixelle's work? Ms. Saarinen explains, "The goal from the start was to investigate the interaction of virtual and physical dance and blended realities. We are doing just that. Taking Ballet Pixelle into first life is part of blending realities. We have performed invited, live, in real or first life, in Australia, Canada, England, Germany, Japan (Tokyo & Yokohama), and the USA (Los Angeles & New York City). In Los Angeles, we were asked to be on a panel of five with Disney's 'Frozen' stereographers." Many people in Second Life fear being ridiculed if we reveal what we do in-world to people in real life. Many keep their Second Lives completely separate and even secret from people in their real lives. But Ballet Pixelle has been met with esteem and respect by the people they have presented their creations to in real life. How inspiring!

As she says, "Real dancers dance." In either life. "We are thrilled to perform in first life, and hope it will encourage others to do or collaborate in blended realities and the future of dance.

"Ballet Pixelle has been in Dance Magazine as a 'Company to Watch', CCN, FOX news, numerous online magazines, and blogs. We won 'Video of the Month' sponsored by Dance Media for 'Phylogeny' (2008). We have won an AVI Choice Award in Second Life and Ms. Saarinen was a finalist as Most Creative Person in Second Life." This is serious! This is real! It is amazing and bears testimony to the endless possibilities available to the creative mind in Second Life.

Ballet Pixelle is even in Wikipedia:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ballet_Pixelle



I asked Ms. Saarinen what her favorite thing was about virtual dance, and her reply made me smile. "Dragons, and boxes, and no body joint limits!" Her least favorite thing made me chuckle. "I can't look at someone's body and say, "Try lifting your leg to here." She is charming, and exudes a vitality that is truly uplifting.

So who does this innovative artist admire in Second Life dance? I found her answer to be deeply touching. "Nattoo Wise, who was able to do what I couldn't, which was to create a dance community in Second Life via Dance Queens." Expanding and uniting the dance community is something meaningful to Inarra Saarinen.

A great soul with a fervor for artistic exploration, establishing a precedence for imaginative adventure. And what changes would she like to see for dance in Second Life? "Linden Labs, are you listening? Nothing has changed in dance animations, skeletons, or upload capabilities since I started in 2006!"



Her message to the Second Life dance community imparts a warmth and purity of friendship. "Hi! Come join us!" Enchanting and irresistible, so generous an offer from a brilliant performance artist. Where some see boundaries, she sees gateways to adventure and opportunity.