

Philip Beesley

Philip Beesley
University of Waterloo
Canada
pba.inc@rogers.com

Collaborator: Rob Gorbet
(Engineering Director)

Hylozoic Soil



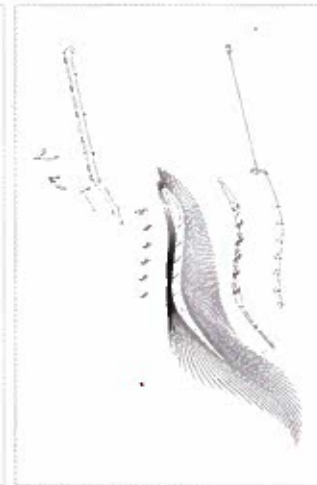
Hylozoic Soil, © 2009 Philip Beesley.
Photo Philip Beesley Architect Inc.



Hylozoic Soil - Bird's eye view



Exploded Column



Exploded Brushing Fern Component

Hylozoic Soil is a visually arresting and complex installation. Quivering to life as viewers enter into its midst, this beguiling piece is made up of a network of micro-controllers, proximity sensors and shape-memory alloy actuators. *Hylozoic Soil* offers layers of intriguing individual and group behaviors. Building upon simple motions embedded within individual elements, turbulent wave-like reactions are produced. Using its tendrils, fronds and bladders to lure visitors into its seemingly fragile web of laser-cut acrylic matrices, this work blurs the distinctions between

organism and environment. Inspired by the physical behaviors and mechanisms of coral reefs, this artificial assembly evokes natural forces to simulate life. As the title suggests, matter and life are deemed inseparable in this work, which plays on the botanical and philosophical implications of rhizomatic structures. Operating at the intersections of architecture, design, electronics, engineering, informatics and art, *Hylozoic Soil* is a visceral experience exploring the nuanced relationship between the biological and the artificial.

Philip Beesley is an artist, architect, stage designer, and a professor of architecture at the University of Waterloo and co-director of the University's Integrated Centre for Visualization, Design and Manufacturing (ICVDM). He works across digital media art and experimental architecture. His recent projects have been immersive digitally fabricated lightweight "textile" structures that often feature interactive kinetic systems that use dense arrays of micro-processors,

sensors, and actuator systems. Distinctions for his work include the Prix de Rome in Architecture (Canada), the Governor-General's Award, and the international FEIDAD 2008 Design Merit Award for Digital Media Art. He was recently awarded first-prize honors at VIDA 11.0 for *Hylozoic Soil*. He has degrees in visual art at Queen's University and in architecture at the University of Toronto, both summa cum laude, and received a diploma in technology at Humber College. *Hylozoic Soil* was created by Philip Beesley (artist) and Rob Gorbet (engineering director). The core design team for *Hylozoic Soil* includes: Hayley Isaacs, Christian Joakim, Jonah Humphrey, Kirsten Robinson, and Jon Cummings. Additional support includes: Yoshi Wachi, Manuel Kretzer, William Elsworth, Jonathan Tyrrell, Eric Bury, Lawrence Chan, David Blackmore, Jane Wong, Elie Nehme, and Matt Schmid.

Hylozoic Soil, © 2009 Philip Beesley.
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