



## CONTINUUM CHAOS THEATRE

7 years and older • 23 minutes • 98 seats

A combination of art, science and emotion, the novel approach taken by SPACE FOR LIFE is exemplified by the **Continuum show, created by Michel Lemieux and Victor Pilon**, at the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium: stunning, moving images, innovative technology and an immersive experience that sweeps visitors along a journey through the splendour of space and time.

**“To do a show for a planetarium is a child’s dream come true,”** explained Michel Lemieux. “I spent part of my childhood at the former Montréal Planetarium, and that’s most likely why I started creating multimedia shows with projections – it is there that I first understood that it was possible to use light to tell stories! As a fan of planetariums and reader of popular science magazines, I also knew that poetic liberties had to be credible; as we went along we made sure our approach made sense to people like the astronomers Pierre Chastenay and Pierre Lacombe, who is also the executive director of the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium.”

With two domes that house their own exclusive theatre, the **Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium** offers an immersive experience that is not found anywhere else in the world. On one side, an astronomical theatre (Milky Way Theatre), where visitors explore the starry sky and interact with the theatre’s scientific presenter. On the other, a unique emotional experience in the Chaos Theatre, where visitors begin their adventure by taking an uninterrupted artistic journey: “the goal of the show is to engage visitors’ emotions more than their intellect,” states Michel Lemieux. “It’s the first experience the public has at the Planetarium – **we want them to fall in love with space**, like we all do when we stand there in awe looking at the real sky!”

**“We enter the dome and walk on a densely dark reflective surface that recalls a body of water such as a lake, its surface mirroring the starry heavens at dusk. The eyes of animals stare out from the shadows and shine like small, seeing stars...”**



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When we look up at the sky, it’s hard not to ask the big questions: What is our place, insignificant earthly stardust that we are, in all this immense space? We are so small, but so great too, because we have the ability to ask ourselves these questions!

Michel Lemieux

## A VISUALLY STUNNING INSTALLATION

A wordless show – a **completely original experience** for the world’s planetariums – *Continuum* takes flight in a customized dome, where the line of horizon, which is usually at 180 centimetres, has been lowered to a metre in order to create an even greater immersive experience.

**“Everyone has laid down on the grass as a child looking up at the sky, imagining all kinds of things,”** reflects Michel Lemieux.

The show’s creators were inspired by their own ritual of sitting at the boulder-strewn edge of the river in front of their cottages observing both the sky and their reflection in the water. Until now, **audiences** attending Lemieux and Pilon’s shows have witnessed the human and digital interacting in front of them. In *Continuum*, however, their role is completely different: **they are now the actors** on the stage.

The show begins in a forest at night. The floor, reflective like the surface of a lake, gradually reveals boulders – comfortable bean bags covered in rock-like material to lay back on – surrounded by Adirondack chairs to stretch out in! From the human scale, the show propels the audience into space on the refrains of mesmerizing music, a selection of Philips Glass’ symphonic work from the last 15 years. Amongst the images used are photos taken by the Hubble telescope and reworked into synthesized images as well as photos of nebulae recreated and deconstructed into many layers to visually take the audience into the power of space.

## THE RELATION BETWEEN ART AND SCIENCE

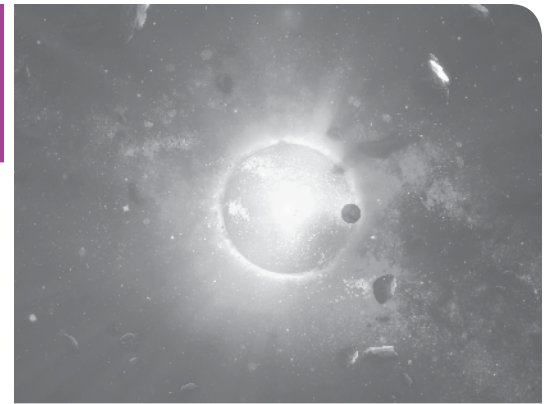
“Life is very, very rare. **The goal of art is partly to become conscious of this.** Humans are close to nature, and the new Planetarium at SPACE FOR LIFE and the artistic, emotional, scientific and interactive experiences offered there allow us to **ask ourselves new questions and to better understand our interdependence with nature,**” emphasizes Victor Pilon.

“Places like the Planetarium and SPACE FOR LIFE are places that raise awareness,” adds Michel Lemieux. “We need places where we can say ‘take a closer look.’ Because the experience of nature is magnified, because we get it, because we see from close up, we enter into a relationship and our desire to preserve this relationship is strengthened.”

From this perspective, the creators see SPACE FOR LIFE and its facilities as playing an important role, allowing people, who don’t necessarily have access to nature, to reconnect with it.

**“The idea of interconnectedness** is an abstract concept, but **essential if we are to understand our humanity and our place in nature,**” remarks Michel Lemieux. “We have the impression that the planets and space are outside of ourselves. And yet the atoms that form life here on Earth are the same as those that make up the stars!”

**The goal behind the initiative and approach:** seduce people. Get them interested and spark their imagination and curiosity. “The planetarium speaks to us about how incredibly precious life is. And that is very important. Visitors come and leave with this awareness and it helps them treat our planet and one other with greater care,” believes Victor Pilon.



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We make our way through the galaxy, discovering nebulae across immense space! A journey to blue universes and bubbles joined together, progeny of the Big Bang. These bubbles turn into cells – human forms and space in the image of the other! – and then we find ourselves in the water of the lake. We surface, in the forest, like a *Continuum*, a kind of cosmic fable that celebrates the beauty of the Universe.”

Victor Pilon

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All these things that are at the core of our humanity are all product of relationship, and not just a relationship of people to one another, but [of] people to a much larger world beyond ourselves, which is just another way of saying nature.”

Stephen Kellert, Professor Emeritus of social ecology, Yale University