

# Emotion in Motion

A text by  
Sandy Amerio

## SANDY AMERIO'S STORIES

Curious and attentive to the world around her, Sandy Amerio produces films, videos and texts that present a subtle social dialectic. In *Emotion in Motion*, she once again looks at the world of business. This time, however, the approach is more fictional. Interested by tales and the emotion they generate, by the form they take and by the way we use them today, the artist takes up the role of narrator to tell us a story that can be interpreted on a number of different levels.

*Emotion in Motion* is constituted by a weave of interlacing information. Business, the stock exchange, genetics, the Hayward Fault, the slaughter of whales, IQ, storytelling, the myth of Apollo and Pharmakos, etc.—all these different subjects are developed to varying degrees, forming emblematic fragments of a society, weaving together in spite of it all the thread of a story that has no beginning or end. In addition to the correspondences that are present throughout the story, the recurrence of the themes dealt with here leads us on to other works by this artist. Among the references made by *Emotion in Motion* are allusions to the text about “How Mitsubishi is trying to win against the whales in Mexico”, published in the magazine *Trouble* in 2001. At the same time it looks forward to the themes of future productions that she would work on during a coming residency at the Laboratoires. *Make your body language mean business* were performances inspired by the methods and behaviour of “storytellers” employed in companies, and

There was nothing left. Just a sun-drenched beach and the end of the Earth/

The average horizon to be worked out—by 24 GPS satellites orbiting at a height of 10,600 miles, with four of them always over any given point on the planet.

The average risk of a hypothetical telluric tremor had been calculated many times for this zone. But no one had succeeded in identifying the actual level of risk. The movements of the Hayward fault had been worrying seismologists for 130 years. The GPS surveys indicated that the southern part was moving faster than the northern part, and these movements should have triggered the Inevitable long ago. But the Inevitable still hadn't happened when S.Y., of the Main Bank Company, with his two most recent synthetic nucleotides ACT, GGT, YAG, EMO, TION, AND, SAY, ACT, GAT, YAG, EMO, TION, ACT, ATT, GTA, CYT, YAC, TAS, SAY, GGT, YAG, ATT, ACT, ATA, AAT, CYT, YAC, CAT, AAC, TAS, SAY, GGT, SAY, GGT, ACT, ATA, AAT, CYT, YAG, YAG, SYS, ACT, EMO, TION, SAY, AND, EMO, TION, AND, SAY, ACT, GGT, YAG, EMO, ATG, EMO, TION, AND, SAY, SAT, EMO, TION, SAY, ACT, ATT, GTA, TAG, SAY, AND, ACT, EMO, TIO, NAL, whose identification (no. 9 890 976) had earned him promotion to the rank of Nodal Consultant – the remarkable emotional permeability you are naturally gifted with makes you our ideal associate – decided to ask for self-patenting rights and everything started.

Or rather Everything started, and it wasn't just a matter of S.Y.'s current state of mind. He'd been immersing himself in Everything, spending his time making and unmaking connections so he could view the Earth as an immense switchboard for which he was one of the trusty operators. He was the Molossol caviar in the Earth sandwich. He wanted to feel this great Everything, the one your average human being was referring to when he said Everything was fucked, belief in a better world was extinct and the only thing left was certainty.

In S.Y.'s world there was a High and a Low, and everything in the Middle was just an overlapping of feelings that had to be transuded as effectively as possible. S.Y. was accustomed to predicting stock exchange fluctuations and their consequences, applying the same techniques as certain physicists in predicting earthquakes. He followed the market's variations over time as if measuring the thickness of the Earth's crust, with the slightest

*Hear me, children yet-to-be-born* is a film idea that she is developing with a view to shooting in California and Mexico.

Amerio finds her sources mainly on the Internet, surfing on the web and spinning her own, a convoluted skein of correspondences, analogies and correlations. These complex, sometimes subjective interweavings require the full attention and imagination of the reader, their total implication in a deciphering that involves several different layers of interpretation. Like a filter, the artist absorbs the information delivered by the World Wide Web and restores it, reconstitutes it in accordance with her own vision of the world. Several of her films adopt a similar process. With *Waiting Time/Romania* (2001), using a documentary form, or *Surfing on our History* (2000), which adopts the filming techniques of reality television, Amerio captures instants of reality that she then recomposes on the mixing table. What results from these operations is a continuous shifting between documentary and fiction, spontaneous commentary and mise-en-scène.

By drawing in this way on our everyday culture, but without imposing a moral critique, Amerio offers a personal vision of the world and history that remains sufficiently open for viewers to assimilate it in keeping with their own experience.

Maud Desseignes

**1**  
Theory of Extreme Values: a risk management theory that describes rare, extreme events. It notably has applications in engineering (for calculating reliability), in medicine (for drawing up statistics) and in environmental science, geology and meteorology.

**2**  
On the options market, the straddles strategy is based on the gamble that the index will not fluctuate beyond a certain range. The buyer of straddles lays himself open to losses in the event of major variations.

**3**  
Steganography is the science of conveying concealed information. The message goes unseen because it is hidden inside another message, in contrast with cryptography, in which the message is visible but coded. During World War Two steganography was used by German spies for transmitting secret information. The term is now used in connection with DNA encoding (*Nature*, vol. 399, 10 June 1999).

**4**  
A loser-wins variant on heads and tails. If A has chosen tails and it comes up on the fourth throw (heads-heads-heads-tails), A wins a sum equal to two multiplied by itself three times, e.g.  $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$  dollars. If tails comes up on the sixth throw (heads-heads-heads-heads-heads-tails), A wins 32 dollars. The longer it takes for tails to come up, the more he wins.

cracking an intimation of a decision to be taken. He modelled planetary disasters using the Theory of Extreme Values,<sup>1</sup> in the belief that there he had found the objectivity necessary for his predictive estimates.

He'd even been tempted by various nebulous theories positing a correlation between the apparently suicidal behaviour of whales beached on the coast of California, earthquake detection and risk portfolio management. It was, after all, common knowledge that in its hunt for possible enemy submarines, the American navy used decibel levels capable of bursting the inner ear of all the marine mammals on the planet. Emotionally conscientious, S.Y. had to consider the most minor hypothesis, however outlandish it might be. The lunar cycles, for example, caused tides that generated neutron emissions 12 times higher than normal, and these would lead him to reconsider his current straddles strategy.<sup>2</sup>

S.Y. had thus come to the conclusion that his Emotional Intelligence was now a trend prediction tool the Organisation could not do without, and he too was bent on garnering some kind of profit out

of it. After all, he was the one who was no longer completely normal, who had suffered when the Main had decided to modify his genetic code in the innermost depths of his flesh, and who, even before Everything got under way, had represented the ideal repository for All the Fears in the World.

For the Organisation, enhancement of the firm's intellectual capital was THE priority. It had to be

shared, and handed on to future generations, and S.Y. saw himself as its embodiment. You couldn't call him a sum; he was more like a result—the Repository for All the Fears in the World. No, not a sum, but a result, for events had proved to him many times that the sufferings of different peoples were not always of equal intensity. He made up for the screen-sufferings that concealed other sufferings and on some occasions he suddenly began to weep. All he hoped for was that the Main had not beaten him to the punch and had not already steganographed<sup>3</sup> his genes with its brand, which was none other than the famous Main Emotion.

That morning S.Y. was scared.

The label on the collar of his shirt was making him itch, and that had always been a sure sign. It didn't take long for the news to get round the Organisation, with everybody offering an opinion. And even if S.Y. seemed unconcerned as he started a fresh round of the St Petersburg game,<sup>4</sup> he was well aware that some attempt would be made to dissuade him from patenting himself. The neutron emissions were up by a factor of six today, and as he saw it, that was really going to complicate matters.

The Organisation's Annual Aims and Objectives Congress was about to start any second, and he feared the worst. He imagined himself being singled out for abuse by all those present, and told to give up the idea, but contrary to his expectations the Congress went off exactly as it should have, even if the atmosphere was a little tense during the opening speeches. The aims had been fulfilled and each speaker revelled in getting his message across with the aid of absolutely watertight crypto-scientific graphs. Then, as the last address closed amid the usual hubbub, he saw a man of indeterminate age approach the rostrum where the various speechifiers had just performed. Nobody could say if he was a trader, a risk manager or a technician coming to raise the microphone for another speaker. An ectopic mass of hair, apparently held vertically in place by a greasy root, was the final touch to an unlikely-looking figure.

Objects had been attracted to him as if by a magnet. Thus he appeared enveloped in the shadowless glow of a number of PAR Pin spotlights. A hypnotist who has sneaked into a managerial operations room. A blood loss inhibitor, with a piercing gaze that transfixed the audience. The Organisation had called him in to sort out the conflict that had been making itself felt since S.Y. had requested patentability. No one suspected that this man told stories to the executives and that storytelling<sup>5</sup> was now a management must. Least of all S.Y. who, intrigued, checked out the list of speeches and saw that this one wasn't mentioned. All he could find was a tiny note in italics that seemed to move about on the page: *Emotion in motion*. S.Y. caught himself forgetting (something that had never ceased to bother him).

The storyteller began.  
With the audience hanging on every word.

*“Today is no ordinary day.  
Today has seen a human being die.  
Today several centuries ago.*

*Today, several centuries ago, in the event of an earthquake  
or some other disaster,  
a man was sacrificed, as a form of purification of the evils  
the community was suffering from.  
Sometimes the victim was a criminal who had broken the  
Law,  
other times it was just the ugliest man in the city.  
He was taken to a specially chosen place,  
cheese, cakes and figs were placed in his hands,  
and after he had been whipped seven times on the genitals  
with fig and scilla shoots  
he was stoned to death, then burnt on a pyre of wild shrubs,  
and lastly his ashes were scattered...*

*The ordeal I have just described to you was undergone by  
Pharmakos, punished for having stolen the goblets conse-  
crated to Apollo, God of Light, and of Truth, he in whom no  
light remains, God of the Arts and of the Sun, he who knows  
the future and who purifies.*

*Thus for many years, early in May, the  
festival of Thargelia replicated the ex-  
ecution of Pharmakos, indefatigably...  
With Pharmakos dead, the figure of the  
scapegoat, and with it that of the artist,  
could be born.*

*With his own little business, the artist  
then began to capitalise the emotions of  
his community*

*STOC’  
SWAP’  
FILTR’  
RECYCL’  
FEEL’*

*THINK EMOTION IN MOTION  
and tell his story, finding convincing excuses for himself,  
some of them extraordinary enough to make him an ad hoc  
medium for society’s unconscious impulses.*

*Tomorrow’s worker will indefatigably hand on the energy  
needed for the work of emotion, and may ill befall him who,  
like Pharmakos, seeks to appropriate for himself those emo-  
tions for which he is only the intermediary.*

*For today is no ordinary day.  
Because today another human being must be sacrificed.  
Today in several hours’ time.*

*But all of us gathered together here are going to do every-  
thing in our power to save him...”*

Nothing more remained. Just a beach covered with  
whales and the end of the sea/  
The average horizon to be worked out—by 240 U.S.  
Navy decibels going to the uttermost depths of the  
ocean, detecting any and every enemy submarine.

5  
A senior management  
practice involving telling  
stories to employees with  
a view to generating  
certain kinds of behaviour.  
Storytelling’s many  
applications include  
conflict resolution  
and optimal management  
of such changes as  
relocation and staff cuts.

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