

Biography: Viktor Ruban is choreographer-researcher, curator, performer, educator, independent culture diplomat and culture activist. Initiator and ambassador of Ukrainian Emergency Performing Arts Fund initiative, he represents Ukraine in European Culture Parliament. He is also program director and co-founder of venue #KyivDanceResidency—platform for international studies in somatic, dance and performative practices, movement-based art and research. Ph.d. student in culture studies of Modern Art Research Institute of the National Academy of Arts (Kyiv, Ukraine)



Viktor Ruban © DR

Michael Century
(musician and cultural theorist, Rensselaer
Polytechnic Institute, NY) –
Nonsynchronous Innovation: Periodizing the
Digital

While the digital transformation continues to outpace socio-institutional adaptation, the technological arts have moved on to vastly expand their temporal horizons. Timescapes of artistic research and creation now embrace the residual as much as the emergent; techno-diversity against digital solutionism; sympoietic rather than linear models of innovation. But nonsynchronous innovation is hardly unique to the current moment, as revealed in Michael Century's recent book *Northern Sparks*, on Canada's early experimentation with digital media.

Poised as a "counter-environment" to the great powers, in McLuhan's phrase, Canada's experience of the transitional decades into the information age was grounded in a technological ethos that emphasized sensorial immediacy, embodied interaction, and improvisatory expression. This alternative ethos was situated between a pair of distinct yet inextricably bound forces, one national-political and proper to Canada, the other techno-mediatic and global in scale.

The unraveling of these forces by the late millennium reveals innovation itself as a complexly drawn process comprised of multiple layers with fluctuating degrees of synchronization. From a cross-media perspective, *Northern Sparks* also reveals how the differences between the arts with respect to improvisatory immediacy and discrete formalization make any neat chronological periodization of the digital problematic.

Biography: Michael Century, musician and cultural theorist, is Professor of New Media and Music at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. His book *Northern Sparks: Innovation, Technology Policy, and the Arts in Canada from Expo 67 to the Internet Age* appeared with MIT Press in 2022. At the Banff Centre, he founded the Media Arts program in 1988. Century's works for live and electronically processed instruments have been performed and broadcast in concerts and festivals internationally.

<http://www.nextcentury.ca>

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/10249242>



Michael Century © Nadia Rabhi