

Vases Channel Buster Keaton in a Modern Take on Shadow Puppetry

By [Beckett Mufson](#) — Apr 23 2015



Images by the author

A spotlight shines on a pair of twisted vases in interactive design group [Dpt.](#)'s latest installation, *Parade*—but nothing is as it seems. Swing the nearby hanging lamp and the shadows wobble back and forth, then come to life, erupting into a silent fistfight that would make Buster Keaton proud. Eight different silent dramas, four ferocious tussles and four graceful dances are hidden behind the ceramic sculptures, tucked away in the darkened Nam June Paik room on the third floor of the [Museum of the Moving Image](#)'s *Sensory Stories* exhibit.

The magic of the installation relies on a simple illusion: the lamp is not a lamp, the shadows aren't shadows, and the vases certainly aren't vases. A Kinect camera captures the motion of the "lamps" and sends it to a projector mapping the "shadows" onto the wall behind the "vases," which are actually ceramic sculptures by Laurent Craste. Using a 3D model Dpt. made of the white 8' x 8' x 8' cube, animator Sebstien Leger drew upon the classic art of shadow puppetry to build believable light movements into the installation.

Originally built for Montreal's [Chromatic Festival](#) in 2014, the *Sensory Stories* rendition expands on what Dpt. member Elias Zananiri calls "a simple magic trick," hidden within the vases' narrative of love and conflict. "I love the simplicity of it," [Yelena Rachitsky](#) of Future of StoryTelling, who conceived and produced the exhibition, told The Creators Project. "It makes you think differently about what you see in your everyday."





Check out more of Dpt.'s work on their website, and read more about the Museum of the Moving Image's *Sensory Stories* exhibition [here](#).

By [Beckett Mufson](#) Tags: [vase](#), [Shadow](#), [light](#), [Light Art](#), [shadows](#), [fighting](#), [Flower Vases](#), [Dpt.](#), [Parade](#), [Nam June Paik](#), [Museum of the Moving Image](#), [Chromatic Festival](#), [sensory stories](#), [kinect](#), [Laurent Craste](#), [Sebastian Leger](#),