

KRAAK

FESTIVAL

2015

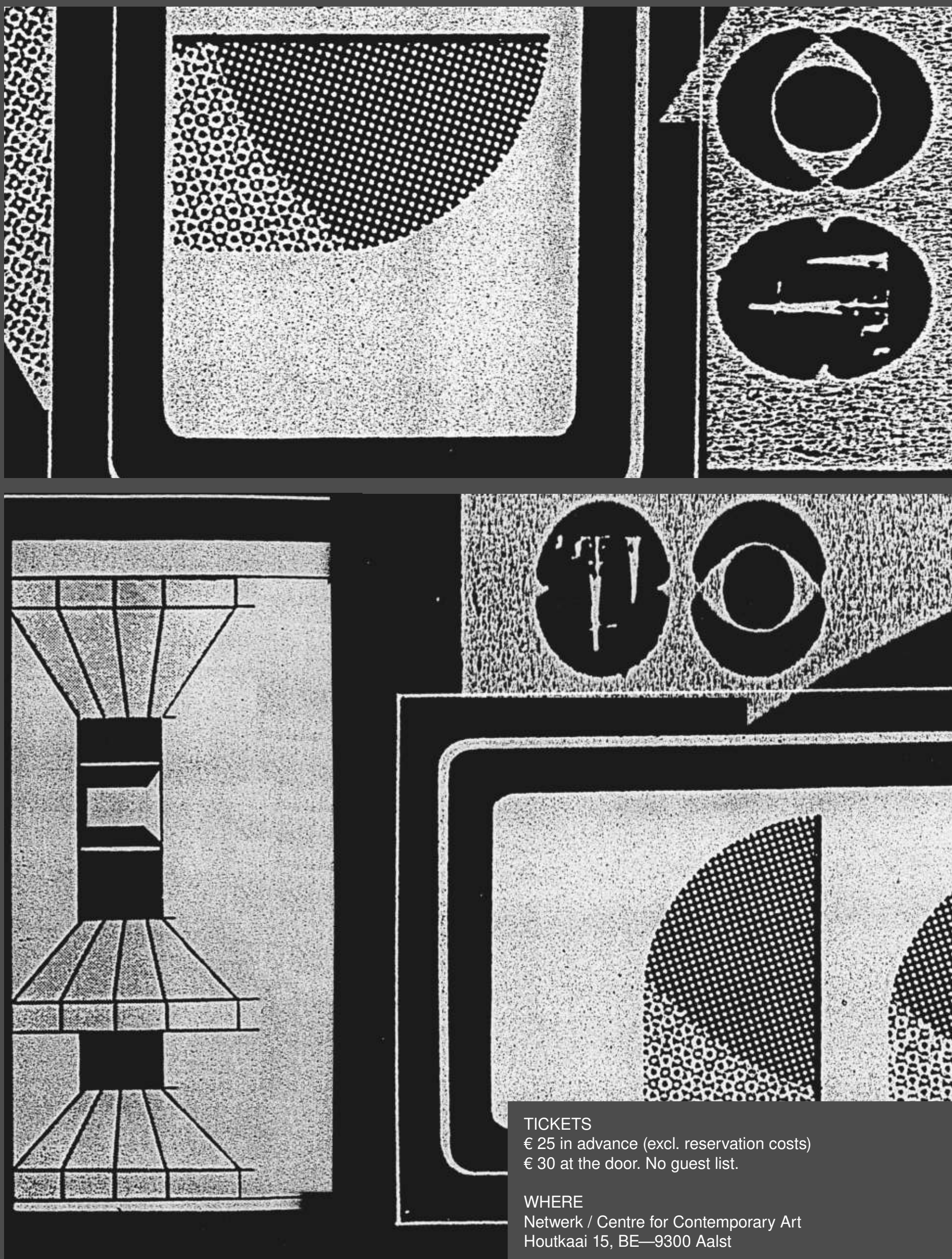
ÁINE O'DWYER & DE 2^{DE} ADEM (IR / BE)
KRAUS (NZ)
MADALYN MERKEY (US)
NEUTRAL (SW)

RODION G.A. (RO)
BRYAN LEWIS SAUNDERS & RAZEN (US / BE)
SEA URCHIN (IT / EG)
MATHIEU SERRUYS (BE)

KONRAD SMOLEŃSKI VS. LOTTO (PL)
VEX RUFFIN (US)
YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS (UK)
YONG YONG (PT)

THE AVANT-GUARDIAN V

07 MAR 15 13:00
Netwerk / Centre for Contemporary Art



TICKETS
€ 25 in advance (excl. reservation costs)
€ 30 at the door. No guest list.

WHERE
Netwerk / Centre for Contemporary Art
Houtkaai 15, BE—9300 Aalst

EDITO
KRAUS (NZ)
NEUTRAL (SW)
SEA URCHIN (IT / EG)
MATHIEU SERRUYS (BE)
YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS (UK)
BRYAN LEWIS SAUNDERS & RAZEN (US & BE)
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MADALYN MERKEY (US)
VEX RUFFIN (US)

2 men. Like the idiots in my hometown, their merit lies in their muscular power, not
3 their brains. Spring classics carry in them only a fraction of the cunning and tragedy
4 of *pure heroism*. The victory of Thomas De Gendt springs to my mind, on the flanks
4 of the Stelvio, in the Giro a couple of years ago.
5
6 You'd probably ask yourself what cycling has to do with avant-garde or Jihad. On
7 first sight, there is not much in common in between art and cycling. Compared to
8 noisicians or avant-garde composers, the body of a cyclist is a well-oiled machine.
9 Chaos, intuition and lucidity is the *modus operandi* of the arts. Cycling's core con-
cept is efficiency. The arts claim to be ethical on money, the main goal of cycling
10 teams is gaining it. The arts are latently elitist, cycling is an overtly popular sport.
11 Taking the differences into account, for me, the victories and the failures of men
like Contador or Boonen trigger the same emotional response then an outsider
composition, a tape full of noise jams or a ragtime trash concert.

You seem to me a passionate man, and I'm sure you understand passions—which
sometimes cross the border of obsession. That's the reason why I'd like you to point
out, in a poetic way, what the core is of the 17th edition of the KRAAK festival—The
so-called high mass of off-stream music. I hope this letter will inspire you.

This letter is addressed to you, because, while writing this edito, I couldn't ignore the
fact that dystopia is everywhere. The army in the streets, beside-the-point debates
about freedom of speech, a we vs. they discourse, with no clarity on who is part of
which side, as the 'we' or the 'they' seems to be defined by looks—beards, trousers
which are too short, a vaguely sunburned face... I keep you partly responsible for
this, although I'm the first to admit that cynic geo-politics gave you a wide supported,
yet doubtful, reason to exist.

In this contemporary context, it seems the *raison d'être* of avant-garde is under
pressure. But, I am sure you and I can find a common ground, especially in the
shared belief in the power of the image, and in addition, arts and music. I admire
your talent for powerful imagery. Grained photo's of warriors dwelling in the desert,
exuberantly veiled in black dresses, on white Adidas sneakers. Waving the more
and more know black flag with a white circle and Arabic verses. They are moving
images, their power lies in the combination of the composition and the estranging
content.

Dear Mr. Bakr, while giving this current state of the avant-garde some thoughts,
I was wondering whether you consider yourself as an avant-gardist. Is the Jihad
for you, what the KRAAK festival is for me? I see parallels between you and the
warriors fighting for IS, and avant-garde musicians: the latter produce aesthetically
challenging works, and contaminate content by form—not unlike the images of the
IS. Moreover avant-guardians are organised in an loose network of autonomous

EDITO

Dear Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi,

I am obsessed with cycling. You now might suspect the opposite, having devoured
the fifth issue of this publication so utterly devoid of any irony.
Nonetheless, I cycle a few thousand kilometres a year, the Mont Ventoux doesn't
have any secrets for me anymore, I am regularly spotted wearing tight and aesthet-
ically unjustified outfits, and I spent a fortune on a celeste green Bianchi—the same
type on which Pantani won several races.
Every spring classic, every Giro, Tour and Vuelta keeps me glued to several sports
channel's streams. I devour gluttonous accounts and opinion pieces about sly strat-
egies of favourites, in a search for the spirit of man.

My heart jumps over a beat for the long tours, like the Tour de France, the Giro and
The Vuelta. The spring classics are for East-Belgian farmers, too big, rude muscled



MY EXPECTATIONS OF KRAAK FEST, BUT WITHOUT THE LEOPARD



cells, interconnected through new media. Both disturb the world around them, the avant-garde in the way I described above, you by terror attacks, abductions and decapitations—destroying lives and families.

Maybe I envy your profound quest for the obsessive. Before some one misunderstands me: I abominate your methods. My respect for human life is too big. Personal drama should be avoided in any way. But the shock effect you accomplish, speaks to me. Sometimes avant-garde feels too safe. Nothing is new, the shock effect is neutralised by its institutionalisation and by the history of art.

Whilst reading the last paragraphs, you probably getting my concerns: I am sincerely dissatisfied with the Western context. The overwhelming stream of news about radicalisation, the beside the point excuses of our Muslim community, the blustering by annoying politicians, distracts me from my personal obsessions—cycling and art. As I said earlier, I take you responsible for this. As an intelligent man, you understand that personal obsessions are very important—you follow yours, I follow mine. It's annoying that yours interfere mine.

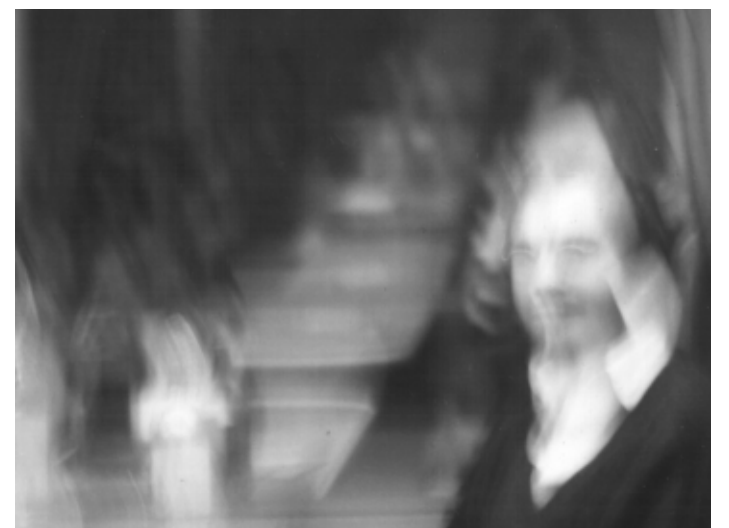
I have a solution, I sincerely hope you would considerate it. Maybe you should focus on cycling and start a Pro Cycling Team. I'm sure you will be equally satisfied. For several reasons: a same heroism will be yours—now gained through decapitation,

dragging people at a 4x4, and exploding western targets. Cycling will cause the same disturbed feeling, which should be clear out of my account on cycling. Cycling is on top the perfect opportunity to exploit the power of the image. Something tells me a Jihad cycling team would blow minds—excuse me the slightly unfortunate metaphor. Close your eyes, and picture a veiled, bearded man, carrying verses of the Prophet, racing to the top of a mountain, alone, empowered by pure faith. While doing so, he humiliates deeply those western bastards behind him. It would be a great scene, I'm sure it would produce great images as well? There's off course always the avant-garde arts... It seems that puzzling your audience with contradiction and uncompromising ideas is already your cup of tea. Remember the Jihad on Adidas.

You would in free us from stupid non-discussions about freedom of speech, and political recuperation, nor would you have to destroy the personal luck and safety of our and your Muslim brothers. And I would be able to concentrate on what's really important. For instance: Wout Van Aert or Mathieu van der Poel? Will Contador try to win the 3 big rounds, and so on. Not to forget the yearly KRAAK festival.

Yours truly,

Niels Latomme



JIMI HENDRIX JAMMING ON DARK SIDE OF THE MOON: LONG DISTANCE ECHOES FROM KRAUS

Kraus is a New Zealand experimental musician and composer. The New Zealand Listener called him 'a national treasure' and 'one of the most quietly important and interesting people making music in New Zealand'.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kraus_\(musician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kraus_(musician))

Kraus?

I don't really remember exactly because I chose the name in about 2001, but it was partly because I was really into Dagmar Krause at the time. I like that album *Desperate Straights* that Slapp Happy did with Henry Cow. Also there was that housekeeper character Kraus from the 80s TV show *Benson*, that I really liked. I think it was supposed to be a band name, but then the band ended up being only me. And people called me Pat, so I became known as Pat Kraus, which is not my real name.

Musical aesthetic?

I like to squash contrasting things together to create a synthesis of extremes. For example a recipe for some classic Kraus is brutal pounding toms and raw synth,

and then I would lay some bamboo flute over that, and sprinkle with some spacey echo, and then fuck with the tape speed. And for a title, some extremely ironic joke or obscure literary reference, or something hyper personal and romantic. Easy!

I think the best of my stuff has surprising combinations with influence from world folk stuff and pre modern Europe. And it has an evocative, atmospheric sound world, that's very important to me. I have some guidelines that I always follow, some of which come out my formative years. I don't usually do tracks longer than three minutes. I am against being self-indulgent, and also I just don't know how to structure longer pieces and I'm not very interested in doing them. I like the concise nature of popular music and structurally I use that as my model. Like, in a very abstract way I am using the structure of a sixties pop song a lot. There will be a simple melody, and then another one, and repeat, and then a sort of bridge that could be any third thing, it could be another musical idea or just a different sound. And then go back to the other two parts. The material and sounds that I'm filling that container with are not the stuff of popular music, but that is obviously the structure. At least, that's what I hear when I listen to things I did five or ten years ago. Now I am a bit looser, I have

gone back to four-track tape and I do more improvisation and I use less tracks, like some songs now it will just be one or two tracks of the tape, and the structure might be more theme and variation. That is partly from being more confident and a better guitar player now that I have been playing it for twenty years.

New Zealand?

I think I was pretty unknown here for a long time, I was isolated and don't know if people were aware of my stuff, outside my social scene. But since starting to play live at the end of 2013, and touring New Zealand for the first time in September 2014, maybe that's changed. Someone at one of my shows was heard to say that it sounded like Jimi Hendrix jamming on *Dark Side of the Moon*. And after hearing that, I realised I have no fucking idea what people think of me. But I am part of a very supportive community of friends who have been unbelievably kind and helpful, and their good opinion means the world to me.

<http://kraus.co.nz>

[Hans van der Linden]



NEUTRAL

Nihilist, urban no wave was a while ago a has-been genre, suited for old farts with a J.G. Ballard obsession, who cannot handle the confident optimism of generation Y. Reality is different nowadays, dystopia is everywhere, and the Swedish duo Neutral sharpen their songs on it. Their debut album *Grå Våg Gamlestaden* (2014, Omlott) is a fuck you towards optimism and softness, with its broken guitar noise, misanthropic industrial and warped tape experiments. We had some back and forth mailing with Sofie Herner and Dan Johansson, dwellers of the warehouse scene of Götheborg.

Digging into your musical background shows you are quite embedded in the Swedish underground noise scene with other or previous projects like Sewer Election, Ättestupa, Heinz Hopf, Leda or Källarbarnen. Can you tell us more about these bands? In what way does Neutral relate to this background?

(Sofie Herner) Utmarken, a rehearsal space, music venue, record store in Gothenburg, was the starting point for me when it comes to making music. Dan and Matthias Andersson (RTB records, I Dischi Del Barone, Källarbarnen, Heinz Hopf, Arv & Miljö) started up the place, and around that time Matthias, Dan and I started Källarbarnen. It ended up being mainly Matthias and me trying to play instru-

SEA URCHIN

Image a place where minimalistic dub meets esoteric avant-garde, and enter a playground of forgotten Italian pop stars. We present for you Sea Urchin, the brain child of the Egyptian-Austrian Leila Hassan and the Italian artist Francesco Cavaliere.

Hello Francesco and Leila, how are things?

How is winter in Berlin treating you guys?

(Francesco Cavaliere) Hey... Let's change topic!

(Leila Hassan) I think winter in B. is pretty similar to Belgium, just less rainy, not the best time to stay out but good to do music.

Tell me something more about your background, you're both rooted in the world of visual arts. When listening to Sea Urchin's music, I often have the feeling that you approach the concept of imagination in a similar way as many fine artists do, rather than focussing on musical skills and techniques. Am I right on this?

(FC) We try to visualise music, sometimes we dedicate music pieces to certain visions that we have during the day. We have the common habit to observe things in an intense way. Often stunned by reality, very simple details are curious for us, we love to walk around looking at the characters in the streets, our fake Michael Jackson, the Marvin Gaye of the Flughafenstraße Mosque, the Esperanto Lebanese *Warrior Messenger*... All those people! The scenes that our neighbourhood shows... We love it a lot.

There is actually a straight link with the visual aspect, as most of your shows are accompanied with an atmospheric game of light and reflections. How and why does these things get combined? What's the typical setting for a Sea Urchin live show?

(LH) I believe in the supernatural, many things like blows of fate, experiences in life touch something in me. Visuals I've always wanted to do, but by luck I came across with light and I use raw materials like glass. Since that it is an important part in my life and works with music. It's like a small ritual we do preparing a light installation for our set.

Let us talk about the musical influences. As I hear a lot of inspiration coming from different genres and geographic angles, what are the things you get inspired by the most and also how important are the different origins from both of you towards the work you make?

(LH) I have two nationalities, you can almost say I have two hearts. I have worked with music, I used to sell vinyls, then deejaying. Later in art school, I started weaving and doing textiles in a visual art way, I was really into costumes and masks... Later I performed on stage and then start this duo, using voice and vision, so my influences are correspondingly large. Inspired by life. I believe in a way all your experience come together once.

(FC) Watching the Italian peninsula from far away I fell very fascinated by it. When I went back with Leila to explore the south of Italy, it was very exiting to find my family roots, full of things to learn. Some time ago things where too close to me to be caught.

(FC) (LH) Talking about music; this is not easy because we are very open, but it seems that we have one constant love for the Oran music scene, which produced very good stuff till the early 90s. Certain Editions Disco Maghreb included.

And... yes, we believe that Jamaican dub productions from the late seventies are somehow the real alchemic music potion, the perfect beats burns in there!

How works a regular Sea Urchin rehearsal? As you use a lot of pre recorded sounds, is there a relation to the acousmatic music and *musique concrète* coming from Paris in the early sixties?

(FC) We talk and exchange music visions all the time. 'How should this track sound... Is this the right name for it... Did you remind that parrot we saw... Maybe we can add his sounds flapping and pecking...'

We try to picture good music in our head. The real rehearsal arrives just few days before the show. I did read and listen about that French movement, but I must tell you that the words have always been more interesting that the music. But there are always exceptions. I love certain tape works that H. Pousseur did at the fonologia studios of Milan. Although he was Belgian and closer to Darmstadt. Sea Urchin probably has not much relation with that 'school' but more with a practice that you can find in rap or hip

hop music culture, musicians like Grand Wizzard Theodore, Grandmaster Flash were creating grooves data from the mix of pre existing music sometimes using little percussions. Different but same effect in our practice it is Raï contemporary music; the use of the voice combined with the keyboard pre sets of Drums, Flutes and other musical instruments. I would say that we belong more to that attitude when we mix and produce our music.

Leila, your voice plays a very important part in SU, which partly defines the typical sound. How is your voice connected to the music you make, would it be possible to use the same way for other projects?

(LH) Let's say I'm not sad about my voice part, we hardly do not use effects on this. Also live I like to use the voice in a classic way like in radio plays etc. Sure, I can imagine, to working on other projects, I do like to have inspiring people around me, and I'm open to do sound.

You maintain a good relation with different Belgian artists. How do you experience the scene of Belgian underground music?

(LH) With very familiar feelings, In Belgium I have met a lot of nice people, and I love them! Our fans are from there, we go often there, to concerts and we support the underground scene. I have the impression there are a lot of great artists and musician making great Artworks, with a lot of passion and details.

(FC) There are our friends, few of them are our favourite musicians. I'm very happy to have meet them, we did stated collaborative works too.

What are Sea Urchin's further plans? Any records coming out? New shows, tours?

(LH) 2015 is still somehow open, we just finishing an album, and each of us has other projects, I definitely want to tour, that is still up after Sweden, Belgium and London. A wish is to travel to Egypt and perform there, I would be very happy to travel more and play more shows, also love to play in radio shows... lets see!

[Pauwel De Buck]



ments. Neutral is what happened when Dan and I combined our influences and sounds.
(Dan Johansson) Neutral is just a continuation of what we did at Utmarken in some way. Friends who're getting together and do stuff.

Your music appeals strongly to the wave and noise scene from the eighties, both in the means of creation (reel-to-reel recordings and minimalistic tape experiments, coupled with trumpet and screwdrivers to bring out the best of your guitars) and in the overall industrial / no wave atmosphere. Was this heritage a source of inspiration for you?

(SH) No wave was a very important thing for me as a teenager; I spent

most my spare time dreaming of James Chance, Pat Place and Nancy Arlen. Later on, I think no wave has been important to me as an attitude towards music. And I guess the screwdriver got stuck from there on.
(DJ) For me mid-nineties American harsh à la Macronympha, Skin crime and such have been huge influences on how I approach and listen to music. They were and are life changing.

How is your music conceived? What's the general approach in the (writing) process?

(S) I play something, loop some sounds, record it and send it to Dan. Dan deconstructs it somehow and sends it back to me. We chat about it and might do some changes. Dan tells me I should record some voice, I do it

and send it to him. He mixes and fixes. It's all very intuitive and uncomplicated.

Your debut album is called *Grå Våg Gamlestaden*, ('a grey wave in Gamlestaden', referring to a former industrial district in Gothenburg characterised by abandoned factories and dreary apartment blocks). In what way has the city been an inspiration in making this music, and what role does it play on the album? Would you agree with the interpretation of some, who describe the album as 'an anti-urban statement'?

(S) I'd say I'm more influenced by the area I grew up in (not Gothenburg), which is a dreary apartment block kind of area, but Gamlestaden is something else to me. It's the first place I've lived

in and really liked. Dan and I lived very close to one another in Gamlestaden the last five years, but I had to move a couple of months ago. I'll always love Gamlestaden, and I know Dan does too. The last months I've lived partly in the countryside and it's really not for me. No one likes the word 'urban', but Neutral is, to me, definitely more 'urban' than 'anti-urban'. But the most fitting word is probably 'anti'.

What are the scarce lyrics on the album about?

(S) Dull feelings and local characters in Gamlestaden.

Can you tell a bit more about the previously mentioned Swedish underground? Has it evolved a lot in the past two decades?



MATHIEU SERRUYS

Mathieu Serruys recently released his first record *On Germaine Dulac*, a vinyl filled with crescent synths and recorded objects, matured through a signature reel-to-reel handling. He did so on the fresh and ambitious B.A.A.D.M., of which he is half the igniter.

On M.S.

You are trained as a graphic designer. I find that back in your approach on music, you are not a musician, rather a composer of sounds.

Yes, I can imagine that. I make recordings, inspired by a film, or something similar. I do that on the spot. Afterwards I flesh out the recordings and arrange them. For my latest release, *on Germaine Dulac*, I had to record a part 50 times before it was good, although I don't like that. Furthermore, as a designer I like to work with unexpected elements, errors, serendipity. This is the same for my music, that's why I use a lot of tape recorders. Their nature renders them both unreliable and unpredictable. Different recordings can not be compared. That somehow is a basis for both my music and design.

What music do you feel affiliated to right now? Ennio Morricone, for one. The soundtrack for *Once Upon a Time in the West* is magnificent. Not only the composition but also how they got mastered, mixed, the texture on the records. I do think it's characteristic for that time, rather than that he aimed for it. Also John Carpenter, *The fog*!

On G.D.

For your record, a certain personage, Germaine Dulac, was the starting point. How much can you say that person, her images, were really in your head at the moment of recording?

The record started from a live soundtrack for one of her films that I did, so at that point I was completely focused on the film. Afterwards, I retook that stuff and rearranged it, creating its own identity. I wondered, what does it take to make it a self-sustaining record?

Stepwise I unconsciously drifted away from the film although I tried to stay somehow connected. The atmosphere is undeniably in the record.

I like the *musique concrète* pieces in your record. You haven't played these a lot live. Yeah, I want to do that more often. There was for instance some piano in recent live shows, but in rerecording through different reels, it got quite unrecognisable. I like how I can record something, very thin and basic, and then mix it up and grow in with the rest.

You like to do Alpinism, I can recognise that somehow in there. I think they truly are connected. I seek a similar sphere with both. I believe the mystery and romance one finds in the mountains is merely created by the human connotation given to this set of rocks. It's very interesting, a bit like with music. The attraction grows.

On B.A.A.D.M.

The B.A.A.D.M. site states that you believe in 'music as a medium' How do you see that exactly?

Music should not necessarily stand on itself. On the one hand it could be derived from an image, a physical object, thoughts. Music allows to express feelings

about certain objects. After that, people might look into that connection, but the larger part won't. For them it's something new, moving people, providing new offspring. In that way music passes stuff, and maybe someday someone might make a film about it.

You provide the starting point for the musicians?

Yes, that's true. When we approach a person, we're familiar with his or her methods and atmosphere. Then we look for a subject that forms an interesting confrontation, responding to his aura. Or vice versa, we have a subject, and we think of an artist that fits perfectly with it. By doing this, we force the artist to make new music, instead of compiling stuff from his archives. It also provides a certain coherence between the releases.

You and Joris Verdoodt (co-igniter) try to build an extended framework around each record, a lot of attention and space goes to its origin, its design. Doesn't providing so much context minimise the role of the music?

I don't think so. A cover is a cover, and even a blank one says something. And with the design we try to approach the music, not the other way around. In that sense, I feel it becomes an extension to the music.

Doesn't it eliminate the suggestion of the listener? He no longer is virgin to the music. You provide a context and give as such the listener a very defined narrative.

That's personal taste. I think it makes the B.A.A.D.M releases more interesting. We put a lot of effort in figuring out the right connections between artist and image, it's the core of our releases.

NOTE: B.A.A.D.M. has an interesting event coming up on the 3rd of April at 019, Ghent. A night with 3 artists, Camargue (BE), Sewer Election (SE) and Helm (GB), each of which got puzzled with 2 films.

[Simon Apers]



What's the state of affairs today?
(S) I leave this question to Dan, I don't know if I know what is happening, since I moved from Gothenburg and I generally don't know what's going on. New faces have shown up, people are trying out new things. I think lots of good things are happening, I like that it seems people are using instruments more.

(D) I'm the wrong person to answer this question, but if any interest in the contemporary Swedish scene, please Google Järtecknet, I Dischi Del Barone, United Forever, iDEAL Recordings, Tordon Ljud and Millstone Vinyl.

On a related note, can you tell us something about the Gothenburg-based Omlott-label (Peter Brötzmann, Peeter Uuskyla),

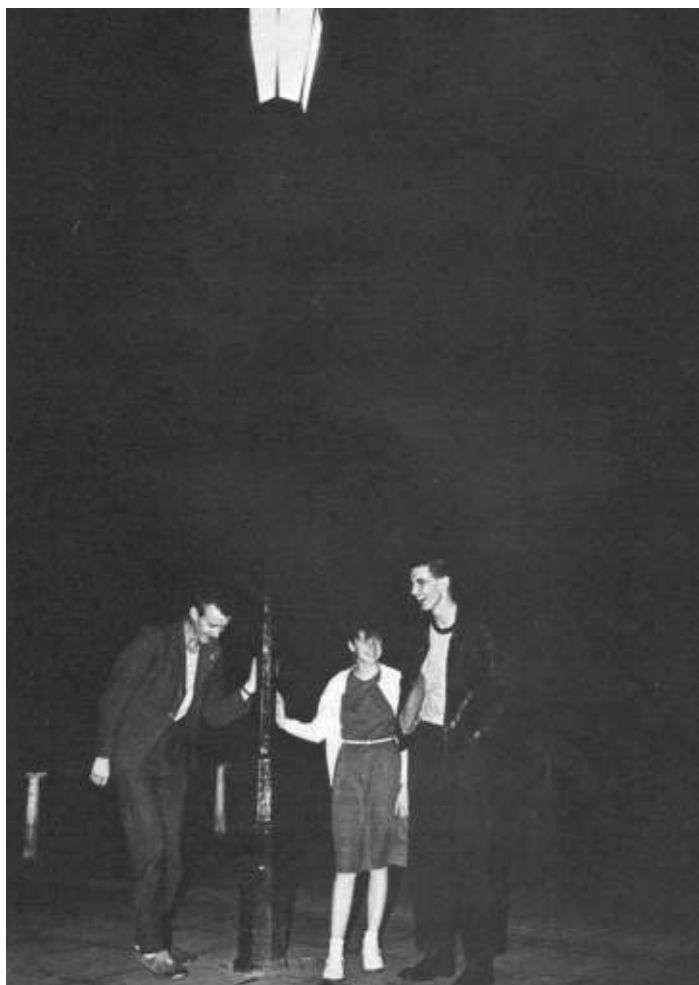
on which *Grå Våg Gamlestaden* was released?

(S) It is newly started and has a free jazz / experimental profile. Four records have been released so far. Gustaf and Anders, the owners, run a really nice record store in Gothenburg, which is called Music Lovers. Gustaf is also part of the Höga Nord label, (Dan and I play with him in Enhet För Fri Musik, our debut LP will be released by Holidays Records any time now).

Finally, which shows will you definitely go see at KRAAK festival?

(S) I know so little about what's going on musically, so I want to see everything but especially Kraus, Mathieu Serruys and Young Marble Giants.

[Ode Windels]



10 QUESTIONS TO A YOUNG MARBLE GIANT FROM A POST-CHERNOBYL KID

In the past 30+ years were you able to listen to *Colossal Youth* for fun?

Very rarely, but I am always surprised how good it is. It's exactly the same with all my records—because they are not preconceived... I don't know anything about a record until I have listened to it for a few years. This is a delicious paradox about writing and recording; two creative processes which are entered into innocently, with a small packet of sandwiches and a bottle of water. (I know the woods are deep!)

How did the collaboration go between the three of you while working on *Colossal Youth*? Everybody did their job or was it an organic flow?

Musically it was between Phil and me because Alison was able exactly to sing what I wrote, (despite some things being in difficult pitches, for her,) and it was,

I think, a pleasure for both of us (you should ask Phil.) Subsequently I have identified that for me, as a writer, I have two different ways of working. One is solo and the other is when I write for a project. The solo stuff is of course by me alone and shows my viewpoint only. When I write for Moxham & Halliday, or when I wrote for YMG, I somehow incorporate(d) a kind of fictional element. If you like it's John Lennon on my own stuff, i.e. raw and personal and Paul McCartney on collaborations, i.e. less direct, more imagined. But I'm better of course (joke).

Post-Chernobyl kids as myself discover Young Marble Giants through other bands that reference you as an influence. Who do you think are the better referrals? Do you keep up with new bands?

I'm too addicted to writing the next song to concern myself with just about anything else—except paying the bills.

I do hear interesting new stuff on the radio but the quantity of good stuff is nothing compared with the cornucopia of the 1960s and 1970s (albums, mainly, in the 70s.)

How do you feel about the cover versions of your songs by Hole and Etienne Daho? You could quit your day job because of the money they brought in?

I feel profoundly grateful for the interest and the money they generate. I was newly married with three very young children at the time and the income enabled me to be there with my kids, totally involved with them. Excellent timing!

What's the main reason to keep playing live with Young Marble Giants?

For me it's complicated; I get to be in a band that is hugely loved and supported by audiences, well paid and composed of two of my three brothers, whom I probably wouldn't see otherwise, and Alison! It's also brilliant for my profile, which needs all the help it can get, as I'm struggling with my 2nd wonderful creative songwriting project Moxham & Halliday. On the downside we only play a couple of gigs a year generally and we don't make any new music.

I found a flyer online of a concert night YMG played on called Rock against Sexism, Do you

think YMG played an important role as a female fronted band? Did you also experience down-sides to it?

Great question. Inevitably, whenever women are doing things equally with men in public, it gives an example of something which is actually perfectly natural. Female singers *per se* are not unusual however so this is less revolutionary than, say, a female fighter pilot. Basically men and women are different in many ways (and identical in many others) so there will always be differences in what they do and that's a good thing. The point is that women should feel confident about doing *whatever* they want to.

Which of your post-YMG projects differs the most from YMG?

Another excellent question! It must be my work with Louis Philippe because, although my songwriting must be similar to the YMG stuff, his contributions (including the influence he's had on me) are incredibly distinctive. You can always tell, when listening to his stuff, that it's him and never anyone else. We are about to release our second album together, *The Devil Laughs* by the way.

Are your children aware of the impact their father's band had on not so mainstream music? You'd have to ask them—I don't know. Basically I don't look back or analyse my stuff—that's the job of other people. I have a lot of music to make and time is getting shorter.

What happened to youngmarblegiants.com? It's a mix of lists with interviews and advertising for soccer bets.

The guy who started it got busy with life and couldn't keep it going. He offered it to us but I can't afford to do it. Shame—it's really good. One day...

Are you familiar with KRAAK or the Belgian underground scene you will play for on 7 March?

As you can guess by now the answer is no—but I will be soon!

[Claire Stragier]



BRYAN LEWIS SAUNDERS

Bryan Lewis Saunders is an intense performer and visual artist. He searches the dark corners of himself and mankind in general. He goes to places where average people are not willing to go. His life seems to be a continuous performance in which taking drugs to make self portraits is a logical thing to do. Or regardless of what people think of his disturbed mind, he records himself while sleeping and uses the recordings as source material for albums. He has collaborated on performances and other recordings with fellow dark hunters of the true grotesque John Duncan and Leif Elggren. Most interesting is the unconscious book on tape called, *The Confessor*, in which our own Razen provided the soundtrack for the title chapter.

Obsession seems to be a big issue in your work, how do you relate to it?
I would say obsessions come in different forms for me. In drawing and painting it's about forced obsession. I make myself to do it everyday. The drawing is of course consciously obsessed. For the dream recordings, the sleep works, I have developed a technique to press the button and record myself sleep-talking while I'm unconscious. The regular spoken word stuff, the Tragedy, there is obsession in the writing process. I will write one sentence, and repeat it over and over again until the next sentence comes out. I keep going like this, and then by the time I get to the 10th sentence it has become really forceful and natural.

Could you call it a stream of consciousness?
When I'm awake it is, but when I sleep it's definitely unconscious because I don't remember having said any of it while I'm asleep of course. When I'm writing for the spoken word performances it's not a 'stream' of consciousness it is more like gun shots of consciousness. I repeat the same thing over and over again, then some spark ignites and the next sentence comes out. So I don't quite know where that fits within conscious states.

Why are you so interested in these kind of techniques?
It's really interesting to figure out who you are, what makes me think and what bothers me. It's good and helps me become a better person. To find out who I am. When I was a kid, I used to be a bad person. Now I'm good, but I can become bad again. It's all part of self discovery.

So it's therapeutic?
Definitely, the majority of the drawings are a therapy. The spoken word as well, but I'm not sure if it is for other people. You could consider the sleep anti-therapeutic, because it messes with my sleep rhythms at times. In the beginning I had four dreams a night, and I woke up and recorded what happened in each dream. Over time I started to fall asleep while I was still talking, or I would push the record button while I was asleep and catch myself snoring or talking. It became a compulsive act and began interfering with my sleep cycles. But now I've gotten used to it.

Tell me something more about *The Confessor* tape?
The album is one of 24 chapters from an unconscious book on tape. I used recordings I made during one night and compiled them. At the end of the night, when I woke up, I described what happened in my dreams. We put that in the beginning, to introduce the story but as the recording goes on, the story becomes more and more abstract and surreal as I slip out of consciousness. When you add music to vocals such as sleep talking, it makes my voice sound awake when I'm not, but like I'm on drugs, or really tired. The recording was made from eight hours of sleep, but I cut out all of the silent space between speech and made it one narrative. The challenge is to translate those recordings into something that people can understand. Most of my dreams are nightmares, so the recordings are not really popular. The subject matter is unsettling, people don't want to listen to it really.
The recording I made with Raymond Dijkstra is maybe the best one I've had suited to transfer dreams to another person. I had a dream about a bobcat and I spoke about going forwards and backwards. I said some cryptic things and layered real sounds of bobcats on top if it. Then I played the audio forwards and backwards. Raymond added sounds of scratching on glass. I had hoped that when people listened to the album on repeat with headphones on while falling asleep that the bobcat would then enter into their dreams. Some people have told me that it has happened.
People have always been interested in dreams and if you're recording yourself talking while dreaming it



YONG YONG

In 2013 two youngsters scratched their way out of the ass of Europe. Their cut up, out there hip-hop, was born in the basement and squad scene of Lisbon, the city with too much sun and no work. They hip-sterised Portugal, with LP's released by Night School records and a swag tape on Goaty Tapes. Currently they reside in Glasgow, making their way to the top, opening doors to a theatre centred around mythical personae. Crappy synths are the sceptres to open the furthest side of irreality. A chat on their beginnings.

So, how started Yong Yong?
Were you individually making music before you formed a duo?

Music was always strongly present in our relationship even before we started. We would appreciate the same kind of stuff and share it with each other. Stepping into the practice came naturally; one day Chico found an old keyboard on the trash, with Chinese brand 'YongMei' with the most unpredictable monophonic personality. We jammed for hours with it and recorded what were the first Yong Yong songs, layering blindly melodies. One of them would be featured on the album *Love*. The object was powerful, accompanied us since then, becoming an identity beyond its material form. It started communicating with us, we would have the same dream were this figure talked with us about a place, this promised land. We played it every gig until it got total smashed on an airplane ride to

the UK. We still have the corpse and the will to repair it one day. Even it's unrecognisable and basically just a bunch of plastic and wires on a bag, we respect it and care for it.

Your music sounds like you're fond of analog synths and drum-computers. Any pieces of gear Yong Yong couldn't do without?
We have been always about working with the resources around us, purposely or not, from trashy keys to inherited drum machines. We experienced situations that fully changed our set up; the most meaningful one was this time we lost a backpack with most of our gear, including the computer we used in the set. We were lost at first, but it was a bless. Then Lord Prince Infinito came in touch with us, and

explained all the previous visions that he had shown us and our situation in the cosmos. He made us re-think how we would do things, especially without the laptop. Which can be an evil burden. So I guess now we just try to understand and follow his teachings and signs. We should also pay respect to our friends; right now almost all our devices are borrowed.

To describe your music, people seem to find weird metaphors a very appropriate tool. Any favourites you recall?
I think its good when people feel the need to get poetic, and that applies to anything. One time this guys who were putting us on in Lisbon described our music as *space blues*. I think that was pretty cool.

adds a lot of details to it, not like writing down your dreams when wake up. You tend to forget things as you awake. But to record the dream while you are experiencing it takes you as close as possible to being in the actual dream state. Unfortunately I have a lot of disturbed dreams. They're not the kind that the average person would be interested in.

Is it hard to share this intimate stuff with people you don't know?

Not one bit. I never edit the bad words or the messed up stuff out of the recordings, I don't believe in self censorship at all. If I want to discover what it is to be me, a human being, why should I hide the important stuff out of fear of what some people might think or say? Like Tom Waits says, 'You're innocent when you dream' you know?

Do you believe in psychoanalysis?

I don't believe in the symbolism of dreams at all if that is what you mean. If I, for instance, dream about

milk, I am dreaming about real milk it's not about my mothers breast, or semen, or anything Freudian or Jungian. The nature of dreams in the pre-REM stage or in the REM sleep are different. The dreams in the pre-stage are positive and self affirming, in the REM stage they are negative and dark—you are paralysed during this stage, you can't talk nor push record so it can be interesting to mix the two types of dreams together.

The majority of my dreams I see as rehearsals for possible future events in real life. When I dream about milk, it's really practical. My brain is playing out the 'what if?' question. People don't remember that much of their dreams, so they're missing data I believe and can't fully perceive them as possible event rehearsals for their wakeful life.

The surreal part comes from the fact that language has the ability to affect the events within the dream. For instance, if I dream that I am at a party with amphibians and there is crystal meth. Then the language part of my brain may get confused, and

instead of thinking 'methamphetamine' I think 'meth-amphibian'. That mistake can change the course of the dream and suddenly it's not frogs that are doing meth, it is another entirely different species 'meth-amphibians' and they start growing legs out of there head, the surreal stuff... Language is processed imperfectly during the dream state, I believe. All the sensory input during a dream, comes from the brain and is affected by the language and emotional processes working on their own, basically. I believe but who knows for sure?

That's the reason why I and other people probably find it so fascinating. At this moment, lucid dreaming is of no interest to me. I don't want to influence what's happening naturally. To me it cheapens the true nature of who you are, and I don't want to monkey with that. But that could change in the future as I keep exploring.

[Niels Latomme]



Ever came up with some insane metaphors yourselves?

I don't know if you can call it a metaphor but Super-Natural and Avant Grime might be fitting.

Your aesthetic has a lo-fi and ambiguous feel to it, the music as-well as the videos you make.

Do you consider Yong Yong to be a total concept?

We wouldn't call it a concept but its definitely total. Yong Yong gravitates around other identities that form our imaginary. Maybe it's the one that became a more public form, but its part of the tale that is told on our video 'Yong Yong—Tocha (DJ Tabako Edit)'.

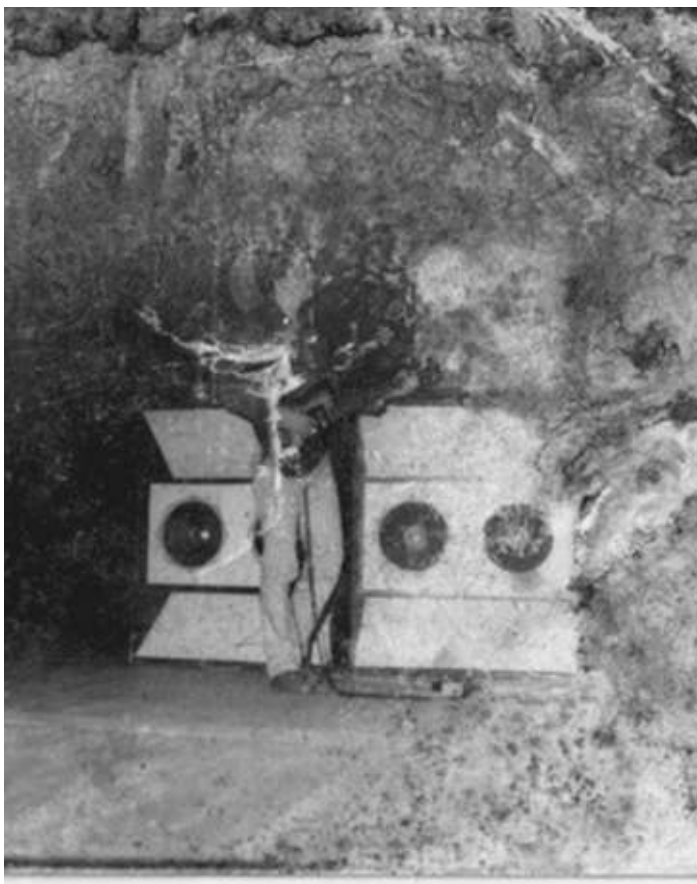
You both moved from Lisbon to Glasgow, quite a change, I guess.

What attracted you to the north and have these new surroundings changed Yong Yong's music?

Yeah we moved to the UK a year ago, we never chose Glasgow, our intention was just to find a new place. When we first came here we felt an instant connection with the place and the people we met. Our music changed, it would change anyway, but here the main difference is that stuff happens more easily than in Portugal. Although we've been very supported and even started for our Portuguese friends. Glasgow has more of a rhythm to it and it has been more easy to try make a living.

[Jannis Van de Sande]





YOU WILL HEAR HIM OFTEN PROUDLY INTRODUCING HIMSELF: "I AM NOT NORMAL!"

Born in 1953, the year Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili Stalin died, Rodion grew up listening to music from the radio, especially brass bands which made a strong impression through its sobriety, energy and expressiveness. "For me, making music was a way to unload the vast amount of energy I had. I was always cranking up the volume, singing along, drumming with forks, spoons, better said with everything that surrounded me. I was always a noisemaker."

The 60s and 70s in communist Romania enabled children and youngsters to develop their technical curiosities through books, DIY kits and Russian devices. This is the context in which Rodion Ladislau Roşca developed his interests for mechanics and electronic devices. "My mother gave me the most beautiful presents such as 'The little electrician' kit or 'The little mechanic' kit. Having played with those things stimulated my skills and I always felt an profound pleasure working and making plans."

He started with clarinet when he was 8, following an electric guitar in 1967. "I have made my first compositions in 1969 using the tape recorder of a friend. I recorded my ideas for fear of not forgetting them. The next step was to add voice one and voice two simultaneously. These were my first multi-track songs, a full-blown orchestra in which I played every instrument. I was the first Romanian musician who did that in those times. In 1971 I had hundreds of short ideas waiting to be developed. One day I have decided to make a complete track, and so I have made one with the few English words I knew 'come on, come on'. I see it as a pearl regarding its melody and sensibility. Right after, it followed 'What is with me', 'Here we are' 1972, 'Piatra' 1973, 'Cine te crezi tu?' (Who do you think you are) 1973."

It was in 1975–76 that Rodion formed 'Rodion G.A.' with Gicu Fărcaş and Adrian Căpraru, and became a DIY tech wizard. He started to improvise and compose more and more using reel-to-reels and surrounded himself with three or four Tesla tape machines—one of them transformed into an echo machine—, an East German Vermona drum machine, a toy Casio VL Tone and a little Soviet-made Faemi organ to which he added phaser, flanger and fuzz pedals. Even so, he kept on composing in the intimacy of his room like a madman. By the end of the 70s the atmosphere became grim across the country.

"During the communist regime I was constantly followed by the god damned police, either for my long hair or the music I was listening to. All I wanted was to fled the country." As to openly oppose the regime, he knew there was a chance to get in serious trouble so he didn't want to cause any sorrow to his mother. Talking about the artist's status in that period, "Our band was acknowledged from the beginning as the first Romanian electronic band. My songs were number one both on radio and TV, they have been soundtracks for TV programs, documentaries, animations and theatre plays. I was always praised for my work and considered a pioneer. I am not modest, I know my value." In 1978 he started to send tapes to local radio stations and in a short time his tracks were heard everywhere. The first concert came in 1980 but his songs were so complex that they couldn't have been performed in their original form. He needed more musicians for that but the scene was scarce. Rodion G.A. were very famous, so famous that only two tracks were released on a compilation. The irony... And still no proposal for an album release.

"Moment" was the first song to be aired on the radio in November 1978. The choral part stirs me. It has a brilliant structure, must have been sent from above,

otherwise I cannot seem to get how it came up to me. Even after 35 years I ask myself how and still no answer. For me, this song is an energy giver. In 'Paradox' the sound is ample and unusual for those times. 'Stele si lumini', another sound monument, with a thousand watts 'orchestra'. They are my beloved ones together with 'Cantec fulger', 'Dans macabru' and 'Imagini din vis'. These are his darlings waiting for thirty years to be released.

In terms of composition, he is a man of layers, a man of archive. "I have a complex mind and I analyse a subject from different angles and perspectives. Sometimes, while working on a track, I get tired or bored. I stop and I lay it aside so that after days, years or months I can rediscover it and eventually finish it. Listening to the final result I get more ideas and I work more on it until I think there is nothing to add. Other times, I get ten more ideas from a track and I finish it a couple of hours." No wonder nobody can place his music in a concrete genre. As for me, I find the status 'the father of Romanian new wave' a bit exaggerated because it lacks a historical and political context. As form, some tracks have the new wave vibe but form is not always everything. Considered the king of records in Cluj, he avoided making the same music as the one he was listening to (THE BEATLES, THE ROLLING STONES, BEE GEES, APHRODITE'S CHILDS, MANFRED MAN, THE WHO, CLIFF RICHARD, LED ZEPPELIN, FRANK ZAPPA, BLACK SABBATH or KRAFTWERK). Whatever he does comes organically, instinctively, following unknown paths, connections and logics. That is what makes his music unique and alive.

One can say that Rodion was born under a sign of constraints: political, financial, social. And even so, aren't constraints stimulating creativity? I guess he is the answer to this question.

[Cristina Amelia Messer]

ÁINE O'DWYER

The Irish, currently London based Áine O'Dwyer is a multi-instrumentalist and singer, best known for her lyrical harp playing on collaborations with Mark Fry and The A. Lords, United Bible Studies, Piano Magic and Richard Moul. She covers a broad array of music deeply rooted in the Irish tradition of epic tale telling troubadours, interweaving it with improvisations on harp or organ. Her music makes the bridge from an undefined, mythical past to the fragmented times we live in now. Which might in need for new stories. On the KRAAK festival she will perform together with the Ghent Choir De 2^{de} Adem.

You just released a beautiful record with the intriguing title *Music for Church Cleaners Vol I & II* on M.I.E. records. Can you tell me something how you came to this?

I was visiting some friends back in 2011, and on this visit I walked by St. Marks church. At that time I was already looking to make for church spaces, which led me to this project. I walked in and had a look around, I was instantly drawn to the pipe organ. As I was leaving, I met with the sacristan. We exchanged details, and arranged that I could come and play the organ on Saturdays when the church cleaners would clean the church. It was very exciting to work in this environment, in a unofficial way. The cleaners didn't ask any questions about my recording devices.

Having grown up in a Catholic environment, my memory automatically came into play while making this project. It allowed me to explore this in a subtle way. A church is so pregnant with meaning, I felt that I didn't have to do much in order to extract material in this environment being in the church's down time and with the church cleaners. I felt strongly about Irish church crimes and how do you or anyone reconcile with this massive uncovering? The recording devices were deliberately set up to pick up the ongoing sounds. I didn't conduct the cleaners, they were doing their jobs, and I mine. I had my back turned to them at the organ. Sometimes our blind thoughts would interweave, sometimes with melody, sometimes with rhythm, or drone, so an important element was

chance but also being present in the moment was the key. Allowing from improvisation, not just with an instrument but allow all sounds to exist on the sound palette. There are some moments, where they almost bang or sweep in rhythm with the music, as if they were really conscious about it, although I haven't asked them about this, so I don't know and maybe I'll never know. Sometimes my thought became active through the improvisations and listening, or the conversations and sometimes thought was less conscious. I like to find a place where I can melt into space or lose a part of my self to join something more universal. But there are so many different processes involved. There was a separate editing process where I listened back to all the recordings and chose



MADALYN MERKEY

Madalyn Merkey is a visual and sound synthesis artist who uses the post-romantic idea of the landscape to carefully sculpt fluid and organic electronic pieces. She debuted with the record *Scent* on Ducktails' New Images label. It's successor *Valley Girl* was a highlight of 2014. We had a Skype conversation on her music, vocoders and Brandy.

I came across the Brandy plug-in on Google on your side, what is it about?
The website worked with the Google map API, but the background images are no longer supported, so it doesn't work properly anymore. It generated textures to represent landscapes of the Pacific Ocean, Moon, stars, and Mars on a computer screen. The filler terrain was kind of silly depictions, as they were representing infinite space, and not real destinations.

Talking about landscapes, the hills of California inspired your latest record *Valley Girl*. As the music is very abstract, how do you see the two relating?
The landscapes which are the subject in *Valley Girl* are more about the transition from where I used to live to where I live now. Before moving to Oakland, I lived in Chicago, which is a very vertical city, very concentrated and with a very rich culture. In Oakland, everything is much more spread out. The record is abstract, trying to capture the idea of rolling hills and waves, and to present electronic music in a more natural and fluid way.

It's about injecting the organic into synthetic, almost plastic like music?
Yes, that is so. I always try to use music as material. I think a lot about the quality of the material and inspect the sounds carefully. It works around

a compositional set of rules I set out. I reinterpret how I interact with my surroundings, which in real life are a lot of trees, really open spaces, and natural variations. Those elements I use as a compositional constraint and a way of working with the material.
The sounds and the atmosphere of the album reminds me of the *Far Side Virtual* album by James Ferraro. Are you interested in these ideas of creating a virtual reality which stands aside from the day to day reality?
Not so much. I definitely like interacting with the real world, to draw inspiration from. James is trying to be evocative in his music, which I'm not doing much. I'm more interested in organising the sound, it's about knowing the song material, generating it all myself.

You studied at the famous Mills College. Where there people who where a big inspiration for you?
The first who springs to mind is Maggi Payne, a composer dedicated to acoustic recording techniques and electronic music pieces with the Moog on campus. Her particular sensibility towards sound exhibits such a high-level of care and is very inspiring to me. Whenever I hear a work by her, I'm impressed by the detail of it. She cares so much, and you feel it every second in the focus of the piece. She has been very supportive towards me and my practice. Also I learned quite a lot from John Bischoff. Any computer music problem I had, we would discuss and form a solution in one sitting. His computer music class got me to really think about building systems to generate change in a composition. From him I learned to appreciate deviation from my original ideas in favour of growth and further development of complex musical occurrences. Especially always changing elements, who work their own way. His talents in control and music aesthetic is really beautiful.

Was the old generation also an influence?
Oh yes, Robert Ashley was the reason why I started studying at Mills. For a while I was really into his operas and how relevant the way his use of voice was, so alive and visceral. Again, especially the kind of control and care in his music, which made it a real art form. I worked in the archive at Mills, where I got to see some letters from Robert Ashley. He helped in setting up the Centre for Contemporary Music.

Have you ever met him?
I saw an opera of his in Brooklyn in 2012. I didn't meet him, I guess I was a bit afraid.

About voices, tell me about how you work with the vocoder and the synthesised voices in your music?
A friend gave me a vocoder unit seven years ago, which became my first musical instrument. I was really fascinated by its strong characteristics. I was interested in learning about all the different combinations of sound which I could make with it and using my own voice to control it. It pulls out certain aspects of the voice. From using the voice, I got interested in using synthesisers. It extended my capabilities, because before it, I never recorded voice regularly, and it opened the way to a lot of possibilities, starting from scratch.

Would you ever use your voice as a pure instrument, without effects?
While I was at Mills, I took classical voice lessons. So I have some technical skills, but it's difficult to know how to compose for voice. I really admire the use of voice (by other people), it's really a craft. Before I would come out with works for voices, I'd have to be really satisfied with it, and find a definite focus. For now it's not really on the table, but it interests me because I think it's really important to have a portion of body action or gesture inside the music.

How do you interact with the contemporary DIY and post-noise scene, as being an academic?
When I still lived in Chicago, I started going to noise shows. Before that I lived in Oklahoma, a very rural place. Seeing those shows and performances, using unusual instruments like air conditioners and such, made me interested in seeking out shows and becoming involved in music. So I started a label while doing visual arts. By duplicating tapes, and preparing the music for them, I soon became interested in the audio. I realised that audio releases information over time. In visual arts you get all the information at once, while in audio it evolves. While using audio in artworks, also the physical yet non-physical aspects of it started interesting me. It doesn't take up any space, but you can totally fill the room with it, and create these different atmosphere pressures. I was always interested in the properties and the principles of acoustics, and that got me wanting to have an academic control over the compositions.

[Niels Latomme]



the ones which I thought spoke about particular things.
Were the recordings a way of digging into your childhood then?
Kind of, but I'd like to think of it in an universal way. The more we dig into ourselves, the more it becomes universal.
The idea of confronting the profane, the day-to-day with the holy, the organ appeals to me a lot.
Were you aware of this subtext?
Yes, I like the idea that the sacred is in the day to day, in our daily rituals. The human is sacred regardless of someone being in a church, not in a church, on a stage or off a stage. We are our own church and our own god.
You mentioned being raised in a Catholic family. Do you still believe?
Erm... No, no (laughs). I could admit that I am a spiritual person, but religion is a man-made thing. I'm not a part of this. When I was younger, I did rebel against it. But now I'm fascinated by how much mania it inspires in people's minds. It has made it's way into people's genetic makeup, especially from an Irish perspective. We're trying to progress out if it, but it seems to be something that holds the human back or should I say, it denies the animal nature of the human. And we are both.
You seem to work in broad array of music, from folk based songs accompanied by harp to site spe-



VEX RUFFIN



Vex Ruffin smashed all his guitars, but that doesn't stop him from making minimal post punk no new wave. In the HBO series *Girls*, Adam lifts weights to his song 'Take it'. That's what Vex Ruffin does. Pumping adrenaline in your brain circuit. So you can get ready for that booty call. LAMINA!

In the YouTube comments to the 'I'm Creative' video, people are whining a lot. Do you get a lot of hate from the hardcore hip-hop fans because you take up a spot in the Stones Throw catalogue?

Not really, I think a lot of them like my music especially when they see me play live at special stones throw events they get into it. You'll see a hip-hop backpacker wearing a Dilla shirt dancing, a guy with dreads moving his hands in the air and a heavy set girl, it's like a scene in *8 mile* except there dancing to Front 242. As far as people who post YouTube comments they all do not know what there talking about.

One of the comments says 'this is like retard post punk?' Seems like a compliment to me, but are you offended?

They did? I didn't see that one. Yes I'm totally offended. No I'm not it's cool.

Was it important for you to get signed with Madlib's label? Did you set it as a career goal or did it just happen?

Well, I started making music trying to be like Madlib actually even gave him a beat cd before I got signed in like 2005 or something... switched up my sound and went the weird rock route and got signed. Stones Throw was my first pick and the only label to hit me back when I sent out a bunch of demos. It's pure fate.

From your album artwork I'm guessing that you're a comics and cartoon fan, as are Madlib

and Doom. They both create alter egos and characters, like Quasimoto in Madlib's case, or they sample cartoon sounds. What cartoon or comic was influential for you?

I'm not really a big comic / cartoon guy when I was a kid I grew up watching *He-Man*, and *Voltron*. I'm actually working on a hip-hop record with a rapper from Los Angeles named the Koreatown Oddity and we sampled a lot of old cartoons from the 90s, can't wait for that to come out. It's almost finished!

What's the common ground between punk and hip-hop?

I have no idea... being original.

What does LAMINA mean?

Lamina is animal backwards its when I get very angry or stupid. I become the Filipino incredible hulk. I haven't been lamina for a few years now cause I'm a father now.



Does playing live with a band influence the way you write songs? Or do you still do everything with a sampler, mic and electric guitar?

I don't have a band anymore. I still record with sp. Been sampling more and more than I ever did before because I smashed all my guitars which is stupid cause now I don't have any. Would love to work with a band one day.

Are you working on a new album?

Yes! It's finished. We just need to finish mixing it. It's called conveyor and it's more influenced by 80s New York, electronic music, industrial, disco, darkwave, britpop, noise and hip-hop. It's all over the place of course! Should be out sometime this year.

Number 8 on your 'Random facts—Vex Ruffin' list is 'my dream is to tour the world with my band'? How are you doing so far?

Well I toured Europe last year been kind of MIA working on records. I have a feeling I'm going to have a good chance in 2015.

What's your drug of choice?

Atenolol.

Do you have other projects / bands?

Working on a experimental album inspired by Richard H. Kirk and Death Comet Crew and a jazz fusion / industrial project I'm working on, and of course a hip-hop album with the Koreatown Oddity, all beats produced by myself.

Who would you like to make music with if you could cross the boundaries between life and death?

I would love to have worked with Rammellzee and Patrick Cowley.

[Niels Latomme]

cific organ improvisations. How does that work?

For me, they are coming from the same source. If you work with different instruments, different concerns come to the surface. But they could be part of one thing. I like to feel that I'm continually developing, I don't like to put a full stop after anything really. I feel like I have a lot to learn all the time. So it's just a matter of finding new ways of experimentation, and trying to avoid stagnation by pushing forward as much as I can. I like to work with all sorts of mediums, because they say different sorts of things but they all come from me and naturally they communicate something which is intrinsic in me.

Did you work in other fields of the arts?

In the past I would have used performance art based works, installations, video and film. The past three years I've been focussed on sound. There are lot of reasons for this, but the main reason is that I feel at home with sound and I want to explore this more, although I'm still keen on the visual too. It will make it's way back in, some how.

What is your background?

As a kid, I played music quite a lot, went for lessons, all of that sort of thing... and then I studied art. I came to London to do an MA, I guess that makes me an art school kid (laughs).

Is the musical tradition a big influence?

I used to live in county Limerick, your are definitely soaked in tradition there.

I feel the past influences seeping into the music, whether I like it or not. I used to accompany a lot of great fiddle players in my early days who had an abundance of traditional Irish, English, French music. These all made they're way in to my memory bank. I didn't fight it for this project. At the time of releasing them back in 2011, I felt like it was a confessional almost, as there was no editing performed on the tracks themselves and I could hear the traditional Irish melodies interleaved in the improvisations.

Thank you, we'll see you at the KRAAK festival then!

[Niels Latomme]

COLOPHON

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ÁINE O'DWYER
& DE 2^{DE} ADEM (IR / BE)

The Irish, currently London based Áine O'Dwyer is a multi-instrumentalist and singer, best known for her lyrical harp playing on collaborations with Mark Fry and The A. Lords, United Bible Studies, Piano Magic and Richard Moulton. She covers a broad array of music deeply rooted in the Irish tradition of epic tale telling troubadours, interweaving it with improvisations on harp or organ. Her music makes the bridge from an undefined, mythical past to the fragmented times we live in now, and which might in need for new stories. She just released a stunning record on the unfamous M.I.E. records, with the intriguing title *Music for Church Cleaners*. On the KRAAK festival she will perform together with the Aalst Choir De 2^{de} Adem.

KRAUS (NZ)

Pat Kraus is a contemporary Joe Meek, mastering the guitar, bamboo flute, tape loops and self build synthesizer. At the other side of the world, the man writes broken pop songs which are the soundtrack of an universe where Ignatz is jamming with Bruce Haack.

MADALYN MERKEY (US)

'Madalyn Merkey paints deconstructed, postromantic synth landscapes.' It could be the title of an adventure of a fictional avant-garde composer in search of the holy grail. But Merkey just released the album *Valley Girl* (2014, New Image Ltd), which is a great example of sound synthesis inspired by the Californian hills.

NEUTRAL (SW)

A moment ago nihilist, urban no wave was a has-been genre, suited for old farts with a J.G. Ballard obsession, who cannot handle the confident optimism of generation Y. Reality is different nowadays, dystopy is everywhere, and the Swedish duo Neutral sharpen their songs on it. Their debut album *Grå Våg Gamlestaden* (2014, Omlott) is fuck you towards optimism and softness, with its broken guitar noise, misanthropic industrial and warped tape experiments. The facts: Sofie Herner and Dan Johansson are dwelling in the empty warehouse scene in Göteborg, the same where Källarbarnen, Sewer Election, and Ättestupa hide.

RODION G.A. (RO)

Somewhere in the seventies, deep in the Eastern Bloc, a man saw the future. With state of the art equipment he changed Romanian pop music profoundly, and injected electronics, far out synths and

never heard tape collage into it. His name was Rodion G.A., and disappeared since then. In 2014, Strut records re-released a couple of his records, and Rodion raised to prove that he was the first and the only king of Eastern Bloc Kraut.

BRYAN LEWIS SAUNDERS
& RAZEN (US / BE)

Bryan Lewis Saunders is a visual artist whose life turned out to be a continuous performance. He conducts research into the dark sides of the human mind, and confronts himself with fears which mortals wisely avoid. Impressive is *Under the Influence*, and ongoing series of self portraits, kicked off in 1995. Each portrait is made under the influence of a different kind of drugs.

Apart from a visual artist, BLS is a gifted spoken word artist, who collaborated with a.o. Ze'v, John Duncan, Leif Elggren and our own Razen. Razen and BLS released together the album *The Confessor*, an intense tape on which recordings of himself talking while sleeping, were used as raw material by Razen.

SEA URCHIN (IT / EG)

Minimalistic dub meets esoteric avant-garde, entering a playground of forgotten Italian pop stars. Sea Urchin is the brain child of the Egyptian-Austrian Leila Hassan and the Italian artist Francesco Cavaliere.

MATHIEU SERRUYS (BE)

Serruys is Ghent's finest tape noiser and synth wizz kid, in search of the sensitivity hidden in reel-to-reel and analogue synth grain. He is together with Joris Verdoodt, the honcho behind the freshly new B.A.A.D.M. label, on which he released his deep personal debut album *On Germain Dulac*.

KONRAD SMOLEŃSKI VS. LOTTO (PL)

One of the key works in the sound exposition *Orkest!* is the monumental installation *Everything Was Forever, Until it Was No More* by the Polish artist Konrad Smole_ski. Two gigantic church bells are facing two towers of speakers, everyday they start to ring mercilessly. The church bells intermingle with sounds captured during the day in the exhibition, warped and manipulated until a deep, massive drone is left. The work plays upon our deepest fears that one point in time, there will be nothing left anymore.

For the KRAAK festival Smole_ski invited the Polish improv and noise rock band Lotto for a unique performance to activate the installation.

Lotto is the trio of Mike Majkowski (who is part of Hailu Merga's recent band), Lukasz Rychlikci and Pawel Szpura. Hailing from Warsaw, they explore the outer borders of improv, country and noise rock through long repetitive structures.

VEX RUFFIN (US)

Minimalist punk rock with new wave beats, Brainbombs meets Madlib.

YONG YONG (PT)

Cut up, *out there* hip-hop, straight from the basement and squad scene of Lisbon, the city with too much sun and no work. Yong Yong hipsterise Portugal, with LP's released by Night School records and a swag tape on Goaty Tapes.

YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS (UK)

1978... decent clothes were a valuable reason to lynch someone, musical skills were forbidden and without an egg you didn't go out of the house. Music history claims that in between Sex Pistols and The Smiths there was only bleakness, aggression, anarchism and nihilism. With their naive and minimalist songs, Young Marble Giants were an anomaly in the Zeitgeist. Even now their debut album *Colossal Youth* hasn't lost any freshness, and has been a more profound influence on this generation compared to the collected works of the no future hipsters.

+ EXPO: ORKEST!

An exhibition on sound with a focus on interplay and interaction, that sounds like a stretched ensemble.

Orkest! is a score for ensemble that relies heavily on the architecture of the gallery space and the visitor's exploring. The visitor feels the dynamics and contrasts as he / she explores the exhibition, making his / her own score. The works are well chosen to fit in the specific rooms as well to interact with the other works in the adjacent spaces so they reinforce each other in the in-between spaces.