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# DEAR READER,

The Spring is halfway through, and we are gently sliding into the Summer. This is a new edition of the Avant-Guardian, covering KRAAK's program since January. This edition is for you. You can read it when you are sitting on a terrace, nipping of you well deserved Ricard or white wine, and mesmerize about the evolutions in *off-stream* music we presented last months.

In the moment of a similar experience – sitting on a terrace – we encountered Mekhitar Garabedian. Mekhitar is a good friend and foremost a great visual artist. He was thinking aloud about this magazine, and expressed his admiration for its format.

What I remember from our loose conversation, is him telling that if you want to make something sound like it's coming from Armenia, you just should add 'ian' to a name. Mine would be Niels Latommian, for instance. It stroke me as funny, but also to the point in it's absurdism. It suddenly became clear that from that point of view *The Avant-Guardian* presents itself as an outsider. A stranger that curiously watches a community to which he seems not belonging to. At the same time, *The Avant-Guardian* is actually part of it, as he presents himself as a trickster, by altering

A the sound of his name into something unkown and exotic. While he is actually deeply rooted in that community.

A Meki (we call Mekhitar 'Meki') liked the name as well because it incorporates a paradox. It's proclaiming to be avant-garde, but also to be the guardian. It appeared to me that this an excellent position to stand with both feet into the contemporary social state of mind. It is an old school way of distributing new information about bands and musical acts. It's far from transparent, and it's – due to its physical format – not available everywhere and at any time. It is notorious for its belated timing.

But that it's beauty, as it guards and cherishes the 'avant', the things that came before.

That's why it covers concerts, which already passed. The Avant-Guardian is as such a platform to let you image and dream about events in the past, wondering how they have been; or, if you were at the event, to let you look onto it from a different angle, because you finally got to know where this or that band came from, what they think, why they make certain (musical) choices.

And so we become enriched with different experiences, insights and emotions.

I wish you a very beautiful summer!

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## KRAAK'S NEW YEARS SNIFTER YERSINA PESTIS / AYMERIC DE TAPOL p. 4

KRAAK opened 2017 with a New Year's Party, to celebrate this: 'Hang on and feel 2017 together'.

According to Wikipedia, **Yersinia Pestis** is a dirty disease. According to the Brussels underground it's a young Brussels band. They bastardardize Black Metal, Psychobilly and other fertile styles which flourish like fungae in cellars. The band calls it Death Wave, which could be, with its razor-sharp fuzz, fist-pimping drums and creepy vocals, the morbid brother of Crap Wave.

**Aymeric de Tapol** is a versatile French sound artist, noiser and modular synth freak that once got lost in Brussels. Nowadays you can call him one of the cities hidden gems. His most recent concerts and records (Lexi Disques, VLEK a.o.) show a grown up skater that is freely steeple chasing between technoise, power drones, French pop tunes, sound art and analogue synth weirdness.

☛ In de Ruimte  
09.01.17

## FREE SPIRITUAL CAMPIRE MUSIC PELT / NATHAN BOWLES

Since last year KRAAK started a collaboration with the cosiest living room of Brussels Centre, run by the people of AB who felt the need to open a more direct context to offer *off-stream* music. They started Huis23, and we are one of the guests on regular bases. When we heard Pelt would be in Europe, we couldn't miss out on this respected and highly influential collective of free drone folk. Too bad for the Avant-Guardian that the US-EU connection was fucked by the one whose name cannot be said, so an interview was not possible. But if you scroll down in the archives of *the Avant-Guardian*, you'll find an interview in nr. 4.

■ For over 20 years, the American

avant-folk trio **Pelt** has been releasing countless records, CDR's and tapes. Originally started as a psychedelic rock band they evolved to playing noisy drones, Western raga, Appalachian folk and Eliane Radigue-like minimalism. Next to that, all members of Pelt had fruitful solo careers; master guitar player Jack Rose (who died in 2009) will probably be the most well known of all, but members Nathan Bowles and Mike Gangloff have also made a name for themselves ale solo artists, next to leading the ragtime/folkband the Black Twig Pickers. Mikel Dimmick on the other hand is mostly known for his other project Spiral Joy Band.

**Nathan Bowles** could be called the true heir of the American

A Primitives folk tradition. Apart from being a member of Steve Gunn's band, he plays self-written songs that are nothing but a great addition to the folk tradition, reviving it by

injecting Appalachian music with hardcore emotional depth.

☛ Huis 23  
16.02.17

## KRAAK FESTIVAL

SEE ATTACHMENT

☛ Beursschouwburg  
03.03.-05.03.17

## DE BIËNNALE VAN BELGIË AFEWORK NIGUSSIE / CARRAGEENAN / MCCLOUD ZICMUSE / EURO2000 p. 7

I Gabber Sam Gunst is one of the thriving forces in the Ghent underground scene, but slowly the world is recognizing his talent. We were happy to work together, as he invited us – next to the fine chaps of KERM and more – to curate part of the musical program of his bi-yearly exhibition The Biennial of Belgium. We proposed a program of three acts that covers the wide spectrum of underground music.

A **Afework Nigussie (ET)** Versatile musician and singer from Gondar (north of Ethiopia). His solo set at Gardena will emulate his personal allegorical history of that of an 'Azmarí'; a type of Ethiopian bard who embodies the freedom of speech in Ethiopia by singing provocative, humoristic and often improvised verses set to music. Afework

frequently collaborates with Dutch post-punk mainstays THE EX.

**Carrageenan (FR)** Dystopian technoise made by the Brussels based underground star Matthieu Levet. He forms with fellow Brussels undergrounder TG the band Pizza Noise Mafia. Played last year a killer set at the KRAAK festival.

**McCloud Zicmuse (US)** Brussels most enthusiast and dandyesque artist, songwriter, instrument builder and collector of Belgian folk music. As Le Ton Mitié he makes lo-fi songs, but when he uses his birth name, he explores the possibilities of up cycled music instruments and out there tunings. Highly recommended is his Shelter Press released tape *The Well-Tuned Laemiaen*.

☛ In de Ruimte  
25.03.17



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# KRAAK & VOORUIT PRESENT PANCRACE PROJECT / GLORIAS NAVALES

**Pancrace Project** is an improvising quintet comprising French, British and Austrian performers. The members include Prune Bécheau, Arden Day, Julien Desailly, Léo Maurel and Jan Vysocky. Pancrace is also the name of the church in Dangolsheim Alsace located next to where the instrument inventor Léo Maurel lives. Maurel makes ingeniously designed instruments inspired by the hurdy gurdy. Pancrace instigates proceedings in the confinement of an organ; a Cyclops puffing its continuous and raucous breathe only to be woken by instruments who, like horseflies, mischievously start tormenting proceedings with microtones and striated polyrhythms. The journey ends four sides later with the language of the birds imposing an unadorned silence on the church.

**Glorias Navales** is a band based in Santiago, Chile, who combines local folk traditions and paganism with a post-Velvets aesthetic. Imagine Lou Reed, John Cale and Violeta Parra together, doing late night acoustic lo-fi trance jams in a rural area of Chile. They offer a raw, unvarnished walkway straight into heart the of the contemporary Chilean underground. Kye recently released the great *Cofradía Nautica* their debut LP and the follow-up to 2015's *Carta a Maureen Tucker* cassette on ETCS. Drawn from live concert tapes recorded at BYM Records, and recordings made in the band's private practice space.

Tramzward  
15.04.17

# EAR TO THE GROUND FESTIVAL VA AA LR p. 8 / WILL GUTHRIE p. 9

Ear to the Ground is festival founded by KRAAK's neighbours De Bijloke. It presents a mixture of in total 32 micro concerts and performances – all ranging in between 10 to 35 minutes –, exploring as such the margins of what a concert could and would be. See it as

an exhibition at the Bijloke site, which presents concerts instead of sculptures, for which De Bijloke invited KRAAK to add 2 out there performances.

Bijloke Site  
13.05.17 / 25.05.17

# B-SIDES & RARITIES SEE ATTACHMENT HENRY ANDERSEN RECORD LAUNCH

A happening to present K093 – Henry Andersen's debut album *Stanzas or The Law of the Good Neighbour*. Henry Andersen is a Brussels-based visual artist and composer. Trained as a minimal and reductionist composer under the wings of Peter Ablinger, he moved from music into visual art, writing and sound performances. KRAAK released his debut vinyl on May 25th. For *the Avant-Guardian* Andersen curated the insert, which you can see as another extension to

his piece. For the record launch he proposed to turn the idea of a concert up side down, inside out and broaden it up to a platform to present the (mostly visual and performative) work of his friends with whom he read the list that serves as the composition for the record. You can read more on his work and record in the lengthy interview in the KRAAK festival attachment.

Damien & The love Guru  
09.06.17

# KREIS PLÖN, KÖHN RECORD LAUNCH KÖHN p. 6 / RASHAD BECKER p. 5 / YANN LEGUAY p. 5

A triple bill of current electronica's grandmasters, honouring the 20th birthday of Köhn with a new record. Almost 20 years ago Jürgen De Blonde debuted on KRAAK with the nowadays unfindable and almost vision-ary album *köhm 1*. It was the starting point for a vital and wondrous exploration that lead him over paths of glitch, idm, shoe gaze, hypnagogic pop, improvised music, straight forward synth music, field recordings and kraut... In the middle of this ungraspable adventure through contemporary electronic music, Köhn stands as a genuine artist that stayed true to the curious spirit of the DIY knob twiddling and boggling boy he once was.

KRAAK is proud to present his 7th album on KRAAK – *Kreis Plön*, which documents and envisions 20 years of exploring. It's an album that is about a fusion of the past and the future, of separation and reconfiguration, of mourning and rejoicing, of noise and peace. *Kreis Plön* is about geolocation. It's about probable fiction and looking for bits of different puzzles that fit together. An exercise in linear and perpendicular coherence devoid of any objective logic. In the middle of the album an artist is envisioning his place in the Now, questioning how or when he got there, as he links memories to imaginary places, and real places to imaginary histories. *Kreis Plön* stands as such a masterpiece

that bluntly envisions the future of electronic music. **Rashad Becker** Check your record collection and say it is not true: one third of all the techno and avant-garde LP's of the last ten years was cut by Rashad Becker. In 2013 the master cutter surprized with his album *Traditional Music of Notional Species vol. I* (PAN records), a sci-fi trip filled with entartete synth compositions, floating in between an empire once created by Throbbing Gristle and the manual of the USS Enterprise. **Yann Leguay** is a Brussels-based French Artist. His approach to sound design for installation, performance

and film focus on the materiality of sound. By modifying the reality of the material (as sounds or real objects) he affects the sensibility of the viewer, changing the perception and relation with materiality. His interest on media and the players that work with it is a clear position on what we are making as utopian, wanting to produce perpetual and solid memory. By deconstructing the elements of this human need, he gives an overview and a distance on the global relation we have with objects and memory. **Recyclart**  
09.06.17

# YUNG SHEIKHS EXTENDED KATZ MULK p. 11 / WHITE DEATH p. 12 / NONLOCAL SOCIETY p. 10, 15 / OSILASI p. 13 / TRANSPORT p. 12 / DE BATTERIES p. 11

Extended version of our notorious Yung Sheikhs series, that picks up the diamonds out of the swine's playing field called the underground. **Katz Mulk** (UK) Deeply embedded in the Manchester underground, Katz Mulk was born out of the Human Heads crew. The trio makes warped electronics, auto tuned improv and loose pop music that combines the best of hipstertronics and hardcore avant-garde music. Their debut is soon out on the top notch Singing Knives label. **White Death** (UK) Bleak improv duo of visual artist Hannah Ellul (1/3rd of Human Heads) and the ever-thriving force of the Manchester scene Kelly Jayne Jones (1/2nd of Part Wild Horses Mane on Both Sides). Icy, chilled out and tactile electronics inspired by the surrealist lyricism of Henri Michaux and likes. **Nonlocal Society** Part Chilean, part Belgian AV trio that melts visual music with musical video art. Out there synths, vague field recordings and

macroscopic bio-psychedelic video materializes into a post-millennial form of new age. Or, in short: a cloud of probabilities. **Osilasi** Fresh duo of Guili Guili Gulag's Léa Roger and Vitas Guerulaitis' Célia Jankowski. Clash of noisey repititive no-wave, West-African dance music and French progfolk, made by harp, Boîte a Gourdon and a young version of Moe Tucker on drums. **Transport** (DE) Trio made out of notorious names like Vomit Heat, Teks and Nicolas Wandt. Kraut rock in its most transcendental form, referring to Amon Düül, Ash Ra Temple, injected with a good dose of rattling and percussion. **De Batteries** are a Verboden Boys spin-off that takes the notorious Antwerpian Fluxus tradition into new realms of house garden and kitchen electronics and melancholic avant-pop. **Barlok**  
24.06.17

# OUT NOW! K092 Köhn – Kreis Plön – LP & CD K093 Henry Andersen – Stanzas or The Law of the Good Neighbour – LP

The Avant-Guardian is a free form magazine documenting and materializing KRAAK's momentary events into a concrete and time resistant format. Issue nr. 9.1 — Summer issue  
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The drawings of Watcharita Aroon are visual translations of the concerts by WIDT and Napalm Tree in Tram Zwart, December 9, 2016.  
Gerard Herman's drawing was previously published in the book *Ommens in een personenwagen* (Gent: het balanseer, 2016).  
Lizzy Vandierendonck is Kraak's mermaid. Fascinated by sea landscapes she made an animated video for Köhn's *Todendorf*: [vimeo.com/220686637](https://vimeo.com/220686637).  
The Flemish Government and School of Arts Ghent support KRAAK. We'd like to express our gratitude to all our partners that hosted and helped us this season, being: In de Ruimte, Barlok, Damien & The Love Guru, Q-O2, Les Ateliers Claus, Les Brigitinnes, Beursschouwburg, Huis23, Bijloke Muziekcentrum, Recyclart, Vooruit, Oorstof, De Player, Café Oto and Tramzward.





**■ AYMERIC DE TAPOL ■** Aymeric de Tapol is a versatile French sound artist, noiser and modular synth freak that once got lost in Brussels. Nowadays you can call him one of the city's hidden gems. His most recent concerts and records (Lexi Disques, VLEK, Angström and Tanuki) show him freely steeple chasing between technoise, power drones, french pop tunes, sound art and analogue synth weirdness.

**We had, in the days before his concert in In De Ruimte, a nice chat about Climatic Music, Dinosaurs and the Brussels Scene.**

Niels Latomme

NL How are you?

AT I'm very good, and you? Can you see me?

NL No I don't.

AT I don't know how it works... *Annuler, préférences...* Ok... Did you finish later.

NL Did I finish late?

AT Last night, I mean.

NL Ah, not at all.

AT I have a problem with the camera, I don't understand... Give me two seconds. RRRRR... Why! Fuck I don't understand, but we can do the interview like that.

NL OK, are you ready?

AT Yeah!

NL I have some serious questions for you. The bio told me that you're working on 'climatic music', what does it mean?

AT I worked on that a couple of years ago. I made pieces out of field recordings of all sorts of weather. Partly I wanted to create music of desert islands. I was also reading a book about the symbolic meaning of sound in the Middle Ages: people were very frightened and saw mystic meanings in wind, or storm. It still makes sense if you try to understand how certain frequencies work and which meaning they have. A lot of references and meaning related to certain frequencies still refer to Catholicism. For instance, if you want to create a scary mood in a movie, you use certain bass sounds in the soundtrack.

NL 'Climatic music' was for you a research on how certain emotions and moods in music relate to natural elements?

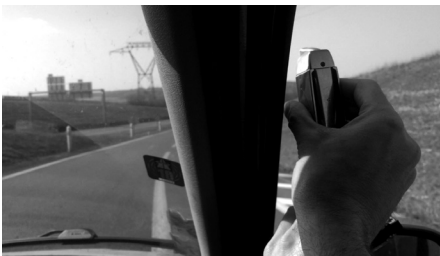
AT Yes, and how we understand music nowadays. The release on VLEK, 'Les Horizons' talks also about that.

NL The VLEK record displays a more electronic, abstract and synthesized array of sounds. How do they relate to the idea of natural and organic – what you would call 'climatic' – sounding music?

AT Actually, for 'Les Horizons' I tried to remember the feelings and emotions of "extase" in front of nature.

NL Are you drawn towards the idea of 'the sublime'?

AT I never thought about it in this way, but yes, maybe I do. It's about the overwhelming feeling you have if you are witnessing and experiencing nature in a pure way. They're similar experiences: being absorbed by the nature and by listening to drone/minimal music. Especially if you take into account that in this kind of music you can feel the mysterious sounds that you cannot



perceive by the ears. For instance the very low frequencies the sun is transmitting. Or the sound of the Aureoles Borealis.

I am in search of transcendent music, although I can't find it.

NL You didn't find it yet?

AT *laughs*, no no, of course not. Like the guys who were looking for the Jürgenson's frequency – or the so-called 'electronic voice phenomenon'. These guys were listening to megahertz frequencies on the radio. The idea is pretty great, but they ended up listening to meaningless noise music all the time. And in it, they heard all these mystical voices. It's something very vague, but a lot of people took it very serious... Me too.

NL The single on Lexi, is completely different compared to your electro acoustic records.

AT I have an organ in the living room that I like to play. I worked one year on the tracks, because I couldn't play melodies. I do a lot of different music. It's good for the energy, and I cannot focus to work on one project at the same time. I'm too chaotic.

I started making music in 2000. Before that I played bongos and congas in a Cuban band. Now I focus more on repetitive music, simple music with an oscillator. It's nothing new though, but I really enjoy it. It's kind of dance for the brain, and I'm lost in it. I don't know what I do, once I start playing live.

NL That's again the sublime, no?

AT Maybe... *laughs*.

NL Are you an analogue guy?

AT I don't care so much... I see sound as a laboratory in which I can play around, and some things shouldn't be finished. You can start for instance with a flute, record it in a car and make a huge drone out of it. And I don't feel the need to make a piece out of it.

Live I mix all these sorts of digital and analogue sounds and recordings. I'd like to make a scenario with it. Maybe I need to be more precise, and reduce the sources. But I'm too chaotic for that. I'm not a minimalist.

NL If you make a piece, a recording or playing live, do you think linear? Or do you like to work in a certain context where a piece not necessarily has an end, a beginning, or a narrative in between?

AT It's complicated, as I'm listening to a lot of music that inspires

me. Playing a live concert needs a different approach then working in the studio. I don't take live things into the studio and finish it for a recording, or vice versa... But I don't know if I have answered your question though...

NL No you didn't.

AT *laughs*.

NL What is your background?

AT I was an arts student in Toulouse. At that time there were no studies that focus on sound in arts, which is a shame, as France has a huge history in that. For instance Fluxus and Futurism. But nobody was talking about that in the art school. In 1999 I started making music, when I went to Africa for 3 months. The Meridian tape (Tanuki) consists out of these recordings. In 2000 I started with my first computer and sound card. I was completely into Max/MSP and all that, and it evolved into the chaos that I'm doing now.

NL You told me that you were in France last week, to work on this old synthesizer?

AT I gave a lecture there and there was one teacher who was part of the GMEB, who have this really old synthesizer in the studio. It seems that it was a super machine build for working with kids. You can play with the tape and oscillator. It is pretty rare to meet this old people and find instruments like this, because there is no budget to take care of these old machines, and the studios don't care about it.

For the album 'Talking with a Dinosaur' (angström) I went to the GRM (Groupe De Recherches Musicales, Paris), to use a similar instrument. In 1966 a technician created this synthesizer for Pierre Schaeffer. To name a few, Francois Bayle, Matmos, Pan sonic and Francois Bonnet used it before. I knew Christian Zanesi, the director of GRM, so I contacted him.

The record is a research in audio archaeology, with field recordings of a sleeping machine. I started with the question how I could make a record

without any effects or processing. Like making music with the sound of a stone. I composed short pieces and I left them like that, as raw material. The titles refer to animal, computer and human language.

NL How do you see yourself in the Brussels scene?

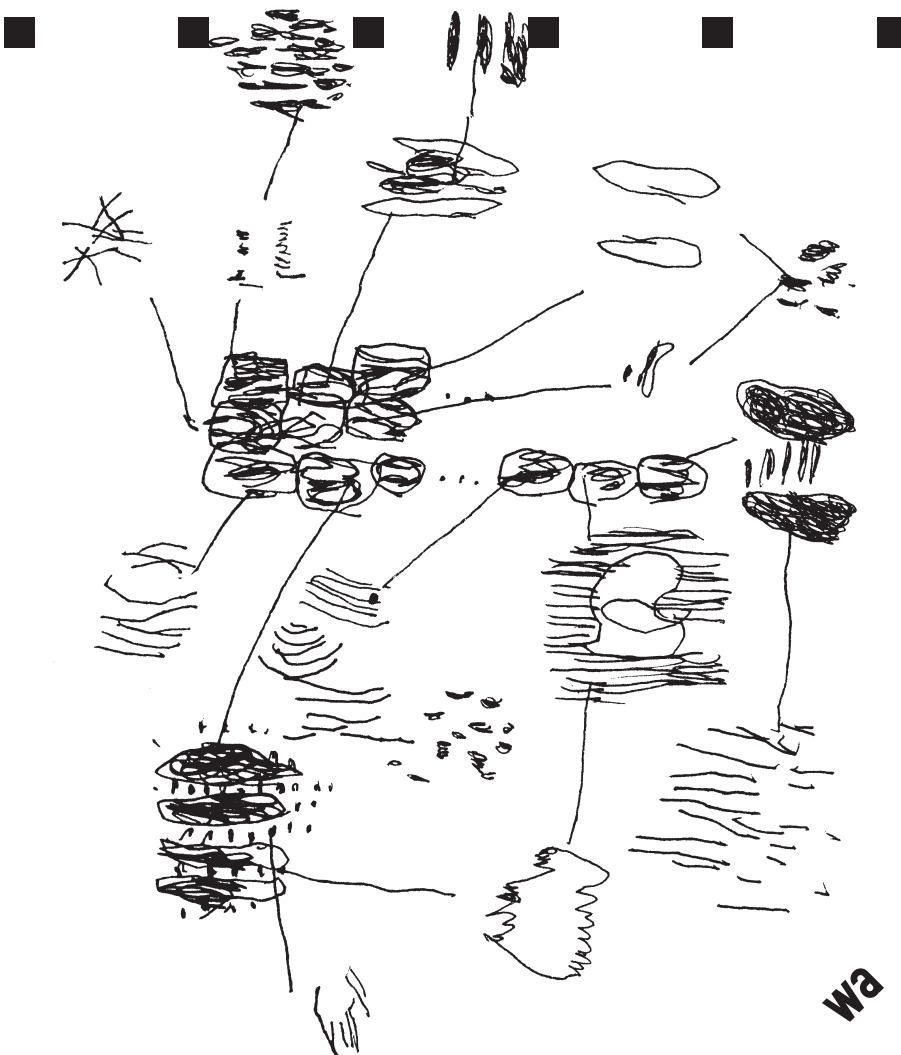
AT I like it a lot because there is a big variety of people. In France it used to be more monocultural. Genres don't exist in Brussels and it's inspiring. In France, I felt, as being part of an electro acoustic scene where I always had to use 60 speakers. The result, of course, was that I couldn't play more than 2 gigs in one year. In Brussels, I started to realize that I perfectly could do whatever I want. And I can share more with people, who are not coming for only one background, but who are interested in several things. I like that a lot.

NL Is it because the scene is more open? That people don't worry so much about the idea of 'difficult' music?

AT It's a political question. Experimental music started out from some sort of opposition, I feel. It was about creating something as different as possible. We are now in this ocean of all these possibilities. But the DIY models are still very essential. If people want to show the laboratory of a sound, they can do it and we can accept that. It's a little political action.

NL Is it against something, for you?

AT No, it's about proposing an alternative. There is also good music in the mainstream. I cannot separate underground and mainstream, cause it's a huge feedback of exchange. You see for instance in hip hop that a lot of mainstream artists are working on strange stuff sound wise. But it is important that people have the chance to express themselves more free, and take time to listen to other people. That's why I like the Brussels scene so much. It's important to share music like that, in small places, and it's not easy.



# "RASHAD BECKER IN CONVERSATION WITH JÜRGEN DE BLONDE"

**JB** Hello Rashad, pleased to meet you and to get the chance to talk to you. You are a well known mastering engineer and cutter. You are a sound artist and performer as well. What is the difference for you? Do you consider both to be art or craftsmanship or maybe neither? Where do you draw the line, if any at all?

**RB** Well... These are simple and yet tricky questions already. My concept of art is very informed by the sixties and in that sense the term actually holds little significance to me. I am absolutely not anti-art but I am also not very protective of the term and the phenomenon. Craftsmanship on the other hand is something that I cannot really claim for myself I guess as I have little education. The term has definitely an auratic bond with following up on traditions and being true to them and studying hard to live up to them and evolve them.

Both realms can awe me and evoke deep respect but I don't think I have strong aspirations towards either when it comes to attributing myself. Both realms can have very annoying side effects of celebrating ability and ego. Both can be dwarfed by too strong a will to design and create. Both can serve great causes... alas; I cannot really locate myself on any axis between the both.

I guess a line between art and craftsmanship could be drawn when it comes to mediability vs. immediacy.

The practical difference between being a composer / musician and working in the musical service industry is immense to me, in a way it is not even the same life. I am dealing with entirely different questions with an absolutely different sense of time and in a very different mind set. It is the difference between a day job and something that emerges from your culture / ideology / possibly personality. The fact that in my case the both are relating to sound is not that significant after all...

**JB** Your pieces sound very organic, alien, primordial and psychedelic (psychotropic almost). Are those pieces based on mind-altering experiences or are they purely based on figments of imagination? Do you have a certain idea in mind of what you want to create or is it more a matter of preparing a patch with your set-up and seeing what comes out of that?

**RB** While I think that psychedelic drugs are the only drugs really rewarding and worth taking, my interest in and sense of music is really not shaped by them.

I would not call it imagination but actually be smug enough to call it fiction. I want to have a clear aspiration regarding the character, mood and range of every single element before I sit down to sonify it. In that sense I write the sounds before I synthesize them. They get a name before I touch a knob. I need this to hold on to

pieces. If I do not know what kind of fiction I want to create with a piece or a cycle of pieces then I always end up deleting stuff. I have deleted a huge body of work in my times. When I don't know what it is that I am putting together, if method / strategy get arbitrary I end up having no judgement and also I get bored...

I never think in terms of patches. Maybe, at this point, I should stress that although I recently started indeed drafting instruments with modules, I really don't think that I am part of the modular synthesizer culture, as it seems an entirely different approach to composition

**JB** Do you consider your live performances as crucial? Do they add something to your recorded work? Where lies the difference between live and studio for you?

**RB** The difference between live music and recorded music is the difference between push media and media on demand in a way. Playing live is ultimately push media, possibly responsive to the surroundings. It expires instantly and has probably an immediate social context to it. It interferes with the attending biographies on base of one singular (multidimensional and multi-subjective) mutual intervention. Recorded music finds multiple entry points to the same biography (at least if it is not rejected) and has to withstand the scrutiny of many different conditions of life, different moods, different weather, the commute to work, accidental lucid dreaming, washing the dishes, sitting in the gift wrapping room with a nice glass of warm milk and so on. Recorded music has a mediated social context to it. People bond over it potentially, but in a different way than a shared instance. It will often be visited alone.

In all that light, playing live is indeed much more precious and much less troubled to me then recorded music. When recording music, all the future social / individual relevance it might hold is practically fiction too.

**JB** How do you relax your ears? Can you still listen to music and enjoy?

**RB** Relaxing my ears practically means changing my mode of listening. I do this by either not listening at all or trying to auditively capture as much as possible, on a purely phenomenological level. I do sometimes go through cities pretending I am deaf. Just not responding to any auditive stimuli or address at all. It's like wearing a costume to me. On other occasions I do try to not miss a single detail of the sounds surrounding me without putting them into context. Both I find deeply relaxing.

Yes I do derive joy from listening to music... But when I listen to music I really hardly ever pay attention to the sound or the mix or any technical aspects that go beyond composition (of course acknowledged that often composition and sound design are indistinguishable...)

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I am a very stoic listener, if I find a piece that deeply intrigues me or that I find very gratifying I listen to that piece for a year or even longer until another piece pops up successfully taking the former ones place... I always only have a few pieces resident in my everyday life and if I really connect with music it stays indefinitely. I am still listening to the music that informed me when I was 13 years old. Also I do indeed listen to my own music quite a bit. It is simply the sort of music that I want in my life.



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**JB** At the KRAAK festival I saw the trio you play in. It sounded similar to what you do solo, only more dense and with an expanded palette. Is this the result of finding partners in crime? And what's with the masks?

**RB** Funny you should mention the masks... That trio is nothing new, it is the continuation of a conglomerate formerly known as column one that has been active since more than 20 years. It used to be more performance based but recently we wanted to turn more decisively towards musical performance. Hence the name change to 'moleglove'; don't ask...

The reason why that particular concert sounded so much like my music was actually the masks. Column One was always costumed and we did not want to entirely give up on that and really liked the bush masks. But we failed to rehearse with the masks, and when went on stage with them it turned out we could not actually see that much. Slightly disastrous and I was the only one who could still navigate his equipment to some degree... Hence it was an involuntary or accidental near-solo show but without me being prepared for

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## "YANN LEGUAY *Less and less control*"

When I first listened to 'Headcrash', I thought there was something wrong with my record. Brussels based French artist and musician Yann Leguay explained me there was nothing wrong. Or maybe there was something wrong, but that should not be a problem.

Joeri Bruyninckx

**JB** Can you explain to me what I am listening to when I listen to 'Headcrash'? From what I understood, it's the sound of four hard drives where you put the needle of a turntable on.

**YL** The set-up consists out of four open hard drives that are installed on a small plank full of magnetic sensors. There are the tone arms



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that... hm... I want to believe that some people still sort of enjoyed it but it was a bit frustrating for us naturally to realize that we are stupid men. And we were indeed eager and prepared to perform an entirely new take on the column one legacy but failed near miserably.

**JB** Do you like insects? Do you imagine their sound world?

**RB** I do indeed have insectophobia. I cannot stand them touching my skin and looking at them makes me shiver. The worst thing about them is the sounds they produce. A slightly even more bad thing is if they do not produce any sounds whatsoever, like the stupid hideous moth. A distinct and big exception is cicadas. I adore their repertoire, specifically in East Asia.... Japan, China and Vietnam are very rich in local sound profiles when it comes to cicadas and I am mesmerized. I have hours of recordings. Funny enough, a cicada on my arm is no trouble for me whatsoever, I deeply admire them.

**JB** Is there a linguistic dimension to your music?

**RB** I am not sure... I guess it would be quite a stretch for the term linguism to make that claim? I guess there is of course a semiotic dimension but I reckon that is true for all music?

**JB** Where do you take your inspiration from?

**RB** I am not entirely sure... It is probably more a question for motivation than inspiration. As for that, I just want a certain sound or musical mood or condition to be there and hence I make an effort to create it.

**JB** Do you have certain records you take as an example in terms of mastering?

**RB** No, would not make any practical sense to me. Clients have been bringing in reference records in the past and it was never helpful... I believe there are plug-ins which recreate a spectral profile of one piece on another though. But it seems like a futile effort to me.

and needles from turntables, plus some other sensors, and the ability to get the sound directly from the head of the hard drives by plugging a cable in the right place on the circuit board.

**JB** You seem to have a rather 'hands off' approach in the making of this music. You create the installation, but once that's done, you let the machines do their thing, right?

**YL** Not really, you have to see it as an instrument. The whole process is done live, the set-up is playable. The HDD's are fully under control, the speed of the spinning (that makes the pitched drone and harmonics) and the movement of the arms (that produce rhythms and accidents) are activated by sending electrical



■ signals. The sound is raw, there are no treatments, no effects, and everything is directly sent to the mixer. That gives 12 different sources to mix with, from pure analog with the needles to more digital sounds with the magnetic sensors.

**JB Did you do a lot of editing and layering after the initial recording?**  
**YL** They are live sessions, recorded during a residency at Atelier Claus. I have edited them in a studio, but I was looking to emulate the experience of the live recordings, especially in the dynamics and evolution of the track.

**JB You've been presenting the installation used on this recording for a while before making this recording. Why did you decide that the summer of 2016 was the right moment to make this installation into a record?**  
**YL** I arrived at a certain point in this project where it wouldn't be updated anymore. I am slowly moving to other projects for the time coming. That's why it's important for me to end a period of work with a physical object: this record. The proposition of the Vlek label to edit the result of few years of experimentation with this set-up was the best pretext to do it.

**JB Do you think that people will get a full understanding of what you are doing if they only hear the sound, without seeing what you've done?**  
**YL** I don't know, and I don't mind so much, I just know that you could not get that type of textured sound and behavior without building this kind of instrument. For the visual aspect in a live situation... I never play on stage, always on the floor close to audience, and let the people have a look at what

is happening. It's up to them, if they want to see it or not.

**JB The music on 'Headcrash' reminds me of Pan Sonic, Yasunao Tone and Pita.**  
**YL** Of course they are big references for me, aesthetically and historically. I would say that what I have done is a kind of physical D.I.Y. version of that, without any synthesis. I was searching to go directly to the source of this type of sound and rhythmic, and extract the music from the material itself.

**JB Do you see what you do as noise? Or as an abstract kind of techno?**  
**YL** Hard for me to put a label on it, I used to let people determine what they are listening to. I guess it could make sense to talk about it as tech-noise, but there are a lot of openings to this kind of music, so a lot of possible words to define it, which is also what I am looking for.

**JB Is there, besides the musical aspect of your record, also a philosophical side to your deconstructed technology, like a warning that says: technology is not the answer to everything?**  
**YL** Yes of course there is some theoretical background in it: by going straight to the source of mechanical and digital magnetic sounds, I try to avoid usual interfaces. It is something very important to know about the technologies we are using: the amount of interfaces and the consequences of it. Today we have less and less control on the material itself but just some possibilities the interfaces let us to access. I am not saying that we should go back to the middle ages but I mean it's important to understand that one of the principles of using technological tools means that dematerialization was a big fake. We should talk more about delocalization of material within interfaces.

■ **KÖHN** ■  
**Luckily I moved my bike to Ghent a few weeks ago, so I was able to happily get lost while still getting somewhere. After a few wrong turns in the jungle I follow the river and arrive at Köhn's house. A damsel in a little pre-examination distress opens the door and the coffee is already simmering. We sit down, after a short prognosis on the quality of the coffee we start talking.**

Amber Meulenijszer

**AM We are in your house, is this home for you?**  
**JB** Yes, I have been living here for a while now, but it's more the things you drag along that make your house a home.

**AM What do you drag along?**  
**JB** The people around me, my instruments, a few records. The last few years my record collection has become more volatile though, given the fact that music had become so accessible via the Internet. That is something, which has changed a lot in the way I myself interact with music. I used to go to the library to borrow CD's, a habit I've been picking up again more and more lately, that does give a whole different feeling, we have lost the whole material and ritual thing that surrounds the music.

**AM Do you not think it is a pity you cannot hold the music in your hands anymore?**

**JB** I used to find it more difficult than I do now. Every two weeks I had the same ritual: I went to the library, took five CD's with me, and then I used to go to the local hi-fi store to go buy empty cassettes. Sometimes I ran out of money and I had to save on cassettes. That is something, which is gone too now, recording on top of something else, which had the funny side effect that you could still hear the sound you taped over in the silent pieces. That has disappeared with digital recording, that given of lamination. You don't find the layers a painter uses in a digital illustration too, we lose the perspective of the process. Which is not a criticism, it's just something that has disappeared. It's not that I am nostalgic towards the analogue, but it is just something I have noticed when I transferred from analogue to more hybrid machines and eventually to computer.

**AM Your new record had been recorded digitally?**

**A**  
**JB** My new record has indeed just been recorded digitally for 90%. There are one or two tracks on it, which I have actually made with Ableton. I record my concerts and home jams because they are largely improvised. In the end this records is a puzzle of al those hours of archive material. It has really become a patchwork, horizontally and vertically, of old and new material.

**AM What is sound to you?**  
**JB** Sound to me is that which connects myself to the time and space where I find myself. Sound is indissoluble connected to a course of time. It can also influence your perception of time; when you listen to something with a heavy rhythm, you get really entwined with it. If you listen to something more open like a drone, a field recording, free improv or free jazz, where the structure of rhythm and harmony is not so explicit, it totally changes your perception of time. It influences you on a conscious and unconscious level.

Also, ever since we are able to record sound, sound has been susceptible to an identity crisis. You can literally disconnect sound from its source and frame of time or space, just by reproducing it. Which is interesting, but it is a new given and I think humanity is not even half aware of it, nor do we know how to handle it. In the past, sound used to depend on language and to me that also is a little paradoxical, because language itself originated from imitation. You can see it when you listen to words we have been using for a long time, they are often also onomatopoeic.

**AM I think you can also hear it in your record.**  
**JB** Yes, unconsciously it's in it. Or consciously.

**A**  
**AM Where does sound shift into music? Or is that a distinction you tend to avoid?**  
**JB** It's a distinction I often think about and the answer I have found for myself is that music is abstract, music exists in the mind and on the other side on paper, but once it is released into the world and can be physically experienced, it changes into sound. We experience harmony in music, simply because it is mathematically reducible; it's all about cycles and vibrations and the human brain that discovers patterns in them, which we try to control.

The longing to reproduce and to move people is an ancient given. On one hand music is trying to organise the sounds we experience as pleasant, and on the other hand it's really about the way sound moves us. The musical principles of organisation are abstract, we categorised them in tones, rhythms and measures, but it is that information which is transferred via sound.

**A**  
**AM Your new record is called Kreis Plön, I vaguely suspected that I knew the name from somewhere and a simple Google search confirmed: Deutschland. Have you ever been there?**  
**JB** No, I have been to Germany and Austria a lot, but I have never been in Kreis Plön. More: when I thought of the name Köhn, I did not know there were people with that name or that it even was a little town in Germany. Only a few years ago I discovered that that place actually exists. I've been thinking about giving a concert



there, which would be funny. But when I put together my record, I was looking for titles and something to bind the whole. And then I really did in depth Google maps research on street names, place names, names of hamlets and selected words on a very associative basis. I bumped into names like *klinker*, *loop* and *rumohr*, and when I saw the escutcheon afterwards, the picture was complete. But I only know the place from dorky photos on Google. Apparently it is an environment where you can find quite a lot of prehistorical heaps of dirt and stone, which, then again, is quite interesting.

But the German clearance, yeah. I grew up with a lot of German, my mother was a dedicated fan of schlager music, and her whole side of the family was. Every summer we went to Tirol, the classic picture with lederhosen, big pints of beer and lots of zärtlichkeit. I must say that it's a very beautiful place, when you look at the nature, but ironically enough I have been to Austria about twenty times and I've never been to Vienna. A classic story: me, nine or ten years old, at home on Wednesday afternoons, and my mother cleaning the house while listening to the radio show *Made in Germany* on Radio 2, three hours of schlager music only. On Saturdays she used to watch ZDF, where you could follow die festen im Oberbayern, which kind of left his marks on me. When you grow up with it, you take it all for granted. Later I listened to Nena's *99 luftballons* with the girl living next door to me, she was a big fan. So the German really sneaked in via various ways. Also when I began searching for music, I used to read about Klaus Schulze, Krautrock, Kraftwerk and so on. That whole cosmic music scene also brought me back to Germany.

**AM Is that an association you want evoke with your music? When you use such words for titles?**  
**JB** Maybe yes. Actually what happened is: the titles on my first two records are West-Flemish words who all have something to do with rabbits, but then spelled according to German logic. That was a try to bring together German and Flemish in a weird way. Because I notice that in Flanders and in the rest of Europe, we are being incredibly ambiguous about Germany. Of course we know why, we also have kind of a dubious history with collaboration. I was born in East-Flanders, but when I became twelve years old, I went to school in Bruges and spent the rest of my youth there. That whole West-Flemish



mentality started working on me from then on, and with that also came their attitude towards Germany. Combine that with the German I have been impregnated with since I was born and there you have it. Maybe that is my way out, to put those two together. I find the confrontation very interesting; German vs. West-Flemish. Also trying to teach Germans how to speak West-Flemish is very intriguing.

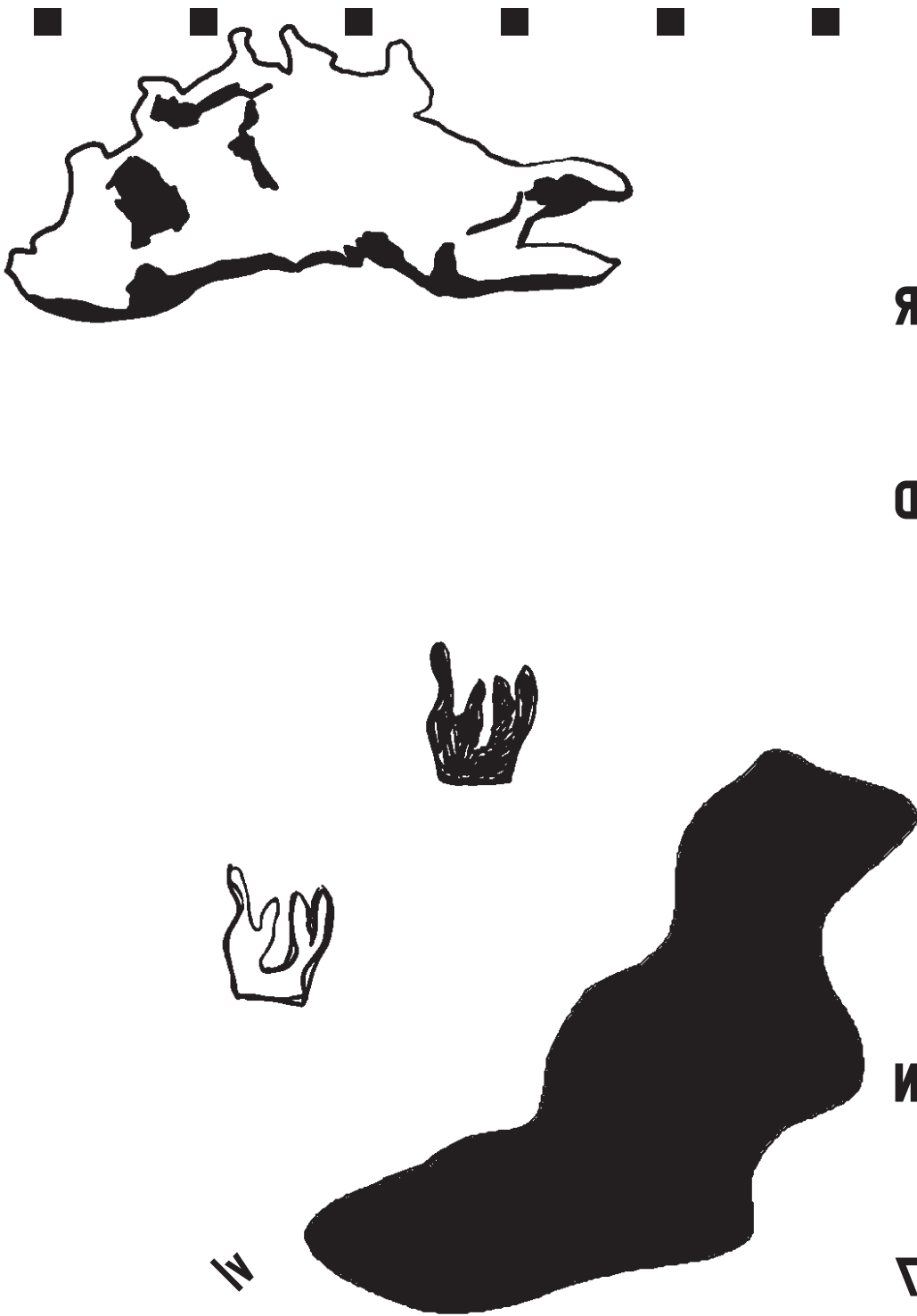
By the way, it's really funny how people keep focussing on WW II. By the end of the 90's I went to Salzburg as an exchange student, and I took some history classes, who happened to discuss that period. The prudence with which they handled the subject was truly fascinating. WW II was also the first war in which they used amplified sound, which in my opinion makes Adolf Hitler one of the first rock stars. He spoke to the mass using the same technology the first rock bands used. An ironic link, when you think of the hippies who preached love and peace in the same fascist manner Hitler did. I find that delightfully ironic.

AM What associations are there for you in *Kreis Plön*? I myself get a very mossy feeling.

JB Mossy? That is beautiful, thanks. To me, at some points, it is about searching the borders between synthetic sound and natural sound, also about the line between sound and music and then the noise aspect. Noise, not only in a grotesque brutal way, but also noise in the way that we filter information out of the whole of sound that comes to us. You pick out the things that resonate with yourself

at that moment, the rest is noise. That is not always a process that happens consciously, but it happens. I think those are the three stories I examine in my sound, and in that way also the three layers of association in the album. There is a passage for example where I use a recording of mating frogs in season, which I recorded here in the Bourgoyen in Ghent. I then switch to a no-input/feedback mixer, which I think produces sounds that resonate in the same spectrum as those frogs do. You will find that no-input/feedback mixer a few times along the way when you listen to the record, sometimes it's used for a crooked saxophone solo, sometimes as a jammer and sometimes just as a layer of noise that covers the sound like maizena. At the same time it also refers to twenty years ago. Because it actually is my old four track minidisk recorder, which doesn't record that good anymore, but has become an amazing instrument. I have begun to use it as a distortion machine and a lot as a live instrument. That process of reshaping sounds is something I have picked up again lately and I am having a lot of fun with it. For me, *Kreis Plön* is also a merge of the begin days of Köhn and everything that came after with the live aspect. Really a come-together of a lot of things actually, half of them I don't even understand myself.

AM With these words I leave Köhn in his lovely home to take the train back, where I find myself surrounded by Germans from Frankfurt, who have never been to Kreis Plön either.



**EURO2000** Gabber Sam Gunst startte vorig jaar met zijn techno -en acid-tapelabel EURO2000 en gaat sindsdien stevig door aan een tempo van 1 nieuwe release per maand. Daarnaast gooit hij ook als grafisch vormgever hoge toppen, getuige de cover van de Cult.-bijlage van (jawel!) De Morgen. Daarnaast is het hij de drijvende kracht achter het tweejaarlijkse event De Biënnale van België. Hij nodigde KRAAK uit om één van de avonden van zijn tentoonstelling te cureren, waarop we Afework Nigussie, Carrageenan en McCloud Zicmuse aan het Gentse publiek bekend maakten. Tijd voor een interview met de man, als een van de drijvende krachten in de Gentse Underground.

Joeri Bruyninckx

JB Waarom besloot je vorig jaar om een eigen label te starten?

SG M'n fascinatie in het beluisteren en archiveren van techno en varianten heeft een grote impact op m'n dagelijkse activiteiten, ik kreeg meer en meer een drang om meer uit die fascinatie te halen, en daaruit is het label gegroeid. De kans krijgen om de muziek en de artiesten te publiceren en te promoten waar je zelf van houdt geeft een enorme voldoening.

JB Vanwaar de naam EURO2000?

SG Wanneer het idee kwam om het label te starten moest ik constant aan de naam EURO2000 denken, het moest die naam worden. De naam beschrijft perfect het gevoel en de esthetiek van het label.

JB Waarom breng je elektronische muziek uit?

SG Elektronische muziek biedt een veel breder spectrum aan klanken. De oneindigheid en het intense van geluid spreken me zeer aan. Het idee dat klank ontwikkeld wordt door reacties van elektronische pulsen fascineert me enorm, klanken die je met akoestische instrumenten nooit kan evenaren.

JB Waarom vooral techno en acid?

SG Ik kan me het meest in terugvinden, of in verliezen. Het heeft een breed spectrum aan subgenres waarbij je snel uitkomt bij zeer niche aftakkingen die superinteressant zijn. Liefst met een hoekje af. Ik vind het dan ook wel leuk om de artiesten waar je dagelijks muziek van beluistert te releasen op het label.

JB Zie je techno en acid als experimentele elektronische muziek?

SG Er zit vaak wel een experimentele vibe in techno en acid maar over het algemeen wordt het wel beschouwd als dansmuziek. De setting hoe je de muziek presenteert kan ook veel bijdragen aan de impact en structuur van de muziek, iets wat je in experimentele stijlen ook vindt.

JB Techno en acid piekte op het einde van jaren '80 en het begin van de jaren '90, wat betekent dat je te jong was om dit te hebben meegemaakt. Denk je dat je hierdoor anders naar deze muziek luistert?

SG Ik heb inderdaad het hoogtepunt gemist in de geschiedenis. Maar dat was net het begin, ze experimenteerden met nieuwe geluiden en nieuwe toestellen. Er zijn toen zeer interessante dingen gebeurd waar ik zeker door getriggerd ben. Door de voorgeschiedenis zou nooit kunnen gemaakt worden wat er nu wordt geproduceerd. De behoorlijk naïeve opbouw van de muziek is veranderd in meer complexe structuren die op een meer technische manier worden



opgebouwd, al was de charme van de vroege techno en acid ook wel de simpele productie.

JB Vind je dat EURO200 deel uitmaakt van de 'second wave of techno', die donkerder, vuiler en meer underground is dan de eerste?

SG Muziekstromingen lopen vaak evenwijdig met de sfeer van de maatschappij op dat moment. In de geschiedenis zie je dit met de grimmige jaren '80: de depressieve sfeer die er heerste werd gepresenteerd door de new wave/industrial/power electronics-stromingen. Ze werden volledig weggeveegd door de utopische jaren '90. Mensen hadden er terug zin in, gingen allerlei grenzen aftasten. Het was ook het begin van een digitaal tijdperk waarin het geluk niet op kon. Aan het escapisme van de dat moment komt er terug eind, een reality-check. Snel werd duidelijk dat het geluk maar een fata morgana bleek te zijn. Nu hebben de mensen er weer genoeg van, en dit merk je in de sfeer van de muziek. Liefst gaat het zo vies en zo hard mogelijk, de impact van de klank is zeer intens, een intense sfeer die EURO2000 graag benadert.

JB Wat is de muziek uit die 'first wave' die jou het meest aantrekt?

SG De '90's techno kreeg snel verschillende vertakkingen: trance, acidtechno, hardcore; tot die laatste voel ik me wel het meest aangetrokken. De komst van de Thunderdome-gabbercultuur is voor velen een inspiratiebron geweest, een levensstijl. Het uitgestotene, het bestempeld worden als een marginale cultuur, de zeer uitgesproken beeldtaal, dat intrigeert me, net zoals de muziek, die als een slag in je gezicht aan kwam, gewoon rechtdoor.

JB Die mythische verhalen over R&S en de Boccaccio, doen die vandaag nog de ronde in Gent, of is dat ondertussen voorbij?

■ **sg** Die zijn inderdaad wat in de geschiedenis verdwenen, er heerst een andere energie in Gent waar dit op een andere manier wordt bekeken, Ze zijn ook deels uitgestoten door de politiek. De wedergeboorte van R&S heeft nooit meer dezelfde impact gehaald zoals voordien, klassiekers blijven hun waarde behouden. mensen richten zich echter vooral op het nieuwe, op de toekomst.

**JB** **Waarom release je op tape?**  
**sg** Ik vind dit medium het aangenaamst om mee te werken: het heeft een leuk formaat, het is behoorlijk klein maar je kan er veel kanten mee op. De muziek krijgt hierdoor ook een extra filter op zich, wat je ook bij vinylplaten hebt.

**JB** **Waarom release je in oplages van 60?**  
**sg** Iedere release wordt gezien als een werk op zich, heel het proces verloopt handmatig en binnenshuis; het is niet de bedoeling om een massa-productie op te starten maar de tape net als kunstproduct te beschouwen.

**JB** **Vanwaar het hoge tempo van ongeveer één nieuwe release per maand?**  
**sg** Ik ben constant op zoek naar intense klanken en ben vaak iets te enthousiast, waardoor ik niet kan wachten om boeiende projecten aan te gaan. Het selecteren, creëren, dupliceren en het zeefdrukken van de releases doe ik ook allemaal zelf.

**JB** **Je bent ook graficus van opleiding. Hoe kwam je op het idee om dit te combineren met muziek?**  
**sg** Dit gebeurde zeer dynamisch, vormgeving en klanken zijn beide grote passies van me, het leek me ideaal deze te combineren, deze kansen kreeg ik bij IN DE RUIMTE en bij het label KERM uit Gentbrugge. Vormgeving en muziek

liggen dicht bij elkaar, enkel het eind-product heeft een andere gedaante.

**JB** **Is hoe een tape er uit ziet even belangrijk als hoe hij klinkt?**  
**sg** Ja, ik probeer een harmonie te creëren tussen de muziek en het ontwerp. De releases hebben een behoorlijk uitgesproken esthetiek tegenover de voornamelijk duistere, cleane beelden die vaak gebruikt worden. EURO2000 haalt meer inspiratie uit het foute, de *future aesthetics*, het internet en hetgeen waar je aan twijfelt of je er wel aangetrokken toe mag zijn.

**JB** **Heb je ooit zelf muziek gemaakt?**  
**sg** Ik heb muziek gemaakt onder het alias Marc Tytgat, maar dat staat momenteel on hold. Beter een verre buur dan een goeie vriend, of hoe zeggen ze dat? Ik ben wel met wat nieuwe projecten bezig, maar hierover later meer.

**JB** **Welke labels inspireerden jou om zelf een label op te starten?**  
**sg** De eerste labels die ik leerde kennen waren KERM, Social Harmony, Hare Akedod en KRAAK, waar ik zeker wel naar opkijk en die me ook inspireren. Toen ik Niels van KERM leerde kennen ben ik behoorlijk snel betrokken geraakt bij de vormgeving van de KERMuitgaves. Uit onze overkoepelende belangstelling voor experimentele acid en techno zijn we een nieuw project aan het ontwikkelen: TRANSPORT, wat staat voor het presenteren en archiveren van deze muziek. Daarnaast willen we ook de mogelijkheid bieden tot onderzoek en experiment.

**JB** **Van wie zou je nog graag iets uitbrengen?**  
**sg** Dit zijn er een hele boel. Elke dag ben ik op zoek naar nieuwe artiesten en nieuwe tracks. Wat me aanspreekt, archiveer ik. Zo heb ik ondertussen wel al een mooie lijst, die constant verandert.



# ■ VA AA LR is the trio of Vasco Alves, Adam Asnan and Louis Rice. They are the ultimate re-imagineers and rethinkers of your daily sound environment, using non-conformist techniques and arte povera methods in contemporary music. ■

Inge Van den Kroonenberg

“When you begin to wonder if improvised music has done all it can, a group of young upstarts go about proving you wrong. Vasco Alves, Adam Asnan and Louie Rice have a way of rethinking improvisation through the instruments/objects used and environment they are put to use within. An early album saw fire extinguishers play a key role, and a concert at London’s Cafe OTO was enhanced halfway through when a car pulled up outside and additional pre-recorded sounds were blasted into the building from the vehicle’s oversized stereo.”

Inge Van den Kroonenberg proposed VA AA LR 49 questions that could conduct an interview. The answers were burned, the questions form a trace that could be read as a poem in itself. A written report of the actual performance serves as a counterpoint to the poem.

## Chapter 1 Burning the Object / 49 (unanswered) questions for VA AA LR

- 1 Which object would you like to burn?
- 2 Which medium would you choose to record the sound of the burning object?
- 3 Which format would you choose to convert the sound of the burning object to?
- 4 Which setting would you choose to burn the object of your desire?
- 5 What time of day would you choose to burn the object of your desire?
- 6 What would you use to burn the object of your desire?
- 7 How does listening to the sound of the burning object alter your sense of time?
- 8 How does listening to the recorded sound of the burning object alter your sense of time?
- 9 Is it important that the sound of the burning object can be recorded?
- 10 Is it important for your work as a composer that the sound of the burning object can be recorded?
- 11 To what extent is it important in your practice as a sound artist to destroy the object by burning it?
- 12 What would you expect from the recording of the burning object?
- 13 When would the recording of the burning object have failed?
- 14 For what reason would you delete the recording of the burning object?
- 15 Would you consider burning the recording of the burning object?
- 16 Would you consider to record the burning of the recording of the burning object?
- 17 How does the burning of the object affect a space?
- 18 How does the burning of the object affect the acoustic qualities of that space?
- 19 How does the burning of the object affect a person being present in that space?
- 20 In what way does the presence of a person affect the status of the burning of the object?

- 21 In what way does the presence of a person affect the recording of the burning object?
- 22 How does the presence of an audience affect the status of the burning object?
- 23 How does the smell of the burning object affect the hearing?
- 24 To what extent is burning the object an act of control?
- 25 To what extent is recording the burning object an act of control?
- 26 To what extent is listening to the burning object an act of surrender?
- 27 How does the fact that the burning of the object is an irreversible process affect the listening?
- 28 How does the recording of the burning object affect the drama of this event?
- 29 How does the irreversibility of the burning object relate to the drama of this event?
- 30 What aspect of the burning object would you consider as communication?
- 31 What aspect of the burning object would consider as art?
- 32 What aspect of the burning object would you consider as spiritual?
- 33 What aspect of the burning object would you consider as noise?
- 34 To what extent is burning an object an emotional act?
- 35 To what extent is listening to the sound of the burning object a physical activity?
- 36 To what extent is listening to the recording of the burning object on youtube a collective activity?
- 37 In what way can the burning of the object in public space be perceived as a political statement?
- 38 In what way can the burning of the object in an art context be perceived as a happening?
- 39 To what extent is the burning of the object a site-specific work?
- 40 Can the act of burning the object be repeated?
- 41 Can the sound of the act of burning the object be repeated?
- 42 Would you consider that burning the object for its acoustic qualities is a form of aural cinema?
- 43 What are your intentions as a performer when burning the object as a sound performance?
- 44 How does the smoke of the burning object affect the hearing?
- 45 Do you think that the visual effects of burning the object could evoke physical reactions?
- 46 What effect could the aural aspects of burning the object have on a subconscious level?
- 47 In what way does the body relate to the burning object as a sound source?
- 48 To what extent are you performing the burning of the object?
- 49 To what extent is the burning object performing you?

## Chapter 2 Concert for Signal Flares

It’s eleven pm. The spacious courtyard of the Bijloke site is scarcely illuminated. People hang out at the entrance of the building, smoking cigarettes, having a beer. From the rooftop terrace pop music dissolves



into the nightly sky. No wind is rustling through the trees. In front of the former hospital with its mediaeval architecture two rows of large wooden boards form a plain, minimalistic decor. Their white, square surfaces make a sharp contrast with the backdrop of gothic arches from the 13th century, as if you stare into the mouth of an old reptile with bleached teeth. In the centre on the stone steps that climb up to the plateau of the garden, a tripod with a microphone in a windshield is pointing at the scene. It's eleven fifteen. Somebody makes an announcement for the crowd to move up the plateau on the grass. People group together in between the two ancient lime-trees. An audience is formed. Few latecomers make their way through the performers' area up the steps. Someone bumps against the tripod. The position of the microphone is slightly changed.

A sudden bang instantly followed by an explosion of bright pinkish light evokes a mild shock through the crowd. After some giggling and shuffling attention is regained. The senses are sharpened. In the centre of the scene one performer stands with his arms stretched far from the body, in each hand holding a burning flare. With his gaze fixed firmly to the ground, face half covered in a gasmask and static posture he makes a severe impression. No eye contact, no gestures. Only light penetrating the retina. On the left and right side the other two performers are positioned likewise, wearing gasmasks, looking down. Smoke is filling the scene and the smell of burning chemicals

penetrates the nose. When the first series of flares is expired they reload, take another position and ignite the flares again. The hissing sounds of the burning flares is masked and reflected by the wooden boards as the performers move around the scene. A choreography of hissing noises and boys playing with fire.

When a ground flare is ignited few meters in front of the audience some people take a step back. The stroboscopic effect of the flare is too bright to look straight into, so I close my eyes, enjoying the psychedelic cinema on the inside of my eyelid while listening to the pulsating sounds of the flares going in and out of phase. I imagine myself in the middle of the scene being surrounded by this spatial image of hissing sounds, but that position is only granted to the performers. They are in the hotspot of the sounds they perform. Halfway the set the sluggish rumble of a passing airplane blends with the high-pitched noises of the flares, expanding the soundscape of the performance to a wider scale. For the attentive listener there are some fine aural details to be found in this atmosphere of shifting, sizzling textures and the fusion with accidental, environmental noises, yet the performance is quite a visual spectacle considered to be mere a sound act and the thought of aural cinema comes to mind. With *Concert for Signal Flares* VA AA LR aims to reveal the rich acoustic properties of signalling distress flares as a sonic artefact and by doing so burning the kitsch in order to open the ear.

changes overtime when someone new comes into the space, that's what I like about it, it's never the same.

**JS While the listener experiences a rather brief performance, for you this project must be quite exhausting. Is the impact of fatigue on your playing something you wish to explore?**

**WG** Indeed, I have done a few pieces where the physical fatigue influenced the music; basically pushing myself to extremes and the resulting music is something otherwise unattainable.

**JS Are you aiming at some sort of interaction with the audience? Does the specific person in front of you have any influence on your playing?**

**WG** I approach different performances in different ways, as I do many short performances throughout the day. Sometimes I play taking no consideration of the audience member, other times I will try to play in a way that is very much an offering for that person, a sort of musical gift, other times it is a combination of both.

**JS For the listeners, it's probably quite a strange experience to be in the spotlight somehow, instead of being part of an anonymous audience? How do people generally respond?**

**WG** Very differently, some are a little uncomfortable as for some it's very confronting. Others seem to be very comfortable with this setting, everyone is different.

**WILL GUTHRIE** is one of those performers who continually seem to question the boundaries of his artistic practice. His latest LP “People Pleaser” sees him expanding his drum kit with a diverse range of samples, including everything from the sound of skateboarding to religious chant. In his live performances too, Guthrie seems eager to move beyond conventions, his project “solo for one person” being an excellent case in point.

Jannis Van De Sande

**JS During Ear to the Ground you're playing solo for one person at a time, a straightforward yet peculiar project you've been doing from time to time. Where did this idea come from?**

**WG** The idea came out of looking for different ways to present my music. I still wanted to play live, and have an audience, but was interested in changing the context in which most concerts are presented. Also, you play and listen differently when alone, as opposed to when in a room with others, so I wanted to explore a context somewhere in between the privacy of playing/listening alone, and the public event, which is the more classic concert context.

**JS Is it a challenging project for you as a performer, compared to a more traditional performance?**

**WG** Yes, it is very different, it can be very, very intimate, especially when the room is very small and I am very close to the audience member. I wanted this; I wanted a more intense experience than your average concert where people come but with some distance. They

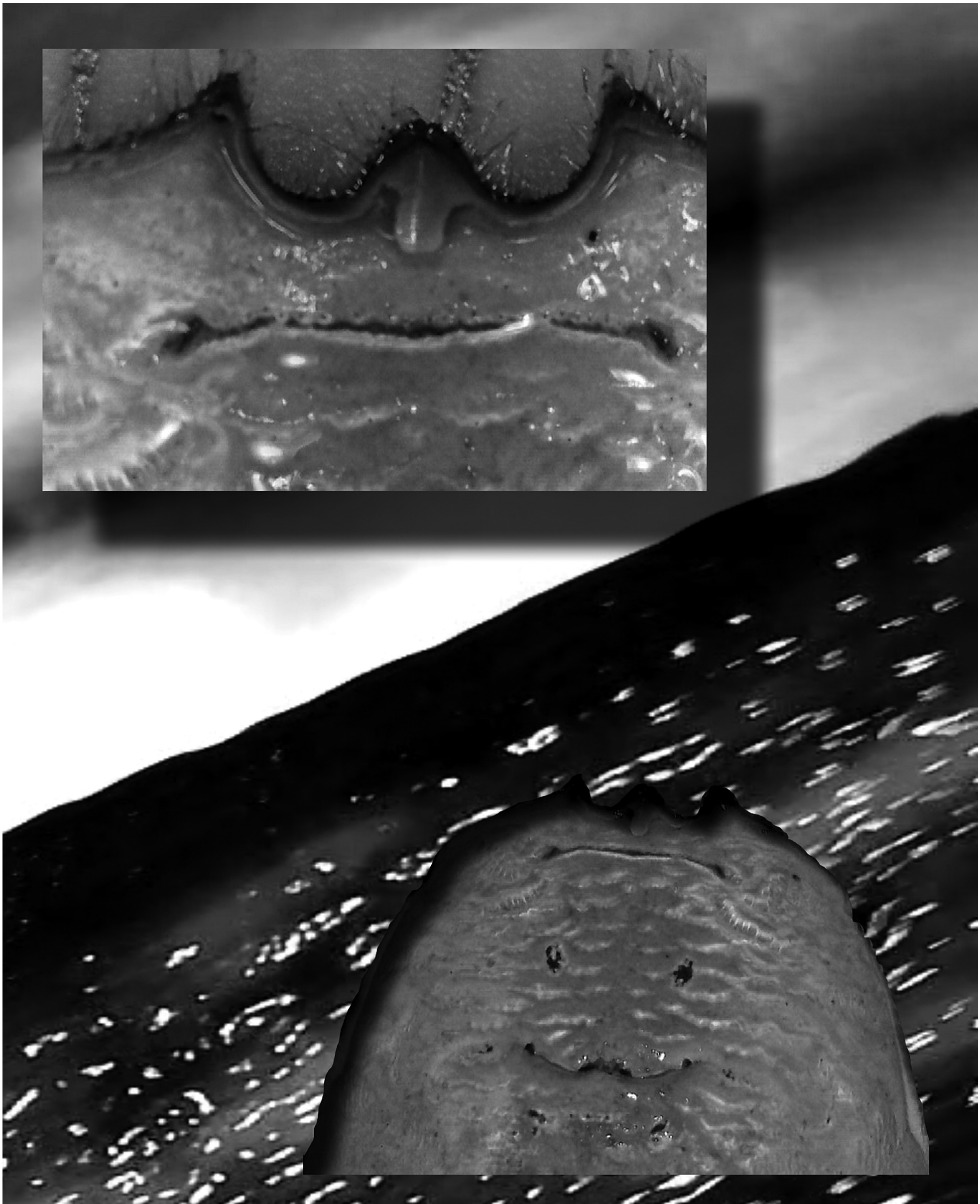


pay for something, they consume it, and leave. This setting is forcing both performer and audience into something different, and is generally a more intense listening / performative environment than a normal concert.

**JS You say this special setting is quite different from a more traditional concert in terms of your relation to the audience, but does it also influence your playing? Do you feel more able to experiment?**

**WG** It depends, sometimes. Sometimes it's rather intimidating and I play it safe, it's a complex situation that







# 'YUNG SHEIKHS EXTENDED'

## 'DE BATTERIES IN EEN NOTENDOP

Yasmin Van Der Rauwelaert en Clara Lissens zagen in de lokroep van een ijzermarchand de naam voor hun band De Batteries. Ze spelen op het Yung Sheikhs Extended minifestival in Barlok, een overdreven editie van de Yung Sheikhs serie waarmee KRAAK beweert de parels uit de zwijnenstal te vissen die men al eens geringschattend de underground noemt.

Gerard Herman

**DB** Yasmin: “We kwamen op de naam De Batteries, van “Oud ijzer, koper, lood en zink, versleten batteries en ouw stoven.”, zodat wanneer we op middelbare leeftijd zijn gekomen, we een comeback kunnen maken als “De Versleten Batteries”. Dit was Dennis Tyfus ter ore gekomen, en hij vroeg of we wilden komen spelen op Ultra Eczema’s Kortste Einde in Bagger. We zeiden ja, maar we hadden nog niks, dus het moest wel. En zo is het gestart.

**GH** Dennis Tyfus ontmoette hen al eerder, toen enkele kunststudenten voor de reeds ter ziele gegane internationale punkband The Verboden Boys een eigen chapter opstartte.

**DB** Mathias MU, Wannes Cools, Ilja Kleinjans en ik waren begonnen als The Verboden Boys (Chapter De Urne), een project van Ultra Eczema. We oefenden op school in de Kerkstraat (Sint Lucas Antwerpen), en Clara had ons gehoord.

Clara stelde voor om fluit te komen spelen bij ons, wat heel leuk was. Maar Clara en ik merkten dat we niet veel lawaai mochten maken, dus zeiden we dat we gewoon met ons twee lawaai zouden maken. Met De Batteries hebben we eerst overdag in mijn living muziek gemaakt, nu hebben we een atelier in Berchem (we zijn ondertussen allebei afgestudeerd). We mogen daar pas na 17u spelen tijdens de week, want naast ons atelier zit een architectenbureau.

Ik denk dat we het beiden leuker vinden om overdag te oefenen, want ’s avonds worden we soms een beetje lui.

**GH** De muziek van de Batteries heeft geen finale vorm. Ze beoefenen een vorm van amateurisme die over de kern van het woord gaat: liefhebben.

**DB** Wij doen eigenlijk maar wat. We zijn technisch niet zo sterk. We worden wel altijd heel blij als er een leuk geluidje uit onze instrumentjes en machientjes komt, en dan werken we daarop verder, laag per laag. We proberen onze instellingen dan zo goed mogelijk te onthouden, zodat we telkens toch ongeveer hetzelfde geluid en ritme uit de instrumenten kunnen krijgen.

**GH** Ze coverden Little Trouble Girl van Sonic Youth omwille van de melodie en de tekst, een lied waarin een meisje vertelt dat ze zich nooit helemaal zal prijsgeven

en in bescheiden mate haar non-conformistische houding koestert. En omdat kunst en muziek nooit alleen bestaan, en steeds een zoektocht is die eender welke richting kan nemen, zijn hier een aantal bronnen waar de Batteries warm van worden:

**DB** Park Pardon, Borokov Borokov, Ria Paqueé en Guilherme De Oliveira, ‘s ochtends opstaan met radio Klara, Chelsea Girl van Nico, en Françoise Hardy. Weather Report, Telemann, Peaches, Strip-teas van Jiří Šlitr & Jiří Šust voor de soundtrack van ‘Sedmikrásky’ (‘Daisies’), ‘Magic and Ecstasy’ van Ennio Morricone, Files for Deafs van Ilja Kleinjans, The Monks, The Nurse, X-ray Spex, The Screamers, Ignatz & de stervende honden, Laurie Anderson, The Sugarcubes, een mooie roze 7” van Ladies Who Lunch (‘Kims we love’), waar covers van liedjes van Sonic Youth op staan, Fluwelen Koord, Daniel Johnston, de zusjes Deradoorian, CE Schneider Topical, Jib Kidder, Mariah, ‘Plantasia’ van Mort Garson (voor de planten), Aawaawaa van Woo...

Het werk van Jeremy Deller, Roman Signer, Eneliis Semper uit Estland, Baldvin Einarsson, Sine Van Menxel, Jelle Spruyt, Gijs Waterschoot en Rien Schellemans, Valgerður Sigurðardóttir, Liese Vanhove, Stef van Looveren, Human Organ Orchestra van Jo Caimo, de keramieken instrumenten van Maika Garnica die ze bespeelt in Sui Moon, het schuurpapier van Cuntst, het pieppak van Clara Lissens, *Gedane Zaken* van Gerard Herman, de sculpturen van Timo Van Grinsven, de reizen van Michèle Matyn.



N.v.d.r.  
Ter afsluiting een haiku:  
De ijzermarchand  
Glijdt langzaam door de straten  
Zijn wagen nooit leeg

## 'KATZ MULK

Deeply embedded in the Manchester underground, Katz Mulk was born out of the Human Heads crew. The trio makes warped electronics, auto tuned improv and loose pop music that combines the best of hipstertronics and hardcore avant-garde music. Their debut is soon out on the top notch Singing Knives label.

As suiting for a ‘the now sound of Manchester’ we had this ‘Facebook messenger’ conversation with Ben Night, Andrea Kerney and Ben Morris about their avant-pop and performance explorations in experimental music.

Niels Latomme

**BN** Hi ya’ll...Niels wants to interview Katz Mulk for the Avant Guardian (an irregular KRAAK publication).

**NL** What’s up with the photo?  
**BN** Haha. The photo came about through a chance meeting at a gig with those sunglasses and Andrea’s mad Photoshop skills. I think it’s an accurate depiction of Katz Mulk in a Mad Max Brexit world. We are the band to heal those wounds!



**NL** So, you make political music?  
**BN** You’re asking all the big hard hitting questions here Niels!

**NL** That’s my style...  
**BN** We don’t make protest music, so not with a big ‘P’. I think we make rough, joyous group musick with narrative fragments stuffed in the holes. And we’re resolutely DIY, but I don’t want to speak for everyone else on this question because we all bring our own sensibilities to it. But with promoting gigs regularly as I do with psykick dancehall, I think there’s a politics to that which is more clearly identifiable...

**NL** Tell me, where comes the name ‘Katz Mulk’ from?

**BN** Ah... a jumble of associations and happen stance. Ben and me were asked to do a gig at Fuel Cafe in Manchester, and we’re not fans of the Morris/Knight duo approach to naming, so I think Ben suggested it initially. And I jazzed it up with the k and the zs. Also, I like that it echoes and is partly inspired by these weird chocolates I found in a German supermarket called katzenzungen (cats tongues!). Also, I thought it had a Jeff Keen vibe to it but I’ve gone cold on the relevance of that. More importantly, we are fans of the cat in general.

**NL** Katz Mulk sounds to me pretty hip hop inspired, you have any affinity to hip hop?

**BN** Do you mean our name or the music?  
**AK** If Katz Mulk are hip hop then I’m flava flav (don’t put that in the interview)...

**NL** Too Late!  
**AK** Where are you getting the hip hop vibe?

**NL** Well, the vocals sounds to me as hip hop inspired. But more, there’s a bleak futurist vibe that reminds of hip hop’s futurism. Also the overall sound is pretty now. There’s no retro vibe in it.

**BN** Personally, I’ve never thought of the vocals as having a connection with hip hop, so I’d be interested to know what you’ve been listening to that made the connection for you. As for the futurism, we’ve never discussed it in those terms, but I like the association! Not Futurism per se, but Ursula le Guin’s writing was a big influence for me in making the music that went into the new album (husks). Especially a kind of ordinary science fiction that I get from reading her work; the strangeness of everyday encounters, and how things spring from that. A few lines are poached here and there and scattered in the music. Contemporary pop music is/was a big influence, a lot of the samples were recorded in the summer at a huge concert, where people who didn’t have tickets gathered around the outside to watch and listen. All the sounds are pretty chewed up though, so you might not be able to tell whom it was! As for the now sound; I think we wanted to work in a way that was distinct from what we do outside of KM. I really wanted to work on a group that could combine dance; music and singing, and would work as performance and as recordings. Ben M can chip in to add his thoughts about the sound...

**BM** The hip hop associations kind of make sense to me in a distant way. Definitely in terms of methodology and also stylistically to a tiny degree. While we were making the last album and playing gigs in the same time frame, Ben told me about DJ Spanish Fly’s mixes and how he was into the raw, compositional bare bones of a lot of the Memphis hip-hop he was playing. I took this as a green light, to experiment with 808 drum machine samples. And then, like Ben mentioned, the core of the album is based around a sampling process, of mainstream pop music filtered through Manchester’s architecture, looped and hand/bodily manipulated using consumer audio technology; tape players, dictaphones etc. so there’s definite comparisons to be made in a pop-music-concrete/ using hip hop drum

machines/ lyrical vocalisation sort of way. That said, we don't sound anything like hip hop! And ben's words don't really approach the world of Memphis hip hop lyrical content!

In terms of sounding now and not retro, I'm not really sure if that's true, but as a context I think we started playing together at a time when we both wanted to push ourselves out of our comfort zones a little bit. This lead us down a more performative route and asking Andrea to collaborate with us has influenced the pathways we've gone down. I was definitely influenced by what Human Heads were and are still doing. I mastered their first album and it really impressed me and signalled a way into new modes of experimentation. Ben and I both have a shared interest in people like El-g, Ghédalia Tazartes, Graham Lambkin, and Robert Ashley. I listen to Michael Jackson, Prince and Sade more than those people though.

**NL Tell me more about the performative aspect? How does that work and what happens? Is it because you want engage people and yourself in a direct experience?**

**BN** This follows on from what Ben was saying about getting out of our comfort zones and pulling different areas of interest together that were put in separate boxes before now. I've been getting more into physical performance over the last few year and I really get a lot from what I feel

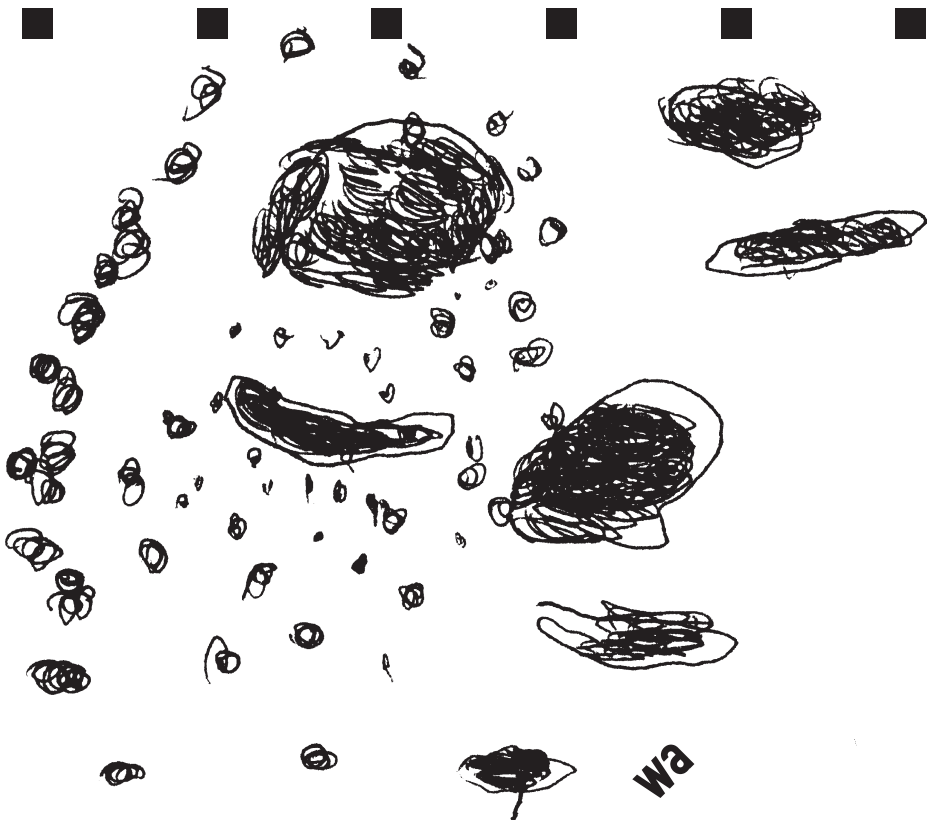
is the risk and vulnerability of doing it live. I mean I'm not a dancer like Andrea is, so it's definitely something out of my comfort zone! Also, the performance aspect comes from an idea about moving sounds around a space, using tape machines to create a primitive, mobile surround sound!

**NL What do you do then?**

**BN** Ah, nice try, but we're not going to part the silver curtain that easily. You'll have to wait and see. Plus, I fell off my bike the other day; might just hobble around for 20mins and show people my bruises.

**AK** You asked about the performative element. Ben and Ben asked if I would be interested in doing some dance as part of a performance they had scheduled. I listened to some recordings, discussed ideas around gesture and came up with a set of movements to improvise around. As my background is in graphic design I recorded these as a visual score/instruction. This first performance involved Ben K and I moving around the space and using architectural features as props. Since then all 3 of us have moved out into the space and the performative aspect has expanded rapidly. Each performance changes quite drastically depending on the space/environment and we take some time to scope it out and decide what will work best.

**NL Thanks!**



**TRANSPORT** is a trio made out of notorious names like Vomit Heat, Teks and Nicolas Wandt. You can call it Kraut rock in its most transcendental form, referring to Amon Düül, Ash Ra Temple, injected with a good dose of rattling and percussion. They play on KRAAK's next instalment of the not so notorious Yung Sheikhs Series, so we conducted a micro bits and bytes interview with Niklas Wandt.

Niels Latomme

**NL How did the band started?**

**nw** The band started around 2010 in Essen, Germany under the moniker "panzerdivision Copacabana" playing small DIY shows in the experimental concert series "Denkodrom". I was still an MC and initially got to know Edis because he made beats for me. Nils came as part of the package.

**NL How is the Cologne scene, it seems you are creating a new chapter in**

**the German Kraut rock tradition? Do you see it that way?**

**nw** We're in that small and familial scene only peripherally, because we have a lot of friends there, and we work there regularly. Edis and Nils are in Essen, Ruhrgebiet with its much smaller scene and I moved to Berlin a couple of years back. But we keep doing stuff in Cologne and Düsseldorf. It's like a little village with all the comforts and disadvantages.

A

I don't know if we are part of a new chapter in kraut. Our mode of improvising and playing together is fed by a love of lots of records and bands – djing in this case feeds back to playing music.

**NL Tell me about Ana Ott records?**

**nw** Ana Ott is the two-man operation of two old friends Felix Möser and Dennis Dycks from the small town of Mülheim. They're churning out interesting underground music with their own money without regard to sales or even profitability

A

**NL How is the record going, and how came it into existence?**

**nw** No idea. It got some nice little reviews and particularly my DJ friends into kosmische musik have a fondness for it. We recorded by laying down skeletal basic tracks at the Makroscope in Mülheim in 2014. In 2016 we overdubbed a lot and finally got it done.

**NL You all have solo projects as well, tell a bit about them, and how do they relate to Transport?**

**nw** Yes, there is a lot of other projects, interrelated and not. Nils and



Katharina Geling

me play in a psychedelic pop band called Oracles; Edis and Nils have an ambient techno project called Gras (there is a 12 inch out on Riviera Club). I'm currently working live and in the studio with Jan Schulte aka Wolf Müller and we'll have a record coming up later this year on Growing Bin records. Also we are working on a new NDW project called Neuzeitliche Bodenbeläge and on a lot of free improvisation. Recently I just released a trio recording with Tobias Delius on sax and Nicola Hein on guitar on Impakt Records.

**NL What is your favourite guilty pleasure?**

**nw** Fried things, AOR, Smooth Jazz, soft, gelatinous foods.

# WHITE DEATH Whitescapes

1a

Not a place of fluids, organs, muscles, tendons and bones all in a constant, precarious and living tension with each other, but a vacant, hollow, whited chamber, scraped clean, cleared of any evidence of the grotesque embarrassments of an actual life. No smells, no noises, no colour; no changing from one state to another and the uncertainty that comes with it; no exchanges with the outside world and the doubt and the dirt that goes with that; no eating, no drinking, no pissing, no shitting, no sucking, no fucking, no nothing.

—David Batchelor

2

And 'white' appears. Absolute white. White beyond all whiteness. White of the coming of white. White without compromise, through exclusion, through total eradication of non-white. Insane, enraged white, screaming with whiteness. Fanatical, furious, riddling the victim. Horrible electric white, implacable, murderous. White in bursts of white. God of 'white.' No, not a god, a howler monkey. (Let's hope my cells don't blow apart.) End of white. I have the feeling that for a long time to come white is going to have something excessive for me.

—Henri Michaux

**White Death is collaboration between Kelly Jayne Jones and Hannah Ellul. The Internet provided us answers by Hannah on our questions about their work. A deep conversation on improvisations, the experimental scene in Brexit Country and the greater value of Awkwardness.**

Niels Latomme

**NL I read the bio of White Death and I was intrigued by the references to Henri Michaux, what do you want to tell with that, and how does literature relate to the music you make?**

**HE** The 'bio' is from a zine in the making and is from a series of propositions on the idea of 'white'. One is by Michaux, there are others. Collaging fragments sometimes seems like a way to start feeling out something new – collage, I figure, is a kind of pointing out and making connections that seem right just now (the carrier bag theory of blurb writing, cf. Ursula Le Guin). Perhaps the way we put

sounds together sometimes works along the same lines.

**NL You are also a visual artist, does that have an impact on your approach?**

**HE** I don't know about this, my initial reaction is to say I don't feel like it does particularly in this case but Kelly might have another perspective. I've been involved in this kind of music since I was at art school and in some respects I feel like I had a fairly clear sense of what I wanted to do musically before I could say the same of my other work. And that perhaps the influence has been in that direction, with an interest in sound



influencing the rest of my work. Having said that, being interested in different forms is always going to shape what you do in sometimes unexpected ways, and that’s certainly been a factor in some of the other music I make which has involved integrating video or text or different kinds of performances. But it hasn’t been something that’s overtly influenced White Death (yet).

**NL How did White Death start out?**  
**HE** We first began playing together when our old bands (Part Wild Horses Mane on Both Sides and Helhesten) did some collaborations years ago. We toured as one band in in France and Spain in 2008, and probably started playing (very) occasionally as a duo then. Kelly was on flute of course and I was playing clarinet at the time, so it seemed an obvious thing to do. We were touring with Chora, and Kelly and I would also occasionally jam with Rob Lye, and his new alto sax. In fact, I think there was a tape released at some point of the three of us. Around that time, Kelly moved to Lyon and I think we did some recording there as a trio and also as a duo. But it was very sporadic until Kelly moved back to the UK in 2010, when we actually christened White Death and released a tape, *Myth and Maneater*. And then it all went on hold again. We were in different cities...

For the last three years we’ve both been living in Manchester and have played live occasionally but there have always been other projects demanding our attention, and so we only just got round to putting together a new release, on local label Sacred Tapes. In the meantime, I’ve become disenchanted with free improvisation (or, to put it more positively, I’ve become more interested in other ways of doing things) and I’ve put away my reeds, and what Kelly does has changed a lot too. But some kind of affinity has persisted, an interest in a similar kind of sonic space and texture, perhaps.

**NL The music seems to be centred on improvisation, what is improvisation for you?**  
**HE** Well, it’s been central to the kind of music I’ve always made and yet I’ve had difficulties with it as an approach too, with the kind of habits it can foster. I spent a lot of time thinking about what it meant to improvise with other people and I came to realise that what I really valued were the moments where it felt like everything might fall apart, where there was a kind of provisional, precarious quality to whole affair. Adam Kotsko has this great line in his book *Awkwardness*:

‘What we can do is practice the skill of awkward improvisation, of identifying those situations most fruitful for intervention, of feeling out the shape and rhythm of consciously-chosen re-doubled awkwardness [...] an awkwardness so awkward it becomes a kind of grace – it is the peculiar kind of grace that allows us to break down and admit that we are finally nothing more or less than human beings who will always be stuck with each other and, more importantly, to admit that we are glad of it.’

(He’s not talking about music specifically, but it has obvious relevance.) I probed at that and pulled what I was doing apart until I kind of hit a wall, and began working with structures and post-production more, eventually moving away from improvising

almost totally in Human Heads, the other band I play in now. My interest in awkwardness persisted. With Kelly, I’ve had to improvise again and it’s not always easy to work out how. And part of that is trying to remember what I get from it. And what that is, I think, is negotiating with people and spaces: messily, contingently. (Kelly has similarly shifted to a more complex kind of performing that isn’t straightforwardly improvised, I’d say). I’m not particularly interested in catharsis, or whatever. Here’s one more line for you that I often think about, from the much-missed Mark Fisher writing about the Scritti Politti of 1978: ‘The methodology then was improvisational, but the group didn’t want anyone (least of all themselves) to be under the illusion that it issued from some vitalist well-spring of creativity. It was the sound of a collectivity thinking (itself into existence) under and through material constraints.’

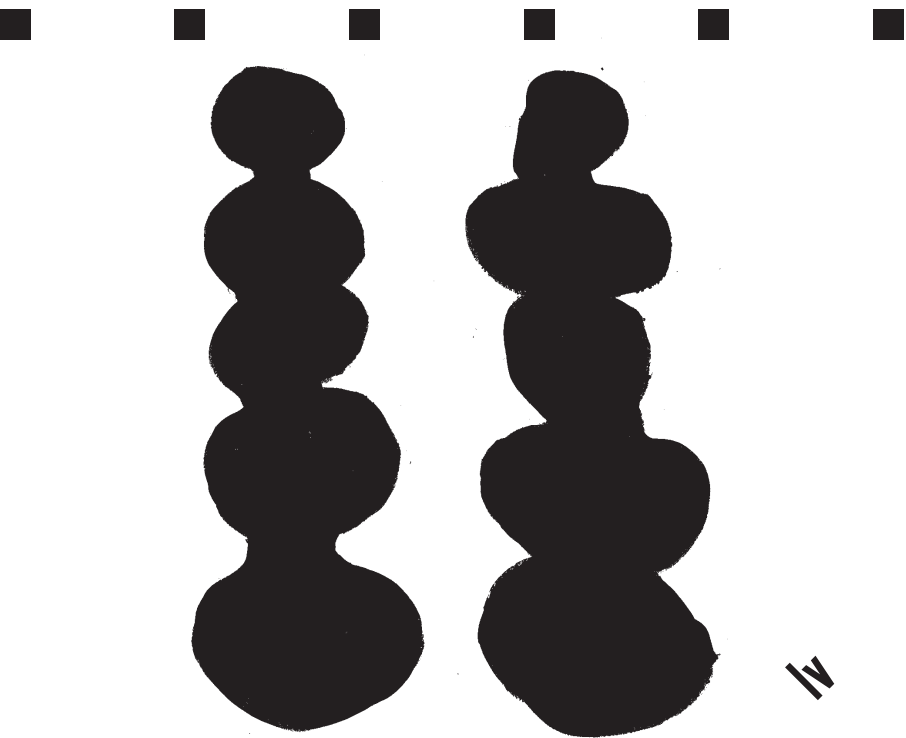
**NL I like the bleakness in the tracks you have sent. Is it intentional and does it relate to your own emotional state of being?**  
**HE** I don’t agree that they are bleak! And so it must be unintentional. What is intentional is a kind of darkness or heaviness. And perhaps that’s not an accident. There are certain preconceptions about where something might go when you play flute or clarinet, these traditionally feminine instruments, that maybe have other kinds of baggage too in terms of associations. So if you want to resist that and to push at what you can do with your sound then going heavy is one way to do it. I think the sounds we’re interested in remain fairly consistent – working with space but occasionally playing with noise, with harshness. More and more, with field recordings too, breaking in with different sound worlds of their own. But I wouldn’t call what we do bleak. And I would definitely be sceptical of any attempt to such suggest that we’re just ‘doing feelings’. Perhaps if you hear bleakness it relates to your own emotional state of being?;-)

**NL That may well be so... laughs. You’ve been around a long time in the UK experimental and underground scene, I’m always interested in how they evolve and how they work. How do see things have changed over the years?**  
**HE** You know, this has stumped me a bit. I suppose I have an unusual perspective because I’ve moved around the UK a lot and it’s probably quite uncommon to have been involved in doing this in so many different cities. But I’m not sure it’s easy to make generalisations about changes in a scene, especially when the very idea of what constitutes a ‘scene’ seems to dissipate as soon as you try to pin it down. But leaving that aside (I would broadly agree that there’s something nebulous but significant that the word ‘scene’ names), I think that, generally, everyone is pragmatically trying to make things happen as best they can wherever they are, and everyone has peaks and troughs during that process. People fall in and out of love with putting on shows; fads come and go when it comes to doing releases. And there are practical reasons why that happens, especially when the sense of how vibrant a city is for underground experimental music actually comes down to the

efforts of what might in fact be a pretty small group of people. But things continue to happen, one way or another. The only obvious shift I can think of is the fact that when I began to be involved in this stuff, in the mid 2000s, it was during what in retrospect looks like a bizarrely hip phase (it probably looked bizarre to older heads at the time, too). Wolf Eyes on Sub Pop, weird shit getting reviews in unexpected places (especially if it came from the US), lots of cool kids coming to shows. Gigs were packed! Realising that wasn’t going to last forever took a bit of getting used to for those of us who stuck around! And I suppose in the UK the last 10 years has coincided with a period when it’s become much harder not to have a (full time) job due to changes in benefits legislation and a housing

crisis, and much harder to get arts funding (and much had already been done to make the situation difficult by the early 2000s) – so the two principle ways that people had found to support themselves while making art and music for decades have been massively undermined. So I suppose that might be a factor in why my abiding sense now is one of a certain pragmatism, of making do.

**NL What is your favourite Belgian beer?**  
**HE** I’m not really a beer drinker, that’s more Kelly’s area. Having said that, I am partial to the really sour beers. The more they taste like actual human bile, the better.  
**NL Then you should try Geuze! Thanks for the interview.**



**OSILASI** Osilasi is a fresh new duo that emerged out the always vibrant and ever revolting Brussels underground. They will play at that concert series that claims to have a finger on the beating pulse of undergrounds everywhere. Time for a typical Brussels multi linguist interview with Lea Roger, harpist and half of Osilasi!

Niels Latomme

**NL How did the project started?**  
**LR** Célia Jankowski joue dans un groupe bruxellois qui s’appelle Vitas Guerulaïtis, elle y joue de l’orgue électronique et elle chante. Je joue dans un groupe qui s’appelle Guili Guili Goulag, on a joué plusieurs fois dans les mêmes soirées. Un jour, elle m’a dit qu’elle avait un violon à roue, une boîte à bourdon comme le nomme son constructeur, le luthier expérimental français, Léo Maurel. De là, et parce qu’on rigolait bien ensemble aussi (c’est important), on a eu envie d’essayer des choses, sans l’idée forcément de faire un groupe, plutôt l’envie d’expérimenter. On a fait une petite résidence en septembre dernier dans les écuries de la ferme du Biéreau à Louvain-la-Neuve. Célia est arrivée avec ses éléments de batterie personnalisés, son violon à roue et quelques pédales d’effets, moi avec ma harpe, mes pédales d’effets et mes objets (épilateur, crochet, archet...). On a continué en janvier dans la ferme de Tourinnes qui se situe au centre géographique de la Belgique, et petit à petit, le projet a commencé à prendre sa forme actuelle: un travail sur le mouvement répétitif, les résonances harmoniques et les micro-variations sonores. Le

nom a été trouvé le soir-même de notre premier concert en mars 2017, *OSILASI*, qui veut dire « oscillation » en indonésien.  
**NL I saw recently you playing the harp, and I like it a lot that you applied the instrument in a more noise-rock context. How did you started playing the instrument?**  
**LR** J’ai commencé la harpe celtique quand j’avais 7 ans, à l’école de musique de Plougastel-Daoulas, village où je suis née, dans le Finistère en Bretagne. J’avais vu cet instrument à un spectacle donné à l’école par un barde conteur, Myrdhin. À 16 ans, je suis allée au conservatoire de musique, où j’ai fini mon cursus en harpe celtique et où j’ai commencé un cursus en harpe classique. À ce moment-là, j’ai commencé à avoir un souci avec mon instrument, les partitions de musique celtique que j’apprenais commençaient à m’ennuyer et je ne pouvais pas me payer une harpe classique. J’avais envie de jouer avec mes potes, mais quand j’essayais de jouer autre chose que du celtique, ça sonnait tout de suite ringard. Ensuite, je suis partie à l’université, en musicologie à Rennes, et bien que les cours m’aient plu,



■ à l’obtention de mon diplôme, je ne me voyais pas continuer des études supérieures au conservatoire ni devenir professeur de musique. Après l’obtention de ma licence, j’ai donc arrêté les cours de musique et la harpe du même coup, pendant 5 ans.

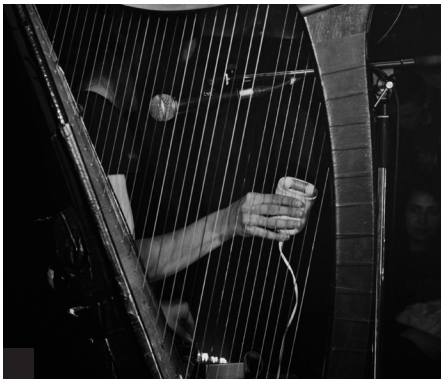
Je suis partie sur Paris pour des études en gestion culturelle puis en anthropologie, et j’ai plutôt commencé à faire des DJ sets et organiser des concerts, j’achetais beaucoup de disques, et j’allais voir beaucoup de concerts. C’est surtout à ce moment-là que je me suis forgée ma culture musicale. Et un soir, Mathieu, le batteur de mon groupe actuel : Guili Guili Goulag, m’a proposé de venir jouer avec lui. On a commencé à improviser pendant plusieurs heures toutes les semaines, dans un imbroglia free-jazz, noise et punk. Par l’expérimentation, j’ai commencé à utiliser des objets et les essayer sur la harpe, pour les sonorités nouvelles que ça apportait. J’avais déjà un micro-contact mais un peu pourri, un pote m’a prêté un ampli, un autre, des pédales et de composants en composants, j’ai commencé à m’équiper et à travailler l’amplification et les effets avec la harpe.



NL **At the same time you weave into it west-african music. Has the travel to benin did influence you?**

LR Je suis en effet allée en Afrique au Burkina-Faso pour jouer avec un koraïste burkinabé, une chanteuse malienne et des amis français, musiciens électroniques. C’était une super expérience, c’est toujours intéressant de jouer avec d’autres personnes, surtout dans ce cas-là avec des personnes issues de cultures très différentes. Mais moi qui m’attendais à découvrir d’autres échelles musicales, j’ai été surprise en m’apercevant que le koraïste avec qui je jouais, utilisait la gamme tempérée (gamme basée sur une alternance de tons et de demi-tons, utilisée dans la musique savante occidentale). Cela m’a fait réfléchir sur la construction culturelle de mon propre instrument, la harpe celtique.

En effet, la harpe celtique est arrivée très tard en Bretagne, après la guerre, prise comme symbole parmi d’autres, d’un mouvement de réaffirmation d’une identité culturelle régionale. Ce qui est intéressant de voir, c’est que le répertoire s’est créé sur une certaine idée du répertoire celte, (Irlande, Écosse, Pays de Galle et ancienne Bretagne) mais pas du tout sur le répertoire populaire actif dans cette région, qui lui avait perduré grâce aux chanteurs. Ceci est aussi dû au fait qu’au même moment où ce revival arrive, une autre tradition se meurt, celle de ces vieux chanteurs



bretons paysans, car les jeunes commencent à trouver qu’ils sonnent « faux » et pas « en rythme ». Après la guerre, il est de plus en plus difficile de trouver un chanteur qui commence un peu avant le temps ou bien qui utilise des notes un peu en-dessous ou un peu au-dessus des notes que l’on connaît dans le tempérament égal. En gros, la modalité se perd au profit de la modernité, qui appelle à des signatures rythmiques où tout tombe sur le temps et des notes « justes ». Et c’est un problème, car la modalité n’est pas pensée en accords de manière verticale comme la musique occidentale savante l’est, c’est une musique horizontale, où le rythme et la mélodie sont pensée ensemble, et donc tout son jeu se trouve dans le timbre, les attaques et les dynamiques qui sont créés sur cette ligne mélodico-rythmique, c’est-à-dire la création de micro-variations qui font qu’elle a cette puissance musicale. Si on lui enlève ça, d’une certaine manière, on l’aseptise. De la sorte, récemment, je me suis rendue compte que la musique celtique que j’avais apprise étant petite, n’était finalement pas cette musique modale bretonne, celle qui groove, qui module dans le son, celle qui accroche, qui a du grain et qui se vit dans l’instant, celle qui se répète mais qui n’est jamais la même.

Il faut faire attention, je pense, chacun dans sa propre culture à ne pas gommer à son insu, ses particularismes, il est évident que notre monde tend toujours vers une uniformisation, il faut trouver les moyens de résister, maintenant ces processus prennent du temps. En Bretagne par exemple, le fait que je sache ce que je viens de vous dire est le fruit d’une poignée d’homme dont le chanteur Éric Marchand, qui s’est rendu compte de cela et qui a décidé de ne pas suivre le mouvement, mais plutôt de travailler les particularismes de la musique bretonne.]

Pour en revenir à mon voyage au Burkina-Faso, je ne sais pas depuis combien de temps la gamme tempérée est utilisée sur la Kora, si comme la harpe celtique elle a été incorporée avec. J’ai été écouter depuis mon retour, plusieurs koraïstes, même des collectages anciens qui datent de 1970 et il semble que la gamme tempérée est déjà utilisée à ce moment-là, alors que sur le kamélé ou le donso n’goni, des cousins de la kora, ce n’est pas le cas. En même temps ces instruments n’ont pas les mêmes histoires, les n’goni étaient utilisés par les bergers et chasseurs alors que la kora était l’instrument des griots, les conseillers des princes. La kora aurait peut-être été très tôt influencé par une gamme venant de l’Occident, qui aurait été incorporée à travers les relations politiques entre le Burkina-Faso et d’autres pays occidentaux.

NL **An obvious reference point for playing harp in a more more ‘experimental’ or ‘off-stream’ way, is of course Alice Coltrane. And free jazz in general – think of Dorothy Ashby and Phil Cohran. Have they influenced you?**

LR C’est évident, il y a tellement peu de personnes qui utilisent la harpe de manière expérimentale, que les enregistrements de ces fabuleux musiciens ont été très importants pour moi. Si je dois citer les deux qui m’ont le plus influencé je pense, ce serait : Zeena Parkins car elle m’a permis de me rendre compte que la harpe pouvait être électrique et passionnante, ce qui est rare je trouve et Alice Coltrane, pour son jeu sincère et libre, et son groove. Ensuite, il y a

A Hélène Breschand, une grande dame dans la musique improvisée et expérimentale en France, son jeu en tant qu’harpiste n’est jamais à côté, sans fioriture, j’aime beaucoup son univers et son fin travail sur le son, son album solo *Les Incarnés* sorti sur D’autres Cordes en 2014 est super beau. Et puis il y a récemment Rhodri Davis que j’ai découvert, ça m’a bien bouleversée, son travail sur les résonances et la polyrythmie est bien bluffant. Je n’ai encore pas pu le voir en live, j’aimerais bien. La compositrice Éliane Radigue lui a composé une pièce : *OCCAM I*, qui est magnifique, à Hélène Breschand aussi : *OCCAM XIV* que je n’ai pas encore eu l’occasion d’entendre, ce serait bien qu’un organisateur en Belgique les programme!

Après, je crois que ce qui m’influence le plus dans ma musique et qui a toujours été un moteur, ce sont mes vinyles de musique électronique (du breakcore à la musique concrète et contemporaine) et tous mes potes qui jouent de la boîte à rythmes passée dans des delays et des distos... les pitchs, les rythmes cassés, les boucles décalées, le son des machines quoi ! Je suis une grosse fan de musique électronique et les couleurs des sons synthétiques, leurs manière si particulière de s’agencer ont été des moteurs pour moi, essayer de les reproduire à la harpe, alors que je ne peux concrètement pas faire sonner les choses pareil, me fait faire autre chose, et me permet d’ouvrir des portes pour jouer différemment. C’est sûr, ça me nourrit dans mon jeu, mais je peux en dire tout autant des timbres et rythmes incroyables de pleins de musiques modales du monde (Gamelans indonésien, cithare coréenne, musique gnawas, Zarb iranien...). Plus c’est brut, vivant et que ça groove, plus j’aime. Le dernier en date que j’ai découvert et acheté en vinyle, il y a deux mois, c’est un vinyle d’ethnomusicologie : *Afghanistan et Iran*, sorti en 1969 sur le label Vogue, collection du musée de l’homme, enregistré en 1956 par J-C. et S. Lubtchansky, c’est magnifique.

NL **What do you actually think about speaking about music in terms of reference to musicians, genres and bands before you?**

LR Nos idées ne viennent jamais de nulle part. Comme dit le biologiste et humaniste Albert Jaquart dans une interview donnée pour le collectif Libre accès en 2010\* : « *chaque fois que j’ai une idée, cette idée est forgée en moi bien sûr, mais a été provoqué par le contact avec un autre, qui disait peut-être le contraire ou la même chose, en tout cas ce qui me rend intelligent c’est ma capacité à rencontrer l’autre, et non pas ma capacité à imaginer tout seul comme un grand des idées nouvelles* ». Donc en effet, en tant que musicien nous ne sommes que la multitude des différentes idées que d’autres ont eu avant nous, que l’on réagence différemment avec notre propre personnalité, ce qui crée de nouvelles idées.

A Nous sommes donc tout le temps influencé par ce qui a été fait, mais j’ai envie de dire que je suis autant influencée par la musique du passé que celle d’aujourd’hui. Je me rappelle d’un débat post-moderne, avec cette idée qu’au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, il n’y aurait plus d’innovation en musique, que tout avait déjà été inventé. Ce discours que reprend Simon Reynolds dans son livre *Retromania*, sorti en 2011, n’est ni plus ni moins que le discours du « c’était mieux avant ». Je ne pense pas ça, bien que je vois en effet beaucoup de musique figée, de musique



« musée » ou de musique « pastiche », je vois aussi aujourd’hui des scènes en pleine effervescence dans les réseaux undergrounds, qui n’ont pas encore d’étiquette, avec des musiciens qui s’influencent les uns les autres, qui se font écouter des trucs du passé, du présent, qui jouent ensemble et qui à eux seuls crée une scène vivante en devenir. Plus tard, je suis persuadée que ces musiciens seront mis sous une étiquette qu’ils n’auront pas décidée, par un critique musical comme Simon Reynolds, qui expliquera ce que ces musiciens ont en commun, car c’est à peu près ça en fait la formation des genres musicaux non ?

Donc, faire référence à des musiques du passé ou à des genres musicaux pour parler d’un groupe d’aujourd’hui, nous permet en effet de le situer, mais je trouve souvent cela trop réducteur pour définir la musique de quelqu’un d’autre. Je trouve plus intéressant d’essayer de faire l’effort de décrire une musique en essayant de parler de ce qui nous touche chez elle, plutôt que d’utiliser des références à des grands noms du passé auquel tel groupe d’aujourd’hui ressemblerait ou donner le nom d’un genre fourre-tout qui ne veut plus rien dire tellement que l’on a tout mis dedans.

NL **Am i correct that you come out of the Brussels, french squatting and noise scene? Or am I wrong? If so, tell me about your background.**

LR On peut dire ça comme ça, mais je dirais plus la scène électronique en fait. À partir de mon entrée à l’université, j’ai commencé à aller dans des soirées électroniques, en free party et en squat, plutôt dans le milieu breakcore et hardcore à Rennes. Par la suite, à Paris, j’ai organisé des concerts réguliers de breakcore, noise et musiques électroniques expérimentales en tout genre dans les squats et café de Paris avec mon collectif : Musikmekanikcirkus, jusqu’à monter un festival qui reliait plusieurs artistes (Du Breakcore aux avant-gardes Dada ou Lettristes, en passant par le cinéma élargie (expanded cinema) et les arts numériques et sonores) qui avaient tous dans leur pratique, un esprit *Do It Yourself*. On l’a d’abord proposé sur une île en Bretagne, le festival *Indisciplinaire*, puis on l’a proposé en format « tournée » aux Pays-Bas, puis il a pris sa forme finale à Paris, on l’a à ce moment-là renommé « Serendip ». Puis en arrivant sur Bruxelles, je me suis investie dans le montage de la galerie E2, je m’occupais des concerts entre autres, puis on a créé un festival, le *grand Bal Exophthalmique*, puis depuis deux ans, je fais partie du collectif du Barlok, j’organise des concerts, moins régulièrement qu’avant, plutôt des concerts de musiques électroniques, mais pas que.

NL **You see yourself as part of a Brussels sound?**

LR Je sais pas bien, de manière générale, je ne suis pas très à l’aise avec les étiquettes et les notions de communautés, c’est souvent plus complexe que ce



que l'on écrit dessus. Mais, si j'essayais de voir ce qui me lierait à un son bruxellois (mais qui est un peu cavalier car je ne vis à Bruxelles que depuis seulement 3 ans), ce serait peut-être un certain éclectisme musical. Je trouve que les groupes belges alternatifs sont souvent traversés de plein d'influences diverses, je trouve ça cool, ça se retrouve aussi beaucoup dans les programmations des lieux. C'est

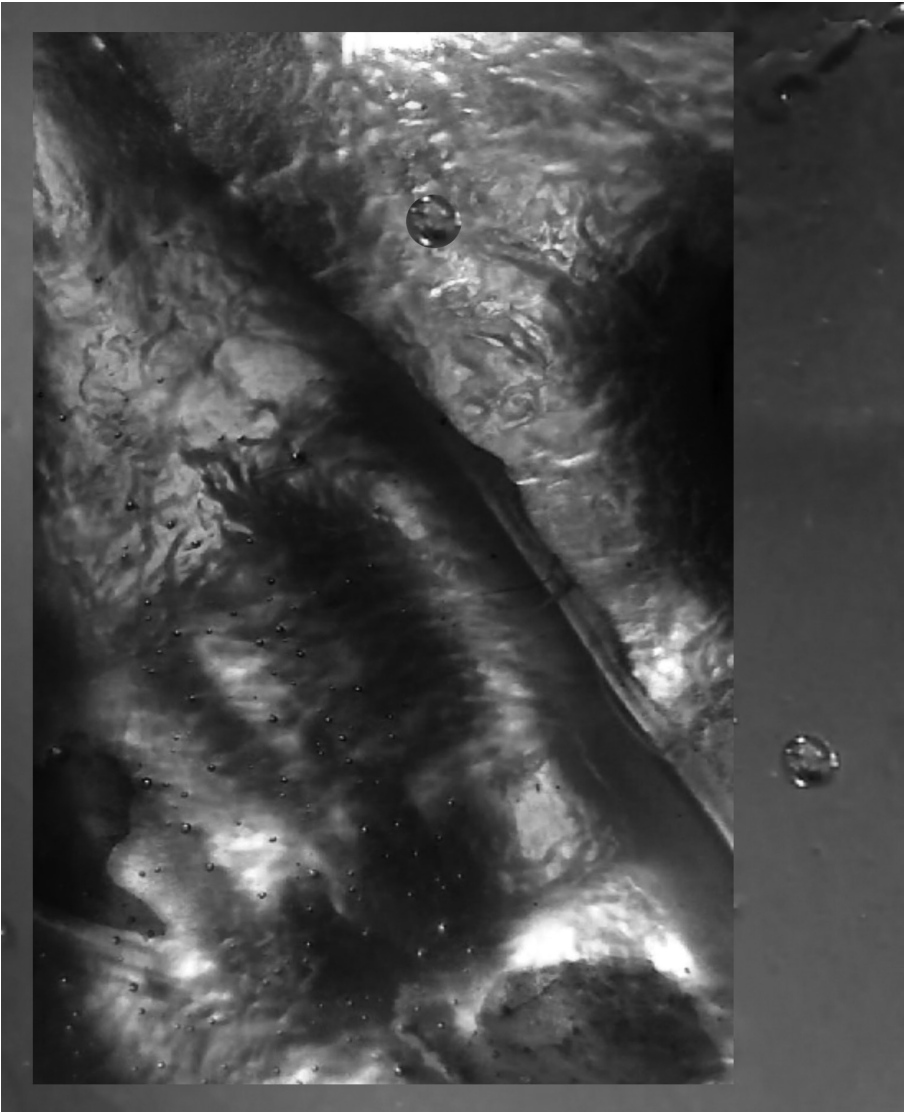
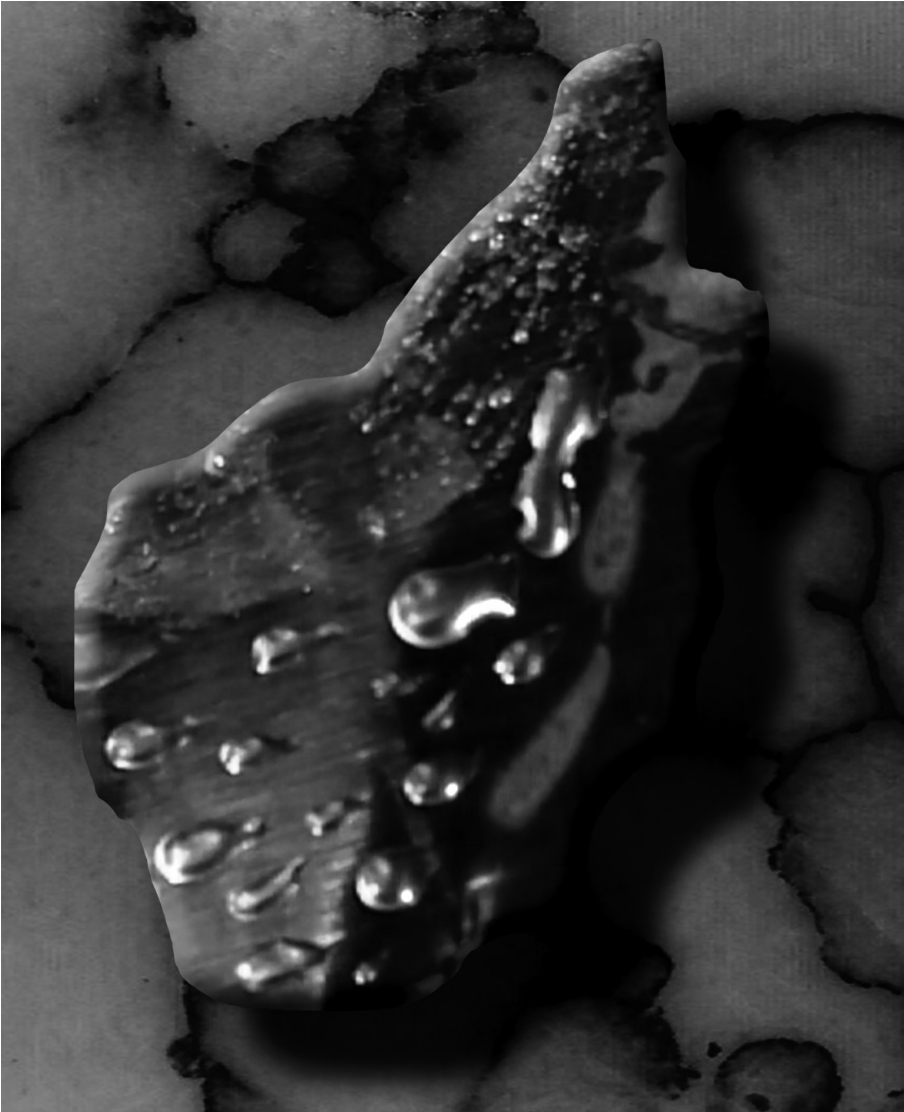
complètement normal à Bruxelles, de mélanger dans une même soirée, différents groupes qui viennent d'horizon sonore fort différents. De fait, les publics aussi sont plus mélangés. Mais le son bruxellois c'est aussi la musique marocaine, congolaise, turque... et je trouve que malheureusement on retrouve peu, ces groupes et ces publics, dans la scène musicale alternative...

**NL What is your favorite record?**  
**LR** Je t'en donne 6, bien que ça été dur de choisir :)  
- Aka, *Centrafrique, Anthologie de la musique des pygmées Aka*, enregistré par Simha Arom, Ocora, 1985  
- Alice Coltrane featuring Pharoah Sanders, *Journey in Satchidananda*, Impulse!, 1971  
- Aphasic et Dj Scud, *Welcome to the warren*, Ambush 02, 1997

- Terry Riley, *Persian Surgery dervishes*, Shanti, 1976  
- Earth, *Earth 2, Special Low Frequency Version*, Sub Pop, 1992  
- Edgar Varèse, *Varèse, Ionisation / Density 21.5 / Intégrales / Octandre / Hyperprism / Poème Electronique*, Moderne music series, Philips, 1960  
  
\* Voir: [vimeo.com/17517736](https://vimeo.com/17517736)

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