

EXPERIMENTAL EMERGING ART NORWAY



ISSUE 2, 2017

BEYOND NATURE

ORON CATTs / ALESSANDRO LUDOVICO / TRANSMEDIALE 2017
THOM KUBLI / HYBRID MATTERS / LABVERDE / MAX DOVEY
NOTTO J. W. THELLE / RICHARD DEDOMENICI / MultiNO 2017
KENNETH K. LANGÅS / WINTER SOLSTICE / HANAN BENAMMAR
KIRSTY KROSS / MARIEKE VERBIESEN / ELEKTRODIESEL

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ISSUE 2

INDEX



06

ORON CATTS
Future of Arts



10

HYBRID MATTERS
Symposium & Exhibition



18

TRANSMEDIALE 2017 & THOM KUBLI



26

LABVERDE
Artists of Labverde 2016



28

ALESSANDRO LUDOVICO
Post-Digital Print



36

MAX DOVEY
Are Artists Just Bug Fixers?



40

RICHARD DEDOMENICI
Making Unprecedented Art



46

ELEKTRODIESEL
@Atelier Nord ANX



48

NOTTO J. W. THELLE
Notam - Past, Present, Future



52

MultiNO 2017
Experimental Festival in Oslo



56

KENNETH KORSTAD LANGÅS
Library & Experimental Arts



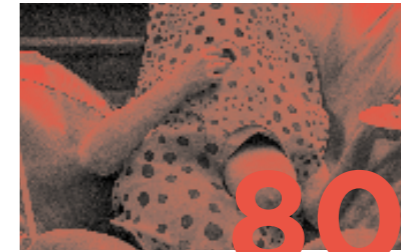
64

WINTER SOLSTICE 2016
Festival & Art Prize



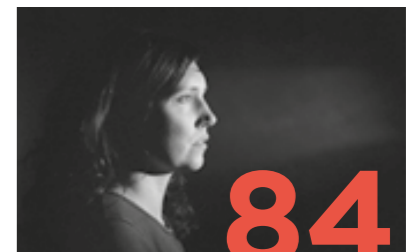
66

HANAN BENAMMAR
Arts Should be Free



80

KIRSTY KROSS
Art for the End Times



84

MARIEKE VERBIEESEN
Loud Matter @ANX Gallery



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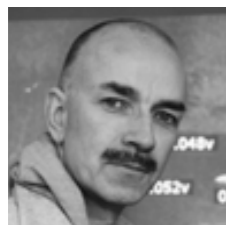
EXPERIMENTAL EMERGING ART

The purpose of the EE -*Experimental and Emerging Art Norway*- is to give a rapid response to the emergent contributions of what art can be. The works and tendencies we present are major additions to the field of emerging aesthetics. EE focuses on experimental art projects - the stuff that somehow stretches and challenges established notions of what art is. One of our criteria for giving coverage is whether the topic at hand has been made or conceived within the last decade? We believe the field of art is -and should be- in a constant flux, challenging the

If innovation always comes from the periphery, then EE will also move at the rim of aesthetics

otherwise market driven understanding of art. If innovation always comes from the periphery, then EE will also move at the rim of aesthetics. We also defend our right to sometimes fall into its core. And at other times out of it.

EE's format is multiple; part magazine, newszine, part website and it spans across several media formats. While the printed issue is for sale, EE is also freely downloadable



Stahl Stenslie
Editor-in-chief

online at EEJOURNAL.NO as a PDF based magazine. Often EE articles are more visual than textual, but online you will find additional background material such as texts, original sound files, video, photos and other Zeitgeist documents to our coverage.

EE is *In Medias Res* and we believe our magazine to be a necessary publication both to be informed about and document a field in constant and rapid change. EE endorses these fluctuations in thinking & doing and see them as essential components of the experimental and expanding field of art. One of EE's main purposes is to support the interesting, the subversive, the abject, the striking but also intriguing, wondrous and the beautiful in the ongoing human project of making art. Whatever art might be or become.

Oslo, May 2017



Zane Cerpina
Editor,
Designer,
Photographer

The interesting, the subversive, the abject, the striking but also intriguing, wondrous and the beautiful

EDITORS LETTER BEYOND

Nature is no *thing* natural. Our definitions of nature borrow too much from theology (Bruno Latour). Nature is no *thing* new, yet always novel as we create and re-create it through and for our concepts of it. Nature is dark, infected by our even darker desires and hyperbole fantasies of a hypothetically 'natural condition' (Timothy Morton). What is the role of the artist in the Anthropocene? If not to destabilize nature as some *thing* natural? If nature does not exist, the arts is a playground to experiment with it. Dissect and recreate it. In twisted, dangerous and dark ways that challenge society's need for a superficial consensus of conform group-think. Undoing 'nature' might make art bad and artists be bad guys. That is good. As otherwise someone else will be the genuinely bad guys. (Oron Catts) Given that role, how much are artists willing to sacrifice? (Kirsty Kross, p. 80) Or will they sell their souls? (Catts, p. 6) Most artists would like to change the world into a better place. But most of all they want to change it. (Richard DeDomenici, p. 40) Thus putting ethics into the forefield of art.

With this as its backdrop, EE #2 moves Beyond Nature, investigating experimental and emerging ways of understanding as well as making art/nature. This issue visits not just hybrid, but also parasitical ways of doing art in times of danger and apocalyptic visions. In the current ecological and socio-political crisis, the function of the artist emerges as more critical than ever. The artists represented in issue #2 respond to the crisis through different forms and expressions. Some, like Kenneth K. Langås (p. 56), through extremely physical music, others physically exhaustive like Kirsty Kross

in her cross-species performance (p. 80), or going naked as in Max Dovey's striptease algorithm (p. 36), and collectively artists organize themselves in world class symposia and international forums such as *Transmediale* (p. 18) and *HYBRID MATTERS* (p.10).

Emergent is also the continued employment of new technologies, science and knowledge to create art. High-Tech and digital technologies have - still to the amazement of many- become a crucial part of art making. It is not going to be less in the future. The experimental arts are moving beyond mere representations, contributing hard-core knowledge to the world. As Oron Catts, the legendary bioart pioneer, frames it in his interview: some artists go beyond imagining these speculative futures, they are engaging in the hands-on actuality.

Like art, it is not about what the world is, but all it can be. EE consequently goes Beyond Nature to further explore that experimental attitude so urgently needed.

Stahl Stenslie



Predictive Art Bot by Nicolas Maigret & Maria Roszkowska
@Transmediale 2017, Berlin



ORON CATTTS

FUTURE OF ARTS

Oron Catts is an artist, researcher and curator whose pioneering work with The Tissue Culture and Art Project which he established in 1996 is considered a leading biological art project. Catts's interest is *Life*; more specifically the shifting relations and perceptions of life in the light of new knowledge and its applications.

The following is a transcript from the talk by Oron Catts during The PNEK NIGHT Event on March 15th in 2017 @Kunsternes Hus, Oslo and follow-up discussion on March 17th in 2017, Oslo.



Oron Catts, Oslo
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

SOCIAL CONTRACTS

We have social contracts as different professionals. As an artist I never signed a dotted line that I am going to tell you the truth. So by definition when you talk to artists, you don't want to trust them, you want to hear their stories, but it doesn't necessarily add to the idea of truth telling. As we now see with Donald Trump it is becoming obvious that there are so many other professions that also do not really strictly tell you factual information. I am now also a **professor of Contestable Design** at the Royal College for the Arts (UK) that claims to be the best art and design college in the world. And there is no social contract for it, so you have to figure out what kind of contract I have with you.

As an artist I never signed a dotted line that I am going to tell you the truth

SYMBIOTICA

Symbiotica was set up as a research lab that deals with the question of life and how our relationship with life is changing. It made sense to park ourselves in the biological science department. The model we developed was based on hands-on engagement. We are interested in artists coming in and engaging in the most experiential ways to manipulate with life. We are best known for tissue engineering, but the scope of research in Symbiotica is much wider. We are into identifying those shifting perceptions of life, the trends in life sciences. We want to explore their possibilities in order to propose alternative directions and to initiate a cultural debate. This is where the contestable comes into Symbiotica as well. By creating those contestable objects, as opposed to the growing trend of speculative design and speculative biology, what we do

We are not imagining these speculative futures, we are engaging in the hands on actuality

is to engage with the actuality of life. We are not imagining these speculative futures, we are engaging in the hands-on development. And that leads to some unexpected outcomes. We are very interested in those places that make people uncomfortable because those are exactly areas that need cultural scrutiny and exploration. The fact that life is becoming raw material and biology is becoming engineering, gives us as artists a new palette of possibilities. We have new material that we can engage with. But this material is extremely problematic, as it is both the subject and object of our explorations which makes it both exciting and challenging. We are also engaged with the strategies and implications of what it means to put life in cultural contexts. When you work with museums as we know them, they are made to keep dead things as dead as possible for as long as possible. What does it mean to put living things in this context? And how problematic it is to put a piece of life as an art object in this context? At Symbiotica we have academic courses, we run Masters in Biological Arts, a PHD program, we curate and present exhibitions, we run symposiums, seminars and workshops. But we are best known for the residency program. Since 2000 we have had more than 120 residents coming in and developing different projects.

I SEE A SYMPTOM

Going back to me saying "When someone sees a solution, I see a symptom", in-vitro meat is the best example of that. Many think of in-vitro meat as something trying to solve the problem of over-consumption of meat. This problem can easily be solved by reducing consumption. What in-vitro meat is doing very well, it is reminding us about problems we associate with contemporary

When someone sees a solution, I see a symptom

modes of meat production. By offering this as a solution we are simply extending the symptom of our consumption rather than solving the problem. Anyone promising to provide lab-grown meat to McDonald's as a solution is a problem to me. After the in-vitro meat project we decided to do another first: to be the first to grow insect soup in the lab. We did this piece called **Stir Fly** where we made this domestic bio-reactor in collaboration with designer Robert Foster, and we created a system where you can culture the fly cells in nutrient solution, and when it is ready you can just have a Fly Soup. In this case the nutrient solution operates both as food for the cells, but also as part of the food you would consume. What was really important is that we had this dark cloud of nutrients hovering above. Which means that in order to create this small amount of soup we needed to get blood plasma from two baby cows. Funny enough we had a contamination in the soup. So from insect soup we ended up having a mushroom soup, and then it exploded in face of the technician who was trying to play around with it. **That was a glorious failure.**

Anyone promising to provide lab-grown meat to McDonalds as a solution, is a problem to me

MEDIA'S ROLE IN HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

Alessandro Ludovico (AL): You never name the human responsibility in all these acts. You don't want to directly involve humans. The human responsibility is always a question of direct gestures, but playing with some non-direct consequences. I am curious about the fact that you also cleverly deal with media, creating these resonating chambers, for example, when dealing with synthetic meat. Do you have some reflections about the relationship of the underlying human responsibility and the role of media. How do you connect these two fields?

Oron Catts (OC): 20 years ago when I started I was interested in media being trained as product designer, but I also had a strong

interest in biology. I was trying to combine those two things together. When I started, I didn't even have an idea if it is possible to do it as an artist. I didn't start with a research question "I want to be a bio-artist" or "I want to grow sculptures from tissue". I said: **"Can we use living tissue as a medium for artistic expression?"** And also "if it is a responsible act to engage with life as an artist?" I saw Stelarc, who was using his own body, but those issues of concern are somehow solved when the artist is using his own body. But what does it mean, this act of violence, when you impose your will as an artist on other living bodies in order to engage with those issues?

It is much harder to trust artists in this, because they are instruments of this neoliberal project of innovation

I never expected to be at the point where I am now. For example, in June I am giving a plenary in the biggest synthetic biology meeting in Singapore, I never thought I would reach this position, or that media would become a medium for me to do this. This is an interesting case, as I am credited as the first to grow and eat cultured meat. This gives me the kind of credentials, that allow me to engage, subvert and contest things that are beyond the art world. It gives me licence. And I am so annoyed with moral internalization of artistic approaches dealing with technologies. That takes away the licence of the art to engage with an agenda free from those questions. Now it is much harder to trust artists in this context as well, because they are instruments of the neoliberal project of innovation. Artists were never supposed to be in this role. It seems to be the only structure where artists feel they can pursue their interests. So my question is how much are you willing to sell your soul for? And is there any way for you to buy it back? And in this current situation, art is selling its soul very, very cheap without the possibility to buy it back later. If you know what you are doing, if you are not seduced too far or pushed too hard, there are ways to do it. But especially here in Europe, what I see really happening is that artists are willing to roll over,

and maybe even more this concerns curators and organizations. Art and technology used to be a place for critical engagement, but it is going in another direction.

WHERE IS THE FIELD HEADING

Stahl Stenslie (EE): You have hosted more than 100 residencies in *Symbiotica*. This is a very costly and advanced field, it takes time, money and effort to build these artistic environments. Having those residencies, where do you see the field heading right now?

OC: The residents we had were not only artists, but also people coming from other fields: philosophers, architects, designers, geographers and many other professions. Even in *Symbiotica* we are not trying to make a unified agenda that drives this research. When I look at applications, the thing that determines if an application is successful or not, is how well I feel those people are going to utilize the very scarce resources we are able to make available for them. I am not trying to give preference to either way of thinking. I think we see a growing number of different approaches, but they all utilize life as a raw material for artistic expressions. The reason why we hear more and more about bio-design is that it is becoming a very fertile field for start-up companies. So those who have a much more instrumentalized view are coming in, such as designers. That is going to be quite interesting. And we are going to see more and more artists and designers as instruments in the hype of those biological possibilities. In the light of the political situation we find our world now, what does it mean for artists, designers and hackers to engage Research & Development (R&D) in totalitarian regimes? What does it mean that people who have very strong ideologies are acting actually as R&D people, to control other systems?

We are going to see more and more artists and designers as instruments in the hype of those biological possibilities

HOW TO TEACH THE NEXT GENERATION

EE: Your most important contribution for the field right now is to challenge thinking. You have the power of experience necessary to force thinking forward. And art is about thinking. Art is a weapon for thinking. How do you teach the next generation?

OC: Universities are trying to shut down this thinking. That's why I am so concerned about the fact that artists seem to be co-opted, and critical approaches are becoming instrumentalized, therefore losing the power of critical thinking.

EE: How do you avoid that? For example, in Denmark, the thing that is most important for the universities are employment opportunities.

Why are the arts schools the most militarized spaces in the university?

OC: Who goes to art school to be employable? This is an issue. One of the greatest mistakes is that art has become part of universities, they should have stayed as independent organizations. In academic institutions you don't even need to be mentored any longer. I heard that here at the Art Academy of Oslo students are not allowed to use their studios after 11pm in the evening. How can science departments have the doors always open with dangerous equipment and expensive materials? Why are arts schools the most militarized spaces in the university? Art schools becoming part of universities are selling more than just their souls.

EE: That's why art as well as art education should have no limits. How do you teach your students as a professor of contestable design?

OC: I was always very interested in critical design. But I identify myself as an artist. So I was always accused by my design teachers that I do more art than design. I saw this contestable design as an artistic intervention, external intervention in design. All these areas of design need to be prefaced by another

word to be contextualized. **I can help people to spot bullshit** Contestable design is also a comment about that. Design trade is either to satisfy the needs of the clients or somehow to make things which are desirable. And the idea of the contestable is opposite to that, it is making things which are not only undesirable, but are designed to be contested. Contestable design is a contradiction. Design by definition cannot be contested. And it depends on what you are trying to achieve, and it depends on your social contract.

As a professor of contestable design I can help people to spot bullshit. You don't need more of design people, you need people who understand this better. I am giving the students the critique they have never had. I would look for things in their projects they have never thought about. If they come to me with their projects it will be contested. **Making things... designed to be contested**

WWW.SYMBIOTICA.UWA.EDU.AU



Oron Catts @PNEK Night Event, Oslo
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

HYBRID MATTERS



THE FINNISH BIOARTSOCIETY is a Helsinki based organization developing projects and offering facilities across the fields of arts, science, biology and ecology.

HYBRID MATTERS has been one of the *Finnish Bioartsociety's* networking programs "investigating hybrid ecologies, the convergence of our environment with technology and essentially the intentional and unintentional transformation of our planet through human activity". (www.bioartsociety.fi) The program is led by the *Bioartsociety* in collaboration with other Nordic institutions such as the *IT-University of Copenhagen* (DK), *Malmö University* (SE), *Kunsthall Grenland* (NO), *Nikolaj Kunsthall* (DK) and *Forum Box*

(FI). The program has been successful not only due of its interesting take on currently relevant global topics, but also because its success as a collaborative project with partners across Scandinavia. The three year program concluded with a 2-day symposium (24th-25th of November) and the final exhibition in Helsinki.

WWW.HYBRIDMATTERS.NET
WWW.BIOARTSOCIETY.FI





What if the World War I never ended? Where do we go from there?

Jussi Parikka - New media theorist and Professor in Technological Culture & Aesthetics at Winchester School of Art (UK)
@ HYBRID MATTERs Symposium, 2016



HYBRID OR PARASITE?

"We heard all these biological metaphors about the hybrid. The problem with the hybrid is that the strictly biologically hybrid is infertile, it's sterile. It's a dead end. Is that what we want? Is this the kind of engagement we are willing to engage in? It's a beautiful thing, but in order to get more hybrids we can only clone it or regeneratively reproduce, because by definition the hybrid cannot sexually reproduce. So you cannot go anywhere with that. This idea of hybrid might not be the right metaphor. Maybe it's parasite? ...The major steps in the evolution of the life on earth came through parasitic relationships not through random mutations or incremental steps of evolution as according to Darwinian idea... It is about systems coming together without initially having any mutual benefit, and by accident benefiting each other and jumping through the evolutionary scale."

Oron Catts @ HYBRID MATTERs Symposium, 2016

Anthropocene
 Smanthropocene
 Plasticene
 Undocene
 Northropocene
 Hypocricene
 Endcene
 Psychozooikon
 Connectozoic
 Plantationocene
 Misanthropocene
 Smog-o-machine
 Psychozoic
 Chthulucene
 Anthro-not-seen
 Capitalocene
 Schnubeleduldidlocene
 Prokaryocene
 Oops-a-day-cene

DO WE NEED THE TERM ANTHROPOCENE?

"When we use the term Anthropocene, there is a lot of hype behind that. But it is important to see beyond the hype and make use of it. There is a paradox in it, because it erects a monument of what we try to tackle. What is really interesting, you will hear a lot of different derivatives of it now. Maybe it points out that it is not this grand story what we need. We need many small stories. And we need each story to find its place instead of having one simple one which fits everything and which reduces everything into one concept."

Erich Berger @Hybrid Matters Conference





PLASTIC IMAGINARIES
ÅSA STÅHL (SE) & KRISTINA LINDSTRÖM (SE)

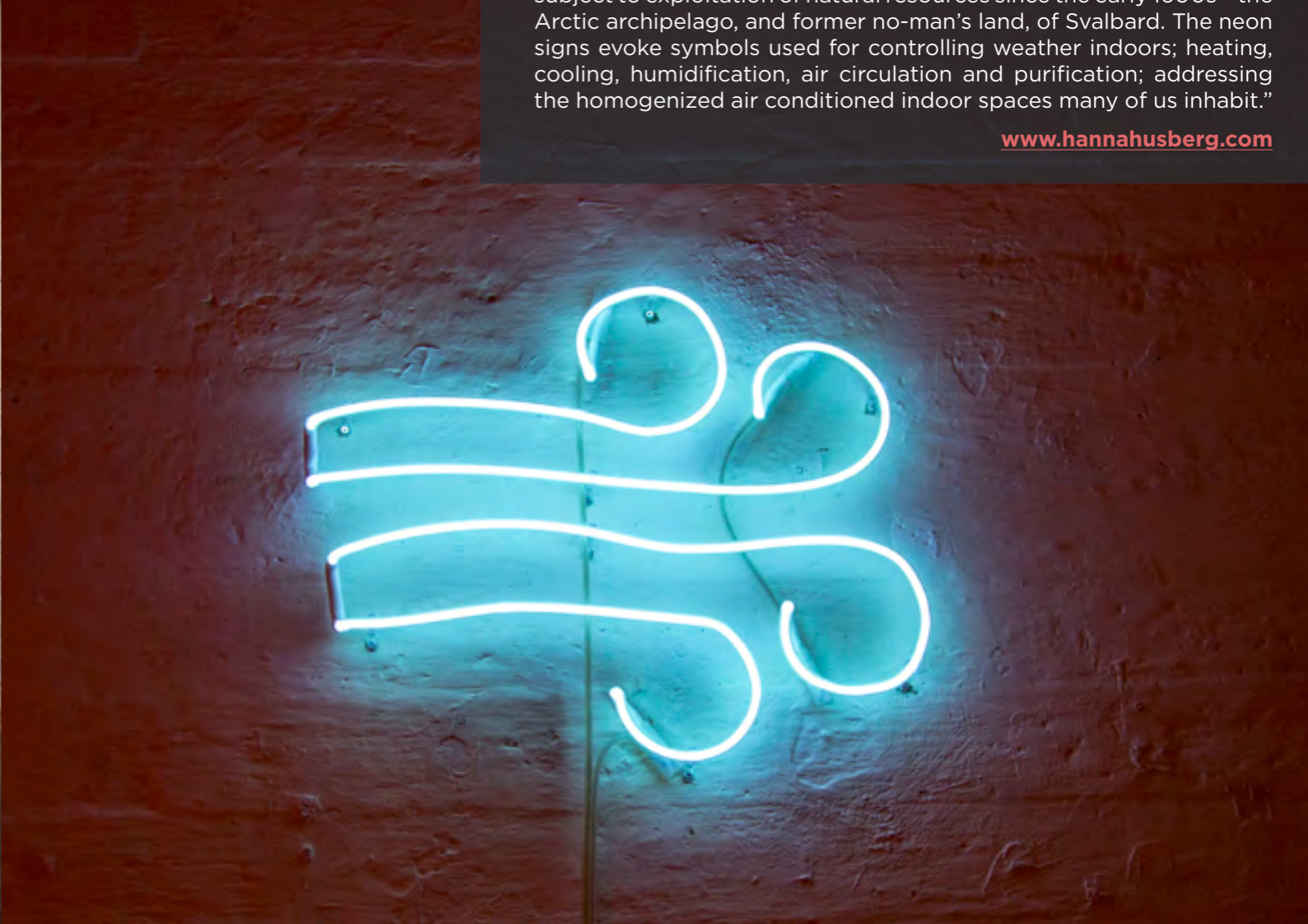
“*Plastic Imaginaries* portrays a ragpicker and a composter that suggest different ways of living with or without plastics. They live in a late plastic age, where previous visions of ridding humans from restrictions posed by nature through the use of technologies have become troubled. In this late plastic age the dependency on plastics is severe at the same time as the resources to make it are running out. Meanwhile, the accumulated plastic waste washes up as a new kind of resource, worry, and curiosity.”



IN THE VAST OCEAN OF AIR
HANNA HUSBERG (FI/SE)

“The installation *In the Vast Ocean of Air* consists of a looped video projection and five neon signs. The film is set in a region that has been subject to exploitation of natural resources since the early 1600s – the Arctic archipelago, and former no-man’s land, of Svalbard. The neon signs evoke symbols used for controlling weather indoors; heating, cooling, humidification, air circulation and purification; addressing the homogenized air conditioned indoor spaces many of us inhabit.”

www.hannahusberg.com



TRANS MEDIALE



Transmediale 2017, Berlin
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

In February **TRANS MEDIALE** celebrated its 30th anniversary once again becoming a meeting place for artists and thinkers from all over the world. The main event was a three day conference under the topic **ever elusive**. It included an exhibition titled **alien matter** curated by **Inke Arns** taking place at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt. The conference format was the same as previous years consisting of performances, talks, screenings and discussion panels.

The thematic focus of **Transmediale'17** was the always changing media culture and its role in fostering new forms of agency. The main exhibition *alien matter* focused on man-made and intelligent agents, and new emerging

relationships between man and machine, exploring technology's ability to become autonomous in the future.

The presence of artificial intelligence and exploration of autonomous technologies can be seen in numerous art festivals, revealing the current hype of AI in media and the public debates. AI has been a vision since the 1960s and keeps coming back as a dream as it is not yet realized beyond the form of algorithms that appear smart.

WWW.TRANS MEDIALE.DE



PREDICTIVE ART BOT NICOLAS MAIGRET & MARIA ROSZKOWSKA

A part of the **alien matter** exhibition was Nicolas Maigret's & Maria Roszkowska's work *Predictive Art Bot*. Its thematic focus is artificial intelligence, big data and statistical analysis. The artists explore how the constant use and development of these technologies could possibly become an important non-human agent not only in predicting future politics and economics, but also future art trends. *The Predictive Art Bot* uses an algorithm based on current online news headlines of digital art and hactivism to imagine the titles of potential artworks. This future art forecast is also tweeted daily on Twitter. Could an algorithm predict what art will be? Some of the predictions posted on Twitter are: "A political campaign against Bitcoin", "An invisible secret art piece exposing the ideology of the anthropocene", "An apocalyptic one-man show predicting the future of terraformation". *The Predictive Art Bot* can definitely be an inspiring brainstorming companion for artists working with the topics of socio-political futures.

www.artbot.space



3D ADDITIVIST COOKBOOK
MOREHSHIN ALLAHYARI & DANIEL ROURKE

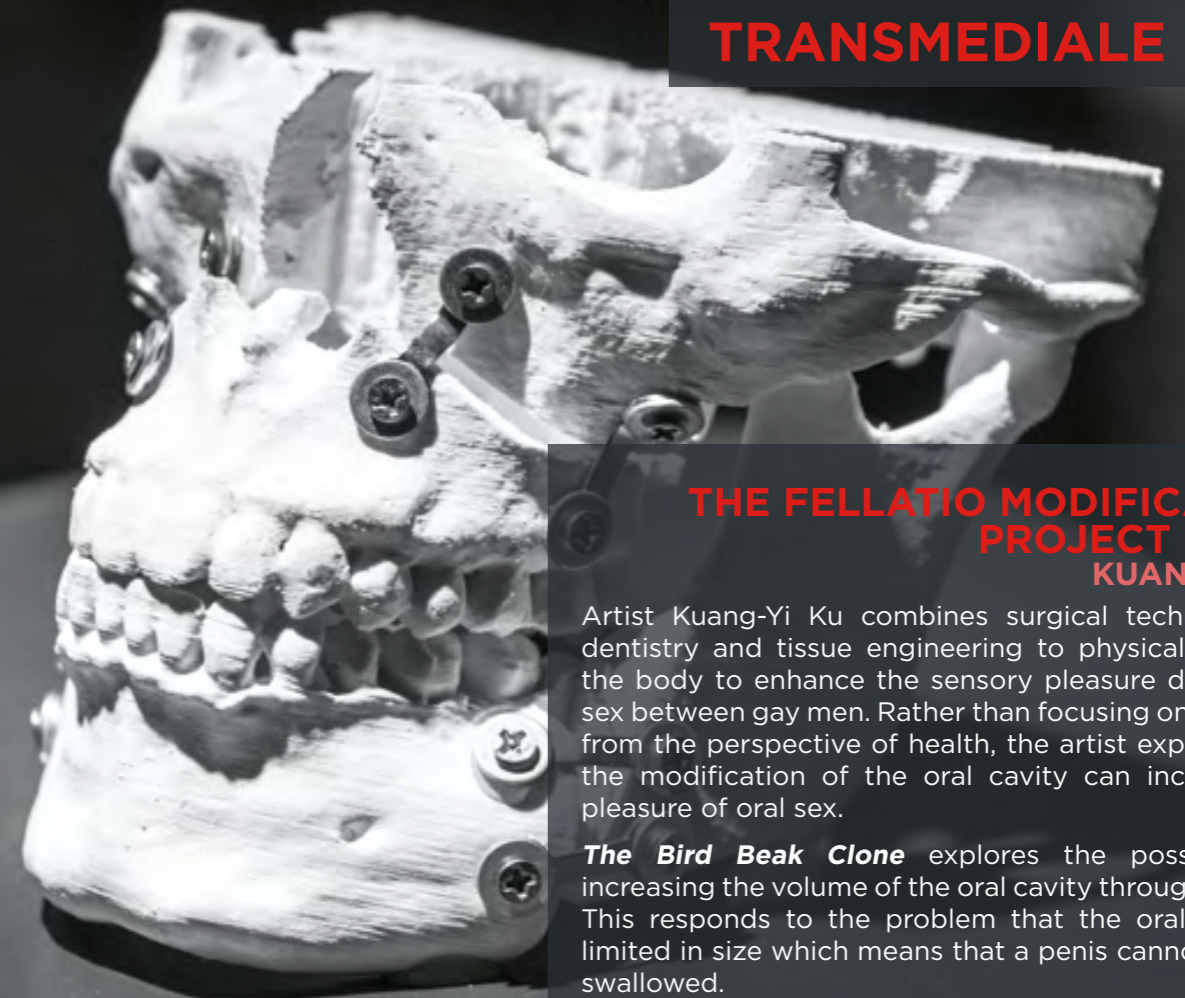
The **3D Additivist Cookbook** is a collection of more than 100 provocative 3D printable objects. These projects are collected as a result of an open call through the **3D Additivist Manifesto** released in 2015 by Morehshin Allahyari and Daniel Rourke. The result is a handbook in the form of an interactive PDF, consisting of project descriptions and interactive 3D object previews. All the 3D printable files can be downloadable from their website. Three projects were 3D showcased at the *alien matter* exhibition during the Transmediale 2017.

www.additivism.org

MAN MADE (2014)
AMI DRACH (1963-2012) & DOV GANCHROW

The **Man Made** was part of the *3D Additivist Cookbook* exposition. The project combines trendy 3D printing possibilities with the first man-made stone age tools such as the prehistoric hand axe. Once shaped, the flint pieces were 3D-scanned so the handles could be designed to fit perfectly.

www.amidov.com



THE FELLATIO MODIFICATION PROJECT (2015)
KUANG-YI KU

Artist Kuang-Yi Ku combines surgical techniques of dentistry and tissue engineering to physically modify the body to enhance the sensory pleasure during sex between gay men. Rather than focusing on dentistry from the perspective of health, the artist explores how the modification of the oral cavity can increase the pleasure of oral sex.

The Bird Beak Clone explores the possibility of increasing the volume of the oral cavity through surgery. This responds to the problem that the oral cavity is limited in size which means that a penis cannot be fully swallowed.

www.kukuangyi.com

THE EVOLUTION OF THE SPERMALEGE (2016)
JOEY HOLDER

The Evolution of the Spermalege is a series of interspecific sexual organs designed using insect genitalia as prototypes.

www.joeyholder.com



ALIENS IN GREEN
BUREAU D'ÉTUDES, EWEN CHARDRONNET,
MARY MAGGIC, JULIEN PARIS, ŠPELA PETRI

Aliens in Green is an investigative laboratory and tactical theatre group combating the alien agents of anthropogenic xeno-power.

During the *Transmediale* artists organized a workshop *Xenopolitics: Petro-bodies and Geopolitics of Hormones* in which the participants were introduced to the xeno-political process of queering. Artists raised a discussion of what means "normal" and "natural" in times of living in a toxic landscape where synthetic chemicals interfere both with human and non-human hormonal systems. The artists conducted a urine-hormone extraction and afterwards discussed the results together with the workshop participants.



THOM KUBLI CONVOLUTION IS ALIVE

Thom Kubli (DE) is a Berlin based artist working with new technologies, sound, surroundings and environment. His latest work *Black Hole Horizon* was part of the exhibition *Radical Atoms* at *Ars Electronica 2016* in Linz, Austria.

*The following is a transcript from the conversation between Stahl Stenslie and Thom Kubli on February 3rd, 2017 during the *Transmediale Festival 2017* @Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin.*

Stahl Stenslie (EE): Where do you think the experimental arts are heading?

Thom Kubli (TK): I totally love the idea of convolution. I think the artist is getting into a state of convolution. That means an algorithmic mix-up of things that come. I think that revolution is dead and convolution is alive.

EE: Like the *Black Hole Horizon* installation, that transforms the space? Are we going to get sucked up into nothingness?

Revolution is dead and convolution is alive (TK): No, it gets convoluted surrounding the space with people. I think it is an organic fusion-like process. It seems to me pretty natural. What you can say for sure is that the idea of the revolutionary gesture is totally dead. What happens is that you don't grab your space violently or with force anymore. You get your space by getting into the range of the environment. This is a kind of intelligence in how you run yourself and how you get yourself into the spot.

EE: Is the age of grand visions over?

TK: It is a different age of different visions. I think it is a time of many, many, many disparate visions. This is the thing of the discourse of the modern - to have these great visions. We fly to the Moon, we build big houses like skyscrapers.

We are having large concepts happening in our minds. And then you go out there and try to realize them. I hope it's not over, but I think that much more than before you have to be aware of something that is somewhat called reality. And you have to make your concept bulletproof, so it works in this construction of reality that is your environment.

EE: You have worked a lot with organic materials in your art. What about the organic future of arts?

TK: I think there weren't so many ways to adjust material like nowadays when there are so many more ways to influence materials, create new materials or build them up from scratch. Before we took what was there, mixed it with other materials and just saw what happened. I think nowadays you can much more precisely design things towards an outcome.

WWW.THOMKUBLI.DE

IT IS A DIFFERENT AGE OF DIFFERENT VISIONS



LABVERDE

ARTISTS OF LABVERDE 2016

The last issue of EE introduced our readers to the LABVERDE ART IMMERSION PROGRAM IN THE AMAZON. *Labverde* (The Green Lab) offers an intensely immersive experience for the selected artists to spend ten days in the Amazon Rainforest in order to reflect on the nature and the ecology while doing research and producing artistic works. In this article we will look at some of the works produced during the program, to see how the fusion of art, science and nature in such a unique location can inspire new ideas and thinking in the arts.

In the second edition of *Labverde*, many artists produced very visual works such as paintings, photographs and drawings inspired by the surroundings. However, some artists took a more conceptual approach exploring the Amazon's role in the Earth's ecological system and questioning its future status in the times of the new geological epoch of human made nature - the Anthropocene.

WWW.LABVERDE.COM



VEGETAL REALITY SHELTER GUTO NÓBREGA

Brazilian born artist Guto Nóbrega's residency resulted in a concept of a multimedia hybrid installation *Vegetal Reality Shelter*. During the residency the artist recorded sounds and videos in the Adolpho Ducke Forest Reserve to create an augmented reality-based system in the form of a small terrarium of plants including a sound system and a small projector. The project aims to provide an augmented reality experience of being in an utopian forest.

www.cargocollective.com/gutonobrega



Vegetal Reality Shelter by Guto Nóbrega
Photo credit: www.labverde.com

SOUND FOREST RIHARDS VITOLS

The Latvian artist Rihards Vitols focused on the themes of nature, ecology and the future of the Amazon rainforest. In his concept *Sound Forest* the artist recorded sounds made by the Amazon Rainforest's plants, animals, insects and birds. He is going to create a spacial sound-scape consisting of 30 speakers that will be set up the same way as the trees in the rainforest where he recorded these sounds.

www.soundcloud.com/user-954248458/tracks
www.vimeo.com/rihvit/videos



Sound Forest by Rihards Vitols
Photo credit: www.labverde.com

THE AMAZON FLUID PROCESSOR STAHL STENSLIE

The Norwegian artist Stahl Stenslie challenges our understanding of the computer by applying ecological and sustainable principles of environmental computing to other fields and other scales. The result was a processor-like device operating with nothing else than the natural flow of water to execute basic computing processes. These 3D printed cubes are made out of 100% recyclable PLA plastics produced from corn starch. The proposed design works on the natural principles of physics, uses no electricity, lasts almost forever and can literally be thrown around.

www.stenslie.net



The Amazon Fluid Processor by Stahl Stenslie,
Photo credit: Zane Cerpina, 2016

THE EARTH THAT WALKS TURENKO BEÇA

How to take the Amazonian forest and carry it into the cities and other locations on Earth? That was the main question for the artist Turenko Beça from the Amazonas. The artist cast actual Amazonian ground, producing small preserved pieces of soil, frozen inside a resin plate, making it possible for other artists in the residency to take it all-around the world. Displacements were geo-tagged once displaced outside the Amazon.



The Earth that walks by Turenko Beça,
Photo credit: Stahl Stenslie, 2016

ALESSANDRO LUDOVICO ON POST-DIGITAL PRINT

Alessandro Ludovico is a researcher, artist and chief editor of *Neural* magazine since 1993. He received his Ph.D. degree in English and Media from Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge (UK). He is Associate Professor at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton and Lecturer at Parsons Paris - The New School. He has published and edited several books, and has lectured worldwide. He also served as an advisor for the Documenta 12's Magazine Project. He is one of the authors of the award-winning Hacking Monopolism trilogy of artworks (*Google Will Eat Itself*, *Amazon Noir*, *Face to Facebook*).

The following is a transcript from the talk by Alessandro Ludovico during *The PNEK DAY* event on March 16th 2017 @Kunsternes Hus, Oslo.

Alessandro Ludovico (AL): Starting a magazine was my secret dream since I was a teenager. I convinced a friend to start a magazine and in 1993 the very first issue came out. And for the first issue we wanted something very special, and we got it. We included the only Italian translation of the William Gibson's *Agrippa* (book of the dead) - a publication that would predict the relationship between digital and print. It was published in the form of a short novel, as a book made out of photosensitive paper. So when you read it - it disappears. Together with the book there was also a floppy disk with the digital version. With a hidden peculiarity: when you clicked on the icon turning the pages, the very moment the page was turned on the screen, it was physically deleted from the floppy disk. So by the end of the reading, the floppy disk was completely erased. That was already telling a lot about the role of the digital on the one side having wonderful properties and the different properties of the print from the other side. It was a great beginning. We didn't have any copyright permissions, we didn't ask anyone for a permission at that time. That was also a statement as we were talking about the absurdity of copyright and how it was handled at the time.

When you read it - it disappears

A publication that would predict the relationship between digital and print

We were extremely ambitious. We also wanted to reflect on the technology we were talking about in the printed pages. So, for example,

we included classic optical artworks from the 70s, scanned them and published them, to have a different type of engagement with the printed pages. The first issues also had the page numbering in binary code. It was another statement to challenge the format. However, it ended quite soon, as the printing company wasn't happy. After the third issue, he said: "If you want me to continue to print it, you have to use decimal numbers."

To be an important node in the network of other magazines

We were investigating the role of print compared to the role of digital and how to deal with these two mediums. In 1997 we launched our first website. In 2013 the magazine had its 20th celebratory issue, next year it will be the 25th. The first English issue was released in 2003. Now we sell around 4000 copies of each issue, we are distributed in 300 stores in the United States, Canada, Asia, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. We have 180 university libraries that have subscribed to the magazine. I am also proud that *Neural* Magazine has never gotten any kind of public funding. The magazine is funded through subscriptions and ads.

But why make a magazine about new technologies in 1993? We were not alone and I was quite obsessed about this structure of networks. I wanted to make a magazine, that not just necessarily would have been the best possible magazine in the world about technologies, I wanted it to be an important node in the network of other magazines, and to connect with others. In 2002 there was a meeting with 11 printed media art magazines. The moment we sat down, I said this is an opportunity to create a network. I was determined and that's what we did - we created the magazine network.

Why establish a network? The main reason was to collaborate. Our slogan was "collaboration is better than competition". We had meetings where we supported each other by sharing knowledge. *Neural* was the first one to use PayPal payments, *Mute* was the first to experiment with print on demand. We had meetings and we explored, and discussed

The 20th Anniversary Issue of *Neural*,
Presentation by Alessandro Ludovico, 2017



these possibilities. We also managed to publish three readers on this topic. (in 2005, 2006, 2007) These publications and also the book *Post-Digital Print: The Mutation of Publishing since 1894* that sums up 10 years of research, can be freely downloadable at:

POSTDIGITALPRINT.ORG

With the series of artworks in between, the network concept started and is still striking me. Network as distribution and instrumental infrastructure can become very powerful. But the lesson we should learn from the internet is that networks can be scalable, we shouldn't always think of it as a huge structure. And when they are small they are more manageable, they can be rescaled and used in very effective ways.

Networks are also about distribution, and distribution means access. In 2012 we embraced another challenge after 20 years of publishing. As a magazine that publishes reviews, we receive tons of publications. Then we established the **Neural Archive** which is extremely focused on new media art.

I started to think: we have this small very focused library, and there are other institutions who have small libraries like that. When you look at these small art scenes, there are institutions who have archived these publications that cannot be found in libraries, but are important documentations of the field. When I am visiting an art library or a university library, I

Alessandro Ludovico
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

Temporary Library @Transmediale 2017
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017



am checking what they have. And usually they have very few things or a totally misplaced publications. I started to think that we have a lot of knowledge in one place. But how can we give this knowledge back to the community? The physical *Neural* archive is something we cannot give public access to, but we have an online database of everything we've got. We are not scanning the books, we don't want to exploit other publishers, so we just publish the cover, bibliographical data and content index. You can search through it, and it turns out to be a very nice tool for research, you can search for one artist and track where he published a text or had his artwork exhibited. We recently reached 1000 archived publications. It is still an ongoing process.

Breaking the walls of the library The very moment we publish something online, we are taking responsibility for it. It becomes official that we have a physical copy of each of them which means we are committed to preserving it. And that someday somebody else in the scene could say: "yes we can take over it and continue the work!"

Libraries are a very hot topic for me. Libraries are about preserving. There are many net artworks that are lost forever, but the memory might have been conserved through documentation in a magazine or a book. I see libraries as very strategic agents in the digital and post-digital era because they are making memories accessible. The idea comes

from breaking the walls of the library. Libraries are great, but I find them to be monumental institutions. The idea of making a selection of books available outside the library, like walking libraries, means to move a bunch of culture where it is needed. Now we go to a library if we need to find something very specific, otherwise we just open Google and start searching.

TEMPORARY LIBRARY

The idea of the *Temporary Library* is to create a curated selection of books, make them available as a small library. First we establish a concept. In the case of Transmediale, who were celebrating 30 years anniversary, we wanted to reflect on the festival's history, but we also wanted to reflect on the impact of the festival in Berlin. We started to make a list of books, co-curated by me together with Annette Gilbert. We compiled a list of books, which we thought would reflect on the impact of Transmediale. We asked publishers, institutions, people and friends to donate one copy of selected books. We asked for 200 books, we got 170. I was extremely happy that it was used at Transmediale. People were checking what's there, reading, there were even students who brought their laptops and just studied the selection. There are things that are very hard to get because they were published in only a few copies and forgotten in some storage. That is what I try to define as a sleeping knowledge. But it is not meant to be only a festival event. After the festival the whole collection has to be donated to an official library. In the case of Transmediale, there is a deal with The University of Arts in Berlin, that they have to accept the collection under the conditions that if another event in Germany would ask for it, they would be open to enter into negotiation, and possibly make it available there. The selection becomes permanent afterwards, but it can be moved elsewhere if needed. The University of the Arts were even more enthusiastic, they wanted to exhibit it at the library for a couple of months before adding it to the permanent collection.

That is what I try to define as sleeping knowledge

In 2017 there are going to be two new selections. The first one will be displayed at *ISEA 2017* in Manizales, focusing on Latin American media art. The second one will be part of the *xCoAx Conference* in Lisbon, Portugal with a geographical focus.

Stahl Stenslie (EE): You have kept going on so long without funding. What about crowd-funding?

AL: Those who buy are funding us. But it is a renewed relationship with every issue. It is a challenge for us to keep it interesting enough over time, continue to attract subscribers and advertisers. I have seen plenty of magazines dying over time. Most of them at some point were not able to cope with what was going on anymore. Beyond the graphic design it is absolutely essential that every issue is evolving. Different not only in terms of content, but also concept and its structure. The digital is meant to be ephemeral somehow. I can lose it, I can change it. While with print you can't do that. And it is a nightmare for a publisher. Print has this archival validating quality. Digital from the other side has this speed of light and it can also be so huge. In my research I started to think about the quality of digital. And one of my claims was that if you think about the first computers, there was no storage. It was not invented to store, but to process. The storage is something that is conflicting with its initial infrastructure. The digital storage is always a kind of oxymoron - a contradiction in terms, and cannot be reliable. Just as with the preservation of digital artworks. It is again a question of fighting against the windmills.

EE: Today we live in a culture that counts likes. We have this terror of clicking and liking. It also concerns reading. How do you approach that new reading group. Who reads *Neural* today?

AL: We only have statistics from the online platform. It is mostly the age group between 25-50. I never thought about targeting specific groups. Since the very beginning I thought about the magazine as a collection of ideas. If the idea is interesting, it is not a matter of age. Targeting a specific group means to code your information in a way that it is digestible by that specific group, which means you also have to

keep up with trends. But on the other side, with an evolving product, you cannot just stay with your own generation or your friends, otherwise you are signing your ending. I have to be extremely attentive to what younger artists are doing, even if I don't like it. What is the meaning and how can I contextualize in a proper issue. That is the challenge of the time. And of course with years the challenge gets bigger, because I get more distant from certain practices.

You cannot just stay with your own generation or your friends, otherwise you are signing your ending

WWW.NEURAL.IT
WWW.POSTDIGITALPRINT.ORG
WWW.SOUTHAMPTON.AC.UK/AMT



Alessandro Ludovico @PNEK DAY Event
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

*The digital storage
is always a kind
of oxymoron - a
contradiction in
terms, and cannot
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Alessandro Ludovico @ PNEK DAY Event

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MAX DOVEY

ARE ARTISTS JUST BUG FIXERS?

On his website artist **Max Dovey** describes himself as “28.3% man, 14.1% artist and 8.4% successful.” Born in the UK, now living and working in the Netherlands, he holds a BA in Fine Art: Time Based Media and a MA (MDes) in Media Design from Piet Zwart Institute. In 2016 his work **Hipster Bar** was part of the **Summer Sessions pop-up exhibition at Ars Electronica Festival**.

The following is a transcript from the conversation between Max Dovey and Zane Cerpina on April 1st, 2017 in Oslo.

Zane Cerpina (EE): Tell me what is your background, what artistic practice do you work with?

Max Dovey (MD): I have a background in theatre, performance and live art. I went to film school, but couldn't make films in the ways that directors can. Then I went to art school where you are encouraged to do things you want. In fact all the courses I have done in media have stopped happening or have changed their name. Which has a negative aspect of feeling you are in industries that

are falling apart when you graduate, but then on a positive side you become a specialist. I am a live artist and I like to work with data like algorithms, algorithmic governance and how networks can enforce social and political biases. I have a quite political stance on the way that infrastructures enforce and maintain hierarchical power.

EE: How do you weave these topics into your artworks. What is art for you?

MD: Art for me has been two things. Either it has been exposing existing social and political issues, but another thing is (and this is when it falls into some problems) when it tries to solve the issues. Art is very good at revealing. Design on the other hand is used to fix and solve the issues that artists would highlight. That is how it should work in a perfect world. After Brexit and Trump, everybody has to go back to their jobs, because we have to, even if we are outraged. We keep on protesting online. But I have been feeling slightly unhappy about how the arts and the design community have been trying to respond to the geopolitical changes, the rise of far right nationalism and the crisis in identity politics. The response has been quite dumb; open calls such as redesigning Trump's wall or redesigning the Brexit passport. This is “designing hope ideology” within creative industries, when we go back to being busy by creating prototypes against a situation which is very difficult for artists and designers to solve alone. And this is why I don't know where my energy should go to. Should I go and protest every Saturday for few hours and then go back to designing my crypto-currency, prototype or anti-Trump meme? That's where I feel that the art and design industry is not having a good enough political response to what is going on. It feels quite weak for the creative economy just to have open calls responding to these changes like that. What can art and activism

Art is very good at revealing

The art and design industry is not having a good enough political response

actually do together? And is the creative industry too stuck in this innovation ideology, to create and design and build change. It doesn't mean we shouldn't carry on researching and designing, but that we should be realistic about it. We need a new kind of realism. I know that automation rumour has been going on for a long time, but still, the traditional narratives of working and getting a stable income, and being able to afford a home are changing. There will never be the same amount of stable jobs. It is no longer possible for many Europeans, so they go freelance and become artists and designers. Because there is nothing better, there is no point working towards something that you will never get. That kind of a bubble has been slightly shattered.

EE: In all this crisis, how does your artistic practice come in?

MD: I know what is wrong with my artistic practice. It is being caught up in a machine learning loop, for example, my critique of image recognition algorithms. Suddenly or over the period of time, if that work gets enough credibility and shows, the technology company will update their service products and programs. When I work with commercial based applications, I do this consciously. Consequently artists like myself end up assisting at improving and updating commercial software. Through the piece **How To Be More Or Less Human** where I was taking my clothes off in front of an image recognition algorithm, I was showing that it had a bias towards naked bodies being associated with women. After doing that over a period of a year, I ended up training this image recognition algorithm, so that the software could correctly identify that my naked body is a man. Now that software is updated, my critique has been completely absorbed in the cycle of progress and the next version of the software. And I can no longer do the work anymore. So I really question what role the artists and designers have in this process. The other option is to

build your own systems and you don't use any cloud based services. I am more interested in what companies are training their software to say and do, but then I am also very limited in what I am capable of doing.

Are artists more than just bug fixers in this innovation narrative, when a company releases the code and encourages artists to develop applications using that software? Artists do a lot of free labour, they might get an artwork out of it, but I think the companies get out of that paradigm by developing your own tools and software. Working creatively with technology sometimes feels like highlighting bugs to be fixed by software developers.

EE: What's next? Can we get out of this loop?

MD: Trying to come up with a long term plan is quite difficult. The nice thing about the Anthropocene is that it

Are artists more than just bug fixers?

has a temporal scale to it and it is exciting. When I am working with my datasets, websites and platforms I get caught out as a software user rather than an artist or designer. Every new version or every new update will disrupt the artwork and it will disappear, like movements before it, such as Net Art. I am focusing now on the artist as a user, citizen as a user and entertaining the idea of software as a state.

WWW.MAXDOVEY.COM



Max Dovey, @Ars Electronica
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2016



A Hipster Bar @Ars Electronica, Linz
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

HOW TO BE MORE OR LESS HUMAN

How To Be More Or Less Human is a performance installation by Max Dovey. The artwork examines how computer vision interprets gender, race and class through commercial stock imagery. Visual stereotypes and typologies are highlighted and performed by human and non-human actors to demonstrate how humans are encoded into computer vision.

www.howtobemoreorless.com



RICHARD DEDOMENICI MAKING UNPRECEDENTED ART

Richard DeDomenici is a UK based artist, filmmaker, raconteur and manufacturer of dangerous toys and his works often take the form of public interventions.

The following is a transcript from the conversation between Richard DeDomenici and Zane Cerpina on April 6th 2017.



Richard DeDomenici,
Photo: Sarah Jaynes, BBC

Zane Cerpina (EE): What's your background? How did you get interested in art?

Richard DeDomenici (RD): The first performance art I ever saw was by Kira O'Reilly at the open-day of Cardiff School of Art when I was 19, and I thought "what is that?" Because my art education up until that point had basically involved drawing tea pots. I couldn't understand what I was looking at, I thought it was stupid. But it stayed with me and I thought I could try out the time-based fine art department as a bit of a joke. When I got there I realized it was amazing: so broad and freeing. Most of the universities in the UK didn't even have such a department, and those that did have mostly been shut down now, because it is not as profitable as painting. I think it is bad for the art community, but good for me because it gives me less competition! The first performance I did after university was in a phone box, blowing up balloons to protest against British Telecom's decision to stop expanding its public telephone box network in early 2000s. Then I was invited by the *Live Art Development Agency* to perform at the *National Review of Live Art*, which has also been shut down, and for the next year I was going around the country blowing up balloons in phone boxes, and I became very quickly established in the live art scene in the UK. It's very fortunate that I'm still doing it 15 years later. But I am unemployable now, I could never get a job in a shop, because I have a very suspicious empty period of unemployment on my CV. So that's it! I have to do this for the rest of my life.

So that's it! I have to do this for the rest of my life

EE: In one of your projects *Live Art Aid* you raised money together with artists for the artists themselves. Was it a comment on how hard it is to survive as an artist?

RD: It was a parody of Live Aid with 20 artists involved. Artists are being kicked out of their studios, a lot of people are leaving London, giving up on making art. There were big arts funding cuts planned, so I was asked by the organisation *Home Live Art*, to develop an alternative method of fundraising. I said: "Yes, let's release a live art fundraising record, a take on *Do They Know It's Christmas!*" It was slightly ridiculous because in society people feel little sympathy for the plight of performance artists.

EE: Are the current times a test of which art will survive?

RD: I am secretly an optimist. I have a facade of pessimist, but that is just to protect me, because optimists are vulnerable. If I was a pessimist I would have given up years ago. But in a way the best art often comes out of bad situations. It always takes time to think of how to respond to current crises. In the UK it costs £40,000 to go to university. Poor people can't go anymore, and the ones who can afford it rarely study art because there is no obvious career path. University has become all about joining the workforce. I only hope artists who are still studying will be up for the challenge to make some interesting work about everything that is happening at the moment.

EE: We are definitely living in interesting and dangerous times. How do you express that through your work?

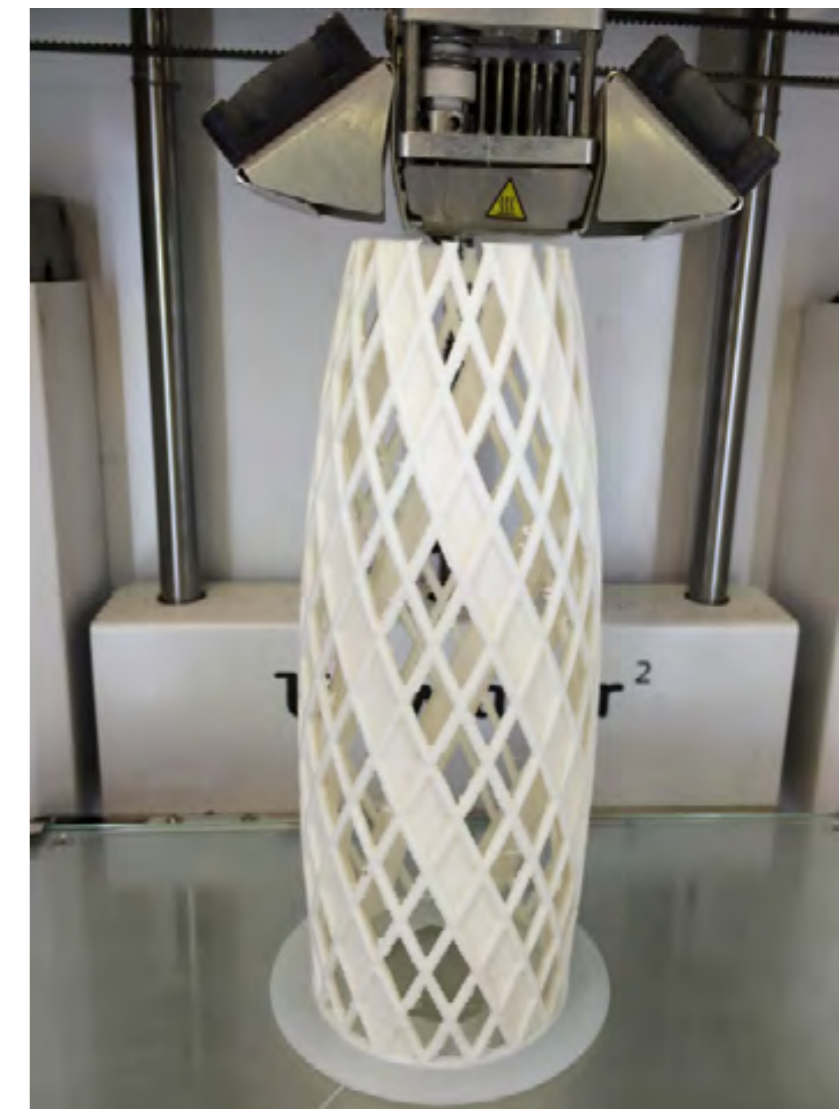
RD: We live in unprecedented times, and I think it is my responsibility to make unprecedented art that responds to the times we live in. So I am trying a lot of experimental techniques. I believe that cumulative effects of lots of tiny anomalies can be huge. So if you can change things a little bit and do that a lot of times, eventually it will cause an interesting critical mass. The objective in my work is to cause the kind of uncertainty that leads to possibility (a quote I stole from the *LA Cacophony Society*). If you can make someone look at the world

I think it is my responsibility to make unprecedented art

in a slightly different way through your work, hopefully they will question everything they see. And that is the dream of my work to unlock these modes of perception.

EE: On your website it says that you are an inventor of dangerous toys? Do you mean a specific project?

RD: When I first wrote that statement, I yet had to invent any actual dangerous toys, so it was more of an aspiration. Now that statement refers to my phallogentric line of architectural sex-toys made in response to the recent spate of phallogentric skyscrapers in London. They all have these ridiculous names, like *The Undershaft* and *The Shard*, and so to satirize that I am going to release them as a series of adult toys.



Prototype of a satirical range of London skyscraper sex toys

Straphangers from the London Underground trains installed in Tokyo by Richard DeDomenici, Photo: Richard DeDomenici



I also was considering making sex-toys from the bobby straphangers that were installed in the London Underground trains to hold onto. We had them in trains for 150 years, then they were removed for safety reasons in 2008. I managed to get *Transport for London* to send me a box of 16 of them. I took them to Japan six years ago and installed them from the ceilings of skyscrapers in Tokyo, so that during seismic activity people would have something to hold onto. It was an urban-absurdist project, an international exchange of something no longer needed anymore and put somewhere where it might be useful. Two weeks later the tsunami happened. And I thought I was slightly ahead of the time and maybe it was my fault, because art can change the world. And I believe it. You have to believe it as an artist. And if you

believe that art can change the world for the better, you also have to accept that it could make things worse. Personally I would prefer to make the world better, but more importantly I would just like to change the world!

If you believe that art can change the world for the better you also have to accept that it could make things worse

EE: Your artistic interventions have some similarities with *The Yes Man* from NY. How is the value of a hoax changing in times of post-truth, Trump and the constant flow of fake news?

RD: Yes a little bit, and I've done a couple of things with them. I think it is interesting how networks of artists are built across the world. Big corporate structures are pretty resilient if you attack them from one area. They are so vast that they can accept attack from one node and just redistribute. And I think it is good to have similar transnational networks for artists. I think it helps the artistic community to resist attack in the same way.

The prank has been a powerful tool throughout history to highlight ridiculousness in society,

We live in fertile times in terms of generating new forms of creating reality

but it is true that it has become mainstream. Advertising and PR have appropriated the performance art prank. Your ideas will always get co-opted. But, if every invention eventually becomes convention, then it is the job of the artist to keep on innovating! We live in fertile times in terms of creating new forms of reality. It has always been hard to hoax. And I think *Fake News* are temporary, I don't think it is the new normal. I hope. There's my optimism again...

EE: Tell me more about your latest project *Shed Your Fears* exhibited at Tate Modern?

RD: I built a non-religious confession booth, that looked like a garden shed, for two strangers to sit in and talk to each other about their fears. I didn't know if people would even want to go inside, but actually some participants were spending even 45 minutes in there, talking with a complete stranger, coming out in tears, hugging each other, and making new friends. Except for Catholic people with claustrophobia. They were terrified of it. A mother went in the shed with her children, and I didn't think it would work. But she came out 10 minutes later saying that her two sons have been talking to her about things that they have never discussed before. I accidentally made something magical. The next stage is to see if the shed will work in a non-arts setting. We want to get people with differing views to have a chat, and talk without fear of ridicule. For example, a lot of people did not admit to voting for Brexit. A lot of politicians are exploiting our fears, and I think the only way to avoid that is to talk more about our fears to each other.

EE: Another very political project was your *Asylum Seeker* boy band. What was your take on the issue?

RD: *The Fame Asylum* project caused a lot of controversy, as I suspected it might. It was an idea to combine the exploitative nature of manufactured pop with potentially vulnerable

The *Fame Asylum* members: David, Saeed, Long, and Aaron



asylum seekers. But by doing so, hopefully capitalising on the affection young people have towards pop stars. At the time the term *Asylum Seeker* was used pejoratively in the media, but few people had ever actually met an asylum seeker, or knew their personal stories. So my idea was to use pop music as a trojan horse to alter attitudes towards immigration issues among the difficult to-reach opinion-influencing female adolescent demographic, who are the opinion formers of tomorrow. I think in 30 years a lot of today's problems will be solved by younger generations. The whole thing was a very small art project, until quite late in the process when *Channel Four Television* got involved and it turned into a TV documentary. I didn't have any editorial control of the finished film, and they manipulated it to add some extra drama. Luckily it was before social media, otherwise it would have

Use pop music as a trojan horse to alter attitudes towards immigration issues

caused a lot more controversy. But afterwards people sent me emails about how it had changed their attitude towards immigration. Some of the same media organisations that had been demonising asylum seekers were now accusing me of exploiting the boy-band members, so people didn't know how to react. It was a bit of a non-logical moment. Like my *Reverse Begging* performance, where I sit in

People get trapped in a logic-loop, and really have to challenge their own assumptions about what reality is the street with a coin in my hand asking passers-by “Would you like some spare change?” When it works best, people get trapped in a logic-loop, and really have to challenge their own assumptions about what reality is. It was my dream to take Status to Helsinki Eurovision. I theorise that a UK Eurovision entry comprised of performers who aren't from the UK is the only way the UK will ever win Eurovision - particularly post-Brexit!

EE: Yet, the work you are best known for is *The Redux Project*. Tell me more about it, how it started and why has it become so popular?

RD: *The Redux Project* is a comment on, and contribution to, the increasingly derivative nature of mainstream cinema. It started by mistake when I was asked if I had any ideas for a site-specific performance in a cinema in Bangkok. At that time I was travelling around Europe by train, because I had given up flying in airplanes for 18 months to save the world - which didn't work. But I was spending a lot of time in European train stations, and recognized lots of locations from films. In Paris I had a video camera and I tried to recreate what I remembered from the movie *Amelie*. Later in Berlin I had a YouTube-enabled smartphone, so I could more accurately match my footage to *The Bourne Supremacy*. I quickly realized it was possible to make something for a dollar which looks like it costs millions of dollars. So for Bangkok I chose to remake the romantic comedy *Bangkok Traffic Love Story* in the

Make something for a dollar which looks like it costs millions of dollars exact original locations. I decided to play the female lead - I was the most unconvincing lady-boy in the city - and when we screened it at the *Scala Cinema* in Siam Square I thought people might be a bit offended, but it actually got a better review from a local film critic than the

original. I was amazed that people preferred my cheap remake to the original, so I decided to make more. Since then I have made more than 60 *Reduxes* around the world!

I think people like the Redux project because it encourages them to take the manufacturing of culture into their own hands. People no longer have to be passive consumers, they can be conscious creators!

The Redux Project showcases the latest cheap technology to show that the old hierarchies don't need to exist anymore. Next I'd like to build a mobile application which notifies you when you are close to a film location, shows you the original footage, and helps you film your own *Redux*. Hopefully by making fake versions of things that are themselves inherently fake, we'll somehow arrive at a greater truth.

WWW.DEDOMENICI.COM

People no longer have to be passive consumers, they can be conscious creators!

Screenshot from *Her: Redux* by Richard DeDomenici

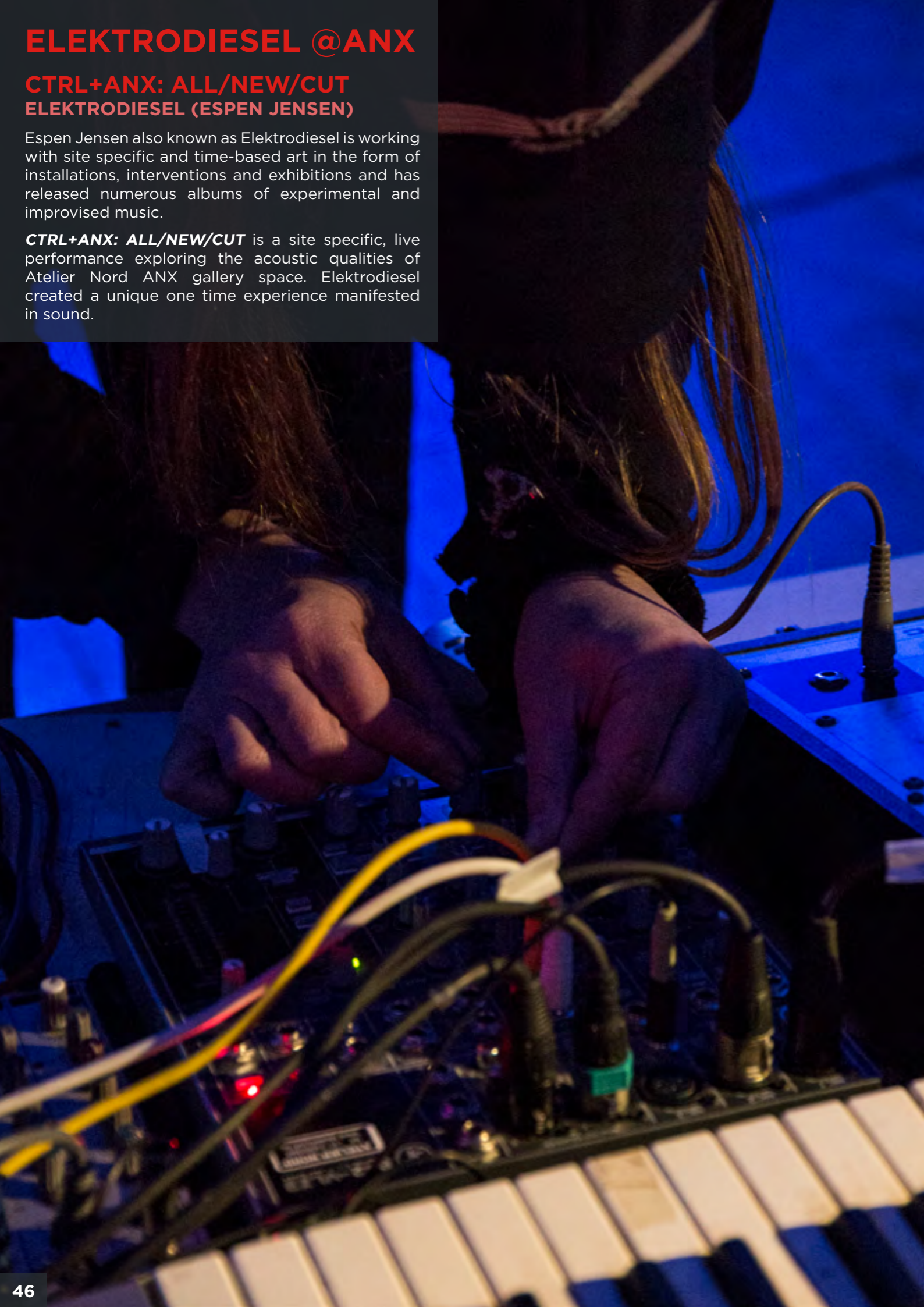


ELEKTRODIESEL @ANX

CTRL+ANX: ALL/NEW/CUT ELEKTRODIESEL (ESPEN JENSEN)

Espen Jensen also known as Elektrodiesel is working with site specific and time-based art in the form of installations, interventions and exhibitions and has released numerous albums of experimental and improvised music.

CTRL+ANX: ALL/NEW/CUT is a site specific, live performance exploring the acoustic qualities of Atelier Nord ANX gallery space. Elektrodiesel created a unique one time experience manifested in sound.



ELEKTRODIESEL @ANX





NOTTO J. W. THELLE

NOTAM - PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Notto J. W. Thelle is a Norwegian musician and composer. He gained his Master's degree in musicology at the University of Oslo, and from 2012 until 2017 he has worked as the director of Notam (Norwegian Center for Technology in Music and the Arts).

The following is a transcript from the conversation between Notto J. W. Thelle and Stahl Stenslie and Zane Cerpina in May 2017, Oslo.

EE: We know you best as the director of Notam, but can you tell us more about your background before that?

Notto J. W. Thelle (NT): I am a musician and composer. Originally my background was in rock music. In the 1990s I was a band musician, I moved to London and played music there for six years. It was a great experience for a while, but I gradually became disillusioned by the music scene I was in, and the whole philosophy behind it. I was also tired of the hand-to-mouth situation as a musician. At that point I had never formally studied music, besides having a guitar teacher during the early years. I was self-taught in everything I did, including the music production.

I gradually became disillusioned by the music scene I was in, and the whole philosophy behind it

EE: From being a full time band musician, how did you arrive at Notam?

NT: After my time in London I made a snap-decision that I want to do things formally, so I applied for studies and got in the Department of Music at the University of Oslo. At that point I had to teach myself how to read notes! After that I also did my

Master's. At the same time I got more and more interested in the technological part of music. I took any subject that had anything to do with the music technology, acoustics, sound production and sound programming, and I also took some courses in informatics. I just went all in. In 2008 Notam needed someone to write the annual report, and I was suggested to Jøran Rudi by my supervisor at the University. This is how my time at Notam began. Soon after that I was offered a position there, working with communications. While I was doing my Master's, my position at Notam expanded. A lot of coincidences led me to becoming the director in 2012. At the same time Notam relocated (to Sagene in Oslo). Many important decisions had to be made in a completely chaotic situation. My period at Notam has mainly been about stabilizing the economy, creating a new environment and building the new ambisonics studio. Being director here during this period has been like a rite of passage for Notam, crossing from one organizational form to another. And now when my term is running out, I think it is time for somebody else to take over.

EE: Could you describe the major, emerging tendencies in sound art these days?

NT: I have a feeling that if I do describe any major, emerging tendencies, something completely different will be true half a year from now. I think the diversification is probably the only one main tendency. Sound as art is making an impact everywhere. For instance, sound is becoming more widely accepted as a physical, sculptural phenomenon, manifested as a process propagating through materials or liquids. This can be experienced visually or through other senses than purely aural. In more visual arts contexts, sound tends to have a thematic

The diversification is probably the only one main tendency

function that serves a spatially oriented and object-based practice. The sense of sound as something unfolding in time becomes less important in a such settings. This is not new, but I think it's quite safe to say that sound as a "conceptual articulator" in multimedia contexts is in vogue at the moment. If that makes any sense.

EE: Which experimental artists would you put forward as the most interesting right now?

Sound as a "conceptual articulator" in multimedia contexts is in vogue at the moment

NT: An "experimental artist" is a very wide term. In terms of revitalising the experimental art scene, I'd like to name a few. Koka Nikoladze (www.nikoladze.eu) - for him, anything can be an instrument for artistic expression, especially objects you least expect. Tine Surel Lange (www.tinesurel.com) - her audiovisual works and her newfound flair for ambisonics composition. Marieke Verbiesen (www.marieke.nu) seems to be at a particularly prolific point in her career, definitely "one to watch". Verdensteatret - collaborative, experimental and interdisciplinary art at its finest. And Hege Tapio's vigorous work for the bio arts field in Norway needs to be commended. Look to i/o/lab! (www.iolab.no)

EE: What are the most important issues in the experimental art scene in Norway?

NT: The scene needs to be seen as a scene! From a political viewpoint, anything outside of established traditions seems unworthy of attention. The timing is crucial for connecting the dots between many extremely exciting, but fragmented initiatives all over the country and giving them the impression of being all parts of one force. This is needed to make the experimental art scene prosper. **PNEK** and its nodes are instrumental to make such a concerted effort happen.

The scene needs to be seen as a scene!

EE: You have headed the most profiled art sound institution in Norway for many years, what's next?

NT: Me. I'm next! **Just realizing you are not the center of the universe**

Heading *Notam* has been all about helping other people, and it has been a life-changer for me. I'm psyched by all the positive energy and great projects I've seen realised over the years, and it will be exciting to see how I can channel this to my own projects. I have no specific plans for the rest of 2017 so far, so we'll see what happens. Some freelancing for sure. Bills need to be payed. Next year, I may be starting a Ph.D. It's all quite open at the moment, and I find that profoundly liberating right now.

EE: How do you think your time at *Notam* has influenced your personal artistic practice?

NT: The most important effect it has had on me, is the humbling effect - just realizing you are not the center of the universe. That paradoxically has given me more confidence. It sounds strange, but before I had less confidence and I was more interested in myself. Now I am more interested in the work of other people. At the same time I have more confidence. Another thing about working here is that I haven't done anything creative for five years, but I've had lots of new impulses. I have no idea of how it is going to come out, but I hope it is going to be something completely different. It is quite exciting to have a clean slate.

EE: How would you like to see *Notam* grow from now on?

NT: Recently I have been thinking about this a lot. I think that with *Notam*, but also with the whole **PNEK** network, the time is ripe for restructuring. When you work on the inside it seems to be working quite well, but from the outside it can look quite confusing. There has to be some strategy of making *Notam* appear as something easy to grasp from the outside as well.

WWW.NOTAM02.NO

The time is ripe for restructuring



Notto J. W. Thelle @Ambisonics studio
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

Ambisonics studio @Notam
Photo: Åsa Maria Mikkelsen

MultiNO 2017



MultiNO 2017, @Atelier Nord ANX, Oslo
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

In January *EE* was following a week-long experimental non-commercial music festival **MultiNO** in Oslo. *MultiNO* is a roaming festival around Europe every year. The festival is organized by the international network *Multiversal* and *MultiNO* is part of their international festival program **Multidom** with other events in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Athens and London. The program in Oslo took place at *Deichmanske Bibliotek Grunerløkka* and *Atelier Nord ANX*, Oslo.

On each day of the festival, there were around ten performances varying from heavy noise music to purely vocal voice shows, experiments with sensors, guitars, electronics and self-made instruments.

With artists from Norway and all around Europe, expressions ranged from low-key compositions to harsh physical sound experiences. *MultiNO* gives a space for expression to the most experimental artistic practitioners and offers unique experiences for the audience.

The next *MultiNO* will arrive in Oslo in October, 2017.

WWW.MULTIVERSAL.EU

ARTISTS @MultiNO 2017

TUCELLA / LAJUS / DAL POZZO / BERNE'

Artists Tiziano Tuccella (Electronics), Vincent Lajus (Cello), Federico Dal Pozzo (Electronics) and Emilio Berne' (Drums) performed mixing music instrument sounds with electronics, sensors and other elements.

www.soundcloud.com/vincent-laju

www.soundcloud.com/federicodalpozzo



ARTISTS @MultiNO 2017

PERFORMANCE BY SOLLI / LANGÅS / SEKI

This was a performance by the three artists: Marius Solli who played drums, Kenneth Korstad Langås (bass, electronics) and Kazehito Seki doing electronics and voice performance.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iEs8Bv8_gQ



ARTISTS @MultiNO 2017

KENNETH KORSTAD LANGÅS LIBRARY & EXPERIMENTAL ARTS

Kenneth Korstad Langås is heading Deichmanske Library Grünerløkka - which is a public library in Oslo. Continuing on the theme of alternative ways of creating a library, EE talked to Kenneth about his approach to merge the traditional concept of a library with experimental art practices.

The following is a transcript from the conversation between Kenneth Korstad Langås and Zane Cerpina on March 23rd, 2017.



Kenneth Korstad Langås, Oslo
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

Zane Cerpina (EE): *Deichmanske Library in Grünerløkka can seem like a typical public library, but here you can often experience artistic workshops, performances and even international noise festivals. Why?*

Kenneth Korstad Langås (KKL): I believe the library is the last democratic space in the society. It has to be open for absolutely everyone. It is interesting that on the one hand we have a good classical collection here, but on the other hand my goal has been to explore the public space in a more radical way. I am trying to open it up for people who are really engaged in what they do, such as exploring the arts - from music, film and theatre to fine arts and the experimental art scene. How can we use art practice as a different way to meet the audience? It is important to give the space to narrow fields, such as experimental music. Even if you show something very abstract, you shouldn't be afraid to give people something they don't understand. During the **SØRFORKOMFORT** festival that we organized in collaboration with *Folkebiblioteket*, *Dans for Voksne* and *Edge of Wrong*, we had a musician exploring music created from the Ebola virus, step dancers, noise musicians, and a theatre play on the same night. A lot of festivals are doing this now. Many people who come here, they say that these specific scenes tend to be quite narrow. **My goal has been to explore the public space in a more radical way**

They want to explore how to make a broader platform for practices and have new audiences.

EE: Returning to the topic of the public library, what is its role in times of post-truth and fake news?

The library is the last democratic space in the society

My goal has been to explore the public space in a more radical way

KKL: I think that the library will become more and more important in the years to come. Propaganda has been around for a very long time. And librarians are good at finding sources and promoting critical thinking. It will be more and more important as one of the key actors regardless of online information.

EE: From the events I have experienced here, it seems that you manage quite well to gather a good number of visitors. What is your approach to the local audiences?

KKL: It is always a challenge, especially for smaller events. When you bring in very interesting artists that have never been to Norway, it is extremely hard to get the audience. It is also a question of how to reach people without using Facebook. It is a challenging situation when one actor controls the whole public space. It is damaging both the audience and institutions, as it becomes this big wave of information that the public is receiving. On the dangerous side this is used to manipulate polls, but my question is if there is a way to turn this upside down? Can we exploit the same data to pinpoint cultural activities? Of course this is a problematic question.

EE: Can you tell me about your involvement in the **MultiNO Festival**, that took place at the library in January 2017?

You shouldn't be afraid to give people something they don't understand **KKL:** I have been involved in the festival for the 3rd year. *MutiNO* offers quite extreme experiences. Both in a sense of being very abstract, but also extreme as reaching a physical notion of music. I had an interesting experience in Valencia, Spain, where the concert took place in a second hand store. There was a PHD student who have never experienced this before. She said it was extremely interesting, but she couldn't take it anymore, it was too much. It is nothing radical in terms of trying to make something brand new, but it is offering the audience new experiences. And in terms of organizing it, there is some funding, very little, so everything is based on volunteers, and

finding institutions to help. It is an extremely generous platform. I've also toured around Europe and performed in seven places, and it is interesting to compare both approaches to expressions and also different audiences.

EE: Being part of this touring experimental venue, how do you find the audiences differ in each country?

KKL: In southern Europe it was packed, 200 people came to this concert, in London only 40. There is a big movement in Naples, in Italy, for example. The cultural scene is really evolving there, you see people in age range from 18 - 70. I need to do more research on how this is possible.

EE: At *MultiNO* it was the first time I saw you perform as an artist. What is your artistic background?

KKL: I've been working as a fine art artist since the 90s, exploring media art, installation work, and I also worked in *Verdensteatret*. But coming back to it now 10 years later, **Developing the library is one of the most creative things I have ever done** and shifting my focus to experimental music scene, I think it's really interesting. I am just continuing my artistic practice through a different expression. It also can be seen as a reaction to our times. It is also my abstract way of dealing with the frustration of what is happening in politics - from migration to poverty and debt. It is an expression that is extreme, but I also work with low key sound projects.

I actually think that developing the library is one of the most creative things I have ever done. It is the most complex public space. By now I have worked on 500-600 events here. It is the same as working with art. You see what impact your actions can have on the audience.

WWW.DEICHMAN.NO



ARTISTS @MultiNO 2017

EXCITED GUITAR BERNT ISAK WÆRSTAD

Bernt Isak Wærstad is a musician, light artist, producer and music-hacker based in Oslo. During the *MultiNO* he performed *Excited Guitar* using acoustic guitars and transducers.

www.soundcloud.com/mrbernts



ARTISTS @MultiNO 2017



WINTER SOLSTICE



Performance by Risto Holopainen
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2016

RISTO HOLOPAINEN
www.ristoid.net

When the day is at its shortest and the night its longest, it's time to visit the **Winter Solstice Night Exhibition**. The 2016 edition was the 5th anniversary event taking place from dusk to dawn between the 17th to 18th of December in Oslo.

WINTER SOLSTICE is a one night exhibition and cultural event happening in Oslo. It was initiated by the artist Hanan Benammar and is realized together with *Vandaler Forening's* team, enthusiasts from the experimental art scene and volunteers. *Winter Solstice* is a roaming event, every year taking place in a different location. The 2016 edition was held in an empty, industrial building, gathering more than 70 artists and several hundred visitors.

According to Hanan Benammar there are only three rules for the event. First rule: it is free and open for everyone. Second rule: there is free food. Third rule: It has to last throughout the whole night until sunrise.

For the second year *PNEK* (Production Network for Electronic Art, Norway) gave the **From Dusk till Dawn PNEK Art Prize** - an award that is a collaboration between *Vandaler Forening* and *PNEK*, aiming to support and encourage experimental practices and artistic collaborations. This year the prize was given to two winners: **WAAAHAWAD** and Kirsty Kross.

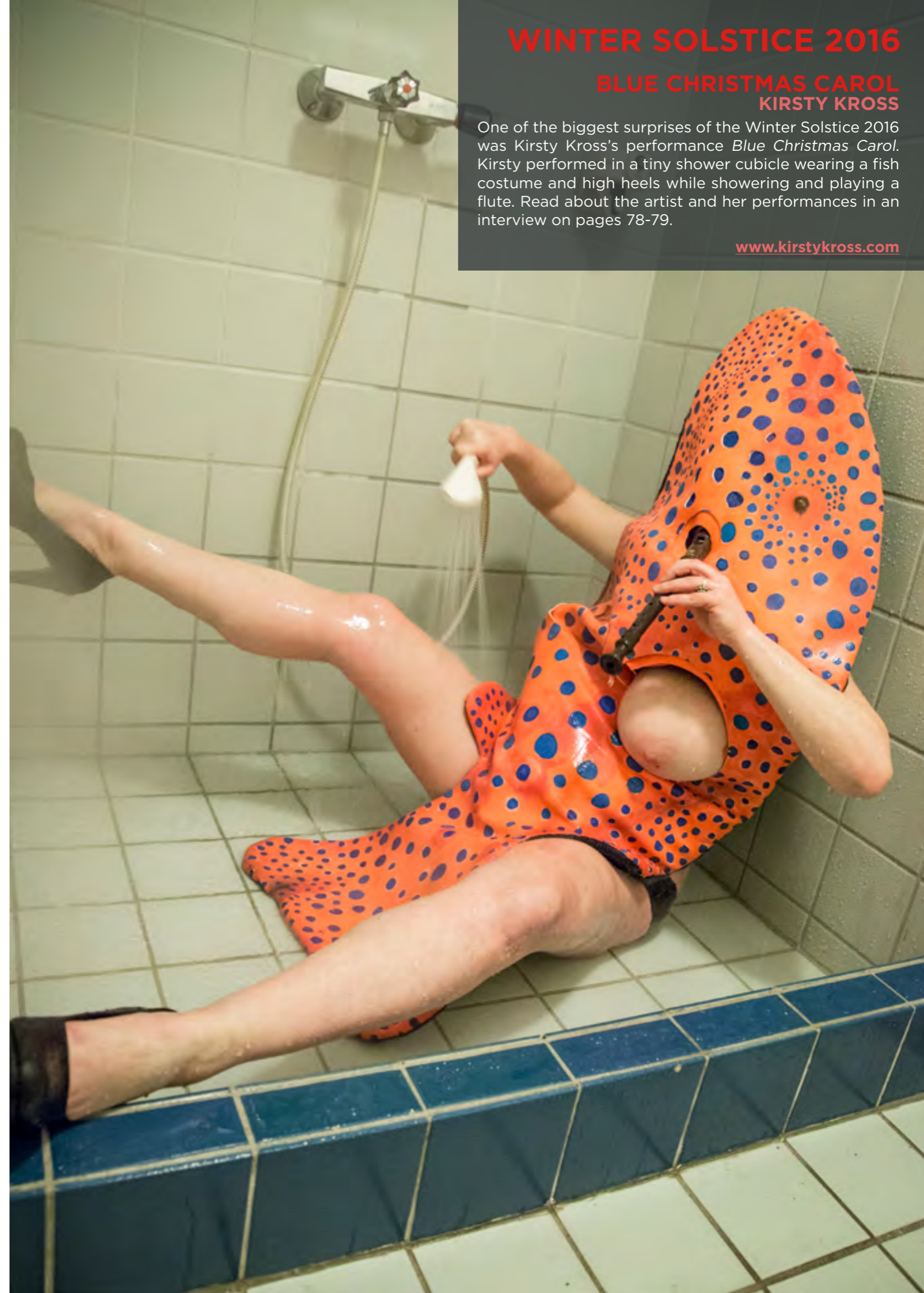
WWW.VANDALERFORENING.ORG

WINTER SOLSTICE 2016

BLUE CHRISTMAS CAROL KIRSTY KROSS

One of the biggest surprises of the Winter Solstice 2016 was Kirsty Kross's performance *Blue Christmas Carol*. Kirsty performed in a tiny shower cubicle wearing a fish costume and high heels while showering and playing a flute. Read about the artist and her performances in an interview on pages 78-79.

www.kirstykross.com



HANAN BENAMMAR

ART SHOULD BE FREE

Hanan Benammar lives and works between Norway, France and the Netherlands. She studied at the Art Academy of Oslo and the Dutch Art Institute (NL). She is the leader of an experimental artists run space *Vandaler Forening* and organizer of the *Winter Solstice Night Exhibition*. She is involved in several art events and institutions, while working on her individual art works, focusing on music, sound field recordings, text and archiving.

The following is a transcript from the conversation between Hanan Benammar and Zane Cerpina on March 23rd 2017, Oslo.



Hanan Benammar, Oslo
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

Zane Cerpina (EE): What is *Vandaler Forening's* artistic focus?

Hanan Benammar (HB): The idea of *Vandaler* is not about vandalism as in burning churches, but using art as a tool to create the change we want to see in our own environment. It is an art organization collectively generated and aiming to organize and document experimental art practices, with a focus on interdisciplinary art, political issues, electronic and time-based works. People can send an email and apply to do anything they want. We are also one of the core-members of the **Flatbread Society** based in Oslo (Losæter). This year we are organizing the **Human Scarecrows** performance program for the second time. We will eliminate the human audience and perform for birds instead to distract them from eating the crops.

Art as a tool to create the change we want to see

EE: In 2016 the 5th edition of *Winter Solstice Night Exhibition* took place in Oslo. How has the event changed in these five years, both in terms of audience and the way you organize it?

HB: It depends on the space. The first year it was at Olaf Ryes Plass 2 where we used all 4 floors including *Atelier Nord's Gallery* space ANX. We had 150 people participating. What struck me, there were no accidents. I realized that you can actually trust people. I think the criminalization of how we see the world has become a problem. At *Winter Solstice* every artist involved is responsible for the evening.

EE: *Winter Solstice* is a very experimental event. How do you get the audience, and how do you see the public's general interest in the experimental art scene in Norway?

HB: I don't expect people to like everything. It is a very honest program. It says it is going to

be chaotic, and there is no printed program for the audience to see. I think there are more and more people coming every year. They don't come specifically for experimental music, they come for the experience of the whole night.

EE: What role does the *PNEK Art Prize* have in the *Winter Solstice Night Exhibition*?

Get rid of the ideas of some art "being the best" and some other not being "good enough"

HB: The prize is about relations and how different fields collide. How the visual arts, performance practice, electronic arts, dance, and poetry mixes. The prize is here to encourage experimental practices and encourage people to continue working together. *The Winter Solstice* is non-judgemental. In my opinion, we should generally get rid of the ideas of some art "being the best" and some other not being "good enough".

EE: Are you offering the *Winter Solstice* as a platform for people? At the event you can feel this natural organic movement of artists. They arrive maybe in the middle of the night, set up their equipment, and perform. It is a very autonomous event.

HB: Yes, it is a platform. I make sure that things go smooth, give general advice. I think many would assume the more money there is, the better the event would be. Because of our zero budget it is not possible to spend time individually on 70 performers. The only thing is the sound check the day before.

EE: How do you see the *Winter Solstice* developing in the future?

HB: If I let it develop naturally and let everyone participate, things would naturally grow and expand. But this year I think it was the maximum amount of participants I could handle. I think next year I will try to reduce it and make it harder to find. It will become even more mystical.

EE: Hiding it seems to be opposite to what everyone else is trying to do. How do you find partners and support for the event?

We have to free ourselves from paper work

HB: I would like to involve more partners. For the Solstice last year we also had a residency with *Notam: Norwegian Center for Technology in Music and the Arts*. It was a great collaboration. They are an institution with a structure, the *Winter Solstice* is not structured, it is based on volunteer work. It is like two worlds colliding. I think big institutions should also be here to provide space for smaller organizations. None of us should only stay in our comfort zones. I think electronic art in Norway is somehow isolated from the rest of the art scene. We have to strengthen interdisciplinary collaborations. Electronic arts shouldn't be just about the medium, it has to talk about the world. And we have to organize events despite the rules. What are all these rules?

EE: Art should be free?

Art should be free and take over the world

HB: Art should be free and take over the world. We have to free ourselves from paper work. We have to do things the way we want. There shouldn't be this need to wait for the next application deadline, and we as institutions should not look at CVs to decide who to include in the program. If we are really honest about art being potentially a political tool for radical emancipation and social change, then we have to get rid of all this and focus on giving people experiences. It is a collective process. That does not mean only working in a group, but having sense of being part of a society, which can be micro or universal. The Solstice and every art event survives as long you don't depend on money, as long you cannot describe what exactly you're doing. As long as you find new strategies and regenerate yourself, and explore the field outside your comfort zone. And as long as I am doing this I will make sure there is a place for people to do what they want.

WWW.VANDALERFORENING.ORG

WINTER SOLSTICE 2016

PERFORMANCE BY KAROLINE AAMÅS,
MARI STOKNES AND LOVE KJELLSSONA

Mari Stoknes is a performance artist that combines the traditional discipline of hair hanging with dance and her aerial skills. Karoline Aamås is a Norwegian rope artist who also does hair-suspension. Love Kjellssona is a sound artist working with conceptual art, performance and visuals.

www.lovekjellsson.se

www.karolineaamaas.com

www.maristoknes.weebly.com



WINTER SOLSTICE 2016



WINTER SOLSTICE 2016

PRESS GARRY WILLIAMS

Garry Williams is an Oslo based artist, working with installation and performance art. At *Winter Solstice 2016* Williams performed **Press**. This work is about the traditional task for household servants in the UK to iron newspapers - in order to seal the ink onto the pages and ensure the clean hands of the reader. During the performance the artist re-staged this tradition, carefully ironing the original newspapers published in the UK on the 12th of September, 2001.

Williams was also part of the *Kunst Vardo* performance program in 2017, where he performed **Woo**, offering his body as a performance site for the dancer Florencia Guerberof. He was leading her through an improvised route around the luxurious Barcode and Sørenga districts of Oslo.

www.garry-williams.com



WINTER SOLSTICE 2016

EUROP EUROP

Europ Europ is an Oslo based experimental sound artist group that started as an improvisation project and has been active since 1996. The members of *Europ Europ* are Mr. Europ - vocals, noise, tape samples, Mr. Europ - organ, drum machine and Ms. Europ - harp. They play organic minimal electronics in a combination with organ and harp.

www.europeurop.com





AGNES HVIZDALEK

“Agnes Hvizdalek is an improvisational musician originating from Vienna’s experimental music scene and has been based in Oslo since 2008. From an early age, she has dedicated her life to new music and her fascination with the human voice. She celebrates this in her abstract vocal music, for which she has received international acclaim. Always exploring new horizons, Hvizdalek has engaged in numerous cross-disciplinary collaborations merging voice and visual and performance art, dance, theatre, film, writing.”

www.agneshvizdalek.at



ALEXANDER RISHAUG

“Alexander Rishaug is an Oslo based sound artist, producer and musician. His sound is melodic, melancholic and often quiet. Rishaug explores tones and textures through the use of electronics, field recordings, toys or simply just playing around with an instrument. Rishaug combines the intimate knowledge of his musical equipment with the curiosity of an amateur.”

www.arishaug.com

WAAAHAWAD
(NORA FIONA ERIKSEN & FREDRIK FALK)

One of the two winners of this years *From Dusk till Dawn* PNEK Art Prize was WAAAHAWAD - *We Are All Alone Here And We Are Dead*.

WAAAHAWAD is an experimental duo established in 2014, consisting of Oslo based sound artists Nora Fiona Eriksen and Fredrik Falk. At the *Winter Solstice 2016* they performed *Winter Wear vol2*. For the performance the duo had invited visual artist Peter Horneland to contribute with live visuals.





*The winners of this years
From Dusk till Dawn PNEK Art
Prize: **WAAAHAWAD** - We Are
All Alone Here And We Are
Dead and **Kirsty Kross***

PNEK ART PRIZE 2016

WAAAHAWAD was invited to perform at the *PNEK Art Prize Ceremony* at Kunsternes Hus in March 2017. The artists filled the first floor of Kunsternes Hus with a mix of audio and visual experiments both for the invited audience and accidental public enjoying the evening at the venue's restaurant.



PNEK ART PRIZE 2016



KIRSTY KROSS

ART FOR THE END TIMES

Kirsty Kross is a performance artist from Australia. Since 2015 she has been based in Oslo and is a board member of Performance Art Oslo. In her artistic work Kirsty combines performance, music, drawing and elements of installation art. She often uses her body and her biographical background as a starting point for her work.

The following is a transcript from the conversation between Kirsty Kross and Zane Cerpina on March 23rd 2017, Oslo.



Kirsty Kross, Oslo,
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

Zane Cerpina (EE): You performed at the *Winter Solstice 2016* and you are one of the winners of the *PNEK Art Prize 2016*. First tell me what's your background and how did you get into performing arts?

Kirsty Kross (KK): I studied art history, I did art teaching for six years in high school, but I was very young and got very frustrated about the tight rules, also on clothing. On weekends I started wearing crazy clothes and performing. I was dating a musician, and we thought: "What if we wore those crazy costumes on stage, would we get a lot of shows?" We called the band **Team Plastique**, we came to Berlin and toured around Europe for six years. The band was very performance oriented. I never wanted to pretend I was good at music. It was more about critiquing the role of women in the music industry - I often began shows looking sexy, but by the end I would look like a complete monster. In Berlin I did a Masters of Art in Context at the University of Arts. My last show outside Berlin was in Oslo, where I met my husband. I think I always dreamt about being an artist, but it happened in a very round about way.

I was brought up very religious, in a religion that believes the end is coming soon. I also grew up with a lot of people in my family with mental illness. From a very young age I was really aware of people being crazy, and I was often concerned that I might go crazy too. I think adults often lack a sense of play. In the band I liked to create situations where people were allowed to be a bit looser and uninhibited. It has been a process to get the same feeling into performance art, as I am on my own. I think that having a sense of play and questioning what it means to be an adult is somehow the main part of my work.

EE: You have performed in a fish costume several times in very different settings. What is the story of the fish?

KK: I actually made my first fish costume when I was 12 years old. I had to get dressed for a parade as something from the Australian state I come from - Queensland, which is the home of the Great Barrier Reef. The fish got rediscovered much later in Berlin, in my graduation piece which was an exploration of identity, as I realised that the fish has been a very important symbol in my family. For me the fish is something that expresses the need to fit in because I didn't really fit into my family or mainstream society either. I love performance art because you can really intervene in any given context.

EE: But with the many variations of the performance, what is the message? Is it political? What are you trying to tell to the audience?

Do I actually care? **KK:** It is, but it is ambiguous. I think we live in a time where we have so much information and so many images. It is really hard to be noticed or remembered. We have very critical things happening economically, socially and ecologically. Yet people are addicted to their smartphones and are constantly distracted. So even if people know what is going on, they aren't able to focus. The concept of attention span is changing rapidly, and we don't know where this is going to lead us to. Concerning the ecological issues, I really care about the ocean and the Great Barrier Reef, for example, but then again look at me: I am an Australian living on the other side of the world and I fly constantly. I think artists want to make a difference, but they are also attached to their lifestyle as an artist. So I think for artists who take on these very global issues, they are often in this very contradictory bind. Am I just trying to make myself relevant? Do I actually care? How much am I actually willing to sacrifice? I think now it is so common, especially in Norway, to depend

How much am I actually willing to sacrifice? on art grants. So there is this need to make art relevant. Sometimes I wonder how much people really care about these issues and what can art actually do? The performance at the Kunstneres Hus was titled **Falling down the stairs in A major**. It was about the

attention economy and ecological problems as well as the rise of the one percent and fascism, the desire to be on top. As humans we are fucked by our general nature.

We always want more, but we need to exist together. I guess humans are attracted to gold and glamour, all the things that monarchies created in the past. This elitism is maybe coming again, but there is also this catastrophic sense of foreboding. So in the performance, everything I did was slightly awkward, as if I was on the edge of disaster. This need to be perfect all the time, really messes things up for humans. Also in the performance I ate sushi. And the idea of the fish eating more fish, is what we are looking at now. People are really happy to exploit other people. I guess with the religion, I was brought up in the shadow of the apocalypse. And even if I am not that religious anymore I guess in some ways I am very affected.

I was brought up being under the shadow of the apocalypse

WWW.KIRSTYKROSS.COM



Kirsty Kross @ Kunstneres Hus,
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

SUDDEN SHOWER

SUDDEN SHOWER
PER HESS & NINA BANG

Sudden Shower is an installation work by Norwegian artists Per Hess and Nina Bang. The artwork was produced in collaboration with **Atopia Kunstlab** (www.atopia.no). The artist duo has created an artwork using neon lights and large drawings mounted on the window. When viewing the work through the window it creates an illusion of a zoetrope.

www.ninabang.com
www.perhess.com



SUDDEN SHOWER

MARIEKE VERBIESEN LOUD MATTER @ANX GALLERY

Marieke Verbiesen is a Dutch artist based in Bergen, Norway. Her interactive and audiovisual works have been showed and screened at various art events and festivals in Europe, USA and Asia. In February 2017 Marieke had a solo exhibition *Loud Matter* at *Atelier Nord ANX* in Oslo. *Loud Matter* has been previously exhibited in Japan, Australia, and also during the *Transmediale Festival 2016* in Berlin.

The following is a transcript from the conversation between Marieke Verbiesen and Stahl Stenslie on January 29th 2017, Oslo.



Marieke Verbiesen,
Photo: Wouter le Duc

Stahl Stenslie (EE): Marieke, can you tell us about your background?

Marieke Verbiesen (MV): I come from the fine arts background. I took my education in the Netherlands where I did animation and sculpture. I started to realize specialized installations, and further I took my masters in electronic arts. I often work with very physical elements as I like to use the language of specific materials. And in my works there are always animated and moving elements as well. I focus on how to add the interactivity so that the audience can be the ones controlling my artworks.

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EE: How did you find your way from the Netherlands to Bergen where you are based now?

MV: I was participating in an artist residency at *BEK* (Bergen Center for Electronic Arts), and after that I started to organize various events in Bergen through *BEK*. I saw the interest and response to my projects and enjoyed collaborating with Norwegian cultural partners, artists and musicians.

EE: How would you describe *BEK* today?

MV: I think, it has grown a lot. Now it has a dual function both providing services to artists and art institutions, lending equipment and studios as well providing workshops. In my opinion that is a unique function for an electronic arts institute. It makes it more open to public use, as a lot of people know what *BEK* is and who is working there. It is easy to approach us to organize things, but at the same time the staff

initiates their own projects as well.

EE: Going back to your own work, how would you describe your artistic expression? In your latest exhibition *Loud Matter* at *Atelier Nord ANX*, there was a sense of retro style from the 80s.

MV: For *Mayhem Machine* I have spent a lot of time researching how the audience can create compositions themselves in an intuitive way, and offering various forms of exploration when using all its tools. There is humour in the tools, such as the “bad guitar solo” joystick and the “reverse bhtshifting” algorithm. These are things that you cannot explain but people discover once using these tools. I have been using both classic and new technologies in **Mayhem machine**, and I was inspired by classic arcade machines as they have inherited information about how they are supposed to be used. *Mayhem machine* is an interactive composition installation but looks like a game. I wanted to create a machine that is easy to approach without having to read a manual, but instead can be explored by playing it. The technology within it is very complex, but the machine is built for “exploration whilst playing”, and can be understood intuitively.

People love destroying things

This was very important as I want the audience to feel included in the experience.

EE: When looking from the users interaction perspective, how do you think they experience the project?

MV: To build this machine, I went through several stages of looking at how people use it and if they understand how things work. People sometimes do very unexpected things. In the *Mayhem Machine* you both create and destroy compositions, that is where the name comes from as well. And I have experienced that people love destroying things. Especially when using machinery, they test what are the limitations, how far can they push it. Another important aspect for me was to make an installation that can evolve, where I can change its functionality at any time. For example, to invite other artists to contribute with sound effects.

EE: How do you see this area of experimental art developing in future?

MV: Interactivity forms the work itself, it is not something that I “add on” in a later stage. I look for unusual, experimental ways of interaction to create my work where there is something to discover for the audience. Without interaction from the audience, there is no work. Their role changes from spectator to participant. Interactive art is still largely an emerging field in Norway and I aim to establish a platform where Norwegian artists can showcase autonomous interactive art. Although there is room for emerging art forms in Norway, too often interactive works still fall in the realm of applied arts here, but I am sure this will change with time and with the generation that is now growing up surrounded by interactive interfaces. Because what you grow up with, will become your cultural reference.

What you grow up with, will become your cultural reference

WWW.MARIEKE.NU



Loud Matter Exhibition opening @*Atelier Nord ANX*,
Photo: Zane Cerpina, 2017

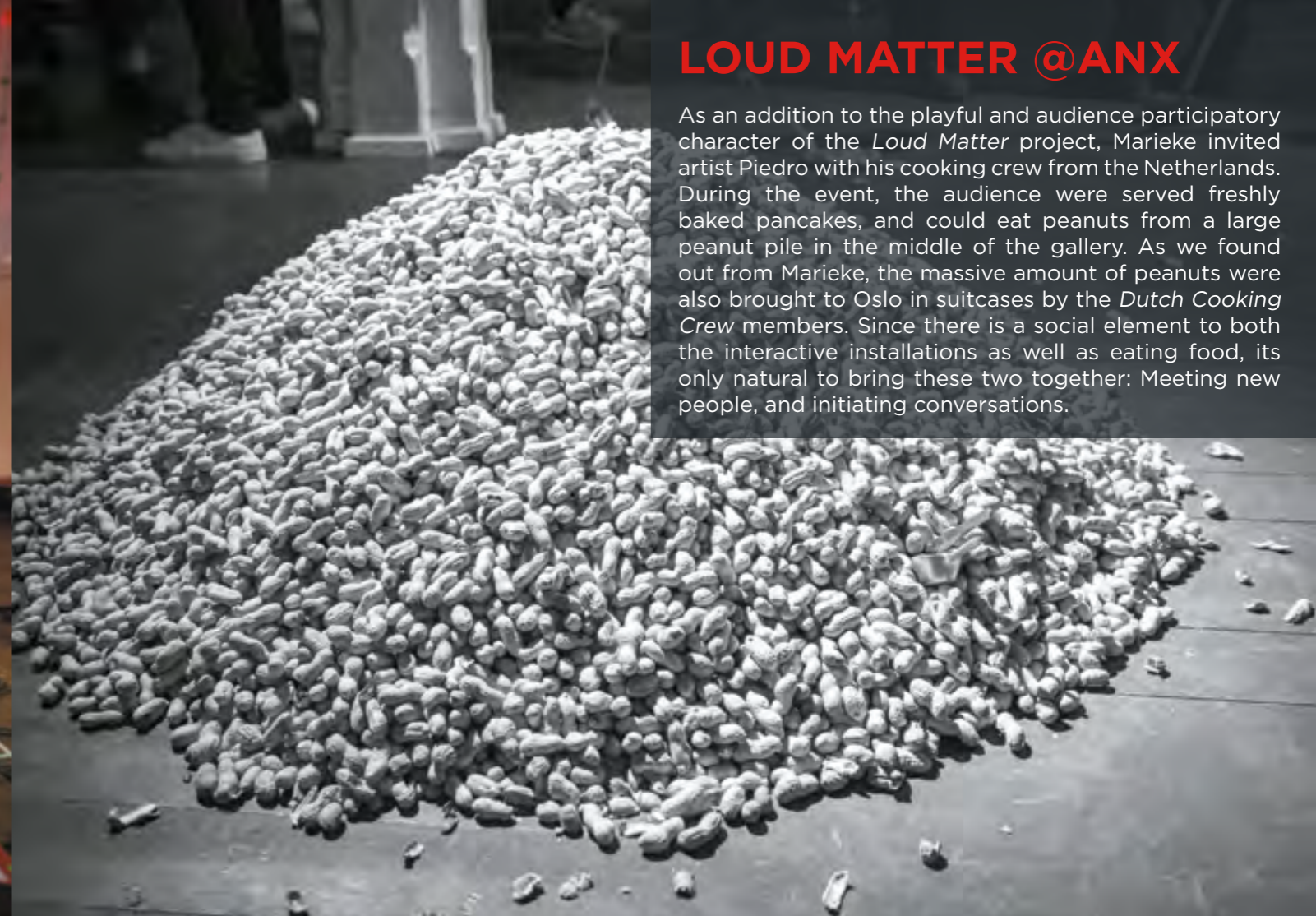
LOUD MATTER @ANX

As part of the exhibition *Loud Matter*, Marieke Verbiesen had invited sound artists John Hegre (NO) and James Welburn (UK/DE) to play a concert accompanied with a live animation by the artist itself. The concert filled the gallery with distorted noises, electronic tones and even sounds of guitar being hit by a hammer and carved with a knife.



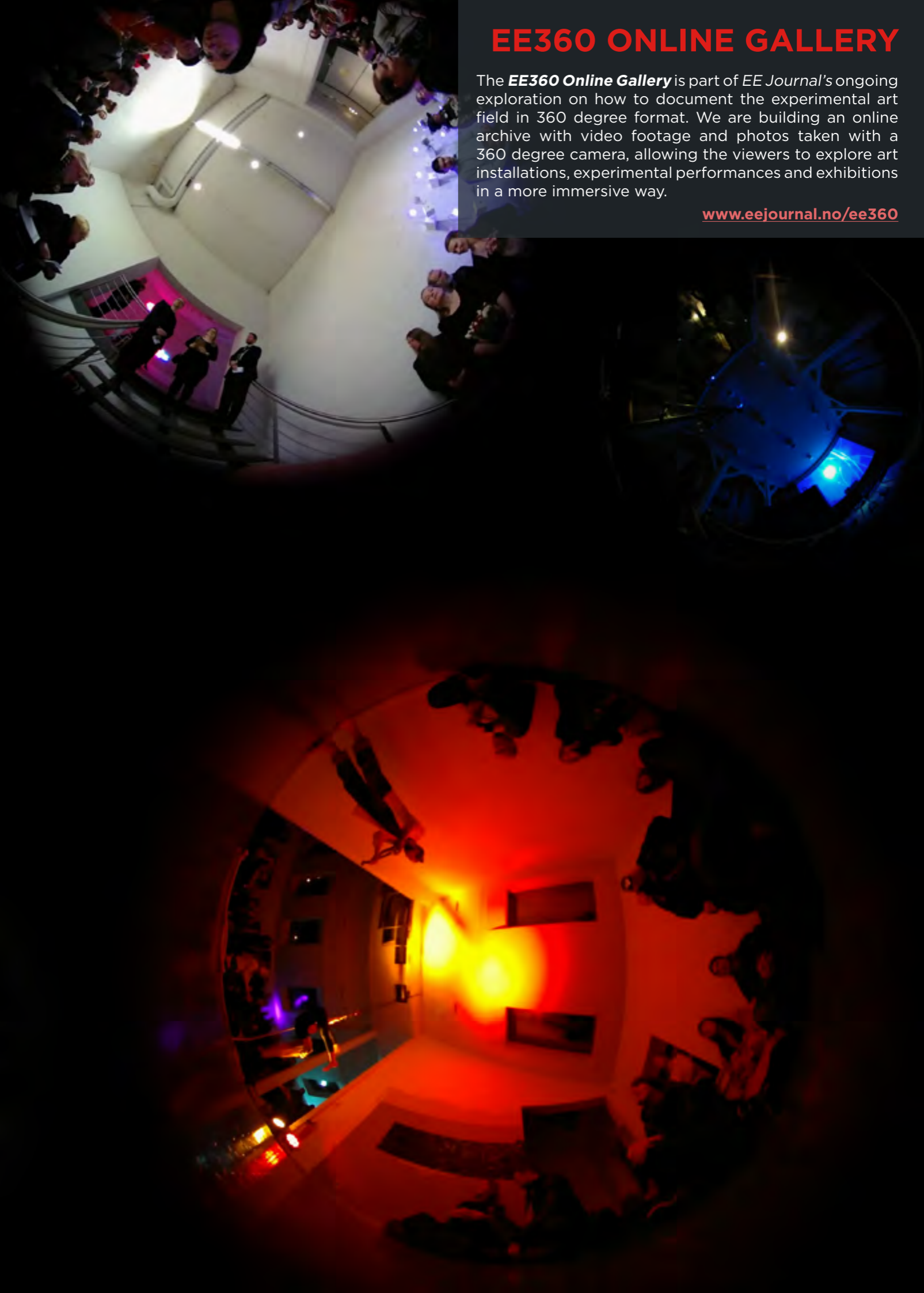
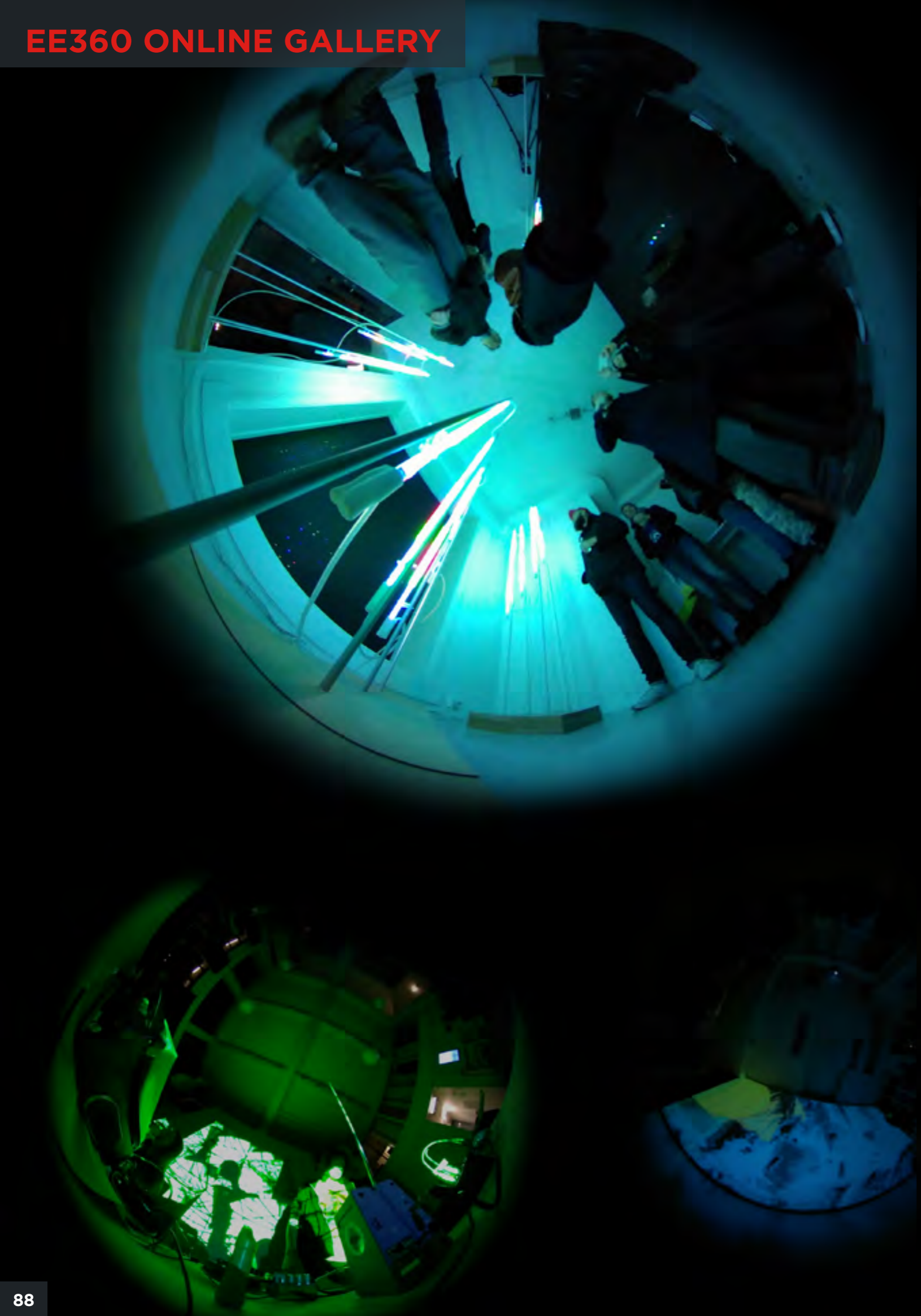
LOUD MATTER @ANX

As an addition to the playful and audience participatory character of the *Loud Matter* project, Marieke invited artist Pedro with his cooking crew from the Netherlands. During the event, the audience were served freshly baked pancakes, and could eat peanuts from a large peanut pile in the middle of the gallery. As we found out from Marieke, the massive amount of peanuts were also brought to Oslo in suitcases by the *Dutch Cooking Crew* members. Since there is a social element to both the interactive installations as well as eating food, its only natural to bring these two together: Meeting new people, and initiating conversations.



The **EE360 Online Gallery** is part of *EE Journal's* ongoing exploration on how to document the experimental art field in 360 degree format. We are building an online archive with video footage and photos taken with a 360 degree camera, allowing the viewers to explore art installations, experimental performances and exhibitions in a more immersive way.

www.eejournal.no/ee360



UPCOMING EVENTS

ISEA 2017

11th - 18th of June, 2017 at Universidad de Caldas, Manizales, Colombia

ISEA - International Symposium on Electronic Art, is one of the world's most prominent international arts and technology events, bringing together scholarly, artistic, and scientific domains in an interdisciplinary discussion and showcase of creative productions applying new technologies in art, interactivity, and electronic and digital media. The 23rd edition is themed Biocreation & Peace. ISEA017 invites to reflect on the contributions that art, design, and technology provide as alternatives for social development based on respect for natural biodiversity and having pacific coexistence of the communities.

www.isea2017.isea-international.org

TRANSPIKSEL 2017

TransPiksel PERÚ, Lima - August 17th -21st, 2017

TransPiksel COLOMBIA - August 24th - 27th, 2017

TransPiksel MÉXICO, Ciudad de Mexico - September 5th - 13th, 2017

Touring workshops, exhibitions, audiovisual concerts and a BioArt Lab with international and local artists working on art and technology with a special focus on bioart, environmental sciences and DIY electronics to be held in Perú, Mexico and Colombia.

www.piksel.no/transpiksel/

ARS ELECTRONICA 2017

POSTCITY Linz, September 7th - 11th, 2017

Ars Electronica - the Festival for Art, Technology and Society - takes place every year in Linz, Austria, during the first week of September. The 2017 topic will be "Artificial Intelligence / The Other I." The place to see the best and latest of electronic, digital and experimental arts.

www.aec.at/ai/en/

RIXC ART AND SCIENCE FESTIVAL 2017

19th - 21st of October, 2017, RIXC, Riga, Latvia

RIXC is annual Riga based international festival for digital art, science and emerging technologies. This year's festival programme will include the Open Fields conference, the annual gathering for international scholars and artists working at the intersection of arts, humanities and science. The Open Fields aims to raise the discussion on the changing role of art in society, its transformative potential, and relations to the science.

www.rixc.org/en/festival/



