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10. Philipp Geist

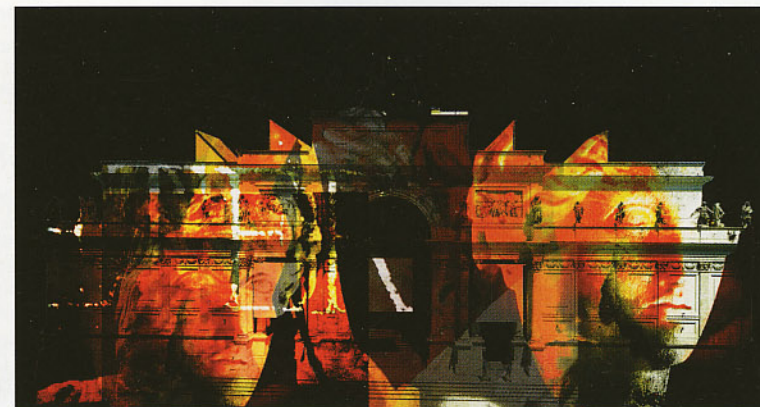
Philipp Geist works internationally as a multimedia artist in the mediums of video, performance, photography and painting. For his video works, he only uses self-filmed images and generated images which he transforms, abstracts and densifies in order to create a dialogue with the sound, the space and the visitors. The images alternate between colourful and monochrome compositions. For his work he uses contemporary digital hard- and software and also analog tools.

Music and sound play an important role in Philipp Geist's live performance works. The music influences the speed of the images, the intensity of its effects, its colours and contents. Geist selects the images live and as the music is generally improvised, the images are found and modified spontaneously.

His works also include video-room-installations whose form and content are conditioned by the place where the work is being presented. In his video-installation "RIVERINE", an ongoing project, Geist shows video recordings of rivers from different international locations, using underwater-video-cameras.

Philipp Geist has also realized video installations which covered the entire front of large buildings. By using the architects' plans of the building he is able to highlight or to hide parts of the building. He manipulates its three-dimensionality with his two-dimensional images.

<http://videogeist.blogspot.com>
<http://riverinezones.blogspot.com>



CAMP '07 – Glimpses of a Visual Music Festival

Since 1999, CAMP (Creative Arts and Music Project) takes place every two years, choosing another venue in or around Stuttgart (Germany) for each edition of the festival. Sometimes, CAMP likes also to travel, as in 2005, when the festival followed an invitation to the Espaço do Tempo in Montemor, Portugal. But this is not what makes CAMP so special: it is all about the format the founders of the festival, Friedemann Daehn and Thomas Maos, have invented to bring musicians or sound artists together with artists from the visual field (video, installation, new media) in order to create visual music. Visual Music is understood here as a form of predominantly non-narrative experimental audiovisual production that is mainly performed or produced live and where sound and image become equal partners.. The musicians and artists are invited for one week and CAMP gives them all the essential luxury you need to experiment freely: time, space, technical and gastronomic support.

The first impressions by entering the vast building of the Württembergische Kunstverein Stuttgart, where this year's CAMP took place from August 12-19, was one of a mixture of different sounds. The sounds came from the team of the Kunstverein still being busy with deconstructing the last exhibition and from the musicians trying out their sounds. Everybody seemed to be running around in search for a cable, a graphic card or another electronic device. But later on, one could also see small groups of musicians and visual artists discussing the concepts for their improvisations or relaxing in deck chairs on the terrace while talking about their projects. As an informal atmosphere often encourages the exchange between the international guests and also an interested public, the bar is a very important part of the CAMP philosophy. But of course, there are also other forms of exchange: this year, the festival had organized for the first time workshops where an interested public could get an insight into the artists' work. A public lecture on visual music by Verena Kuni (Germany) and Axel Stockburger (Austria) gave different theoretical approaches to the subject and led to a discussion that created a link between ongoing theoretical discourses and the creative experiments the artists at CAMP were undertaking.

During the whole festival week, between workshops, lectures and group rehearsals, there was an almost feverish atmosphere of concentrated work that led in a relatively short time to astonishing results which were presented to the public at the end of the festival. Before and between the performances, the visitors could become involved themselves and play with the interactive audiovisual installation programmed and constructed by the two students in resident, Hiroyuki Hori (Japan) and Michael Hieke (Germany). The first performance evening was dedicated to the groups of



Photo: Hoiger Lund

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artists that had been combined by the artistic directors Fried Daehn and Thomas Maos, each group containing one visual production unit and several musicians working in one defined space. The groups had reacted in different ways to the challenge of the spatial situation, which they had found on their arrival, the spaces of the Kunstverein being very beautiful but also difficult to deal with in terms of acoustics. One room also being still under construction while the group was working in it, the only sensible thing they could do was to include the situation in their performance. They consequently filmed the transformation of the room over several days (destruction of a wall, painting of another wall) and recorded the sounds. In the end, the Berlin based visual artist Philipp Geist chose to use only very reduced material from this shootings in black and white, projecting on two opposite walls of the room little above the floor, so that people could walk through the projections, becoming a part of them with their shadows that made an answer to the shadows on the walls in the projection. The electronic musician Markus Urban (Austria) performed with the corresponding recorded sounds while Mark Lorenz Kysela (Germany) was improvising with his saxophone to the visuals and the electronic sound generated out of a beautiful concert of electric drills and hammers.

Here, a part of the answer to the question that is intrinsic to visual music, that is, how to generate a correspondence between sound and image, lies already in the common source of the material for the performance. In a similar way, the visual artist Kasumi (USA) tried to link her material to the music: Kasumi had reserved a premiere to the festival, working for the first time with new material, different figures cut out of film material, very often with a political background –

a like George Bush saying "Violence is always the solution". While she was mixing her visual material she could also control its sound by switching it on and off and giving it as a source to Thomas Maos (Germany), who integrated the spoken words and other sounds into his improvisation on the electric guitar while Masayuki Akamatsu (Japan) was joining in with an improvisation on his laptop. The work of another group with Solu (Spain/Finland) on the visuals showed again, that image and sound can come beautifully together on the base of a very concentrated and reduced aesthetics, even without technical link between them.

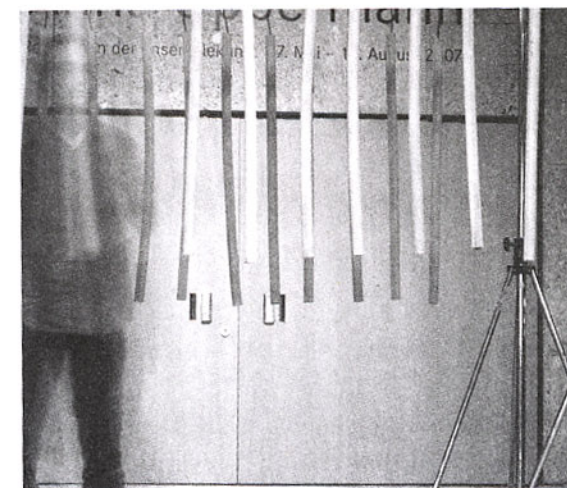
Solu was projecting her images on two opposite walls of an elongated room, bathing it in the beginning literally in a flickering white light. Then, thin moving lines and the black and white shape of one of the musicians moving in the same room started a dialogue with the equally reduced but – like the flickering light – slightly aggressive laptop sounds of Fried Daehn (Germany), who had decided against the more opulent sound of his electric cello, and the noisy drones of Tobias Kirstein (Denmark).

It seemed, however, more difficult to create a link between the gigantic slide projector operated by Friedrich Förster and Sabine Weissinger (Germany) and the music. The machine, coming from the French "son et lumière" context, had no problem in filling the big dome of the Kunstverein with images and in impressing by this mere technical wonder. As the images, however, were moving extremely slowly and were taken from a reproduced aesthetical stock rather than adapted to the specific architecture, the musicians had some understandable difficulties in dealing with the images.

On the second evening, the public could discover the "freestyle" projects in which the artists had organized themselves, namely a "noise" project and a "silence" project. In the first project, Solu and Philipp Geist created together a noisy imagery with e.g. oscillator lines freeing themselves and developing into white noise, in collaboration with a finely structured improvised noise music, even if Tobias Kirstein and Ricardo Caballero (Mexico City, Mexico) would have preferred to be more powerfully noisy. In the end, it was all "silence": several monitors were placed on the floor of the dome with the screen upwards, showing the installation "Riverine Zones Connected" by Phillip Geist, and all musicians were improvising to these floating waters. Paul Hubweber (Germany) mastered his trombone in almost incredibly low tones as well as Anja Füsti (Germany) reduced her drums according to the extremely difficult acoustics of the cupola. The festival ended with an exquisite electronic beep by Masayuki Akamatsu and many ideas coming up for the next edition of the festival. One result of Solu and Philipp Geist doing visuals so fruitfully together was, for example, to invite more visual artists in order to give them the opportunity to leave the traditional format of one visual artist performing with a group of musicians and to experiment with different kinds of audiovisual combinations.

For more information on CAMP see
www.camp.festival.de

Text on CAMP '07 by Cornelia Lund and Holger Lund, directors of "fluctuating images" in Stuttgart, Germany, a non commercial media art space with a focus on audiovisual artwork (www.fluctuating-images.de).



Photos: Stefan Hartmaier