PLATOON

GLOBAL CREATIVE NETWORK

Q1/2015

VERMIBUS
RELEASING THE DEMONS IN FASHION ADVERTISING

ONYX ASHANTI
MUSIC FROM THE MATRIX

MATT LAMBERT
CAPTURING THE NEW REALITIES OF SEX

WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY

AN ARTISTIC EXAMINATION THAT GOES BEYOND CORPORATE COMMODITIES

WELCOME TO PLATOON MAGAZINE

by Christoph Frank & Tom Bueschemann

PLATOON Cultural Development was founded in the year 2000 as a communication organization envisioning a global creative network aiming to change the world. Since then, we have been thinking about publishing a magazine like the one you hold in your hands now.

As most commercial agencies fail to assist brands in using their large influence to fulfill cultural responsibility, our goal was to create a bridge between the two main players in the cultural field: artists/creatives and brands/institutions. We believe in the strength of cultural development to resist pure economic or power-driven objectives. But on the other hand, economic resources are often necessary to fully realize an artistic project. PLATOON COMMUNICATION provides this catalyzing partnership of artists and brands in various international projects and campaigns.

Over the course of the last 15 years, we have gathered more than 7500 members from over 50 countries in our PLATOON NETWORK who believe in this strategy. Working with them on artistic and commercial projects of different directions led us to create a space for these activities: PLATOON KUNSTHALLE. First opened in Seoul, Korea, in 2009 as our headquarters for Asia, it was quickly followed in 2012 by PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Berlin. The shipping container structures became the physical platforms and steel ambassadors for all of our activities.

Now, the PLATOON MAGAZINE is another physical platform to showcase the visionary energy of our network. While also published online on our redesigned website (www.platoon.org), the print issue will be distributed via the network to all populated continents.

Each quarterly edition not only highlights the creativity we see on a daily basis within our network, it also includes a theme – an artistic topic of global relevance. First on our agenda: wearable technology. We explore the topic in various texts, offering a general overview and opinions, as well as profiles of several of our members working in the field. Soon enough, we'll see wearable technology affect our everyday lives, and we're giving you a glimpse into how that might manifest.

Ultimately, this magazine is for inspiration – another step to reach our goals of cultural development. If, like us, you're interested in changing the world, then read on. We want to share the experience with a like-minded community. We hope that you will join us in doing so.

CHRISTOPH FRANK
FOUNDER
MEMBER #002

TOM BUESCHEMANN
FOUNDER
MEMBER #003

The PLATOON FLAG symbolizes the unity of the NETWORK. The colors stand for determination (blue), peace (white) and fellowship (green).

Photo: Patrick Voigt

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Photo: Minsoo Kang

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I COULD KILL YOU, BUT MY SHIRT NEEDS AN UPDATE FIRST.

POWER, FASHION AND OTHER PROMISES OF WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY

by Mario Gamper

The hype is officially on. Millions are being thrown around like candy in the latest articles of the business press. Between today and 2020, experts expect us to buy a whopping 500 million digitally empowered small devices – in addition to all the phones and tablets we are already buying. Mighty Intel have even created a new platform dedicated to wearables, a complete computer compressed to the size of an SD card. They call it Edison, a name that promises stories of era-shaping inventions.

It's always exciting to witness the coming of age of a new product category, not least because triumph and failure are seldom so closely joined. New products enter the stage with a feverish mix of insecurity and energy, a combination of promise and awkwardness. Wearables are no different. The fact that engineers have managed to squeeze all these sensors, CPUs and screens into tiny gadgets is mindblowingly fantastic. And yet, nobody I know wants to wear Google Glass.

Photo: Studio XO

Fashion Wearables – one of the various ways to combine tech and the body (Bubelle Dress by Studio XO).

But it's that energy and promise that make us want to explore wearables now. Not their current shortcomings. In the long run, we won't put up with smartwatches that need to be charged every day. But for the moment, we just might cut them some slack, because we want to find out what wearable technology could become for us. This is a big question.

A HIDDEN PROMISE

Wearable technology pushes humanity forward into an age where we might merge with machines. But it also connects us back to our very beginnings. Because wearable technology isn't a new cultural achievement – we just forgot about it for a while. When humanity was young, all tech was wearable. Flintstones, wire snares, wicker baskets – all those wearable tools gave early humans the extra powers that lifted them above the animal kingdom in the fight for food and survival. Unwearable tech, in comparison, is a much more recent invention. Its most extreme form, of course, is the factory. At the height of the industrial revolution, the technology that empowered humanity had taken on dimensions that no longer allowed it to be moved at all. Everything, including the humans, had to be brought to it.

Photo: Eva Ball

Early wearable tech significantly improved paleolithic conflict resolution skills.

> *"What we hope for is more than just a digital accessory. We want technological super-powers, unbound, accompanying us."*

The digital world is allowing us to change that. We may again take our most powerful tools with us. Thanks to Moore's law, these tools are becoming more and more powerful. And thanks to Koomey's law, they are becoming more and more energy efficient at the same time. As we move forward, wearable tech is therefore promising more and more transformative powers in smaller and smaller packages. Eventually, it will cease to be visible as a separate technology at all, like the incredibly powerful shirt mentioned in the shamelessly attention-grabbing headline of this article.

Maybe what causes the hype for wearables is more than just the desire for new sales. Maybe what we as a species hope for in wearable technology is more than just a digital accessory. We want technological super-powers, unbound, accompanying us, always ready to provide us with a competitive advantage – wherever, whenever. But how much of this promise are we going to get as a present next Christmas?

WEARABLES FOR CONSUMERS

If we look up "wearable computer" on Wikipedia we only find two subcategories, and neither one seems to even remotely focus on enabling us with superpowers. The first is "fitness trackers." Most of us have already met them in their basic version as digital step counter. Nike moved in early – a good move for a runner's brand – with the surprisingly well-designed Fuel Band, but retreated just as quickly when a million gadget producers followed. Currently leading the pack is Fitbit. But new offers and brands are popping every day. The main question is which brand can first define the sweet spot between perfect gift (Fitbit) and permanent use (no one yet).

The fitness tracker has two natural evolutionary children: sports telemetry and health trackers. As sensors become better and cheaper, athletes can move from just tracking steps to the finer points of fitness telemetry: heartbeats, sweating, skin temperature. Imagine a crew of Adidas geeks in a tent, monitoring a sensor-shirt-wearing football team as if it were a Formula 1 racer. Imagine a US football coach, seeing exactly how hard his quarterback was hit via readings from the player's helmet embedded with acceleration sensors.

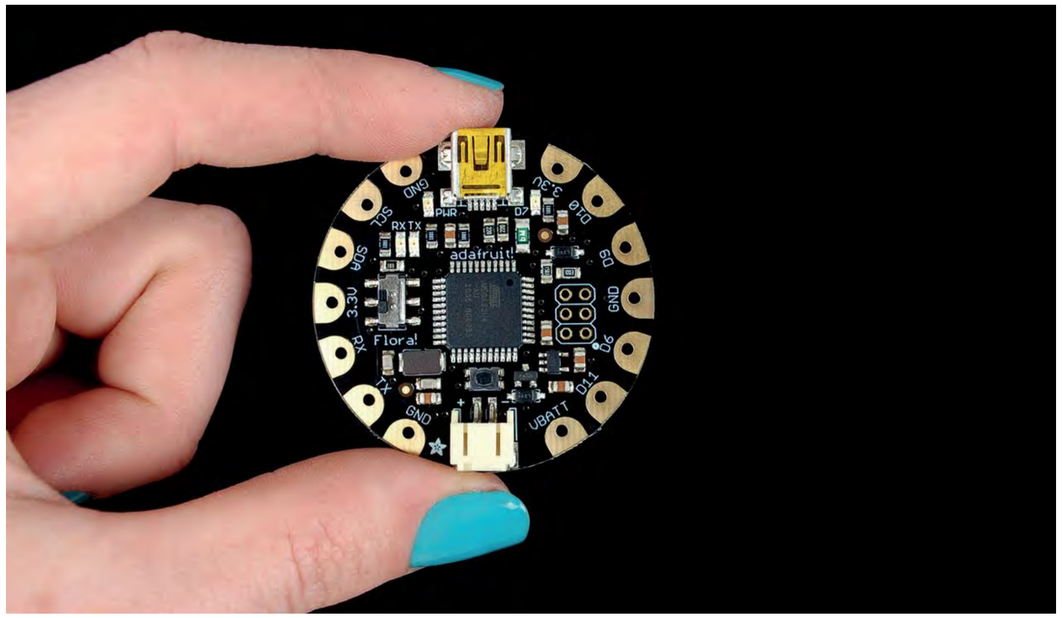


Photo: Adafruit Industries www.adafruit.com

Adafruit's Flora micro controller. The brains behind the LEDs.

In health, wearables like Scanadu combine new sensors and algorithms to continuously record various vital signs like blood pressure and pulse with just one small device. TempTraq looks like any cute little bandage, but it's actually a Bluetooth embedded thermometer that continuously records and transfers your temperature. Even babies no longer have to crawl and sleep without a wearable. At this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, the award winning Sproutling ankle bracelet monitors connected babies' sleeping patterns.

Amazing devices, most of them. But empowering? In what sense? Let's look at the second category of wearable computing devices, then: the Smartwatch. And yes, Apple is making one, too. But this time, they are clearly not the innovator. That title should go to the founders and supporters of the Pebble Watch, who raised more than 10 million US dollars in 2013 for what was then the most successful Kickstarter project ever. Pebble established the model that all others emulate: a simple digital watch that becomes a lot smarter when it's connected to a smartphone. Eager to finally best Apple, Samsung has already released three generations of their GalaxyGear smartwatch in less than a year. They have shown both the promise and problems of this category. While Samsung claims to have sold a couple of million pieces, they're still clunky, not easy to operate and run out of juice too quickly.

Wearablemania has an official kickoff day. Even if it's not announced yet.

On the other hand, they do hold some promises to show some useful information, just when we need it, without drawing and unlocking the phone. Will that make us more productive? Sure, a little. But is it really a tool? What radical new thing does it allow us to do?

It seems that the wearables aren't powerful enough just yet. We'll have to wait a generation or two before they will do truly astounding things. Let's suspend our search for instant superpowers for a while, then. Maybe we'll be all the wiser for it, as we could easily overlook an aspect of "wearing things" that is just as much part of human culture as technology: the need for expression through fashion and art.

FASHION AND ART OFFER ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

Members of the global PLATOON NETWORK of creatives have been using wearable technology for years to expand the opportunities for self-expression. Soomi Park (member #3692) combined mercury motion sensors and LEDs to create her *LED Eyelashes* in 2009. The lashes

blink and draw attention when the head is moved. It looks pretty, but is actually social commentary on Asian women's desire for bigger eyes. Rebecca Halls (member #6714), founder of the Hoopurbia dance festival, has integrated laser beams into a hula-hoop for one of her performances. That's right, friggin' laser beams. Austin Powers would be proud. Other members intently stretch our notions of what an instrument is and how you play it. Onyx Ashanti (member #6667) is combining 3D printing, motion and pressure sensors, wireless networks, music software and sampling into a unique set of wearable instruments and a form of music he calls beatjazz. Artists and radical thinkers like these – not big tech corporations – are the drivers behind the maker movement and the wearable fashion movement.

Take a company like Adafruit, who offers you all the electronics and tools necessary to LED-up your jeans jacket like a Christmas tree, or look at wearable fashion designers Studio XO, whose owners design experimental dresses for Lady Gaga. These successful companies have not sprung from business canvases and considerations of market size, but from the curiosity of explorers. As Nancy Tilbury and Ben Males of Studio XO will tell you, they couldn't work without their lab. Always tinkering and discovering new opportunities, be it fabrics with digital components, thermochromatic fabrics or new conductive materials. They are connecting sensors, lights and pneumatics to break the limits of what a dress can do. Some of their work for Lady Gaga is obviously a bit brash, like the flying "Volantis" dress (basically a quadcopter with a pop-singer attached to the bottom). Or the 3D printed "Anemone" dress, with various embedded bubble blowing mechanisms. But some of their work speaks of a future that we might want to live in, like the weightless "Bubelle" dress that both senses emotions of the wearer and then transforms them into a dance of colors across the various materials and shapes of the dress. Hi-tech couture pieces like Bubelle might be a bit too fragile to hit the shelves of H&M anytime soon, but if an LED-bling-jacket is your thing, pop by PLATOON members Trafo Pop's (member #6709) next workshop. They'll show you how to make one and wear it with pride.

POWER IS POLITICAL

Supporting the fun side of technology is one reason why PLATOON KUNSTHALLE supported and co-hosted Wear It, Berlin's first festival for wearable electronics and arts last fall. But with their ability to record their surroundings, to bring down the borders between the private and public space at any time, wearables are more than fun. PLATOON is also interested in exploring the body-political dimension that comes with custom-tailoring wearable electronics to your personal needs.

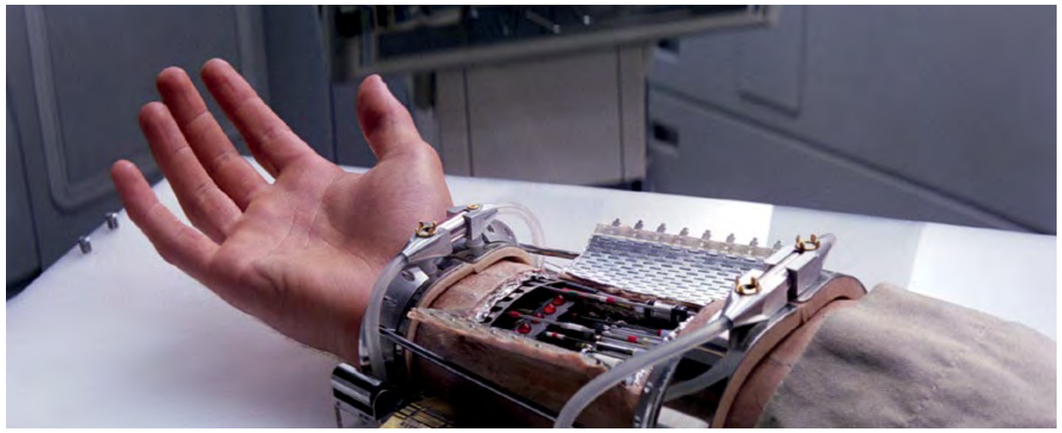
> *"It's important we don't just talk about features, but also examine the impact on our societies"*

Photo: Courtesy of S. Mann, originally published in *Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction*, The Interaction Design Foundation, 2012

Prof. Steve Mann, shown here with his EyeTap augmented vision and MindMesh controller, began working on wearables in the 1980's.

No one personifies this political dimension better than Steve Mann, the guy who actually invented wearing a full-fledged computer plus camera back in 1981. Originally motivated by using video cameras to improve the dynamic range of vision of welders – we'd call that augmented reality now – he went on to develop these portable systems which eventually turned into something he calls "The Eyetap," a more powerful and even more freakish looking cousin of Google Glass that sits directly over the eye and continuously adds layers of digital information to reality. When Mann started using his wearable camera in public, he soon found that it made owners of surveillance cameras very nervous. Mann coined the term 'sousveillance' for the subversive act of recording and documenting the fact of being recorded.

Today, sousveillance has become very easy, smartphones and portable hi-res cameras allow us to record and counter-record with very little effort. Smartphone videos now often shed new light on police practices. Mostly, the attention isn't appreciated. But the genie won't be squeezed back into the bottle. After the Ferguson shooting of unarmed Michael Brown, US President Barack Obama asked to allocate 75 million US dollars to equip policemen with bodycams to videotape their interactions with civilians. What makes this interesting is that the police officers themselves would not have access to those videos. We might call this preemptive self-sousveillance. And it was generally celebrated as a move to more transparency.



A still from *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*. Courtesy of 20th Century Fox and Lucasfilms

Being a cyborg could make you incredibly popular. Just ask Luke.

Officer bodycams offer a glimpse of the political questions wearables open up, with their close connection between people and technology: questions of data privacy, questions of security. Even questions of access to connected clothing are largely undiscussed and will create some interesting conversations for years to come. It's important that we don't just talk about technological features and opportunities, but also examine the impact on our societies, and explore options how to mediate some of the disruptive sides of wearable technologies.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESSES

The bodycam story also serves to illustrate another important aspect of wearables. For some wearable tech, the first significant adoption might not happen in the end-consumer market. It might lie in the B2B markets. The B2B and institutional markets are attractive for small series production of tech companies, because style requirements are low, and prices can be very high. Going back to the Taser Axon camera, which more and more of America's police officers will soon be wearing, this technological gem offers stunning 640x480 resolution for a refreshing 399 USD. Did someone say robbery?

Google Glass may be the most famous example of this trend. While the geeky contraption has disappeared from more and more Christmas wishlists, it is slowly growing a reputation in the workplace. The medical field is one where widespread adoption might catch on soon. Several US hospitals have begun equipping doctors with Glass. One of the benefits: patient information can be pulled and shared hands-free, thus reducing the need for repeated sanitization. Car repair is another field where Google Glass is being introduced, using optical recognition to overlay explanatory video manuals in real time, showing mechanics exactly what to do, without the need for a manual, leaving their hands free. This vastly increases the speed with which mechanics can train, or solve issues on rare models and configurations. Infrared goggles are already being used by firefighters and rescue workers to find people faster in situations with too much smoke or in darkness. While it's hard to imagine a firefighter screaming, "OK Glass!", into a wall of fire, it's not hard to see how the ecosystem of developers and technology could greatly improve many of their tasks – by providing indoor maps, for example, or superimposing markers on structurally relevant elements of the building.

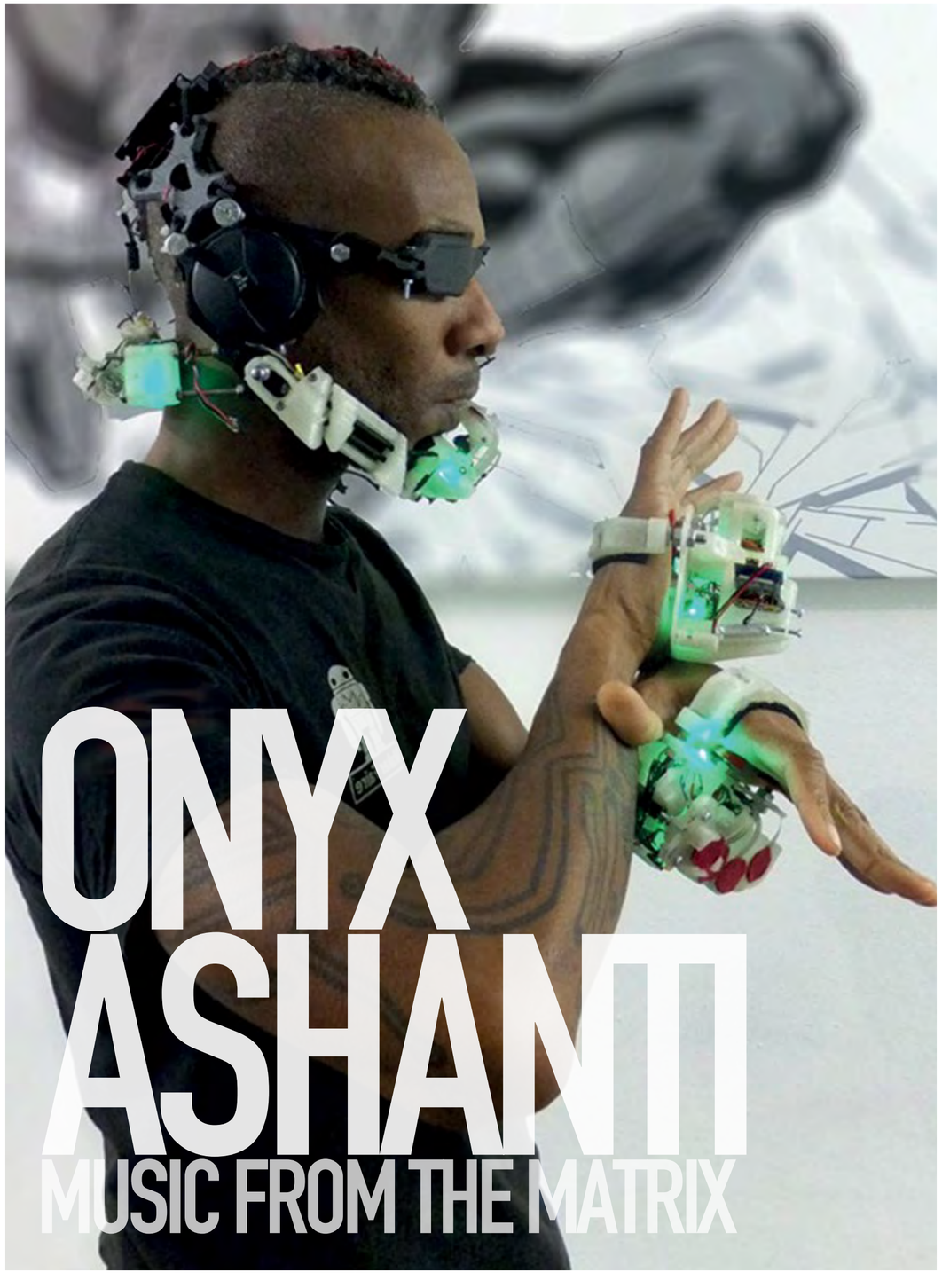
MARIO GAMPER
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
MEMBER #4040

Exploring wearables at work is probably one of the smarter undertakings for many companies. More than in the consumer electronics market, companies can expect to learn much from the interaction with makers and artists. Understanding how people react isn't so essential when we're talking about smartwatches. But when we move to a field like wearables for seniors, the sensitivity of artists might come in handy.

REDEFINING THE RELATION BETWEEN TECH AND HUMANITY

Wearables are coming. Whether they will become a major success in their current form, like smartwatches, remains to be seen. Whether it will be a 10 or 20 billion-dollar market by the time this decade is over, who knows. But the fact that digital miniaturization will create new devices that will both permanently accompany and change our lives is beyond doubt. Very soon, we will be so deeply comfortable with having technology on us, around us and maybe even within us that we can finally no longer pretend that technology is opposed to our nature. Technology will become part of our nature.

Until that happens, I'll play the waiting game. Plus I'll add some laser beams to my Mac.



ONYX ASHANTI

MUSIC FROM THE MATRIX

Going from playing saxophone in a small town marching band to creating his own instruments to be a one-man band, Onyx Ashanti has brought science fiction to life with 'beatjazz' – his term for his concoction of beat-driven, jazz and improvisation-informed experimental electronic music. Using self-built electronics – a system that he's constantly building upon – his first beatjazz controller was a three-way wireless network called the "exo-voice" worn on his hands and head, played not unlike a saxophone with a mouth unit, but with the freedom to move his hands in any direction. Incorporating gestural controls, color codes for different musical elements, CAD (computer aided design) and 3D printing, Ashanti's music is just as rewarding to listen to as it is to watch him perform or to investigate his methods for making it.

While one can easily place him in an afro-futurist lineage with the likes of Sun Ra, George Clinton or Lee 'Scratch' Perry, it's safe to say that Ashanti is one of a kind. Thrillingly inventive both as a DIY electronics builder and a musician, he credits modern technology and the open sourced, shared information of the internet in really allowing his work to flourish outside of the constraints of traditional instruments.

Photo: Midan Studio

Onyx Ashanti at TEDxLuanda, 2013.

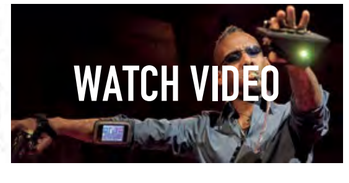
Photo: Onyx Ashanti

An overview selfie of the entire "exo-voice" system.

Photo: Oliver Ajkovic

Performing at REMAKE FESTIVAL at PLATOON KUSTHALLE Berlin.

ONYX ASHANTI
MAKER
MEMBER #6667



www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0v7MrJ8M4

TRAFO POP

All photos: Florian Eenningkamp

Trafo Pop light jackets have built-in LED screens controlled by microprocessors.

DIY ROAD WARRIORS

Trafo Pop on a night ride.

Part bike gang but all DIY-enthusiasm, Trafo Pop are a group of artists and designers – led by PLATOON member Thomas Gnahm – known for their homemade light jackets. With built-in LED screens controlled by microprocessors, their night rides, flashmobs and demonstrations are colorful affairs featuring wearables such as jackets whose LEDs react to sound and come with touch interfaces that control animation on the back. It's also an open community that encourages others with workshops that teach attendees how to make their own jacket or device that can then be worn at the next night ride.

Even as Trafo Pop work to make their wearables even more interactive, as with the sound reactive jackets, the ingenuity they've already exhibited is undeniable. What's perhaps more impressive is their spirit of community – pooling their talents for a common cause (of fun), emphasizing their good-natured biker gang image. In hosting regular workshops where they share their knowledge, they combine cooperation with an energizing punk attitude, and they also plan to expand the network to other cities. Trafo Pop feel like a countercultural resource for bicyles, lights, electronics and wearable technology.

THOMAS GNAHM
INITIATOR / DESIGNER
MEMBER # 6709

www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTGFSYXSmJA

Photo: Minsoo Kang

Soomi Park's LED Eyelashes

SOOMI PARK

TRUE EMOTIONAL FASHION

In the field of wearable technology, or wearable media, artist Soomi Park is a veteran who has been speculating on its possibilities since the mid-noughties. Perhaps best known for her *LED Eyelash* and *Digital Veil* projects — the former took small LED lights that flickered on or off according to the movement of the wearer's head, and attached them to false eyelashes; the latter placed an LCD panel in front of the wearer's face to offer alternative facial distortion — Park regularly questions beauty standards, especially those prevalent in her native Korea.

While social critique — specifically, the desire for big eyes as a beauty norm or the frequency of plastic surgery in the afore-mentioned examples — is an important part of her practice, the playfulness of the work makes it operate on multiple levels. Brimming with technological ingenuity, she's also revealing an alluring futurism with prototype products that could have come straight from the pages of a cyberpunk novel. As she nears completion of her PhD studies in Media Arts Technology, it's apparent that these innovations are merely the beginning. Her current projects include organic muscle movement for plants through technology, a sound project investigating the seemingly inaudible and "emotional earpieces." Park feels comfortable working in the hypothetical, which is an important characteristic for both art and science.

Photo: Minsoo Kang

Digital Veil

Photo: Hyoseok Kim

Swing Skirt

Photo: Soomi Park

Vixen™ Circadian Eyedrop

www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0jBile_1tE

All photos: THE CONSTITUTE

EYESECT

A GLIMPSE OF THE UNKNOWN

The EYESECT *cameras can face forward or backward (left) or detach (above).*

WATCH VIDEO ONLINE

vimeo.com/83792484

If you've ever wondered what it would be like if your eyes were on the sides of your head in an insect-like fashion instead of facing forward, *EYESECT* can provide the answer. The wearable, interactive installation – created in 2013 by THE CONSTITUTE team of Sebastian Piatza and Christian Zöllner – takes the form of a helmet-like device you place over your head. Detachable, hand-held camera 'eyes' provide the sensory input, which the wearer maps into a new spatial awareness otherwise impossible for human biology. Any outside observers will be unable to see the wearer's face in the amorphous, globular helmet, and instead will be looking at distorted reflections of themselves in the metal coating.

EYESECT is a strange invention that manages to change sensory perception for any user. While it might be disorienting, it's also entertaining, thought-provoking and futuristic – a rather successful combination. We may never know if it really gives us the perspective of an insect, but any kind of different perspective is useful for learning.

CHRISTIAN ZÖLLNER
INTERACTION DESIGNER
MEMBER #6572

SEBASTIAN PIATZA
PRODUCT DESIGNER
MEMBER #6574

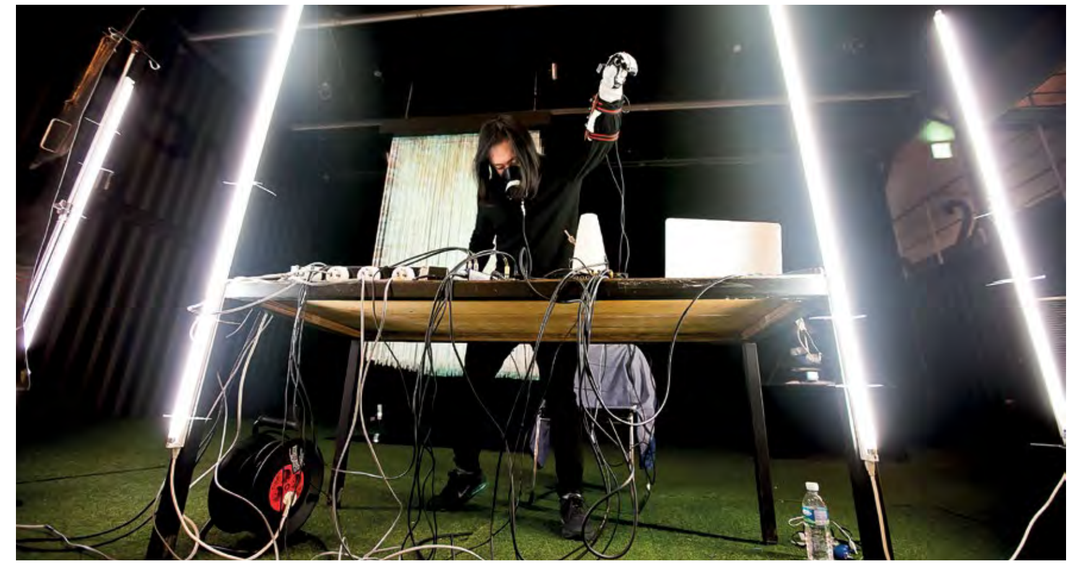
All photos: Tobias Kalleder

SUNGHYUN CHO

TO SERVE AND PROTECT

Calling Sunghyun Cho a multi-media artist is accurate, but it doesn't quite get across the breadth of his work. The Korean artist is probably best known for his performative installations, which go beyond the merely audiovisual to examine digital architecture and experimental sound. As a former student of architecture, media art and sound, the relationship between space and sound is a particular meeting point for his practice, although color and image are obviously important touchstones.

Of special interest in the realm of wearable technology is Cho's *Sound Guard*, which incorporates a glove, a Taekwondo martial arts armguard, a small universal board — making electronic modification simple — condenser microphones, sensors and circuits as an open-



Left and above: Sound Guard *in action with attached mask unit.*

source light and sound controller. It can capture sounds from the atmosphere or via direct contact and comes arrayed with LEDs, constantly changing via electronics, body movements, even the performance environment. Cho is also working on developing more controllers that connect to other body parts.

As an artist who overlaps so many disciplines, Cho's work represents the cross-platform nature of modern art while simultaneously representing the sensory overload an infant might feel first encountering his or her surroundings. Notions of communication and perception are newly explored in these ingenious integrations.

Sound Guard *gear*

Cho's Sound Lantern, *which needs sound to illuminate.*

SUNGHYUN CHO
MEDIA / SOUND ARTIST
MEMBER #6416

vimeo.com/88086455

Photo: Xavier Antoinet

Photo: Adrian Lausch

Left: Jenny's Playlist performing in Mika Satomi's interactive, polygonal structures. Above: DIY ArduIMU Data Gloves for Music.

THE FUTURE IS WEARABLE

It's easy to see how wearable technology will soon become a more important part of our day to day lives, and Wear It – the Berlin-based agency for wearable technology, fashion and eTextiles – will be ready when it happens. Bringing together designers, artists and engineers to work on prototypes and share ideas, they're also responsible for the Wear It festival, the first festival for wearable electronics and arts in Berlin.

Kicking off in the autumn of 2014, the Wear It festival crammed two days with speakers, workshops, parties, performances and an exhibition for an intense conference, split between Berlin's Betahaus and PLATOON KUNSTHALLE, in one of the most exciting fields in technology. Attendees were also treated to a Show & Tell event, introducing them to an array of fascinating prototypes.

For example, the team behind the DIY ArduIMU Data Gloves for Music includes pop star Imogen Heap; the musical gloves are both instrument and controller, designed to interface with performance software such as Ableton.
Jussi Mikkonen's team presented multiple items, including the MP3 hoodie – the hood's cords control functions for pause, play, next, previous and volume – and the NOTE-bag with its eTextile elements that can record and playback sounds and music.
Vincent Dugast and the team's Moon Hoodie has a hood with an illuminated interior, which varies in intensity and rhythm via fabric buttons.
René Bohne – author of the book *Making Things Wearable* – presented his LumiNet jacket, an organic illumination network using programming that spreads new code like a virus.
Jenny's Playlist are an electronic music duo who perform their music using the wearable, interactive, polygonal 3D structures handmade by Mika Satomi.
The HCI Group at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar developed interactive costumes of computational clothing for theater stages.

Photo: Dusana Baltic

The first prototype of the Moon Hoodie will go for a crowdfunding campagin in the beginning of 2015.

Photo: Gilmar Ribero © Chicks on Speed (2011)

Chicks On Speed's BipedShoe is also an instrument.

In addition to the display of new ideas made physical, Wear It also boasted an impressive group of speakers from academia, art, music, design and spaces in-between. Talks were given, including one by Kate Hartman – the Associate Professor of Wearable & Mobile Technology and Director of the Social Body Lab at Toronto's OCAD University – an artist and educator whose work has been exhibited internationally and is included in New York MOMA's permanent collection. The keynote speaker co-created sewable radio transceivers for clothing and has just published a book, *Make: Wearable Electronics*.
Alex Murray-Leslie is a PhD candidate at Sydney's University of Technology, but is perhaps better known as a member of "artformance" group Chicks On Speed and her focus on the BipedShoe project of foot-worn music instruments.

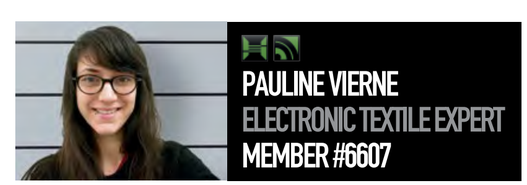
Photo: Courtesy of Aalto University

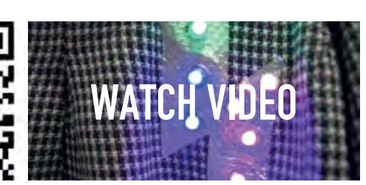
Record and playback with the NOTE-bag.

Becky Stewart – co-founder of Codasign and Anti-Alias Labs, arts technology education and practice groups – holds a PhD in acoustics and spatial audio and has put GPS into hand-cobbled leather shoes, and is currently working on turning the Brooklyn Bridge into a musical instrument.
Leslie Birch's projects include the Orbit Skirt, which shows the orbit of the International Space Station, a bracelet that allows astronauts and earthlings to share scents and other innovations. Katharina Bredies has worked extensively knitting with conductive yarns and textiles as a medium for electronics.
With such a strong program, it's fortunate that Wear It returns in 2015 and will continue annually. No doubt it will remain at the cutting edge of a rapidly evolving field.

Photo: Marko Schmidt, Jena

The Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) Group from Bauhaus University Weimar made interactive costumes for the staging of Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea. Above: Diving Suit, *2014*





www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNvW4dO_7IM

HUMAN MACHINE UTOPIA DYSTOPIA

by Saroj Giri

Illustrations by Anna Niedhart

WHO WORKS FOR WHOM UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF TECHNOLOGY?

What is the source of unfreedom today? It is 'freedom.' What is the source of dystopia? It is 'utopia.' This seeming and perhaps bland contradiction is nowhere more evident than in the realm of the human-machine relationship, as we are promised a brave new world of accelerating technological advancement. This fundamentally changes the way we experience reality itself, leaving a thin line between freedom and unfreedom, utopia and dystopia – a tussle between what *Forbes* calls "dystopian critics" and "utopian proponents."

We must, however, immediately dismiss those who see technology only as enslaving humans or undermining some 'true essence' of what it is to be a human. Nor do we intend to limit our critical understanding of technology at the level of problems, or fears of surveillance and issues of privacy and the security state. Such an approach often keeps things at the outer surface level and might not delve into the real issues at stake.

It is not about technological surveillance or digital tracking working on us from without, but something far more intrusive. It is about technology approaching the human, where the human-machine gap is getting redrawn. This is particularly clear with regard to artificial intelligence (AI), as *Eurasia Review* makes clear: "Technology is now going inside of us and we are going inside of technology, that's really what AI means – a piece of humanity going inside a machine."

So let us first admit that far from being one-sidedly enslaving of humans (technology enslaving humans from the 'outside'), we are looking at a holistic, internally connected, interactive world of humans and machine. Technology is not about stand-alone gadgets prompting us to their schemes, but fusing and musing with us.

Take wearable technology gadgets today. They sense the body and then respond: rather than stand-alone gadgets, they are more like "body-sensing networks" and "learning systems," as we hear about Synapse, a digitally-designed and 3D-printed interactive dress. Or the Muse, a brain-sensing headband which reads a person's mind and accordingly plays the appropriate music to make you feel better. Or the Fortis exoskeleton which "naturally moves" with the body and enhances your ability to do just what you want done.

Or take a 'gestural device': SixthSense is a wearable gestural interface that augments the physical world around us with digital information and lets us use natural hand gestures to interact with that information. You do not command it to do the task; it just does it, *as if it instantaneously senses your intention or your 'needs', as though it were your own arm or limb!*

In another instance, an entire city is planned where everything is connected with each other, where everything is smart, with sensors and radio signals. This is Songdo, outside Seoul. As the *New York Times* tells us, according to John Kim of Songdo project, it is not just humans but "the city itself will exemplify a digital way of life, what he calls 'U-life.'" So it is not just connecting with neighbors through video-conferencing but connecting with things, with your property: "wireless access to their digital content and property from anywhere in Songdo."

Now let us make no mistake; often lots of 'technological innovation' is typical TED-talk hyperbole, full of hubris and ultimately vacuous. And yet we do have technology today which contains a compulsive positive feedback loop. So it is possible that it is not technology which determines your needs, but your needs that produce the right kind of technology.

> *"Science as an extension of nature, technology as an extension of the body."*

Take this guy on Reddit who outlines his 'need': "I have three cats, one of which is overweight. To help her obtain a more healthy weight, I've calculated how much food each cat should have per day. Now I need a way to ensure each cat only eats from its own bowl. I thought it might be a cool project to try making RFID food bowls for my cats." So he got Arduino Uno and was able to design a technology for his needs! Similarly a question, "Want to have a coffee pot tweet when the coffee is ready?" The answer is Arduino. Arduino by all accounts is designed by artists for use by other artists and designers, and seems to do well without any TED bombast and corporate hijackers.

Of course, even corporates now tend to be 'creative.' A quote in *Forbes* tells us, "Successful wearable technology companies will start with the design first, then build the technology around it." In essence, they are literally growing clothes from microorganisms like cellulose, fungi and algae! It is like science as an extension of nature, technology as an extension of the body. Indeed, sometimes it might appear that we have reached the other end, where perhaps technology is enslaved by humans, as with the Japanese-designed smart-bin which slavishly picks up a thrown piece of paper, ball and beer can – in real time!

What we have in effect is an ubiquitous interactive environment, augmented reality, also called the Internet of Things. It is clearly not about having an environment cluttered with blinking gadgets that are out of sync with the environment. It is about a material/object world which responds and cooperates with humans, anticipates actions and makes them happen – an augmented reality bringing more freedom. The door opens 'seeing' you, so you do not have to open the lock with a key. You save time and energy, increasing overall efficiency: more freedom.

That is why it is seductive to believe in some technological utopia or "cybernetic communism" or such like. It is not just affecting our 'real lives' but also redefining our sense of freedom, the good life and indeed of utopia. It is thus deeper than surveillance of your activities and loss of privacy, it is also about defining the horizon of human imagination. In particular, it might end up presenting dystopia as the desirable utopia.

> *"The highly interactive, reflexive designer environment can be easily captured and enclosed for private profit."*

So while the easy account of humans increasingly becoming slaves of technology must be dismissed, we must however deal with a paradox which will show us that unfreedom is being produced out of this 'freedom' – a problem which involves surveillance and loss of privacy but goes deeper.

Let us note the paradox: the highly interactive, reflexive designer environment could retain the seamlessness, open-endedness and freedom, and yet *it can be easily captured and enclosed for private profit and the power of a minority*.

Take Facebook. Facebook is where users most freely interact and keep in touch with their friends and family, a highly personal and private space for many. A user builds his profile apparently for his own good, according to his personal tastes and preferences. Big Brother or Big Data might be surveilling all of this, but it is also true that *in that moment and to the best (or is it worst?) of your knowledge you express yourself freely*. There is freedom to express yourself, even though you are potentially under watch, and a dictatorial or democratic regime can possibly take offence and throw you behind bars.

But even before you get to the reality of surveillance, or apart from it, Facebook is routinely making profits on this highly personalized content and 'expression of freedom.' User-generated content produces huge profits for Facebook. *Some 1.35 billion active monthly users of Facebook qualify in many ways as 'unwaged labor.'* No wonder Facebook employs far less workers than, say, General Motors but earns a disproportionately high profit.

The paradox then comes down to this: the most horizontalist social interaction (among users) offers itself so elegantly to a centralized, verticalist appropriation and profit-making! How is that possible? Social interaction, dialogue and general social relations become moments of production of value. The realms of freedom, of interaction and a dialogical process between humans and between humans and machine, now become 'unwaged labor',

filling the pockets of rich corporations and ad agencies. Freedom here, through an uncanny twist, leads to unfreedom.

Hence the freedom-enhancing, interactive, non-imposing human-machine environment we discussed above must itself be problematized. The first thing we need to recognize is this: the more the machine is 'almost human,' interactive or intelligent or catering to your 'real needs' and freedom, and not imposing itself, the more closely does it (get to) interact with humans at the micro level of your day-to-day activity. This opens up the most private sites and moments of your daily activity, integrating them into the grid. These sites could also be brain waves or micro-organisms out of which they are literally growing clothes (as we noted above), or your 'true needs' that you will now seek a solution to. Your 'true self' will be out there.

So you have this smart-bin, connected to Facebook, turning the activity of managing garbage into a value-generating process. "People can review and share communications about the bin-related behavior of themselves and others." Just the human curiosity about each other's binning activities can mean more eyeballs converging — which can then be sold to ad agencies. Interaction between human and machine (between the bin and humans) here is definitely dialogical, and yet it is also part of a centralized process of value-generation and profit-maximization — and not just digital tracking and surveillance. This process would be multiplied tenfold in Songdo, where the entire city is supposed to be connected. So much for the Internet of Things!

This of course means that you could be 'in public' even while being in private, quietly carrying out your daily household chores. You would be contributing to value and profit-generation even when 'doing your own thing'. Leisure activity or your most creative moments of 'freedom' would derive their final rationale from being value- or profit-generating. Hence, work here goes out of the factory as all of society, basic human interaction and private moments, now become what is called the "social factory".

It is about distilling the value-producing public moments without disturbing your creative, private flow. The contingency of your true, spontaneous real life is now somehow amenable to the necessity of value production and profit-making. Capitalism is mediated through the determinations of 'freedom' and the apparent celebration of the heterogeneous and the diverse — as Slavoj Zizek often points out, critiquing those like Judith Butler or Gilles Deleuze, who tend to celebrate heterogeneity and multiplicity as anti-capitalist.

"The realms of freedom between humans, and humans and machine, now become unwaged labor, filling the pockets of the rich."

It is like capturing or distilling work out of the worker, production driven by "work without worker," as Jason Read puts it. The Amazon Mechanical Turk is a good example of this bifurcation of work from worker. Read points out that capitalism was always marked by the split between the 'labor power' (the capacity for work) and the worker, with the labor power being all that capital is interested in. However, now this logic is taken to another level, as capital is able to distill only the value-generating aspect from the 'freely lived' or 'spontaneous' life of the worker.

No wonder Steve Jobs could advise that you should do what you feel like: pursue your wild dreams. Do not work to fatten big corporations, pursue your own dreams — and they will fatten anyway! And here we can see how even 'offbeat' ideas like following your own dreams seem driven by the question of capital-labor relations or the class struggle.

Work without the encumbrance of the worker is paralleled by "food without food." You can directly consume proteins and carbohydrates and other necessary ingredients for the body, no need for food. Soylent is one such powdered 'food replacement' developed by Robert Rhinehart. Writes *Forbes*, "The thought of replacing meals with a powder evokes futuristic images, and naturally has led to its share of dystopian critics and utopian proponents."

The same logic is at work with the 'sharing economy' of Uber or Airbnb. The 'sharing economy' (another TED-type 'innovation') comes down to 'capital without capital.' All the (necessary) functions of capital, but no capital! Thus the 'sharing economy' or 'the common' is created in a way which is only really about value-generation and profit-making — one which excludes any collective based on a sense of the collective. Just recall how difficult it is for Uber taxi drivers to organize, as they are pushed away from appearing as workers but only as 'work' — almost fictional.

"This pairing of freedom and unfreedom turns out to be underwritten by total unfreedom elsewhere."

Interactive design, gestural interface (SixthSense), wherein you can open the door with the wave of your hand, really feels like doing away with the unnecessary encumbrance of say, lock and key (or of food and worker), which then allows you to focus on "what is essential" (say, that the door should open). That way, humans are freed of unnecessary drudgery or work, increasing free time. But then we have a situation where this free time and leisure (now mostly made simultaneously 'public', or value/profit generating) itself is being enclosed and drives towards value generation and profits for a minority.

There is a sleekness about it all: it is efficient as it distills out only what is necessary! Or take Foxconn's robots that can anticipate the kind of work to be done. These robots would be highly interactive and dialogical. This only means that the worker will, given the 'co-operation' of the robot, literally exist only as work. At best, humans would be shepherded into working at the pace dictated by the value/robot logic.

The interactive or dialogical part, then, is really about touching and connecting the points of value generation — be it work or Soylent food — and the rest, the workers or real food, are immaterial. It feels like an abstract, self-referential world of interactive technology and 'sharing economy,' one which is not aware of its own conditions of existence. Hence we have the problem of capitalist over-accumulation without any consideration for the environment or the condition of humans.

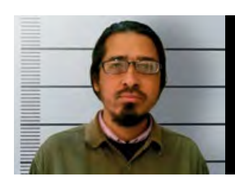
This self-referentiality or blind acceleration approaches what Frederic Jameson calls the "semi-autonomization of reality." This also means little sense of temporality, where we have come from and where we are going, as space, spatiality becomes everything, totalizing — the interactivity and positive feedback loop actually reinforces this ghettoization and semi-autonomization. This is what Henri Lefebvre meant when he stated that "with the advent of modernity, time has vanished from social space." Now it is only space, timelessness.

This self-referentiality is further accentuated when it forgets that the 'freedom' of the interactive environment is conditional upon pure unfreedom existing elsewhere in the global economy. The 'social factory' dominated by immaterial labor, knowledge economy and interactive technology can exist only since there is super-surplus extracted elsewhere through good old top-down factory production elsewhere in the global chain. Think of sweatshops in the Third World or ghettos in the First World. Hence the user-friendly, interactive designer Apple products are made in slave-like, 'non-interactive' conditions of Foxconn.

The social factory of creative human-machine relationship is funded through super-exploitation and 'primitive accumulation' of surplus elsewhere. This super-exploitation of millions of workers in sweatshops or click-farms or in mines and factories is invisibilized. It is like the last compartment in the train in *Snowpiercer* or the districts of *The Hunger Games*. Who can forget the little boy in the last scene of *Snowpiercer* who is now another lever in the engine, and who has to be *that small* to literally become a cog — another lever in the machine!

So you have freedom and capture at the same time, the dialogical and the hierarchical at the same time. Freedom and colonization at the same time. But this pairing of freedom and unfreedom, mostly in the advanced Western countries, turns out to be itself underwritten by total unfreedom elsewhere, mostly in Third World countries, but also in many sectors, those using immigrant labor, in the West.

As we know, the all-powerful engine in *Snowpiercer* with all its interactivity and smart dialogical features is nothing without the last compartment of poor workers who are the fuel and the energy, the "living form-giving fire" of Marx. It is another irony that even those in this compartment cannot survive if the engine stops! The engine must keep running, as the hero of the workers, Curtis (Chris Evans), discovers at the point of victory over the oppressors. If the engine stops, everyone dies. But the engine has something oppressive built in it — so what does one do?



SAROJ GIRI
PHILOSOPHER
MEMBER #6716

ANNA NIEDHART
ART DIRECTOR / ARTIST
MEMBER #0248

PLATOON COMMUNICATION

IRRITATE / POSE QUESTIONS / INSPIRE THOUGHTS

Over the last 15 years, PLATOON Cultural Development has worked with an array of international brands and institutions in various fields of communication. With the resources of our global creative network, we incorporate artistic and visionary ideas into such projects. Our goal? To always embed a cultural and artistic approach – to surprise, irritate, pose questions, conceive of new strategies, inspire thoughts and create engagement.

PLATOON COMMUNICATION manages brand identity through strategy development, positioning and creation of consumer campaigns on- and offline. We connect brands to leading, maybe even 'hard to reach' areas of culture, enabling engagement with open minds and participation in daring projects. With that in mind, this magazine also aims to inspire decision makers to leave their comfort zone and venture into something relevant.

Photo: Matej Ficko

For the 20th anniversary of the fashion label HUGO by HUGO BOSS, PLATOON created a global communication project involving 20 contemporary creatives. Steffen Seeger (member #6632) created the key visual (as seen above), and many of the other artists came directly from our network. The 360° campaign was rolled out on- and offline. The final exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in London attracted 150,000 visitors in four weeks.

Photo: Marc Brinkmeier

HUGO exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in London.

HUGO store window in Berlin.

For the tobacco brand Camel, PLATOON COMMUNICATION realized a series of innovative street art events. Several international artists from the PLATOON NETWORK took part in the URBAN VOID live-art project, focusing on creating art instead of merely exhibiting it. Alongside workshops and lectures, original paintings and installations were made on site at PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Seoul over the course of five days.

Photo: Tobias Kalleder

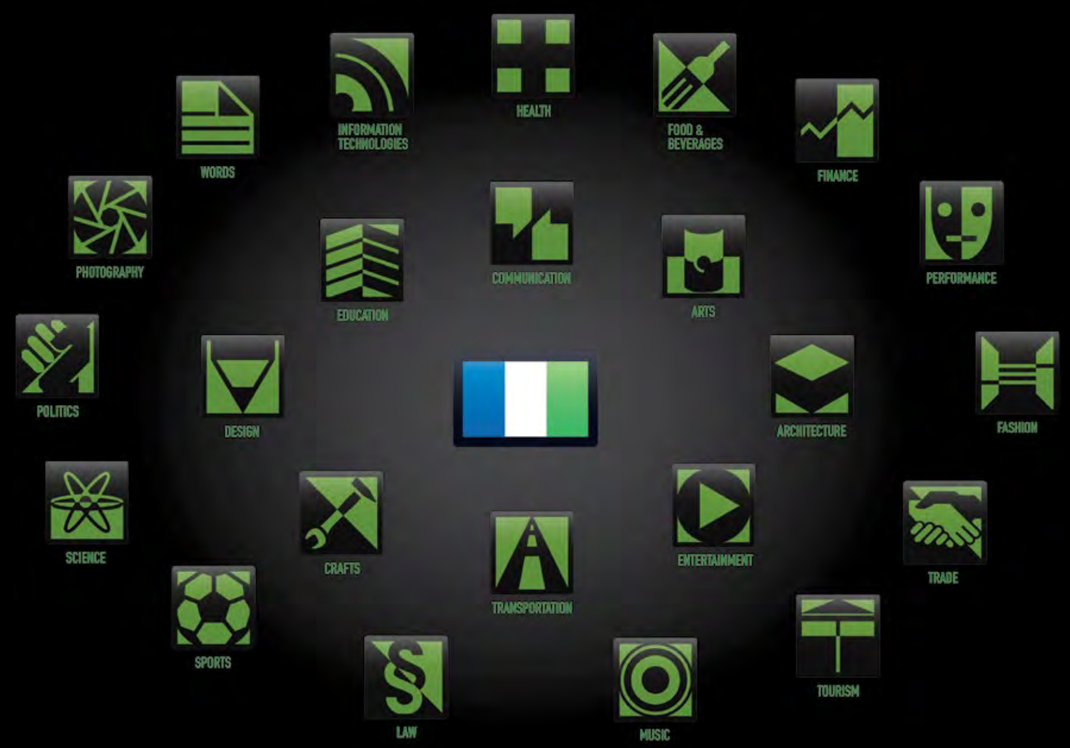
The German luxury leather goods brand MCM (Modern Creation München) called on PLATOON for the MCM SPACE Flagship Store opening in Myeong Dong, Seoul. The showcase/interior art exhibition concept of handbag gigantism was created in collaboration with the miniature set-artist Kim Yong-Gyu as PLATOON ARTIST LAB member.

The PLATOON INTELLIGENCE LAB is a research and think tank format developed for the needs of global brands. With the contribution of our global network we select the right specialist for their challenges. Pictured is a PIL session we conducted for Volkswagen on the topic of "Connectivity." Major trends were detected by insiders in Seoul and applied to product ideas by maker-culture creatives in Berlin.

In 2015, Germany's minimum wage law takes effect. Over the last eight years, PLATOON COMMUNICATION created the (finally) successful political campaign for the country's largest trade union, ver.di. The picture above shows one of many campaign tools – this one created by artist Victor Ash (member #1686) – in front of Berlin's parliament.

PLATOON NETWORK

WORLDWIDE SPECIAL FORCES



PLATOON MEMBERS are sorted into different categories, based on their professional skills. If you are not a member yet, but you want to actively engage, find out more at platoon.org/recruiting.

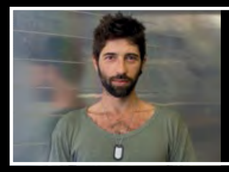
A platoon, per definition, is the smallest independently operating unit that can be deployed into action. However small, it only takes a passionate team of dedicated individuals to make ideas happen.

Our organization, PLATOON Cultural Development, has attracted open-minded individuals from many different fields of expertise to join forces with the mission of making a difference. Radical minds, visionary thinkers, artists and creative professionals have all applied in person to be a part of PLATOON NETWORK. Today, it's an international roster of more than 7500 members, hailing from over 53 countries. We always welcome the chance to meet more outstanding creatives. Recruitment gives you the opportunity to interact with other members in the PLATOON network, a platform where creatives can meet and work together, share insights and ideas, and present projects to a receptive community.

Within the recruitment process, new members are sorted into various "Special Forces," a set of 23 professional fields spanning architecture, art, design, performance, communication, science, education, politics, information technology and more. When different skills and personalities come together, they often provide unexpected results that may lay the ground for new cultural developments. The cultural seismograph of PLATOON scans the constant output of the network and presents it in its temporary container infrastructures, PLATOON KUNSTHALLE, which serve as hubs for the network and incubators for innovative ideas.

With our new PLATOON MAGAZINE – published quarterly and distributed on all continents by PLATOON´s ambassadors to a number of cultural spaces – we now offer an additional platform for our members, also designed as a reference for curators and others in the cultural sector. In the magazine, we present our members' finest, highlighting the breadth of their talents and the extent of their achievements.

In this first issue, we introduce you to projects like *SOUND OF LIGHT*, a synergy of colors and sound pulsing in a huge inflatable bubble, or *LICHTGRENZE*, a poetic statement and public artwork that pays tribute to the fall of the Berlin Wall. We also lure you into the world of demons created by artist VERMIBUS, who transforms beautiful models into transfigured monsters by stealing advertisements from billboards at night, only to replace them in broad daylight. Maybe you´d like to *STOP & THINK* a moment with G, reflecting upon philosophical issues. Or why not just get naked, literally and figuratively, with *DELIVERANCE* – pondering existential questions about what we really need not only to survive but actually to exist. You'll find all of these and more in this issue of PLATOON MAGAZINE.



MARCELLO DATO
CULTURAL DIRECTOR
MEMBER #693

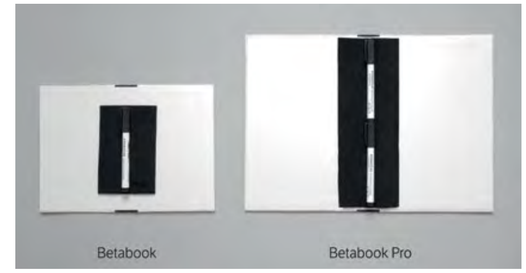
More than 7500 MEMBERS in more than 50 countries are part of the PLATOON NETWORK. Apply to be ambassador of the PLATOON network, organize cultural activities and help us distribute the magazine in your city. Find out more at platoon.org/magazine/about.

All photos: Courtesy of Betabook

BETABOOK

THE LAST NOTEBOOK YOU'LL EVER BUY

Betabook is a new, portable, reusable whiteboard tablet in the form of a book in which notes can be made with a marker pen and erased with a cloth. On one hand eschewing digitization while encouraging integration of sorts (suggested use includes taking photos of notes with your smartphone, and their promotional video wryly uses digital jargon to describe the product), it saves paper waste but still exists in the physical realm. It's both modern, but somehow old-fashioned, pragmatic yet – as you will read – conceptually driven. The brainchild of inventor Jay Cousins, in his partnership with experimental storytelling studio KS12 members Gabriel Shalom and Patrizia Kommerell has solidified into a Kickstarter campaign that, at time of writing, had already exceeded it's goal by 40 percent in only a quarter of its fundraising period. We had a brief chat with the three of them to find out more.

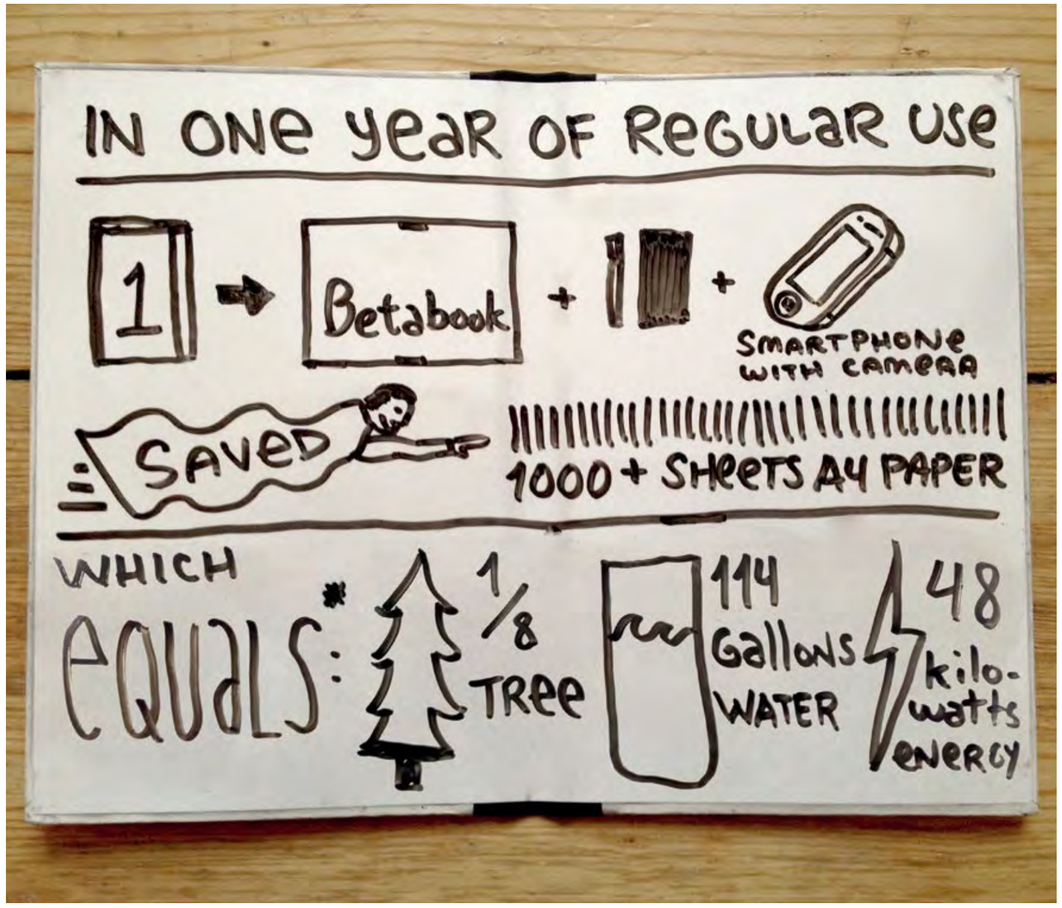


Betabook has an A4-sized (~ 8.3" x 11.7") writing surface.

Betabook Pro has an A3-sized (~ 11.7" x 16.5") writing surface.

Your last project was Orikaso [portable, foldable, polypropylene plates, bowls and cups], yes?
JAY: The last product-based project. I've done a lot of other things in between: co-founded Open Design City, Chaordinated Self Organized Events and helped catalyze maker communities in Egypt. But this is my first return to the world of product design.

How has this process of product design differed from Orikaso?
JAY: Orikaso was exclusively me designing in my bedroom, all done in secret, this has been far more collaborative; the first prototype was born in five minutes, but it took numerous iterations in the wild to reach a finished product. The first prototypes I just used publicly, and would make a new one based on feedback. Then, after KS12 got their hands on a prototype, they began to find new materials and make the product more professional.
GABRIEL: I watched Jay and Pati develop the product together through various material choices and mechanical builds.
JAY: The core difference for me is that the design process here was far more organic, more product birth and evolution than design, while Orikaso was very controlled and egoistic from a process perspective.
PATI: I was concerned with getting every aesthetic detail polished and functional. It was clear to us that there was an opportunity to create something timeless with the design.



"THE BETA ELEMENT IS A REFERENCE TO PROTOTYPING – THAT EVERYTHING SHOULD BE SEEN AS A PROTOTYPE, UNFINISHED." JAY COUSINS

How long was it between the initial prototype and the final prototype?
JAY: First product was born around March 12, 2012. By March 22nd, it had already got to its basic shape.
GABRIEL: Factory prototypes were received two weeks ago. So over two years of development. Slow design. We were busy with other things; Jay was in Egypt part of the time, and we took KS12 to Portland to participate in a startup incubator.
PATI: That said, the best designs take time; it's good to have time to get perspective AND to use the product and work with it in real situations.
GABRIEL: It looks simple, but the supply chain spans multiple countries!

You all met at Betahaus, is that why it's called Betabook?
GABRIEL: That's one half of the story – the other half has to do with something Jay said when we interviewed him for a video documentary we made in 2010 – also the first time we met: "Essentially, everything should be delivered in beta," which is also the name of the video.
JAY: The Beta element is a reference to prototyping – that everything should be seen as a prototype, unfinished. As in, this is an invitation to improve on the product and to change it to better suit your needs. It also represents the use of the book itself – that nothing you create inside the book is permanent. It is a space for flow and continuous change.

So, you had this thought about the importance of Beta in 2010, and then in 2012 you made the first version of the book?
JAY: Yep, although I'd been experimenting with different ideas in-between, this was the first prototype I produced since Orikaso that I felt the world could benefit from. But everything I built from that moment, from spaces to events, was always in perpetual Beta. The interview with Gabe helped to clarify my thoughts on this, also.

Your material for the project says, "Betabook embodies the spirit of Berlin." In a way, does your international trio also do that [Jay is British, Gabriel is American, Pati is German]?
JAY: There is the internationality, but I think how it really embodies the spirit of Berlin is the freedom to create and collaborate. Berlin is a space in which people can gather and easily share ideas. Betabook is a smaller portable space that you gather around, rather than in. But at a microcosmic scale the freedom is there.

THE BETABOOK TEAM: (from left to right) Patrizia Kommerell, Jay Cousins and Gabriel Shalom

WATCH VIDEO ONLINE

vimeo.com/107904835

JAY COUSINS
DESIGNER
MEMBER #5404

GABRIEL SHALOM
ART CONSULTANT
MEMBER #5406

All photos: Ralph Larmann

Lichtgrenze *was a 15 kilometer-long line of LED lamps and balloons that retraced the path of the Berlin Wall.*

DECONSTRUCTING THE WALL

The 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall was a momentous occasion observed by millions around Germany. Tasked with this high-profile commemoration, brothers Christopher and Marc Bauder created a poignant reminder both of the wall itself and its fall in the shape of a 15 kilometer-long line of 7000 LED lamps – which illuminated the white balloons that sat atop them – recreating its path in dividing a city. On November 9, 2014, hundreds of thousands of spectators lined the streets while the balloons were affixed with notes and wishes and released (by those who wrote the notes) into the night sky, extinguishing that barrier of light.

Berlin's Brandenburger Tor on November 9, 2014.

The large-scale installation, called *Lichtgrenze* or *Light Limit*, worked both as a sharp reminder and celebration, a simple attraction with immediate implications, taking place all over the city – an artistic and logistic success reported on by many major news organizations across the world. Requiring the direct participation of 8000 people, it was also something of a social sculpture, observing the past in a distinctly modern way as a powerful example of public art.

While "light artist" Christopher Bauder has had a number of major commissions before, especially in the commercial realm, *Lichtgrenze* was also a major step forward for the artist himself, seeing him touch a vast public with a simple idea. Proof of a national imagination captured? "Lichtgrenze" was declared Germany's 2014 word of the year.

The lamps were lit for two nights before the balloons were released.

CHRISTOPHER BAUDER
ARTIST / DESIGNER
MEMBER #3582

vimeo.com/110554287

STATE FESTIVAL

SCIENCE MEETS ART

Photo: Robert Felgentreu

Diana Wehmeier, Schall & Schnabel's PD 628 – space time *performance at the 2014 STATE Festival*

Celebrating science is generally agreed upon as a good way for societies to progress, but why should scientists get all the fun? That's the question prompting Berlin's STATE Festival, the brainchild of physicist Dr. Christian Rauch. Within the format of a multi-day festival incorporating screenings, exhibitions, performances, workshops, panels and real-life research, STATE brings together scientists and artists for an interdisciplinary approach to both examining the world in which we live and bringing new information to the public. With its inaugural event – based on the theme of "time" – in October, 2014, STATE continues annually with an expanded edition in 2015 and smaller satellite events throughout the year.

Further to its goals in permeating the boundaries between science and art, STATE also provides a platform for ongoing dialogue between all of its attendees. Dovetailing with today's stance towards access to information, this kind of philosophical openness is one of the surest ways to encourage the kind of wonder that will only result in more breakthroughs in either field.

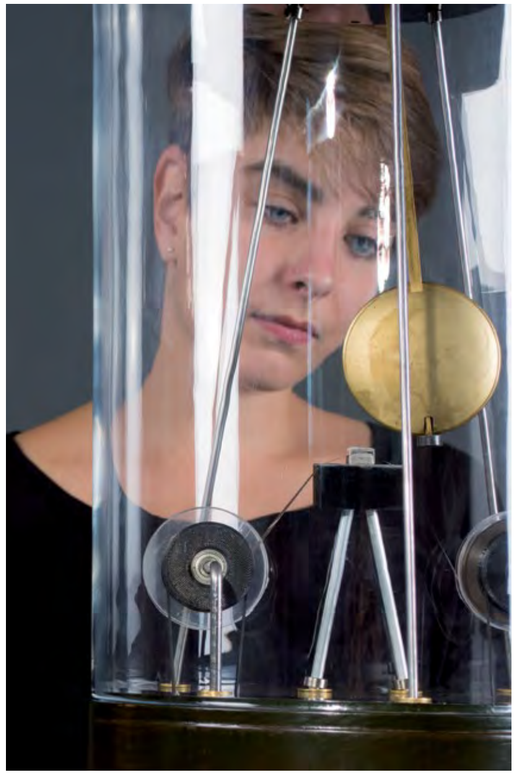


Photo: Valerian Blos

Valerian Blos's Farewell, Sweet Memories installation records collective memory, which the magnet pendulum starts to erase as soon as any audience leaves. Only continuous interaction prevents the memories from vanishing.

Photo: Robert Felgentreu

PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Berlin during STATE's films program.

Photo: schnellebunterbilder

In schnellebunterbilder's interactive installation Blink Of An Eye, tracking cameras interlink the user and light, creating an ever-changing image.

CHRISTIAN RAUCH
PHYSICIST
MEMBER #6561

vimeo.com/110024179

SEOUL SEARCHING

SUMMERTIME MADNESS

Left: The cast of Seoul Searching. *Above: On the set.*

For award-winning, Korean-American director Benson Lee, the teen movies of the eighties (think the John Hughes canon) hold a special place in his heart. But as much affection as they inspired, their abject stereotypes of Asian-American characters were something of a negative inspiration for his new film *Seoul Searching*, which debuts in the premiere section of the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. Based on his own experiences, the romantic teen comedy depicts a group of teens from the Korean diaspora as they gather together for a special, state-sanctioned summer camp in Seoul in 1986. Ostensibly, they're there to discover their Korean heritage, but as with any normal teenagers, they have their own, fun-seeking agendas. *With Seoul Searching*, Lee uses the accessible, light-hearted format of the teen rom-com to inject a little honesty into diversity. Not only capturing the voices of Korean teens from around the globe, it brings sorely missed depth to Asian characters on film. As the first Korean-American director accepted into Sundance's Dramatic Competition — in 1998, when his film *Miss Monday* received the Special Grand Jury prize — Lee is well-placed to bring a candid, but entertaining portrayal of the nuances of race and identity to light.

BENSON LEE
FILM DIRECTOR
MEMBER #4044

www.youtube.com/watch?v=AU0Ln2S-84

ENEMIES JOIN FOR FREEDOM

The word 'fan' as a shortened version of 'fanatic' seems nowhere more evident than in football, where fans are often referred to as 'hooligans' and violence between supporter groups occurs regularly. No different in Istanbul, where three clubs – Besiktas, Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray – are renowned for their rivalries turned hatred, and violent clashes have resulted in countless injuries and even deaths. Knowing this, when directors Olli Waldhauer and Farid Eslam saw pictures of the various club supporters banding together in the huge Gezi Park protests of summer 2013, they instantly realized the significance. Two days later, the pair were in Istanbul with cameras. With *Istanbul United* – a documentary produced by PLATOON member Tanja Georgieva and set for worldwide digital release in January, 2015, even as it continues its way around global film festivals – the viewer is taken into the heart of the protests that rocked a nation. We see the most intense of foes brought together, overcoming their differences to unite their strengths and defend peaceful protestors in the face of the brutality of the police for a cause even larger than football.

This page: Stills from Istanbul United. *Above: Fanblock Galatasaray*

A street at Taksim Square, Istanbul, summer 2013.

During the supercup between Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe in 2013.

Running from smoke bombs in Instanbul, summer 2013.

WATCH VIDEO ONLINE

www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTKSf1h0rWT

TANJA GEORGIEVA
FILM PRODUCER
MEMBER #1094

SALON REVOLUTIONÄR

LUMPENS, V.A.J.P., 2011

PERFORMATIVE INSURGENCY

Photo: Dario-J Lagana

StratoFyzika's 2014 performance of THÆTA, *the third part of their* Shadows *trilogy.*

At a time when Kinect Xbox hacks were enabling a new generation of interactive installations, performing artists — fascinated by these new technologies — began activating them in a completely new manner. Inspired by this new strand of creativity, PLATOON NETWORK invited several of its members to develop a new series of multimedia art performances, called Salon Revolutionär. It drew two disciplines together, performance and media arts. Previously, performers have often held the misconception that media artists are just the next prop and light designers. Instead, they are actually multimedia storytellers in their own right, also experimenting with new inventions to convey their message on multiple levels of understanding.

Initiated at PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Seoul in early 2011, this platform of an experimental, total art performance series was intended for the development of site-specific works, combining elements of interactive media arts, contemporary dance, electronic music, video mapping and RPG (Role Playing Games) into a single event. For the first editions in Seoul, PLATOON hosted a variety of collaborations ranging from LUMPENS's *V.A.J.P.* (Visual Art Jam Performance) — mixing his visual artwork with contemporary dance and DJing — to the infamous Rufxxx team, founded by a photographer who instead of taking photographs invited people to practice portraits in the form of performance art. The Salon quickly evolved into a mash-up, prototyping lab, and nowhere were the elements of RPG with modern dance and video mapping as evident as with the Pure Hybrid Group.

The format proved to be so inspiring that as soon as PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Berlin opened its doors in 2012, it was also introduced to the Berlin audience. The series opened with *"II aiKia II"* by StratoFyzika, an interactive projection-mapping performance adding a digital dimension to the real-world space of dancing, combining light projection and choreography with sound and motion tracking.

With an incredible resonance for the participants, Salon Revolutionär began to channel people into the new field of multimedia performance art and its whole new set of possibilities. The second edition of Berlin's Salon Revolutionär kicked off with the premiere of *GEBILDE*, a cutting-edge dance performance with never-seen-before interactive lasers designed by Felix Bonowski. By using a simple reflective material on their wrist, performers could draw with lasers in the air, wrapping themselves with a green laser wall covered in a thick foggy maze.

Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Tatsuru Arai's Vitruvian *at the UK premiere at Kinetica Art Fair in 2014.*

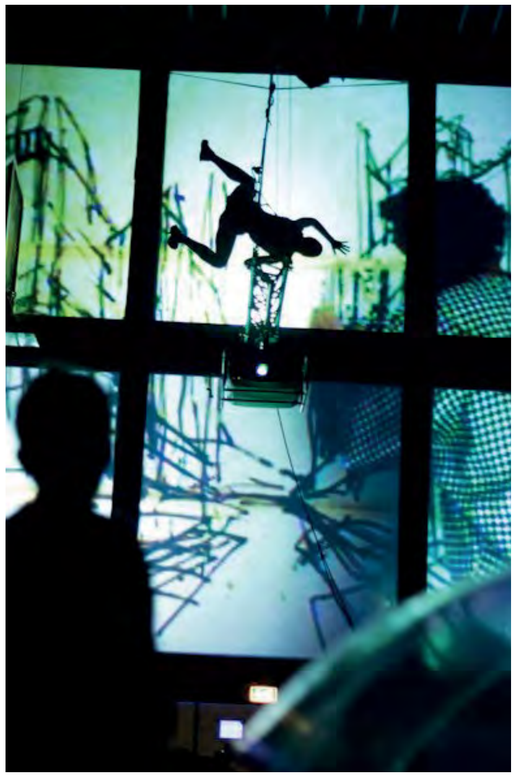


Photo: Matej Ficko

Daniel Daoudi's Melodie - Die Kunst des Anderen, *2013.*

Scaling the idea of the format up, several art collectives were invited to create two full theatrical performances. The first was directed by Daniel Daoudi from Lab Montage: *Melodie - die Kunst des Anderen*, a site-specific theatrical video performance with acrobats dancing on the ceiling, live tape artists, inflatable pneumatic drums and polaroid poets. The second, *Vitruvian*, was directed by talented Japanese media artist and composer Tatsuru Arai. This performance featured opera singers and dancers on sensor-connected iron plates, clashing classical elements with modern technology through the mapping and analysis of movements and vocals of the performers.

Salon Revolutionär Volume 4 presented a full-scale hybrid mix of classical theater, music, dance and multimedia art, with a cast of more then 25 people, directed by playwright Felix Shefer. *Eschaton* revolved around Tobias, Europe's top hacker, who was being controlled by a digital superpower tracking all of his online habits and secrets. Coincidentally, the play premiered just few weeks after the Edward Snowden revelations. It reflected the legitimate fears of privacy and autonomy, still a relevant concern today.

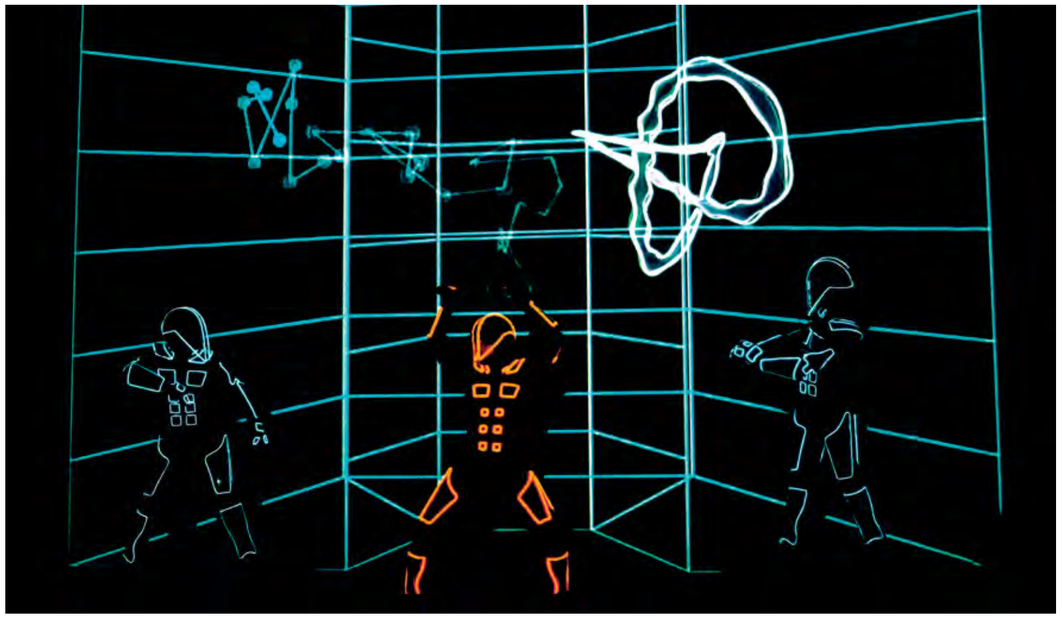


Photo: Oliver Rjkovic

Performance group Vospertron in Eschaton, *2013.*

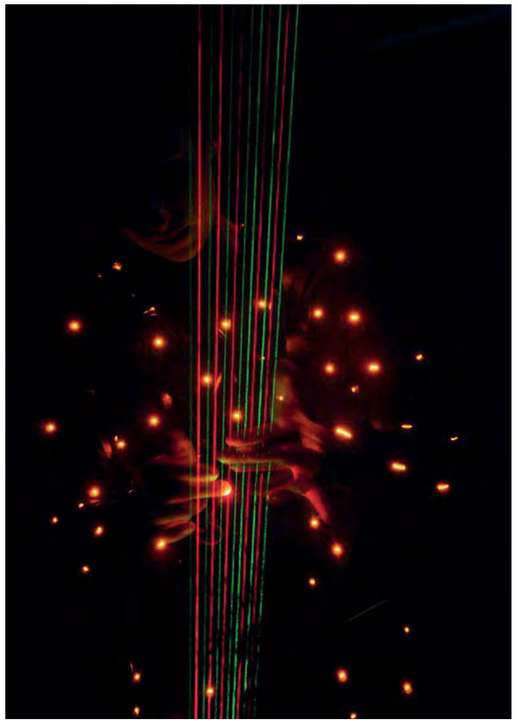


Photo: Heather Schmaedeke

Laser Harp *performed in* Eschaton, *2013.*

Featuring unique ensembles of visionaries, each Salon Revolutionär was an invigorating and revealing experience but most importantly, the connections made and relationships gained remain strong to this day. Over their course, the rise of multimedia performance art became clear, and it's fair to foresee its implementation in institutional or more traditional theaters. The latest developments within the field have also shown to be very inspiring. For instance, the international acclaim for *THÆTA*, the third part of StratoFyzika's *Shadows* trilogy, was a clear sign that the scene had gathered momentum. It enjoyed great success in Sao Paolo last autumn — a long way from the initial performance of the first installment (*II aiKia II*) at the Salon in Berlin.

However, innovation never rests. Now that even fields such as wearable technologies have captured the imagination of the general public, it is time to enter a new season of revolution, to break new boundaries. In the wake of holograms, hubots, brain interfaces and cognitive computing, we may find the right ingredients to kickstart a new Salon Revolutionär.

vimeo.com/69124498

Photo: Laura Colome

VERMIBUS

RELEASING THE DEMONS IN FASHION ADVERTISING

Photo: Andreu Diaz

Vermibus interventions in Berlin (left) and Barcelona (above).

Adbusters might be a name chosen by an organization and magazine, but it's since entered common vernacular as a term for the anti-consumerist subversion of the intrusive advertising that's impossible to avoid in daily life. This is the realm of Vermibus, the anonymous Berlin-based artist with multiple series of adbusting work involving the temporary removal of glossy posters for reworking with solvent. The once airbrushed figures of models become melted and ghoulish – as do the logos of the brands – and are then returned to their original locations on bus stops and billboards.

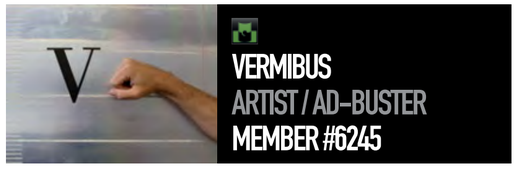
If we no longer see the sanitized perfection that lines public space due to its ubiquity, we've still internalized the imposed beauty standards. Vermibus's altered images stand out not only because of their deviation from the norm, they also reveal something honest both about ourselves and about the industry they mock. Ugliness exists, and it's the internal ugliness of greed and corporate desensitization, not physical ugliness, that is manifested in these altered images. As brands have become more important than people, it's up to artists and activists like Vermibus to ask us to take a better look at ourselves.

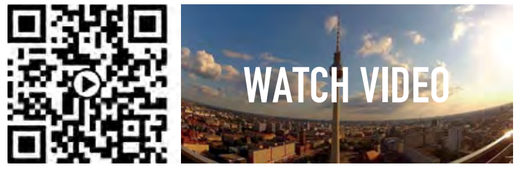
Photo: Jast

The artist at work.

Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Medusa, *2014*





vimeo.com/45735953

All photos: Courtesy of the artists

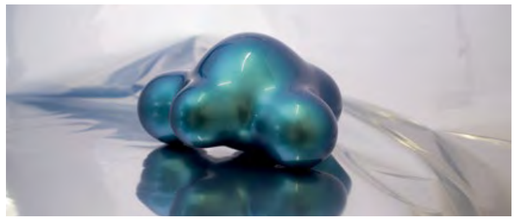
PUSSYKREW's Body Double, *3D printed sculpture; PLA, acrylic paint; 24 x 18 x 20 cm; 2014*

PUSSYKREW

Adding an extra dimension to the digital video work they've become known for, 3D printing was a natural progression for Polish duo Ewelina Aleksandrowicz and Andrzej Wojtas, aka Pussykrew. Their quick move to win the Artist of the Year Award at the 2014 3D Print Show London is an indication of how readily their 3D generated animation and video translated to a physical form. Their award-winning sculpture series *Materia* focused on the classical bust with CGI-inspired modifications, but the globular, distorted and distended shapes of *Metaballs* were equally compelling as images we're accustomed to seeing onscreen come to life.

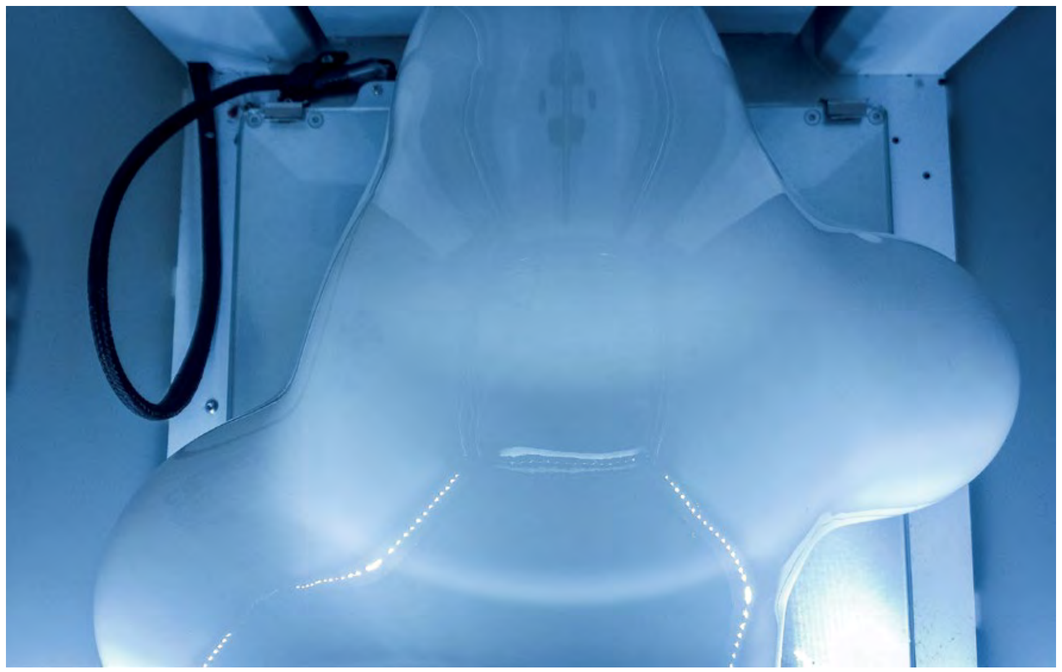
DREAMS MADE REAL

Interestingly, Pussykrew are now operating on multiple levels of creativity, from the punk, DIY background they came up through and still embrace, to the collaborative environment of the PLATOON ARTIST LAB in Berlin, to the white cube gallery spaces that have hosted their most recent work. It's probably not coincidence that this move to the gallery coincides with their investigations of the concept of "post-digital." Their 3D printed works are blurring the borders between the virtual and the physical in a new materialism, and the white walls of the gallery serve only to emphasize that confusion.



Spill *from the* Metaballs *series.*

Body Double *(also previous page) in production.*



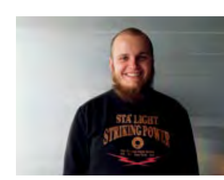
Metaballs *in production.*

Metaballs *on display at a 3D Printshow at the Carrousel du Louvre in Paris.*

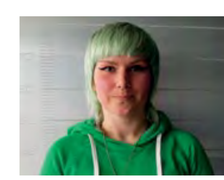
Collision *from the* Materia *series in a solo exhibition at the Gallery BWA Zielona Gora, Poland.*

WATCH VIDEO ONLINE

vimeo.com/61641182



ANDRZEJ WOJTAS
ARTIST
MEMBER #6019



EWELINA ALEKSANDROWICZ
ARTIST
MEMBER #6020

All photos: Lee Seok Min

Watermelon Samurai, *installed on a table in 2008.*

DO YOUNG JUN

In the anthropomorphized sculptures of Seoul-based, Korean artist Do Young Jun, objects come alive. But where his previous work focused on garbage transformed into animals, his current series personifies fruits, vegetables and nuts. The soil, clay and epoxy resins – sanded, casted, maybe with a bit of extra fiberglass or airbrushing – exhibit their own personalities and reflect micro-narratives: watermelon ninjas after battle, exhibitionist peapods, cruel monarch strawberries surveying their kingdom atop a cake. The craftsmanship and detail of his work lend his characters alertness and animation. While undeniably cute – reminiscent of anime, *kawaii* (the Japanese word meaning "lovable," or "cute") and a booming market of the toys most commonly collected by comics-loving adults – Jun has also revealed a political edge, citing GMO (genetically modified organism) awareness as a major concern. Additionally, he highlights violence and competition with his figurines; combined with their adorable appearance, it makes for darkly comical stuff.

FRUITARIAN SOCIETY

Watermeleon Samurai - Suicide, *2011*

Banana Shark, *2011*

Grapes Poodle, *2008*

PEA-Ka-boo, *2012*

DO YOUNG JUN
ARTIST
MEMBER #6706

FRIEDRICH LIECHTENSTEIN

SUPER GEIL

Photo: Esra Rotthoff

Photo: Courtesy of SN/Heavy Listening Records

Liechtenstein at Bad Gastein Waterfall.

If Gilbert & George are London's living sculptures, then Friedrich Liechtenstein is Berlin's ornamental hermit – once a fixture living in the office and showroom of an eyeglass company, now a celebrity nationwide following his viral YouTube commercial "Super Geil" for Edeka supermarkets. In it, the East German – part flaneur, part raconteur, part crooner, former puppeteer – whose real life appears suspiciously like a never-ending performance art piece, injected the quotidian with the absurd for a humorous, surrealist take on groceries.

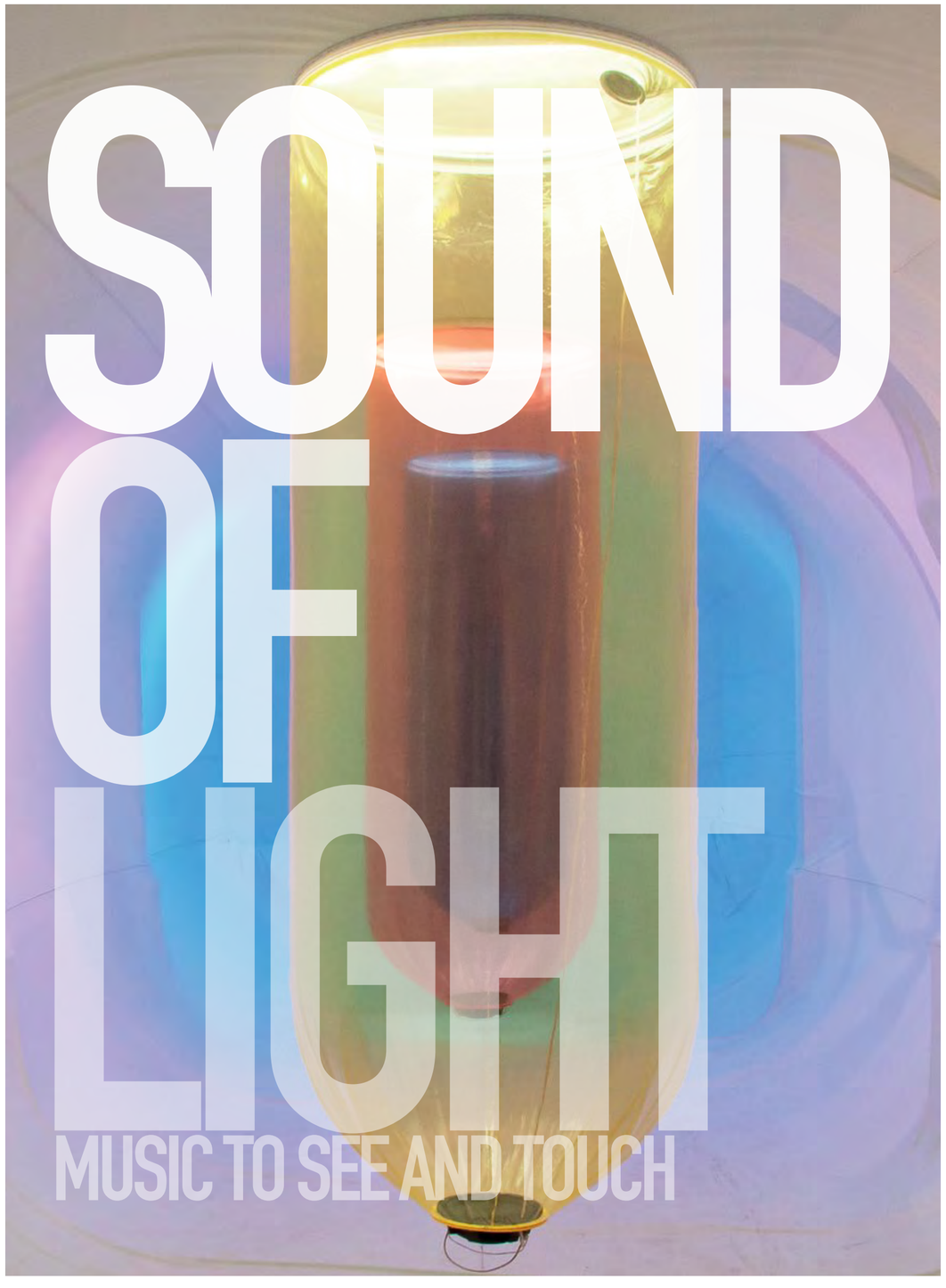
Following 12 million YouTube views with a well-received concept album about the town of Bad Gastein – a place whose glories lie firmly in a previous century – Liechtenstein now holds the distinguished position of Bad Gastein's artistic ambassador. Add to that his success in the publishing of his memoirs *Selfie Man* – coming from the man who is the ornament to many a fan's selfie taken after stopping Liechtenstein on the street – and one gets a sense of irony as artform. Where once he intermingled freely as the host at PLATOON BERLIN's members' night every Thursday, Donnerstag Bar, or performed at some of Berlin's most discriminating venues, such as his shows as RADIALSYSTEM, now Liechtenstein may be content to hide from his adoring fans in rather unusual circumstances: his own flat.

FRIEDRICH LIECHTENSTEIN
MUSICIAN / ENTERTAINER
MEMBER #6300

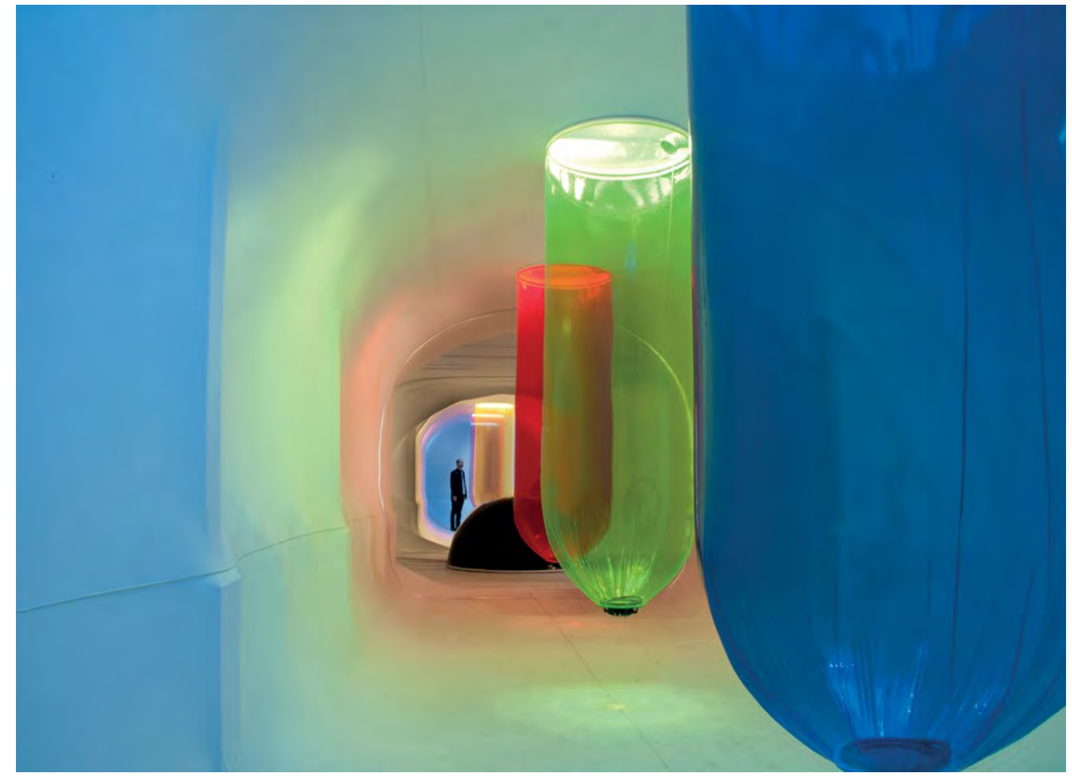
www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVkcgDNBG94

SOUND OF LIGHT

MUSIC TO SEE AND TOUCH



All photos: Marco Canevacci, Simone Serianga



Inside the Sound Of Light *installation at Hamm, Germany, in 2014.*

While the concept of synesthesia — or one sense perceived as another, such as audio manifesting as color — has gained a lot of popularity in recent years, it can be difficult for the general public to get a sense of. *Sound Of Light* — an installation by Marco Barotti and Plastique Fantastique created for last autumn's Urban Lights Ruhr project in Hamm, Germany — was one way to experience something akin to that unique audiovisual state.

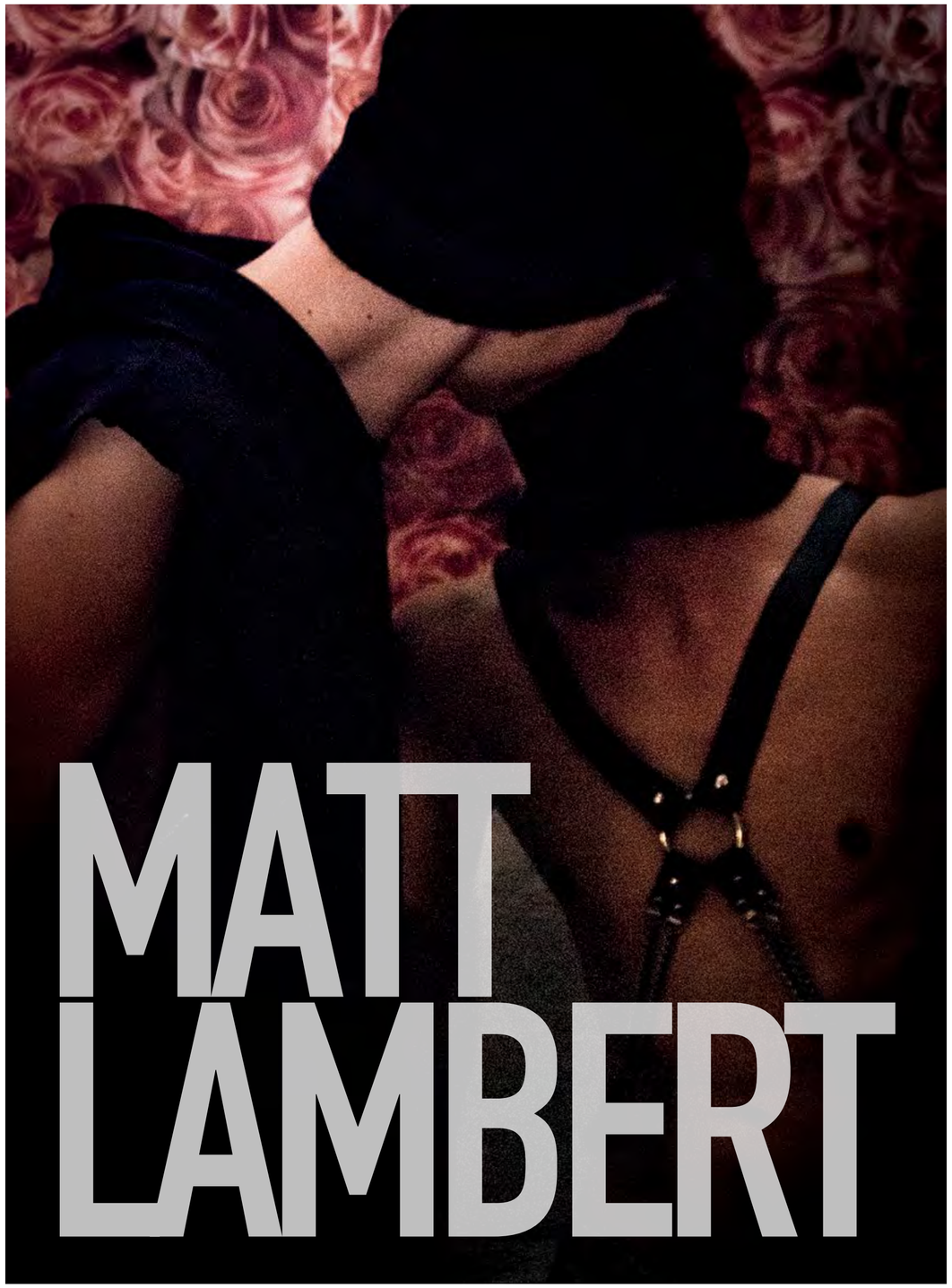
A camera filming the sky digitally broke the light down into the color spectrum, sending each signal to a corresponding hanging column fitted with a woofer. It was then transformed to a sound, essentially turning the columns into loudspeakers. Visitors also affected the space — a large pneumatic pavilion — making for individual concerts, particular to that time of day.

Sound Of Light incorporates sculpture, music and technology for a wholly innovative installation that playfully produces connected but discrete sensory awareness, amplified in the interior of the pavilion. The bright colors and plastic environment, redolent of toys, offer an accessibility that serves to make the science behind it even more intriguing — the kind of artwork that provides as much inspiration as it does entertainment.

MARCO CANEVACCI
ARCHITECT
MEMBER #3646

MARCO BAROTTI
MUSICIAN
MEMBER #7777

vimeo.com/112904750



MATT LAMBERT

All images: Courtesy of Matt Lambert

A still from his short film Heile Gänsje.

CAPTURING THE NEW REALITIES OF SEX

American photographer and filmmaker Matt Lambert is at the center of a cultural shift, devoted to exposing truths and opening minds, particularly in the field of sexuality and relationships. After cementing his reputation with commercial work, he has found his true calling, perhaps currently best represented by the series of short films he did for *Dazed Magazine*'s online portal as one of their "Visionaries." These unflinching, but sensitive portrayals allow the viewer to peer inside the vulnerabilities of sex and attraction — a difficult world to navigate at the best of times, much less as part of any alternative life narratives. The straightforward, non-sensationalized approach reveals the relatable humanity of his subjects. Judging by his next commission, with a major television network, it's safe to call his work a success. We caught up with him via email, between his endless producer meetings, to get the bigger picture.

Of the various activities you do, which part of your work speaks the most directly to your own interests, or represents you the best?
It's all a reflection of my life and interests. My short film work is what I love most, but it's also fueled by the brief encounters of quick and casual photoshoots/conversations with friends and acquaintances. A lot of this [short film] series started with intimate snapshots with my boyfriend (now husband) and friends at after-parties around Berlin.

I had come from such a formal place with the work I was doing in New York that I didn't put a lot of thought into it. There was a division between my commercial film work and my personal work. It finally got interesting when I erased those lines. The work started to become semi-autobiographical and therefore I naturally connected to it on a much more emotional level.

A still from his music video for Austra's "Habitat".

"IT BECOMES MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO DEMONIZE WHEN YOU HEAR SOMEONE'S STORY OR LOOK INTO THEIR EYES." MATT LAMBERT

My photo work began to inform my film work and became part of an ecosystem. For example, one of my ongoing photo projects has been shooting male escorts in Berlin. I've become friends with quite a few, and some became the focus of short docudrama film pieces. Others have made cameos in other longer form film projects.

Aesthetically, I came from a world of punk rock and my early imagery was primarily black and white and heavy-handed. There was a violence to these images. As I started to become more comfortable in my own skin and fall deeper in love with humanity, my images opened up and became softer, lighter, warmer and more sensual.

It seems like a lot of your work, especially the short films, deal with a specific topic and theme. Can you explain that for us?
The most recent stage of my filmmaking and visual art career has stemmed from a selfish curiosity to revisit, deconstruct and redefine my youth. However, as my exposure and niche audience has started to grow, I've started to frequently receive messages from people telling me how my work has helped them to define their own struggles with identity and sexuality. This open dialogue with those coming of age has me wanting to continue exploring themes of youth, love, sex, relationships and identity in hopes of continuing this change in people.

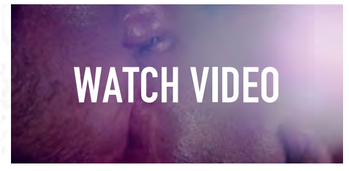
When people are reduced to stereotypes, it's so easy to minimize their experiences. However, it becomes much more difficult to demonize when you hear someone's story or look into their eyes. I aim to present my characters with an intimacy that precedes their sexual orientations. Acceptance and tolerance of LOVE as a concept and reducing the FEAR of the unknown can allow for the evolution of how people look at others.

As a filmmaker, what are your goals for any given work?
They are always changing. For now, my biggest hope is that the work resonates with young people (even if just a small percentage), and allows them to evolve the way they look at themselves and those around them. Love and tolerance are usually a vital subtext in recent work.

You're now in a position where people outside of your own community are noticing your work. How do you think that will change what you do?
It hasn't really changed what I do, but rather helps redefine what's seen as obscene as it starts to permeate the mainstream. A big hope would be that it opens up a few more minds and shifts the current cultural stance on sexuality and intimacy. So many people (especially in the United States) are afraid of their own inner-core and this inhibits so many others from existing how they naturally should.

It's been noted that you will have your television debut in 2015 on a major network. Can you tell us anything more about this project?
All I can say is that I'm developing, writing and directing a TV series for a major US network surrounding the themes of youth, love, sex and relationships taking place in multiple cities around the world.

A still from Heile Gänsje.



vimeo.com/100029029

MARC BRINKMEIER

All photos: Courtesy of the artist Marc Brinkmeier

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

If Berlin is famous for its urban decay, then the *Zuhause In Der Eisfabrik* (or *Home In The Ice Factory*) series by Berlin-based photographer Marc Brinkmeier exposes some of the complexity within that. It's true that his poignant images depict the derelict ruins of a former ice factory in the heart of the city, sitting directly on the river Spree. But it's his portraits of the Bulgarian refugees who have made such a place their home that are the most revealing. With no heating, no toilets, no electricity or running water, they exist alongside luxury apartments and quickly-rising real estate. Yet every single person portrayed exudes relatable normalcy, pride, some kind of joy and dignity.

Quietly political, Brinkmeier's photos catch a city in flux through a group of marginalized people. With a certain power over their image, the photographer renders them utterly human – instead of an 'other' to be feared or dismissed, they appear not unlike much of Berlin's underground community of artists, ravers and freaks. Fittingly, the Eisfabrik also had a second life as a club before it fell into its current disrepair. And as harsh an environment such a place can be, we can see via his eye that their community has lent it the character of any home – a place to ease their human spirit.

Bulgarian refugees have made a home the derelict building.

Inside the former ice factory.

Exterior view of the Eisfabrik.

A new life in Berlin.

MARC BRINKMEIER
PHOTOGRAPHER
MEMBER #331

vimeo.com/55536120

Photo: Bibh, Project Moonscircle

ROBOT KOCH
ROBOTS DON'T SLEEP

Robert Koch, better known as Robot Koch, has spent a long time perfecting his craft. The formerly Berlin-based German producer, now transplanted to Los Angeles, creates electronic music with both the delicacy of electronica and the punch of hip-hop. Coming up as one-third of Jahcoozi in the early 2000s, his move to solo work has included collaborations with and remixes for a number of well-known names, including Norah Jones, Tensnake and Bassnectar, among others. Most recently, Koch has found acclaim from a less likely source, winning the Deutscher Musikautorenpreis for Best Electronic Composer in 2014 from Germany's copyright agency GEMA. Following that with a move to Modeselektor's celebrated Monkeytown Records, Koch's new EP *Tsuki* will be out at the end of January, 2015. Perhaps revered British radio DJ John Peel said it best when he described Robot Koch as, "Wonderful and strange – pop music from the future." And while there's certainly a futuristic element to it – there are some timbres only electronics can create – there's very little robotic about it. Koch manages to find a natural balance of swing, melody and surprising warmth, enlisting a number of ethereal voices along the way for an otherworldly sound.

Photo: Kyle Kesterson

In action in Seattle in 2014.

Photo: Tonje Thilesen

In New York, 2014.

Photo: Sachin Soni

Following his set at Magnetic Fields Festival, Alsisar, Rajasthan, India in December 2013.

WATCH VIDEO ONLINE

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RNwAmJy8ns

ROBOT KOCH
MUSIC PRODUCER
MEMBER #3479

All photos: Timor Kodal, http://photo.kodal.de

DELIVERANCE

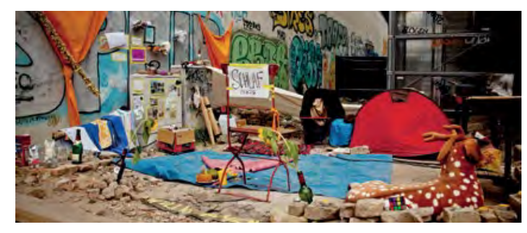
SURVIVE OR EXIST

"Who are you? How do you live?" These are the first questions in the artist statement for *Deliverance* – a live-art work by Kat Henry, Penny Harpham and William McBride – but the piece raises so many more. Last performed outside of PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Berlin in August, 2012 (its third iteration since 2011), the Australian artists remained stationed in a five by six meter square outdoor space for ten days starting with nothing – no clothing, no food, no shelter, no materials whatsoever. Relying solely on the public/audience to facilitate their existence, the trio subsisted on donations as and when they came in (which started quickly, thanks to social media and pre-performance announcements) – clothing, food, tent, sleeping bag, toothbrushes, everything – and engaged with all comers while resolutely refusing to explicitly define their provocation.

Deliveries of clothing started quickly outside of PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Berlin.

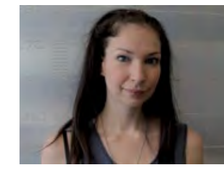
WATCH VIDEO ONLINE

www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9bVOZ0704



The public donated food, clothing, shelter and more.

WILLIAM MCBRIDE
PERFORMANCE ARTIST
MEMBER #6053



KAT HENRY
THEATRE ARTIST
MEMBER #6082

PENNY HARPHAM
ARTIST / PERFORMER
MEMBER #7781

Ultimately, the people who viewed the ongoing performance work – whether by visiting on-site, online via the live stream, or afterwards through the documentation – each had their own perception of what it was about or which world issue it represented. Financial crisis, homelessness, excess and ecological concerns are only a few of the equally valid interpretations. With a disarmingly simple concept, the artists have generated some seriously complex dialogue.

REBECCA HALLS

Photo: Bigum

Rebecca Halls and the laser hoop.

HOOPURBIA

Photo: Einar Snorri

Halls and her hoop skirt.

If you think the hula hoop is for children, Rebecca Halls will introduce you to a contemporary lifestyle choreography you didn't expect. The Canadian, Berlin-based performer, yoga instructor, professional hula hooper and trained contemporary dancer founded Hoopurbia in 2012, the world's first urban hula hooping event, which features a week of contemporary dance workshops, multi-disciplinary collaboration and dance competition. Rising from the Native American traditional, storytelling dance form, hoop dance has been adapted with a modern twist, especially with the introduction of Halls's laser hoop prototype (LED hoops were already in use), her collaboration with scientist Jo Grys. With the laser hoop, premiered at Hoopurbia 2014, Halls's hoop dance performance becomes an undulating, mesmerizing array of lights. Now preparing for their fourth annual festival in 2015, Hoopurbia has grown to become a unique dance, music and art event, repositioning hoop dance to the front of the modern dance landscape. With hoop dance gaining popularity across Europe — after already attracting followings in the US and Australia — a good deal of credit is down to Halls's energy, vision and commitment to the form. With innovations like the laser hoop and events like Hoopurbia, she is a one-person hoop dance evangelist.

REBECCA HALLS
CONTAMPORARY DANCER
MEMBER #6714

www.youtube.com/watch?v=URYY28-3g21

Photo: Mike Massaro

Secret Cinema's presentation of Lawrence Of Arabia *in 2010.*

TELL NO ONE

Calling London's Secret Cinema an immersive, live cinema event doesn't quite do it justice, judging from the scale of their most recent production around the 1985 box office smash *Back To The Future*. With an estimated 70,000 attendees over the course of a month, the secret remains squarely in the hands of the organizers, who give instructions on time, place and dress code, but not the film being screened, nor the scale of the event around it. Advised to the 1950s theme, participants (it's hardly fair to call them audience) wandered into London's Olympic Park to find a version of Hill Valley, the town in the film, complete with town hall, shops and café. They interacted with actors playing characters from the film and get into character themselves, guaranteeing that no two experiences were the same.

While their *Back To The Future* recreation was their largest yet – other productions have included *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Lawrence Of Arabia* (where real camels were involved), *Alien* screened in Berlin and more – Secret Cinema plan on taking their alternative cinema events around the globe with events in the USA planned, as well as Secret Music and Future Cinema offshoots. With their unusual strand, the organization – founded by Fabien Riggall – are putting the emphasis on realtime, in the moment, in the flesh happenings, even asking attendees to relinquish their phones for the duration, encouraging a different kind of role play for our increasingly digital lives.

Photo: Carlotta Cardana

Hired actors 'fight' as part of the production of The Shawshank Redemption *in 2012.*

Photo: Camilla Greenwell

The 2014 production of Back To The Future.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9mofpp_bdk

Photo: El Bocho

JIWOONG YOON

A PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

"Stop," and "think," are simple commands, but for Korean multimedia artist and polymath Jiwoong Yoon they are also a gateway to a greater sense of being. That's the aim behind his performance piece *Stop / Think*, which he first unveiled in Seoul in 2013 during the philosophy event of the same name. Inspired by the work of the event's participants, such as Slavoj Žižek and Alain Badiou, G (as Yoon is nicknamed) roamed the streets of the city's fashionable Gangam shopping district pushing a moving billboard with the directives printed large and clear. Engaging with anybody curious enough to speak with him, but also imploring the public at large, G was essentially asking people to pause their cycle of mindless consumerism and reflect on what could help enrich society as a whole.

Photo: Woo Juice

G's Stop / Think *public intervention in Berlin (left) and Seoul (above), 2013.*

Photo: Arunchit Sasivimolkul

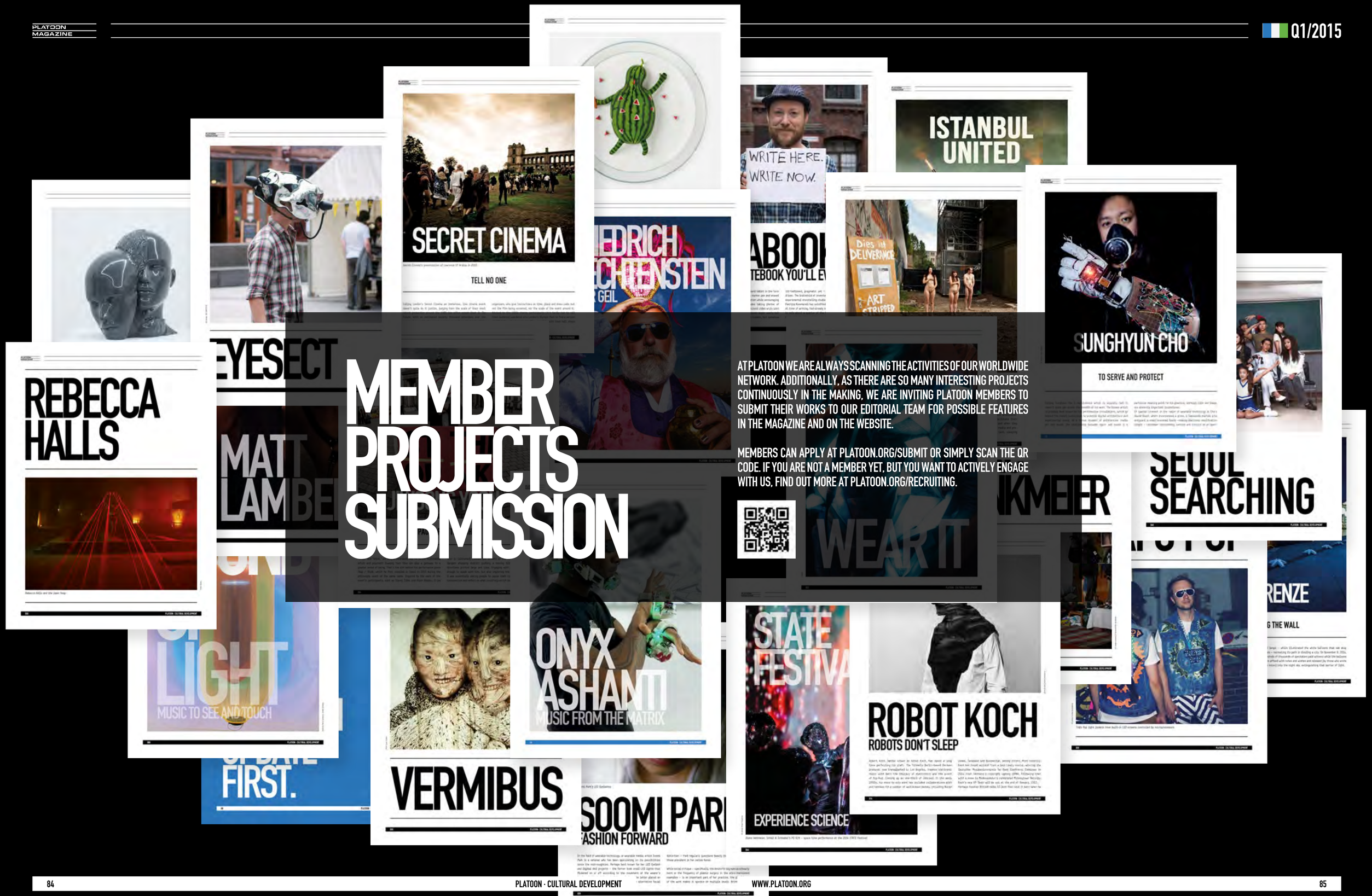
In residency at PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Seoul.

While many might not arrive at that particular train of thought on their own, it's easy to see how, especially in today's distracted times, a pause for thought of any kind could only be a positive step. Bringing the piece to Berlin later that year was a reminder of the universality of the lesson. Sometimes an artist with a placard is all it takes to start a dialogue.

Photo: Jr Choi

G's solo show at PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Seoul, 2014.

vimeo.com/79868872



MEMBER PROJECTS SUBMISSION

AT PLATOON WE ARE ALWAYS SCANNING THE ACTIVITIES OF OUR WORLDWIDE NETWORK. ADDITIONALLY, AS THERE ARE SO MANY INTERESTING PROJECTS CONTINUOUSLY IN THE MAKING, WE ARE INVITING PLATOON MEMBERS TO SUBMIT THEIR WORKS TO OUR EDITORIAL TEAM FOR POSSIBLE FEATURES IN THE MAGAZINE AND ON THE WEBSITE.

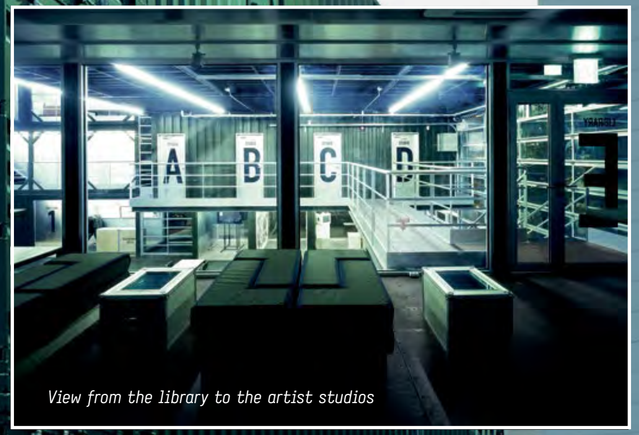
MEMBERS CAN APPLY AT PLATOON.ORG/SUBMIT OR SIMPLY SCAN THE QR CODE. IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER YET, BUT YOU WANT TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH US, FIND OUT MORE AT PLATOON.ORG/RECRUITING.

PLATOON KUNSTHALLE SEOUL

PLATOON KUNSTHALLE is designed as an experimental space for artists and creatives, and for the members of the PLATOON NETWORK. The program is curated by PLATOON Cultural Development and various invited curators. The venue hosts art projects, workshops and events in the realms of club culture, subcultural networks, global movements and more. It also presents a multitude of creative and artistic projects that clash with regular art institutions.
Subculture at PLATOON KUNSTHALLE is presented in different formats like exhibitions, movie nights, concerts and multimedia performances, workshops, discussion panels and special events. The ARTIST LAB scholarship programs give young upcoming artists the opportunity to develop their creative projects and be supported by the affiliated network.

The modular architecture consists of up to 34 standard freight containers. This award-winning architectural concept represents the global spirit of sharing cultural goods and flexibility as a moveable building. PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Seoul opened in 2009 followed by its Berlin counterpart in 2012. The KUNSTHALLE is an integral part of PLATOON DNA, and will be rolled out to other continents soon.


Rooftop bar area



View from the library to the artist studios


Main hall with bar and restaurant

Designpreis Deutschland 2011

dot design award

KOREAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Panel talk with 12 world-class philosophers including Slavoj Žižek, Alain Badiou and Wang Hui.

50th anniversary commemoration of the Franco-German friendship treaty with audiovisual performances.

Movie night on the rooftop.

Monthly night clothing market in collaboration with Bling Magazine.

24 hour filmmaking competition Bisque Rage.

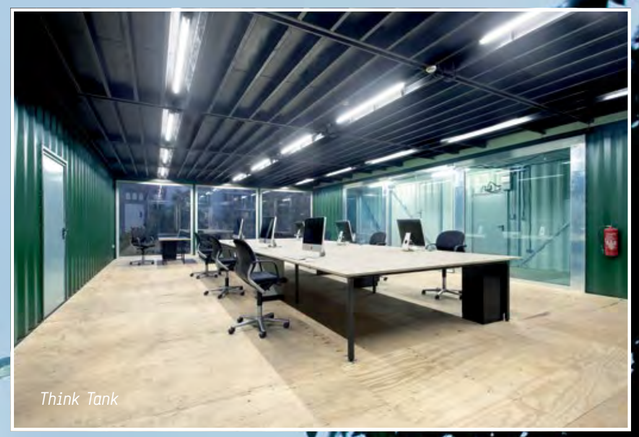
Workshops and art activities for enlivening the local Gangnam district.

Martin Leuze's photography exhibition, Berlin - Seoul, An Abstract Comparison.

Urban football with the Triple Squad Festival.

One of Miller Music Tour's live concerts and performances.

PLATOON KUNSTHALLE BERLIN


Think Tank

Main hall

Worklounge

Martin Leuze's photography exhibition, Berlin - Seoul, An Abstract Comparison.

Plugger's immersive multimedia show.

Opening of PLATOON KUNSTHALLE Berlin, 2012.

Korean Street Food Culture - POJANGMACHA

The TEDx conference.

Urban Collage by Converse on the façade of the KUNSTHALLE.

The main hall during the KUNSTHALLE opening event.

Photo: Marc Brinkmeier

Alt Berlin, one of Berlin's oldest bars, revived as a living social sculpture.

Photo: Mark Brinkmeier

The World Cup 2014 screening behind the KUNSTHALLE with a huge Jesus statue made by Bosso Fataka.

NEXT ISSUE Q2: TEMPORARY SPACES

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Photo: Camilla Mantovani

Aeropolis by Plastique Fantastique in Copenhagen, 2013.

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