

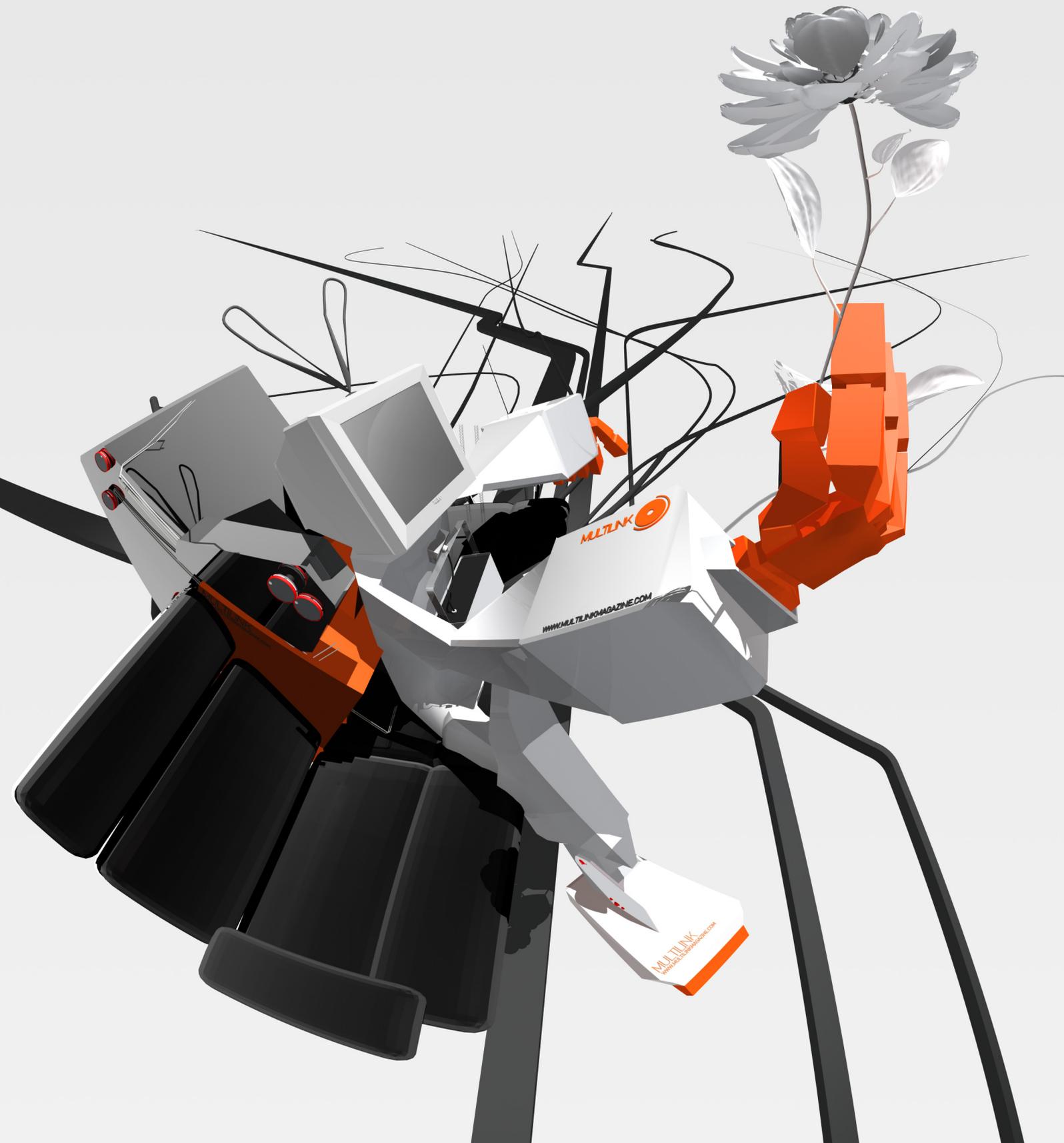


MAGAZINE

ART / DESIGN / MUSIC / FILM
Volume Two: Issue 1

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Happy new year. I hope 2006 is rolling well with everyone. We're back again with another issue thanks to our ever expanding team of contributors. We've decided it's about time we gave these guys their own page of credits so make sure you have a quick browse to catch a line or two on each of the heads that stepped up and delivered a feature this time around. Massive thanks to all those involved (including you for reading). I'm going to add a news/blog to the front page of the site as soon as I get the time and we'll do our best to keep it updated with enough interesting info and links to keep you entertained until the next issue drops (hopefully May). Peace.

Project Co-ordination: Rob Lynam & Steve Sawyer

Art Direction: Inmo Visual Consultancy www.inmo-design.com

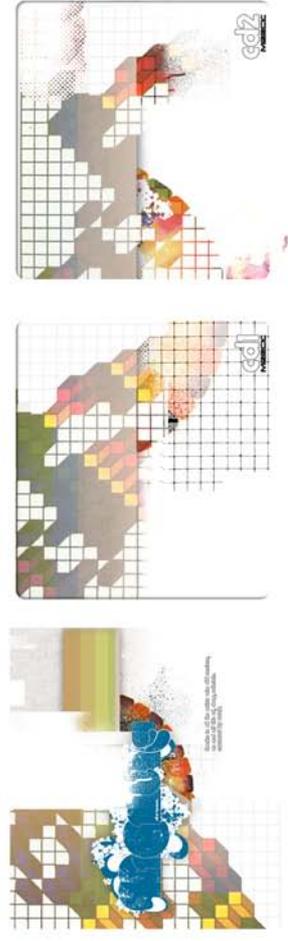
Inmo Design are available for design, photography, illustration, art direction and various types of project management. Send all enquires to: mail@inmo-design.com

Thanks for your time: 40 Winks // Gabe Koch & Travis Stuart // Sean Hatfield
NiKKi Keli Navaro // Faceworker Films // Lynsey Wood // Esa Ruoho // Lynsey Wood
Precursor // Miles & Natty @ Soundway Records // Fernando Cardenas
Patrick McCarthy



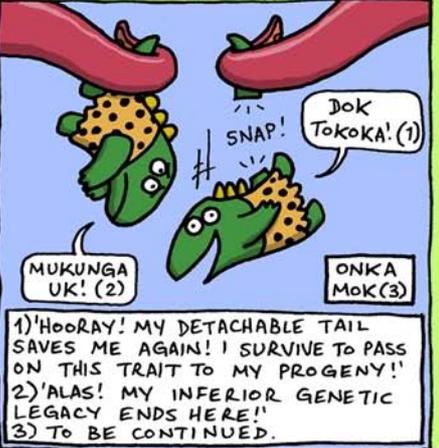
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the unfeasible adventures of beaver and steve



Will steve's tail ever grow back? Read the rest of this story and more for free at

www.beaverandsteve.com

CONTRIBUTORS

DAVON RAMOS is a film maker, record head and herbal connoisseur out of Los Angeles. He spends most of his time in lesbian bars playing billiards or working on various movie/music/writing projects in small dark rooms. He just finished producing/editing the DVD for 'The People Under the Stairs' forthcoming 'Stepfather' album and is in the MFA Film Program at the University of Southern California. get at him: www.myspace.com/slothangeles

JINPOW is a Fine artists living and working in Birmingham. His strange blobby architectural vjstas are hidden within the city's grey dying heart. More of his work can be seen at www.jinpow.co.uk

SIMPSON helps run Zebra Traffic Records (www.zebratrafic.co.uk) and presents a weekly hip hop radio show called 'The Dugout' on Brighton's Juice 107.2FM which you can check out online each week at www.totallyradio.com He's also a founding member of the Clever Looking organisation (www.cleverlooking.org) and is available for comments/harassment at www.myspace.com/tommysimpson.

JAMES WYETT somehow finds the time to write articles for us, build the odd website and remain a man of impeccable decency whilst working in the potentially dangerous environment of an all girls 6th form college. A master of both time and moral management indeed.

HANS DE BOCK is a welcome addition. Previously writing for various publications including the now sadly deceased, Belgium based 'Plastiks' magazine. We're hoping to receive some more stuff from him in the future.

HUGO MENDEZ is an eclectic DJ and all round friendly face. Having spent the last year or so managing logistics at Soundway he continues to do so while recently adding a similar position at Jazzman records to his schedule.

ERIK SKODVIN records solo music as 'xhale' and collaborates with Otto Totland as 'Deaf Center'. Their recent album - Pale Ravine was without doubt one of our favourite releases of 2005. He also does design work for various clients including Merck and Narita records. Check issue #1 for a brief interview on his many projects including the label 'Miasmah'.

SAM BARKER is studying digital music at Brighton University which is a bit of a farse as he should really be teaching it. Dropping by his flat/synth museum, you'll usually find him scratching his chin and staring into an ibook, a process that usually results in tracks recorded under his 'Voltek' alias. He also organises 'Instrumentality' (www.instrumentality.info) a weekly shindig of electronic sounds where you can often catch one of his own live performances alongside the many guest acts. You can contact Sam via www.myspace.com/voltek

MIKE HIRST hails from Swindon in the UK, Mike Hirst's time is divided between his day job, skateboarding with the Rolling Like Kingz crew and unleashing his unique observations.

AKITOSHI MIZUTANI is a Berlin based motion graphics designer. When he is not providing us with stunning cover illustrations, he works on a variety of projects from tour visuals for Arovane to producing his own DVD project, you can see more of his work at www.a-60.net

DAN GIBBS when not devoting time to nurturing his bamboo garden, he turns his green fingers to a producing wonderful organic creations of the digital persuasion. You can contact him at d.gibbs@dangibbs.co.uk or check out his reptilian wonderland www.lurbworld.co.uk

ROSS BREADMORE is an award winning designer and writer who has worked for subba-cultcha.com and Juice magazine. He studied illustration and lives in Hove.

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40 WINKS

INTERVIEW BY SIMPSON



It being a slow, rainy Thursday December morning in Brighton town, I had just drained my third cup of tea and was preparing to go record my weekly 'Dugout' radio show. Scrabbling about my front room/kitchen/studio collecting up that weeks new musical gems to drop on the show...new Jehst LP – check, new Dirty Diggers' Alice Russell Remix – check, Marc Moulin's Balek (the 'Funk Classic') – check, most recently received MP3s burnt on to a disc – check...now where's that classic Kool G Rap 12"...bugger, it was right here a minute ago...wait, what's this? A small brown padded A5 envelope muscling its way to the top of a random pile of vinyl/bills/press releases and now staring me direct in the boat-race. Now although I was in a rush, I'm a curious kind of guy y'see, and to be blatantly honest, I just like getting stuff through the post that ain't from British Telecom, Seeboard or those nice chaps at the bank. Tearing open the mystery envelope, I was greeted by two cds in blank paper sleeves and a business card. One mix cd and one CDR with a load of tracks on it, from an artist/group/collective known as 40 Winks. Save the card, which had the contact details of a Japanese record label: Escapism, there were no further particulars. No press release, no reaction sheet, no promo company details, nothing. Now I know this isn't that unusual, but taking the trouble to send someone a mix cd and an EP with no details is just a little puzzling...anyway, popping the first (mix) cd into the player and hitting play, I was pretty much immediately taken with its contents.

What followed was a bloody brilliant 30 minute mix of instrumental hip hop, jazz, soul-oddities, skits and generally, laid back beats, along with a fair amount of real nice vocal samples from what sounded like a clutch of old sci-fi b-movies, infusing the mix with a kind of real nice story-like narrative. The tracks weren't all necessarily mixed into each other in a traditional DJ sense, but there seemed to be a common thread holding the whole thing together, a kind of musical understanding, that to me, felt unmistakably not English. None of tracks on the mix were familiar to me. Some felt old, and some new, most were instrumental, with a couple of vocal hip-hop cuts, but all blended (and this is the perfect word) together seamlessly.

Eagerly checking the second CD, it contained a handful of the tracks from the mix and more. 12 tracks in fact. Relaxed instrumental pieces with a real hip-hop ethic, nice drums, well chosen samples, excellent arrangements, tight cuts and carefully selected, but enjoyably random vocal interview style samples (check the 'h-h-hold on a second...you're a...a...are you a gypsy?' sample on 'wishing upon a beat'). There's a real jazz strain running through 40 Winks work...Melodic piano nestles next to warm basslines, flutes and harps and lovely vocal touches, tied together like a little jazz parcel with crisp drums. If I was to try and compare 40 Winks music to some of their contemporary beat makers, I guess they could go toe to toe with some of TM Juke's early output, or could even, at a stretch, be compared (albeit favourably) with some DJ Krush material (with a more straight up European edge).

Anyway, a couple of weeks later, after playing the tracks regularly on the show and also the mix, I googled these guys, found their website and dropped them a little email. Getting a swift and positive response, it turned out that these jazz cats were from none other than Antwerp, in boogie down Belgium...(told you they weren't English!). Antwerp eh?! Not exactly a well-known hotbed of hip hop culture...not exactly a hotbed for any musical export as far as I know (although I am prepared to be wrong). Anyway, we got chatting and this is what transpired...

BONJOUR (!) CAN YOU LET US KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELVES...A LITTLE BACKGROUND?

PADMO: 40winks consists of two producers from Antwerp, Belgium. There's Weedy, the lazy-23 year-old city dwelling night owl and Padmo, the 24 year old-drum programming beat critic.

Weedy and I hooked up during high school trying to form a turntablist crew but we weren't too spectacular at it to be honest. We've always been more into the musical aspect of turntablism than the technical part, plus we didn't enjoy performing on stage. So I guess the next logical step for us was to retreat to the safe environment of our bedrooms, becoming bedroom producers.

We've been doing this for about 5 years now. I would describe our music as instrumental hip hop, focusing on the laid back side of things. Which is funny because when we started we didn't want to be defined as instrumental hip hop. Our idea was just to do rap beats, but to have more variation in them replacing the mc with scratches and movie samples.

DO YOU JUST USE COMPUTERS/SAMPLERS? OR DO YOU INVOLVE INSTRUMENTS TOO?

WEEDY: I've always loved sampling. I play some instruments, but rarely use any live instruments in my music, although I might use more live elements in the future.

PADMO: If you can call shakers and tambourines instruments, then yeah! No, in general it's all sample-based. We both make beats using software. We prefer it over hardware because that's what we're used to and that's how we started making beats in the first place. People say our tracks do have a live feel to them and we often get asked when we're going to perform live, but that's not our main focus at the moment.

WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING PRODUCERS IN BELGIUM? HOW IS THE 'SCENE' OVER THERE?

PADMO: Well, Belgium is a small country and naturally the hip hop scene isn't big either. There's a number of hip hop fans, but most artists don't get appreciated beyond their home town. On one side you got artists that sound like they're telling the American story instead of their own and on the other hand, there's artists who have a local feel to them, but their music is just not the kind of hip hop that I love. It's hard to find that balance, especially a balance of doing your own thing and having hip hop fans worldwide relate to it. There aren't any local hip hop labels releasing local music, or at least not on a regular basis that I know. So I think the lack of interested labels stops people here from getting more serious about hip hop, because it's hard to grow out of the demo phase.

DO 40 WINKS HAVE ANY MAJOR INFLUENCES? MUSICAL OR NON-MUSICAL?.

WEEDY: I love all kinds of music, no particular influences really. As far as non-musical influences I'd say laziness, old records, night-time, woman, movies, life...

PADMO: I'm influenced by the greats in hip hop. I can also be inspired by local talent, like Y skid (part of the Dustbusters crew out of Holland). He's got this jazzy style that's still hard hitting, like nothing I heard before. However, I think we've found our own style by now, we don't really get influenced too much by other artists these days. As far as non-musical influences, my biggest influences are science fiction and my wild imagination. And of course Weedy and my girlfriend telling me whether they hate or like a beat of mine, influencing whether something will make the final cut or not.

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE YOUR MUSIC? THROUGH DJ SETS? RADIO?

WEEDY: Mostly through the internet, we could do some more promotion but I prefer to stay in the lab.

PADMO: We don't really DJ anymore like we used to even though we've done some guest mixes to promote our releases. As far as promo, we've learned how to do it ourselves. When a release is on its way, we try to contact as many magazines, webzines, DJ's and radio shows as possible. Even back when we weren't signed to any label, we've gotten in touch with people worldwide. You can catch us on myspace, but www.40winksmusic.com is the main place to follow us in our adventures!

SO, HOW DID YOU HOOK UP WITH JAPANESE LABEL ESCAPISM?

WEEDY: They hooked up with us...we're lucky bastards!

PADMO: True, Escapism was slowly getting started in mid 2004 when DJ Grinch contacted us and gave us the opportunity to do a 12", which quickly became an EP called 'Extended Pleasure'. He had heard about us, but didn't remember how or where exactly. Being that Escapism was just getting started, it took a while to get the EP released. In the meantime Grinch hooked us up with another Japanese label that was just starting up called Swamp. Swamp is actually a sub-label of Polystar Japan and they re-released our 'More Than Loops' album in Japan in March 2005. Extended Pleasure was finally released in November 2005.

WHAT ARE THE FUTURE PLANS FOR 40 WINKS?

WEEDY: Maybe some rap tracks and hopefully another full instrumental album. Maybe a Blue Note remix album?...dreamin'!

PADMO: We're featured on a compilation by Little-D, an Amsterdam based soundlab (www.little-d.com), which will hopefully come out this year. But right now we're in the process of redefining our style, seeking out the best elements from the past years and taking it a step further.

www.40winksmusic.com

www.escapism.jp



40 WINKS



ENTERING THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH A STRING OF RELEASES ON MONOTONIK (AND VARIOUS OTHER NET LABELS), HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH THE TPOLM COLLECTIVE, AND FURTHER RAISING HIS PROFILE WITH THE WELL RECEIVED LP DEBUT "CONTAINER" ON DEFOCUS. ESA RUOHO, (MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS LACKLUSTER) HAS SINCE RELEASED 6 FURTHER ALBUMS INCLUDING HIS MOST RECENT OUTINGS "WHAT YOU WANT ISN'T WHAT YOU NEED" AND "SLICE". DESPITE THE APPARENT LACK OF SELF-SATISFACTION TOWARDS A LOT OF HIS OUTPUT TO DATE, IT WOULD SEEM THERE'S A BELIEF HE STILL HAS A GREAT DEAL MORE TO OFFER THE LISTENER.

Esa was born and bred in Eastern Helsinki, Finland. Apart from a recent 2 year spell in Dublin, Ireland he has lived in Kontula since 1989. So apart from the obvious musical creative endeavours, what's he been up to recently?

"I've been gathering up books, ebooks, documentaries, and articles, on forward thinking people such as Nikola Tesla. I'm thinking that the ultimate achievement of Tesla's, wireless electricity/audio/data-transfer, could very easily be adapted to create a wireless, i.e., spaghetti-free studio for musicians. If you could get into what Tesla was suggesting, and understand anything about electronics and magnetism, high frequency, resonance, and transmitting data/audio/electricity wirelessly, you could easily adapt the technology towards creating simple audio-jacks that would broadcast at specified frequencies that other audio plugs could receive, thus enabling you to connect synthesizers to mixers without the use of cables".

"Tesla also had proof that he could transmit electricity at least 45 KM without any degradation, and wirelessly. He was so attuned into his knowledge and experiments that he realized that abundant electricity could be transmitted all over the world without any significant loss. Thus he, back then, at the start of the 1900s, envisioned a complete Tesla Wireless World System, including automobiles and aeroplanes patching directly into the omnipresent broadcast electricity".

"I get asked why I'm interested in Tesla, why do I care about it, the answer is, if this was in effect we would be in the 2006 that this year was supposed to be, not this resource-war dark-ages of nations and non-renewable resources, the rat-race eerily insane self-perpetuating society".

What initially sparked his interest in electronically generated music and how did that interest develop?

"I've always had computers around me, from day 0 (my dad soldered together a 4Kb computer from a d-i-y kit, some telmac... and later supplied us with a various assortment of machines). I early on gravitated towards the game songs on the c128D. I had never heard anything like them, they were completely synthetic and more to the point, fitted the games they accompanied and stayed with me".

"I later heard tracker-modules on the amiga500, and started collecting them. At around this time I was given records, cassettes and CD's, by my brother and older sister's now-deceased husband. Things such as Kraftwerk, Massive Attack and Jarre. I started purchasing full length albums for myself, stuff like the Shamen and the Prodigy, and began gravitating towards Hardcore/Gabber".

He was subsequently sold a cd by a friend claiming it was Gabber. It actually turned out to be Aphex Twin's Selected Ambient works Volume 2. Perhaps this helped encourage a general expansion of musical influences? "In around 94-95 I started seriously purchasing records and travelled through the whole lot that was available. The Orb, Autechre, afx, and later on Squarepusher. I loved saw2 to bits, but lent it to a friend who never returned it. I then realized how affected I'd been by the record."

"For some time I'd been collecting modules made by various people. I started my own BBS which was centred on sharing modules made by everyone who was any good. I heard other people's takes on what they were influenced by, sampling various records and chopping them to bits, and making short and sweet chiptunes, or ambient excursions. I saw so many people doing this, and understood the commands it would take to fade out a melody, or what you could do to make a rudimentary echo. So I took some samples from a module, and played my own melodies into it. I kept doing this, and got help from a few friends, who pulled me together...I got into mucking around with trackers quite a bit, moving on to different programs, slowly encountering more music, and just writing more and more".



Fig. 5.2 Cosmic fertilisation and the sign of the cross

On the topic of musical style, technique and technical expertise...

"I use very simple sounds, too simple. If electronic music was a constant challenge of arming up with all kinds of fancy tools and sounds, I'd be the guy with the loincloth. I do like interesting sounds, I just don't feel like I'm the guy who is supposed to do all that. I value nifty sounds, I value complex programming, but it has to move me too. There are a lot of people who can do very complex, very unique sounding things, and I feel outgunned by them. But I'm not interested in the electronica-armaments-race. I acknowledge that for the person looking for a technological kick or a nifty weird sound buzz. They're not going to see anything in my stuff other than simplicity. I view this as a failure of mine, as in, if someone makes a very complex track, that is very melodic, and full of twists and turns, I believe automatically that it's better than what I've done".

"I know for a fact that I'll never get on Warp because I don't sound like the future, I don't sound cutting edge, in fact, bleeding edge, or even anywhere really. One of the reasons I started doing remixes, (like *Remixselection_one* on *psychnavigation*) was to flex, with the hope that maybe people would realize I can do things other than "container" and "cdr2". That there's more. Maybe it would result in getting signed to a record label that doesn't want me to repeat what I've done previously, because that's the only thing they can accept."

This was a major factor behind "what you want isn't what you need" being released. It mainly comprised of material from 1996 to 2000 and was designed to give people a last injection of the cdr#2/container-era material.

Capturing new audiences and trying to appeal to a broad range of labels is something that seems to continually drive Lackluster to develop and broaden his style.

Demonstrating these skills on releases such as the excellent *remixselection_one* on *psychnavigation* (2004), the showcase sampler *12"*, the *r u oho 12"* both released on *Merck* (2004) and the minimalist, ambient excursion, *Spaces on U-cover* in 2001.

"Most people don't know I've released ambient under my own name. It was supposed to come out as Lackluster, but *deFocus'* Clair Poulton told me to release that material under another pseudonym... *Remixselection_one* is another one most people have never even heard about. There were only 500 copies made, hardly any distribution, reviews or promotion. I was hoping he'd do 2000 copies, maybe even just 1000. He did 500, and it sunk without a trace".

His initial success and the financial benefits as a result have unfortunately been contrasted in later years with the harsh reality of trying to make a living as a musician. Does he ever consider altering his style in order to fill a financially rewarding mainstream market need?

"A few people mention that I should change, and alter my material, to do something more dancy, more palatable. Well, I do dancy, somehow, sometimes. But I don't do it because I consciously want to release a record. I have a big problem with sending demos out to labels. I don't know what they want, or how to appease them. How do you know what they want? What if they don't know what they want?... I tend to just really try and stick to what I do, and do it like I can, and believe that if I'm true to myself, eventually, something will happen".

"In fact, sometimes I'm of the opinion that I haven't gotten signed to a major label because I haven't put everything I can, everything I hold true, all the struggle and learning, into what I have done, thus far. And maybe it would happen, maybe things would resolve themselves, outside of me, if I just stepped up my game. Not to sell a record, but to become better, to advance, to go where I can hear. I can almost feel it right outside my reach, but I run away from it and end up with unfinished songs that didn't quite go where they could have."

"I try to not be tainted by my rummaging ruining thoughts or fears of failures or depressions or anything, and instead clear the mind and let what's coming out, come out. But even trying to do things unconsciously is sometimes too conscious, and becomes something I've consciously tried to force. I realized this ability disappeared around the time my first record came out, and I started receiving actual feedback. I developed some sort of a musical ego, started hunting for mentions and notices, went review-hunting. Suddenly I built up this musical ego/career ego that can convince me every once in a while to spend hours and hours rummaging through Google, trying to "network", trying to "push the music". Instead of doing exactly the opposite i.e., sitting in my place, not thinking about the recording industry, reviews, promotion, distribution, and the resulting ripples thereof. And work on the music, and let everything else revolve at its own time".

He's performed live gigs all over Europe, and has aspirations to do so in Canada and the United States. What goes into live performances in terms of preparation and technique, and how does he feel about the travel aspect of his work?

"I've played a total of 61 gigs, and since middle of 2003 it's been Ableton live only. I don't prepare my sets early on, the only preparation I do is a kind of freeform improv-jam with various parts of various tracks. I try to twist the tracks. I try to move them around whilst keeping the basis of the original track, but maybe showing different sides to it. I have a few tracks that I tend to play at every gig, mainly because I might be feeling a bit self-conscious and not sure which track to play next. I can do medleys of tracks, or just rework things so that it'd take a while to "get" which track it was originally. I take a laptop, a mouse and a mouse pad with me, and use the mouse and the pc keyboard to toggle loops and control master-fx. It's very rough and ready, I use a few effects, but mainly just layer a lot of different files together and try to build progressions out of previously released, unreleased, unfinished, never-to-be-finished, prepared-for-gig-use-only wavefiles".

"The travelling is nice to a point but I'm really let down by the redundant nature of combustion-based planes, this isn't the best the world has got to offer. I don't like all the artificial spaces, I'm mostly unable to deal with being around stressed, overdosed on food, sleepy, depressed, unable to shut up, be quiet, and at ease people.

I find airports to be quite stressing and completely monitored, the last straw to be honest was when they started demanding shoes to be taken off at airports".

"I think the best thing about travel is when I can calm down and look at something, or be somewhere, and sense it, instead of just being driven around to a place, play a gig, eat, sleep, go to next place etc. I sometimes get flown to a festival, 3 days in advance and a day after I play, I leave. That at least gives me some time to just chill..."

Some all time favourite artists include Bola, Boards of Canada and close friend Brothomstates. Whilst discussing the possibility of working with other people I suggested that maybe a Lackcluster/Brothomstates collaboration could bear some interesting fruits.

"Lassi (Brothomstates) is a good friend of mine. Dear friend of mine. but I have hang ups about playing the keyboard or making sounds when anyone is around, anyone I respect, or anyone who can play better than me and make better music than me, knows their gear more, etc. yes, I'd love to do stuff with him. It's just that I wouldn't be involved because, well. Let's see, because I'd self-cancel out of it. It's quite miserable, the people I respect the most, I can't communicate with musically, even if they tell me my stuff is quite good. I can't accept compliments, I can't accept good feedback, I don't know how to let it punch in".

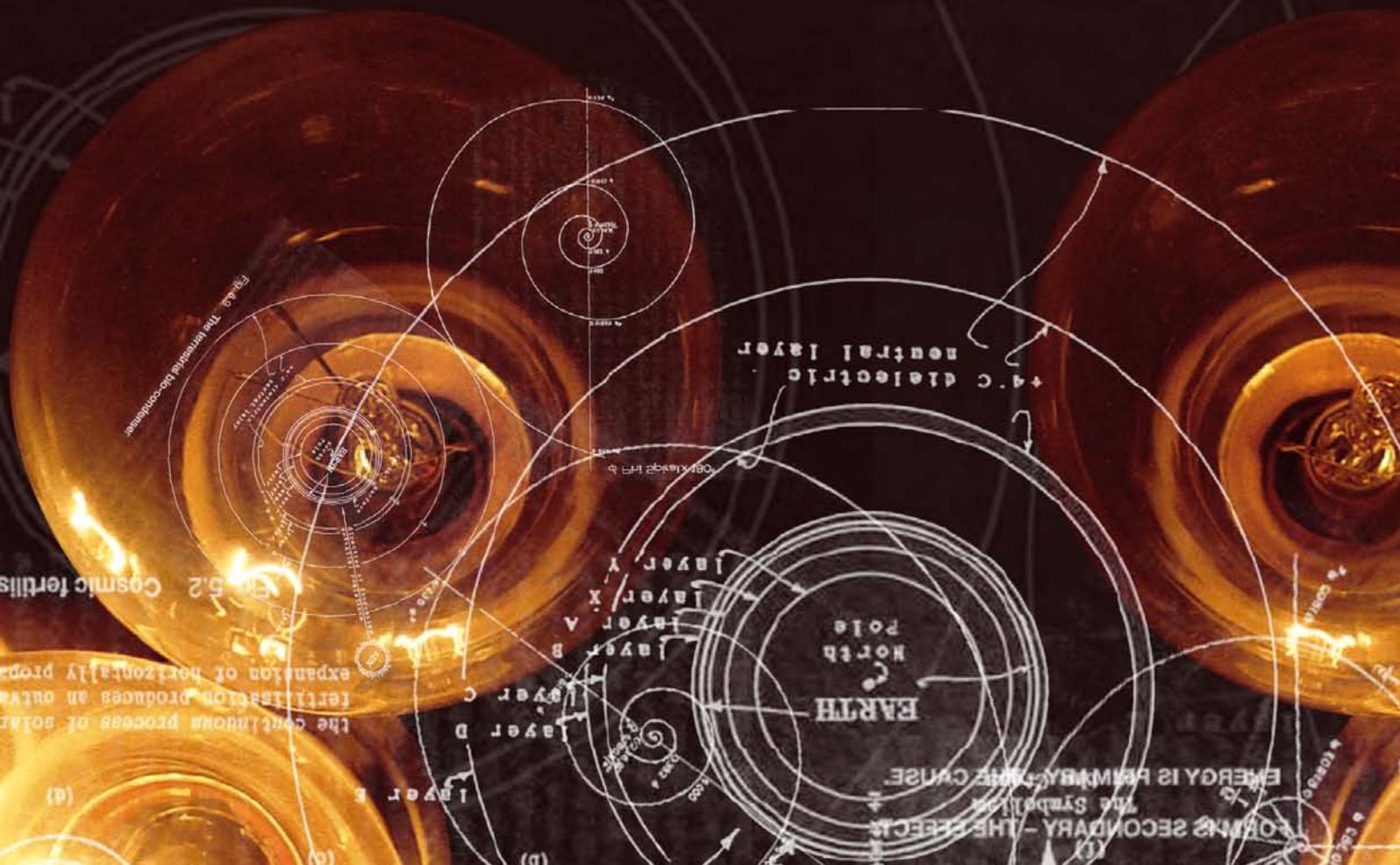
Arguably the internet has raised Lackcluster's profile. Involvement in the demoscene, the topm collective and numerous releases on the likes of Monotonik and Kahvi have helped. But with p2p file sharing resources freely available there's inevitably been a negative impact on hardcopy sales. How does he feel about this?

"File sharing is such a can of worms. I think one of the main problems with this is it isn't the file sharing that should be picked at. Yes people share, ok, and people don't buy, but some people do buy. Everyone would be buying more, if they had more money. No one has any money. It's not the fault of some guy who comes to my gig, that he doesn't have money, I can't blame someone for that, and I don't. We don't have money, because our money is going into things that should be free, so like, yeah, ok, I see a lot of people sharing my stuff, but I think, fine. Sure I felt a bit sad when slice and wywiwyn popped up on soulseek. Maybe this means some people won't purchase from my web shop. It's easy to look at say 15 people sharing slice, and the me having 35 copies of it lying around at home, 35 copies that I could sell, and order some books, cables, purchase something on bleep, or donate something to someone else. But they'll be sold eventually and it's all ok. It'll work out".

With several remixes in the pipeline at various stages of completion, 3 albums scheduled for release in the next year and numerous live outings, what else does Esa have planned for the future?

"There's another label that wants to release an album eventually. They would be interested in more acoustic stuff, and I would be too. There's stuff that's semi finished towards that, but nothing definite. I just want multipart songs to be honest, progressions in songs, movement changes, progress, "second beat" "second twist" "that chord change there" stuff. Proper musical songs...it seems that the next one might have that, or then it might be conceptual. But it'll probably be another mp3 release."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON LACKCLUSTER LIVE PERFORMANCES, UPCOMING RELEASES, A BROAD SELECTION OF DOWNLOADABLE TRACKS AND LIVE GIGS, AND TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS WEB SHOP VISIT:
www.lackcluster.org



PRECURSER

George Smith is a 24 year old abstract digital artist/photographer known to many online as 'Precursor'. George's work can be seen on his personal site EndEffect.com with many of his pieces available in easily downloadable wallpaper sizes for you to enjoy. Alongside this he also runs a online community/clothing company called 'Naature' with Jason Krieger (Phirebrush.com). As well as sharing his knowledge of digital tools Photoshop & 3dsmax (He recently put together a tutorial on one of his digital pieces for Advanced Photoshop magazine which should be published in March 06) George is also a member of the online abstract art group known as depthCORE and has been busy working on depthCORE's 23rd art pack which will be released in March. The following pages feature a selection of his works with some comments from the man himself.



LET'S EVOLVE

Quite possibly one of the biggest turning points in my creative style. This was the first piece that I created for depthCORE right after I was asked to join. The pack theme was perfectly titled "Evolution" which couldn't have fit better. I tried to create something new by meshing nearly all of my styles and techniques together.



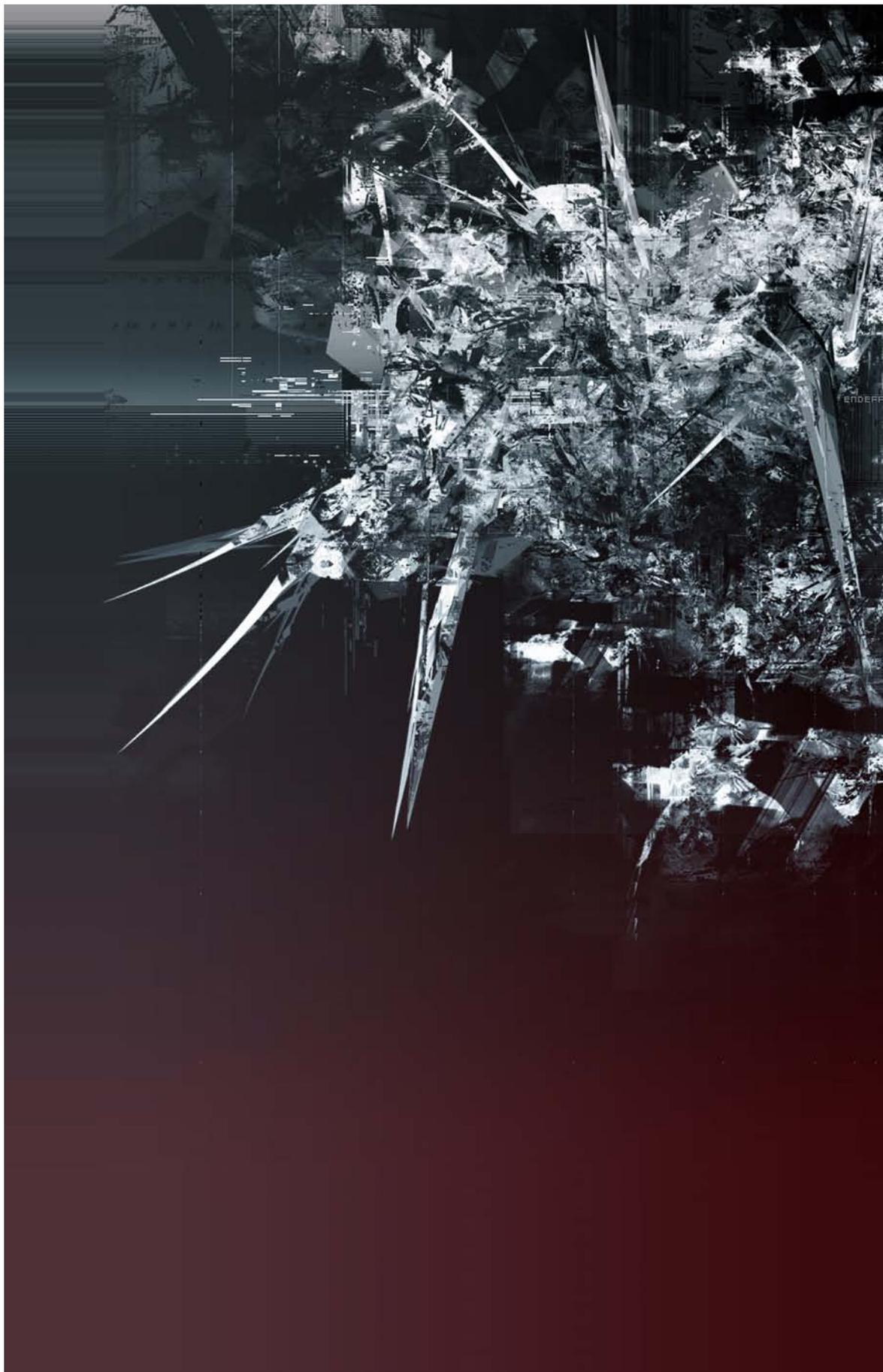
VSTATION

This is one of my more cleaner symmetrical pieces. The piece was an homage to a style I have long moved away from, combining very light blue tones with hard contrasts. Creativity from depthCORE members has helped me a lot since I have been a part of the group, and this is one of the many results of that.



FROSTBITE

This piece represents an extension of my symmetrical style that I have grown to love. I attempted to introduce a colour that is not very typical of my work, in this case, pink. It also contains elements which are very prominent in most of my pieces which gives my work a clean, techy, grungy feel.



BACKSTAB

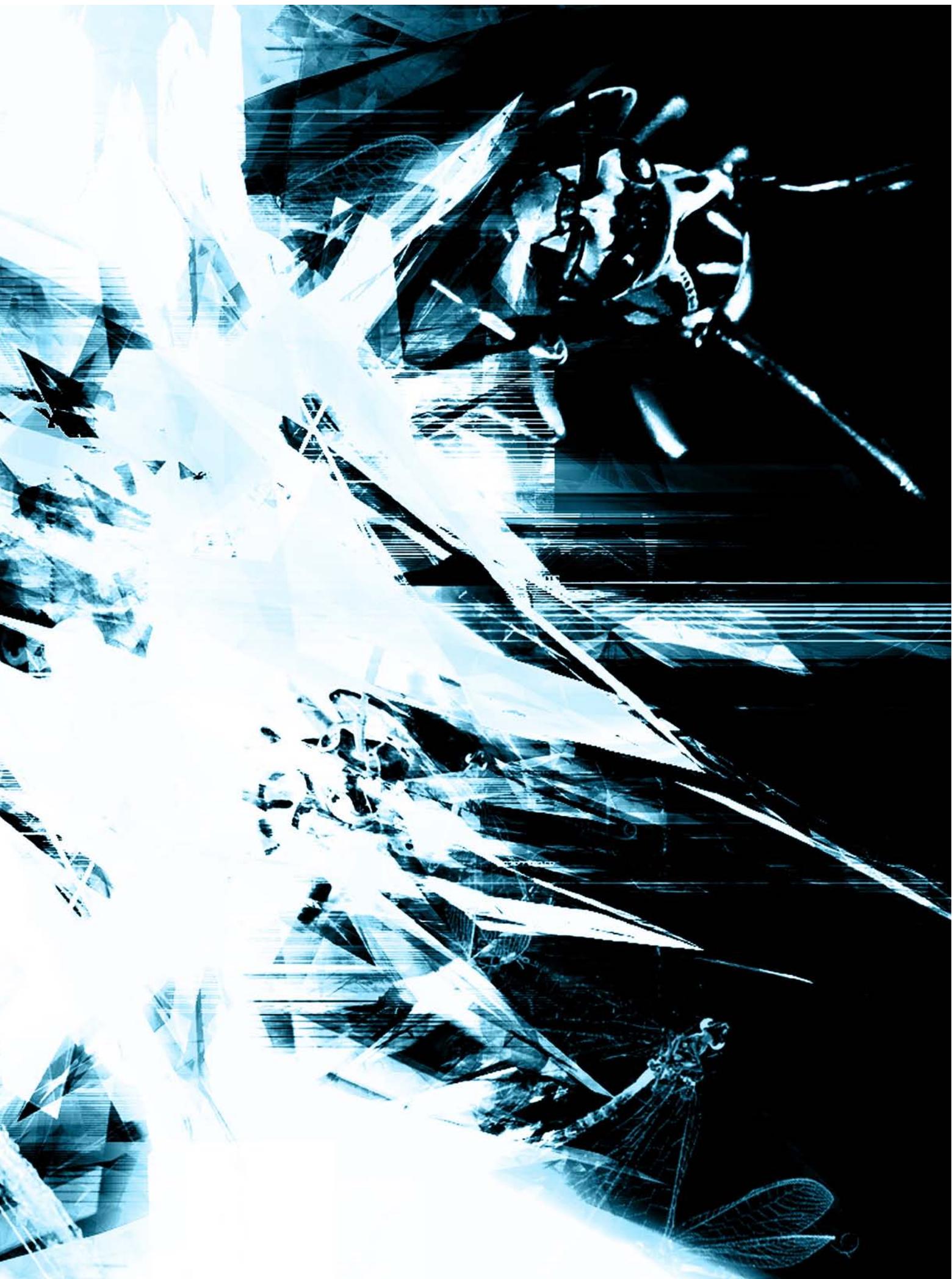
Photo-manipulation beyond what it is thought to be. This is the most technical my work has ever gotten. A personal favourite of mine, I took a few simple photos of some beetles that I captured and kept working it until this slowly emerged. With a lot of refining and retouching.

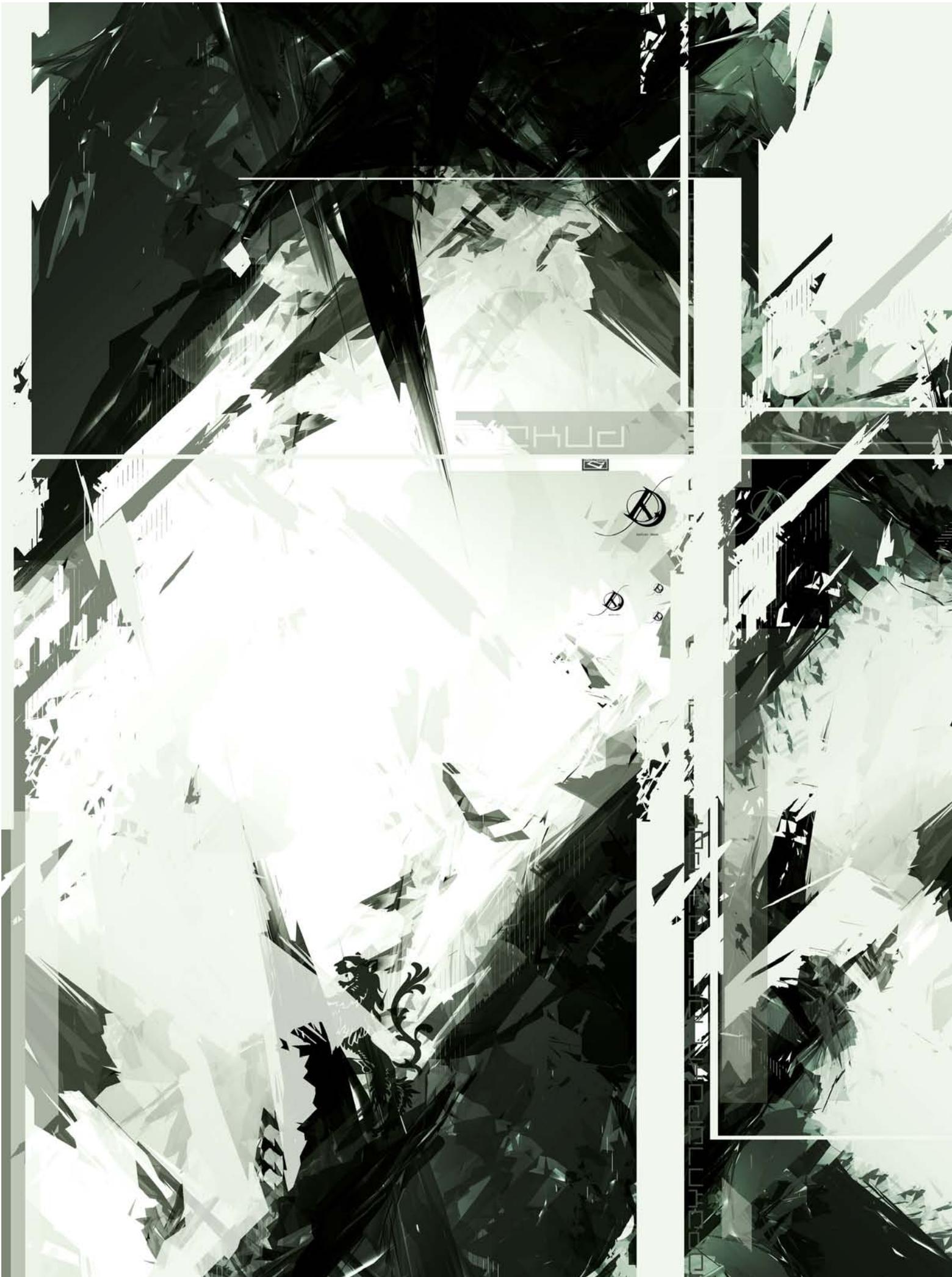




FORCE OF NAATURE

Although one of my older pieces, this image represents a point in my artistic career where I began to incorporate my nature photography with my 3d abstract. This is also where the name Naature came from which now represents my clothing line and online community.







EKUD

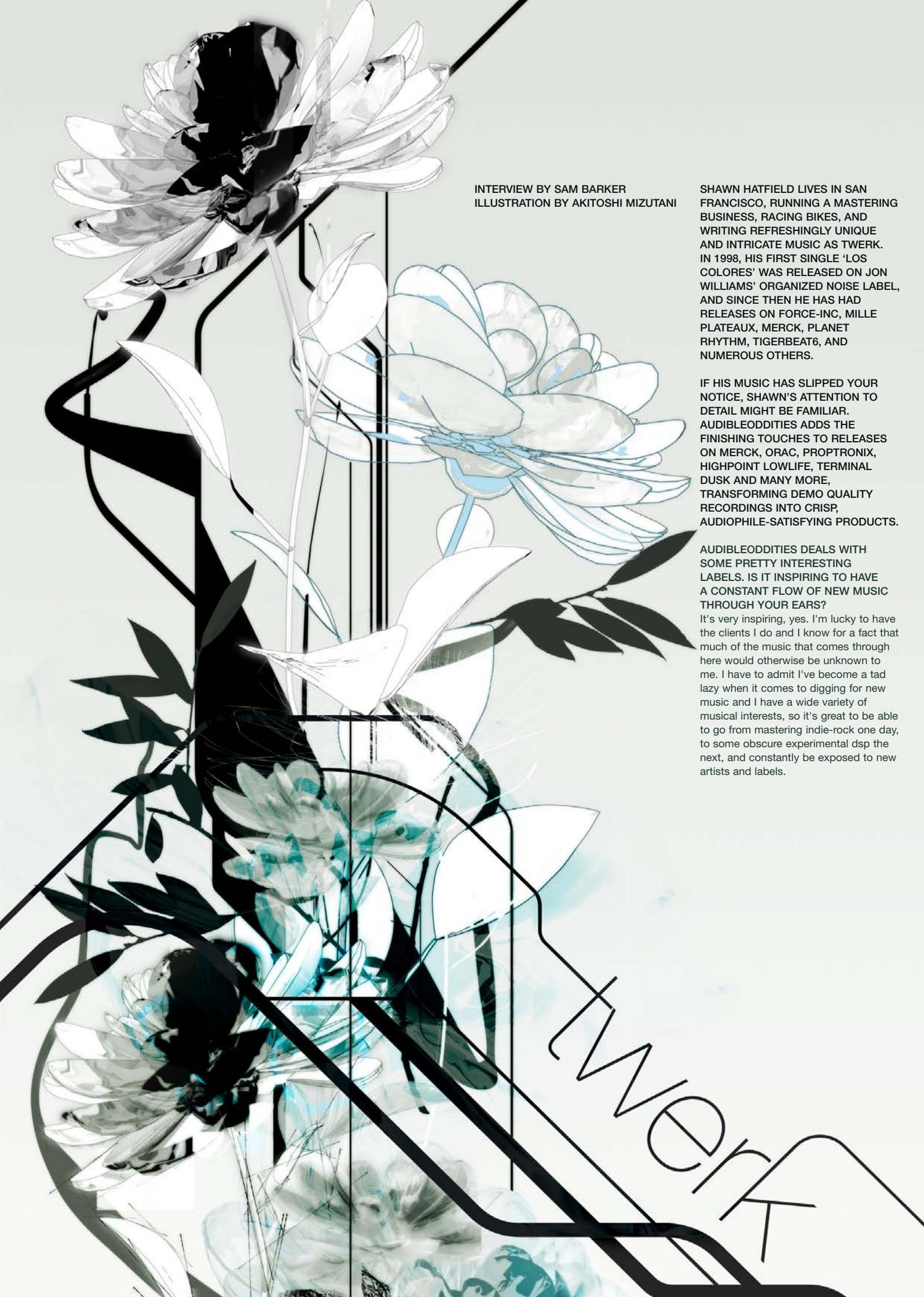
This was created as a tribute to the grand master pimp daddy of abstract, Justin Maller, creator of depthCORE and known as "ekud" to most of his online peers. Justin is always trying to do something different and push the boundaries with each of his artistic phases, and by seeing that has pushed me to test myself. this piece is one of my most recent turns on my creative path of abstract.

TO SEE MORE CHECK:

www.endeffect.com

www.naature.com

www.depthcore.com



INTERVIEW BY SAM BARKER
ILLUSTRATION BY AKITOSHI MIZUTANI

SHAWN HATFIELD LIVES IN SAN FRANCISCO, RUNNING A MASTERING BUSINESS, RACING BIKES, AND WRITING REFRESHINGLY UNIQUE AND INTRICATE MUSIC AS TWERK. IN 1998, HIS FIRST SINGLE 'LOS COLORES' WAS RELEASED ON JON WILLIAMS' ORGANIZED NOISE LABEL, AND SINCE THEN HE HAS HAD RELEASES ON FORCE-INC, MILLE PLATEAUX, MERCK, PLANET RHYTHM, TIGERBEAT6, AND NUMEROUS OTHERS.

IF HIS MUSIC HAS SLIPPED YOUR NOTICE, SHAWN'S ATTENTION TO DETAIL MIGHT BE FAMILIAR. AUDIBLEODDITIES ADDS THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO RELEASES ON MERCK, ORAC, PROPTRONIX, HIGHPOINT LOWLIFE, TERMINAL DUSK AND MANY MORE, TRANSFORMING DEMO QUALITY RECORDINGS INTO CRISP, AUDIOPHILE-SATISFYING PRODUCTS.

AUDIBLEODDITIES DEALS WITH SOME PRETTY INTERESTING LABELS. IS IT INSPIRING TO HAVE A CONSTANT FLOW OF NEW MUSIC THROUGH YOUR EARS?

It's very inspiring, yes. I'm lucky to have the clients I do and I know for a fact that much of the music that comes through here would otherwise be unknown to me. I have to admit I've become a tad lazy when it comes to digging for new music and I have a wide variety of musical interests, so it's great to be able to go from mastering indie-rock one day, to some obscure experimental dsp the next, and constantly be exposed to new artists and labels.

TWERK

I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT MASTERING (OTHER THAN IT SOUNDS LOUDER AND MORE SHINY AFTERWARDS). WHAT SORT OF THINGS DO YOU DO TO A TRACK AT AUDIBLEODDITIES?

Every project here gets treated in a very unique way. I do the standard things like compression, eq, limiting, but I tend to mix up the hardware and software to fit the project as best as possible. I typically start by acclimating myself to a project by listening to it in real-world situations. It goes straight to the iPod and played back on several types of headphones, car stereos, boom-boxes, and home hi-fi systems. This way I can approach the project in the studio with as many of the problems exposed from the start as possible. From there, it becomes a process of balancing and sweetening and determining how far we want to go in the volume/dynamics trade-off.

WHEN DID YOU START WRITING MUSIC?

I started writing music around 1998 with the help of a friends studio.

DID YOU HAVE ANY MUSICAL TRAINING BEFORE THEN?

I used to play trumpet in my elementary school orchestra and then went on to start learning keyboard shortly after I got into junior- high. I didn't stick with it though and there was a fairly large gap of time between that and picking up my first drum machine.

YOU'VE MADE SOME GREAT PROGRAMS WITH MAX/MSP, I'VE HAD A LOT OF FUN PLAYING WITH CAMEL TOE RECENTLY. WHAT GOT YOU INTO PROGRAMMING?

I blame my friend Kit Clayton almost entirely. I've never considered myself much of a programmer and I still don't try to come off like I know what I'm doing half the time, but Kit gave me the push into Max/Msp by showing me some of his first programs. He carefully and methodically explained the premise of programs like Max and PD and at the time, since I didn't have a Mac, encouraged me to get my feet wet with a program called Audiomulch. It wasn't long before I picked up an Apple Powerbook and dove directly into Max/ Msp. Kit was a huge help through the beginning. I'd call him with the most ridiculous questions and he'd patiently walk me through my problems without ever making me feel like I was bothering him. Seriously, that guy is my hero. I guess it's been about 6 years of using Max/Msp now and I feel very comfortable in that environment. If you stuck me in front of anything else, I'd be back to drooling on myself and asking for my mommy.

AHH, ITS GOOD TO HAVE FRIENDS LIKE THAT. CLAYTON SOUNDS FAMILIAR, DOESN'T HE WORK FOR CYCLING '74?

Kit is one of the main programmers there at Cycling74. He's the main man behind Jitter, a set of objects for Video processing.

RIGHT. IT SEEMS TO ME, THE CHALLENGE A COMPOSER OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC FACES TODAY IS TO TAKE COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE PROCESS, TO CREATE NEW TOOLS TO EXPRESS THEIR IDEAS. TO WHAT DEGREE IS TECHNOLOGY BECOMING THE ART IN ITSELF? WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH TECHNOLOGY?

There are many facets of audio and technology and genres of music to coincide with each. With a program like max, the programs you make are definitely as much the art as the final outcome. Anyone who's seen an unlocked Max patcher knows what I'm talking about. But that doesn't seem to translate well outside the small experimental music community. Honestly, I think there are too many tools right now with too many options. The challenge for many composers can often be in just figuring out a direction to choose when you have infinite roads to take. That right there is the beauty of programs like Max. More and more I've started making programs with a very small fixed number of functions, and forcing myself to exploit them. I find that restrictions lead to increased productivity and simplify the process without simplifying the output.

YOU COLLECT A LOT OF FIELD RECORDINGS. DO YOU CARRY A MICROPHONE AND RECORDER WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES?

Well.. I would if I had the right set-up. I'm using a Sony portable DAT with binaural microphones and although it's fairly small, it's still a lot more cumbersome than I'd like. I try to carry it around when I know I'll be doing something in a place where it's rich in sound. I just recorded a 2 hour session at the dentist office and before that, a trip to the grocery store where I was able to "play" several food products and packages. I always try to take it with me when I travel too. I played a show in Japan with Portable and I had the recorder on while we cruised around Tokyo shopping. A year later, he asked me to do a remix for him so I snuck in some field-recordings of us to really personalize the remix.

'LIVING VICARIOUSLY THROUGH BURNT BREAD' IS A TASTEFUL COMBINATION OF WARM, FLOWING SOUNDSCAPES, FIELD RECORDINGS AND UNPREDICTABLE ELECTRONIC RHYTHMS. A FINE PIECE OF WORK IF I MAY SAY SO. WHATS THE STORY BEHIND THE TITLE? IS THERE A JAPANESE INFLUENCE?

I discovered this character called Kogepan while in Japan. Roughly translated, it means "burnt bread". I fell in love with him. It was during a time when I was feeling pretty down in general and everything Kogepan stood for, personified me. So the title is merely a play on that idea and suggests that I was living my life through him.

IT'S INTERESTING HOW GOOD THINGS CAN COME OUT OF BAD TIMES. DO YOU FIND YOU BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE WHEN THERE IS SOME EMOTIONAL IMBALANCE IN YOUR LIFE? WHAT FUNCTION DOES MUSIC SERVE FOR YOU?

Honestly, unlike many of my friends who claim to make the best music when sad, I need to be happy and on top of things to really feel like I can make my music. I really had to force myself to stay creative when I was going through that chunk of depression.

Music has always served as a way for me to escape the stress and pressures of living in capitalistic America. When I hear a really powerful song, I spend the next 5 minutes listening and it's at that point, I really just live in the now and not worry about my bills and my deadlines. It's a bit like a drug, but without the crappy side effects.

SCOTT PAGANO'S VIDEO FOR THE OPENING TRACK, 'FROM BROWN TO GREEN' IS A BEAUTIFUL, SYNCHRONISED DISSASSEMBLAGE OF THE URBAN LANDSCAPE, AND A PERFECT COMPLIMENT TO THE MUSIC. HOW DID THAT COLLABORATION COME ABOUT?

Scott's been a friend of mine for a while. I was introduced to him through a mutual friend and we both shared an interest in each others work. I was looking to get some videos made for my album and asked Scott how he felt about it. He was really into it so we had a couple of artistic pow-wows at my house and I sent him off to do his thing. He worked on the video alone and without much guidance from me, so the visual concepts are exclusively his own. We've been lucky and had the video shown at several multi-media festivals and museums with great response.

YOU'VE DONE A FEW RELEASES UNDER THE PSEUDONYM TERRA, WHATS THAT ABOUT?

When I signed with Planet Rhythm, they wanted exclusive rights to my name. So I was forced to come up with something unique that wouldn't interfere with other projects. I've used Twerk for the majority of my work but more recently have turned back to using pseudonym's to free myself from pressures of both contractual obligations and public scrutiny. I gather it won't be too long before people start figuring out my most recent projects though, so I check discogs.com every couple of months to see if anyones pieced it together.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER ALTER EGO'S WE SHOULD KNOW OF?

None that I'll disclose at this time. Having secret projects is turning out to be a lot more fun than I had imagined.

FAIR ENOUGH. WHEN YOU'RE NOT RUNNING A MASTERING BUSINESS, WRITING MUSIC, DESIGNING SOFTWARE OR PERFORMING, WHAT DO YOU GET UP TO?

I ride bikes, constantly. There are times when I'm putting in 300-400 miles a week on the bike. I'm very competitive on the bike and will begin a training program this spring for my new interest in racing track. I've just put together a handmade Japanese track-bike that will hopefully help me win some races this year. Anyone who knows me, knows I'm completely obsessed with it. Since I have a background developing in Max/Msp, I am able to program training tools for my cycling. I have a Max patch I use everyday that tracks my caloric intake and helps me structure an eating program to match my training efforts.

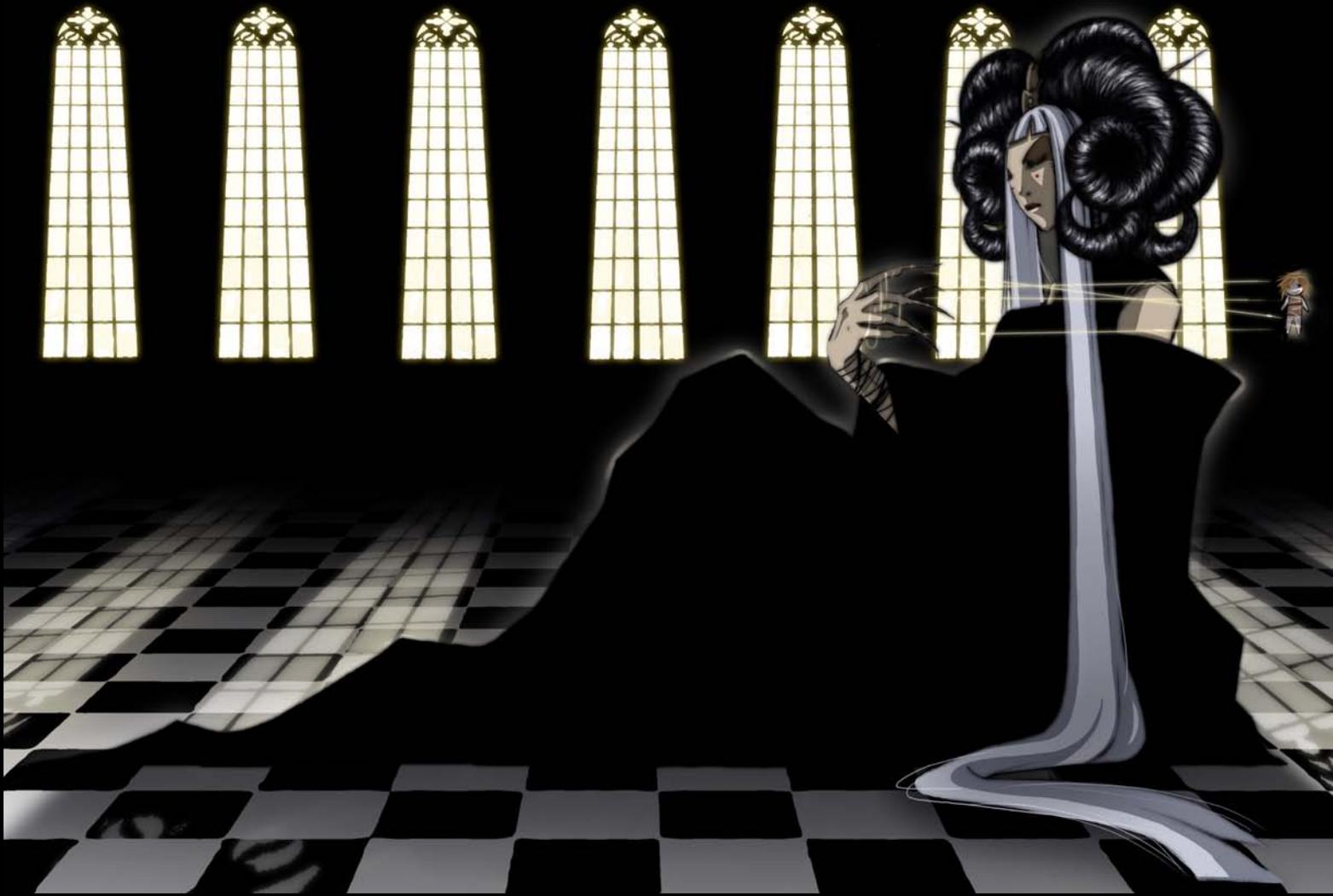
AUDIBLEODDITIES / TWERK INFO, MP3'S, VIDEO'S AND OTHER GOODIES:

www.audibleoddities.com

MAX/MSP / JITTER:
www.cycling74.com

*Linsey
Wood*





Taking inspiration from her interest in Japanese rock music, Lynsey's style moves from one extreme to another while her level of detail provides a constant theme. Outside of studying for a degree she's currently working on Korean based manga 'Frankie*SNATCH' and her illustrated story 'Pray for Tomorrow'. You can check her website for details of both:
www.lynseywood.com

Deity

SOUND WAVES FROM SONOS SOUND WAVE

THE MOVEMENT OF AFRO-CARIBBEAN RHYTHMS AROUND THE WORLD.



Brighton based Soundway Records has been releasing forgotten gems from Africa for the past few years. Now the label is set to unleash some amazing music from Panama and Colombia, opening people's ears to the breadth and depth of afro rhythms and deep grooves from around the world. Fighting the marginalisation of music not made in America and Europe, Soundway is on a mission to give credit to the forgotten and ignored sounds that have rocked the dancefloors and sessions of large parts of the world...

QUESTIONS: HANS DE BOCK

ANSWERS: MILE CLERET, SOUNDWAY LABEL HEAD

HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN?

The idea came five years ago whilst travelling in Ghana with my wife. We included a few days of record shopping in the capital Accra and Kumasi and one day I ended up at a guy's place who was a DJ for a radio station and he was playing some incredible records to me – some of them were eventually included on the 'Ghana Soundz' compilations. That experience was the genesis of it really. When I got back I decided to do this concept album and all in all spent nearly two years, four trips to Ghana with countless taxi and bus trips throughout the country to track down producers and master recordings. I finally put the first 'Ghana Soundz' out on myself two and a half years ago.

TODAY THE TEAM HAS DOUBLED IN SIZE!

Yeah. (laughs) At the moment it's just Hugo Mendez and myself. He came on board last year because we had to take it one step further and I wanted to get the label out of my house. At that point I was doing 'Afro Baby' and 'Ghana Soundz 2' so handling all label issues on top of that simply was too much work. Hugo was deejaying here in Brighton and that's how we got in touch.

THE RESEARCH IS AMAZING. HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN SO FASCINATED BY THE HISTORY OF THE MUSIC?

Yeah I have. I grew up with my dad's record collection, which mainly was soul and jazz orientated. I grew up with records all over our house and found myself especially fascinated by records that had stories attached to them. I must have been collecting since I was ten years old. Later on I studied history at university so I suppose that I have that historical angle in me that I've applied to music as well. It took a lot of time, but I think it is worth doing it properly. That's the philosophy of the label; it's not just getting twelve tracks together on a record and hope that people somehow will understand how they got together or what's the relationship between them, it's kind of nice to be able to satisfy the train spotters. I also like finding records to play at parties but I'm always interested in the stories behind them and the movement of music across the world: from Africa to the Caribbean and back to West Africa again and how that influenced jazz and vice versa. The musical roots so to speak, the way everything is connected and how stories unfold.

WAS IT GENERALLY SPEAKING EASY TO TRACK DOWN THE PEOPLE INVOLVED? WERE THEY STILL INVOLVED IN MUSIC INDUSTRY TODAY OR DID YOU FIND THEM HAVING AN ORDINARY JOB?

Well, the music industry in Ghana especially suffered really badly in the last twenty years. A lot of the musicians no longer have any outlet for their music. The recording industry and manufacturing came to an end in the early eighties when piracy took over. There are still people manufacturing music now, but the production levels have suffered because the commercial side of music has prevailed in general. Quite often it's become a very screwed business where band managers replaced the entire horn section with some preset sounds on a keyboard, because it's cheaper. Why do you want to pay ten brass players or horns men when you can replace them with one keyboard? It has always been seen as business decisions and they never thought it might affect the integrity of the music- resulting in a lot of talented musicians being out of a job and replaced by a drum machine or keyboard. The more charismatic ones, band leaders and singers, survive because they have a personality. A lot of the session men and solo musicians from the bands, on the other hand, are really suffering.

LOOKING AT THE RECENT COMMOTION IN TOGO, HAVE YOU EVER ENCOUNTERED POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES ALONG THE WAY?

Not so much. To be honest, I keep away as much as I can from places where there are troubles. But politics is never too far away in a place like Africa. As somebody was telling me the other day, people forget that these things that are happening in Togo today were happening 25 years ago in Ghana too – which now is considered to be one of the more stable countries of the region. Things can change quickly, just look at Cote D'Ivoire for instance. It's always in the back of your mind though.

I ASSUME YOU WENT BACK TO GHANA WITH FINISHED COPIES OF THE ALBUMS? HOW WAS THE FEEDBACK?

Oh, Fantastic! That was one of the best parts of the whole project actually. Frankly, the best thing was really seeing the reactions of some of the young guys I know in Ghana. They wouldn't think people of their age - I'm thirty years old now - would be interested in music from the sixties and seventies. They were amazed. To see the album come out, to hear it re-mastered and see the reviews and response the album has got gave the young guys a real energy boost to try and go on with the rhythms their fathers had established. The best friend I've made in Ghana is the musician Ebo Taylor, who's on both editions of 'Ghana Soundz' and is teaching at the moment at the music department of university. Obviously he gains a lot of respect from the younger generation as he's one of the big figures in highlife and afro-fusion music. Although highlife music isn't considered quite relevant to their lives any longer, the fact that this pretty old guy and his music receive interest from abroad makes them look back at his achievements.

SO THEY START RECORDING SEVENTIES INFLUENCED RHYTHMS AGAIN?

It is hard. What African countries need is real investment. We often complain about major label record companies, rightly but however much we can criticise the motivations to make money and to spread their name, companies like EMI, Decca or Phillips settled in Africa in the seventies. They were there and were putting investment in music at that time, releasing records and building recording studios. And that sadly enough doesn't happen anymore today. There's no investment from outside, these countries need recording studios, up-to-date equipment, trained sound engineers otherwise they're always going to be stuck in producing music that doesn't quite live up to the standards that are expected abroad. It's always going to be done the cheap way, because nobody invests. It doesn't matter whether it's foreign investment or African, it just needs to be done. I believe the last proper analogue recording studio in Ghana was built in the fifties and is closed now. It's a terrible change, like the heart is being ripped out from the music industry. That was the only proper recording studio left, now what's left are these small digital studios - obviously quite often with just cheap equipment. Back then globalization was emerging and the big companies wanted global presence, whereas now they're happier to spend 80 million pounds on the new Robbie Williams contract than spending 20,000 pounds to set up a decent recording studio in Ghana or something. It's small change to these majors, but they simply don't do it.



BOTH GHANA AND NIGERIA HAVE KNOWN BRITISH COLONISATION, WHEREAS BENIN – HOME BASE OF T.P. ORCHESTRE POLY-RYTHMO - WAS OCCUPIED BY THE FRENCH. DO YOU SEE ANY DIFFERENCE RELATED TO THIS FACT REFLECTING IN THE MUSIC?

I'm not so sure about the music, but there's definitely a Beninois influence that comes out mostly in the vocals more than anything. Benin, although it's a francophone country, is kind of sandwiched along with Togo between Nigeria and Ghana. Nigeria being such a huge presence next door - literally Benin's musical capital Cotonou is at a stone's throw from Lagos. So they are very closely related and that's why they play a lot of afro-beat and funk. And the recording studios in Lagos were so close, that the Poly-Rythmo band used to spend time over there, soak up the sounds and record. But by the same account the traffic could be the other way, because of the linguistic similarity they'd also travel to Cote D'Ivoire, Congo or Cameroon and pick up influences over there. They are quite a unique band - they'll play afro-beat and funk just as soukous or salsa.

ON TOP OF THAT THEY WERE EXTREMELY PROLIFIC, HAVING PROBABLY RELEASED UPWARDS OF FIFTY LPS AND A HUNDRED 45S YOU MENTIONED IN YOUR LINER NOTES.

Exactly, that was really why I was so intrigued by them. Compiling the 'Ghana Soundz' compilations I kept on finding these Poly-Rythmo records. Everywhere they'd pop up, so on my third trip I decided to visit Benin as well. I took one of these cars that pass from Accra to Lagos and arrive in Cotonou crossing Togo. I spent a week over there unravelling some of their stories and principally try and find decent recordings. It was a really interesting experience, one for which I really had to root up my French lessons. (laughs)

WITH THE UPCOMING 7" SERIES YOU GUYS MAKE A SWITCH TO CARIBBEAN SOUND. HOW DID YOU END UP OVER THERE?

Basically, the last couple of years we've been concentrating on West-African releases and got a name for being an Afro label - which is fair enough as we've only released African music so far. But my initial idea has always been to represent music from the Caribbean, or Latin America, whatever I enjoy actually. In my deejay sets I mix it all up with reggae, dancehall and funk. So that's kind of our philosophy, music that has a jazzy or a funky edge but generally originates from a tropical part of the world, or is influenced from that part of the world. I see it as a natural progression. More specifically we'll be taking it to the Caribbean and hopefully to Cuba, Colombia and all these countries.

IT'S NICE TO HEAR SUCH A STORMING TRACK FROM ORCHESTRA BAWOBAB ON ONE OF THOSE SINGLES.

It's one of the only funk recordings they did. It's especially interesting because it's a very Senegalese band, and Senegal isn't known for funk music at all. I know people who spent a lot of time researching music in Senegal and literally there's maybe two or three funk tracks recorded from Senegal ever. And it's a heavy heavy track! It has the deep guitar sound, which is kind of their trademark, but rhythmically it is so very different. Mind you, a lot of these bands back in that time played all kinds of music on stage, but they didn't necessarily record that music. The record buying public - this is what I stress quite a lot in the sleeve notes - are not necessarily the people going out to dance. In Africa in the sixties and seventies you had to be very wealthy middle class to afford records and adequate hi-fi equipment. Therefore quite often the records were aimed at the record buying public, which most of time was a different public than that which attended the clubs. A lot of people were listening to the radio and were in to James Brown as much as they were into traditional African music. So the records are not always the whole story of these bands. If you speak to some of the big highlife band members, that are famous only for their highlife recordings, they say they used to play jazz, bossa nova, salsa, funk, whatever the people shouted. If somebody from the public shouted 'James Brown' or 'Miles Davis' they'd have a go. These were big bands and were fairly versatile. But when it came down to recording it was up to the managers.

THE FIRST SINGLE TO GET IN THE STORES, HOWEVER, WILL BE BY THE URUGUAYAN CANDOMBE PERCUSSIONIST JORGE GRAF. HOW DID THIS ONE COME ABOUT?

One day we were listening to it in the office and we said to each other that we should try and find these guys. Five minutes later we found out thanks to the internet that the record label was still there, sent a mail and got an affirmative reply the very same day. Frisina was eager from the first minute as well. Without doubt one of the easiest ones! (laughs)

REMIXES, LIKE THE GERARDO FRISINA OR QUANTIC ONES, ARE SO GREAT BECAUSE YOUNG PEOPLE WILL PROBABLY GET INTRODUCED TO SOUNDWAY BY THEM.

That's really important. One of the main problems with so called 'world music' - which is a term I rather dislike - is that it's run quite often by people who aren't young anymore, which is absolutely not wrong as such. But it's important to give young people a different idea of world music. It's hard though, because we're actually doing a thing that doesn't directly fit into one can, the 'world' people often think it's too funky whereas funk people quite often think it's too African. Unfortunately retailers too often classify our albums simply as world music, this way jazz or funk lovers don't easily get to know our music. We're getting there though and we're starting to establish a network step by step.



CAN WE EXPECT MORE FROM THE SAME CARIBBEAN STABLES?

We're in the process of trying to do a whole album of calypso funk and sort of fusion - a project for which we are focusing on the whole West-Indian sound from that period, and in particular the kind of stuff that's fused with funk and jazz. As with all these albums, they are not the sort of things that happen overnight, they take a lot of research - finding the records, tracking people down and going there to meet them. We're aiming at early next year for this one.'

APART FROM THAT YOU'LL BE HEADING EAST OVER TO ETHIOPIA IN SEPTEMBER?

Yes. I was there before, but Will (Holland, aka Quantic) and I went to Ethiopia last October to meet Mulatu (Astatqé) and talk about this project, which basically consists of recording some old and new stuff with a band that'll be a mixture of young and old, Ethiopian and international artists. Involving Will, Poets of Rhythm drummer Max, LA based trumpeter Todd Simon (from Antibalas fame among others) and many others. We're putting out some kind of retrospective of Mulatu tracks and plan to put on a concert in the end.

IS ALL THIS TAKING PLACE ON BEHALF OF SOUNDWAY?

Exactly.

IMPRESSIVE! AS PREFACE: IN WHICH WAY DOES THE ETHIOPIAN DIFFER FROM WEST AFRICA?

The main difference to me quite simply is Mulatu; I've been a fan of him since the very first day I heard his music. I was sixteen years old and went crazy from the very first minute I heard it. So I went over to Addis Ababa pretty much with the intention of meeting him and getting some more records. When Will and I were over there, we asked him the same thing and he told us there were a lot of similarities but obviously there is a distinctive Ethiopian character. Believe me when I say Mulatu was single-handedly responsible for introducing his experiences of Latin music in New York and London back into Ethiopian rhythms. But of course you know that Latin rhythms originate from West Africa so he was taking something West African over the Atlantic to Cuba and on to New York and then took it back to Africa but to the Eastern side. These are the sort of stories that fascinate me, the movement and transplantation of rhythm around the world. Note that the Ethiopian sound is a very Middle East sound too, it's a country in between the Middle East and Africa, which reflects in its very African music but Middle Eastern vocals. In the end it's all Ethiopian. (laughs)

BUYING A MULATU RECORD AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN?

I saved some serious money to buy that record. Somebody must have had a box of these records, because all of the London shops all of a sudden had this record on the wall for fifty pounds.

APART FROM SOUNDWAY YOU'RE INVOLVED IN THE STRICTLY NIGERIAN EKOSOUND IMPRINT, IS THAT STILL ALIVE?

My partner Kayode Samuel, who's Nigerian, is still residing over there at the moment, so it's a bit quiet now. But we'll be putting out this Uhuru band featuring Tony Allen on drums and again Quantic did remixes of them a year ago, but they'll be released soon.

WHAT'S UP WITH PIAS FRANCE?

Well, our distributor went bust in England last year and they just refused to give us our stock back. And Pias has got five hundred units of each our titles and to this day they refuse to give them back to us. I can understand that they don't pay us, because they said they had to pay the old distributor. That's one thing, but they still have the whole stock, and they aren't giving it to anyone. I spent months speaking to a guy at Pias and he simply refused to tell us how much was there, and he wouldn't get us any of our stock out of their warehouse even though we had letters from the administrator. It's ridiculous!

HORRIBLE MAN! TO ROUND OFF THE INTERVIEW WITH MORE JOYFUL THOUGHTS, WHICH AFRICAN SOUNDS OF TODAY DO YOU DIG?

Congotronics' by Konono Nr.1 sounds hot and came out of the blue, which makes it a very nice surprise. To me there are so many talented artists in Africa and I think for instance hip-hop is a great example, there are just so many talented rappers and like I said before they don't have the resources and they are not as in touch with what's going on abroad that quite often the music quality suffers because of this. So hopefully we'll move into a period that just because music is from Africa or Latin America doesn't mean it'll end up next to, let's say, throat singing from the North of Mongolia. Just because they are outside from the Western world doesn't mean they need to get filed as 'world'. I hope this kind of music can be seen alongside European and North American music in the future.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR YOU GUYS? CAN WE EXPECT A THIRD INSTALLMENT OF 'GHANA SOUNDZ' FOR EXAMPLE?

Hopefully, there's about half the album I have at the moment. It's just about locating the last final tracks, but I haven't found the time to travel to Ghana again. I'm not saying one hundred percent sure, but there's a fair chance there'll be a third version! For the near future, as you know, we're about to start putting out more 12s and 45s.

FOR MORE INFO VISIT www.soundwayrecords.com.

FACING THE FUTURE



Interview: Andrew Laughlin & Ross Breadmore
Illustration: Daniel Gibbs

Not wishing to come across all Eric Cantona on you, but the film industry is a lot like a vast ocean. Almost endless in terms of opportunity, it has various eager players farming its bounty. There are huge trawlers, blanket sweeping the masses. Then there are specialist vessels, expertly targeting individual quarry. However, there are also tiny fishing boats housing two men armed with only a rod and a net against the elements and competition. Two such individuals are John Beynon and Ian Mackintosh, both founding members of Faceworker Films in Sheffield who scored a major catch (that'll be the last maritime analogy, promise) upon achieving 2nd place in last years International stakes of the 48 Hour Film Competition (www.48hourfilm.com) with innovative short film *Andyman*.

The company has been established for over 3 years now, having already produced short film *Justice in Action*, numerous music videos for new (Borotski) and more established artists (Chicken Legs Weaver) as well as the ubiquitous *Andyman*. They know as well as anyone about the highs and lows of being at the very grassroots of the UK Film Industry and so we eagerly caught up with them in the capacious confines of a Sheffield pub.

When was the moment that a keen interest in film led to a desire to pursue a career in the industry?

John Beynon: Probably dropping out of University. Although, I've always enjoyed films since I was very little.

So what kind of obstacles did you come up against when you were setting up the company?

Ian Mackintosh: Probably the biggest one was time. Finding the time to produce things when we are both doing full time jobs and so obviously everything we do with the film stuff was outside those hours.

How did you fund the initial set up? Buying equipment and that kind of thing?

JB: Ah, credit. We didn't really apply for grants or funding because from an artistic point of view, to be completely independent and being able to do whatever we wanted and not having any kind of limits, then its important to self fund your projects. But also we didn't have the CV for it. If you are gonna get funding then I guess people would want to see evidence of film experience or a film degree which we have bits and pieces of and we definitely had the desire but we thought that being as equipment is not that expensive these days and after taking out a big loan, it was worth going for it.

So how do you two work together? Who takes what responsibilities?

IM: Well, I'm a photographer and in my background I have always naturally done lots of photography and so have ended up on the camera a lot more. I'd say that John is usually doing whatever else needs doing off camera and we have other contributors and actors who we can call on to get involved.

JB: Its also about friends and family getting involved and helping out. It could even be someone who is in the pub at the right time. We're part of the South Yorkshire Film Makers Network too which is where we are in touch with quite a few other film makers in the area and we met quite a few people through the 48 Hour Film Competition including people in the States. But generally films we make are done by ourselves within the time constraints we operate under.

So how did you go about tackling the 48hr Film Competition?

JB: Well, you turn up in the evening on the day and are given an envelope with all the things you're required to use in the film, like the prop which was a balloon animal. That had to be in the film along with a line of dialogue which was 'what's behind the curtain, show me what's behind the curtain'. It had to be five minutes long and all the teams were given the same props and things to use except that every team was given a different genre. We got given super hero.

IM: Then we went back to my flat and started coming up with ideas for a super hero. We'd done a practice run the week before in which we had given ourselves random things to include into a film and then got lots of ideas together to see what was doable in 48hrs.

Did you essentially have to keep it simple with *Andyman*?

IM: Yeah, the idea originally came out because many of our initial ideas were great ideas but were essentially unworkable.

JB: The final concept worked well because we came up with a simple structure for making it with two sections of decent dialogue and a montage in the middle. The montage had lots of easy visual gags.

IM: Yeah, the montage allowed us to just go out for a day and film this sequence which could be looked at and then cut down to the very best bits.

JB: We won the Sheffield heat including best film and best screen play. Then we went to San Jose in America in March 2005 for the World Final where all the different winners from various cities around the world entered for the big prize. In the end we came 2nd out of 600 entries, which we were quite pleased with although we were obviously quite disappointed that we didn't win.

So after that success, are you considering diversifying into more commercially orientated films?

JB: Well, not really. We've done bits and pieces of commercial stuff like filming gigs or plays or we recently did an instructional film for a machine that drills holes in rail tracks for this company, but on the whole, because of the time issue we'd rather be doing things that we are interested in; on subjects and characters that we like.

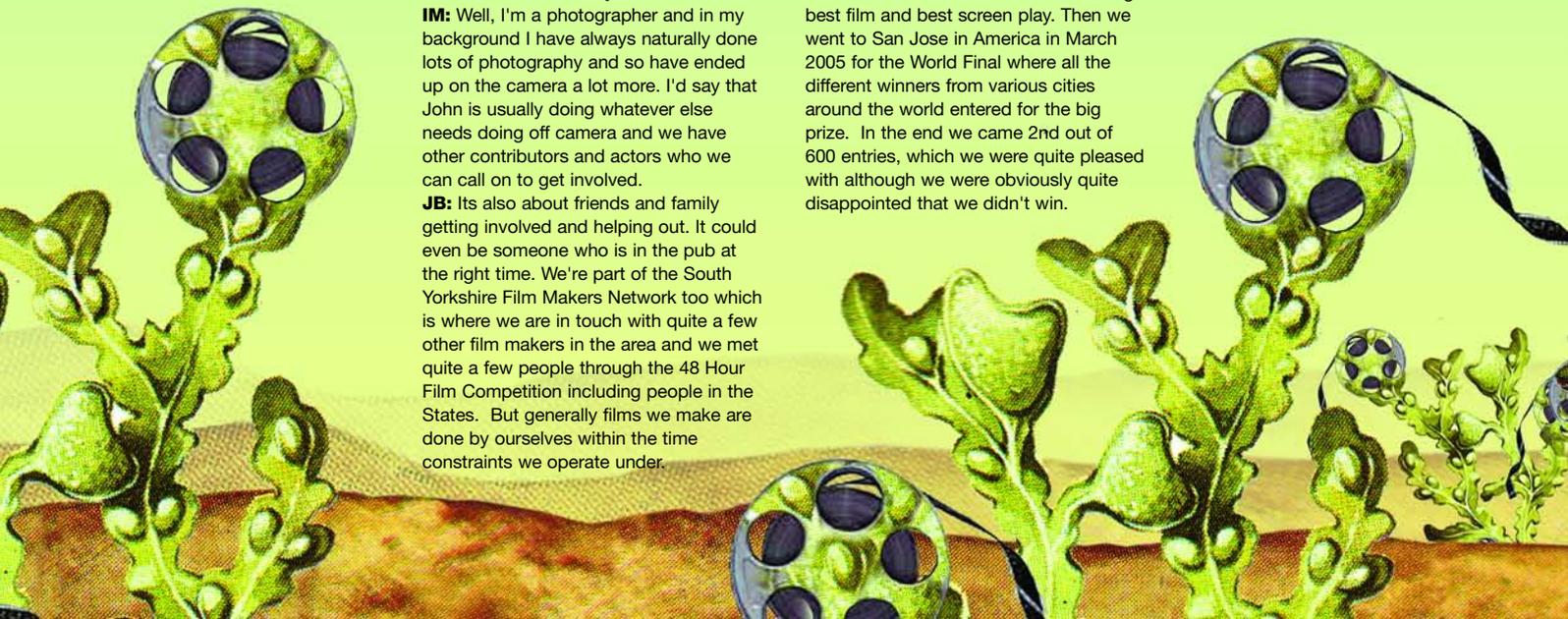
Do you feel that there would be a problem maintaining your integrity if you were to do films of a more commercial nature?

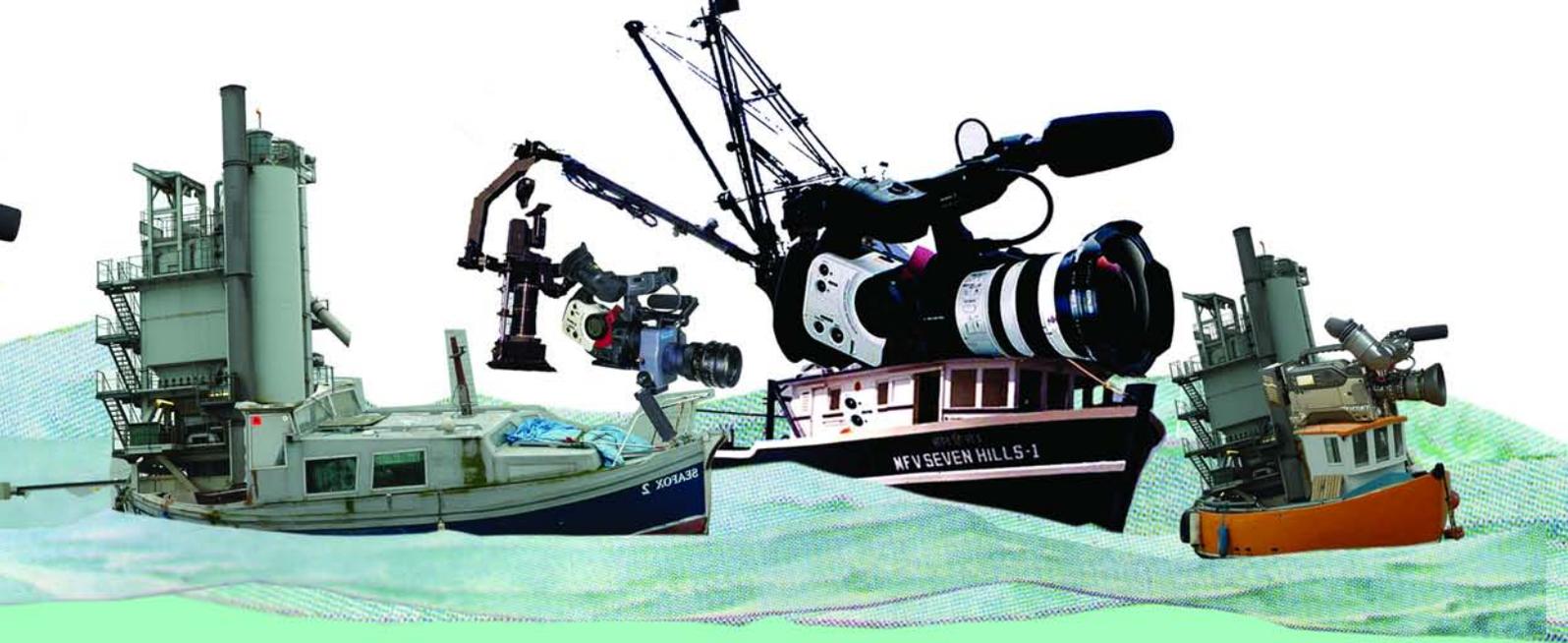
JB: Perhaps, but if you are gonna make films that are going to be seen by people and get serious distribution then you do have to give up a bit of that integrity.

IM: I think that it is still about integrity as you still try and do the job to the best of your ability, even if the job is functional. Even things like the instructional video for the drilling tool, you try and make it as interesting and stimulating as possible despite the obvious constraints. We're keen to make sure it's not all projects like that. But if a project is totally commercial then you are providing a service and therefore you give them what they want to the best of your ability. I can see it now, www.faceworker.co.uk. Cheap commercial films!

JB: Have camera will travel.

IM: Have computer and camera will travel.





So how do you go about making a film?

JB: A lot of the process is driven by circumstance. If you are doing a project for someone else and say, we are doing the camera work but they have their own director, then it will be different to a totally Faceworker owned production. Usual scenario is me and Ian will come up with ideas that we want to turn into a film. Then we plan and work out where we want to shoot it. Do the story boarding. Positioning the scenes here and there including the critical scenes. Working how much coverage you are going to need and so on. But most of our work is done, if you like, on the hoof. We very rarely work from scripts, but that of course depends on the strength of the script available, if there is one.

IM: A lot of our work has been a process of getting used to this ridiculously good video camera we have. I mean, I never read the manual so I just had to figure out how to use it as I went. Its a similar thing to not being trained at making a film, you learn your own way not somebody else's. This means that you come up with interesting ways to do things.

JB: We use an Apple Mac along with Final Cut Pro for editing. The software's pretty good so after you have got the footage on the computer then you can get it on the timeline and chop it up, get some music on there and whatever other stuff you need.

IM: I think we have a completely unique editing and filming technique and I think our approach is why Andyman did so well. When we went to the screenings of all the entries, it was clear that a lot of the other entries had been from people with a film education or who were part of the film set. They all tried to make traditional short films and so a lot of them felt very similar. A bit formulaic.

So who else in the film industry really inspires you?

JB: Well, at the moment I am into quite a lot of foreign films. I'm going through a phase of going to the library and renting some obscure title. There's lots out there.

IM: Nobody really.

Well whose work really drove you to get into films in the first place?

IM: It was an accident really. I just drifted into it and then found upon a medium that I really liked. There isn't really a defining person but I suppose if I was pushed then it would be someone like Orson Welles. He wanted film to be a free expression and so he went out and did everything his own way. He didn't say that 'I want to be like that person or this person' he just did his own thing, which I suppose is the way we try and do things. To always approach things in our own way. I have a history of a film degree and know a bit about cinema but I don't have any old school training so a lot of our work is 'blagged' in some way. I think our approach is therefore pretty fresh and we are learning as we go and getting better.

Do you watch other people's shorts?

John laughs loudly

Sorry, we'd better rephrase that. Do you watch other people's short films?

IM: (to John) I knew you were gonna laugh at that. Sometimes but not often. There isn't many places you can watch short films. Channel 4 used to have the Shooting Gallery and I used to watch that quite a lot. There are often shorts on before films as well. But, in this country it's not a well supported scene. Somewhere like France has a culture of going to see short films, this country is not as strong. In this country you don't get big money for short films unless you are riding on the back of some other success. By this I mean people like Chris Morris or video director Chris Cunningham. There isn't actually a decent outlet for short films other than people making short films as a step up to film careers. It's just the way things have evolved in this country. I admire American cinema too. American's make the best cinema, they basically are cinema. You can't really argue with world domination.

So, are there any other awards or achievements out there that you would really like to reach?

IM: Generally, I think self-satisfaction is my goal.
General Laughter

You can take that in a lot of ways!

IM: Yeah, well if I consider it to be good and I'm happy with it then it's a job done as far as I'm concerned. I don't have a great deal of time for public opinion. If someone doesn't like a film then they can shove it. If someone does like a film, then that's Ok but I'm not too bothered either way. If I'm happy with a film, then I'm happy with it. People are always going to have their opinions and well, if they don't like it then they're just wrong.

JB: I'd like to be in Timeout magazine. That would be my goal.

So what is next for Faceworker Films, in the near and distant future?

IM: Well, the very near future is The Wet House, which is a project that Craig Shepherd one of our actors is putting together which is about a heroin half-way house. It's kind of a staged documentary. A lot of it will be improvised. We're filming it and releasing it. It's received funding from Burngreave Arts Centre. I think it's called Creative Burngreave who are funding it. Ian Mchale is also going to be in it, who is another actor we work with. He was the star of Justice in Action. It's a totally unique project.

JB: Also, the funding that the project has secured does not carry any criteria over the filming, which usually applies to film funding. So we should have quite a lot of artistic freedom.

IM: Yeah, so we are doing that and we are also doing another music video for Chicken Legs Weaver, who are a Sheffield band.

JB: And another music video for Borotski who we've been working with for quite a long time. We've done music videos for him before and he also did the soundtrack for Justice in Action for us.

IM: He did the soundtrack for Andyman too.

So that's in the near future but what's in the more distant future if you can see that far?

IM: The Bear Man, which we'll tackle later in 2006. It's a short film written by Cuon Jacques who also wrote Andyman. Its sort of a bit of a fairy tale about a guy who is essentially an outcast from society and the only way that he can interact with people is by wearing this bear outfit. He lives on the outskirts of this village and steals things from people's houses. There's more in there as well, but you'll have to wait and find out. After that, well that's a bit too far into the future for us to think about. Apart from World domination, American style!

To watch Andyman and other films by Faceworker, please see www.faceworker.co.uk



KAAPSTAD, STAND UP!

FROM LA TO THE CPT AND BACK

WRITTEN BY SLOTHANGELES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FERNANDO CARDENAS AND PATRICK McCARTHY

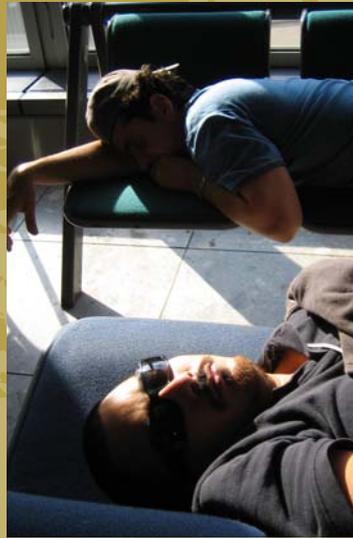
Yo. It's pretty crazy going back to a place that you never thought you'd go to a first time. Like finding yourself in the Himalayas, sherpa in tow and nothing but mammoth ass mountains in sight. Twice, my unforeseeable double-dip came in the form of multiple trips to Capetown, South Africa (in Afrikanz, Kaapstad). It's as if the place has a special kind of power that keeps pulling me back and when you're there you feel that energy engulf and you don't want to leave. The CPT has this feeling about it, like anything can happen and most likely will. Some of it good, some of hard but all of it unexpected and interesting. When I was there in '98 I was shown a lot of love in a place where I didn't know anyone. In '05, I convinced some of the crew from home to cruise with me as I researched a documentary that I have in the works. But the true story is the place and the people that are making it happen at any means necessary.

01 // PASSPORTS, STEWARDESSES AND \$12 SANDWICHES



Team Africa. (Fern, P Dirty, Sloth, L-R) Peep the passport pouch I keep around my neck. Fools were capping on me relentlessly for that shit. Holler!

So... just so everyone knows this story starts at LAX, where an hour before getting on a plane headed towards Africa I realized that I had left my cell phone in the taxi we took to the airport. Sweet!



You can't front on the 28 hours+ of straight travelling (12.5 hrs to London, 12 hours to Capetown with a four hour layover in between). Needless to say much of our time was spent drinking Johnnie Walker with the Stewardesses in the galley and trolling the back of the plane for bored debutantes. By the end of the second consecutive 12 hour flight P Dirty could be seen running laps around the aisles. It was pretty ridiculous.

This is what a \$12 sandwich looks like. Purchase yours directly from Heathrow Airport.

02 // THE ARRIVAL

Capetown, SA





The drive in says it all. Like most big cities the disparity between the rich and poor in Capetown is quite evident.

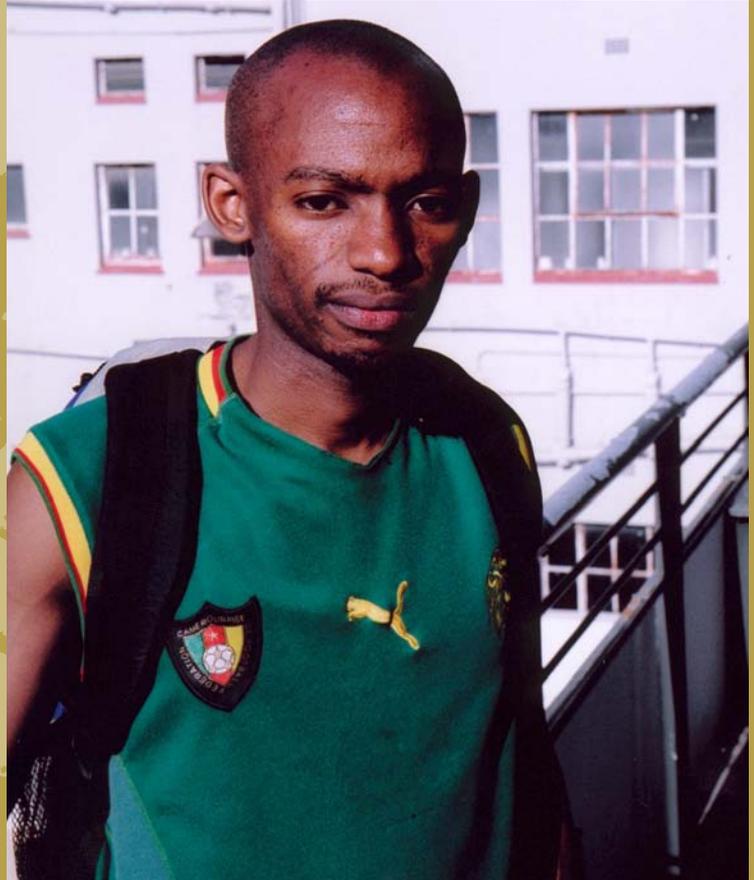


This is where we stayed, just so you know. I mean this shit was nicer than my crib at home. From the balcony we had a great view of the massive and omnipresent Table Mountain (1), which always impresses the honeys. The mountain has a tremendous presence and acts almost like a compass, as you can navigate your way through the city by it. A special shout to the beautiful Tammy who let us into our accommodation and more importantly got the Direct TV to work (2) and finally, The Crash (dirty, 3).



Neo picked us up the first night we were in Capetown in this tiny ass car. He tried to poker face it but his jaw kind of dropped when faced with the 3 big ass Americans that composed Team Africa. We'd met in '98, kept in touch and was he a true gangster when it came time to make sure that Team Africa was taken care of. He is a editor/writer/director and all around hustler in the independent film scene with some projects coming up that I'm not at liberty to print right here.

These masks were in the loft. Sometimes they were our only reminder that we were in Africa.



Long St, out front of Mr. Pickwicks - café to the the stars. Besides having fine ass food and coffee, Pickwicks also have the illest milkshakes and hangover breakfast cures this side of the Congo. A real classic on Long St., always bumping ill tunes and a diverse crowd. Shouts to my girl Sara who learned English by listening to Madlib and Doom and cooks a mean fry-up. For reals.



Trust that street art is alive and well in the CPT.

04 // THE CPT PROPER

The trip really started when we hooked up with Weelz, AKA Tyler Murphy. It's funny because I had this image of him from the footage I'd shot in '98 when he co-owned the only hip hop store in Capetown and he looked almost exactly the same. It was a trip. He is widely recognised as the first white graffiti writer in Capetown and probably South Africa. He is now one of the highly sought after artists in Capetown working at a tattoo shop 'Wildfire' off Long St. He also edits and publishes a local graff/skate zine called 'Real Life' and is currently trying to adapt it into a DVD format. Most importantly, Tyler acts a mentor for a lot of the young writers in town, lending advice or experience and holding events that take kids off the street and teach them something creative. Just a real dude putting it down for where he's from. www.baselinestudio.co.za

Some of Weelz work. Before and After.



Weelz introduced us to Iggy, the madman documentarian who hustles just as hard on the street as he does in the editing room. Homeboy was working on a documentary about the VOX serial killers who terrorised the local townships. He showed me some of the footage and let me tell you that Iggy is madly committed to what the authenticity of his work. He took me to his editing facility which was like this a top notch studio near the waterfront in Capetown complete with complementary sandwiches and beers. Dude's got game.



We had heard about these kids doing some ill web and motion graphics type stuff but we didn't know that we were going there until Weelz told us he needed to get some things done for the 'Real Life' DVD. We went to Observatory, AKA OBZ, which is bit outside of downtown Capetown. Through the security gate we met Justin and the Met04 crew. The Met04 crew seemed to be involved in numerous ventures including commercials, video and web using animated graphics with a unique blend of tribal and urban aesthetic. But they clearly have their hands in many different pots as there latest project was a mixtape (!!!?!) Highlighting different musical talents from in and around capetown. They also had the best Cron we found in the CPT, which is no small thing in my book and something they would definitely be proud of. www.met04.com



05 // CRAZY DAYS, COLD ASS NIGHTS

Lots of nights were spent playing pool and smoking trees at Marvel, also on Long Street. Actually, a lot of days were spent there to. DJ Riko holdin' it down.

And other nights were spent fighting over who got to sleep next to the space heater and smoking trees because when it's summer in the States it's definitely winter in Africa.

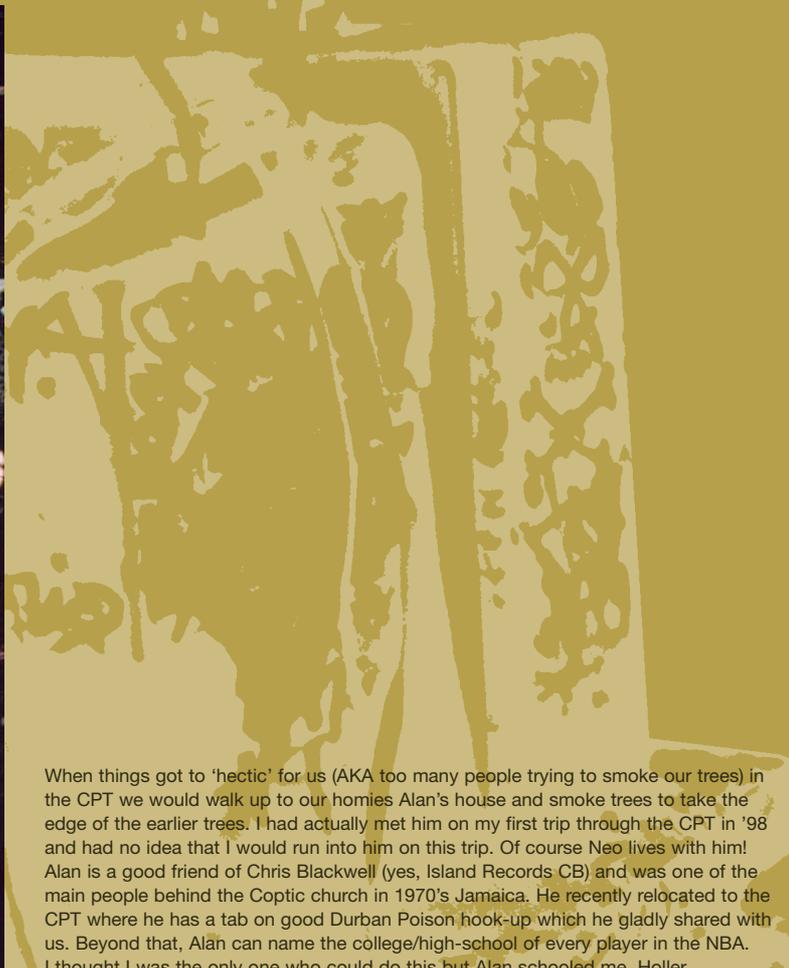


Then mornings were usually spent recharging in Pickwicks recharging on impossible to eat sandwiches made by the most beautiful girls in the world and trying to figure out where to begin our day though it usually found us. Like when we met Gzus, a man we had heard whispers about since our arrival in the CPT... and he did not disappoint either. Part rapper, part production designer, Gzus is the one and the same 'Jesus' that you heard about roaming the nightclubs of New York in a white dashiki. He is also responsible for production design on the Get Rich or Die Trying album cover and recounted in detail how he actually had to shoot the pane of glass for the photoshoot. His latest musical endeavour, Garrick Suspect, can only be bought from directly from the man and when we talked to Gzus, sales were up. The man has stories aplenty and if you meet him, you'll know, but good luck trying to keep up with him because he is global.



Sloth and Gzus - the cover to our album 'Reflections'

I know in England they got this shit but we don't have these signs in LA, stating the nightly newspaper headlines (in this case the Sowetan). But still this shit is really weird. The first one is pretty self-explanatory, the second is a bit more open to interpretation.



When things got to 'hectic' for us (AKA too many people trying to smoke our trees) in the CPT we would walk up to our homies Alan's house and smoke trees to take the edge of the earlier trees. I had actually met him on my first trip through the CPT in '98 and had no idea that I would run into him on this trip. Of course Neo lives with him! Alan is a good friend of Chris Blackwell (yes, Island Records CB) and was one of the main people behind the Coptic church in 1970's Jamaica. He recently relocated to the CPT where he has a tab on good Durban Poison hook-up which he gladly shared with us. Beyond that, Alan can name the college/high-school of every player in the NBA. I thought I was the only one who could do this but Alan schooled me. Holler.

On the way down the hill, back into town, there is the roadside grocer to end all. We got shit to last us the trip for like 6 bucks. Bet.



Enter the Archtypes.



One night we were at a club and Iggy (who'll we'll come back to later, trust me it's worth it) introduced me to these two kids named Hyphen and T.O.P. and they busted for me. I was mad impressed by their flow and in particular their word choice which is especially ill because they probably learned English as their 3rd language. Their crew was called the Archtypes and Hyphen told me there was a 3rd member of the crew- "the playboy" – who was around somewhere. We chilled for a bit but then they peaced and I told them I would catch up soon. Later on, me, Iggy and Pat were hanging with some girls and this chilled out kid named Lolo who had a way with rolling the cron. After a while, Lolo told me he had a crew that he performed with and that I should check out. Of course, his crew was the Archtypes. We made plans to hook up with Lolo later. He said he could pick up the ill Cron. Well' lets hook up then.

NEXT ISSUE: Tune in next time for a Capetown Graffiti tour hosted by Weelz, 3D Graffiti hotel rooms, at home and in the studio with the Archtypes, an introduction to Isaac Mutant, Say Thank You and other tight shit.



NIKKI KELI NAVARRO

PLAYING HOST TO LAIDBACK HIP HOP BEATS ON SOME OCCASIONS JUST AS COMFORTABLY AS MORE MINIMAL HOUSE RHYTHMS ON OTHERS, THE CALM DUBBED OUT SOUNDSCAPES NIKKI'S PAINTING PROVIDE A PERFECT PLACE TO STOP AND GATHER YOUR THOUGHTS. AFTER LEAVING CALIFORNIA FOR AN INITIAL STINT OF AUDIO SCHOOL IN AMSTERDAM, SHE MOVED BACK TO NASHVILLE LATE 2004 TO CONTINUE HER STUDIES FULL TIME. ALTHOUGH CURRENTLY INTERNING AT A LOCAL LABEL/ STUDIO IN THE AREA SHE EXPLAINED THAT "SINCE SEEING HOW THE BIGGER, MORE COMMERCIAL LABELS WORK AND HOW THEY PUSH AN IMAGE MORE THAN REAL MUSIC" SHE'S READY TO PART WITH THE ARRANGEMENT.

Can you tell me a bit about Ndorphin and how you got involved with them?

A long time ago, when I first got into making beats, I met a guy from Germany named Daniel Weisser. He was my mentor in ways when I first started, pointing me to sampling for the first time and giving me some of my first programs. He and some friends started up a netlabel/ pdf magazine a few years ago sharing art, photography and music of all genres from around the globe... and best of all it was all free and non-profit which makes it even greater, knowing it's truly for the love of it. Two years ago they had asked me to do a release with them. My first was "niKKi- The Infamous Often" ..named after one of my dogs, Often. It was pretty much just raw, minimal, deep downtempo beats and rhythms. There was really good feedback from the release and they asked me to put out another one, but a different genre I tend to make as well, minimal tech house/ minimal dub techno. That one was "Keli-Tell An American To Vote", named after the coming election. I made a special downtempo/ trip hop beat for this one named "Crooked", dedicated to the President. I feel like Ndorphin has the right idea and when Multilink found me I got more hope that there are still true dedicated people that put this art out for the real reasons.

How about Night Drive music, how did you hook up with them?

Back in 2001-2002, I had my beats posted up on a site called Besonic where you could post mp3s, pictures, etc. The label boss Andre Kronert, aka Neurotron, scouted me out from there. He heard my beats and wanted to hear more. So I stayed up all night and made 2 new songs and sent them to him in the morning. He totally vibed with them, along with his crew, and they wanted to release me on vinyl. I was totally shocked with big smiles, my first real project and my first real release (and on vinyl), I was stoked. This label mainly focuses on minimal techhouse and minimal techno but is now working with all kinds of artist from all genres.

Your two Ndorphin releases are under different names and although they explore different styles, they definitely share similar qualities. Do you approach tracks under each moniker very differently from the start or do they kind of fall into a Keli or NiKKi form during the process?

Well, I use my first name niKKi for when I make more downtempo/ trip hoppy/ hip hoppy beats and when my minimal tech comes out, I use my middle name Keli. When I sit down to make a beat though, I never know what is going to come out, no control what so ever..heh. I just let it flow out whenever it's flowin.

You got any interesting plans for the future?

Many plans, many hopes and many dreams for my future. I'm hoping to start up a store/ recording studio/ rehearsal space and eventually a label very soon with a collective of artists and engineers. Most likely this will be located in Atlanta. Other than that my plans for now are just hanging out, painting, making music, chillin with my dog, and looking for a new path to wonder on.

www.ndorphin.org
www.night-drive-music.com
www.myspace.com/analognikkibeats

1ST
MARK



Words: Sam Barker
Illustration: Erik Skodvin

You'd be forgiven for not knowing who Tstuart is. There are a few tracks floating around on compilations by Merck, Argentina based Igloo, Chicago's Consumers Research and Development Label, and a handful of remixes strewn about. But Travis is no newcomer, and this isn't his first album for Merck; he also works under the aliases Syndrone and Machine Drum.

As Machine Drum, he has produced some outstanding electronica albums from the heavy 2001 debut 'Now You Know' to the refined punctuation of 'Bidnezz' in 2004. Clinical, hiphop influenced beats that teeter on the edge of dsp chaos. A liberal smearing of funk and a satisfying, dynamic punch that stands apart from other mid tempo IDM.

Travis explores the chaos as Syndrone. Under this pseudonym one expects multiple time signatures, polyrhythms, and generally weirder areas of electronic composition. With album names like 'Triskaideka' and 'Salmataxia', Syndrone could be seen as his scientist persona.

So where does Tstuart fit into all of this? The fact he has chosen to use his real name indicates a more personal offering. Unlike early Machine Drum productions, this latest album is a CD only release, suggesting it is more at home on your hi-fi than out in the club. The title could be seen as a reference to the impending destruction of humanity predicted by Nostradamus and others for 2012; a result of the exponential trends in social conditions and behaviour. However there isn't much to suggest we are dealing with armageddon and ultimate doom here. On the contrary, there is a pleasant and calming positivity to 'Living Exponentially'.

The album begins with some percussive electronic noises not unlike his other productions but here the ambiance is more like a rehearsal room than a laboratory. We are next introduced to a rolling six bar phrase played on acoustic guitar, that soon develops into what sounds like a jazz band jamming away with trumpets and strings held together by lightly processed acoustic percussion. The sound is more european to my ears, the structure is loose and the ideas ebb and flow like a good jam session. I'm not hearing much Machine Drum, but my foot is tapping.

We slide into the second track and the beats have subsided entirely, making way for some lush, orchestral textures and what sounds like a dulcimer shimmering about the stereo field. The pace picks up again in 'This Year Kindergarten Starts at 10AM', taking a more latin influence with some driving, speedy Soca-styled beats and quirky melodic phrases.

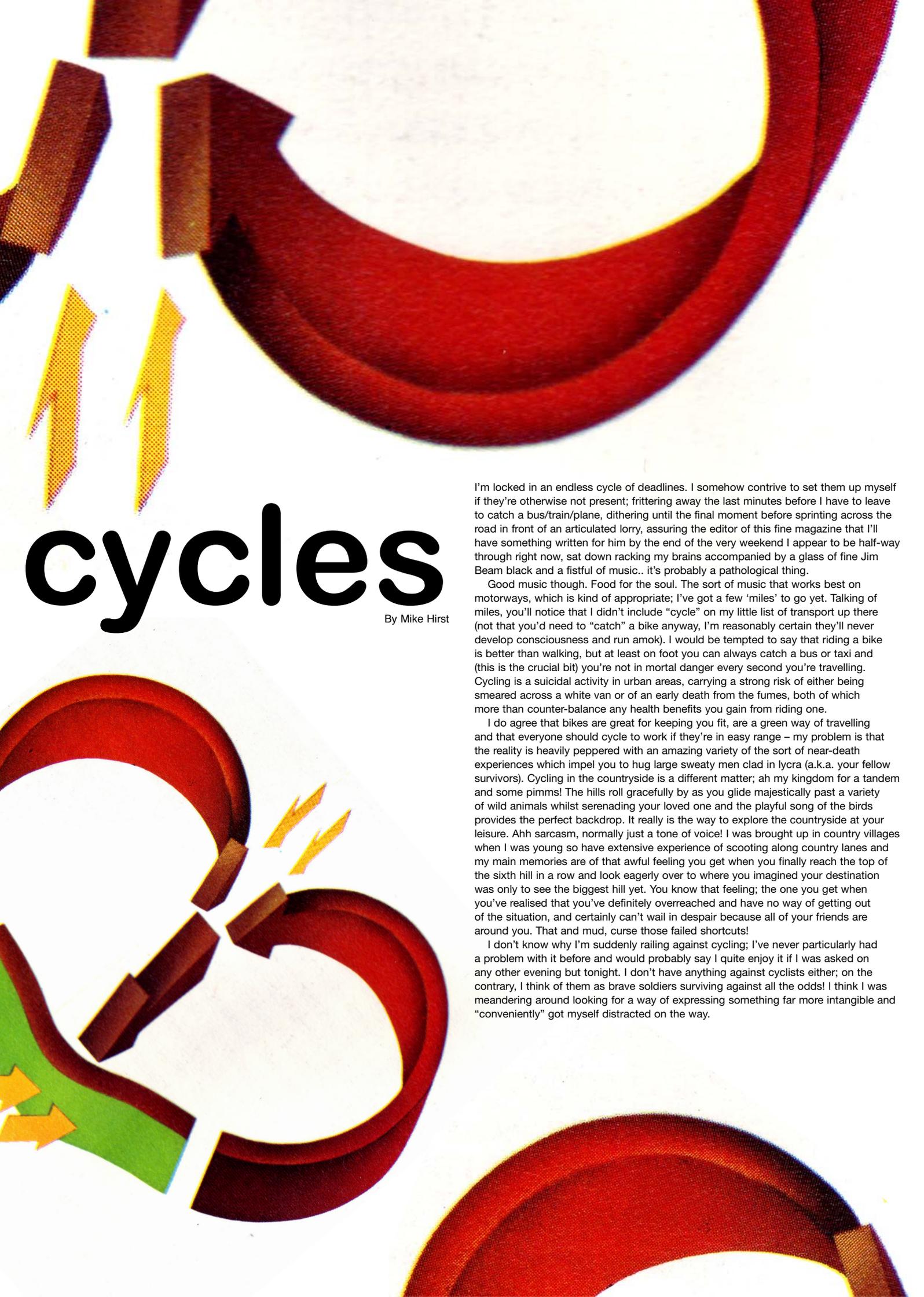
The swooping and sliding dancehall-esque rhythms of 'No Fun King' are as close as this album comes to the familiar Machine Drum sound; sharp, dynamic and punchy. On closer inspection it appears that what we are hearing is an elaborate battle between computer and live drummer. This is also one of the few tracks in regular 4/4 time. Other highlights would have to include the beautifully melodic glitchy guitar on 'Jess', and the wistful 'I Waited Till Morning and Everything Was Fine'.

The tracks here work well as an album despite there being no definite thread tying the whole thing together. Instead what we have is a well chosen selection based on live improvisations in a wide range of styles.

'Living Exponentially' subtly challenges the ear, inviting the listener to engage but without being too demanding. It is quirky in a very understated way, and technically accomplished without showing off. It has enough substance to be the subject of a good hour of intensive listening, but would not be inappropriate to put on while doing the washing up. Quite an achievement in my books.

Fans of Animal Collective and Tortoise won't be disappointed, nor will those of Múm or Savath & Savalas. The modern jazz stylings of Medeski Martin & Wood are there in the mix, and there might even be enough experimentalism here to satisfy the Rune Grammaphon or ECM listener. Much of this album is spent exploring timbre and repetition, reminiscent of Steve Reich's phase experiments or early, epic dirges of Neu! or Faust. And of course, Machine Drum and Syndrone fans will appreciate, if perhaps not recognize immediately.

www.machinedrum.net
www.m3rck.net



cycles

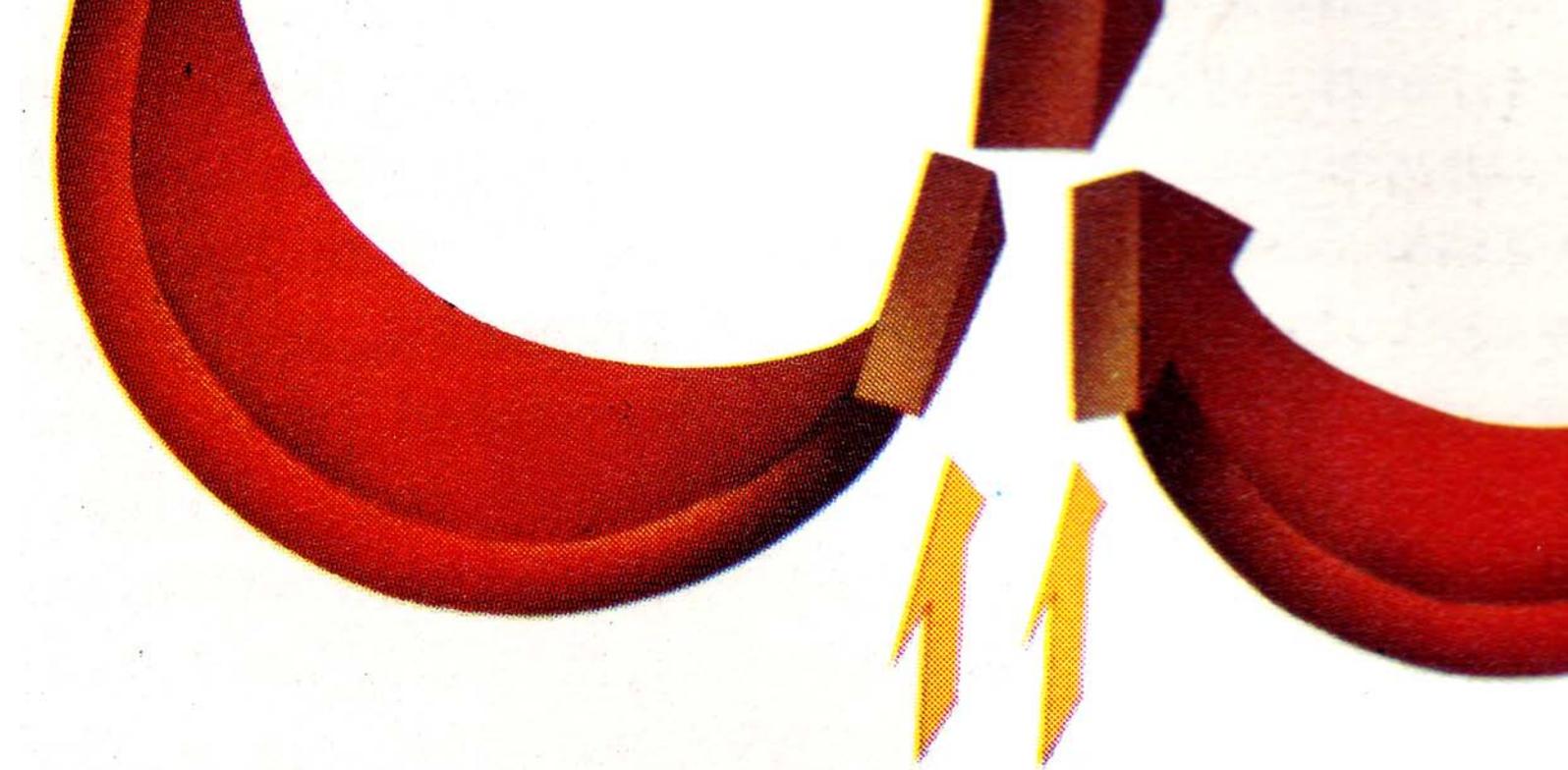
By Mike Hirst

I'm locked in an endless cycle of deadlines. I somehow contrive to set them up myself if they're otherwise not present; frittering away the last minutes before I have to leave to catch a bus/train/plane, dithering until the final moment before sprinting across the road in front of an articulated lorry, assuring the editor of this fine magazine that I'll have something written for him by the end of the very weekend I appear to be half-way through right now, sat down racking my brains accompanied by a glass of fine Jim Beam black and a fistful of music.. it's probably a pathological thing.

Good music though. Food for the soul. The sort of music that works best on motorways, which is kind of appropriate; I've got a few 'miles' to go yet. Talking of miles, you'll notice that I didn't include "cycle" on my little list of transport up there (not that you'd need to "catch" a bike anyway, I'm reasonably certain they'll never develop consciousness and run amok). I would be tempted to say that riding a bike is better than walking, but at least on foot you can always catch a bus or taxi and (this is the crucial bit) you're not in mortal danger every second you're travelling. Cycling is a suicidal activity in urban areas, carrying a strong risk of either being smeared across a white van or of an early death from the fumes, both of which more than counter-balance any health benefits you gain from riding one.

I do agree that bikes are great for keeping you fit, are a green way of travelling and that everyone should cycle to work if they're in easy range – my problem is that the reality is heavily peppered with an amazing variety of the sort of near-death experiences which impel you to hug large sweaty men clad in lycra (a.k.a. your fellow survivors). Cycling in the countryside is a different matter; ah my kingdom for a tandem and some pimms! The hills roll gracefully by as you glide majestically past a variety of wild animals whilst serenading your loved one and the playful song of the birds provides the perfect backdrop. It really is the way to explore the countryside at your leisure. Ah sarcasm, normally just a tone of voice! I was brought up in country villages when I was young so have extensive experience of scooting along country lanes and my main memories are of that awful feeling you get when you finally reach the top of the sixth hill in a row and look eagerly over to where you imagined your destination was only to see the biggest hill yet. You know that feeling; the one you get when you've realised that you've definitely overreached and have no way of getting out of the situation, and certainly can't wail in despair because all of your friends are around you. That and mud, curse those failed shortcuts!

I don't know why I'm suddenly railing against cycling; I've never particularly had a problem with it before and would probably say I quite enjoy it if I was asked on any other evening but tonight. I don't have anything against cyclists either; on the contrary, I think of them as brave soldiers surviving against all the odds! I think I was meandering around looking for a way of expressing something far more intangible and "conveniently" got myself distracted on the way.



The work-life cycle; that is an example of a type of 'cycle' which I find far more annoying. It's really not the fact that I have to work that bugs me, but the fact that I have to do it at set hours. These set hours automatically dictate the rest of my activities each weekday, and parcel my life into a bigger cycle of weekdays and weekends; in a way it acts like invisible bars blocking my way to freedom. I guess everyone has to go through that, so it's not "the done thing" to moan and I won't dwell – but seriously can't someone have a re-think somewhere and redesign the whole concept of the "working week" so we can move away from the days of t'pit?!

We seem to be fascinated by cycles; and not just the sort which magically appear one Christmas under the tree. Well, which sometimes appear depending on circumstances and the child; if you're an Eskimo, for example, you'll probably get something far more suited to the environment unless your parents are sadists. We're obsessed with routine, regular appointments, timetables and generally with locking ourselves into the comfort of familiar cycles. "Where's x"? "Ah, it's Tuesday morning, she'll be in "y". I think people become institutionalised by it all and end up finding comfort in familiar patterns, which is not a bad thing as long as it's a conscious decision to live like that.

And then there are the involuntary cycles; the ones which just (unfortunately) "happen". A good example of this is my own writing process, which has a little cycle of its own that invariably ends with my frantically throwing my fingers at a keyboard right at the end of a very generous writing period. I always start with great intentions, perhaps even dabble with a piece or two here or there, but somehow the existence of a deadline for something concrete has the effect of a red rag wafted at someone with a severe allergy (and an unfortunate proximity) to bulls. There's always a lot of thinking going on in the background (it takes me a while to process even the most catastrophically obvious of facts) I should hasten to add, but on the other hand there is always, but always, a highly bizarre and barely credible chain of events which contrive to throw a last-minute spanner in the works.

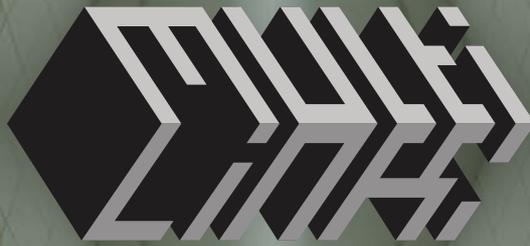
My life could be loosely described as a chain of real-life re-enactments of schoolboy excuses; I've long since ceased bothering to relate the tales, I just bow my head in the shameful acceptance that I've "done it again". I've overcome the somewhat obvious difficulties my lifestyle presents, just by allowing myself plenty of extra time when I've got to do something; there's absolutely no point in trying to prevent the mishaps. This is the thing most people don't realise; and these are always the events which fill the long period of time that elapses between the sunny days when I was "confidently preparing to write something well ahead of time" and the altogether stormier climes when I find myself saying something along the lines of "you're just going to have to put a stick between it's jaws or something, I'm going to sit down and write something right now". Once I've got to that stage its basically all over bar the hiding of the claw marks – the actual writing something down on paper is a bit of a boring formality really!

Anyway that little cycle, which invariably makes pitiful excuses sprout from the green shoots of hope; is my current bugbear – and is just one little cycle amongst the millions that bind us all. Everyone has a similar tale, be it one involving gym avoidance or of tiptoeing around quitting cigarettes or one of a million others – and the cycles involved are the worst ones of all. They are always the ones that repeat themselves regularly which makes people, who are basically remarkably like suave goldfish in many ways, actually notice them enough to get irritated. You never see anyone get irritated about the orbit of the stars – the weather, oooh yes, but never the celestial alignments! And yet it's the longer-term ones that are always the more dangerous.

They're dangerous for two reasons; firstly they happen so slowly that people don't bother getting worked up about it. They save it for later; even the politicians do that. Secondly, they're really the profound, life-changing ones. Take the environmental cycle – now I'm not going to comment profoundly on this as there is plenty of real commentary by knowledgeable people out there; my sole contribution is to say that, as far as I'm aware, some future relative of mine will either be fighting a polar bear or an iguana for shelter; and I'm not too happy about that. This is a very easy example; we all know that we're wrecking the planet yet it's happening so slowly that people always seem to have more pressing priorities to attend to. It's as if the world's biggest barge, an improbably big (fictional) massive thing, was heading at a rate of 0.0001 miles an hour towards Venice. And was scheduled to hit it on September 16th 2105 (this is a very, very, slow barge, remember – with its' slowness probably being due to its aforementioned improbably large mass). And as if the only reaction to this was that impressively cheap holidays to Venice were not only being made available for the first half of September 2105, but were being overbooked!!

Cycles come in all sizes and degrees of significance; the main thing is to be aware of their existence, to not be afraid to break them once in a while: to be in charge of your routine rather than let it dominate your time – at least occasionally, just for the pleasure of being free. It won't always be possible straight away – there's practically no chance my next piece will be ready ahead of schedule despite my current good intentions – but we made these chains for ourselves, so we can free ourselves from them too!





SEE YOU NEXT TIME ...