

# SonicActsXI

THE ANTHOLOGY OF COMPUTER ART

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23 - 26 February 2006  
Paradiso & De Balie, Amsterdam

Sonic Acts XI 2006 is curated, compiled and produced by Arie Altena, Martijn van Boven, Nathalie Bruys, Jan Hiddink, Gideon Kiers, and Lucas van der Velden, with additional support of Laura Blereau, Maarten Callebert, Jace Clayton, Andy Davies, Anja Hertenberger, Michiel Koelink and the Paradiso and Balie crew. Graphic design by Coup, Amsterdam

Sonic Acts XI 2006 is produced in association with Paradiso, De Balie, and bitforms gallery, New York.

Sonic Acts XI 2006 is supported by Paradiso, Mondriaanstichting, VSB fonds, Fonds voor Podiumprogrammering en Marketing, Fonds voor Amateurkunst en Podiumkunsten, Nederlands Fonds voor de Film, Thuiskopiefonds and Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds.

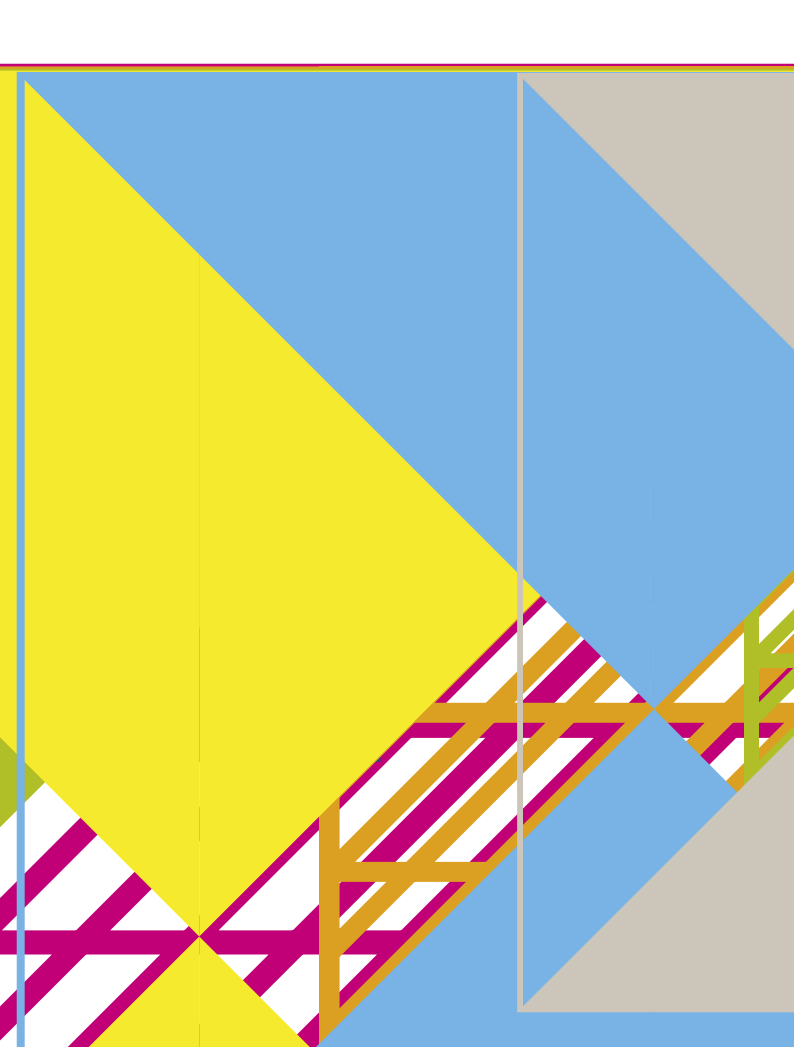


*The eleventh edition of the Sonic Acts Festival is entitled Sonic Acts XI – The Anthology of Computer Art. The festival focusses on the history of computer art and is a tribute to the work of the early pioneers. It also showcases the work of contemporary audiovisual artists and explores developments in current electronic music.*

*Autonomous computer art has seen a revival in recent years. Partly due to the rapid advances in hardware and software, applied and autonomous computer art has flourished in the visual arts and electronic music as well as in the worlds of film, video and games. As hardware and software have become more accessible and user-friendly a large group of artists has taken possession of this domain and developed a great deal of new work. In addition, ever more artists are developing their own hardware and writing their own software. This is an essential element in contemporary computer art, as it was in the early history of computer art.*

*The festival includes a three-day international conference, three nights of live performances, an extensive film programme and an exhibition. Also available at the festival: the Sonic Acts DVD with work of contemporary audiovisual artists, and the Sonic Acts book The Anthology of Computer Art.*





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# Conference

The three-day conference will provide a multi-faceted and penetrating overview of computer art. International speakers from computer art, film, the fine arts, music, the academic world, design and art history will discuss the historical developments and present position of computer art, and consider its future.

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## Thursday 23 February 2006

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Location: Paradiso Main Hall

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**20:30 Jasia Reichardt [UK]**

*Keynote: Before and After Cybernetic Serendipity*

In 1968 Jasia Reichardt organized the now legendary exhibition *Cybernetic Serendipity* in London. The exhibition, which also showed computer art, dealt with the relation between art, science and technology – in which the computer was beginning to play a major role. In her keynote lecture, Reichardt will look at the development of computer art before and after *Cybernetic Serendipity*.

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## Friday 24 February 2006

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Location: De Balie Main Hall

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**13:00 Stephen Wilson [US]** Artists at the Frontiers of Research

**13:45 Andreas Broeckmann [DE]** Image, Process, Performance, Machine; Aspects of an Aesthetics of the Machinic

**15:00 Matthias Weiß [DE]** Does a Micro-analysis of Computer Code Provide Fruitful Insights on Computer Arts?

**15:45 Ben Fry [US]** Computational Information Design

- 17:00**    **Rob Young** [UK] We are Dancing Mechanik: Computers, Pop and Embedded Chips  
**17:45**    Discussion moderated by **Rutger Wolfson** [NL]
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## **Saturday 25 February 2006**

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Location: De Balie Main Hall

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- 13:00**    **Frieder Nake** [DE] Now is the Time - The History of Early Computer Art as a New Research Topic  
**13:45**    **Lillian Schwartz** [US] [Talk on computer film]  
**15:00**    **Manfred Mohr** [US] [Talk on the programming of art]  
**15:45**    **Curtis Roads** [US] Composition in the Electronic Medium  
**17:00**    **Golan Levin** [US] [Talk on creative feedback and reactive systems]  
**17:45**    Discussion moderated by **Arjen Mulder** [NL]
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## **Sunday 26 February 2006**

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Location: De Balie Main Hall

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- 13:00**    **Wolf Lieser** [DE] Digital Art changes the Fine Arts and the Art Market  
**13:45**    **Erik van Blokland** [NL] Code and Typography, some examples of LettError work  
**15:00**    **John Oswald** [US] A Short Talk on Endlessness  
**15:45**    **Joost Rekveld** [NL] Light Matters  
**17:00**    **Joan Leandre** [ES] Retroyou vs Nostalgy  
**17:45**    Moderated discussion







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# Performances

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## Thursday 23 February 2006

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Curtis Roads & Brian O'Reilly perform the composition *Point Line Cloud* to start off the festival. Curtis Roads, composer and author of several books on computer music, including the influential *Computer Music Tutorial*, writes about this piece: "Beneath the level of the note lies the realm of sound particles. Sound particles dissolve the rigid bricks of musical composition – the notes and their intervals – into more fluid and supple materials. The sensations of point, pulse (series of points), line (tone), and surface (texture) emerge as the density of particles increases. Dense agglomerations of particles form clouds of sound whose shapes evolve over time." At 22.15 the Austrian collective Granular Synthesis, renowned for its monumental and impressive audio-visual performances, performs the piece *Areal*. Granular Synthesis creates electronic emotion machines that immerse their audience. *Areal* is a surround environment featuring multi screen projection, a spatial sound set-up and substantial sub-bass.

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Location: Paradiso Main Hall

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**21:15**    **Curtis Roads & Brian O'Reilly [US]**  
perform *Point Line Cloud*

**22:15**    **Granular Synthesis [AT]** perform *Areal*

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## Friday 24 February 2006

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The Friday night programme is compiled in collaboration with Jace Clayton (a.k.a. DJ/rupture), founder of Negrophonic and Soot Records. He writes: "The reality of the city (and the internet) is proximity, influence, fluidity... as well as friction, uncertainty, dislocation, fear. 20th-century categories of race, class, gender, and religion are splintering and reforming under more complex tangles of identity. Music is always a few steps ahead, registering subtle changes, implying or creating new communities. We have assembled an international line-up of underground superstars, people taking the basic template of 'urban music'

and reshaping it to their personal 21st century reality. One thing all these artists have in common is a love of bass – the pressure point when sound becomes sensual, physical. The point at which sound materializes, and changes the way you dance, feel, or think.” The programme offers hybrids of grime, dancehall and electronica, pop gestures, mashes of hip hop and world obscura, disruptive breakcore from Japan and the USA, complex deconstructed beats, experimental improvised noise and various border crossings between ‘East’ and ‘West’ that “scramble the logic that divides”.

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Location: Paradiso Main Hall

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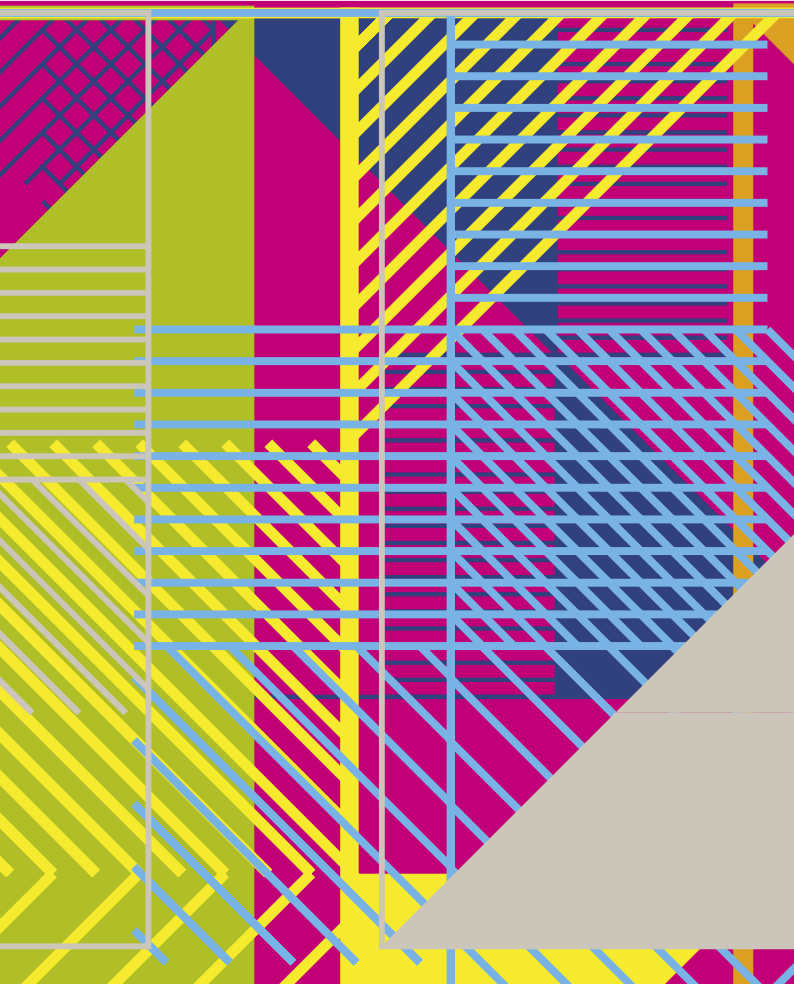
- 21:30** **2/5 BZ [TU]** renegade Turkish audiovisual collages  
**22:15** **mnk\_toktek [NL]** improv noise & live cinema from DIY circuit-bend equipment  
**22:45** **Nettle [ES]** a trio ensemble working with free improv, classical Arabic music & beat science  
**23:30** **Planning to Rock [DE]** one woman show: freak rock pop opera with customised hip hop attitude  
**00:15** **Beans [USA]** one-third of the progressive rap crew Anti-Pop Consortium, now solo on Warp  
**01:00** **The Bug feat. Ras B [UK]** Kevin Martin's heavyweight ragga and dancehall pressure  
**01:45** **Aaron Spectre [USA]** live jungle beats at lightning speed, triggered by hands-on controllers  
**02:30** **Hrvatski [US]** laptop-wizardry and complex, deconstructed beats  
**03:15** **Drop The Lime [USA]** pop gestures twisted into neo-rave intensity

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Location: Paradiso Small Hall

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- 21:00** **Andy Moor [NL]** guitar & turntables improv duet with DJ /rupture  
**21:30** **Gustav [DE]** a crackling log-cabin variation to Frank Sinatras icy charms  
**22:15** **Doddodo & Ove-Naxx [JP]** psychedelic noise and mayhem as a compositional tool  
**22:45** **DJ Scotch Egg [JP]** wild gabba-gabba-pop-spazzrock using modified Nintendo Gameboys and a megaphone





- 23:30 Jammer & Matt Shadetek & Skepta [UK / USA]**  
top grime artists from the ultra-competitive UK scene meet the NYC-Berlin grime connection
- 00:15 DJ Sheen [DE]** a bass-heavy blend of breakcore and jungle, she also handles the decks for Jammer, Matt Shadetek, Skepta in their grime session
- 01:00 Vex'd [UK]** industrial rhythms with a foreboding atmosphere, influenced by grime and dubstep
- 01:45 DJ /rupture & No Lay & G-Kid [USA/UK]** one of London's most talented MC's joined by fellow Unorthodox Fam MC G-Kid, with DJ /rupture on the decks
- 02:30 Ghislain Poirier [CA]** big dirty beats, ragga style riddims and raw minimal hip-hop
- 03:15 Filastine [USA]** a politically charged sonic map of hip-hop, ragga, breakcore, and international obscura
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## Saturday 25 February 2006

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The Saturday night programme features A/V performances by the Russian outfit Akuvido, and the Belgian brothers Boris and Brecht Debackere; TinyLittleElements combines live visuals of Lia with sound by Sebastian Meissner, and AGF and Sue C play their poetic 'minimovies'. Also performing in the main hall are Nanko, Nancy Fortune and Ada, while deep in the night Reinhard Voigt and Matthew Dear will unleash their forward looking techno beats and microhouse. The programme in the small hall kicks off with the fragile songs of Ann Laplantine. Then the floor is given to a N-Event, in which three groups of the N-Collective will perform their mix of improvised electro-acoustic music. Sonic burst from laptops (SKIF together with Bas van Koolwijk); noise and rock textures (Mohal!); structured improvisations (Office-R(6)). They are followed first by the noise duo of Maja Ratkje and Hild Sofie Tafjord (Fe-mail) and then by the video-sound duo NTSC (NotTheSameColor) from Austria. The late night is for the beats, future disco and transformed laptop-pop of TBA, Portable and Jason Forrest.

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Location: Paradiso Main Hall

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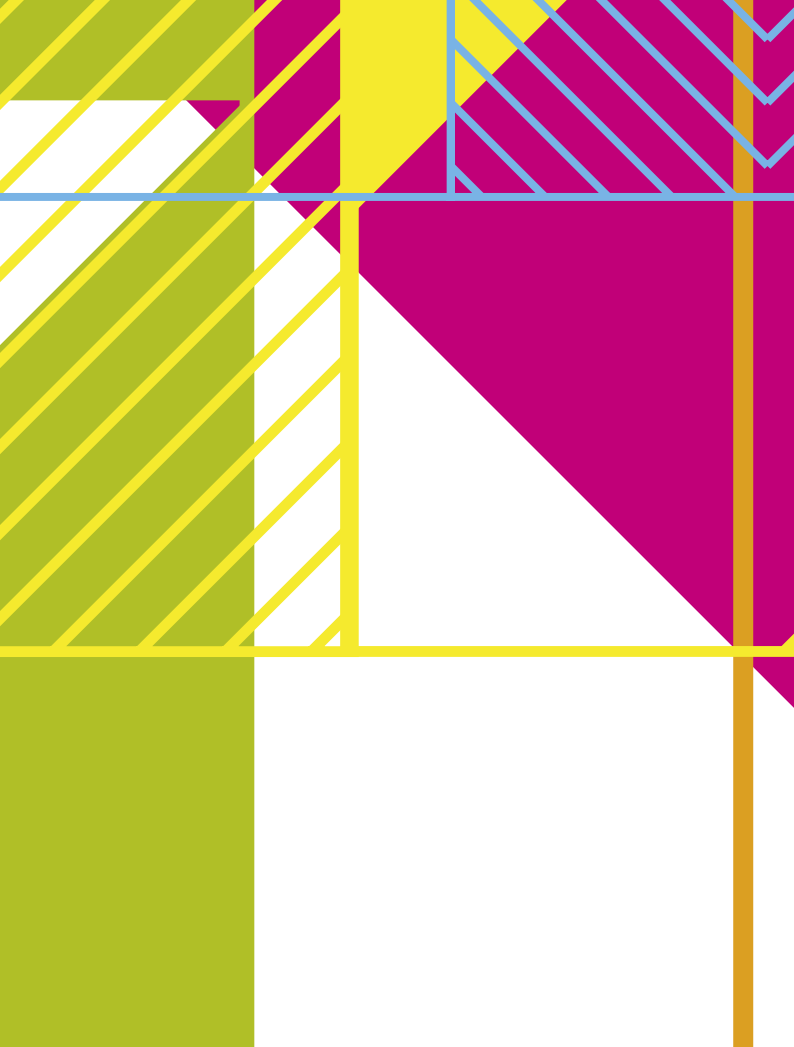
- 20:45 Akuvido [UA]** interdisciplinary audiovisual work from Russia
- 21:30 Boris & Brecht Debackere [BE]** different forms of visual disorientation

- 22:00 Nanko [NL]** from minimal and ambient to uptight and disturbing
- 22:45 TinyLittleElements [AT/DE]** a duo, coupling Lia's live visuals with the electronic music of Sebastian Meissner
- 23:30 AGF & SUE C [DE/US]** a mix of poetical texts against a subtle background of rustling electronic sound
- 00:15 Nancy Fortune [FR]** electronica from France
- 01:15 Ada [DE]** catchy electronica from Cologne
- 02:15 Reinhard Voigt [DE]** forward looking techno beats
- 03:15 Matthew Dear [US]** minimal click- and microhouse, subtle and brutal
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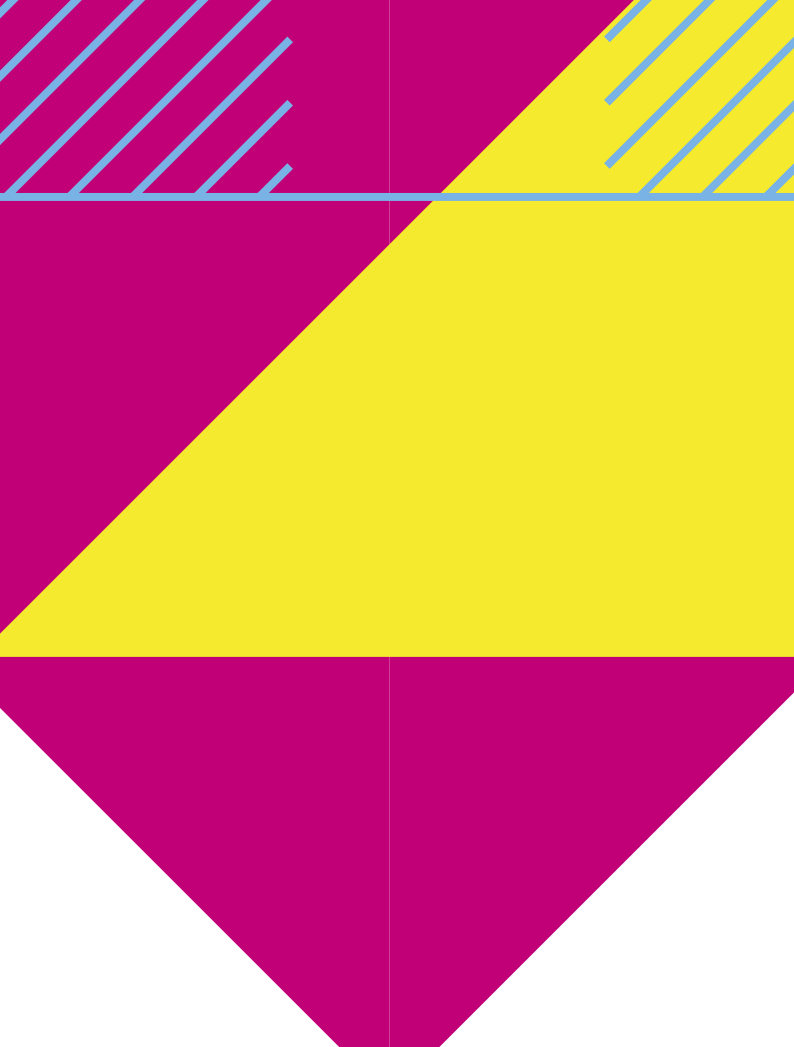
Location: Paradiso Small Hall

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- 20:30 Anne Laplatine [FR]** playful, fragile songs resonant with a great sense of melody and harmony
- 21:15 SKIF & Bas van Koolwijk [US/NL]** sonic bursts, discontinuities, and melodic melancholy from two laptops, plus visuals
- 21:45 MoHa! & Fredrik Hana [NO]** improvised music from the post-braxton continuum, noise-based rock textures
- 22:15 Office-R(6) [NL/US/NO]** structured electro-acoustic improvisations
- 22:45 Fe-mail [NO]** noise duo of Maja Ratkje and Hild Sofie Tafjord
- 23:15 NotTheSameColor [AT]** multiple ways of feedback and physical interaction between sound and image
- 00:45 TBA [GE]** tender melodies and elektro from Georgia
- 01:45 Portable [ZA]** what comes from a mix of traditional African rhythms and the 4/4 sound of house
- 02:45 Jason Forrest [US]** transformed laptop-pop







# Films

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**Thursday 23 February 2006**

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Location: De Balie Small Hall

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**19:30 CONCRETE CINEMA FROM THE GROUPE  
DE RECHERCHES DES IMAGES - part 1**

*Etude Aux Allures*, Raymond Hains, 1960

*Objets Animes*, Jacques Brissot, 1960

*Fer Chaud*, Nicolas Schöffer, 1960

*Takis*, Caroline Laure, 1964

*Remanence*, Marie Claire Petris, 1965

*Plus Vite*, Peter Foldes, 1968

*Electrorythmes*, Peter Foldes, 1968

*Labyrinthe*, Piotr Kamler, 1970

These films from the archives of the Institute National Audiovisuel (INA) in Paris have rarely or never been shown. They were produced in the 1960's and 70's under the aegis of the Groupe de Recherche des Images and include the animation films of Piotr Kamler and Robert Lapoujade, as well as a host of excellent *musique concrete* soundtracks by composers such as Pierre Schaeffer, Bernard Parmegiani, Francois Bayle, Iannis Xenakis and Ivo Malic. They are an important collection of experimental art films; the product of a unique combination of talents, who were able to collaborate and experiment without having to worry about commercial considerations. (Part 2 of this programme is shown on Friday.)

**21:00 PIONEER COMPUTER GRAPHICS**

*Poemfield #2*, Stan Vanderbeek, 196

*Hummingbird*, Chuck Csuri, 1967

*Scanimate shorts*, 1968-1969

*Permutations*, John Whitney, 1968

*Symmetricks*, Stan Vanderbeek, 1971

Artworks made at the intersection of genuinely pioneering technological research and aesthetics tend to have a very personal, idiosyncratic quality and these films are no exception. This compilation of short com-

puter graphics films from the 1960's and early 70's is particularly interesting in that the filmmakers were heavily involved in designing both the hardware and the software that was used to create the images. Whilst some of the filmmakers (Stan Vanderbeek, John Whitney) are primarily known for their artworks, others (Chuck Csuri) are better known for their scientific research.

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## Friday 24 February 2006

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Location: De Balie Small Hall

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### 19:30 **CONCRETE CINEMA FROM THE GROUPE DE RECHERCHES DES IMAGES - part 2**

*Foules*, Robert Lapoujade, 1960

*Reflets*, Piotr Kamler, 1961

*Lignes et Points*, Piotr Kamler, 1966

*Trois Portraits d'un Oiseau qui N'existe Pas*,

Robert Lapoujade, 1965

*Le Pas*, Piotr Kamler, 1970

*Delicieuse Catastrophe*, Piotr Kamler, 1971

Second part of the programme with films from the archives of the Institute National Audiovisuel (INA) in Paris.

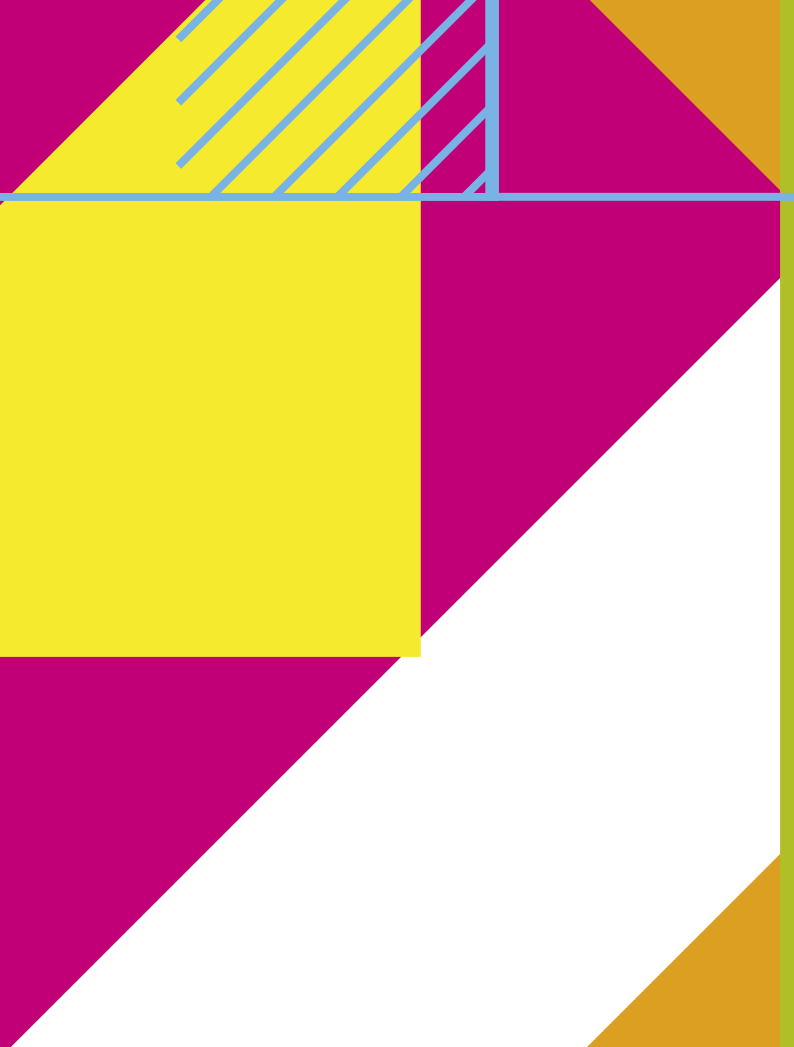
### 21:00 **JOHN WHITNEY IN CLOSE-UP**

*Experiments in Motion Graphics*, John Whitney, 1968

*Hex-demo*, John Whitney, 1978

*A Personal Search: For the Complementarity of Music and  
Visual Art*, John Whitney, 1992

In the mid 1940's, John Whitney, together with his brother James, developed, from army surplus equipment, a pendulum system which he used to produce a series of abstract films, complete with electronically generated sound. John Whitney went on to build an analog computer with which he created a series of visual effects which were to form the basis of his film *Catalog*. Whitney was also occupied with the development of a theory of how images could be directly translated into sound, and vice versa. In *Experiments in Motion Graphics*, John Whitney sets out his views on the computer and its relationship to film. *Hex-demo* is a short fire-side talk, in which he explains





his process of creating geometric forms. In *A Personal Search for the Complementarity of Music and Visual Art* Whitney goes more deeply into these theories.

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## **Saturday 25 February 2006**

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Location: De Balie Small Hall

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### **16:00    COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN**

*Support Engineering*, Boeing, 1970

*Design by Computers*, GM, 1970

*Finite Elements*, Kitching & Emmett, 1975

*Fallout Shelter*, Crawley, 1970

*Integrated Circuit Mask Layout*, MIT, 1968

*The Window*, David Carson, 1974

*Highway Alignment*, Feeser, 1970's

*Human Engineering Display Studies*, US Army, 1974

*Graphics Processing*, Applicon, 1970

*Unigraphics*, McDonnell Douglas, 1970

At the same time as computer graphics were being developed, the idea was taking hold in large-scale industries that the use of computers could greatly facilitate the development of new products. Computer Aided Design (or CAD) meant that research into new products, and the production process itself, could be conducted at a much more detailed level. The CAD programme covers, among other things, the first experiments conducted by the American army to investigate the functioning of the human body, and CAD layouts for Boeing. These films uncover a the history of concepts that were to shape our world.

### **19:30    LILLIAN SCHWARTZ IN CLOSE-UP**

*Pixillation*, Lillian Schwartz, 1970

*Mathoms*, Lillian Schwartz, 1970

*Olympiad*, Lillian Schwartz, 1971

*UFO's*, Lillian Schwartz, 1971

*Enigma*, Lillian Schwartz, 1972

*Googolplex*, Lillian Schwartz, 1972

*Apotheosis*, Lillian Schwartz, 1972

*Mutations*, Lillian Schwartz, 1972

*Papillons*, Lillian Schwartz, 1973

*Metamorphosis*, Lillian Schwartz, 1974

*Alae*, Lillian Schwartz, 1975

*Newtonian II*, Lillian Schwartz, 1978

Lillian Schwartz, together with the computer programmer Ken Knowlton, developed a series of impressive computer-generated films in the early 1970's, which won many prizes at international festivals. In *Olympiad* (1971), computer-designed athletes run across the screen against a naturalistic full-colour background. Lillian Schwartz has, throughout her career, been at the cutting-edge of computer technology, she may be described as someone who, over the years, has been able change people's perceptions about the computer and its capabilities.

## **21:00 THE SIGGRAPH COLLECTION**

*Romp*, Dan Sandin & Phil Morton, 1973

*NCC Report*, Tom DeFanti & Dan Sandin, 1974

*Spiral 5 PTL*, Tom DeFanti & others, 1980

*Three Views of Water*, Dan Sandin, 1975

*Space ++*, Judson Rosebush, 1974

*Digital Effects*, Judson Rosebush, 1979

*Hand Face*, Ed Catmull, 1972

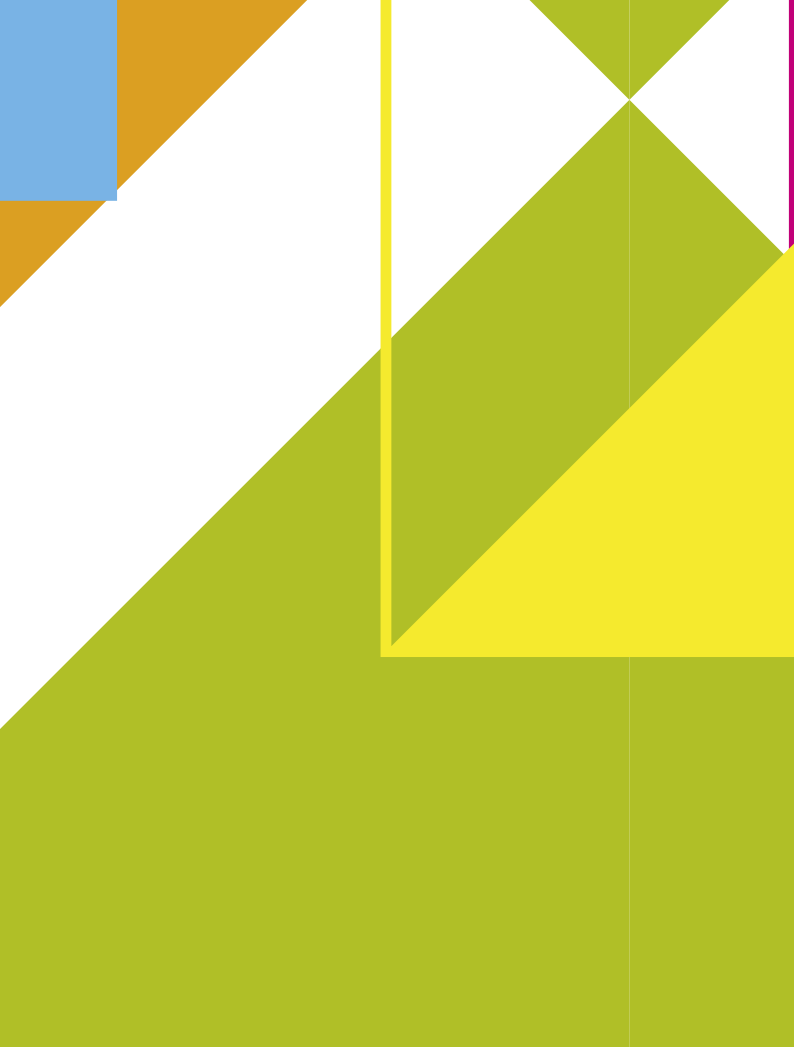
*VidBits*, Alvy Ray Smith, 1974

*SuperPaint*, Richard Shoup, 1977

*Pioneer Graphics*, Richard Shoup, 1978

*Doris Chase*, 1979

This selection of short videos from the Siggraph collection (an annual festival of computer-related technology and art) gives an overview of work from the fields of science, art and entertainment. Each one of these videos has, in its own way, played a role in the development of computer art.







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# Exhibition

The group of artists represented in the exhibition were early adopters of the incorporation of code into their artistic process. Although not all these artists became fixtures in the art world, each one of them laid the groundwork for today's new media artists who utilize code to reveal new forms of representation, interaction and expression. Mostly forgotten in the past decades, the 21st century is rediscovering the work of these pioneers who represent the history of algorithmic computer art. [Organized in association with bitforms gallery, New York].

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**Thursday 23 February - Sunday 26 February 2006**

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Location: De Balie First Floor / Opening times: 10.00 - 01.00

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## **Ben Laposky [US]**

In 1950, Ben Laposky created the first graphic images generated by an electronic (analog) machine. His electronic oscilloscope imagery was produced by manipulated electronic beams displayed across the fluorescent face of an oscilloscope's cathode-ray tube and then recorded onto high-speed film. He called his oscillographic artworks 'oscillons' and 'electronic abstractions'.

## **Edward Zajec [US]**

Zajec started working with computers in 1968. In 1969 he developed the programme Prostor to control modules with different values that generate both structured and random compositions. Zajec sees the im-

portance of the computer in his work, in the effect it had in shifting his attention from the art objects themselves to the mental procedures involved in art making.

### **Frieder Nake [DE]**

In 1963 Nake was asked to design and implement the basic software package which was needed in order to link the newly acquired drawing machine to the computer. His interest in philosophy and mathematics began to merge as he started to experiment with drawing software. In 1965 he was one of the first artists to exhibit computer art. Klee's drawings inspired him to think about programming visual art as a tension between macro and microaesthetics.

### **Manfred Mohr [US]**

Since 1968, Manfred Mohr exclusively works with a computer, that is with the logic of a programming language, to create his art. Through this approach he is considered an important contributor to concrete and systematic art. His process centers on the logical content of an idea and the search for general rules which describe that idea. He writes procedures which generate results that are the logical consequences of complex and multilayered rules.

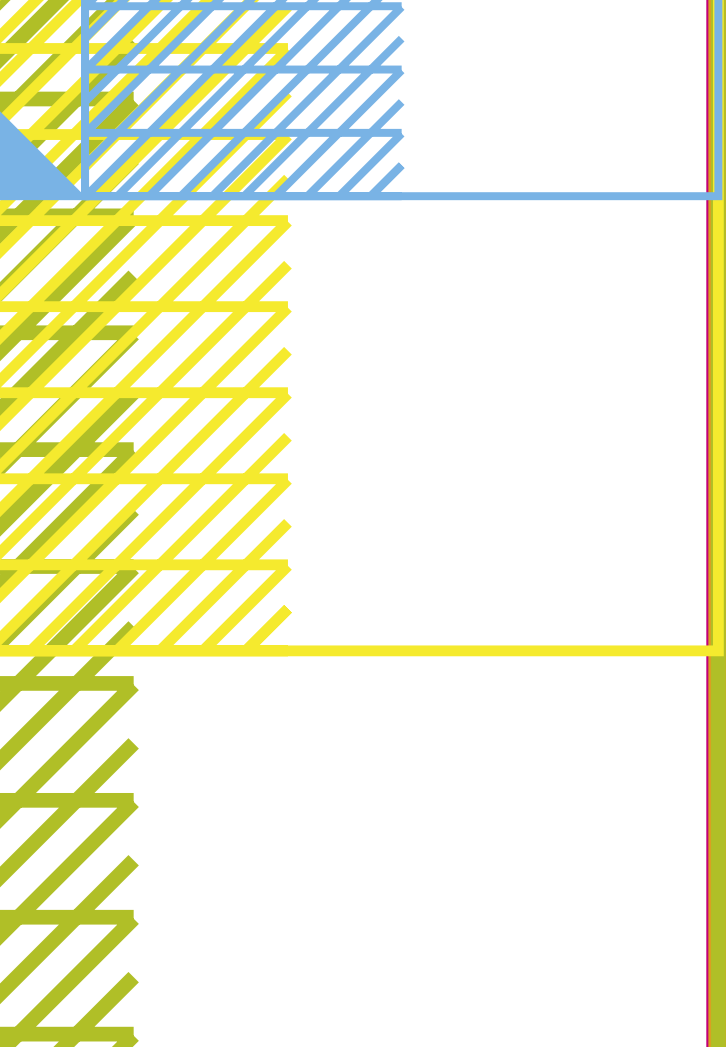
### **Tony Longson [US]**

Procedurally, Longson likes to use (or abuse) the characteristics of the materials and methods available to him. In his work he explores the interplay between 2-D and 3-D visual space and exploits the compelling desire to make order out of chaos.

### **Vera Molnar [HU]**

Vera Molnar was born in Budapest but has lived and worked in Paris for many years. In 1968 she began using a computer to assist her art making. She created geometric drawings by using computer and a plotter. Her work during this period focused on the breakup of repeating units, often expressed as a series of increasingly fractured images. She thinks that the computer could help visualizing artist's idea and create new ways of composition without the burden of cultural references.





# DVD Exhibition

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**Thursday 23 February - Saturday 25 February 2006**

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Location: Paradiso Basement

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Every day during the opening hours of Paradiso, works from the Sonic Acts 2006 DVD will be shown in the basement of Paradiso. The DVD brings together a wide variety of contemporary artists working in the field of computer art including: Bart Vegter, Semiconductor, Effekt, Brecht & Boris Debackere, Telcosystems & Jason Haas, Martijn van Boven, jasch, lia & @c, C.E.B. Reas, Meta, Granular-Synthesis, Frank Bretschneider, Driessens & Verstappen, Karl Kliem, Chris Musgrave, Robert Hodgins & Bit Shifter, Tom Schouten, Golan Levin, Peter Luining, JODI, Martijn Tellinga & Jan Robert Leegte, Bas van Koolwijk, Karl Klomp & Toktek, reMI, NotTheSameColor, Scott Pagano & Keepadding, Mateusz Herczka, Geert Mul, Kurt Ralske, George Issakidis, AGF + SUE.C, Skoltz\_Kolgen, Daniel Perlin & Dj /rupture, SOLU, Der Kopf.

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# Book

*The Anthology of Computer Art* is edited for Sonic Acts XI by Arie Altena and Lucas van der Velden. The book contains a selection of historical key texts on computer art by Lejaren Hiller, Iannis Xenakis, Max Bense, Gene Youngblood, Jasja Reichardt, Ken Knowlton, Frieder Nake, Manfred Mohr, Georg Nees and Vera Molnar as well as contemporary essays by Kim Cascone, Wolf Lieser, Greg Kurcewicz and C.E.B. Reas. 96 pages, black & white, with illustrations and free Sonic Acts XI DVD. Published by Sonic Acts Press, Amsterdam, ISBN 9081047019.

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# Practical & about

## TICKETS

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### Live Performances

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Location: Paradiso, € 12,50 incl.

Thursday 23 February, doors: 20:00, start: 20:30

Friday 24 February, doors: 20:00, start: 21:00

Saturday 25 February, doors: 20:00, start: 20:30

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### Films

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Location: De Balie, € 6,25

Thursday 23 February, 19:30 & 21:00

Friday 24 February, 19:30 & 21:00

Saturday 25 February, 16:00, 19:30 & 21:00

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### Conference Passepartout

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The conference passepartout gives entrance to the conference and all live performances; including the keynote lecture on Thursday, € 45,-  
*Thursday 23 February,*

Location: Paradiso, doors 20:00, start 20:30

*Friday 24, Saturday 25, Sunday 26 February,*

Location: De Balie, doors: 12:30, start: 13:00

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Live Performance tickets are available via Ticketmaster, AUB and at the door of Paradiso. Film tickets via De Balie: +31205535100. Conference passepartouts via De Balie +31205535100, and online via AUB.

## LOCATIONS

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Paradiso, Weteringschans 6 - 8, Amsterdam, +31206264521.

De Balie, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10, Amsterdam, +31205535100.

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