

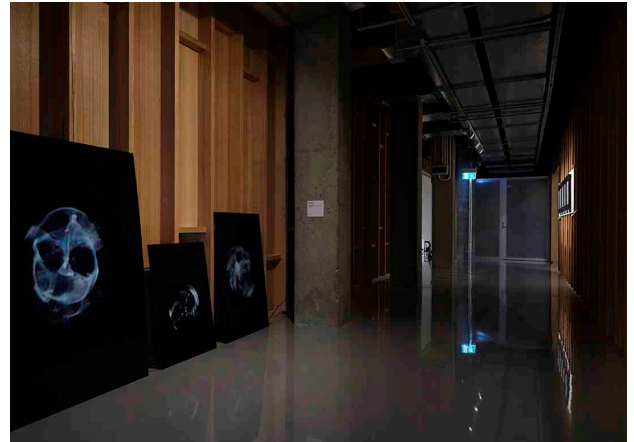
Laurent Schmid
2015
a selection of projects

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Heliopause

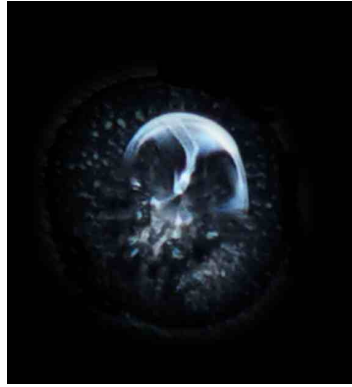


3 photographs on Acrylic backed with Dibond, vibration speakers, sound, 2015 (92 x 61 cm, 71 x 51 cm, 121 x 91 cm)

Heliopause goes back to an idea of the German romantic physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter. He was convinced that all living and dead nature was based on a general principle of duality, which leads to pulsations, periods and magic oscillations. While some of his contemporaries were convinced by these ideas – Novalis wrote: “Hat man den Rhythms der Welt weg, so hat man die Welt weg.”¹ – others thought that “he [was] about to switch to the night-side of science. Volta, who respected his discoveries, was very sceptical about what he called Ritter’s occult science” parts, like the practice of Rhabdomancy and the “speculative science” with the metaphysical thoughts Ritter had while doing his experiments. Volta on Ritter: “In one word his views are too transcendent, he runs and pushes things too far.”

Not only Ritter was certain that light and sound were the same phenomenon, oscillation in different frequencies: “Ton und Licht stören sich nicht! Wie aber im Grunde auch könnten sie es, da sie ja eins sind?”, but he was also convinced that every physical fact could also be read in a metaphorical way: “Wie das Licht, so ist auch Ton Bewusstsein.”

Heliopause



***3 photographs on Acrylic backed with Dibond, vibration speakers, sound,
2015 (92 x 61 cm, 71 x 51 cm, 121 x 91 cm)***

Based on this thinking he developed the idea of a planetary music with the sun in its center receiving all the pulsations of the planets. In a short text he sketches the idea of the possibility to use his own body as an instrument to interpret that music of the planets reflected by the "inhabitants of the sun".

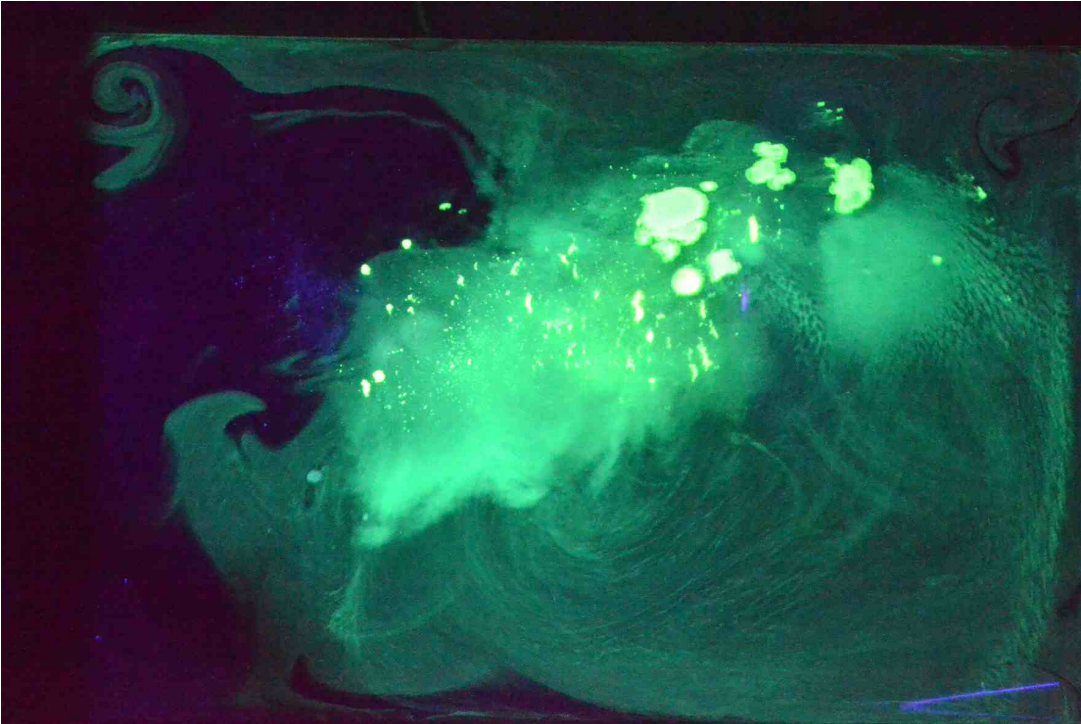
I did a re-interpretation of this idea taking an audio recording of electrons ejected during a solar blast and modifying it following the rules of EVP-recordings by filtering , etc., but without adding new parts. This final sound is emitted by the image-panels and this sound was also used to create the images on them by cause to vibrate drops of Schnaps. So the "Lichtfigur" and "Klangfigur" (light and sound-figure) get back together in a kind of "Feuerschrift" (fire writing), an Idea Walter Benjamin liked in Ritter's theory.

¹ «Having the Rythm of the world, you also have the world.»

² «Sound and light do not disturb each other! How could they, as they are one?»

³ «As light, as sound is consciousness.»

Feeling the Future



Photograph, 80 x 120 cm, Inkjet, 2013

A series of photographs on intermediate areas and interplays of factors that makes them visible by joining the undiscernible individual parts.

In 1801, Johann Wilhelm Ritter detected the ultra violet radiation through a pre-photographic process, he noticed that silver chloride was transformed faster from white to black, when it was placed in the dark region of a spectrum after the violet end.

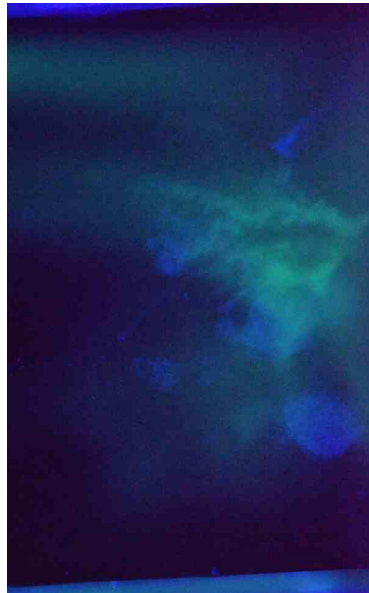
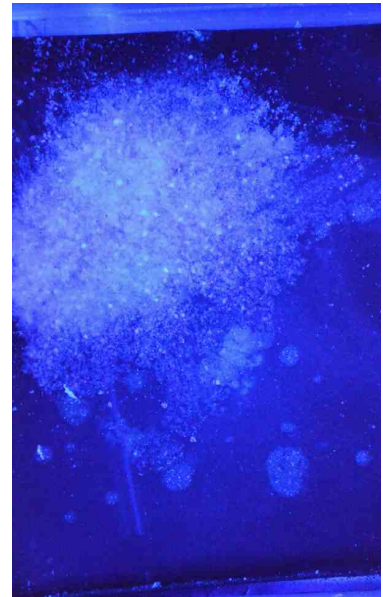
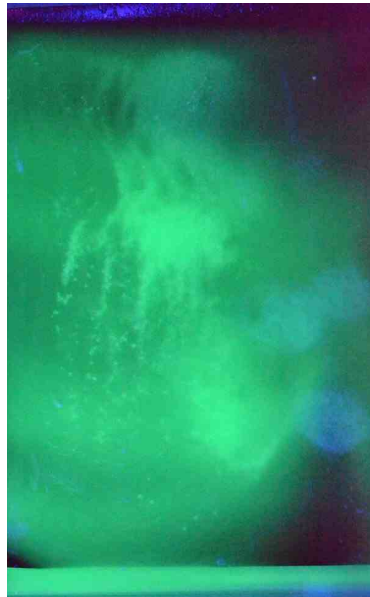
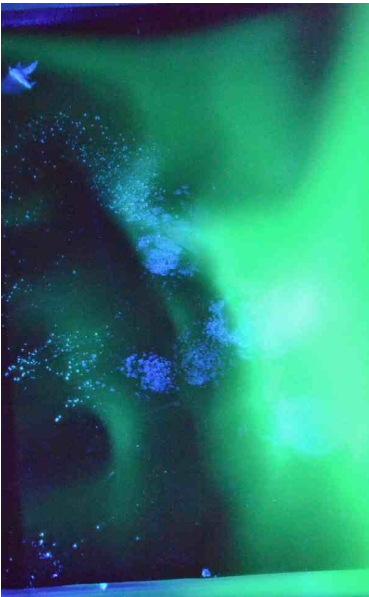
The series referres also to Kristian Birkeland who had recognized a hundred years later that the Northern Lights must be brought about by the interplay of geomagnetism and solar activity, i.e. the impact of solar wind on the terrestrial magnetic field. It is a mutual process by which each of the two elements makes the other visible, just as photo emulsion did with the radioactivity and X-rays.

Both, Ritter and Birkeland were also responsible for a great number of nebulous inventions and both showed an eruptively enthusiastic manner and eccentric lifestyle with excessive consumption of alcohol and other substances provoking their early deaths.

Substances getting visible and glowing under UV-light in different colors, from Gin Tonic over rapeseed oil, LSD and other materials, were photographed.

«Ritter sucht durchaus die eigentliche Weltseele der Natur auf. Er will die sichtbaren und pon-

Feeling the Future



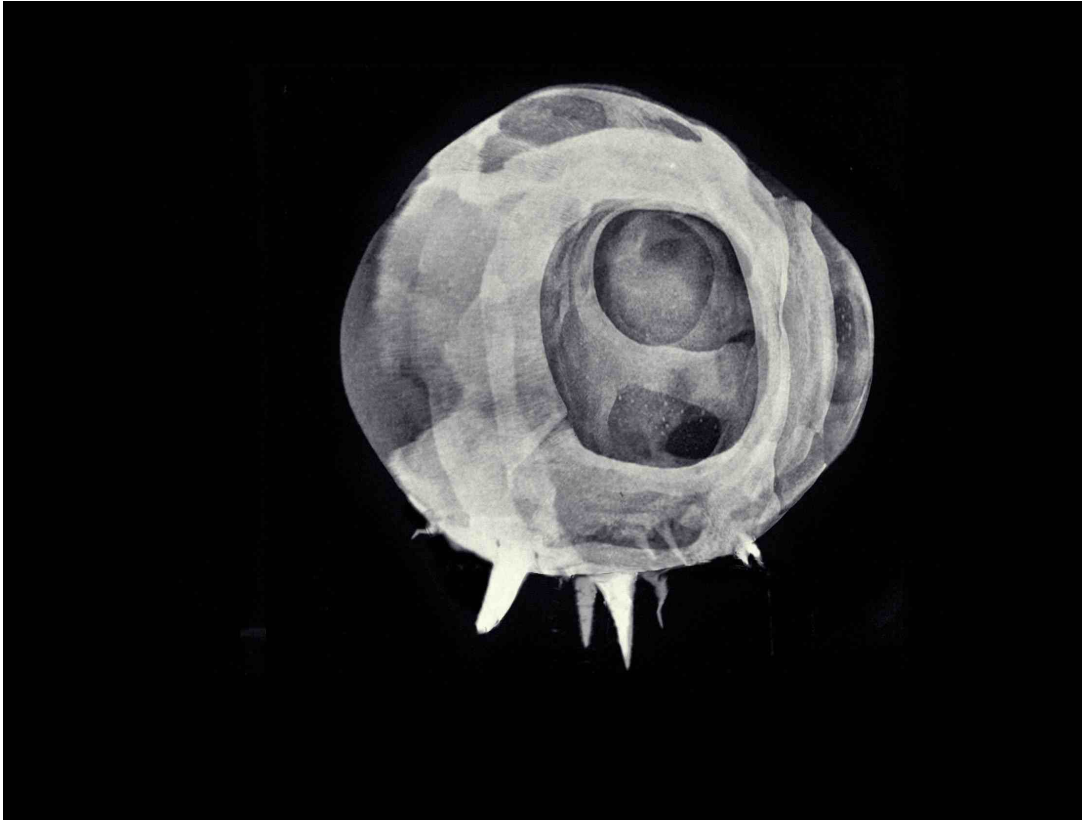
Photograph, 1/3, 2013

90 x 60 cm, Inkjet on acrylic mounted on dibond

derablen Lettern lesen lernen, und das Setzen der höhern geistigen Kräfte erklären. Alle äußere Prozesse sollen als Symbole und letzte innerer Prozesse begreiflich werden.» - *Novalis, Fragmente und Studien 1799/1800. Nr. 158.*

«Ich kann Ritter mit nichts vergleichen als mit einer elektrischen Feuermaschine, an der man nur die stille Künstlichkeit bewundert und eben nichts gleich wahrnimmt als das klare Wasser. Wer sie aber versteht, bringt auf den leisesten Druck eine schöne Flamme hervor. Übrigens ist er auch, wie der erste Brief der Lucinde, Schelmerei und Andacht und Essen und Gebet, alles durcheinander.» - *Dorothea Schlegel an Schleiermacher 17. November 1800. Aus Schleiermacher's Leben. In Briefen. 1861.*

Flying Knotholes



Prints in various sizes, on baryta-coated paper and, in digital form, in blogs, 2010

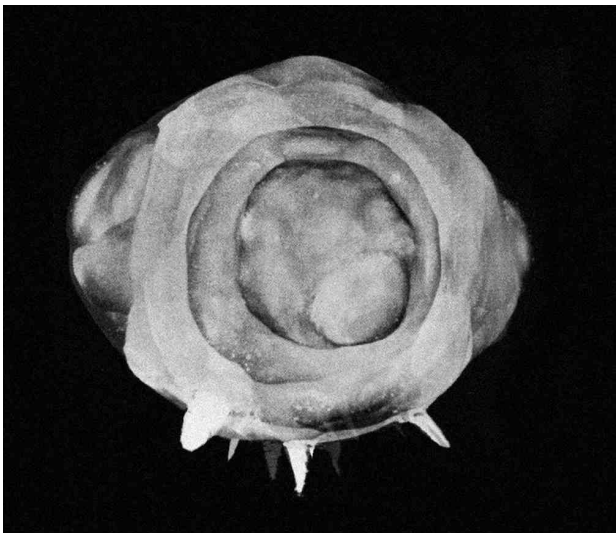
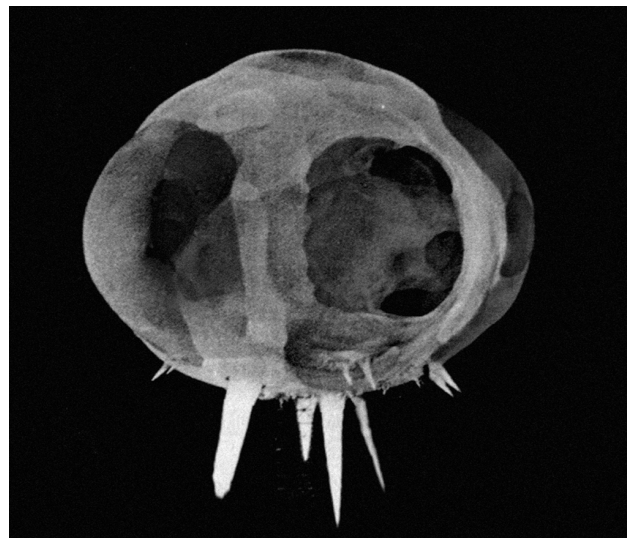
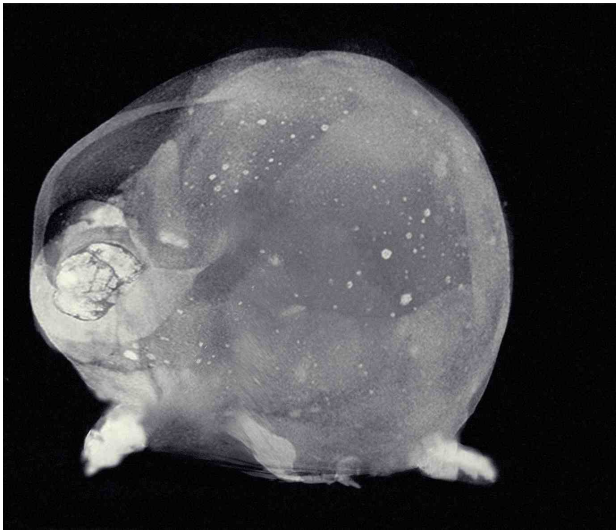
Series of 4 video animations (3-4 mins. each), 2010-2011

Harold E. Edgerton, later nicknamed «Mr. Strobe» by the Hippies, was renowned for his achievements in high-speed photography. Although photographs of atomic explosions already existed, he was commissioned to develop a camera for high-precision exposures at nanosecond intervals. The purpose of what came to be known as the «Rapatronic» camera was to infer the force of explosions by analysing the size of fireballs photographed at ultra high speed.

However, rather than the expected simple fireballs, the photographs revealed curiously biomorphic figures that immediately gave rise to interpretations invoking magic and mysticism. It later emerged that the striking «tentacles» in the images – termed «rope trick» by physicist John Malik – were steel ropes being vapourised immediately after detonation.

Few photos exist because the extremely expensive cameras could only be used once. At that stage of the Cold War, the photographs were used for purposes of propaganda and dissuasion – even though they were classified as «top secret» because the power of an explosion could be inferred not only from the fireball's rate of expansion but also from its structure. To resolve the dilemma, the images were «slightly modified», as Edgerton conceded eventually. In other words, scientific «proof» was based on faked evidence.

Flying Knotholes



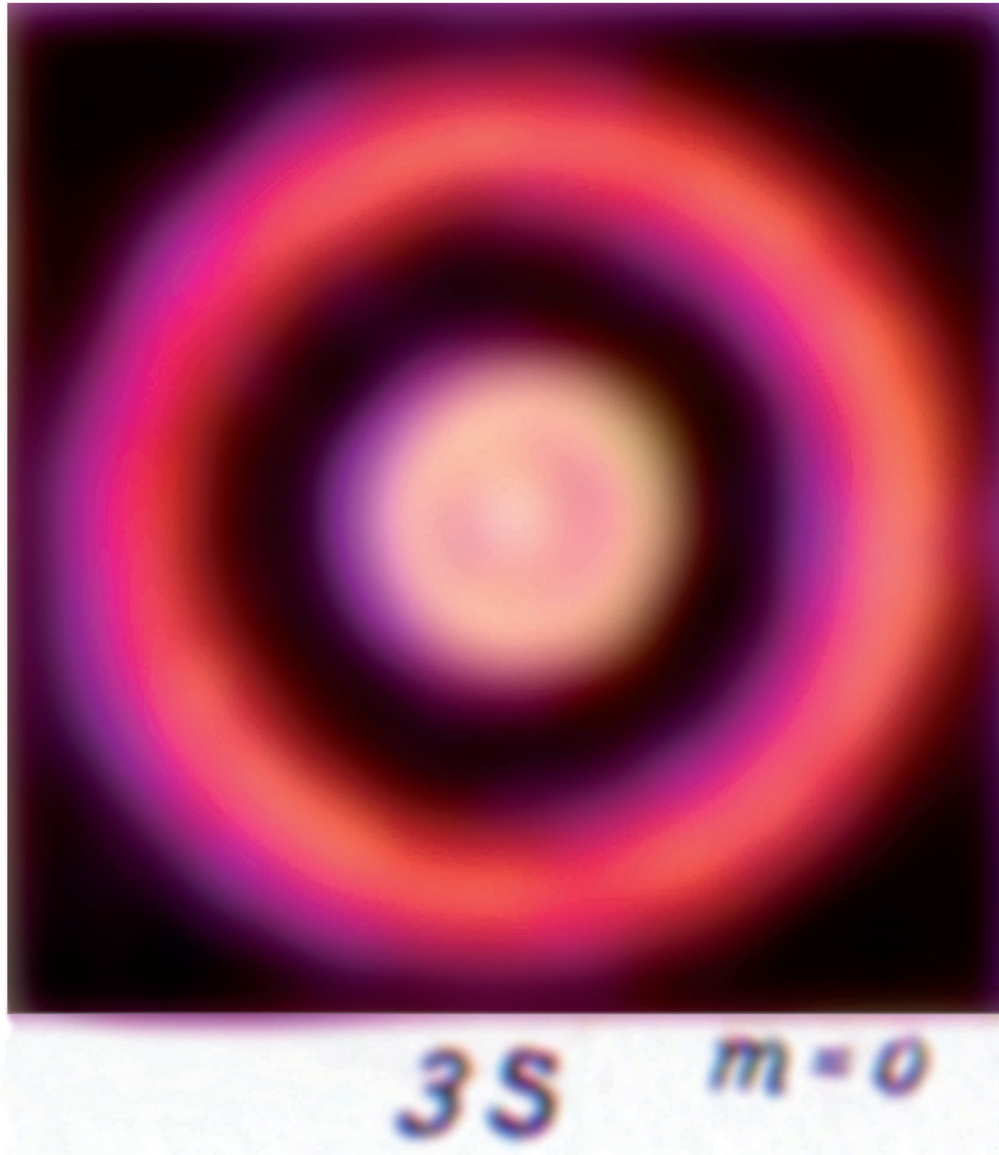
Prints in various sizes, on baryta-coated paper and, in digital form, in blogs, 2010

Series of 4 video animations (3-4 mins. each), 2010-2011

Using morphing software, I have expanded the existing series by creating new images. My photographs are therefore faked fakes.

Alongside my prints I also posted my images to some dedicated blogs, from where they have been copied and distributed without any further action on my part.

Ummagamma

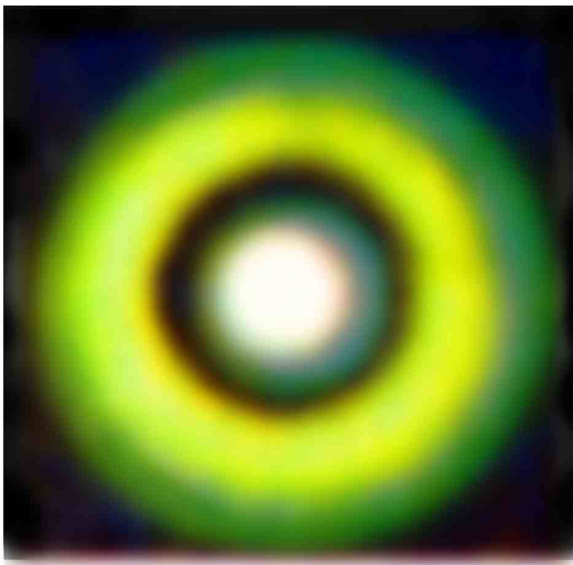


Inkjet on fabric, 140 x 140 cm, 2010

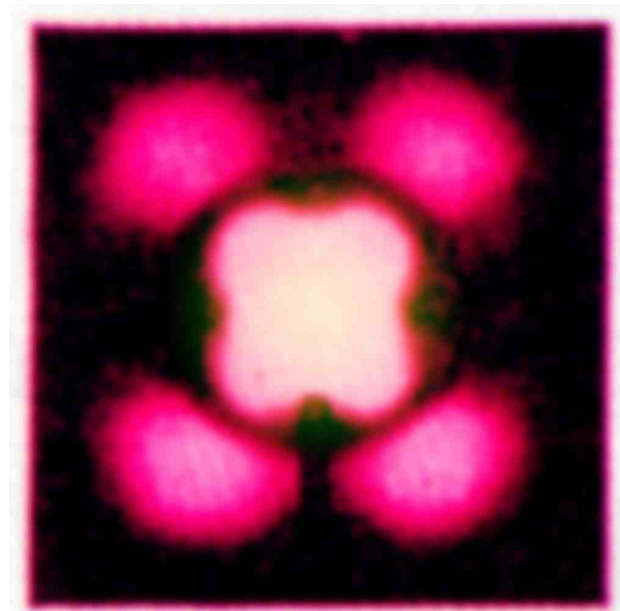
While we know what atoms may look like, each new discovery requires us to adjust our thinking. Niels Bohr's atom model showing a sizeable nucleus in the centre around which electrons circle like planets has proven to be extremely plausible and popular despite general agreement on its inaccuracy.

We tend to represent motion by blurred images. It is a principle that was applied to the 1930s images that inspired the Ummagamma series, which consists of photographs of rotating wooden models; it was hoped the photos would yield images representing an approximate reality. The images were printed on loosely woven fabric, whose fragility refers to researchers and scientists who, in their quest to record the invisible and unthinkable, risked everything. Among them were Henri Becquerel, Marie Curie, Wilhelm Röntgen, analytical chemist Friedlieb Ferdinand Runge, as well as Johann Wilhelm Ritter, one of whose great discoveries was ultraviolet radiation. Ritter became so absorbed in his science that he ruined his health through electrical self-experimentation (and an excessive consumption of alcohol).

Ummagama



2S $m=0$

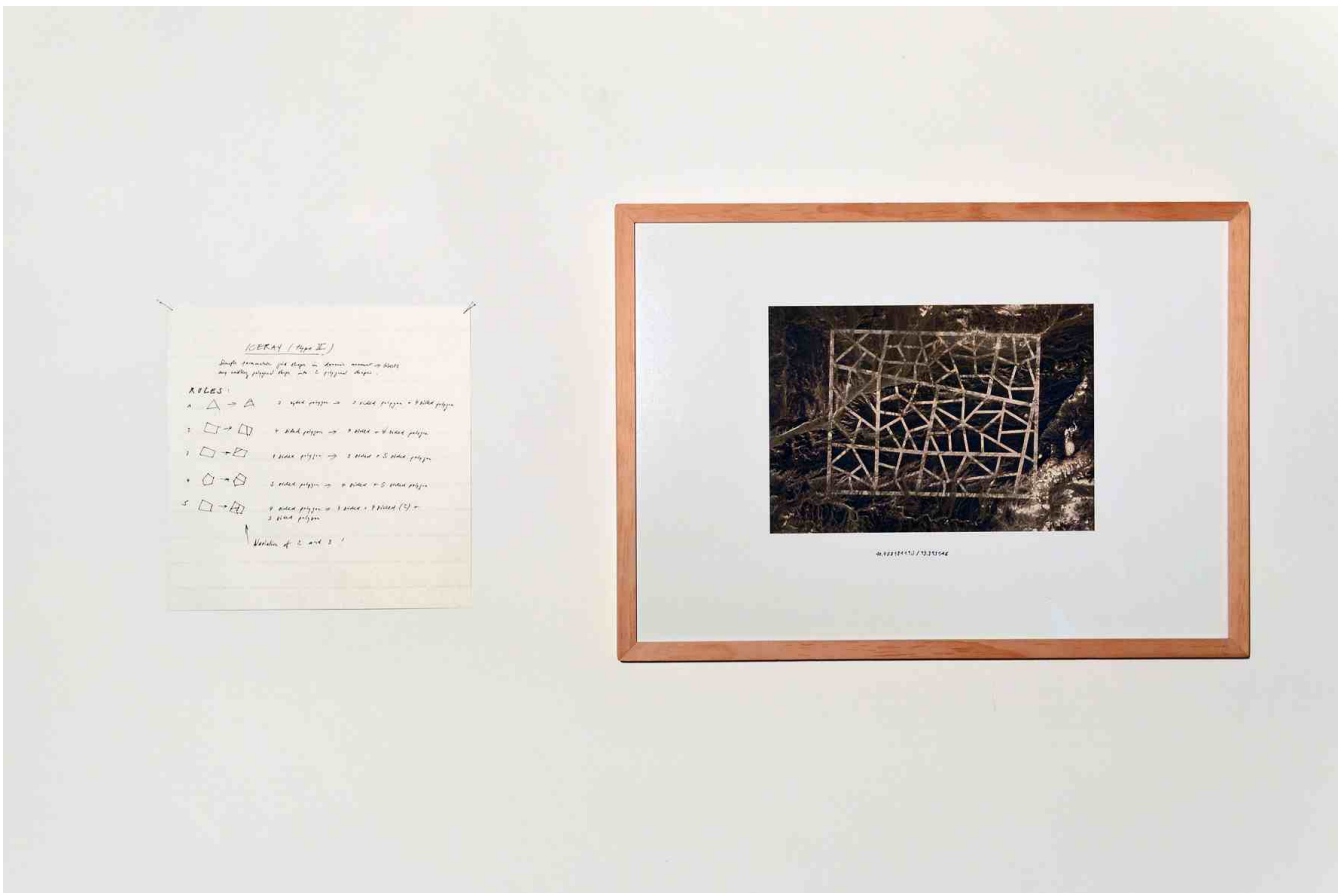


4d $m=1$



Inkjet on fabric, 140 x 140 cm, 2010

40.458148193/93.393145



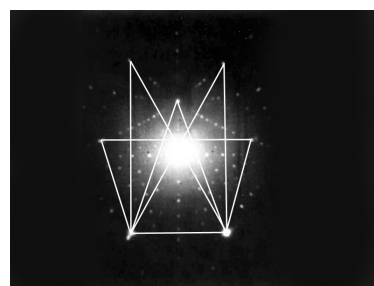
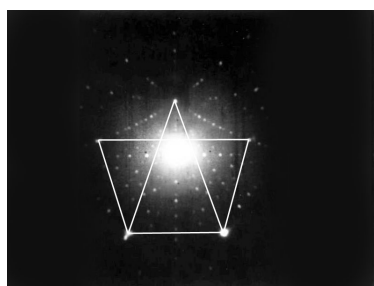
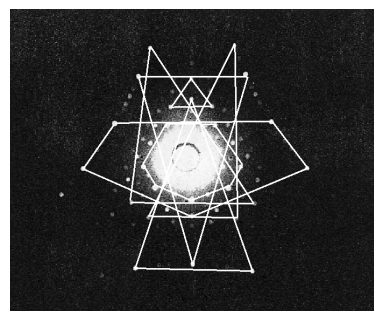
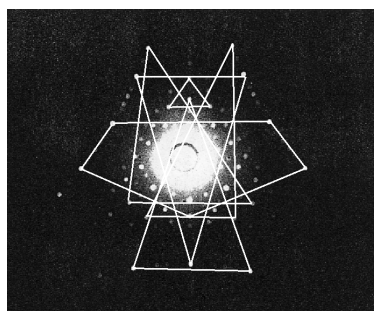
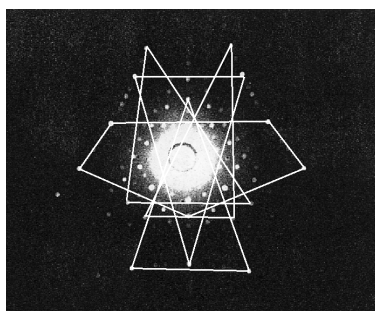
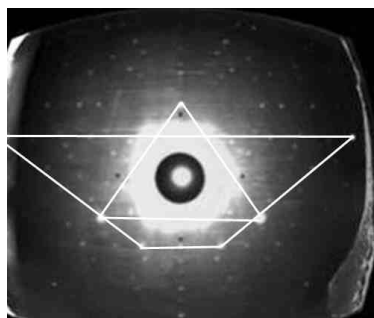
Photograph and drawing, 29.5 x 29.5 cm, 2011

The design of this «Ice-ray II»-type motif of lattice art obeys the traditional Chinese rule, i.e. to divide polygons into further polygons. The project, realised in the Gobi Desert across an area of about 1,700 x 17,000 metres (289 square metres, or some 10.6 square miles), may be considered as a «Landscape of Hysteria» (Stephen Spender, 1933), a notion that made a comeback in the 1960s.

The image shows the site in a fairly advanced state of decay due to weathering. It is an entropic reality that is causing the piece to slowly disappear.

A more or less current state of the site can be found on Google Maps at the coordinates 40.458148193/93.393145.

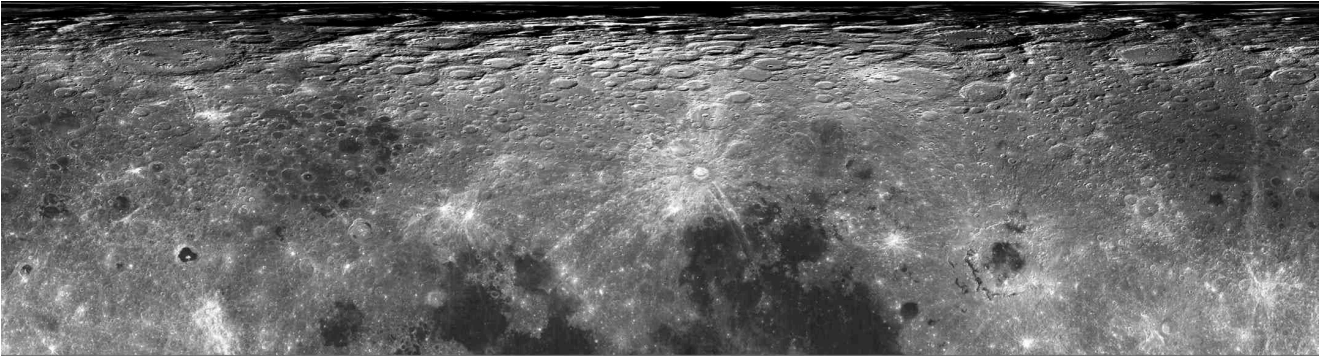
Crystal Dance (1, 2, 3, 4)



Video animations, approx. 3 mins each, 2011

The series consists of 4 animations based on Laue photographs. The method, named after Max von Laue, a German physicist who discovered the diffraction of X-rays by crystals, permits molecular analyses, even of dynamic processes, e.g. to infer protein function, and therefore the analysis of otherwise invisible phenomena. Connecting the reflection points in the animations produces geometrical structures akin to George Gurdjieff's Eneagram.

Moonstruck



Inkjet, 33 x 142.5 cm each, 2012

The piece was inspired by a conflict between the U.S., the traditional «Moon nation», and newcomer China. In 2007 Chinese satellites photographed the surface of the Moon in unprecedented resolution. The publication of one of the images – albeit not in the original resolution – triggered a conflict concerning its authorship, with Nasa claiming the Chinese scientists simply copied a U.S. image from the mid-1990s. In fact, very similar images were the result of virtually identical sections being photographed. However, the Chinese scientists adduced as proof of authenticity a newly-discovered crater gouged out by an impact after Nasa made its observation. The problem remains that we need to trust the Chinese photograph because impacts of this dimension are not visible from Earth.

My two lunar surfaces are based on the Chinese images; however, some new «craters» have emerged.

What are all these lights doing? (STROBES)



Installation involving webcam, stroboscope; software design and technical assistant: Lilian Beidler; 2012 in the context of www.collective-view.ch, a series of webcam video pieces.

Suggesting that the stroboscope invented by MIT professor Harold E. Edgerton for his photographic experiments dramatises intermedia, filmmaker Jonas Mekas asked, «What are all these lights doing? What is the real meaning of the strobes?» Steve Durkee of the USCO collective responded: «... strobe is the digital trip. In other words, what the strobe is basically doing, it's turning on and off, completely on and completely off ... It creates a discontinuance so that it looks like the flicks». The effect was a sense of self-loss since people could only see fragments of themselves, as if they were in an old flickering movie turned into reality.

People close to the USCO collective evidently understood the new technology's psycho-active potential straight away. They asked Edgerton to lend them the apparatus for their parties and concerts, including the now legendary acid tests.

While Edgerton did lend them his laboratory equipment with some interest, he did not show any great enthusiasm for this kind of use. What interests me in this context is the unexpected relationship between what was then considered the counter-culture and a man who worked for the U.S. Department of Defense, developing high-speed flash photography for military purposes (see also «Flying Knotholes», above).

Access to the website with the web-cam activates a strobe installed in a public space. Anyone in the webcam's focus will be subjected to a series of strobe flashes and will perceive their own motions virtually as if they were in a film. The result is a shift of roles insofar as the observed individual becomes aware of his or her objectivisation, while the webcam observer loses part of his or her invisibility since their presence on the website triggers the strobes.

Radio Projects



LapTopRadio «Fight the Power» at Corner College, Zürich, 2012

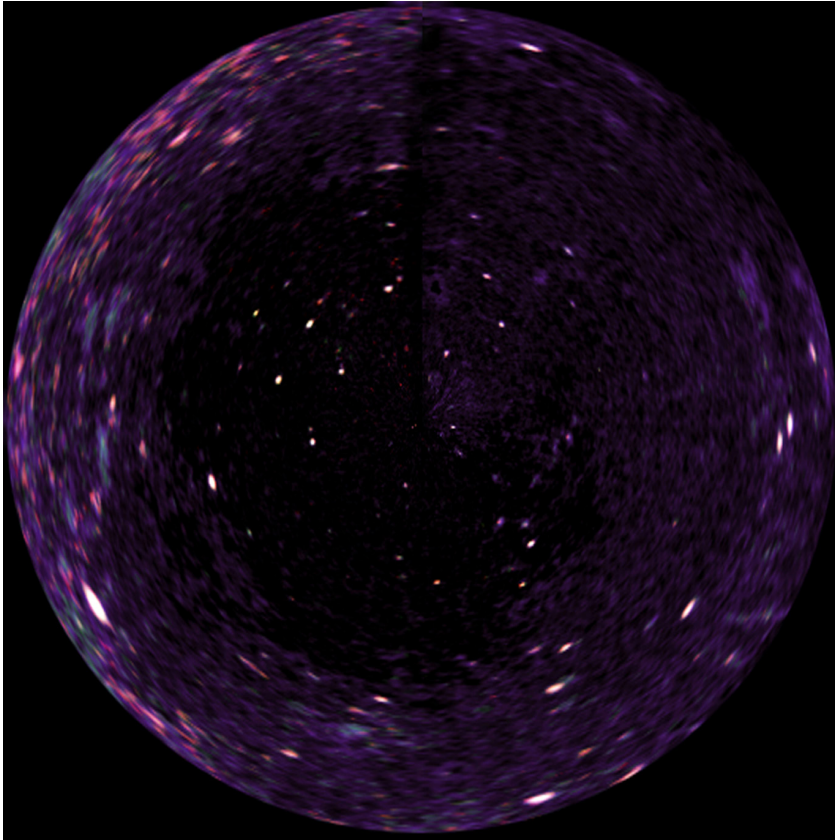
It is very difficult to produce radio pieces one one's own; a team is required. The pieces in this series are therefore always collaborations, which I initiated. As is common for collective projects, everything is based on an initial concept, which is modified and complemented by the participants. The most recent and currently active project in the series is LapTopRadio, an experimental nomadic internet radio that emits its programmes at random intervals. In an attempt to find alternative forms of collective production, we take our studio to our listeners.

LapTopRadio is self-organising and collaborative; it explores the «post-media era» conditions that Felix Guattari alluded to in his late works, expressing his hope that co-opted, streamlined mass media will eventually be replaced by diverse, post-media structures based on a new relationship between producer and consumer in de-centralised, community networks.

Actual projects: Radio Tramontana and LapTopRadio

<http://www.laptopradio.org>

Hot Spots



Hot Spots, 2010
90 x 90 cm, Inkjet on acrylic

Shortly after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima (August 1945), the Kodak Company observed some spotting on their film that they traced back to contamination in their cardboard. Dr. J.H. Webb, a Kodak employee, studied the matter and concluded that the contamination must have come from a nuclear explosion somewhere in the U.S. In fact, it came from the world's first nuclear explosion, the Trinity Test, that took place at Alamogordo New Mexico, July 16, 1945.

Fallout from the explosion had contaminated the river water that the mill in Indiana had used to manufacture the cardboard pulp. Recognizing the sensitivity of this information, Dr. Webb kept his discovery secret until 1949. In response to this event, the Kodak Company installed air samplers in the intakes of their building ventilation system to monitor for fallout.

I took one of these dotted films, copied it into a negative (now blueish image with clear dots) and applied a rectangular to polar distortion.

Hail



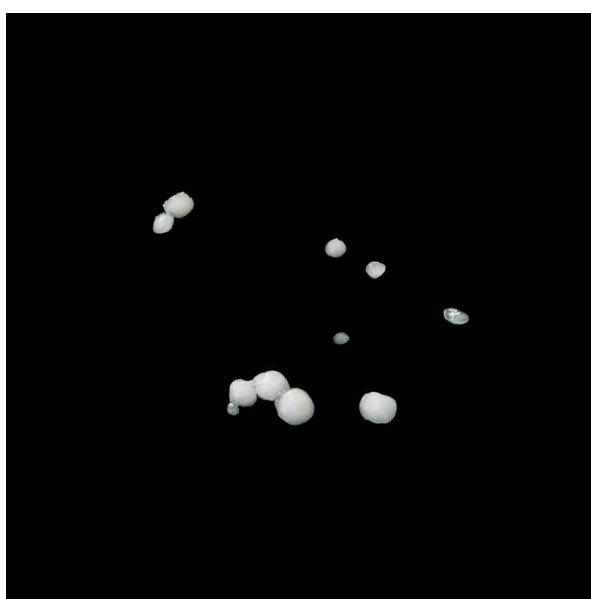
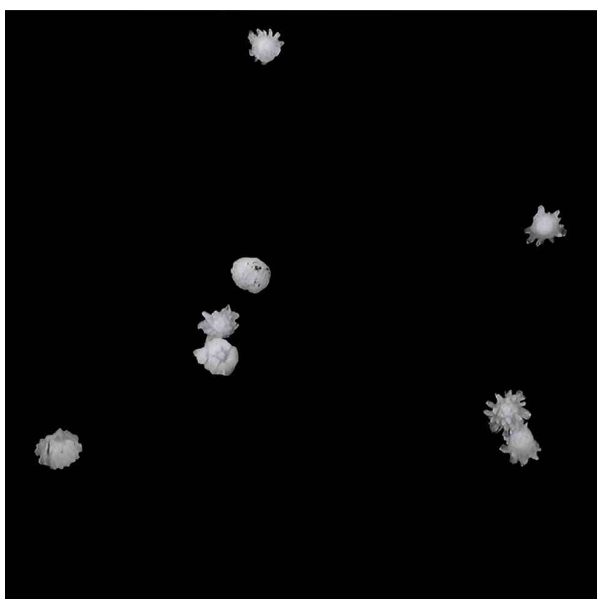
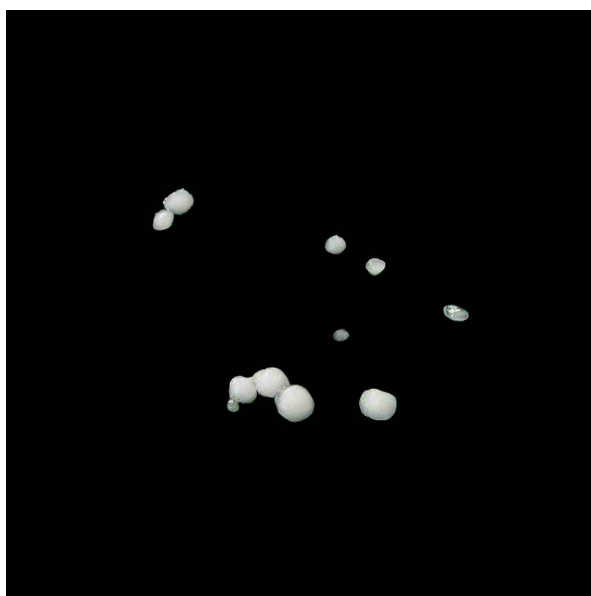
***Hail; 90 x 90 cm, Plexiglass on Duratrans, software; series of 14 prints, 2007
(other forms or realisation: public projections, Geneva 2008, URL:
<http://www.hailmessage.com/>)***

The series is based on photographic evidence of enormous hail stones found on the internet. The hail stones as such have not been altered beyond cropping and pasting onto a black background. The digital code of each JPEG image contains a steganographically embedded text about utopian dreams, e.g. a political, social or ideological manifesto. Once the domain of hackers, terrorists and nerds, digital steganography is most commonly used to inscribe copyright information into images.

In this project I began to use a counter-strategy by steganographically embedding revolutionary texts that call for freedom and autonomy. The programme is based on freely available source code. The works in the Hail series attempt to demonstrate that the thesis expounded by Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs in *The Electronic Revolution* may work not only on an acoustic level but also in visual media. In the streets of Paris Gysin and Burroughs disseminated no longer decipherable sound cut-ups calling for revolts and revolutions, and were convinced that these calls were subsequently heard. My steganographically altered image codes produce a slightly different picture, a visual parallel, so to speak, to Gysin and Burroughs' cut-ups.

The lumps of ice are a reference to a pseudo-scientific thesis, the World Ice Theory or Glacial Cosmogony dreamed up by Hanns Hörbiger, an Austrian engineer, who claimed that ice was the basic substance of all cosmic processes. Against better knowledge and due to party pressure and propaganda, it was adopted as the Nazi party's official cosmology and important scientific theory.

Hail



*Hail; 90 x 90 cm, Plexiglass on Duratrans, software; series of 14 prints, 2007
(other forms or realisation: public projections, Geneva 2008, URL:
<http://www.hailmessage.com/>)*

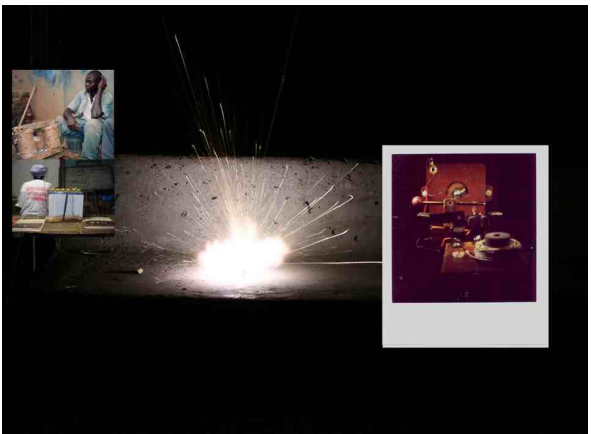
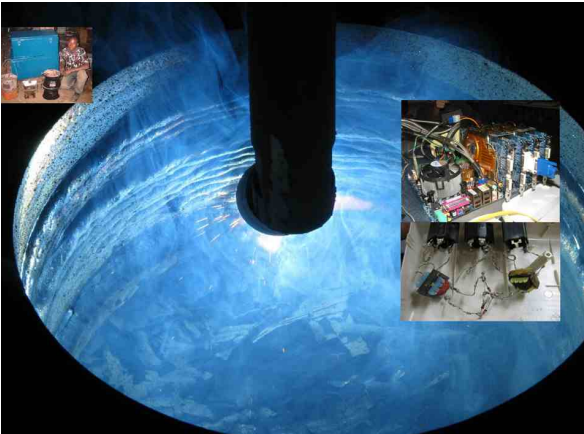
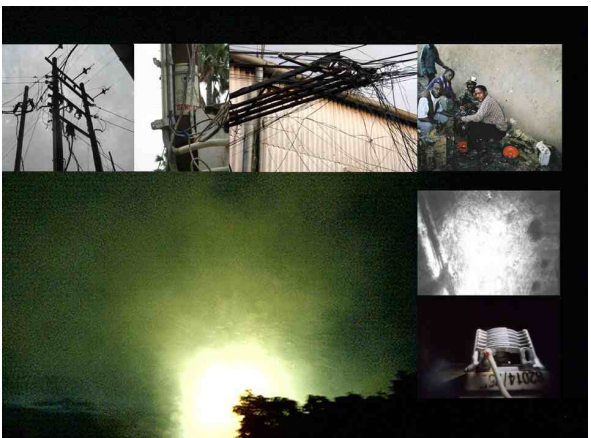
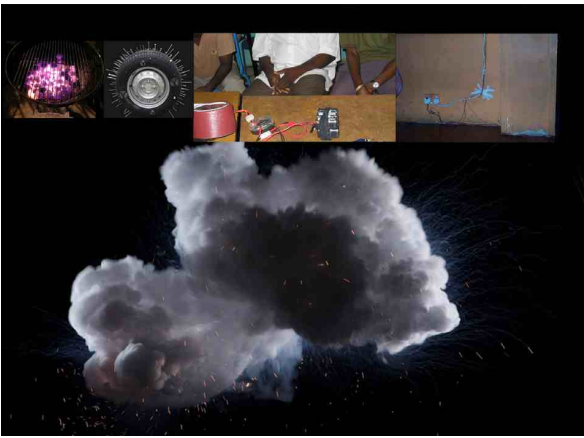
Strange Experiments



Photographs / C-prints; 27 x 35 cm, 2007

For this series I downloaded images of various origins from the internet. Their re-composition renders new meanings and interpretations possible with narrative threads involving magic, low-tech and genius, to perhaps produce a kind of *Autres impressions d'Afrique* and to highlight attitudes we would like to consider ourselves immune to but that run deep within our own society. The collage of visual fiction pays homage to Raymond Roussel's *Impressions d'Afrique* and *Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique*. It was inspired by my artistic interest in the western world's predominant view of Africa, the black continent, and its inhabitants, a view that mingles idealisation, historicising admiration, preconceptions, patronising superiority and a faint revulsion against sometimes inexplicable aspects of magic.

Strange Experiments



Photographs / C-prints; 27 x 35 cm, 2007

reVision



*Radio receiver, Apple Mac mini, software (open-source code), TV monitor,
2007*

*A version of the piece was realised as an installation including a speaker and a
screen onto which the images were projected; 2007*

ReVision humbly pays homage to one of many spectacular projects that drove Nikola Tesla into ruin towards the end of his career. Following his fundamental developments in the fields of radio technology and alternating electrical current systems, and having invented the fluorescent tube and generator systems, he invested huge sums in developments whose intentions seem more obscure from today's perspective. He was fascinated by the fact that most of the background and white noise emitted by a radio set originated in deep space, since stars not only emit visible light but also x-rays and radio waves. In Colorado Springs he installed a gigantic receiver for signals from space, hoping to decipher messages from alien civilisations.

My set-up for the visualisation of cosmic and atmospheric signals is very simple: a radioset tuned to a source of background noise; a computer transforms the sound into visual signals, skipping, oscillating dots of light.

reVision



*Radio receiver, Apple Mac mini, software (open-source code), TV monitor,
2007*

*A version of the piece was realised as an installation including a speaker and a
screen onto which the images were projected; 2007*

Memory Piece



Installation: yoga mats, performance box with computer, earphones and 2 monitors, 2008; Mp3 player edition, 2006

Memory Piece was inspired by the – controversial – method of learning a language while you sleep. The sleep-learning method was applied during World War II by the U.S. Office of Strategic Services – O.S.S., to teach their agents dialects, accents, habits, customs and data of and about countries in which they were to be deployed. Large corporations such as Chrysler have also made use of it. While some educational theorists claim that the method is particularly effective, others have dismissed it as snake oil.

My piece is based on the assumption that the source code of a small image of a black hole can be memorised. Using a text editor and software that can open a JPEG file, a memorised image can be re-constructed. In other words, a picture can be learnt perfectly by heart by taking a detour via text.

Walt Disney Corporation promoted its futuristic film, «The Black Hole» (1979), with the catchphrase, «The journey that begins where everything ends.» The Disney statement acquired a new undertone when chaos theorist O.E. Roessler began to put forward his thesis on black holes in 2008, and in the more general context of discussions concerning the experiments at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at Cern in Geneva that have been claimed to jeopardise the existence of our entire planet.

In my piece the spectator can listen to the readings of two different sets of code for two images of black holes, one in each earphone, underlaid with the usual gentle background sound, and watch the respective image files displayed on either of two monitors, while a scrolling text displays the corresponding code as it is being read. The Mp3 edition has the sound only.

Memory Piece

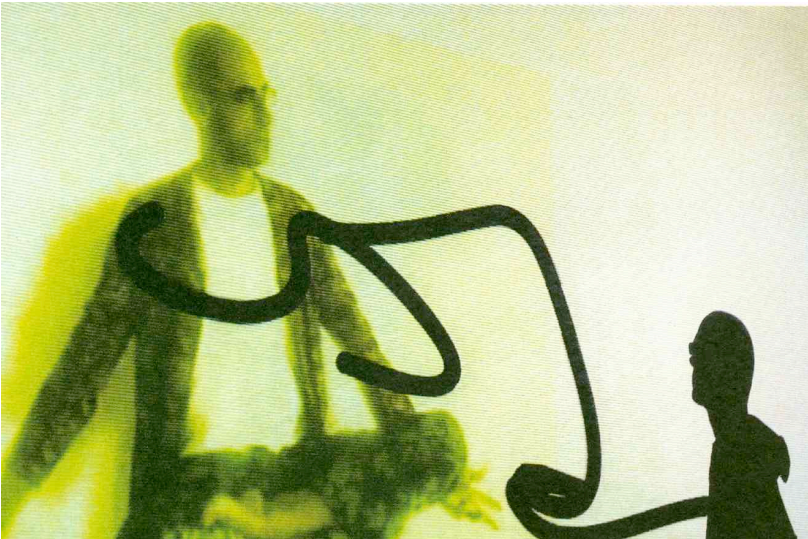
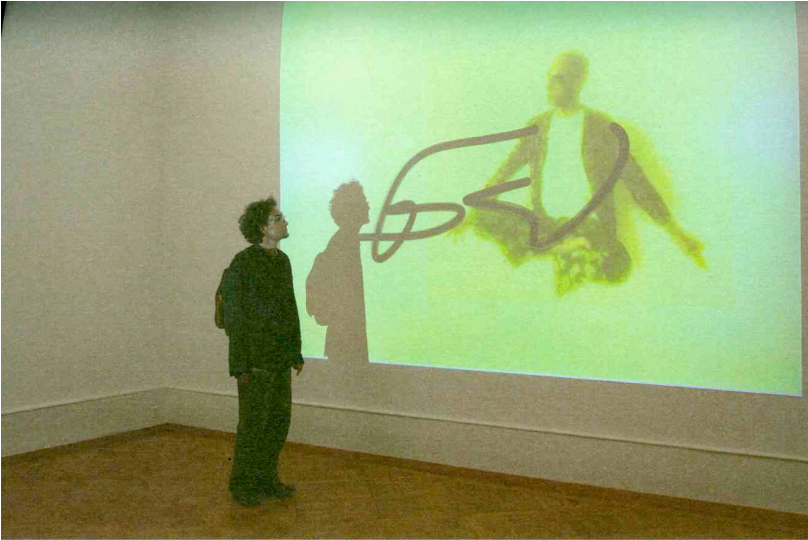
Learning en passant and remembering when you don't expect it.

4D 4D 00 2A 00 00 0B 86 80 0E 60 50 38 24 16 0D
07 84 42 61 50 B8 64 36 1D 0F 88 44 62 51 38 A4
56 2D 17 8C 46 63 51 B8 E4 76 3D 1F 90 48 64 52
39 24 96 4D 27 8B 89 A5 52 B9 64 B6 5D 2F 98 4C
66 53 39 A4 D6 64 7E 9C 4E 67 33 69 E4 F6 55 01
80 09 A0 50 38 24 16 0D 07 83 1F A1 50 B8 64 36
1D 0F 0F 40 00 11 00 A1 56 0D 17 00 46 60 51 00

A0 54 8A 2B 58 AD 48 65 88 88 1D
46 6B 42 D5 ED 76 91 24 44 9A E9
8C 5B D8 CF 99 2D C9 7C 84 C2 BC
59 D8 C4 82 0F 50 6A F4 3A 6C B3
2F EE D0 90 3A 9C 70 2B B3 9F 92
37 67 33 8D E5 64 33 50 0A 76 C3
1E 0C 71 02 01 EE 7D 4D 67 B2 1A
B8 2B C4 99 C9 73 68 40 CA 6A 26
15 8C D1 A4 59 1B 0A 8D 80 EF 5C
D2 46 A9 8C 5C 07 5C F4 CD 15 CE

Installation: yoga mats, performance box with computer, earphones and 2 monitors, 2008; Mp3 player edition, 2006

Dominoes



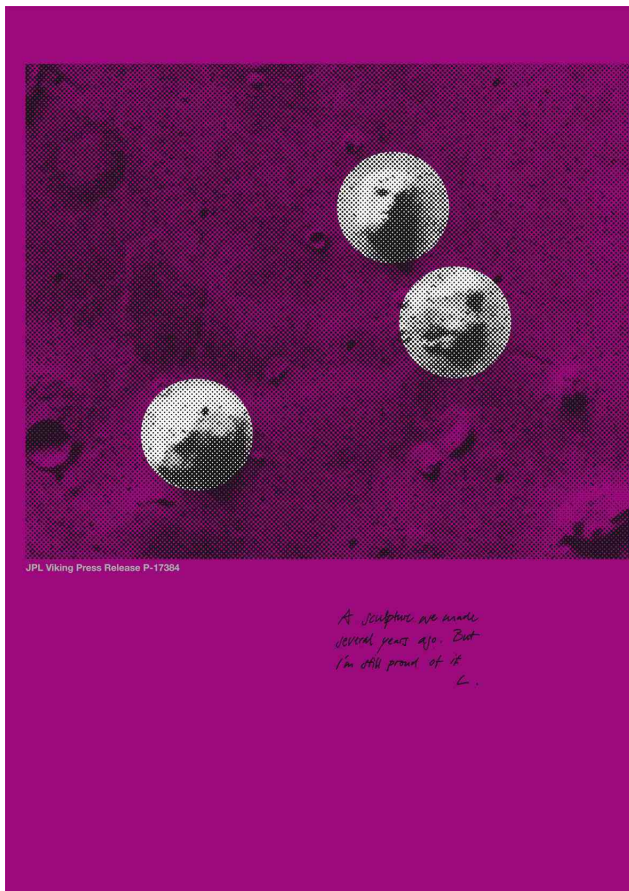
Dominoes, 2004

Interactive Installation; 2 computers, video-recognition system, projection, sound

A playful interactive installation with a drone-like sound. A genie in a bottle – a video of myself whirling around in a lotus position – appears when a visitor approaches. A moving «umbilical cord» connects the projected person with the shadow of the visitor until he leaves the area: the ghost disappears and the sound dims down.

The title of «Dominoes» refers to the song Syd Barrets recorded after having quit Pink Floyd before he lived for years in a psychiatric clinic. Some sampled fragments are scarcely recognizable: «It's an idea, someday // in my tears, my dreams // don't you want to see her proof? // Life that comes of no harm // you and I and dominoes, the day goes by...»

Viking



Poster; offset print, 2 colours, DIN A0, 2006

Autograph text, lower right:

*«A sculpture we made
several years ago. But
I'm still proud of it.
L.»*

This piece consists of a photograph of planet Mars taken by the Viking 1 Orbiter probe of 1976, which shows a semblance of a human face. The photo of the «Face on Mars» made international headlines and boosted old fantasies. A later photograph (Mars Global Surveyor, 1996) shows the same area and reveals what now looks like a perfectly normal mountain or mesa. Since then NASA have conceded that contrast and brightness of the original image were adjusted for publicity purposes until the «face» became visible.

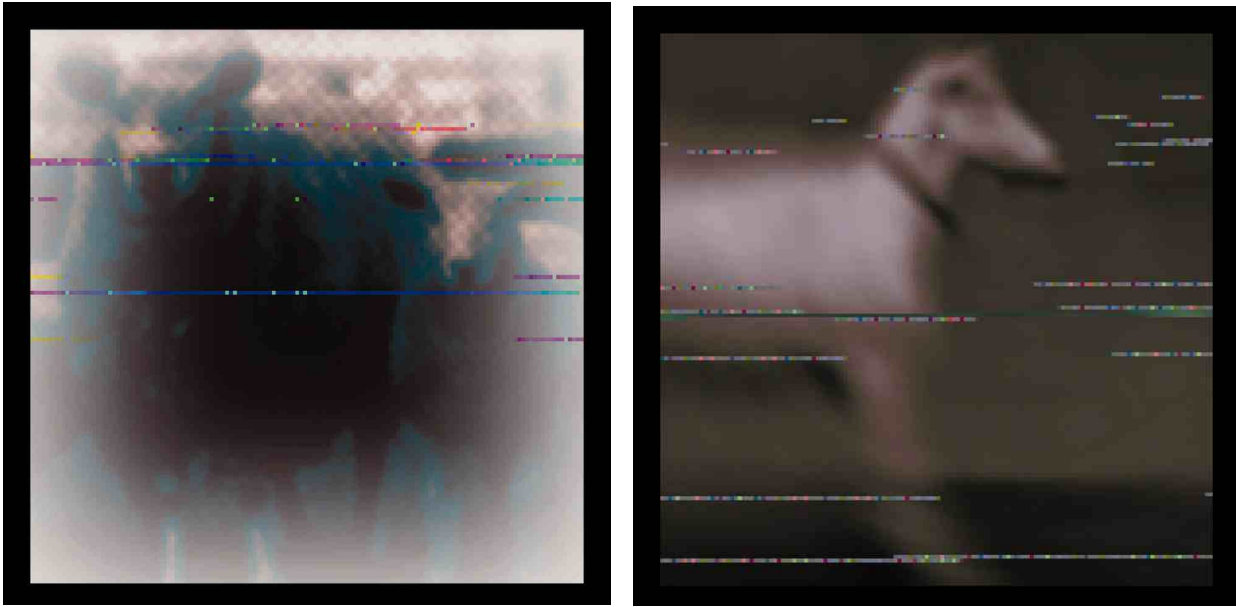
Blue Sparks



Video series, duration: 3' to 5', 2005-2008

The name of the Blue Sparks series was inspired by August Strindberg late work, *En blå bok* (A Blue Book). Oscillating between text and image, my video animations attempt to celebrate moments and interstices when shimmering specks of light are no longer just smudges but are coming to a semblance of order prior to revealing themselves as a text, or when a text dissolves into more open structures. Since the textual, semantic levels moreover create a space for new, additional interpretations, the result is an overlay and intermingling of various levels of information.

Dodo



Dodo; digital airbrush on aluminium and wall, each panel 110 x 110 cm, 1996

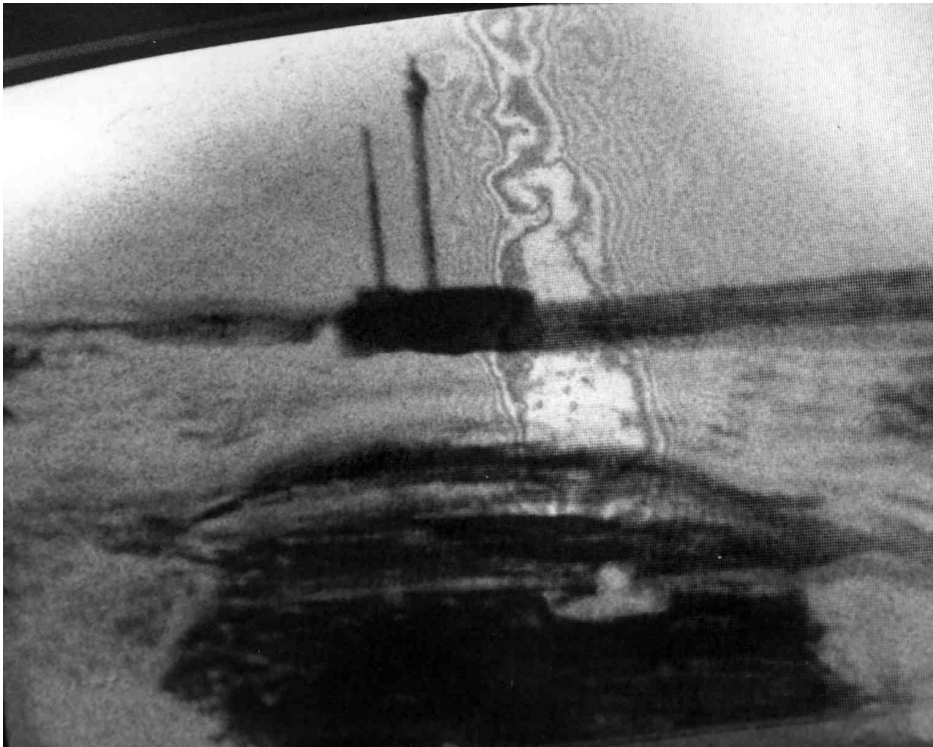
Dodo was my contribution to architectural art at the then new IT Centre in Bern. It was my first venture into using picture code as a design material.

At various places in the centre one unexpectedly comes across aluminium panels with rather blurry and heavily pixellated images alongside bars of colour and text fragments. From a certain distance they can be seen to represent animals. They are farm animals that I assumed would be examined and treated at a veterinary hospital – which is what the centre used to be.

Their pixellation reveals that these images had at some point been digitised into a sequence of signs – numerals and letters – that define values of colour and brightness of individual pixels in an image file.

I overwrote some of these signs, replacing them by the names of wild animals of which I had found out that they had become extinct at approximately the same time that the building was used as an animal hospital. Next I reopened the file as an image, revealing the bars of colour, which are a visualisation of the names of those extinct animals.

Newtons Rings



Newtons Rings, 69 x 96 cm, B/W photograph on on baryta-coated paper, 1996

Newton rings, a common artefact on films in contact with glass slides on images already translated from one medium to another, permits new forms of lecture of the source material (propaganda films) but also of the added errors.



Newtons Rings, 69 x 96 cm, B/W photograph on on baryta-coated paper, 1996

Electrify on Mountain Tops (Elektrisieren auf Bergen)



Lichtenberg figures, 94 x 106 cm; in wooden frame, B/W photograph on on baryta-coated paper, 1994-96

The German physicist and satirist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg was fascinated with electricity, the mysterious force of nature, and impressed with Benjamin Franklin's lightning conductor. Having built a large electrophorus to produce sparks of static electricity, he discovered strange treelike patterns, eponymously called Lichtenberg figures, and understood the principle that would lead to modern xerography copying technology.

In extremely dry weather conditions, however, static electrical discharges are an analogue photographer's nightmare. For works in this series I took previously exposed film to the dark room where I used synthetics to charge it with static electricity. The resulting discharge flashes create a double exposure.

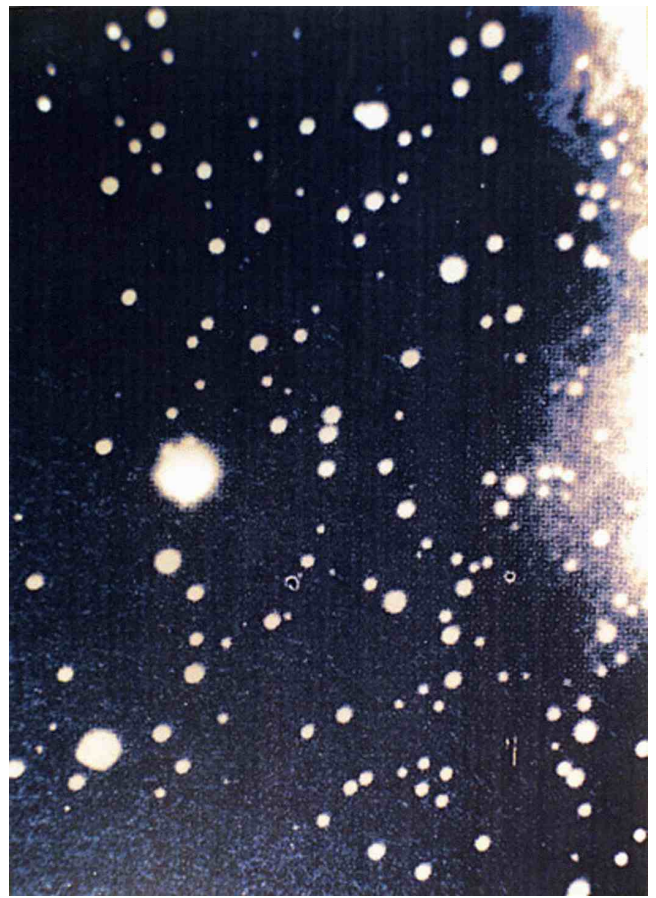
The title of the series, *Electrify on Mountain Tops*, alludes to Lichtenberg's name and to the fact that, in a small volume called *Noctes*, Lichtenberg identified mountains as the place where lightning tends to occur with the greatest frequency.

Electrify on Mountain Tops (Elektrisieren auf Bergen)



Lichtenberg figures, 94 x 106 cm; in wooden frame, B/W photograph on on baryta-coated paper, 1994-96

Partisans / Constellations (Partisanen / Konstellationen)

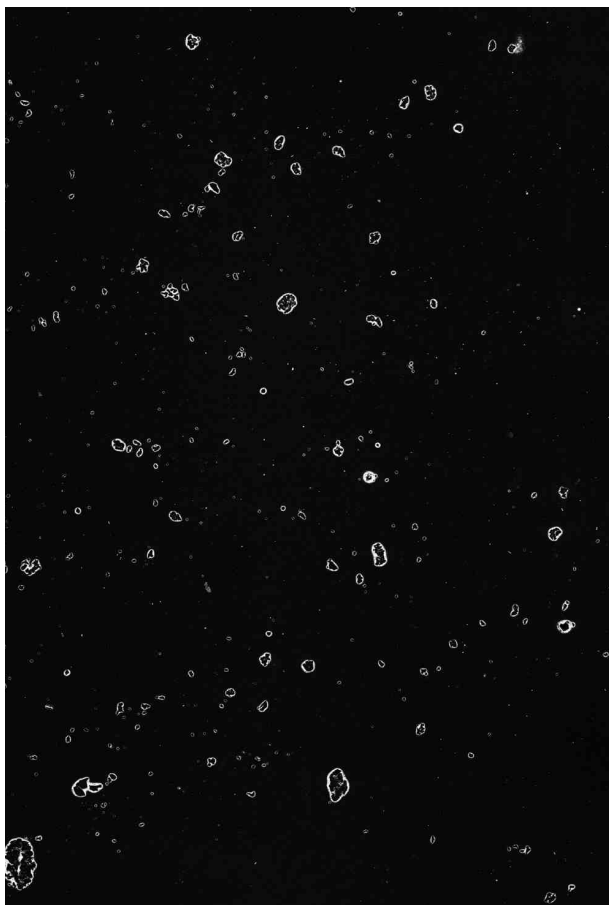


Digitally reworked photographs / Scotchprint, 115 x 80 cm, 1993

«Hickies» is what a printer calls the printing flaws due to specks of dirt, dust and dry ink, whose volume slightly raises the offset rubber blanket. The result is a minuscule bright circle around a dark spot called aureole. While often distracting, hickies may evoke interesting associations. When it comes to prints of star formations, however, a hickie can be disastrous, in particular when such a photograph is scanned or reproduced. A re-print will show «stars» where there is nothing in actual reality.

My coloured digital prints of such flaws pay homage to the «Celestographies» that Gustav Strindberg produced during his stay in Dornach and Gersau, Switzerland, around 1894. For his celestographies, Strindberg exposed photographic paper on a clear night to capture direct images of stars without the interference of optical instruments.

Partisans / Constellations (Partisanen / Konstellationen)



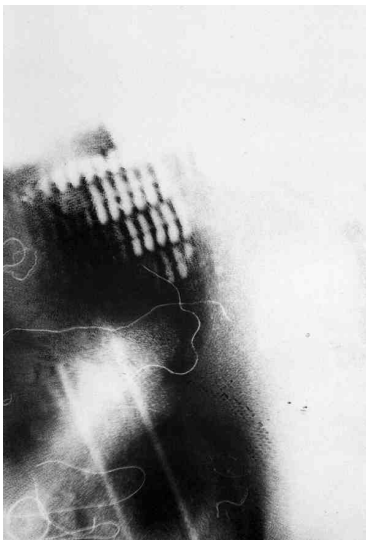
Atlas (Stars); offset edition, 23.8 x 17.3 cm (series of unique prints), 1993

Soon after this, I realised a similar project. For this offset edition of unique prints, I had to search far and wide before I found a printer who was prepared to meet my requirements: to use black ink only, and to sprinkle dust and dirt into the running printing machine to create a fictitious map of stars. To an offset printer, this is a meaningless enterprise; it hurts his professional pride, and entails an extremely laborious process to clean his machinery.

Dust Bag (Staubbeutel)



Edition of duochrome off-setprints and B/W prints on baryta-coated paper, 28 x 45 cm, 1990



We have a tendency to overlook anything that might be embedded in something we consider irrelevant, let alone anything that might run counter to the expected semantic level. Hence, a highly efficient method of transferring secret information is to embed it in noise.

It was by complete chance that I came across a large waste container crammed full with 35 mm film drums. They contained films from the former Soviet Union, mostly ingenuous propaganda from the Soviet embassy, animated, sports and adventure films featuring cheerful peasants, dedicated workers and happy children.

They reminded me of Lev Sergejevich Termen, better known as Léon Theremin, the inventor of an early electronic musical instrument called theremin. Interested in more than ethereal music, the Russian inventor also designed «The Thing», a (Trojan) gift to the U.S. embassy from young Soviets – a passive listening device concealed in a carved wooden plaque. Activated by micro-waves, the «bug» required no power supply or active electronic components, and was only discovered after seven years.

I took the films home and magnified them. The images revealed a great deal of dust, countless microscopic signs that overlay the actual images and may contain encoded messages.

Laurent Schmid develops narrative types of laboratory trials in the field of scientific and pseudoscientific physics, and its reception and influence in our society. An inquiry which leads to questions of faith, of rationalism and anti-rationalism, and finally also to magic and spirituality.

His work is oscillating between digital and analogue media, he is doing performative-lectures, interactive works, radio, videos but also installations, drawings and, in particular, photos.

Laurent Schmid is currently teaching and doing research at HEAD, Geneva University of Art and Design, he studied at Basel and Bern schools of art and and Bern University.

born 1960 in Basel, lives in Bern and Geneva, education:

1981 Schule für Gestaltung Basel

1981-1986 Schule für Gestaltung Bern and Bern University, focus: media

1995-99 President of the art commission of the city of Bern

1997-1999 Directory board «Visarte», professional association of Switzerland's visual artists

1999-2007 Editorial board member of «Art Suisse/Schweizer Kunst»-magazine

runs «activeRat», a art-CD-ROM and DVD label (since 1998), he is organizing and (co-)curating events and exhibitions (e.g. «Version Bêta», CIC, Geneva, 2008)

teaching & research activities:

HKBern, Gestaltung und Kunst (2001-02),

F+F Zürich (2002),

HEAD Genève (since 2000), (department art/media and postgraduate studies «Immédiat»), since 2008 responsible coordinator of «work.master» MFA studies in visual arts, since 2012 together with Lili Reynaud Dewar.

Group exhibitions (selection):

2015 «Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits», MUMA, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne

2014 "The Exhibition of a Film/L'exposition d'un film – A film/an exhibition by Mathieu Copeland", launched at Biennale of Moving Images, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, showed in diff. museums.

2014 "Von Forschergeist bis Sehnsucht", Klinik Südhang, Kirchlindach

2013 "Feu sacré", Kunstmuseum Bern, catalogue

2013 "Cross Over – Fotografie der Wissenschaft & Wissenschaft der Fotografie", Fotomuseum Winterthur, catalogue

2013 "Enlightened", Galerie Bernhard Bischoff & Partner, Bern

2012 «MAE Musée de l'art extraterrestre», LiveInYourHead, Geneva

2011 «X Years», Galerie Bernhard Bischoff & Partner, Bern, catalogue

2010 Exhibition « Looping Memories », Fundacion Sunol and Loop Festival, Barcelona, catalogue

2008 Exhibition «Record Record», Exhibition at Shift Festival, Basel

2006/07 «CH-AT-DE» Exhibition and DVD, «Videos aus Oesterreich und der Schweiz», ZKM Karlsruhe

2006 «UFO», Photoforum Pasquart, Bienne, catalogue

2006 «Driving Fast Through A Slow Motion Landscape», Crac Alsace, Altkirch, F, & Espai Ubu, Barcelona, catalogue

2006 «shaping», Galerie Bernhard Bischoff

2006 «Branding, Marken, Zeichen, Labels», Die Mobiliar, Bern

2005 «Keiner hilft Keinem», Kunsthalle Bern, publication

2004 «I need you», Centre Pasqu'Art, Bienne, catalogue

2004 «From here on out», Kunstraum Walchenturm, Zürich

2004 «salon», Kunsthalle Palazzo, Liestal

2003 «Zeichnungen», Galerie Bernhard Bischoff

2002 «Suspense», (Internet-)Installation Rest. Schwellenmätteli, Project of HGKK and of Museum für Kunst der Gegenwart, Bern

2001 «vierhändig», forum rubigen

2001 «Die Kunst der Mobiliar», Installation im Kunstmuseum Bern

1999 «BAX release», Projektraum Kunstkanal, Bern

1999 «Morphingeneva», airbag, Geneva

1998 «Tapeten», (zusammen mit Patricia Abt), Kunstraum Hotel, Zürich, catalogue

1998 Galerie Serge Ziegler, Zürich

1997 «Statements», Galerie Bernhard Schindler, Bern

1997 «My Swiss Friends», Projekt von Via Lewandowsky, Lombard-Freid Fine Arts, New York

1997 «diskland, snowscape», Shed im Eisenwerk, Frauenfeld

1996 «Sommerausstellung», Galerie Bernhard Schindler, Bern

1996 «Bilderzauber», Fotomuseum Winterthur, catalogue

1995 «Standbein-Spielbein», Galerie Bernhard Schindler, Bern

1995 «Salon-Ausstellung», Kunsthalle Palazzo, Liestal

1995 «Take Care», Kunsthalle Palazzo, Liestal, catalogue

1995 «Bernr Kunstaussstellung», Kunsthalle Bern, catalogue

1993 «75 Aufscheinungen», Kunsthalle Bern

1992 Eidg. Kunststipendiaten, Kunstmuseum Solothurn, catalogue

1991 «Stillstand switches», Shedhalle Zürich, catalogue

1989 «Umspannwerk III», Umspannwerk Singen, BRD, catalogue

1988 «Lokalatelier Atelier, Weisser Saal, Kunstmuseum Bern, catalogue

1988 Kunstraum Kreuzlingen

1988 «Markus Furrer zeigt...», Biel

1987 Galerie Salchli & Agoues, Rufenacht

1987 «La lupa e l'orso», (Villa Pamphili) Rom und (Dampfzentrale) Bern, catalogue

1987 «Ausstellung Thunstrasse», Bern

1986 «Tangram», Bernr Galerie, Bern (Künstlergruppe Tangram mit Albrecht Schnyder, Moritz Küng)

1986 «Biennale des écoles d'art», Toulouse, catalogue

1986 «Malerische Skulptur, Skulpturale Malerei», Kunstmuseum Bern

Solo exhibitions (selection):

2010 «Rope Tricks», Bischoff & Partner Gallery, Bern
2007 «Eclipsing Binaries», Galerie Bernhard Bischoff & Partner
2005 «Jumping reality», Galerie Bischoff & Partner, Bern
2005 «dogdays», Videokunst.ch, PROGR, Bern
2000 «REPRO», Galerie Brandstetter & Wyss, Zürich, catalogue
1998 «Beyond the Borderline», Galerie Bernhard Schindler, Bern (with Zhou Tie Hai)
1998 «Wileys», Galerie Brandstetter & Wyss, Zürich
1997 «Spam», Installation Kiosk durch den Kunstkanal, Bern (with P.Abt)
1996 Galerie Bernhard Schindler, Bern
1995 Galerie Brandstetter & Wyss, Zürich
1993 Kunstverein Biel, Centre Pasqu'Art, catalogue
1992 «Partisanen», Raum O.T. für aktuelle Kunst, Prosart, Luzern, with edition
1992 Galerie Brandstetter & Wyss, Zürich
1990 Shedhalle Zürich, catalogue
1989 «Wartsaalprojekt», Bahnhof Biel (Project of Centre Pasqu'Art, with Patricia Abt)
1988 «stochern und rupfen», Kurt Salchli, Bern, catalogue
1987 «Sprung in den Aetna», (with Chiarenza & Hauser), Kunstraum Kreuzlingen, catalogue
1986 Galerie Chrämmerhuus, Langenthal (with Chiarenza & Hauser)
1986 Galerie Loeb, Bern

Awards/grants/art in public space:

2006 Art in public space, Schulhaus Brunnmatt, Projekt "Wazzar", a radio-project
2001 Viper Swiss Award for Media Arts
1996 Informatikzentrum Uni Bern, Projekt «Dodo», catalogue
1995 Werkbeiträge, town and canton of Bern
1994 Förderbeitrag Kant. Aargau
1991 Swiss Arts Award
1990 Werkbeitrag, town and canton of Bern
1986 Aeschlimann/Corti award

Media projects: (selection)

since 2003 diff. (web- & pirate-)radio projects (ratio.fm, wazzar, o0o0000000 ...), recently: LapTopRadio and Radio Tramontana shows in Sao Paulo (SESC Consolacao, exhibition «Eternal Tour»), Beirut (Station, exhibition «Swiss Zebra»), Berlin, Rome, Milano...
2006 «black hole», mp3-Player, edition
2006 «K7», made at home edition, Lyon, presentation at planet22, Genève
2000 «surprise», Report Thun
1999 «Skinnerbox-Remixes», a CD-ROM Project
1999 Contribution for «RAM» internet project, Xcult, Basel, presentations at Liste, Basel, at Kunstmuseum Thun...
1998 Web-Project for Kunstraum Hotel, Zürich

websites and project-websites for Kunsthalle Bern, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Kunstmuseum Thun, Kunsthau Zürich, Stadtgalerie Bern etc.

video screenings in several festivals (Viper Basel, BIM Geneva, Loop Barcelona, Kunsthalle Vienna, Pro Helvetia New Dehli...)

Performative talks: (selection)

2013 «Galvanische Action», Cave12, Genève
2008 «Fear uncertainty and doubt», with Mauel Schmalstieg, «Dark Designs», Maison d'Ailleurs, Yverdon, catalogue
2007 «Les enfants du géant gazeux», Galerie Bernhard Bischoff, catalogue
2006 «The Raw and the Dangerous Kook», Dorkbot, Progr, Bern

Talks: (selection)

2014 «Unmapping Radio» with Jonathan Frigeri, ESSA conference «Mapping the Field», Copenhagen University
2013 «Brutal Ardur», Symposium «Radical Enlightenment. A Symposium on Cybernetics and the Soul», Palais de Tokyo

Texts/reviews: (selection)

- Bernhard Bischoff, «Ein paar spektroskopische Betrachtungen», in: «Eclipsing Binaries», report, Thun, 2007
- Marianne Burki, «Kunst und Bau, ein Spannungsfeld», Stämpfli, Bern, d, 2001
- Herzog, Samuel «REPRO», in Katalog zur gleichnamigen Ausstellung in der Galerie Brandstetter & Wyss, Zürich, 2000
- Ursprung, Philip, «Partisanen – Zur Kunst von Laurent Schmid» in: Daidalos/Architektur, Kunst, Kultur, Berlin, 1996
- Stahel, Urs, «Seriöses Spiel», in: Katalog Fotomuseum Winterthur, 1996
- Ursprung, Philip, «Gegen die Modernist Correctness» – Neues aus der Schweiz: Claudia und Julia Müller, Laurent Schmid, Ugo Rondinone, in: Eikon, Wien, 14/15/1995
- Ursprung, Philip, «Für seinen ganz privaten Himmelsatlas...» in: Take Care, Katalog, Swiss Institute, N.Y., Palazzo, Liestal, 1995
- Bitterli, Konrad, «Störfälle und Fehlstellen»; Loock, Ulrich, «Blickwechself»; Lux, Harm, «Fragmente, Feb.,95»; in Katalog, Kunsthalle Bern, 1995
- Bitterli, Konrad, «Störfall und Normalfall – Laurent Schmid's Archive der Fehlstellen», in : Katalog, Kunstverein, Centre Pasqu'Art, Biel, 1993
- Lux, Harm, in Katalog, Shedhalle Zürich, 1991
- «Jetzt / Junge Kunst aus Schweiz, Europa und Amerika», Du, Zürich, 6/1991
- Boller, Gabrielle, «Hirsch Perlman, Eric Hattan, Laurent Schmid», in: Artefaktum, Antwerpen, 34/1990
- Ursprung, Philip, «Eric Hattan, Laurent Schmid, Hirsch Perlman» in: Nike, München, 33/1990
- Luckow, Dirk, «Die Frage nach dem Bild und nur ein Störenfried?», in: Katalog «Umspannwerk III», Singen, 1989

and div. texts by around my work by by Lars Bang Larsen, Bernhard Bischoff, Sarah Burger, Yann Chateigné, Mathieu Copeland, Samuel Gross, Christophe Kihm, Maxine Kopsa, Gerhard Johann Lischka, Benoît Maire, Gora Nicoletti, Philippe Piroette in a monographic publication «Rope Trick Effects», 2013