

# SCREENDANCING

## A Retrospective of Berlin Club Visuals

### Press Information

1 Press Release

2 Overview

3 The Artists

4 Video

5 Images

<http://screendancing.net>

# SCREENDANCING

## 1 Press Release

**In the late nineties in Berlin a group of loosely connected video artists developed a more specific form of club visuals. The images were directly related to the music.** These films and film collages had nothing in common with traditional forms of visual accompaniment at musical events, such as the psychedelic oil on water slide shows of 60s and 70s disco or the laser shows at large raves. **Instead, they took their often graphic images from the abstract, synthetic character of the music, its rhythms dictating the edit, filmed sequences were usually masked by effects. This was in deliberate contrast to an alienated rock music which was aggressively opposed to engaging with the medium of video.**

These producers called themselves **VJs**. Equivalent to DJs, they were video artists and electronic music fans, involved in running clubs or music labels, or even making techno themselves. Screendancing is the first retrospective exhibition about this phenomenon, it features works by **visomat inc., Lillevan, Daniel Pflumm, Jörg X. Franzmann, monitor:automatique, JUTOJO, u-matic and Pfadfinderei** from the formative period from 1999 to 2003.

The club visuals affirm instead the often **cold and abstract nature of many video images** and derive from this a brittle tension. **These are products of pop culture rather than of artist's subjectivities, located fully in the here and now, situated between the physical presence of performance and the technical artifice of mediation.** These moments were shared with club music, with techno and house. While the music created a special soundworld, the producers of club visuals in the nineties responded to a **media reality**. They were fascinated by **the colours of TV test cards, corporate logos and computer graphics from advertising and science**. They developed not only a reflection on media processes but a visual vocabulary synonymous with the clubbing experience.

Today club visuals are a marginal phenomenon in the city's nightlife. They appear in the environment of clubs run by art students or at festivals in the form of affiliated media. They can be produced on any computer and usually bear no particular relationship to the music. This was not always the case. At the time of its emergence in the late nineties **these videos developed and extended the artistic programme of electronic music visually**. Originally Techno was a **neo-avant-garde** concept in which all forms of representation were rejected. The music was not intended to be a reflection of reality or of human consciousness. The sound flowed not from an individual ego but from the circuits of the synthesizer. Bombastic, noisy rock music was supplanted by clear, abstract, serial, repetitive forms reflecting a modern, technological world. The artistic scale of the music was all-embracing, creating a visual equivalent was only logical.

Berlin is regarded as a world capital of club culture. While the musical styles and the modes of partying from the 1990s are still in effect, the shape of the scene has changed fundamentally. While today Berlin's night life thrives its international representation, on **tourism, the nineties' club scene was a place where artists and activists from the electronic music scene collaborated on joint projects with visual artists and the upcoming Netculture**. Regardless if one was producing music, art or websites, one developed a **micro political alternative to the**

# SCREENDANCING

**then still intact mass media.** While Daniel Pflumm was fascinated with the blink of a CNN reporter's eye, Visomat Inc. used technical diagrams of the mechanisms and devices of mass media production. Although at **WMF, Panasonic** or at **Maria am Ostbahnhof** performances by VJs were an integral part of a club night, the visual products of this period are largely forgotten. Most of the major protagonists of the Berlin VJ scene of the nineties are now working in other related fields.

The VJing of the nineties reflects **a specific moment of technological development** in which experimentation had become available to those outside of media or artistic elites. What, in the eighties, could only have been achieved by the directors of music videos for the Pet Shop Boys or New Order was democratized within this scene. Micro-political video work on a complex formal level (cuts lasting tenths of a second, multiple effects) was possible. Today the situation is different again with the digital editing technology available to any PC owner, electronic music production and lavish professional quality video collages can now be produced with relative ease. **Screendancing takes a close look at the time frame when this sort of image processing had technical avant-garde qualities.**

**Screendancing is an exhibition for clubbers, connoisseurs of electronic music, gallery-goers, media theorists and lifestylers.**

**To partygoers and techno fans Screendancing offers ...**

... an escape from the representation of techno-culture in old narrative forms: Today Techno recalls the slick conventions of television film. The music calls for stricter, more abstract and yet more free images.

**To the art world ...**

... a way out of its very own structural and institutional constraints. What feedback is created between the videos and their celebratory audience? Screendancing creates a flashback to an era of artistic crossover and interdisciplinary practices.

**To media theorists and artists ...**

.. club visuals offered a populist alternative to the strict, systematic approach to media art. What can match the eclectic, pragmatic approach of the clubbing culture which produced videos combining avant-garde strategies and media criticism with party frenzy and an explosive sense of humour ?

**To lifestylers ...**

... the exhibition offers the cool retro 90's look of analog video and the Berlin TV tower in grass green and pink.

**To everyone else Screendancing provides ...**

... a rare peak at the club visuals of the nineties. For the first time the phenomenon is taken out of the club world and made available to the public in the form of a retrospective exhibition.

# SCREENDANCING

## 2 Overview

### **Screendancing**

#### **A Retrospective of Berlin Club Visuals**

**May 7<sup>th</sup> – June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, Tuesday – Saturday 14h-22h no entrance fee  
Vernissage 07.05.2010 20h**

**.Hbc Karl-Liebknecht Strasse 9 10178 Berlin hbc-berlin.de**

Live VJ Events

05/15/2010 22h

**telematique & u-matic with DJ Errorsmith**

**JUTOJO with DJ Phillip Sollmann/ Efdemin**

05/22/2010 22h

**Jörg X. Franzmann with Kotai live**

**VJ & DJ Lillevan**

05/29/2010 22h

**visomat inc. With DJs Bass Dee & Feed**

**Pfadfinderei**

The Artists

**visomat inc.** <http://visomat.com>

**Pfadfinderei** <http://pfadfinderei.com>

**Lillevan** <http://lillevan.com>

**Daniel Pflumm** <http://nupi.de>

**Jörg X. Franzmann**

**monitor.automatique** <http://monitor.automatique.de>

**JUTOJO** <http://jutojo.de>

**u-matic** <http://u-matic.de>

Team

**Klaus Kotai** – Curator

**Alexis Waltz** – Project Managment

**Torsten Oetken** – Co-Curator

**Zuri-Maria Daiß & Florian Wachinger** – Press

Web

**<http://screendancing.net>**

Kontakt

**Alexis Waltz** [alexis.waltz@gmail.com](mailto:alexis.waltz@gmail.com)

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**Screendancing is funded by the Capital Cultural Fund.**

# SCREENDANCING

## 3 The Artists

### **visomat inc.**

visomat inc. was formed in the mid-1990s as part of the crossover between media art and club culture typical of Berlin, with the primary aim of visualizing music. In addition to our music-related work, visomat inc. have increased their focus over the past few years on media-based interior and object design using analog and digital information carriers. The results of these projects include complete and functional room installations and trade fair stands, installations in public spaces and art exhibits as well as stand-alone objects and sculptures.

### **Pfadfinderei**

Finding and visualizing paths was the approach that led to the name Pfadfinderei (i.e. pathfinders / boy scouts). Starting off in 1999 as a Berlin-based vector orientated design bureau, Pfadfinderei soon expanded to what might be characterized as a cluster of advanced media alchemists given their aggressive passion for Live music visualization. Back in the day, they VJ'd in clubs in Berlin and around the region. nowadays they are planning, creating, and performing full-scale visual installations, in and beyond the club scene, expanding far and wide onto the world's cultural stage.

### **Lillevan**

Lillevan is an animation, video and media artist. He is perhaps best known as founding member of the visual/ music group Rechenzentrum (1997-2008). Parallel to his work in Rechenzentrum, he has performed and collaborated with many artists from a wide array of genres, from opera to installation, from minimal electronic experimentalism to dance and classical music. Lillevan has performed and exhibited all over the globe, and has performed at all the major media festivals.

### **Daniel Pflumm**

Daniel Pflumm studied fine arts in New York City and Berlin. He had numerous national and international exhibitions at art galleries and museums. Using videos and installations show a fragmentary vision of today's corporate world. With Gabrielle Loscheder aka Mo and Klaus Kotai, he formed Elektro Music Department. Elektro Music Dept. produced records, music videos, live shows and a series of clubs: the Elektro, Panasonic and the Init Bar.

### **Jörg X. Franzmann**

Jörg X. Franzmann studied video arts in Offenbach. Franzmann produces Club Visuals since 1996. His work was screened at clubs like Robert Johnson, Panoramabar, WMF, Kiosk, Watergate or Tanzhaus West. He produced a series of music videos for Perlon Records.

# SCREENDANCING

## **monitor:automatique**

Timm Ringewaldt and Sven Gareis collectively form the VJ-group monitor.automatique. Since 1998 they have been creating interactive installations in public space. They develop experimental software and interfaces, which are used to create and modify video images during their performances in clubs, allowing them to react quickly and directly to the music and the atmosphere in the venue. Constantly adding new features and new content to their toolbox, creating new images. You can see them live in many Berlin clubs and events.

## **JUTOJO**

JUTOJO was founded in Berlin in 1998. Starting out with Super8- and slide projection at Club Pfefferbank in Berlin, they did weekly VJ-Sets and slide panoramas at WMF Berlin and at several festivals, clubs and planetaria all over Europe and beyond. JUTOJO work deals with the relation of space to projections, music and light. Most video loops are produced in their studio with selfmade devices working with fluids light and movement. Some of them are filmed at daytime or nighttime with a Super-8-camera in the city or in the woods.

## **u-matic**

Ute Härting is a Berlin based visual artist and motion designer. Reallife footage reduced to pixels and graphic elements are the mosaic pieces for an experimental videomix. u-matics projects and live video performances are characterized by its increasingly minimalistic approach. Collaboration with musicians and other artists is an important part of u-matics work. U-matics projects are shown at festivals, exhibitions and in clubs since 1998.

# SCREENDANCING

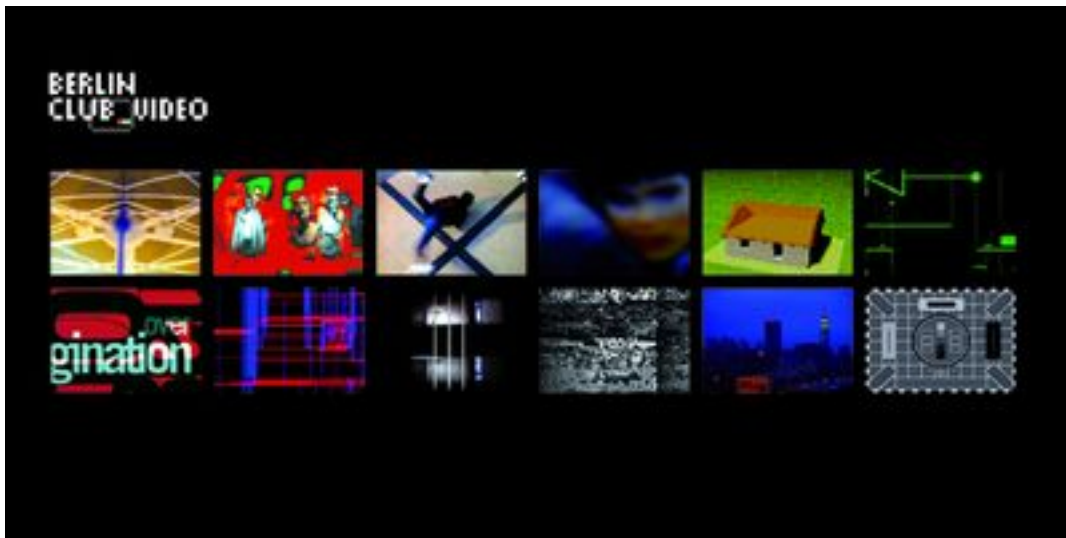
## 4 Video

Selected video snippets will soon be available on screendancing.net. Extensive video material is available on each of the artists' websites.

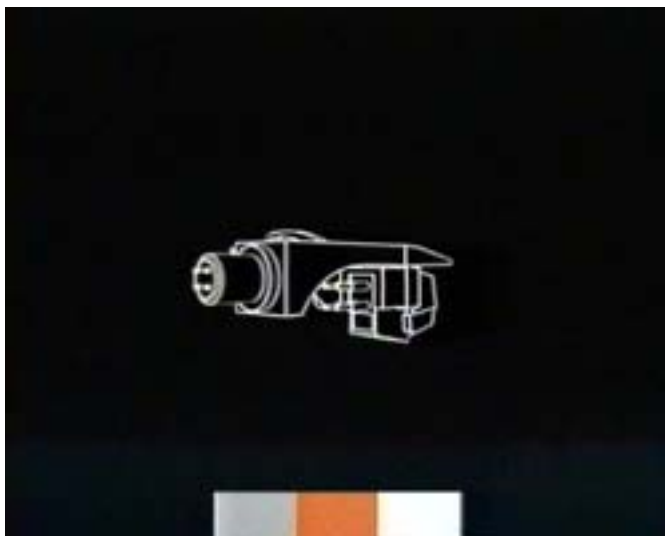
## 5 Images

All images are available in web/ 72dpi and print/300dpi resolution. Please consult the file names for photo credits.

visomat inc.



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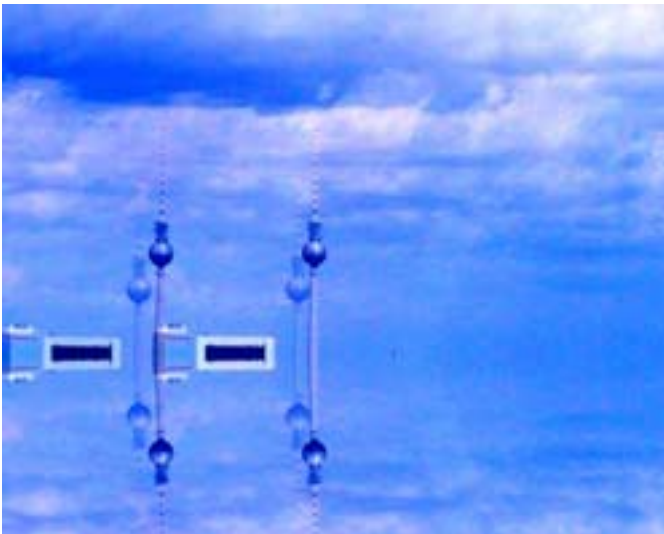
# SCREENDANCING

monitor:automatique



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u-matic



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# SCREENDANCING

JUTOJO



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Daniel Pflumm



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Lillevan



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# SCREENDANCING

Jörg X. Franzmann



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