

The Exhibition

is a Compromise

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*Esemplasticism:  
The Truth is a Compromise*





Impressarium

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*Esemplasticism:*

*The Truth is a Compromise*

Exhibition	Esemplasticism: The Truth is a Compromise
Featured artists	Edwin Deen, Daniël Dennis de Wit, Lucinda Dayhew, Anke Eckardt, HC Gilje, Terrence Haggerty, Yolande Harris, Alexis O'hara, Pascal Petzinger, Mike Rijnierse, Willem Marijs, Bram Vreven, Katarina Zdjelar, Valentin Heun, Sagarika Sundaram, Gijs Burgmeijer.
Opening	29 January 2010, 19.00h - 0.00h
Exhibition dates	Saturday 30 January - Sunday 07 February 2010, 15:00h - 22:00h Wednesday 10 February - Saturday 27 February 2010, 12:00h - 17:00h
Address	Spandauerstrasse 2, 10178 Berlin, Germany

This exhibition is initiated and produced by TAG in cooperation with DISK/CTM - Club Transmediale.

Our brains are esemplastic. They are perfectly evolved for pattern recognition, designed to shape disconnected elements, like the incomplete or ambiguous information we get from our senses, into the seamless whole of our experience. What we see, hear, touch and feel is folded into an amalgam of data, emotions and cultural baggage. And in the contemporary world, this esemplastic power is pushed to the limit in the sea of information that we are floating in: data-visualizations, scientific studies and computer analyses become increasingly abstract and disconnected from our normal experiences. Are we losing our sense of meaning as we fail to join the billions of dots? What compromises are we making when we try to settle on a particular interpretation?

The works in this show demonstrate both an engagement with the issues of esemplasticism, and what these things mean in a world where we struggle emotionally and epistemologically to keep up with technological advances. Edwin Deen's installations, for example, arrays of objects that are overt engagements with 'Pataphysics (a parody of scientific method and theory), critique our uncritical wonder at and acceptance of scientific and technological advancements.

Technological advancement is a double-edged sword. Could it be that our sense of meaning is being compromised by data overload and naïve, star struck awe at what gadgets offer? In our hyper-technological world, we have the luxury of almost limitless possibilities in the arts – cheap digital cameras, laptops as virtual music studios – consumer and prosumer products promise a great deal. But cameras, phones, video games, music making software and the internet arguably take away from our imaginations as much as they offer. Consumer technologies like highly rendered, immersive online games 'externalize' the imagination, which in turn is a degradation of the human capacity to understand the world in different ways. Much media-technologically art of the 00s is pure uncritical celebration of the skills of computer programmers, chip designers, engineers and machinery. When art no longer functions on an emotional or philosophic level, when it is unreflective and contributes nothing to our experiences of constructing meaning, what truths are we compromising?

But it is of course, technological advancements in medical research that have helped us understand the brain mechanisms behind esemplasticism and it's next logical step, apophenia. Apophenia taken to extremes is psychosis, the experience of seeing patterns or connections in random or meaningless data. Peter Brugger of the Department of Neurology, University Hospital, Zurich, has conducted research that indicates high levels of dopamine influence the propensity to find meaning, patterns, and significance where there is none, and that this propensity is related to a tendency to believe in the paranormal.

According to Brugger, "The propensity to see connections between seemingly unrelated objects or ideas most closely links psychosis to creativity ... apophenia and creativity may even be seen as two sides of the same coin." Again, technological advancement gives us reason to distrust our own senses.

The fallibility of perception is what makes us human. This is the emotional realisation that reverberates through the works in this exhibition as each exposes a disconnect between what we experience and what we think we experience. Each jolt of realisation gives us pause: What can we understand from this? As mid-century artists grappled with huge advances in technology; op artists mined similar epistemological territory, seeking to explore vision's connection with knowledge and reality.

Op artists in the 60s were also grappling with new and unsettling ways of viewing the world opened up by technology. It was the era of early space travel, television, computer science and fears of artificial intelligence, as well as medical advances that were giving us blurry glimpses at the brain's activities. Op artists revived disorienting trompe l'oeil effects as anxieties about the potential and fallibility of the brain were fuelled in a climate of futurism – satellites, new medicines, brain scans and colour television. Terence Haggerty and Bram Vreven employ exactly the same visual language. It's a language that is still disorienting to disorient viewers, still questions our notions of truth and concrete reality, but this time around the perceptual tricks are presented to an audience far more cynical.

The role that sound and performance play in our esemplastic worldview is examined here too, with critical looks at the idea of the soundtrack in our i-podded environment, performance and at the role of sound art in the gallery. Lucinda Dayhew shows us how accustomed we are to a 'soundtracked' contemporary world by removing the music. As we watch the projected dancers, we can only imagine what inspired them to move. With her 'soundscapes', Yolande Harris explores our assumptions about musical scores and the sounds we record, while Anke Eckhardt makes a critical jab at the 'sound art' that has become an accepted element of gallery spaces.

The works in *Esemplasticism* – the truth is a compromise are mostly low-tech, using everyday objects and media. Employing sound, objects and synchronicity; relatively 'old' technologies like field recordings, music, video, and projection, each piece lifts the curtain on the perceptual tactics that our esemplastic/apophonic/pattern recognising brains employ to negotiate the world; with wit and irony, they have much to say about verisimilitude as each exposes a different fracture between our expectations, our perceptions and our compromises about the objective 'truth' that exists 'out there'.

Edwin Deen (NL)

'Terra Ingognita'

Miscellaneous installations, 2007 - 2009

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“Edwin plays with absurdity. Absurdity versus poetry. His work is what our judges called ordinary intimate.” (Jury report nomination GRA Awards 2009). Deen’s seemingly random arrangements of objects draw conflicting interpretations. The objects themselves become loaded through the contexts that Deen brings them into, but the search for meaning is belied by the randomness and the banality of the objects themselves. Deen employs ‘pataphysic strategies in his work – a term coined by French writer Alfred Jarry (1873–1907) meaning a parody of the theory and methods of modern science often expressed in nonsensical language.

Edwin Deen is an artist and freelance photographer based in the Netherlands. Originally from Utrecht, Deen has been in various group exhibitions since 2006 and graduated from Amsterdam’s Gerrit Rietveld Academy in 2009. He was awarded the Art Olive Young Talent 09 prize for graduates of a Dutch art academies, chosen from a field of thirty artists.

Daniël Dennis de Wit (NL)

'The Elevator'  
Video, 2004

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A balloon is stuck, jamming an elevator door. The door closes, is blocked by the balloon and opens again. Watching the video jars our expectations, our 'knowledge' of the world against a discordant reality in playful, performative terms. The expectation: balloons are fragile, easily damaged, delicate things; elevators are large, mechanical and clumsy. The reality: balloon and elevator are in perfect balance in a mini-drama performed over and over again. No matter how many times we see the outcome, our brain feels the jolt of confounded expectations every time.

The themes irony, ironylessness, and ambiguity are central concerns to Daniël Dennis de Wit (1982), whose contextual/conceptual work spans various media. He works as an artist, curator, theorist and art-critic. After graduating from the Minerva Art Academy, Groningen with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2005, de Wit was, in 2006, the winner of the jury and people's choice award in the 'Versus' exhibition, and was short-listed for the George Verberg Stipend. In 2007 he was nominated for the Sybren Hellinga art prize. His work has been published in international magazines and he has shown work at galleries including projectt in London and NP3, Kunstvlaai in Amsterdam.



Lucinda Dayhew (AU)

'The disco in my mind'

Multi-channel video installation, 30 minutes, 2008

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A circle, the viewer steps inside. Three larger than life projections show fifteen people dancing to a song of their choice in seemingly random outdoor locations in Berlin. It is the magic hour, just after dawn and the clubbers are making their way home. The dancers loom large, dwarfing the viewer, who can only guess what music they are dancing to. Their chosen song is not audible: all that can be heard is the clatter of their footsteps and the sounds of the street. Their outfits encircle the viewer in disco colours; their feet stamp out the beat. The Disco in My Mind is a state of mind.

Australian-born Lucinda Dayhew has been based in Berlin for several years, collaborating with musician Ari Benjamin Meyers, Jasmina Machina and others. She is a drummer and vocalist and has played in and presented her sound and video installations at number of festivals (inc. The International Untamed Music Festival Riga) and exhibitions (inc. UdK Berlin).



Anke Eckardt (DE)

‘!’

Sound sculpture, mixed media installation, 2009

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A loudspeaker plays a siren-like sound that seems to trigger an ‘eruption’ in the water tank. “All technical equipment that creates two separate events is invisible, creating the illusion of synaesthetic perception.” Viewers are tricked into connecting unconnected events; assuming that what they see and hear is cause and effect. The minimalist black ink on white walls harbours echoes of 60s minimal aesthetics.

Anke Eckardt was born in Dresden in 1976. Until 2007 she was working internationally as a sound engineer as well as a music and art event manager in Berlin (inc. club transmediale, Volksbühne). Since 2008, Eckardt has focused on her own sound art and on sound anthropology. Having been awarded a grant from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Anke Eckardt is completing her Master of Arts in Sound Studies at the University of the Arts Berlin.



<http://www.ankeekardt.com/>



HC Gilje (NO)

'Blink'  
Spatial installation, 2009

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Space perception and re-composition, Gilje has made different spaces come to life. Exploring how audiovisual technology can be used to transform, create, expand, amplify and interpret physical spaces.

HC Gilje works with real-time environments, installations, live performance, set design and single-channel video, presenting his work through different channels throughout the world: in concert-venues, theatre and cinema venues, galleries, festivals and through several international dvd releases, including 242.pilots live in Bruxelles on New York label Carpark and Cityscapes on Paris-label Lowave. HC Gilje (1969, Kongsberg) graduated from the intermedia department of Kunstakademiet in Trondheim, Norway, in 1999. He was a member of the video-improv trio 242.pilots, and was also the visual motor of kreutzerkompani.

Terence Haggerty (UK)

'untitled'  
Wall painting, 2009

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Haggerty uses the “formal vocabulary of Minimal and Op Art” for his smooth 2D compositions, as well as employing trompe l’oeil effects to bend and curve walls. Viewers experience the disorientation of a disrupted picture plane, tricked by the eye/brain into interpreting the distortion as external reality. Cognitive illusions such as this can be explained through theories of ‘Gestalt Organisation’, which purports that in order to make sense of the world, it is necessary to organize perceptual data into meaningful information.

Haggerty was born in London in 1970 and lives and works in New York and Berlin. He studied at the Southend School of Art, Essex, England, and the Cheltenham School of Art, Cheltenham, England. His work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Kuttner Siebert, Berlin; Grimm Rosenfeld, Munich; Konsortium, Düsseldorf; Aschenbach & Hofland, Amsterdam; and Riva Gallery, New York. He has participated in group exhibitions at Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin; Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut; and Artists Space, New York. Haggerty’s work was also included in the Prague Biennale (2003) and the Venice Biennale (1994).



<http://www.terryhaggerty.net/>

Photo courtesy of Kuttner Siebert Galerie

Yolande Harris (UK)

'Pink Noise – Scorescapes'  
Video and sound installation, 2009

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'Pink Noise' or 'The Pink Noise of Pleasure Yachts in Turquoise Sea' is a video and sound installation using underwater recordings collected at a National Marine Reserve in Spain during a Sunday in August. The question is to extend the ideas of navigation landscape and environment to explore musical issues pertaining to expanded consciousness and communications where the score is the central figure. The (musical) score is not just notation but an entity or process where the communications between people through sound and site are catalyzed and channelled.

Yolande Harris (UK) is a composer and artist based in Amsterdam, engaged with sound and image in environment and architectural space. Her work has been presented internationally, including MACBA (Barcelona), Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, NIMk (Amsterdam), V2 (Rotterdam), ISEA Singapore, UCLA, Villa Croce Genova. Significant artist residencies include the Netherlands Media Art Institute, Atlantic Center for the Arts (Florida), STEIM (Amsterdam), Jan van Eyck Academy (Maastricht), Metronom (Barcelona). In 2009 Harris was awarded a national artist stipend from the Netherlands Funds for Visual Arts.



Alexis O'Hara (CA/QC)

'SQUEEEQUE'

Audio installation, 2009

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An immersive sound environment, a dome of speakers, each wired to low-sensitivity microphones hanging from the ceiling within. The sounds created will play on feedback between the mics and the speakers. Depending on the user the noise could be harsh or as cosy and calm as an igloo in the high arctic.

Alexis O'Hara is a multi-disciplinary artist based in Montreal whose practice exploits allegories of the human voice via electronic improvisation, video and installation. In 2003, she began an exploration of interactive documentary performance with the project 'Subject to Change', followed by 'The Sorrow Sponge', both projects involve wearable electronics and direct interaction with her audience. O'Hara won a Canada Council grant in 2002 to produce her debut album, 'In Abulia', and has presented her performances, recordings and installations across Europe.



<http://www.myspace.com/alexisohara/>

Pascal Petzinger (NL)

'H2audiO'  
Installation, 2009

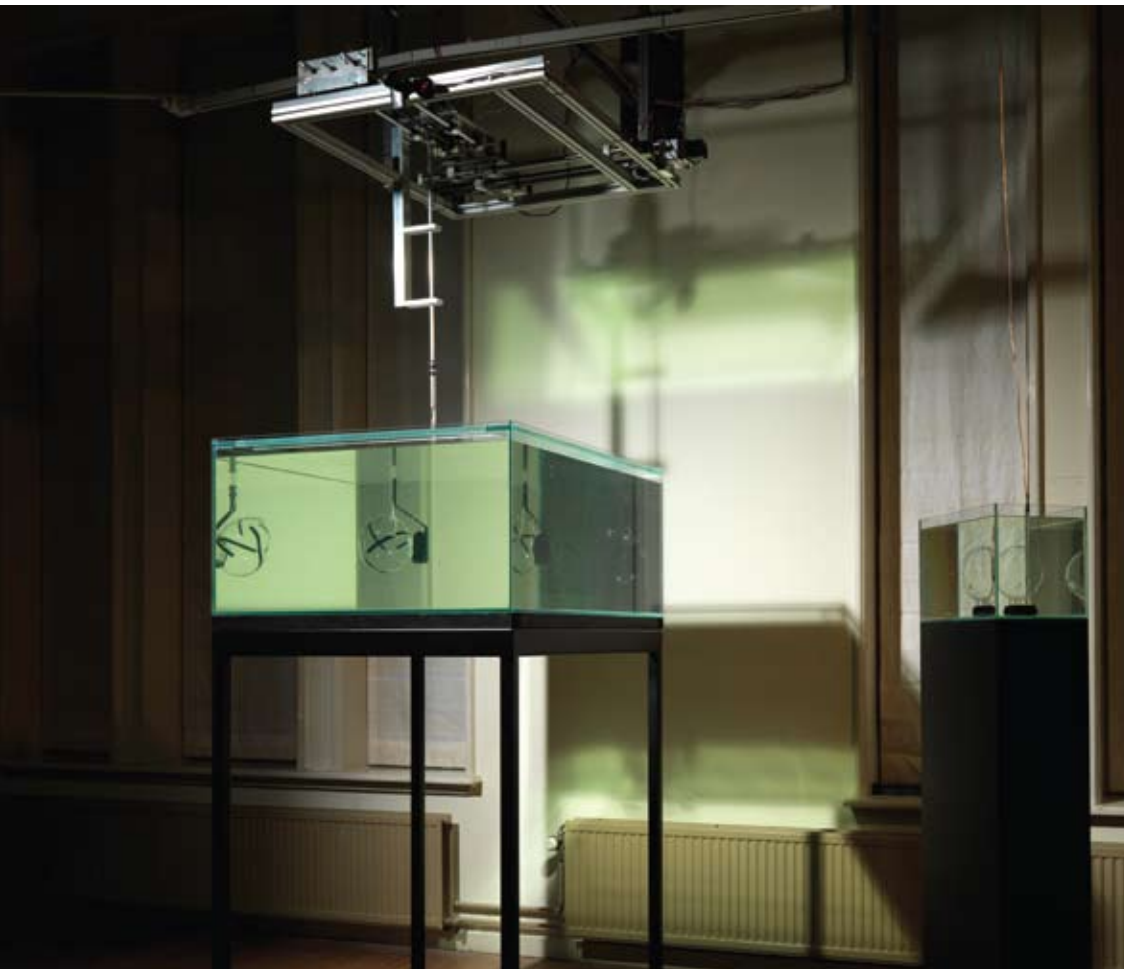
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"H2audiO is an interactive installation dealing with perception, behaviour, and interface ... visitors interact with a glass, underwater sound element, mirroring and re-interpreting the movement and behaviour of visitors." To connect the behaviour of a machine with our own actions requires a psychological jump that needs some conscious effort. Without any explanation of the technology or techniques used here, visitors are left to wonder about the real level of interactivity."

Pascal Petzinger is an artist living and working in Groningen, the Netherlands. His background is in electronics, telematics, data communication and he's worked for the Philips electronics development dept. Petzinger graduated from Academie Minerva, in 2006 after studying media arts with a these on closed systems in media and installation art. His main fields of interest are perception, interface, mediatisation, energy conversion and invisible parts of the electromagnetic spectrum.



<http://www.pascalpetzinger.com/>

Mike Rijniere (NL) &  
Willem Marijs (NL)

'Lumokinese'  
2008

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Through the use of lumodynamic effects (moving light) with independent light sources (red, green and blue) and the use of kinetic objects (driven by electro motors) fascinating, moving, overlapping shadows arise. The positioning of the objects in relation to the light produces dynamic shadows. The space is transformed into an animation machine. One can imagine the impact as if walking around in a movie projector. Lumokinese is a manipulated space in which the visitor and his shadows go on a journey in which they themselves are an integral part. Willem Marijs (1947) is an artist based in the Netherlands who has worked on light, sound and kinetic installations/environments since 1965. He is a monumental/environmental artist working with Computer controlled or manual, electronic and electro-mechanical light and sound systems. Royal Academy of Fine Arts, The Hague. Mike Rijniere (1974) has worked on several environmental projects based on light, sound and kinetics.



Bram Vreven (BE)

'Rays'

Video, 2009

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Vreven's kinetic sculpture fools us into seeing vertical movement when there is none. The information we receive from our eyes is in conflict with what our brain 'explains' in a struggle to make sense of what is 'really' happening. The pleasure of being fooled, of having the glitches in our sense of sight exposed are alluring. Large, black strips evolve from flat blades to elegant helices, by bending and turning, in order to finish in their original flatness.

Bram Vreven (Ghent, 1973) lives and works in Den Haag, the Netherlands. Since 1998, after a career as a jazz musician, Vreven has been constructing sound installations in which he contrasts acoustic and electronic sounds. In addition to various solo exhibitions in the Netherlands and Belgium, Vreven also participated in group exhibitions in, among others, Festival van Vlaanderen (Brussels), Lille 2004 (Lille), NICC (Antwerp), De Brakke Grond and the Consortium (Amsterdam), Art Center STUK (Louvain), Audioframes (Kortrijk) and the Ultima Festival (Oslo).



<http://www.bramvreven.com/>



Katarina Zdjelar (RS)

'SHOUM'  
Video, 2009

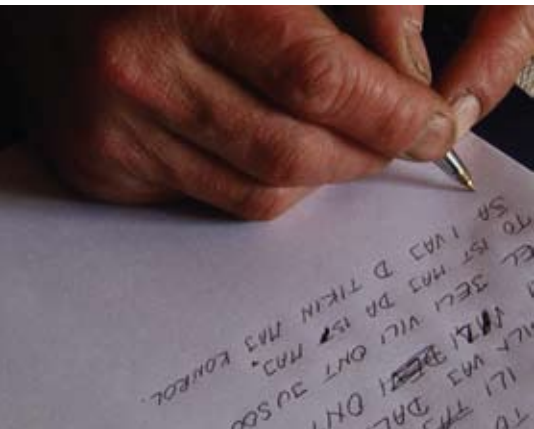
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What do we hear when we don't understand? How much do we 'project' our prior knowledge onto the information we receive from our senses? A young Belgrade man's misinterpretation of lyrics in the Tears for Fears song 'Shout' is a revealing investigation into what happens without the 'stencil' of language comprehension, what our ears are pre-tuned to, and the creative misunderstandings that occur.

Katarina Zdjelar (Belgrade, 1979) is an artist based in Rotterdam. Her practice consists of making video pieces, sound pieces, book projects and creating different platforms for speculation, knowledge building and exchange. Her work explores notions of identity, authority and community and revolves around individuals who, challenged by simultaneous inhabitation of different languages, perform through practice, memory or reinvention.





Valentin Heun (DE) &  
Sagarika Sundaram (IN) &  
Gijs Burgmeijer (NL)

'I AM Display'  
Installation: tube light sculpture, 2009

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Berlin based Valentin Heun is a 27-year old German citizen who is experienced in a whole panoply of different design fields. As a Bauhaus University graduate he originally came from web design, then went over to graphic design, continued with motion design, then moved to crossmedia to finally arrive in interaction and product design. Sagarika Sundaram is graphic designer who has lived and worked in India, Dubai, Melbourne, USA, Zürich, and London. She loves to travel and create new experiences and opportunities for herself. Sagarika is currently based in Dubai. Gijs Burgmeijer is a graphic designer from the Netherlands, currently studying in Berlin.



TAG

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This exhibition is initiated and produced by TAG in cooperation with DISK/CTM - Club Transmediale.

TAG is a platform for contemporary audiovisual art, organization that investigates and presents relevant developments in the visual arts and music. TAG invites both unknown and (internationally) renowned artists to show their work. TAG challenges the artist to excel not only in concept and presentation, but also to develop tools. Specifically, this results in exhibitions, lectures, workshops, concerts, residencies and publications (web and print). TAG collaborates with a number of institutions and presents its programs at various locations at home and abroad.

Colofon

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Producers	TAG, DISK/CTM - Club Transmediale
Curator	Hicham Khalidi
Production	John de Weerd (NL), Clara Meister (DE)
Production assistants	Louis van den Brink & Erik Jutten (NL), Nina Kuntz (DE)
Communication	Danielle Boelling
Communication assistant	Eelco Borremans
Editors catalogue	Janet Leyton-Grant, Hicham Khalidi
Graphic Design	You & McCuskey - <a href="http://www.mccuskey.nl">www.mccuskey.nl</a>
Photography	Eelco Borremans, Remco Schuurbiers
Logistics	Tjebbe van der Kooij
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