CODEC/X - New British Video and Sound Art

codec (compression/decompression software for storage and transmission of audio-visual data) – the manipulation of information, time, sound and space

codex (a pre-printing-era manuscript, a digest or collection of items or laws) – the compilation, formatting, and reproduction of texts or narratives

Lee Patterson + Dave Griffiths, *Heatwork for Sparklers and Spycams*, 5.20

Heatwork centres on discovery of sound in objects, structures and spaces, where it's presence is an invitation to engage with the source. In this collaboration both sources and sounds are raw materials in a process of sonic and optical inscription that utilises basic recording technology and a performative working process. The spectacle is a celebration of the material properties of source matter and original event.

Paul Cordwell + Loopaznavour, *Ugly Little Ornaments 1/2/3*

DVD is a giddy parade of sensation with the illusion of viewer control, where the order of images is secondary to their meaningless digestion. This restless smorgasbord pollutes and supersedes the surrounding home – which necessarily banishes tasteless kitsch (so as not to compete visually or conceptually with the life-affirming medium). In these pieces, the frames become storage units for the inert kitsch of ornamental forerunners to DVD's inchoate hyperactivity. Baroque music draws non-viewers' attention to static ornaments looking back, and transposes expected optical activity into sound. These 'potters wheels' paradoxically critique the ubiquitous, active screens of techno-innovation.
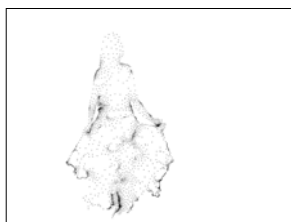
Suki Chan + Mayming, *Shadow Songs*, 5.00

This animation interprets Pliny's myth of the origin of drawing, where a young girl traces her lover's shadow to capture his presence - he later disappears and is never seen again. The sound is a modern account of a traditional folk song from remote southern China, whose original words have been forgotten in time. Made in collaboration with Dinu Li and Andy Hunwick (422 Ltd).

Jacob and Daniel Cartwright, *The Heap*, 3.00

The work is a digital fantasy: pixel creatures wander the forest and gravitate inexorably towards the rhythmic splendour that is the heap of primal matter. The creatures are drawn to and transfixed by this elemental fountain. The pixel bestiary commences an instinctive dance to the throb and pulse of the quivering heap as a state of wild transfiguration is achieved. A wonder of fecundity, a myth: the spitting geyser taps deep into its mucilaginous reservoir. Its ceaseless convulsions describe a natural cycle of life, death and compostation. The Cartwright Bros use software and the machine to chisel their creatures in a work that moves them from synthetic vagrancy to God's ineffable animal pyramid.

Scott Byrne + Happy Fingers, *Crossroads*, 7.50

Crossroads are sites of impromptu magical performance – secret spaces where indescribable events and changes occur. Here it was possible to sell your soul to the devil in return for mastery of a skill. This outside place is now duplicated millions of times in every town and city, potentially reducing the substance of sacred and feared spaces through familiarity. Artworks, once considered sacred and singular, are now digitised for infinite, perfect duplicates. Does this mass compression and proliferation, the conversion of emotive images and sounds, make the work any less powerful? Are we selling our souls at the digital crossroads?

Nick Jordan, *A Road Movie*, 3.30

A filmic construct mirroring the outcome of hand-cranked projection and the flicker of celluloid as it interleaves through the gate. A real-time loop built with the aid of bicycle, DV camera, and two identified points with which to begin and end.
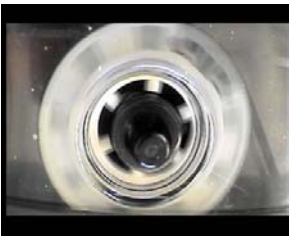
Joe Devlin, *Dictaphone*, 1.45

Found dictaphone tape on street corner subject to removal of speech, highlights the materials used to make recording. Sound fabricated by Ben Gwilliam.

Nick Jordan, *Another Road Movie*, 1.15

Intersection of French landscape as seen from a speeding car at noon with digital arabesques generated by tape replay pressed on fast forward.

Kristín Scheving + Spencer Marsden, *X-Time*, 4.30

Images and sound recorded in Reykjavik 10 minutes before and after New Years Eve, overlayed with audio captured from internet pornography. A narrative of expectation, sexual energy and celebration is wryly evoked through the combination of audio sampling and a climactic firework display.

Blake Quentin + Coryn Smethurst, *Symbolic Exchange & Death*, 1.30

Insect eyes and menu-icons, in mutual regard, form a multi-layered system. The film interprets the restless repetition and redundancy of menu and insect behaviour as typical of absurd technological society. The visual and sonic play alludes to our hyped digital utopia – the tension between an unbridled material and its standardization into discrete binary units.

Carl Turton, *Object / Sound / Movement*, 2.25

These three excerpts are from a collection of eight formal observations of objects. Choice of object arises from experimentation with potential sounds that can be created through physical interaction with each item. Sound is approached as a painterly consideration of line, tone and colour. These repetitive, looped compositions playfully structure sound into percussion and movement into dance – creating audio and visual experiences that work as rhythmic wholes.

Jenna Collins + Jane Brake, *Flying From The Ground*, 4.50

The aeroplane, once-potent symbol of progressive modernity, has become a problematic and contradictory motif. Concorde crashed. Warplanes are flown virtually. Return to Malaga, £35. On 9/11 planes took lead roles in a video loop where real life trumped fiction over and over again. Flight paths redraw world maps and suggest escape and routine. The plane viewed from the ground can be a wistful, graceful thing too. These pieces allow symbolic, narrative or political aspects of the plane to play out ambiguously, whilst the artists occupy themselves with more formal concerns: the difference between looking, hearing and being.

Illuminati + Ben Schmark, *Fait Accompli*, 4.30

An investigative journey through the pipes of a failed, automated drug manufacture process. The endoscope records vapours, contours, embolisms, and various liquids or foreign matter resulting from cross-contamination. The interplay of light and an organic, respiratory soundtrack evoke a feeling of claustrophobia, compression and discovery. The found-footage has been captured through a looped video signal, generating unpredictable image feedback.
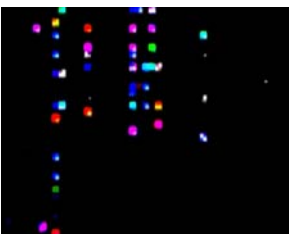
Dave Griffiths, *Rogue State*, 2.15

A set of vetoed resolutions was inscribed onto tape using a magnetic quill. In the digital apparatus, these fragile, analogue impulses produce lawless sonic and visual explosions – making a fluid spectacle of synthetic apocalypse. The action occupies and confuses the space between labour and immediacy in old and new media, and alludes to links between entertainment and military technology. As compressed light and sound are unleashed in illusive, volatile single-frame bursts, the notion of digital perfection is tested.

Abstract Earth + Mark Pilkington, *Piano: A Sound Object*, 4.50

12,000 pieces of wood, steel and felt – seemingly unsympathetic materials for a piano. The piece explores its construction and deconstruction by assembling recorded sounds taken from these components. These were arranged in an abstract structure of sound objects and juxtaposed against familiar pitched tones performed on a live acoustic piano. The time-lapsed visuals depict an image of a toy piano encased in a melting ice cube.
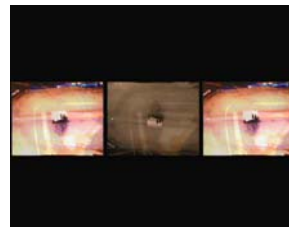
Jenny Hallström, *The Girlz*, 3.00

The sound is of two women who passed the artist in the street every weekday at approximately the same time for more than a month. The artist and a friend, Nikki Cooper, quietly construct intriguing stories about the two women. The visuals are stills of transcripts of these recordings. The film documents a period of time, through repetition and the compression of narrative.
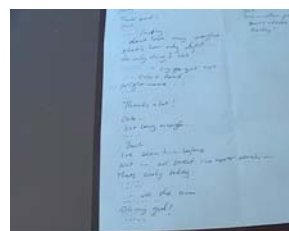
Tamzin Forster, *The Print Machine*, 3.30

A slow pan and zoom around the mechanics of a printing press. Highlighting the duplication and rhythmic procedures in the construction of text, the piece subtly illuminates ambiguity in language through its fabrication and distribution. The reiteration of the printed word acquires aesthetic strangeness, where meaning may lose or gain significance.

CODEC/X artists

Abstract Earth are Rik Hopkinson and Emile Harmel. Their use of photography, graphics, animation and video is focused on commercial and live digital visuals for independent labels and musicians in the Manchester electronica and club scene ■ *www.thought-universe.co.uk*

Loop Aznavour is a composer who previously worked with Manchester bands The Domestic Pets and The Red Alpacas. Current releases include compilation albums from UK's Blissaquamarine and Don Campaus radio in San Francisco. Upcoming releases include the *1978* EP by Lancashire electronic band The Molecule Man, and failed composer Karl Martins ■ *loopaznavour@hotmail.com*

Jane Brake & Jenna Collins have collaborated since 2001. Their first project, *Visiting Natasa R.*, was a short video 'micro-narrative' that explored the emotional landscape of Belgrade in a heatwave. *Flying from the Ground* is a series of performative video experiments forming the first stage of an ongoing body of work. Collins and Brake are now devising work that includes an experimental live element. Jane is an artist, writer and photographer, who lectures at Manchester Metropolitan University. Jenna is an artist with a background in documentary film-making and audio art. She is a visiting lecturer and freelance video editor ■ *jennacollins@yahoo.com*

Scott Byrne is a Bolton artist using photography, video and sound to explore relationships between disciplines operating under similar boundaries (time, space & sound). *Nailpusher* – (live action, animation, and digital sound composed from amplified objects) - won best student film award at 2003 Lancaster Film & New Media Festival. In 2001 he worked on a multimedia project in UK and El Alamein (Egypt), investigating experiences of WW2 veterans of North African conflict ■ *www.schemafilm.com*

The **Brothers Cartwright** have been since 1975 ■ *cartwrights@pharmakon.co.uk*

Suki Chan was born in Hong Kong and studied at Goldsmiths' College (1996-1999). Chan utilises rice as a material outside of its habitual identity and function, alongside light, video and live art. Her inspirations are myth, memory and China. Past projects include residencies at Turnpike Gallery, Leigh (2003), PKW Singapore (2002) & Chinese Arts Centre, Manchester (2000). Group shows include Xtrax Manchester (2003), Thermo at The Lowry, Salford (2003), Liverpool Biennale (2002), Pattern Crazy at the Crafts Council London (2002) NRLA (Glasgow), and Big Screen in Little China at GMI Leicester Square (2002) ■ *www.sukichan.co.uk*

Paul Cordwell produces painting-installations and collaged soundworks that attempt to engage with the slippery nature of language as a machine of explanation. Recent works include Bartleby DVD/installation with Nick Jordan, and Beyond The End Game group painting show (Manchester Art Gallery). Previous exhibitions have included Whitworth Young Contemporaries, Apart, Images For Aliens solo show at From Space, and Local 2 - Banal Ground, Berlin ■ *paulcordwell@hotmail.com*

Joe Devlin ■ *jptdevlin@yahoo.co.uk*

Tamzin Forster is a visual artist working with text, video and photography, exploring notions of language and communication. She graduated in 2002 from Nottingham Trent University and spent time studying photography and narrative in Mexico. Her work has been shown in London, St. Ives, Manchester and Nottingham ■ *www.tamzinforster.co.uk*

Happy Fingers were born of a desire to readjust the sonic and moral landscape. They plough a furrow between high art pretentiousness and complete musical ineptitude. Their debut was an improvised score to a video installation at the 2003 Bolton photography & video festival ■ *www.schemafilm.com*

Dave Griffiths is a digital artist interested in themes of technology, mediation, language, and chance. As a founder of the art collective Pharmakon in 2001, he is an activist of inter-disciplinary practice. His videos with Nick Jordan, Unplugboy, Lord Mongo, DOS and Illuminati have screened at events in Manchester, Liverpool, Salford, London, Newcastle, Bristol, Rotterdam, Ljubljana, New York and Los Angeles. Dave is co-curator of CODEC/X and works as a lecturer ■ *griff@pharmakon.co.uk*

Ben Gwilliam ■ *soundobject@hotmail.com*

Jenny Hallström was born in 1974 in Sweden. She has been living and working in north-west England since 1997. She attended Hellidays Folkhögskola, Skörde Art School, University of Central Lancashire and Manchester Metropolitan University ■ *jenny_hallstrom@hotmail.com*

Iluminati is a composer whose music involves physical, emotive and melodic leanings, and occasional non-linear rhythm. His MP3 works *PST Green-35* and *Toluene 1, 2 Diisocyannate* were included at Salons de Musique, Strasbourg (2000) and Nantes (2001). He curated the Planetsounds *Laboratory Series*, and recorded work for labels such as RSI, Digital Discharge, Brian Lavelle's techNOH series, Newsense (Cambridge), and Resonance FM (London). He is co-organiser of Lotta Continua label and Burst Couch events, and is part of the group Triclops ■ *dave@planetsounds.co.uk*

Nick Jordan is an artist and curator. Utilising painting and video, his work highlights the incongruous and surprising factors involved in making an image and thinking about what's been made. Recent shows and screenings include LUX Expo (RCA, London), Museumnacht (Netherlands Architecture Institute), Tate Liverpool University Network (Chapman Gallery Salford), Gallery 825 (Los Angeles), Experimental Film Today (University of Central Lancashire), Echo Film Festival (Slovenia), and 291 Gallery (London). Future projects include co-curating an exhibition exploring cinematic procedures in contemporary art ■ *nick.jordan@man.ac.uk*

Spencer Marsden ■ *mildmanjan@hotmail.com*

Mayming Vocalist Seaming To and cellist Semay Wu are both graduates of Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester (1996-2000). They are interested in exploring and expanding the socially preconceived notions of their respective instruments. Their performances are powerful, unsettling, cinematic, occasionally sublime, often intimidating yet purposefully unconventional ■ *s_emay@hotmail.com*

Lee Patterson graduated from BA Visual Arts at Salford University in 2002 and established the *New Acoustical Pleasures* imprint with Ben Gwilliam. He received a 1st Out Bursary and performed *Sparklers* at Burst Couch, Manchester. Lee has performed *Heatwork for Bottles* at Expo Nottingham, Root X Hull and NRLA Glasgow (2003). He participated in the sound installation *Hothouse* at Sefton Palmhouse, Liverpool, with IOU Theatre, and completed a short residency at Hull Time-Based Arts ■ *gleepatterson@hotmail.com*

Mark Pilkington is a composer and performer. Releases on his Struktur label blur & question the constraints in exhibition and club spaces. He lectures in music technology, and has produced records for Brassy (Wiija), Porcelain (Mainline, Copenhagen), and Beatphreak (Fat City, Manchester), whilst Thought Universe, Skam, Sonic World Service and Ninja Tunes have released his music. He performed on Danish radio and European broadcasts via the EBU, and at Futuresonic (2000) ■ *www.thought-universe.co.uk*

Blake Quentin is an artist, farmer and voyeur whose work is driven by scopic desire and satisfied by the gimlet eye of his techno-array. Dividing his time between Manchester, Brooklyn and Sofia, he appeared in Buzzword Bingo (2002), and One-Less (2003). He operates the Voidville microcinema in a disused Appalachian mineshaft ■ *blake@pharmakon.co.uk*

Kristín Scheving originally from Reykjavík, is interested in memory, movement, abstraction, femininity and landscape. She studied in Reykjavík and Strasbourg, and is a postgraduate in media art at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her sound and video installations have been exhibited in UK, France and Iceland. Kristín was also involved with shows for Emergency Platform, with Plane Performance, HÄb, and the Concert Party ■ *kscheving@hotmail.com*

Ben Schmark is an artist/curator/editor in new media, performance and pottery. His eclectic work is renowned on the fringes of the young British art scene, being regularly featured in the publication *Shoreditch Twat*. He recently relocated from London to the vibrant Manchester Art World, where his work can be seen in the window of a major high street retail outlet. Recent shows include Fattening The Goose, Buzz Word Bingo, There is some terrible beauty here, Neophiliacs #4, and Useful Idiots. Schmark is currently building a boat ■ *ben@pharmakon.co.uk*

Coryn Smethurst is a composer and philosopher. He gained MA in Philosophy and Visual Arts from Essex University and PhD on philosophy of music from Warwick University. *Birthday Picnic on the Mudflats - A Postcard From My Childhood* was featured on the *Sonic Postcards* CD, and he performed *Porton Down* for trumpet and fixed media at Bangor New Music Festival. With artist Duncan Marshall, *Black Sun Bloody Moon* for percussion and fixed media was performed at MAXIS and Sonic Arts Network. His work has been performed in the UK and USA ■ *corynrrsmethurst@tiscali.co.uk*

Carl Turton is an artist using video, performance, and digital technologies. He is interested in rhythm, pattern and relationships between sound and movement. His playful videos experiment with everyday sounds, whilst capturing the objects and movements associated with those sounds. He is involved in artist-led groups in NW England and was recently screened at Experimental Film Today 2003 (UCLAN) ■ *carljamesturton@hotmail.com*