

DISCOTECA ANALITICA

9.2–31.3.2019



Discoteca Analitica, exhibition view, Fri Art Kunsthalle. Photo © Thomas Julier

Discoteca Analitica reassesses the emergence of multimedia experiments in the Sixties based on the range of early varieties of discotheque. The exhibition offers an immersive experience bringing together Californian counter-culture, pop and psychedelic movements, and pioneers of radical Italian architecture. It is based on unpublished archives and original works. They reveal how music, ecstasy and collective experience, at the heart of these artists' concerns, have preempted our contemporary digital culture.

Works & Documents by:

Edmund Alleyn, Archizoom Associati, Udo Breger, John Brockman, Angela Bulloch, William S. Burroughs, Judy Chicago, Catherine Christer Hennix, Creamcheese, François Dallegret, Electric Circus, Evenstructure Research Group, Vidya Gastaldon, Anna and Lawrence Halprin, Derek Jarman / Michael Kostiff / John Maybury / Cerith Wyn Evans, Jacqueline de Jong, Thomas Julier, Morag Keil, Timothy Leary, Léa Lublin, Tobias Madison, Tony Martin, Marie Matusz, Pauline Oliveros, Walter Pichler, Piper Club, PULSA, Paul Ryan, Paul Ryan, Carolee Schneemann, Nicolas Schöffer, Ramon Sender, Sensorium, Willoughby Sharp, Gerd Stern, USCO, Ye Xe. Curated by Nicolas Brulhart



Judy Chicago, *Women and Smoke*, 1971 - 1972, Performed in the California Desert, Edited by Phyllis Housen, 14'45", 1971 - 1972, Digital projection. Still. Courtesy of the artist; Salon 94, New York; and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco.

Nicolas Brulhart is a curator and researcher, born in Fribourg in 1983. In 2013 he co-founded (with Lauris Paulus and Emilie Magnin) the offspace Wallriss in Fribourg. He participated as a researcher in the SNSF project «Mind Control, Radical Experiments in Arts and Psychology 60-70s» at HEAD in Geneva between 2014 and 2016, then took the co-direction of the offspace Forde in Geneva from 2016 to 2018. Nicolas Brulhart has been in charge of the archives at the Kunsthalle in Bern since 2015. With Sylvain Menétrey, he won a Swiss Art Award in mediation in June 2018.

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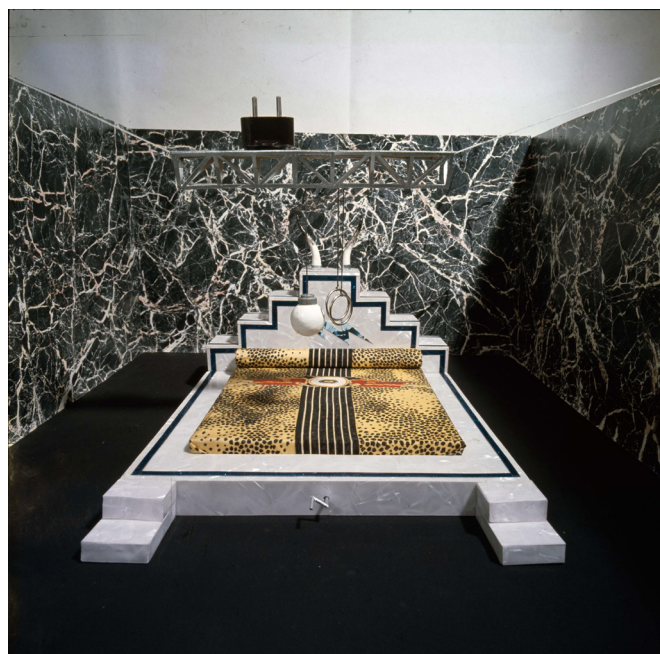
Introduction

In the 1960s, as the development of electronics that would lead to our digital present got underway, artists imagined immersive architectures that incorporated the media of the time. They built all-encompassing spaces in which all the senses were intensely stimulated in order to capture one's entire attention. In fact these spaces were the response to the fantasy of 'total artwork' (Gesamtkunstwerk) for a new electronic age, whose advent they could make out on the horizon.



Corpocinema

From archival documents, historical objects and contemporary works, *Discoteca Analitica* recounts a whole range of interwoven stories: the Californian counter-culture which gave rise to psychedelic art, USCO, Anna and Lawrence Halprin's The Halprin Workshops in which art and therapy merge, Steward Brand's immersive environment inspired by so-called primitive cultures, kinetic artist Nicolas Schöffer's machines and the leisure space projects from radical architects Archizoom and Cedric Price.



Archizoom, Letti di Sogno, 1967

Architecture of the exhibition

The exhibition is conceived as the encounter between two opposing spaces, two ways of allocating attention, stimulating our senses. The white cube, in which the visitor experiences a succession of works of art, merges with the saturated space of the discotheque delivering us into a sort of ecstasy. *Discoteca Analitica* is a place where the intellectual and the sensual merge, but also where the interactive past meets the digital present. There is a common matrix, a common obsession to these dialogues. This obsession is contact, whether it be electric, or come from the senses.

Imagine lascivious bodies lost in a labyrinth in search of an object that can never be fully reconstructed, an unconscious located on the other side of knowledge: a certain strangeness, that of an ideal space that does not exist, except in the form of memory or desire.



Discoteca Analitica, exhibition view, Fri Art Kunsthalle. Photo © Thomas Julier

The Archive Labyrinth (the corridor, the garden, the study room)

The obsession for the document is an obsession for the Real.

In this house of documents, *Workshop 10 Myths* from Anna Halprin, who creates works bringing amateur and professional dancers together, the USCO Solux community project and the Esalen Institute seminars constitute a foundation from which a new psychology of personal development, a culture of the self emerges.

The labyrinth and the study hall were brought together with the help of artist Thomas Julier. He conceived of these spaces as if he were an artist from whom we had ordered not a discotheque, but a discotheque archive. This intervention evokes the architecture of a Renaissance convent.



Discoteca Analitica, view of the study room, Fri Art Kunsthalle. Photo © Thomas Julier



Discoteca Analitica, view of the study room, Fri Art Kunsthalle. Photo © Thomas Julier



Ann and Lawrence Halprin Summer Workshops, Bay Area, California, 1966-1971



Nicolas Schöffer, *Centre de Loisirs Sexuels (intérieur, extérieur)*, gouache first realized in 1955, 100 x 90 cm, photo on wood, Courtesy of Eleonore Delavandeyra Schöffer. Photo © Thomas Julier



Edmund Alley, *L'Introscaphe*, 1968-1970



Lea Lublin, *Fluvio Subtunal*, 1969



Lea Lublin, *Fluvio Subtunal*, 1969

Fragments of attention-grabbing Gadgets (the public space)

In a large open room, you discover fragments of the premises of an interactive culture, a museum game room, where interaction is simultaneously permitted and withheld. As part of the series of interactive objects, a work by Tony Martin offers two people the opportunity to have their faces brought together in a constellation of light and reflections. Not far away, a pinball machine testifies to situationist artist Jacqueline de Jong's both critical and fascinated love of the game. Surrounding these apparatus', the drawings of artist Carolee Schneemann resexualise the excessive ambitions of multimedia artists and their machines of control, blowing holes in the logic of the way they work.

To continue to exist, one can no longer do without the digital infrastructure. It has become our environment, whereas these antique automatons provoke our sympathy, tenderness. They represent the infancy of the attention economy.



Discoteca Analitica, exhibition view, Fri Art Kunsthalle. Tony Martin, *You Me We*, 1968, 120 x 40 x 8 cm, Wood, aluminium, custom reflective glass, custom electronics, color lamps, Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati and Tony Martin. Photo @ Fri Art



Carolee Schneeman, Series *Parts of a Body House*, *Liver*, 1966, 66.7 x 69.8 cm, watercolor and ink on paper, Courtesy the artist and P · P · O · W, New York



Carolee Schneeman, Series *Parts of a Body House*, *Guerilla Gut Room*, 1966, 57.8 x 87 cm, watercolor and ink on paper, Courtesy the artist and P · P · O · W, New York

Symbolic Height (the exhibition's double / topology)

The exhibition continues on the next floor. A series of works extends an analysis advocated by the first two worlds of the fragments and the archive, but in a more symbolic way. In a first room, you face the *Discoteca Analitica* double, just as in the works by Catherine Christer Hennix. There's a bug. A canvas by William Burroughs represents a machine with which contact cannot be envisaged: engagement is not possible. A painting by Ye Xie evokes a task: representing the unrepresentable. The last room picks up on some of the key motifs lost between *Discoteca* and *Analitica*. The missing body in the work by Marie Matusz, the body of the observing/observed child in Tobias Madison's photographs, body of reproductions lost in a dream machine. A dialogue between a myth-making object and the sculpture by Angela Bulloch, incorporating its story, serves as a synthesis of the exhibition.



Discoteca Analitica, exhibition view, Fri Art Kunsthalle. Tobias Madison, *Series Dream House NYC*, 2018, Epson Sure Color Print mounted on Dibond, Pink Plexiglass, Courtesy of the artist and Svetlana, NY. Photo @ Fri Art

Synthetic Perversion (in a darkroom)

You have retraced your steps. While making your way through the exhibition, you experienced the intuition that contact and ecstasy create. In the basement, you visit a fourth room to which you now hold the key: our desirous relationship to automata is inhabited by perversion. This perversion is the equal of the emotion created by beauty. The construction of sensations is inhabited by something that lies beyond the history of technology and gender issues. Like the exhibition, contact served as the substitute for something else, something that cannot get in.

Archive themes:

1. Contact is the only Love

Affects, contacts, cybernetics ...

At the end of the torments of the Second World War, cybernetics, new science for the government of men and automata, had a considerable impact on a new generation of multimedia artists. The modular control of the environment it offered worked their imagination. They fantasised and produced immersive spaces that affected or conditioned visitors through electronically managed stimulation. The discotheque is the perfect example.

Beyond its technical aspect, cybernetics is structured through the concepts of affection and feedback. Artists and scientists imagined a fusion of the neurological model of irritation and electrical contact. Exploration of the limits of perception by psychedelic culture and interactive works of art evoked a whole series of amorous emotional motifs in which technological ecstasy merged with regression. The notion of contact brought to the surface an unconscious charged with sexuality in which problematic visions of gender, the couple and reproduction were articulated.



Discoteca Analitica, exhibition view, Fri Art Kunsthalle. Photo © Thomas Julier

2. Sensorium

In the early 1960s in Palo Alto, Stewart Brand, a recent biology graduate from Stanford University, California, participated in a major study on LSD. Brand, then a photographer in the army, developed the idea of a multimedia show that would aim to better publicise, defend and spread the interests of Amerindian communities in the United States. His project *America Needs Indians* outgrew its initial ambitions as a documentary and became something else entirely. With the architect Zach Stewart, he imagined a modular and itinerant structure that could accommodate the productions of other collectives. These immersive multimedia shows were named *Sensorium I-II-III...* They made the public aware of new technological, spiritual and environmental issues. The documentation presented here reveals an imaginary anthropology of the quasi-demiurgic creation of a total multimedia machine.

In San Francisco in 1966, *America Needs Indians* was included in the program for Trips Festival, a three-day event organised by Stewart Brand, Ramon Sender, Bill Graham, Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters, bringing together the chaotic protagonists of the local counter-culture to create a happening. It included film makers and multimedia artists, rock bands and experimental theatre.



America Needs Indians, Copyright July 1964 for Stewart Brand, photographer by Osborne Stewart, Architects, San Francisco

3. USCO

In 1963, John Cage sent the media theorist Marshall McLuhan's manuscript *Understanding Media* to the beat poet Gerd Stern. It had a big impact on him. At the time the hippie culture was coming into being in San Francisco, Stern set out to invent a poetry for the new electronic age.

In 1964, Gerd Stern, painter Steve Durkee and engineer Michael Callahan founded the multimedia collective USCO. Various protagonists of the American counter-culture were regular collaborators: Stewart Brand, Timothy Leary, producer John Brockman, experimental film maker Jud Yalkut. The over-equipped collective (film projectors, slides, lighting effects, oscilloscopes, synthesisers, and other electro-mechanical equipment etc.) travelled the United States, producing multimedia shows in universities, theatres, concert halls and museum lobbies. The rest of the time, they were housed in an old church in Garneville, NY, not far from Timothy Leary's mansion. There they built the Tabernacle, a multimedia stimulation environment that attracted an informal community looking for sensory experiences. Architectural projects from *Transformer*, and then *SOLUX* came in the wake of the Tabernacle, a series of projects that combined a spiritual quest and multimedia.



Discoteca Analitica, exhibition view with Gerd Stern and Nicolas Brulhart, Fri Art Kunsthalle.

USCO, *Universal Spheres*, 1963, 182 x 228 x 8 cm, oil and screenprint on canvas, galvanized aluminum, Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati and USCO.

Intense sensory stimulation devices and the aim to create a direct impact on the brain interested a very diverse group of characters. Timothy Leary hired them to produce his 'Psychedelic Sessions' in New York. The entertainment entrepreneur Murray the K ordered the multimedia content for his new giant commercial disco from them. The Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia mandated them to create an aggressive immersive device with the aim of allowing them to conduct stress tests. Under the names Mavericks Systems and Intermedia Systems, Gerd Stern and Michael Callahan provided consultancy for various companies in the fields of education and marketing.

USCO was involved in a broad spectrum of activities that embodied the epistemic shifts produced by the advent of electronic technologies. These technologies disrupted the hierarchical relationship between sensory perception and understanding.



Discoteca Analitica, view of the study room, Fri Art Kunsthalle. Photo © Thomas Julier

4. Psychedelic Therapy

In 1960, Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert, professors in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University, ordered doses of LSD from the Basel pharmaceutical company Sandoz to further their research into the therapeutic potential of hallucinogenic drugs. In 1963, they were fired from Harvard for conducting acid tests on students.

With the help of a patron, Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert moved into a sixty-four-room mansion in upstate New York. There they created the Castalia Foundation, a reference to Hermann Hesse's educational novel, *The Glass Bead Game*. It offered retreats and workshops to guide people in their psychedelic experiences. A series of archive documents provide information on developments in the workshops and sessions. Interpersonal games structured communal living. The psychedelic journey was a programmed experience that took place in the ambiances of the different rooms of the manor. As the 'trip' experience began, a pre-written score created a rhythm of musical moments, moments of speech, times of meditation, communion and rest. The slogan Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out was popularised in opposition to an ideal of control. Timothy Leary's ambition would lead him to transform these sessions into messianic shows, becoming the New York Psychedelic Theater. The messenger of the psychedelic revolution was assisted in the production of these sessions by artists' collective USCO. Psychedelic therapy and multimedia productions merged together in these environments.

5. Same Player Shoots Again

In Brussels in 1961, Jacqueline de Jong put the idea for a magazine in English to the International Situationist committee to supplement the original International Situationiste bulletin and the German magazine *Spur*. The first issue of *The Situationist Times* appeared in 1962, although de Jong had been excluded from the group. From 1962 to 1967, the artist published six polymorphic and multilingual issues of a magazine that was to become an emblem of the counter-culture.

The last issue of *The Situationist Times* was supposed to be devoted to the cultural topology of the pinball machine, but it was never completed. The documentation collected by de Jong and Hans Brinkman in the early 1970s was brought together as part of the exhibition *Same Player Shoots Again, The International Tilt Exhibition* at the Kunsthalle in Malmö at the end of 2018. Here we have a selection that includes photographs, correspondence with contributors, an inventory of pinball machines in Amsterdam, excerpts from magazines and newspapers, and two brief essays by Brinkman and the psychologist Joost Mathijsen.

Pinball machines were often found in bars or discotheques. Their illustrations sometimes represented these environments by metonymy, producing an analogy between the drifting ball and the visitor to these environments.

Thanks: Jacqueline de Jong, Ellef Prestsæter



Roy Ascott, *Plastic Transactions*, 1971.

Special event

From 29 to 31 March at Fri-Son
Jon Rafman, *Dream Journal 2016-2017*

Opening : Friday, March 29, 6pm

Fri Art and Fri-Son present the monumental installation *Dream Journal 2016-2017* by Canadian artist Jon Rafman. From 29 to 31 March, day and night, Fri-Son's large concert hall hosts a giant screen whose images are to be experienced lying down on a soft carpet.

The Dream Journal includes videos with soundtracks by Oneohtrix Point Never and James Ferraro. To create the landscapes of the contemporary unconscious, Jon Rafman draws from the darkest corners of the Internet and its nebulous communities.

In contrast with the smooth and sedative relationship of the digital economy, Rafman uses the immersive visual language of video games to take the viewer through the meanders of our worst nightmares. Yet, like a Janusian figure, wonders and deliriums compose the two sides of the same coin, inseparable.



Jon Rafman, *Dream Journal 2016-2017*, 2017, 49 mins. Still. Courtesy: the artist and Sprüth Magers.

Schedule :

Friday: 6pm - 5am
Saturday: 11am - 3am
Sunday: 11am - 6pm

More information: www.fri-son.ch

Information about the exhibition and guided tours: fri-art.ch

With the support of

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Atelier Schöffner, Anna Halprin Studio, Carl Solway Gallery, CFA Berlin, Drei Gallery, Edward Cella Art & Architecture, Empty Gallery, Francesca Pia Gallery, Institute for Studies on Latin American Art, Max Mayer Gallery, Musée National des beaux-arts du Québec, PPOW Gallery, Ringier Collection, San Francisco Museum of Performance + Design Archive, The Green Library, Semiose Gallery, Stanford University, The Mills College Library, Wilde Gallery

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