

Martin Howse: Software and Substance

Martin Howse

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Performance



Heavily improvised, playing with the collapse of massed, barely functional salvaged equipment and software systems made manifest in sound/noise and image, Howse presents a complex, process-driven constructivist performance; the symphonic rise of the attempt to piece together fugal systematics is played out against the noise of collapse and machine crash at the deserted border of control.

Material is both evidence and self-obscuring; a literal drama of sheer light (waves) and absolute darkness (our substrate) exacerbated by the excitation of substance and its subsequent bodily detection. The performer is cast as a volatile detective, with an audible forensics probing a tabletop micro-material-theatre.

[MH. Substrate. 2011]

Since 1998, Martin Howse has performed in venues and festivals worldwide, with actions crossing the division of code and matter. Performances have explored chemical processes, terminal live coding, auto-destructive systems and materials under stress, subjected to uncommon processes.

Documentation

- <http://tagr.tv/2010/wormdetour-martin-howse>
- <http://1010.co.uk/org/110410.html>

Workshops



Noise embeds both materiality and equation, equally embracing graphics through circuit diagrams and a wider industrial economy. We hesitate to call our interest electronics; an obsession rather with divination masquerading as detection, with substance and with an interrogation of the material. Noise acts as a revelation, precisely exposing the dark side of over-engineered social acts, manufacture and consumption; all embodied within the blackboxed bug chip.

Noise is elaborated on a path which leads from household materials, such as tin foil, baking soda and coal, through to more esoteric matter; large-scale experiments harking back to earlier times of invention. We're at home with

Maxwell and his demons, thermodynamic exploration [dry ice and propane], and with de Forest [the holy triode].

[MH. Noise produce workshop. CTM. 2008]

Over the last four years, Martin Howse has been involved in both organising and leading workshops in Germany, United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands and Spain. Workshop participants have constructed apparatus to actively explore: the materiality of code, micro-radio transmission, electronic voice phenomena (EVP) and haunted media, electromagnetic emissions from communications technologies and everyday objects, and geophysics/earth sciences.

Documentation

- <http://www.1010.co.uk/org/events.html>
- http://www.1010.co.uk/org/workshop_res.html
- http://www.1010.co.uk/workshop_past.html
- http://www.1010.co.uk/workshop_archive2.html
- <http://1010.co.uk/org/wv2final.html>
- <http://fo.am/electromagnetics>

Psychogeophysics fieldtrips



Where does execution (of software, of the law) take place and what are the effects of such sittings on the individual? Is there a stark division between the physical and the protocol (between the material and the symbolic), or can these terms be considered as points on a continuum of abstraction? What other ways can be imagined to map these points?

Psychogeophysics actively interrogates these questions using a core constructivist methodology based around the pairing of paranoid forensics and excitation as primary interventions in the world.

Psychogeography can be defined as an examination of the total effects of geography and place on the individual, [“the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals.” Guy Debord. Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography, 1955]. Psychogeophysics expands this research to embrace geophysics, defined as the quantitative observation of the earth’s physical properties, and its interaction with local spectral ecologies.

[MH. Psychogeophysics Summit. 2010]

For the last two years, Martin Howse has been involved, alongside several artists and theorists, in elaborating the new discipline of psychogeophysics through laboratory-style events (in Germany, London and Norway) and exploratory field trips (in Berlin and Northern Germany).

Documentation

- <http://www.psychogeophysics.org/wiki/doku.php>

Lectures and other activities



The desert of Southern California is a surreal wasteland of military bombing ranges and toxic waste, beautiful vistas and endangered species, and now three peculiar artificial life entities. UK Artists Martin Howse and Jonathan Kemp built these stark, semi-official looking devices at a research station run by the Center for Land Use Interpretation. In this arid landscape, Howse and Kemp hacked out what might be confused for remote meteorological stations, but are actually far more ambiguous devices. They harvest and store solar power, communicate with each other through wireless, listen to military jets, birds, and the wind, and constantly modify their own code. Their small computer displays tells us nothing – we have no way of entering their processing or conversation. They are functionally inscrutable, while nonetheless communicating a sort of technical authority. While their location is available as GPS coordinates it's hard to imagine what one would gain by visiting them, and knowing the American Southwest they would probably be peppered with bullet holes anyway. Quixotic as they appear, they nonetheless present a challenge to our self-importance, as oblivious to our curiosity as are the desert tortoises or cacti that share their space.

[VIDA 8.0 jury statement 2005]

Since 1998 Martin Howse has been involved under various initiatives (ap, xxxxx, micro-research) in publishing, lecturing, and exhibiting, as well as devel-

oping several open hardware and free software projects. He has collaboratively published two works, [the] xxxxx [reader] and xxxxx peenemuende, lectured worldwide, and exhibited in group shows in Iceland, Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Belgium and China. He actively contributes to the detektors project alongside several free software initiatives.

Links

- <http://1010.co.uk/org/>
- http://1010.co.uk/xxxxx_publication.html
- http://1010.co.uk/org/xxxxx_peenemuende.html
- <http://www.1010.co.uk/org/island2.html>
- <http://scrying.org/doku.php?id=pm:peenemunde2008description>
- <http://detektors.org>
- http://1010.co.uk/xxxxx_arch.html
- http://www.archive.org/details/xxxxx-is_land

Biography



Programmer, writer, performer and explorer Martin Howse founded the ap project in 1998 to implement a truly artistic operating system (OS) in its most expanded sense. ap projects have included the ap02 distributed code-creation software developed in collaboration with _v2_labs, Rotterdam and an environmental computational work, entitled ap0201 installed deep within the Mojave desert which received first prize within the Art & Artificial Life competition VIDA 8.0, 2005. In 2005 ap were responsible for the crash seminar and performances in London (ICA and Shoreditch Town Hall). In 2006 Martin Howse co-founded xxxxx, organising one large-scale conference and concert series in London (xxxxx) and publishing the acclaimed xxxxx [reader]. From 2007 to 2009 he has hosted a regular workshop, micro-residency and salon series in Berlin, most recently under the banner of micro-research.

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