

IN-SPHERE

a world behind curtains | may 2010

FEATURING



RIK GARRETT



ANTON BRAGAGLIA



POSSESSION



XIAMEN DADA



XENO & OAKLANDER
LED ER EST



UK DECAY

N-SPHERE

MAY 2010

EDITORIAL

TRANQUILIZERS

»I need to wake up« said Alice as she made her way outside the book and into the streets. Dragging along invisible grinning cats, the 20-something generation of today was built in the shadow of mammoth ideas and sub-cultural tides. Exponentially returning to the origins, a cycle is not only completed, but reformed, as old bands re-emerge, retro-art infuses the sidewalks and digitized photography coexists with more traditional developing techniques.

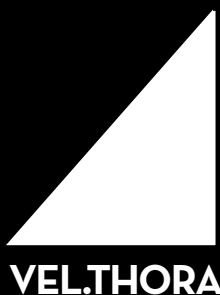
Long living bands or resurfacing ones bring together old fans and new admirers. There, in the chaos of concerts and online communities, the young generation connects with the culture of their parents. A fine thread is sown between ideals, as the former and the latter exchange perspectives. UK Decay is, among others, a fertile ground for closing in three decades and rekindling a somewhat forgotten movement. As they say, »(post) punk's not dead«.

In the early 20th century, futurism expanded into a full-fledged movement. Originating in Italy, its composition codes reverberate into this day and

age, as futurist artists made way to shapes, sounds and ideas that can still be seen in modern everyday life. The motion of subjects, studied by Anton Bragaglia, is now renewed into subtle kinematics of their surroundings, in Rik Garrett's pieces. Once again, the rebirth of concepts is achieved by adaptive transgressions.

Over two decades ago, the only solution to artistic advancement was a complete erasure of the past and utter denial of the present. Today, commemorating the Xiamen Dada movement, the works of their protagonists are exhibited internationally. However, the Chinese example cannot be followed in the current millennium. Older values are brought into the spotlight and mixed with fresh points of view, while young artists no longer need to struggle for their right to create.

The world seem a bit more inclined to convert itself into a medium auspicious to metamorphose. Don't wipe clean, but remodel; don't throw away, but recycle. Thus, the conservation law comes to mind: *nothing is destroyed, everything is transformed*



VEL.THORA

INDEX

2

MAY
2010

Editorial
Tranquilizers

22

NOX I
SHOWCASE

Navid Sanati
Iran

48

NOX II
SHOWCASE

Silviu Pavel
Romania

4

GLASS
SHOWCASE

Rik Garrett
United States

30

ABUSE I
SHOWCASE

UK Decay
Ulterior
The Wars
Gig Review

56

ABUSE II
SHOWCASE

Led Er Est
Xeno and Oaklander
Gig Review

12

STONE
SHOWCASE

Anton Giulio Bragaglia
Italy

38

CLOCKWORK
SHOWCASE

An Erasure in
Three Acts:
Xiamen Dada

64

CHAINS &
SCISSORS

in[e]gress
Sator. Tenet

16

MOVING
SHOWCASE

Possession
Through a Woman
Darkly

44

HANGING
CAGES

The Art of
Being Divine

68

EYE
TEASER

Martin Bladh
Sweden

R

GLASS
SHOWCASE
IK GARRETT

»EMERGING FROM QUIET SPACES«

Name:

Rik Garrett

Location:

Chicago, Illinois, US

Occupation:

Photographic

Definition of personal sphere:

Darkened rooms of all kinds

Artwork in 4 words:

Emerging from quiet spaces

What is inspirational for you:

People who do things. People who make things. People who have turned normal things into magical things: Ted Serios, William H. Mumler, Austin Osman Spare, William S. Burroughs & Brion Gysin, Genesis P-Orridge, etc. And love.

Currently favourite artists:

Hans Bellmer, Pierre Molinier, Yoshifumi Hayashi, Stephen Kasner, Raoul Ubac, Steven Leyba

Tools of trade:

4x5 camera from the 1950s, film. On occasion wet plate collodion process (glass plates, silver nitrate baths, ether, etc.). Sometimes also paint and canvas.

Current obsessions:

Alchemy and the mating process of Anglerfish.

Personal temptation:

Constantly treading the line between not doing quite enough and taking on far too many gigantic projects at once.











ANTON G.

STONE
SHOWCASE
BRAGAGLIA



»WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THE PRECISE RE- CONSTRUCTION OF MOVEMENT«

Name:

Anton Giulio Bragaglia

Lived:

11th February 1890 – 15th July 1960

Location:

Frosinone, Italy

Occupation:

Photographer, writer, essayist, film director, theatre stage designer

Influences:

Umberto Boccioni, Henri Bergson, Étienne-Jules Marey

Associated with:

20th Century Avant-garde Cinema, Italian Futurism

Connections:

His brother Arturo Bragaglia, Pirandello theatre plays, Futurist Magazine *Cronache di Attualità*, *Novissima-Film* Motion Picture Studio, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti

Obsessions:

Fotodinamismo, chronophotography, mysticism & the occult, black&white, reflections & refractions, motion, forbidden things, rhythmic flux, spiritualism conceptualized in visual arts

quote | **Anton Giulio Bragaglia**. *Futurist Manifestos*



photo *Anton Giulio Bragaglia. 1913. Violoncellist*

P

MOVING
SHOWCASE
OSSESSION

THROUGH A DARKLY



WOMAN





Andrej Zulawsky's *Possession* is everything one may want from a love-story or everything one may not want from it, depending on each viewer. It is deliciously unrestrained, psychotic, cruel and barbaric, but, amusingly, it has little to do with the afternoon-meal-lovestory-framework, which is why some may dismiss it, also pointless, depressing, implausible, amateurish even. And, in a certain context, they may be right. However, that context has nothing to do with the movie or its approach. It has something to do with what one may expect some characters or stories to be. We expect breakups to be a certain way because that's how we saw them in the movies we love, that's how we like to remember our own ones, or that's how our friends described theirs (again, the convenience issue). Well, *Possession* isn't convenient.

It has too little to do with what we were indulged to believe or outburst, but, amusingly, shares more common ground than we expect in relation to the human nature.

Conventional wisdom may state that what we do is important, not what we think. So, if someone thinks of stealing, but ultimately does not do it, that person is not a thief and so forth. Well, this is true when it comes to society, but it is a delusion when it comes to the self, in which case there is no practical difference between a thief outside and a thief inside, since the thief inside may ultimately take control if the individual outside lets his guard down or has a moment of crisis.

In relationships or in breakups we may be gentle or at least non violent on the outside, but what about on

the inside? *Possession* tears the curtain apart. There is no outside in this film, at least not one that we can feel familiar in, there are no masks there and no friends to help us. There is the anger, the silent denial, the bargaining, the despair, there is an entire edifice falling apart piece by piece. And even the slightest comfortable thought is carried away: we can't even suspect betrayal – not the one we like to talk about – and, no matter how in-your-face it seems, it is something else.

And what about the imagined thief disguised in Romeo? Most of those intimate relationships rely on projection. We project our own vision, our own ideals into the one we think we love as if he/she is a blank screen and everything is fine as long as we can project undisturbed. The irony is that this process of projection is painted



in human colors, even if – at least at its heart – it is a mechanical process. We see our partner as an ideal and we have to take the big fall when we realize how far off we were. Some may not know how to take it, so they back away to find comfort somewhere else – like nomads. Some may accept it out of fear, complacency or convenience and only a few are really willing to get to the bottom of it.

In this case, the movie is backing away, on the one hand into a frail illusion and on the other into a demanding process of creation, fleshing out our own ideal. But if we are to think about it, it is the dreamer who needs the dream, not the other way around.

Possession deals with each of those aspects in a brutal and uncompromising manner. It has the intensity of a love-story and enough heart to

work for those with the nose for this kind of stuff, but also has enough madness to alienate everyone else. It is a personal film – for better or for worse – meaning that it has a personal film's intensity and approach and a personal film's share of flaws as well. However, it avoids, even here, conveniences.

Don't try to make sense of it, relationships barely make sense beyond certain facts, just follow it, its music and moments of madness, put them all together and observe the result.

That's it for tonight. Misty dreams, headless children!

text | **shade**
photo | **Possession. 1981. Screenshot**
director | **Andrej Zulawsky**
cast | **Isabelle Adjani, Sam Neil**

NAV

NOXI
SHOWCASE
VID SANATI





Name: Navid Sanati

Location: Iran

Web: navidoutlaw.deviantart.com

photo | *Taped*



photo | **Navid Sanati. *Blinded***



photo | **Navid Sanati. Vicarious**



photo | *Navid Sanati. Fear*



photo | **Navid Sanati. Parabola**

WITH: ULTER

ABUSE!
SHOWCASE
UK DECAY
IOR & THE WARS

»THIS IS THE TWIST IN THE TALE«

WHO:
UK DECAY. THE WARS. ULTERIOR

WHERE:
BERLIN, SLAUGHTERHOUSE

WHEN:
SATURDAY, APRIL 24TH

BROUGHT BY:
REMEMBRANCE DAZE

GIG REVIEW:
MARK SPLATTER

UK Decay returns to Berlin for the first time, some 30 years after their 1981 debut as a semi anniversary show. As it often happens with bands who accumulate a cult following them for one reason or another, the return of *UK Decay* to the stage has all the proper ingredients for a comeback. Since 2000 interest built up as to what happened to *UK Decay*. They picked up on the signal. It started with their *UK Decay* community site that quickly grew as old and new fans volunteered information, clippings and most importantly, support. Finally in 2008 some small local gigs began as they tested the reunification waters. The result? Immediate interest by

a reinvigorated audience. Abbo, Eddie, and Spon reciprocated with the same energy, and a new generation of Community began. How relevant is this community?

In 1980, *UK Decay* expanded from their politicized punk single *For My Country* and opened the doors to something different in the punk movement, a more theatric and darker element. *UK Decay* was already a well established band in the London area by the time bands like *Bauhaus*, *Theatre of Hate* and *Sex Gang Children* were refining what would become known as positive punk and, ultimately, gothic.



photo | *Diana Daia: UK Decay live at Slaughterhouse. Berlin*

History lesson aside, *UK Decay's* Berlin performance was, as they say, *A Night For Celebration*. This gig was booked well in advance, and the anticipation was high. As support, local Berliners *The Wars* and *Uterior* from London opened the show. These two bands provided the modernized version of the standard that bands like *Joy Division* and (indeed) *UK Decay*, established. *Uterior* made a good impression with their guitar driven rough cut electronic rock, where you can hear a mix of *Sisters of Mercy* and even *Placebo*. *The Wars*, intended as the opening band of the evening, switched spots on the bill for some reason or another, but the effect was essentially the same. By the time *UK Decay* was ready to perform, the full house was twitching in anticipation. Hit the fog machine and the bass rolls in slowly with *Un-*

expected Guest. Like a curtain being drawn back, they establish the atmosphere in an instant. Included in the set were songs from across their entire discography, *Unwind*, *Message Distortion*, *Stage Struck*, *Testament* and even *Werewolf*. But the most essential element of their set was the integrity and empathy that these stage veterans shared with the audience: Abbo's smirk at a specific lyric, or the rapport with the audience as he recalled the photographer from their show in Berlin decades ago.

This is what makes *UK Decay's* return a success, in carrying over a legacy. From the instigation of a genre that has spawned millions of fans and thousands of bands, coming full circle to here and now. They did not only retain their original strength, but they brought back even more. THIS is the

Twist In The Tale, that is often missed by new and old bands alike, and certainly something that you should not miss next time *UK Decay* plays in your part of the world.



photo | **Diana Daia:** *UK Decay live at Slaughterhouse. Berlin*



photo | *Diana Daia: UK Decay live at Slaughterhouse. Berlin*



photo | **Diana Daia:** *The Wars live at Slaughterhouse. Berlin*



photo | *Diana Daia: Ulterior live at Slaughterhouse. Berlin*

C

XI

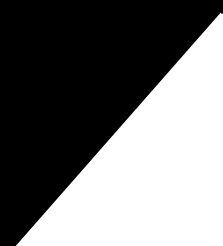
LOCKWORK
SHOWCASE
AMEN DADA

»AN ERASURE IN THREE ACTS: XIAMEN DADA«

Zürich, 1916. The war is in full swing in Europe, but a group of artists, enjoying the haven of Swiss military neutrality, establish Cabaret Voltaire. It quickly becomes the center stage for the Dada movement, defined as anti-art, anti-war, nihilistic and transgressive.

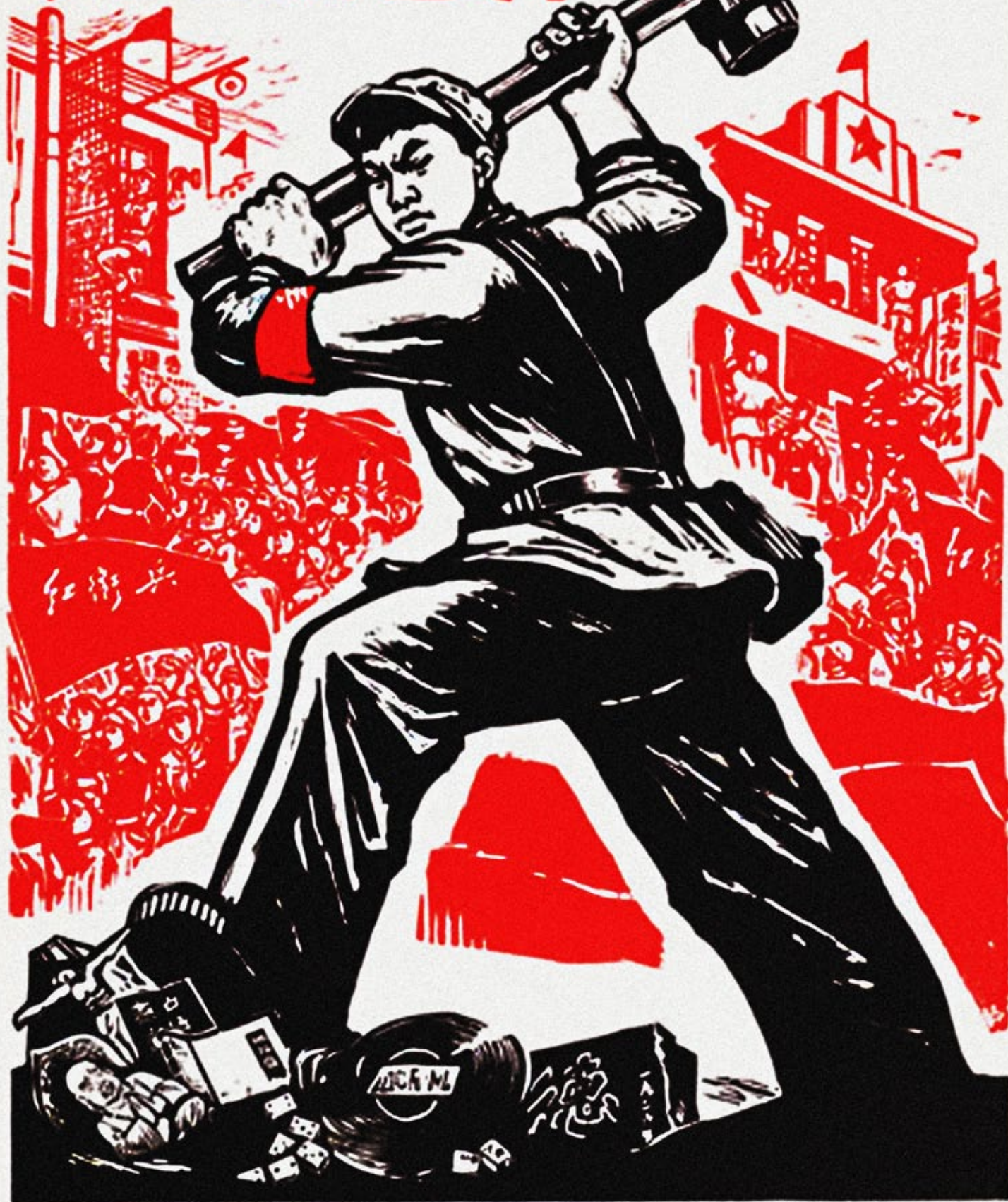
Erase the traces of bourgeois life urged Brecht in 1926 and that is precisely what the Dadaists did. Everything was criticized and demolished, from the colonial perspective, the Enlightenment's cult of reason to Dada itself. Unsurprisingly perhaps, while living in Zürich, Lenin was a regular of the Cabaret Voltaire. The nihilistic drive of the dadaists proved to be an invaluable example in the orchestration of another major »erasure«: The October Revolution of 1917. The seeds for utopia were planted and the next following decades witnessed a widespread struggle for its realization.

Beijing, 1966. The promise of a new world and the call for revolution had been shaping the Chinese society since Mao Zedong became the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949. The most printed book in the twentieth century, *Quotations from Chairman Mao* had laid the foundations for the Cultural Revolution to come. Claiming that the threat of restoring capitalism was growing, Mao called for a re-activation of class struggle and permanent revolution. As propaganda posters advocated, the »erasure« of the old world was crucial, in order to build a new one. Many ancient monuments and artworks were eliminated, the extent of this destruction still being unclear. At the same time, *Mao's Little Red Book*, as was known in the West, was widely read and appreciated, especially by young students, disillusioned by the right-wing politics of their countries. But none



SIMINA NEAGU

打碎旧世界 创立新世界





Huang Yong Ping, 2007. *Well (detail)*.
Ceramic and taxidermy 61 x 26 inches Installation
View: Gladstone Gallery, New York
Copyright Huang Yong Ping
Courtesy of Gladstone Gallery, New York

could foresee the disastrous effects the Cultural Revolution had on Chinese economy and society.

In 1976, when Mao died, the opposing forces within the Communist Party gained momentum and China slowly advanced towards an epoch of reform and »opening-up« towards the West. Cultural Revolution had been abandoned, but what was there to be done when the world had been swept clean?

Xiamen, 1986. The port city of Xiamen, located in southeastern China, was one of the first special economic zones, areas that enjoyed more liberal economic policies than the rest of the country and were especially designed to attract foreign investment. This city, as Zürich had been in 1916 for the Dadaists, became a safe ground for a collective of young Chinese artists. Inspired by the vitality of a new wave of experimental art and by the recent influx of Western art theoretical writings, Xiamen Dada was formed in 1986. It included artists such as Huang Yong Ping, Cha Lixiong, Liu Yiling, Lin Chun and Jiao Yaoming, that would later become

one of the leading figures of contemporary Chinese art.

In the climate of developing political dissent and social problems, new sources of inspiration were cited: Marcel Duchamp, John Cage, Joseph Beuys, Taoism and Zen Buddhism. On one hand, the Western avant-garde, not yet fully accepted and on the other hand, traditional Chinese culture that had been undermined during the Cultural Revolution offered a suitable background for this subversive, radical collective. Interested in notions such as haphazard, nihilism or absence, they wrote manifestos, organized happenings or burned their previously exhibited artworks. Their creative ethos is best exemplified in actions such as Huang Yong Ping's *The History of Chinese Painting and the History of Modern Western Art Washed in the Washing Machine for Two Minutes*, during which two popular art history books Wang Bomin's *The History of Chinese Painting* and Herbert Read's *A Concise History of Modern Painting* were transformed into an undistinguishable mass of cellulose. Thus, a third erasure was performed, creating a new, clean slate

for art practice. Both the millennial tradition of Chinese painting, mutilated by the Cultural Revolution and the recently discovered Western avant-garde art were refused and obliterated in a two-minute washing cycle. But, like any other idealistic attempt at total resistance, it was short-lived.

Epilogue. The brutal repression of the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 offered a harsh lesson to that new wave of artists and intellectuals. Cynicism became a prevalent attitude and it's no wonder that today's best-selling Chinese contemporary art exports are »cynical realist« works, ironical renditions of propaganda images. A sense of hopelessness and an utter subjection to commercialism have grappled most of the contemporary art scene. Huang Yong Ping, the leading member of Xiamen Dada now lives in Paris and is courted by private galleries and influential institutions for his monumental, conceptually sophisticated installations. One cannot ignore the question that is immediately raised: Is this the logical conclusion of successive erasures?



photo | The History of Chinese Painting and the History of Modern Western Art
Washed in the Washing Machine for Two Minutes. 1987/1993
Courtesy of UCCA (ucca.org.cn)

T
BEI

HANGING
CAGES

THE ART OF
HANGING DIVINE

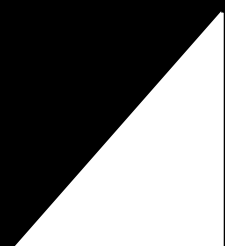
»BEAR HIS STRINGS IN SILENCE«

Late was the hour the puppeteer was hailed into the room. Adventurous spectrum, thick armor, broad shield, rusty tools of a retired assassin, unlucky friend for hire by the highest bidder. He politely inquired about his long awaited apotheosis, a well deserved finale for services rendered.

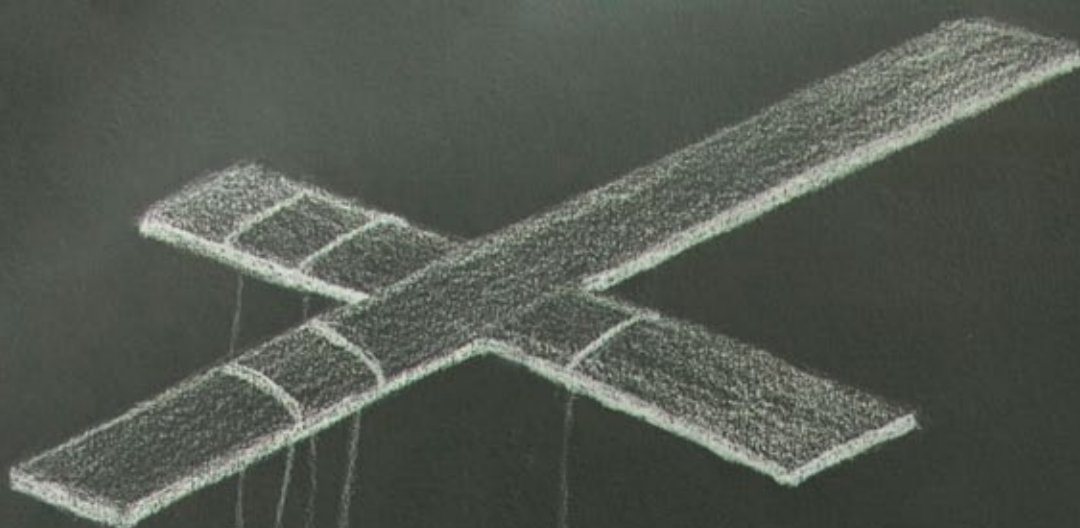
»I died under your boot, in mushy smell of blood, while overflowing emptiness marked my end. What will you do now that you got away with justified murder? I cannot guess, beyond the dancing fury in your eyes.«
»Murder... A long lost friend. So well covered by the cloak of a perfected smile. Perhaps someday I'll beg forgiveness of those I have done wrong to. Including you. But not today. Today I wallow into the seeds of haze planted long ago, abandon myself to the strong, deep roots of the crepuscule I adore.«
»You do know that

you'll be left stripped of every fantasy you could ever give birth to. Your strings will drain you motionless, until you'll fade from memory, for I alone could master and control your doom. But as you rose in rebellion, you traded places with those whose corpses you piled up before your throne of dementia. Tell me, how does it feel?«
»It was almost worth the price. It might still be. Once I find the words to trouble and cast a shadow over your triumph.«
»Still defiant I see. Then maybe I shall take my veins and put them to a better use, and make a new set of customized strings to celebrate your failure. And do not be troubled. I know your resilience all too well. Alas, you ran out of aces up your sleeve.«

And so they laughed to the puppeteer's face. He wishes for just one day the city would be empty and deserted, so he can bear his strings in silence.



BAHAK B



SI

NOX^{II}

SHOWCASE

LVIU PAVEL

Name: Silviu Pavel
Location: Romania
Web: silviupavel.com

photo | Voodoo







photo | **Silviu Pavel. Naked Twins**



photo | **Silviu Pavel. Opposite**



photo | **Silviu Pavel.** *Almost Tango*



XENO AND

ABUSE"
SHOWCASE
LED ER EST
OAKLANDER

»THE BEGINNING OF THE SPRING LIVE SHOW SEASON«

WHO:

XENO AND OAKLANDER
LED ER EST

WHERE:

BERLIN, BANG BANG CLUB

WHEN:

THURSDAY, APRIL 22ND

BROUGHT BY:

REMEMBRANCE DAZE

GIG REVIEW:

MARK SPLATTER

At the very peak of what one would call the modern cold wave sound is Brooklyn based *Xeno & Oaklander*.

But before purists dissent - there is a genuine French connection. The duo is comprised of American Sean McBride and French-Norwegian Liz Wendelbo. Thus a large part of their lyrics are sung in native French, which sits perfectly on top of their brilliantly executed, and exclusively analog synth wave.

Their 2010 European tour brings them to Berlin after dates in Scotland, England, Ireland, Belgium with their debut album *Sentinelle* (*Weird Records* 2009).

Together on tour is *Weird Records'* label-mate and fellow Brooklynites, *Led Er Est*, who fulfill the guitar role for the evening. Their sound is comparable to *X&O*, with heavy focus on electronic effects, with gouts of guitar washing over the *John Carpenter* inspired synths - check their songs *Scissors* or *Laredo*, or their brilliant cover of *Solid State's A Darkness in My Soul*, for example. With this they won me over instantly, despite the keyboard player's desert explorer outfit! After *X&O* having such good press in publications like *NME*, *Vice* and *The Village Voice*, this show was highly anticipated for Berlins hardcore minimal fans, wavers and even more diverse factions. The crowd



photo | *Diana Daia. live at Bang Bang Club. Berlin*

began picking up momentum, but sadly it never escalated any further than a few people's timid swaying. X&O were the most animated attendees at the show – when they were on stage, belting out *Shadow World* and the favorite of mine, *Vagabond*!

The opportunity for Berlin to experience two of America's best, and this from a very limited selection, wave bands from a modest, but impressive label like *Weird* should have gotten better response in mainland Europe's most vibrant music city. With that in mind, the night was however a success, thanks to the full attendance, albeit a brief one (the sets were unceremoniously short), and a sober one. The audience made haste in vacating shortly after the concert, leaving the

bands to pack up for Prague the following day, so the impending after party didn't happen.

On a final positive note, this was for many the beginning of the spring live show season in Berlin, and the first tour for the independent minimal and wave scene to hit the Hauptstadt since winter last year. This ends a virtual dry-spell of quality artists from abroad hitting Berlin's hundreds of stages, clearing the path for a dozen upcoming concert tours all with the destination Berlin.



photo | **Diana Daia:** *Xeno and Oaklander live at Bang Bang Club. Berlin*



photo | *Diana Daia: Xeno and Oaklander live at Bang Bang Club. Berlin*



photo | *Diana Daia: Led Er Est live at Bang Bang Club. Berlin*



photo | *Diana Daia: Led Er Est live at Bang Bang Club. Berlin*

CHAI

NZ CISSORS





wie froh bin ich,
daß ich weg bin!

EYE TEASER

MARTIN BLADH

SWEDEN



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