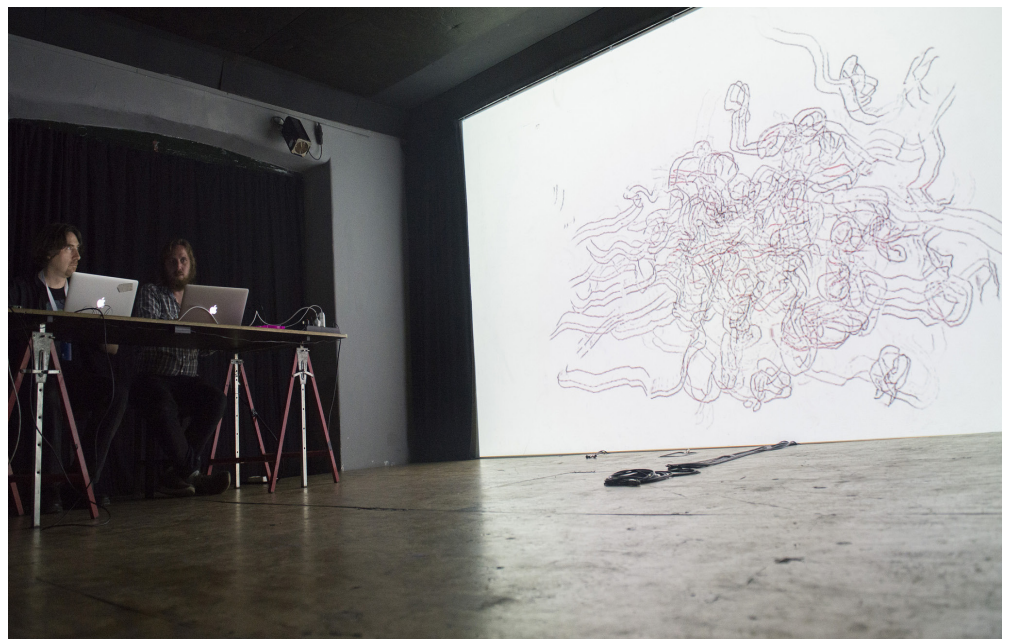# *JETZT*

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Abstract

JETZT is an audiovisual live performance combining live generated and processed video and audio. It is based on the same named poem written by Max Bense, German philosopher, science theorist and pioneer of the generative aesthetics. The artists are approaching the phenomenon of JETZT (German expression for "the present moment" or "in the now") using an interwoven system of sound and images, generative algorithms and interactive swarm simulations. Within the constraints of the composition and the algorithmic setup, Bisig and Wegner are responding to one another through spontaneous decisions and improvised variations.

Keywords

Audiovisual
Live Performance
Generative Algorithm
Swarm Simulations
Computer Music
Poetry
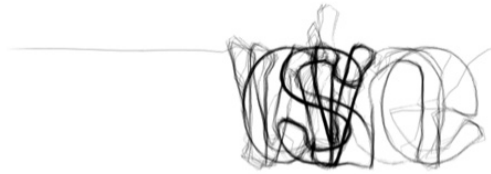
1. ABOUT

Jetzt is a chronological deconstruction of the same named poem written by Max Bense. JETZT means "in the now" or in other words the present moment. The poem is an amusing play on words as well as an acute insight on the structure of German language. Bense refers to the fact that when we point to a now, as when we say "this moment" (JETZT), we have already missed it in some sense. The now eludes our capture, for it disappears at the very moment we apprehend it. The poem was created as a reaction to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels remarks on the topic of JETZT in "Phänomenologie des Geistes" (in the chapter relating to Bewusstsein, Teil I: "Die sinnliche Gewissheit").

> Jetzt,
> jetzt und erst jetzt,
> jetzt und nur jetzt,
> jetzt und doch jetzt,
> jetzt ist das jetzt erst jetzt,
> das nur jetzt ist und doch jetzt ist,
> nur jetzt und doch jetzt,
> jetzt das jetzt ist,
> nicht jetzt das jetzt nicht jetzt ist wenn es jetzt ist,
> nicht jetzt wie es jetzt nicht ist,
> nicht jetzt wie es jetzt nicht jetzt ist,
> jetzt das nicht ist ist nicht jetzt,jetzt nicht,
> jetzt noch nicht,
> doch jetzt das noch nicht jetzt ist wenn es jetzt ist,
> jetzt das jetzt nicht mehr jetzt ist wenn es jetzt ist und jetzt das jetzt ist,
> wenn es nicht
> mehr jetzt ist,
> dieses jetzt,
> erst dieses jetzt,
> nur dieses jetzt ist jetzt.
> (Bense 1961)

2. COMPOSITION // SETUP

The performance follows a composition in 10 parts and leaves space for sponta-neous decisions and improvised variations by Bisig and Wegner on stage. Several words of the text are synthesized, sometimes stretched to a very long time period. The connection between music and image progresses through different forms of relationships, control parameters for sound synthesis occasionally affect image generation, spoken words become periodic attractors for the swarm simulations.

Ephraim Wegner developed a Csound script that coordinates the text material by a Markov chain. The chain indices are linked to parameters of granular synthesis (speed / duration, size, rate) a noise vocoder, a rhythm section (speed / duration) and fractional noise (speed / duration, frequency).

Fig. 2
Screenshot, excerpt of Wegner's Csound-script.

The video generation is also linked to the indices of the Markov chain, thus influencing swarm behaviour, repulsion and attraction of the individual particles, alignment on typographic vectors and creating various structures with different textures. Within the borders of this setup and the limits of the composition, Bisig and Wegner are using their live impact on the stimulating indices, turning parts of their instruments on or off, setting thresholds, using transparency and volume control to respond to one another as well as to the evolving system.

3. PURPOSE

The artists are approaching the phenomenon of JETZT using an entangled sys-tem of sound and images, zooming in between the lines and letters, expanding that present moment along time and assigning it a location in space. Sound and Picture are constantly changing and evolving. There is hardly a moment of tem-poral extension, except for those moments, when particular words of the poem are made tangible musically or in the visual projection. The play on words is com-plemented and counteracted by the play of the artists. This approach enables a different form of perception of that present moment, whilst at the same time it is conceived it is already overlapping with the actual presence. The issue of this simultaneity is beyond the expressive possibilities of language.

The first release of this audiovisual work has been broadcasted within the frame-work of Art's Birthday 2017 by the German public broadcaster SWR. There is a 20 minute excerpt available online (http://www.swr.de/swr2/hoerspiel-feature/

art-s-birthday-2017-daniel-bisig-ephraim-wegner-jetzt/-/id=661194/did=188
43366/nid=661194/6zznqu/index.html).

4. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Daniel Bisig holds a Master's and PhD degree in Natural Sciences. He is active as a researcher and artist in the fields of artificial intelligence and generative art. He has worked as a researcher at the Institute for Biochemistry at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology and the the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of the University of Zurich. He is currently employed as a senior research associate at the Institute for Computer Music and Sound Technology ICST of the Zurich University of the Arts. As part of his artistic activities, he has realized algorithmic films, interactive installations and audiovisual performances, some of them in collaboration with musicians and choreographers. The derivation of generative algorithms and interaction techniques from biomimetic simulations forms a central aspect of his work.

Ephraim Wegner (*1980) studied audiovisual media at KHM in Cologne and is currently teaching generative art and audiovisual media at the university in Offenburg. As an artist he uses various computer languages (like Csound, Pure Data and Processing) to combine different forms of digital audio synthesis and generative art, "steering" towards multidisciplinary ap-

proaches and concepts. His performance practice ranges from improvisation (preferably using live input from instrumentalists) and notated works up to algorithmic compositions. Up to now there were numerous cooperations with other musicians, ensembles, festivals and institutions, among others "ars acustica" (SWR2), "Acht Brücken Festival" (Cologne) and "Donaueschinger Musiktage". In 2015 he received a scholarship from Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg.

REFERENCES

Bense, Max. *rot 6 modelle*. Stuttgart: edition rot, 1961