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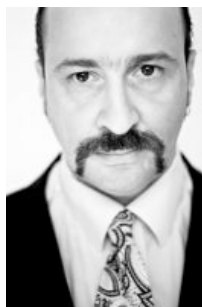
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INTERVIEW SERIES (Alexander Hacke / Danielle De Picciotto) - Neubauten.Org

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Ship of Fools by Alex Hacke & Danielle De Picciotto
18.10 @ Kino Lucerna, Performance and Documentary presentation
Interview with Provokator.org, Marika Instigator in Chief of IMG

Provokator.org met with Danielle De Picciotto and Alex Hacke a few years ago at the **MOFFOFF festival** when presenting their documentary "Neubauten.org". They returned to Prague last year with the Tiger Lillies / Mountains of Madness and recently with Einstürzende Neubauten's tour in support of their new release, "Alles

Wieder Offen".

Their affection for multi-media, multi-genre, multiple layering, multi-focus seems to prevail. After several fruitful projects like the homage to HP Lovecraft with The Tiger Lillies featuring Hacke channeling HP and De Picciotto's intriguing yet nightmarish imagery, "we thought we'd quite like to do a show where all the different aspects of our work can be in one show," Danielle professes, "so that we don't necessarily work with other people, but we kinda show all the different things we do, because we do so many different things were always asked 'so what do you really do?'"

To say they've been busy is a gross understatement.

Provokator.org was able to snag a few minutes of their time at their studio in Berlin to discuss their latest project reinterpreting Sebastian Brandt's, "Ship of Fools".

Provokator.org: So let's just get right in to it because I know you're short on time. [Regarding the DVD] At eachpoint you seem to have really good summarized philosophies when you describe each chapter, let's say like a bumper sticker. For example: "to be greedy is considered a virtue not a vice in this society".

Alex Hacke: Bumper sticker philosophies?! (Laughs) Thank you! Well, yeah. Isn't that right?

Provokator.org: Well, are we just talking about western society?

Alex Hacke: I suppose so. I'm not that familiar with the eastern one so I believe that 'The Ship of Fools', is pretty much aimed at the western society. I think that there's a completely different set of problems and virtues in the western society.

Provokator.org: Danielle mentioned that when you guys take this on the road, you'll incorporate each place where you'll perform in to further or future performances.

Alex Hacke: Well, we are intending to in the future. From now on when we perform 'The Ship of Fools', we want to make the project mutate, expand and develop a life on its own, so that it doesn't get stagnated and routine. And also this way we can really connect with the places where we're performing and also make it a more universal thing.

Provokator.org: Would you consider then bringing it farther east and seeing how that flew there?

Alex Hacke: Yeah, absolutely! If we don't have to censor it (laughs).

Provokator.org: Well, I mean, I've noticed that, for instance with dancing, you've incorporated quote unquote "oriental rhythms".



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Full Calendar

Upcoming Events

- Mon, Nov. 24th** - Tricky (UK) - Roxy - Prague.
- Mon, Nov. 24th** - The Wedding Present (UK) - Lucerna Music Bar - Prague.
- Mon, Nov. 24th** - Mira Wanek - Kaštan - Prague, CZ.
- Tue, Nov. 25th** - Awesome Color (us) - Klub 007 - Prague.
- Tue, Nov. 25th** - BELLIFER, DEWASTEMIND, KATARZE - Hard and Heavy - Bunkr - Praha.

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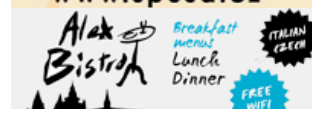
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Alex Hacke: Yes.

Provokator.org: So would that be something that you'd inspired to maybe incorporate...

Alex Hacke: Well, we are scheduled to do it in Istanbul next year and we have invited some Turkish musicians of the country. We want 'The Ship of Fools' to be as it was; the first European best-seller ever. You know, since a couple of hundred of years ago it's been translated in to every European language, so we will also have a Turkish reader. A Turkish actor who will read the text in Turkish as we have been. In fact, there will be a Czech person, a Czech poet reader.

Provokator.org: Oh really?!

Alex Hacke: Yes.

Provokator.org: That was another question I had, whether it would be subtitled or it would be read out loud?

Alex Hacke: It would be read out loud in Czech.

Provokator.org: So that would be simultaneously English and Czech?

Alex Hacke: No, it will be just Czech, except for the singing.

Provokator.org: I noted that on every place that you will bring it, the poetry in between 'The Ship of Fools' will be translated.

Alex Hacke: Yes, yes! There are in fact ancient translations of those texts.

Provokator.org: So will you be using those?

Alex Hacke: Yes, yes! We are using those and that was what I meant that it was the first European best-seller, you know. It was a very popular book then, just a couple of years when it came out, in the 1400s, and so it traveled all over Europe and it got translated in all these languages like that.

Provokator.org: The poetry that you read in between is not direct from 'The Ship of Fools', is it?

Alex Hacke: Yes it is!

Provokator.org: Ah! Because when you guys speak it, it seems much more modern.

Alex Hacke: That's the whole point about the book. It is really contemporary and up to date, particularly when you read it out loud you don't really realise that it is aimed at a society that lived a couple hundred years ago. We really haven't changed that much.

Provokator.org: It still has the same quote unquote 'pre-fabricated opinions'?

Alex Hacke: Yeah, that very much applies.

Provokator.org: And, for example, on the pre-fabricated opinions, if you're saying that they are pre-fabricated by media at the moment, by who were they pre-fabricated when it was originally written?

Alex Hacke: Well, the opinion back then, was say made by the church, the town officials...

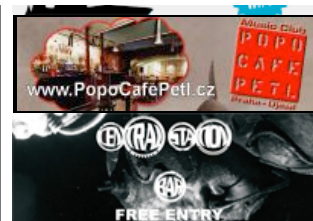
Provokator.org: The feudal system?

Alex Hacke: Yes. But we always have somebody to look up for information and it has always been a valued good, so who is able to spread the word is in power so it's always the same people, really. (Laughs)

Provokator.org: In reference to one of the of the chapters that you mentioned, "anger is a good motivation but it can make you blind".

Alex Hacke: Yes... aggression, in fact, is a live force but instead of an uncontrollable energy, you would be a very mean person if you really managed to channel your anger in a certain way, so I actually think that, luckily, we are not able to channel our anger very well... Even more destruction would occur, so...

Provokator.org: When you recorded that, or just composed it, you were in



Canada which is a very beautiful nature-like context.

Alex Hacke: Yes! (Giggles) It is a 'very beautiful nature-like context' and it was very intense working there. Very concentrating, there's no distraction when you are on the country side. And on some of the pieces I started recording, actually anger started in Berlin, but then in Canada I had sort of the right spirit and the time to actually sit down and channel my thoughts.

Provokator.org: To focus.

Alex Hacke: Yes.

Provokator.org: Was it a conscious decision to include high-fi instruments with low-fi accouterments?

Alex Hacke: Well, the whole project is meant to show all the different things we do best and as a matter of fact we deal with technology, we deal with very basic and simple things, you know. Danielle draws and does video work [and sings] and I play percussions and string instruments and at the same time I do programming, so it was our aim to incorporate pretty much everything we do best.

Provokator.org: I noted, well... what is that thing that you play? The 'programming thing'?

Alex Hacke: Is called a "Lemur", like the animal, and is made by a French company called JazzMutant and it doesn't produces any sounds on its own and, to put it simply, it is a multi-touch screen controller. You know like, usually if you ever touch a screen you can only make contact with one finger that I can [use] to control. Basically it controls software, generates objects and connects these objects to parameters on a given piece of music software, say, on a virtual synthesiser or something like that. Also I can control the sound with my hands. This makes it very apparent and makes it a lot more entertaining for the audience, because usually if you play electronic music or if you work with computers on stage, the computers screen is like a barrier. It really divides the performance from the audience, so this is a great tool to put electronic music back into the real space because if I was playing a bongo or a ukulele, people can see how I control the sound with my hands. You know what I mean? It makes it more real than if I was staring at a computer and just moving the mouse around.



Provokator.org: Right. I was impressed as well with the Bow Chime.

Alex Hacke: Yes, this is a very beautiful instrument, invented by an American artist...

Provokator.org: Robert Rutman.

Alex Hacke: ... and composer Robert Rutman, who was born in Berlin in the 30s and after living in the States he invented these beautiful metal instruments like the Bow Chime and he also invented the Steel Cello which is a giant sail almost as big as a little occupant sailing boat. (Laughs) Yes, he's a wonderful poet of metal instruments.

Provokator.org: With Einstürzende Neubauten's "Alles Wieder Offen", the reaction to the sales seemed, as Danielle had mentioned, much more impressive than if you had gone through a record company. Did you expect this?

Alex Hacke: No, no. The whole thing was more a project, you know... An experiment and nothing has been true but yeah, it was quite exciting to find out that in the first couple of weeks we had sold more copies of "Alles Wieder Offen" than we had sold of "Perpetuum Mobile" until then. What that said to me was that instruments that buy the promotion or the propaganda and that we were able to tell the story on how we deal with the situation, the decline of the music business and with our approach and with our solutions to those problems and it certainly helped to spread the word that there is a new record.

Provokator.org: Would you continue to work this way for future recordings?

Alex Hacke: Right now we're not sure whether we will continue at all. We are taking a very extensive break. (Giggles)

Provokator.org: Understood. And will that have anything to do with the fact or the sense that the recent recording sounds almost as if coming full circle, as Danielle has mentioned?

Alex Hacke: No, I'm sure that if we... we have been working very intensively for

the past five years, you know, along with "Alles Wieder Offen" we also released nine other records. And we have been working continuously on other projects since 2002 and the project was divided in phases, so phase two started on the day that phase one shut down and phase three started on the day that phase two shut down. We never took any time off from the creative process so, I guess that once the death has settled we would be able to come up with new great ideas but right now we are all concentrated on different things.

Provokator.org: In conclusion, to speak about your cooperation with Danielle, three subjects of the chapters of 'The Ship of Fools' seem to have to do with a sort of respect of the sensual talents of women, with the dancing and the sensuality. Since you and Danielle have been married and started cooperating and collaborating, have you found that, maybe, you'd have to either defend or validate Danielle's work or just step away and not say anything in order for her to stand on her own because she was an independent artist before you had met and now that you are working collaboratively, sometimes is much harder for the, in this case the female artist, to be defined.

Alex Hacke: Well, **she is a great artist** and I'd have been collaborating with her, besides the fact that we are married but, of course, when you get the chance to filter your artistic output, as I have on my collaboration with a female, you know, is it true that women are very under represented even in the so-called progressive spheres as the art world, and there is still a lot to be done, like you can see on any group exhibition, or film festival, or music festival, it's all dominated by males and I think it's a great thing to be able to apply both filters to one's work, is something that I don't have the chance to do with any of my other projects so, it's great, really. I love doing that.



Provokator.org: Thank you very much Alex, by the way. Of all of these chapters, for example when Neubauten took the album to the fans, it was a bit of a gamble and you were breaking the rules that were set before, 'Of Sloth' [a chapter in Brant's Ship of Fools], you haven't been taking any breaks. Have you been learning any lessons yourself by repeat performances of 'The Ship of Fools' and it's topics?

Alex Hacke: Yeah. It is a great effort and cool because we are not only the captains and the navigators, we are the whole crew of that ship.

Provokator.org: Including the fools! (Laughs)

Alex Hacke: Yeah! If you have a crew of fools! (Laughs) There is a very small crew too and is quite a challenge to do the show but it's great, it's such an analogy for so many things, particularly in show business. Being in a band, putting on shows is like being on a ship, full stop. You have to have a bit of a sense of humor.

Provokator.org: I know that you have a really good sense of humor! (Laughs) I'm really looking forward to see you guys, when you come down and happy birthday by the way!

Alex Hacke: Thank you! Well, it will be my birthday when we meet.

Provokator.org: Thank you Alex, once again, for your time.

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