

Curator's Statement

**Caspar Stracke**

*Noise! 2010*

June 26, 2010

What do you associate with noise, when thinking strictly in visual representations? Visual noise is mostly associated with partialization, scrambling, indeterminacy, fractals—all in abstract imagery. De-tuned analog TV comes to mind as well, then—fashionably—chaos theory, patterns generation, plus hundreds of thousands ambitious effect filters that pulverize images and scramble pixel coordinates.

After making many glamorous appearances in music video culture over three decades visual noise lives on in DIY-style VJ culture. Yet, the aggressive vast multiplication of spectacular abstract moving patterns is nowadays inserted as eye candy in every possible visual outlet, flat screens and LED walls in public space, in any moving background of advertisements, on screen savers, eBooks and cellphone "skins". But, let's be honest, that did not turnout to be so bad (as it was predicted only a few years ago) We very efficiently filter out what we consider as visual pollution - at the same time we have also learned to bypass the well-known side effects of this very strategy - the prozak-esque callousness.

The program I curated for *Noise!* represents a kind of reset, a back-to-the-roots approach, looking back to the origin of cinema, for this program in particular at the origins of visual music on film. The selection of films also investigates on the meditative aspects of abstract moving imagery.

The film program begins with two works by two prominent avant-garde artists, Paul Sharits and Rose Lowder. Both pieces are silent as well and were produced in the same year, 1982. Their approaches to abstraction and visual meditation are highly individual, yet their *modi operandi* is almost the opposite—Whereas Sharits' piece *Bad Burns* was created by a technical accident in the film gate of his camera, Lowder's *Les Tournesols* animates nature in a meticulous calculated frame by frame approach.

The program makes another giant time leap right to the present, and continues with a film by Bruce McClure's *Three Leader Songs* from 1998/99, in which 16mm film leaders are sanded down with a 1/2" dremmel. The structure of circular scratches, including the edge of the film, comprise the optical soundtrack, which made audible by the projector's optical sound reader. The film program closes with *Citadel* (2009) a work by Kevin Medal featuring a very personal and unique approach to digital aesthetics and abstract moving imagery.

For the performance program, I invited a group of New York-based sound artists (Kamran Sadeghi, Zach Layton, and David Linton, who are known for integrating their own visuals into their live performance setting. For *Noise!*, these artists have been asked to perform a short set while "depriving" themselves of their primary medium, sound. In other words, to mediate their music or auditory concepts with visuals only and to perform in complete (or near) silence.