



Klaus Damm

visible music

contents

Klaus Damm	
artistic career	3
“visible music” –sound and image composition	
artistic concept and realization	6
selected recent works	
“Formant II – The Blue Sound” (2012)	10
Luminale 2010: “Phoenix” and “Ra” at Saint Batholomeus’ Cathedral Frankfurt (Kaiserdom)	16
“The Song of Phoenix” (2010)	17
“Ra” (2010)	23
“Space Curvature – Indigo” (2008)	29
“Temporal Interweaving – Yellow” (2007)	35
middle period works (excerpt)	
“Domani, a Bequest” (1994/2004/2006)	36
“September Moons – Poetic graphics” (1989/2004)	37
early work (excerpt)	
“Abstractions on the Golden Yellow Sky” (1976), “Fungal music” (1977), “Rose Garden” (1978)	38
contact	
.....	39
www.visible-music.de	



Klaus Damm

wholeness composed of sound and images

The integration of music, artistic designs, and spoken word in diverse creative forms is at the heart of Klaus Damm's artistic work. Since 1978, the sound and image artist born near Cologne in 1949 has been using computers as a tool for his art.

artistic development

Klaus Damm began his artistry in 1971 mainly with artistic and lyrical works while he was studying musicology and German studies in Bonn and subsequently in Bochum.

He further developed his artistic vision and craft at the Ruhr University Arts Centre under the tuition of the German informal painter Hans-Jürgen Schlieker.

Klaus Damm was trained as a composer at the Folkwang University of Music, Drama, and Dance in Essen. He started there as a student under the tuition of Nicolaus A. Huber in 1975. In 1978, he became the first ever composer to win the Folkwang award. He then went on to specialize in algorithmic composition and electronic music under Dirk Reith. His compositions were produced at the WDR (West German Broadcasting) and performed at New music centers. He became an committed participant on the board of the Essen Composers' Association and an active member of the Cologne Society for New music. His position has been documented by articles in specialist media and lectures.

After graduation, Klaus Damm initially focused on projects in the field of computer music within the scope of a research and development project backed by the Federal Ministry for Research and Technology. In collaboration with Dirk Reith, he also developed languages for algorithmic composition and electronic sound synthesis.



Klaus Damm

development beyond the “scene”

After 1985, Klaus Damm largely moved back from the avant-garde scene. The tendencies of contemporary art and music market appeared too far away from his own aesthetic and artistic visions.

Between 1986 and 1992 he was head of a music school near Bonn. During this time, he paved the way for two of his composition students to achieve national and international recognition.

In 1989, he took part in the Cologne performance of choreographer James Saunders' Dance Project 23, which was preceded by six weeks of intensive interdisciplinary work with Saunders and his team. This new artistic freedom prompted the “Septembermonde” poetic graphics with their associated compositions and dance interpretation. In 1992, he compiled texts and compositions from the seventies to produce the book “Domani, ein Nachlass” (“Domani, a Bequest”).

In 1993, Klaus Damm presented archaic landscapes as computer graphics in a solo exhibition at the Luisa Hausen Gallery in Euskirchen. He developed his own composition program for his musical during the private viewing of the exhibition. The works were first presented for the Bonn Art Award and later, in a revised version, at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2004.

Klaus Damm

ArtOfVision

Introspection dominated Klaus Damm's art until 1995. Through the founding of his "Agency for Communication and Design" in 1995, later renamed "ArtOfVision", he dedicated himself to humanistic and social challenges and assignments: corporate identity processes, authentic corporate communication – from concept and text through to design – as well as presentations and mediation.

Before this, he trained as a "certified public relations consultant". He wrote his thesis on the PR concept "Folkwang – Integrating the Arts". In 1995, Klaus Damm used these principles as a basis to draw up a development plan for the Folkwang-University in Essen. He also designed and provided text for the university's image brochure.

Time and again Klaus Damm has introduced creative approaches into corporate design processes. These were based on his visual works, which later merged into the design concept of his visiographs. Klaus Damm presented his image montages in a joint exhibition with sculptor Peter Schröder.

"visible music" – a new beginning

In 2003 Klaus Damm resumed his composition work and since 2007 has found an independent, condensed form of expression using sound and images. Unaffected by the demands of cultural market trends, he has developed his interdisciplinary concept of "visible music".

After years of retreat, Klaus Damm reintroduced himself to the public as a composer and artist with the premiere of the sound/image visiograph "Im Lied des Phoenix" ("The Song of the Phoenix") at Frankfurt Saint Bartholomeus' Cathedral (Kaiserdom) and an accompanying solo exhibition during Luminale 2010.

visible music – sound and image

archetypal association contexts of sound and image

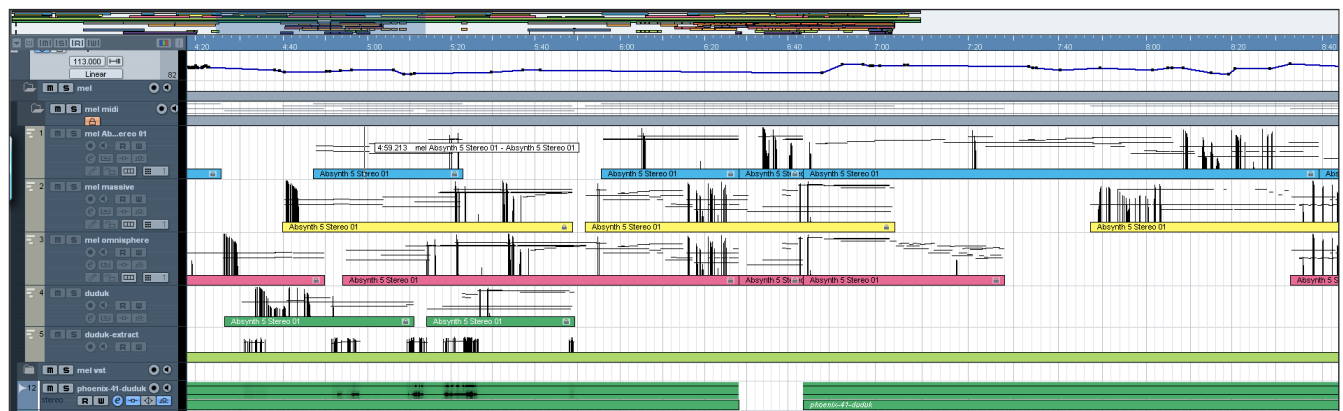
The surface structure of Klaus Damm's works offers something direct and tangible in all media – echoes of physicality, frugal, or crystalline structures, elementary rhythmic and melodic output cells, and spatial sound forms. These elements combine deeper in the structure to become polyphonically interwoven archetypal association contexts – orbiting universes beyond time. Both strange and familiar worlds thus emerge revealing inward paths to completeness.

sound composition

Sound, rhythm, and melody cells are modulated to create various design forms. A single cell therefore becomes the starting point for moving surfaces, percussive stops, linear networks, substructures, and lights. New structures emerge: rhythmically and metrically structured or amorphous, melodically comprehensible or interwoven into turbulent hyperspace.

In this way, on the design level, different cell variants run canon-like into parallel layers. These then break up again into groups which are in turn reinterpreted temporally by expansion, compression, cuts, and permutations and sonically by filter and modulation processes, spatial positioning, and layer displacement.

During montage and mixing, cross-layer and group (inter) modulation and sound expansion processes result in a static whole with structures moving within themselves from which simple design elements are modeled on the surface.



visible music – visiographs

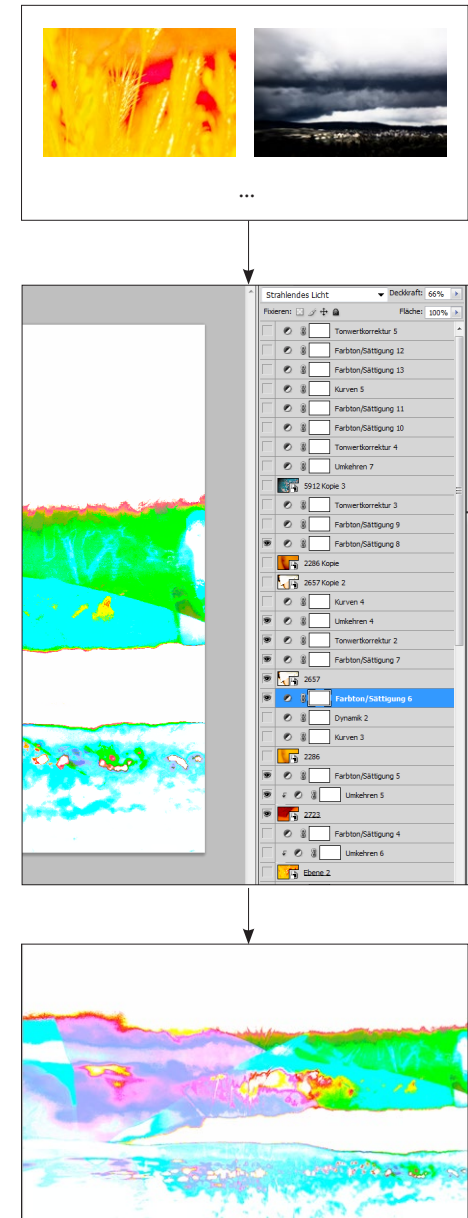
image composition

Klaus Damm has developed his own image composition method in the form of “visiographs”: he uses a complex montage technique to condense his input photographic materials to their emotional and creative core.

For Klaus Damm, stylization begins with taking photographs and the individual choice of perspective, lens, focus, and lighting scenarios. It continues with RAW developing where he abstractly creates stylized versions. He superimposes these to form multiple layers with expressive dimensions from other motifs. Through numerous “offsets” and modified “attitudinal levels”, Klaus Damm creates a wide spectrum of complex energy scenarios which form part of a concise pictorial language.

Using this basic structure, Klaus Damm creates “image clouds” of up to several hundred associated visiographs. He categorizes these based on parameters relating to composition and expression with which he forms groups over parameter intersections.

These allow the artist to work with defined structural processes in series of visiographs – produced as large prints under acrylic as image sequences in graphic reproduction portfolios and ultimately as input materials for moving image structures.



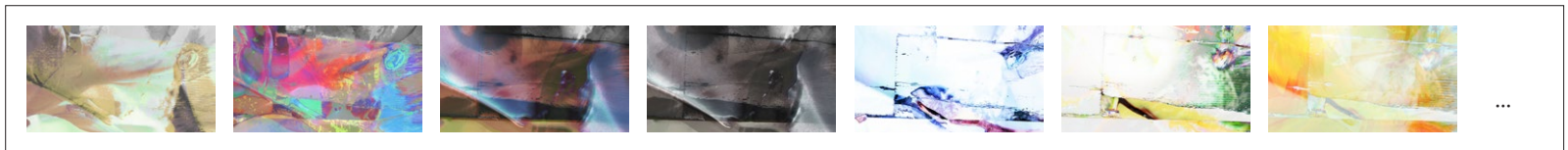
visible music – video-visiographs

moving image composition

Klaus Damm composes series from the image cloud like musical elements creating moving image structures known as “video visiographs”. Transitions between visiographs, which are interrelated in different ways, provide the basis for movement as well as direct dynamic intervention in the layer structure of the visiographs.

Klaus Damm applies structural processes similar to “parameter counterpoint” from the music of Webern serialism. Here, a parameter such as chromaticity can undergo a specific slow transformation process, while other parameters such as planarity or structural division follow other processes with different speed structures.

Some layers are also superimposed in the moving image composition using templates formed from image structures. Structural differentiation arises through interventions in temporal and transitional processes, interchange, offsetting modes, changes in opacity, and other processes which Klaus Damm uses to stock his virtual pallet with a broad spectrum of design forms and expressive forms.



Stills from „Im Lied des Phoenix“

visible music – merging

sound and image composition

Klaus Damm's visiographs feature a cross-media, polyphonic relationship between sound and image, a composed tension with moments of convergence and distance between the layers. His compositional principles are based on new music post-serial processes and are applied in equal measure to music and image layers. This whole provides a dense synaesthetic perception of sound and image compositions.

unity in diversity

Klaus Damm's compositions transcend barriers between art sectors and are designed to be performed collectively or individually. At the same time, music and image layers are independent works in their own right, albeit composed in relation to one another – a metaphor for a whole, whose parts – although true in themselves – always only convey a certain perspective on a more all-embracing truth. This in itself constitutes dynamic potential for an endless sound and image cosmos representing unity from vibrant diversity – both static and growing – a “glass bead game”.

Formant II – Der Blaue Klang (The Blue Sound)

creative forms

music (2009)

Electronic music – 19 min 33 sec

visiographs

Series of images, each 55.1 x 82.7 in

Lumaprint under acrylic glass, limited and signed edition

video-visiograph (2012)

Sound and image composition – 20 min 50 sec

in the beginning there was sound

The beginning of John's Gospel identifies the essence of many religions and spiritual interpretations of life in different codifications. Language remains limited here by its inherent restrictions. Only through the existential experience of the implied do the metaphors used provide the dimension of understood truth.

To access this experience, I have translated my adaptation of the original wording through “sound” and compositional metaphors to enable the understanding of my interpretation of this existential experience in a holistic way:

Synchronicities in the visual and acoustic events in parallel states penetrate one another: slow, subtle changes in different processes adapted to different manifestations of the substance (Canon per Augmentationem) create a cosmos of spacious cycles. Sound and vision reflect different prism-like views broken down on a wholeness, which is perceptible only in segments.

In Part II of the composition, a language-derived abstraction manifests itself first in the modulated sound of a discourse, then through the early archaic encrypted lines, and lastly up to the muted final fade of the source text; all while the music is more and more condensed on a core of sound-pulses.

ॐ अनशब्दो भारो हे क्लान्तो

In the beginning was Sound,
and the Sound was with God,
and the Sound was God.
He was in the beginning with God.

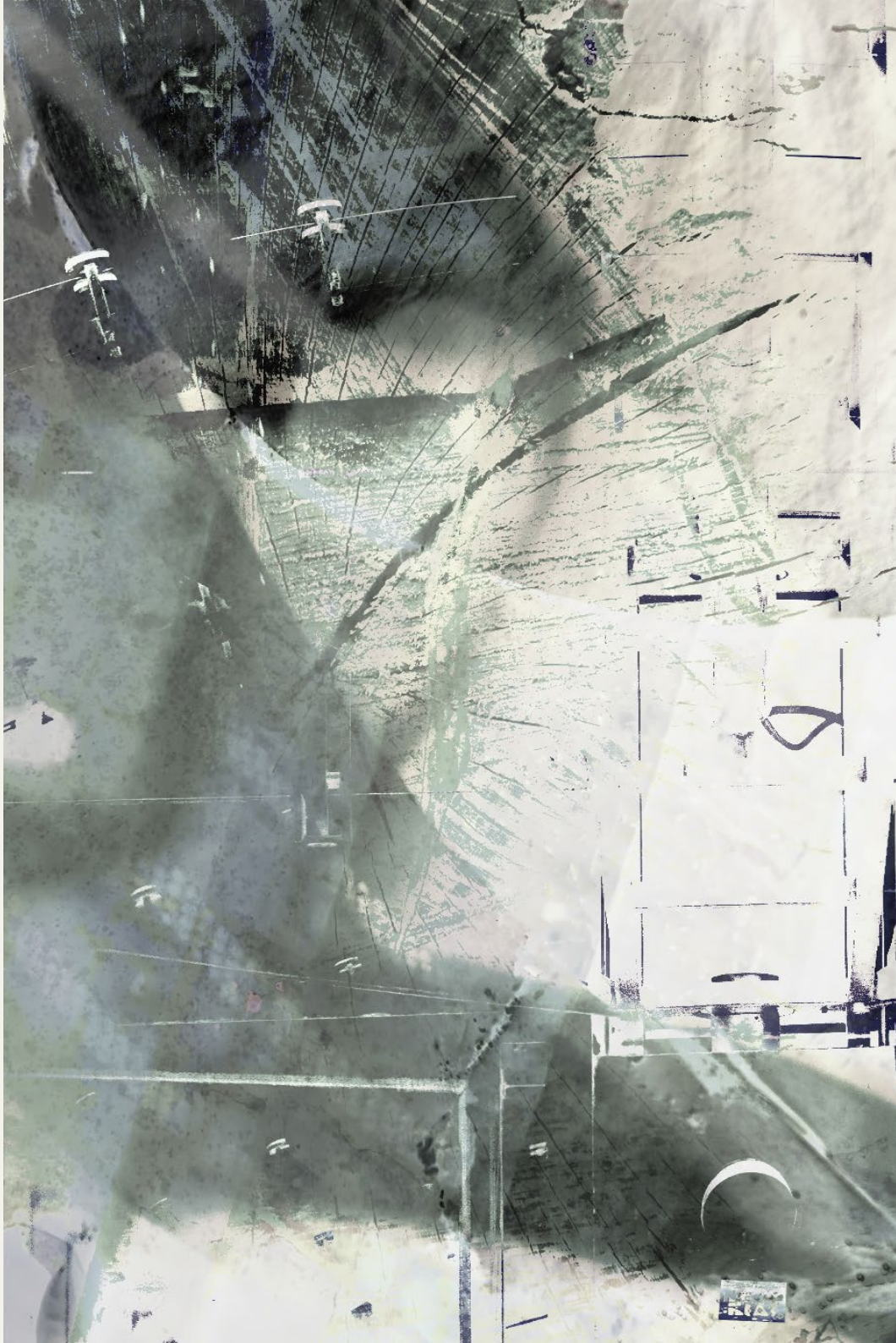
All things were made through Him,
and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.

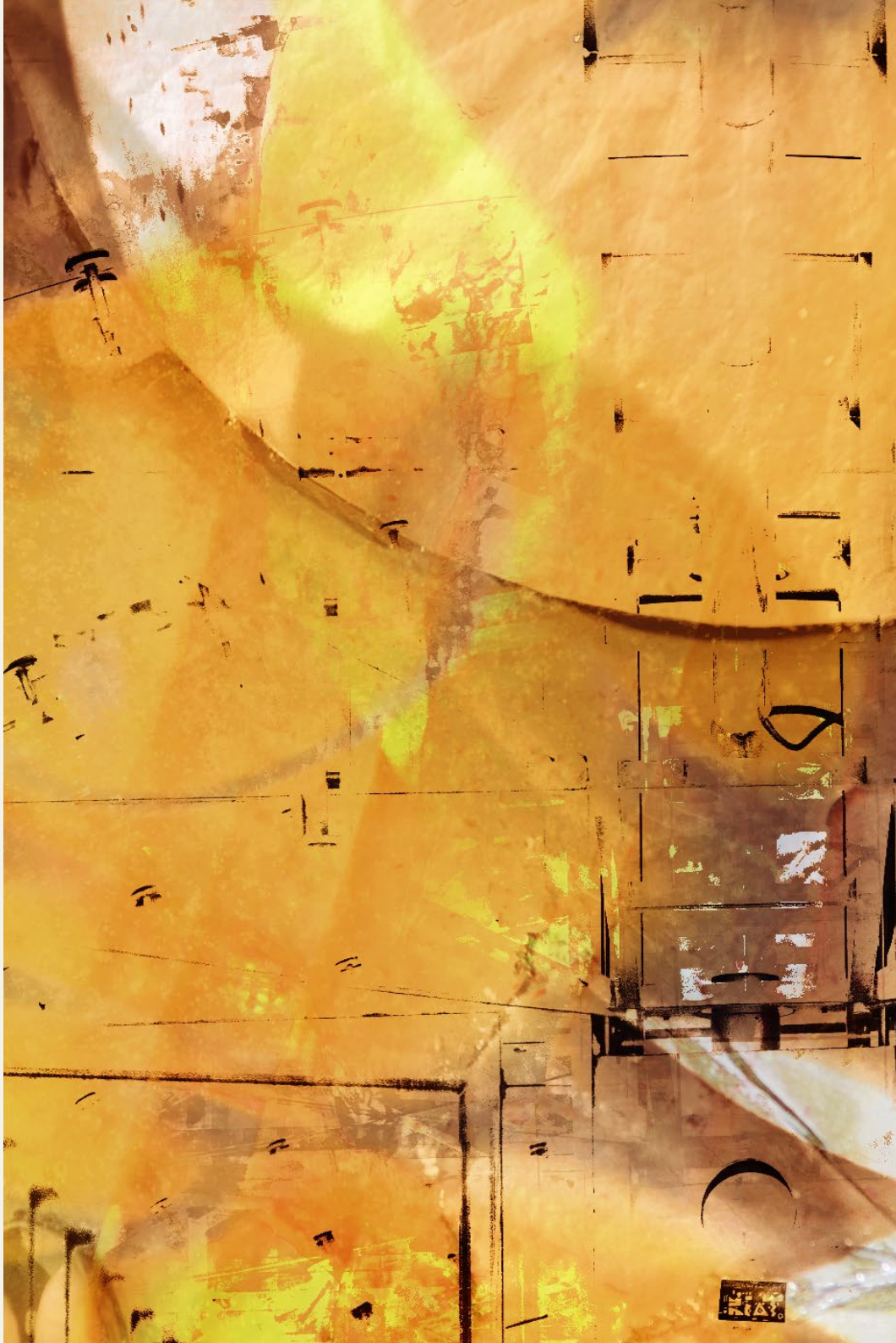
(from John's Gospel 1,1)



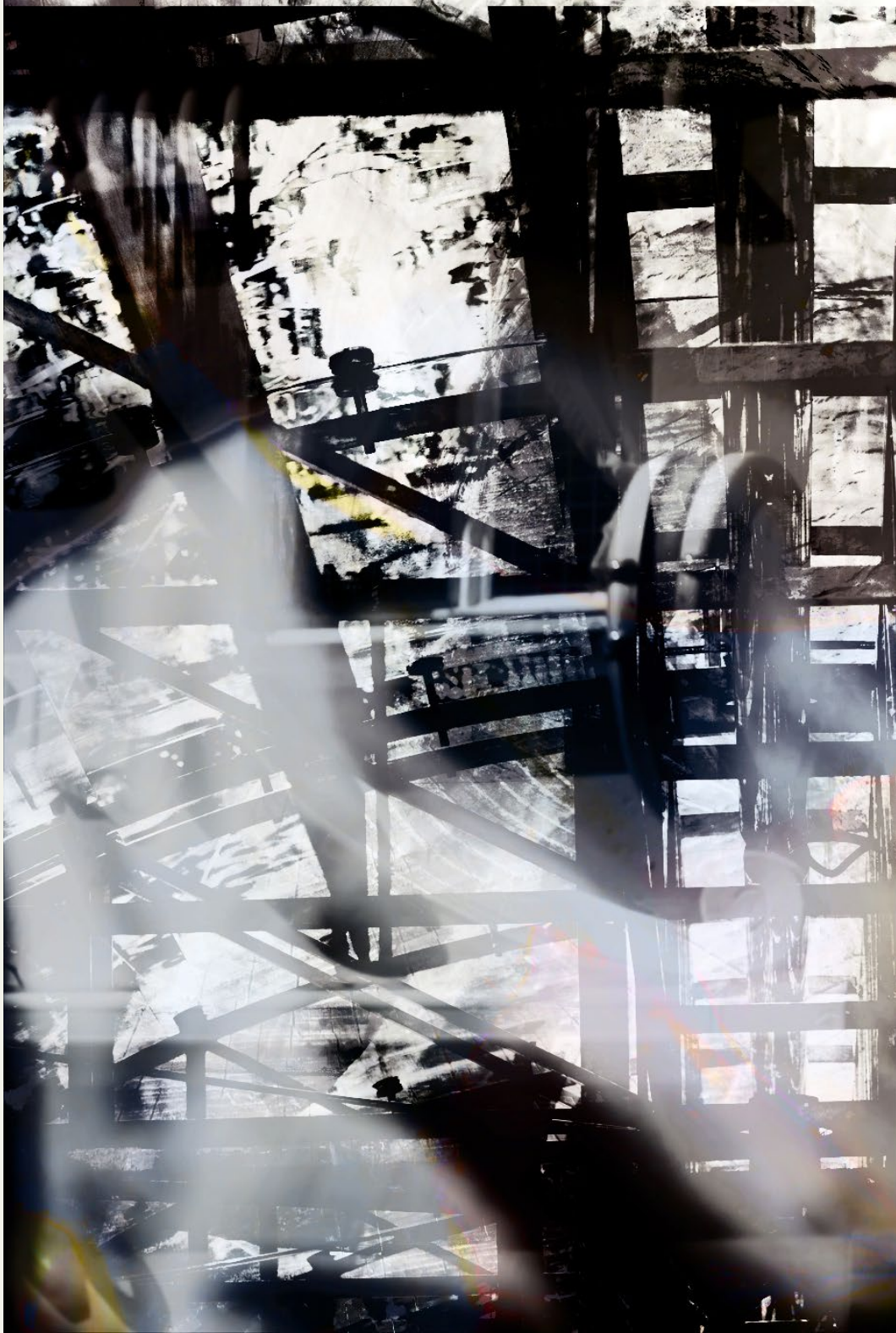
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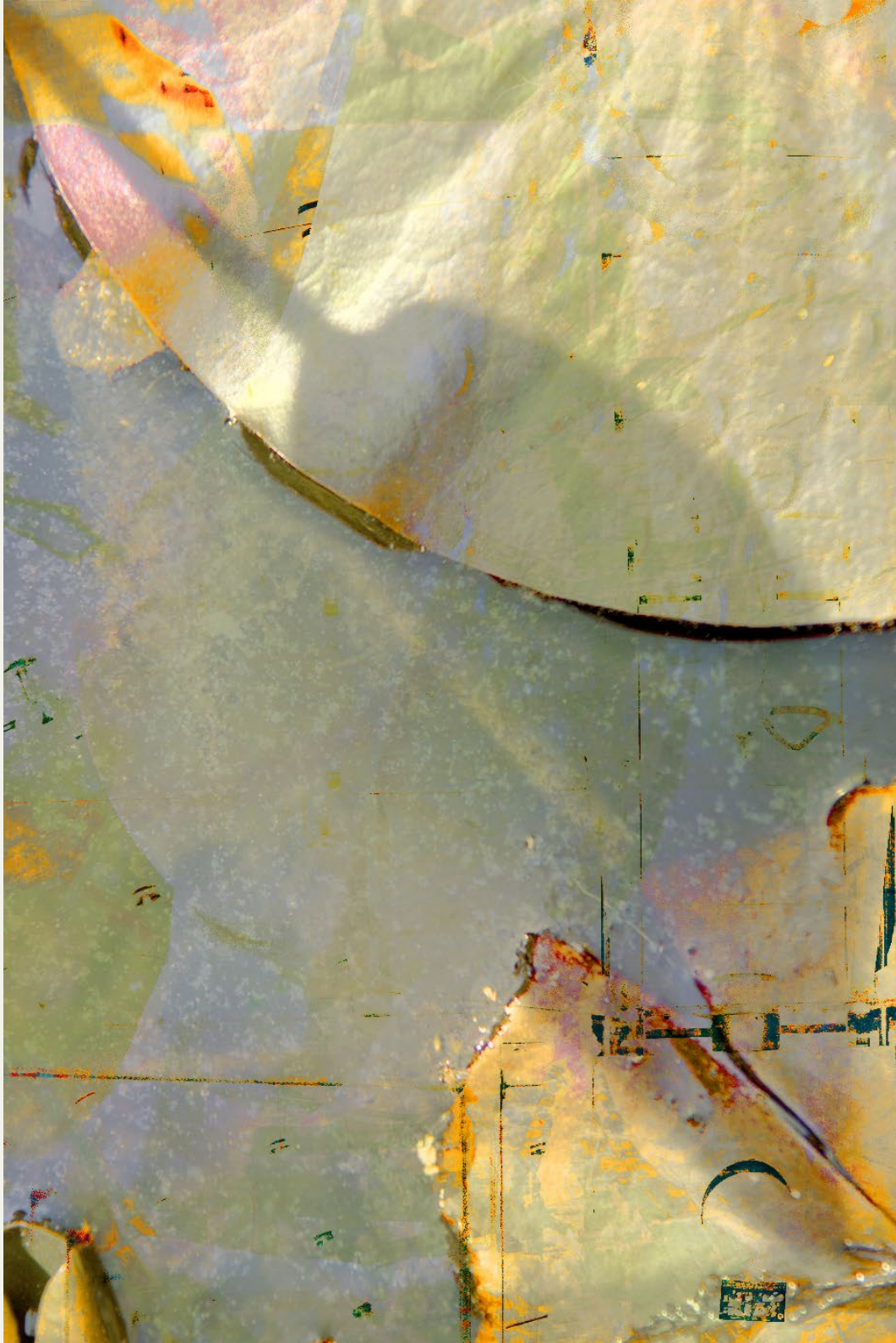
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Luminale 2010: “Phoenix” and “Ra”

the Luminale

An international meta-festival of light culture in Frankfurt and the surrounding area, the Luminale offers a platform for artists, architects, and light designers which attracts interest throughout the world.

sound and image compositions in a sacred space

During the 2010 Luminale festival, the Frankfurt Saint Bartholomeus' Cathedral (Kaiserdom) provided Klaus Damm's synaesthetic art consisting of sound and images with a sacred backdrop. Energy – generated by shape and colors somewhere between dream and reality, pervaded by echoes of organic elements combined with archaic electronic music from both strange and familiar worlds. This reveals inward paths to completeness.

The performance of Klaus Damm's sound and image compositions “Im Lied des Phoenix” (20') und “Ra” (10') shone over the whole width of the choir during the five days of the festival each evening three times the performance of the sound and image compositions “Im Lied des Phoenix” (20') and “Ra” (10') . In the neighboring “Haus am Dom” Klaus Damm presented a series of visiographs corresponding to the compositions premiered in this context.

The project was kindly supported by  **satis&fy** www.satis-fy.com, who presented the event technology, and by ArtOfVision

www.artofvision.de



video installation at the cathedral
exhibition at „Haus am Dom“

© Fotos: Christine Fehrenbach, Frankfurt a. M.

Im Lied des Phoenix (the Song of Phoenix)

creative forms

music (2010)

Electronic music – 19 min 50 sec

visiographs

Series of images, each 82.7 x 55.1 in

Lumaprint under acrylic glass, limited and signed edition

Exhibition: April 11 to April 16, 2010, at the “Haus am Dom”, Frankfurt

video-visiograph (2010)

Sound and image composition (dedicated to Lu.) – 19 min 50 sec

Premiered on April 11, 2010, at Saint Batholomeus’ Cathedral Frankfurt (Kaiserdom)

Performed during Luminale 2010: April 11–16, three times a day

growth and decay

The metaphor of the phoenix relates to the cycle of growth and decay. Transience harbors birth, birth carries within it the roots of decay and death leads to resurrection as a new dimension of existence. The end and new beginning merge into a transformation point. Its energetic quality transcends boundaries.

Life situations – even those which appear desperate or destructive - harbor the seeds of a new, more fulfilled life opportunity and inner growth from which visions can unfurl, even externally. However, even this is made relative in the wider context of life as just a different way of looking at a whole. Like a tree observed from different sides, various shapes emerge which nevertheless refer to the same substance. The observer never perceives the various sides simultaneously. He nevertheless observes the tree as a whole. The composition technique reflects this view.

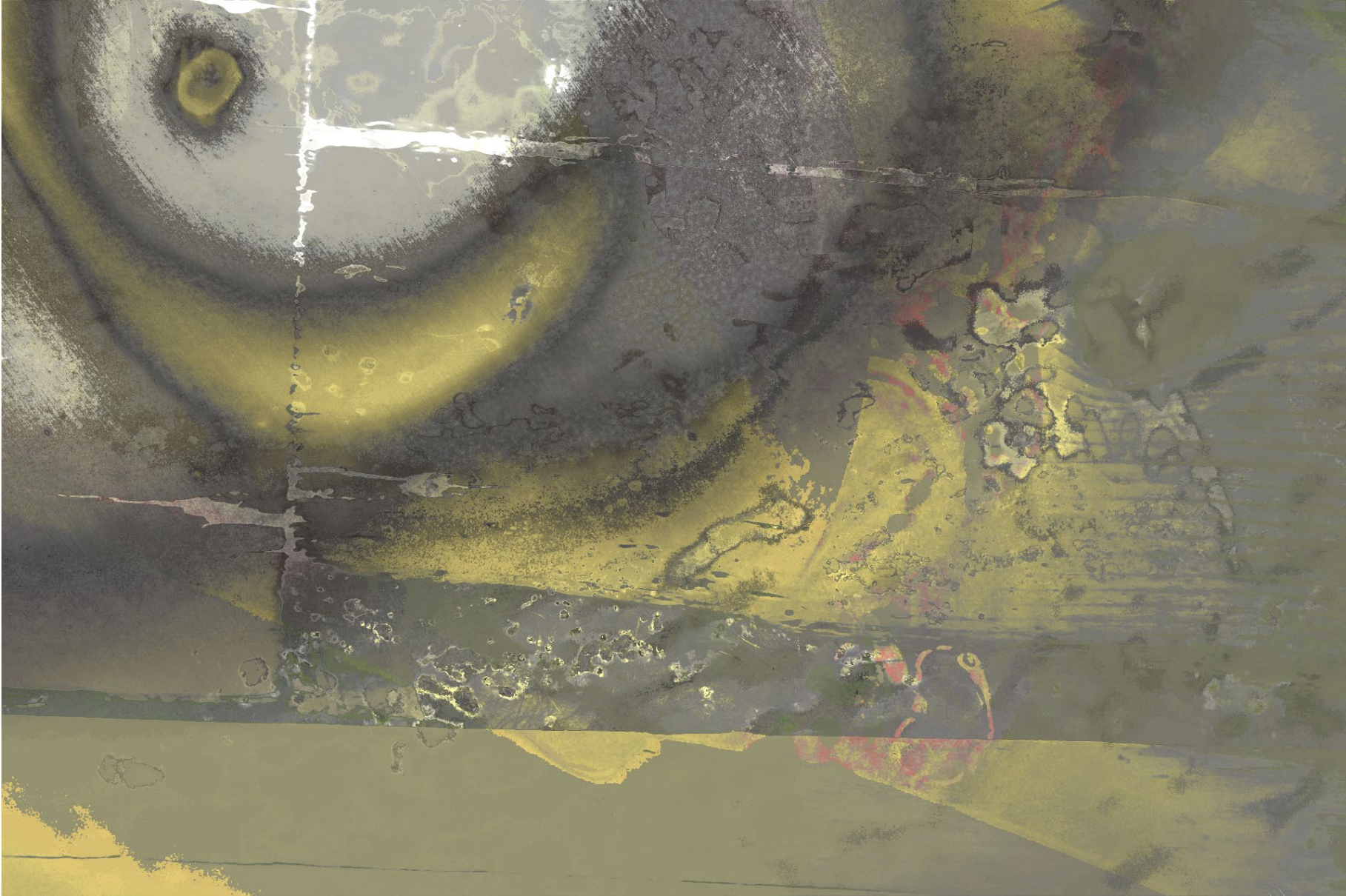
Thus in the images of the video visiograph “The Song of the Phoenix”, destructive and decaying elements are linked with newly forming beauty and love as if ultimately inseparable.



im_lied_des_phoenix_5873_0390



im_lied_des_phoenix_5873_0399



im_lied_des_phoenix_5873_0116



im_lied_des_phoenix_5873_0237



im_lied_des_phoenix_5873_0405

creative forms

music (2010)

Electronic music – 9 min 55 sec

visiographs

Series of images, each 82.7 x 55.1 in

Lumaprint under acrylic glass, limited and signed edition

Exhibition: April 11 to April 16, 2010, at the “Haus am Dom”, Frankfurt

video-visiograph (2010)

Sound and image composition (dedicated to Lu.) – 9 min 55 sec

Premiered on April 11, 2010, at Saint Batholomeus’ Cathedral Frankfurt (Kaiserdom)

Performed during Luminale 2010: April 11–16, three times a day

infinite finiteness

The landscape of a distant world in the light of its mysterious sun – accompanied by a quiet melody on an archaic wind instrument. Associations of plants, stones, elements of landscapes, and corporeal codes merge and bond with abstract energy images of shape and color.

Transformation processes lasting thousands of years intensify as if speeded up from the perspective of time over time. Every state blooms, decays, and is recreated in a transformed form.

In the virtually static music, gestural and ethnic echoes are combined with modulated, electronic soundscapes. Developments and structural processes are perceived in a similar way to entities made of changing perspectives moving within themselves – experiences of a universal existence.



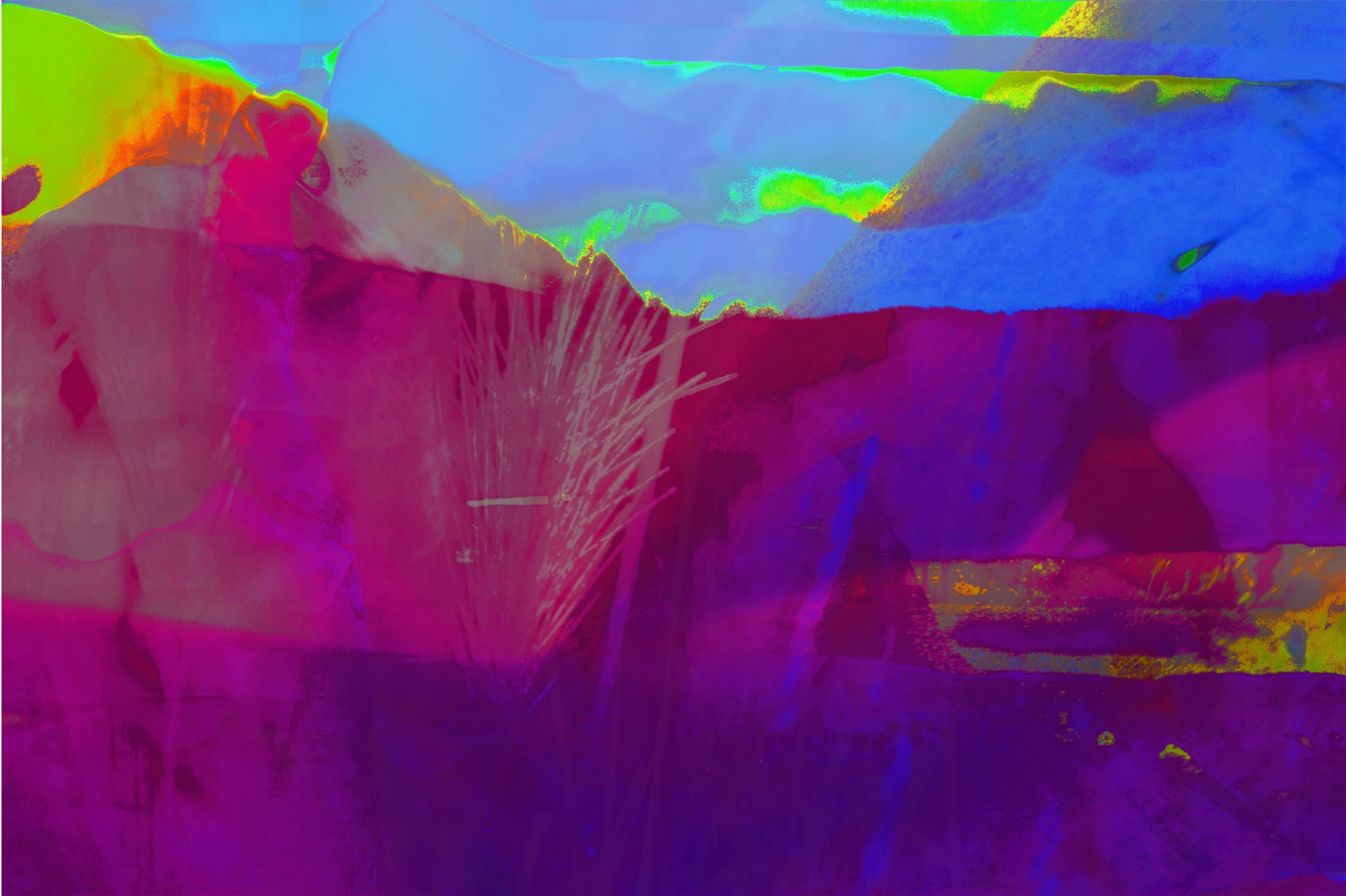
ra_5912_0167



ra_5912_0062



ra_5912_0269



ra_5912_0308



ra_5912_0260

Raumkrümmung – Indigo (Space Curvature – Indigo)

creative forms

music (2008)

Electronic music – 10 min 30 sec

visiographs

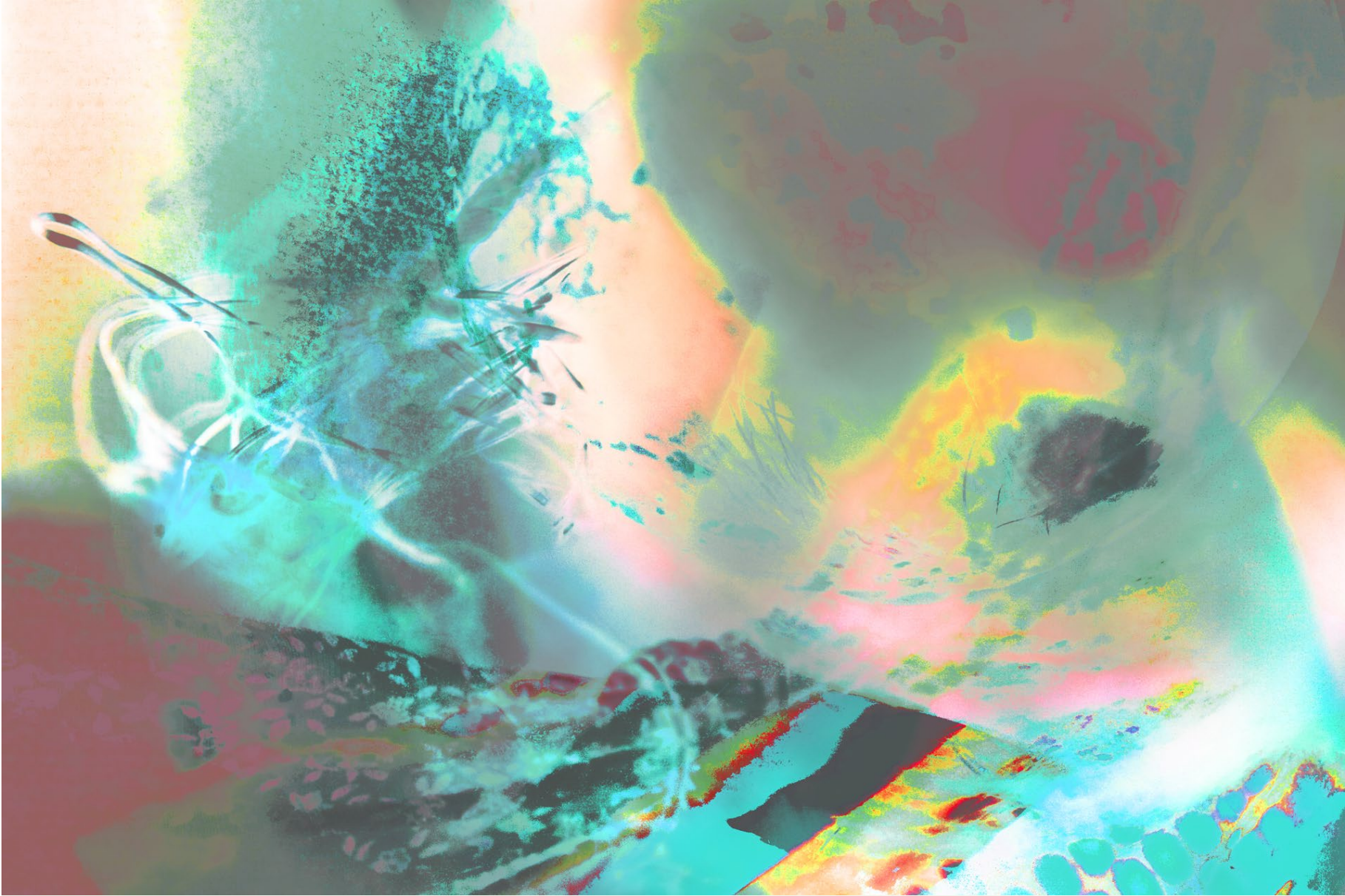
Series of images, each 82.7 x 55.1 in

Lumaprint under acrylic glass, limited and signed edition

on the perception of curved space

Three-dimensional space and time combine to create four-dimensional space-time. All forms of energy warp space-time. “Straight lines” become lines of extreme distance. Space-time has only an inner and no outer curvature – a concept from the general theory of relativity, which blows apart the notions we have learned from the inside and outside.

Through a process of immersion in nested experience spaces, “Raumkrümmung – Indigo” seeks to lead the composition holistically to a notion of the size of this phenomenon – as an expansion of our perception into another dimension.



raumkrümmung_0038_0013



raumkrümmung_0944_0006



raumkrümmung_0038_0191



raumkrümmung_0038_0267



raumkrümmung_0038_0229

Zeitverwebung – Gelb (Temporal Interweaving – Yellow)

creative forms

music (2007)

Electronic music – 12 min 50 sec

time in time

The notion of time progressing in a linear fashion from past to future enables us to deal with time in a way which is comprehensible and compatible with everyday life. However, this model is a simplification of the ongoing reality. The fact that “our” time is merely a linear projection of a multi-dimensional phenomenon in which an infinite number of realities coexist alongside each other and are interrelated is taken for granted in the models of quantum physics. However, this is generally beyond individuals’ direct experience.

“Zeitverwebung – Gelb” leads to subtle perceptual dimensions in which the logic of time perception appears to be increasingly overridden and can therefore lead to an intuitive experience of the interwoven time complex.

middle period works (excerpt)

Domani, ein Nachlass (Domani, a bequest) (1994/2004/2006)



Using the form of a “bequest”, Klaus Damm has created a genre for his portrait of the artist figure “Domani”, which enables him to incorporate a wide variety of expressive forms (verse, song, fantasy, fairy tale, and essay) into a single dramaturgy by arranging fictitious sources.

By juxtaposing various stylistic devices and layers of speech modelled on the montage techniques of Gustav Mahler, the author has developed a virtually symphonic form. Familiar speech gestures are modulated to become alien content, speech fragments break up, and meta-context is produced from incoherency.

Klaus Damm lays down the base lines for the character of Domani from the outset with a motto and self-portrait and this is further developed in the introductory poems. The subsequent “3 songs” reflect a retrograde progression of the poems. The sweeping fantasy „Gehirnsprengung“ (“Brain Explosion”) casts light on the absurd passages of the first part (“Ares”, “Aphorisms”) while the fairy tale bundles the more lyrical elements back together in a self-contained form. Finally, the “publisher’s epilogue” refers back to the introductory quotation by Alexander Herbrich.

realization

Text, music, and graphics are based on work by Klaus Damm from 1971 to 1974, which he compiled in 1994 to form a fictional bequest.

The second redesigned edition was published in 2004 in Klaus Damm’s “edition xsynart”. It was presented at the 2004 Frankfurt Book Fair with ISBN number 3-9809422-2-8. The author produced a third grafically revised edition in 2006.



Extract from „Domani“, 3rd edition

middle period works

Septembermonde (September Moons) – poetic graphics (1989/2004)

Klaus Damm created a variable multi-media form for his “Septembermonde” (1989) cycle of poems. With written words as graphical raw materials, he designed a sequential image composition which visually complements the text. Klaus Damm composed an electronic musical interpretation for the parts of the cycle entitled “Schritte” (“Steps”) and “Grenze” (“Border”). He adapted this for dance with Cologne-based dancer Isabel Bartenstein.

Works in various media are stand-alone pieces and at the same time complement one another. The book form thus allows observers to feel their way into texts and graphics in their own time. In contrast, the form of the silent video installation structures the observation time for images as a composed dimension. Similarly, the music stands alone as a two-movement electronic composition. It can also be interpreted reciprocally with the appropriate parts of the synchronized video installation.

In 2004, the new edition was recomposed as part of the “edition xsynart”. Graphics are left in the electronic graphics language used at the time they were developed in 1989, the technical possibilities of which have impacted on design concepts through material reduction, with four-color palettes per image, a total spectrum of only 16 colors and 320 x 200 pixels.

realization

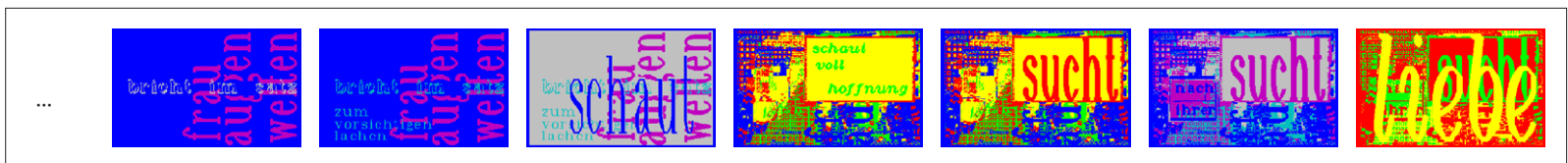
The first edition was entered by Klaus Damm for the Bonn Art Award in 1990 and exhibited there. He created the music for the poems “Schritte” (“Steps”) and “Grenze” (“Border”) in his algorithmic composition language “SG2” in 1989.

In 2004, a second redesigned edition was published in his “edition xsynart”. It was presented at the 2004 Frankfurt Book Fair with ISBN number 3-9809422-0-1.

m u t

große frau mit braunen augen
wagt die welten zu bestaunen,
zu bewegen
bricht im satz zum vorsichtigen lachen,
schaut,
schaut voll hoffnung, sucht
nach ihrer liebe.

„mut“ from „Septembermonde“



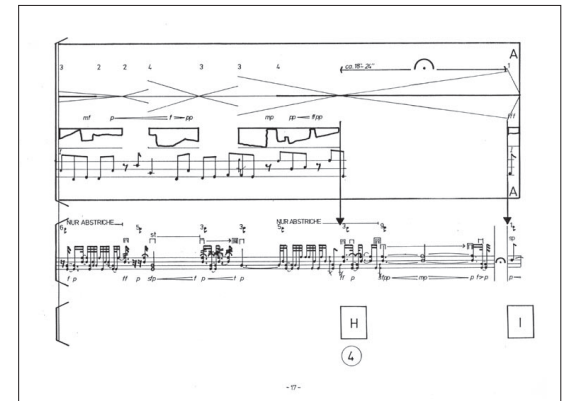
early work (excerpt)

Abstrakta am goldgelben Himmel (1976) (Abstractions on the Golden Yellow Sky)

For 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones and drums – 7 min 20 sec
premiered in Darmstadt in 1976, WDR production 1978, vinyl AUL 30 430 SF

Pilzmusik (1977) (Fungal music)

For flute, viola and electronic sound modulation – 2 movements, 12 min 40 sec
premiered in Essen in 1977, WDR production 1978



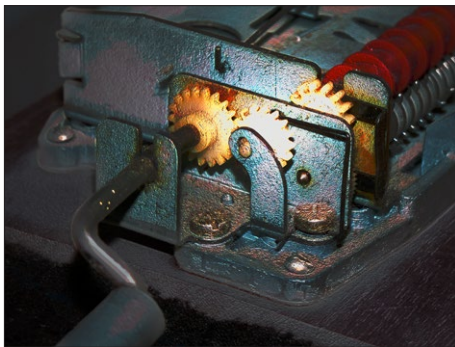
„Pilzmusik“, score page from the 2nd movement

Rosengarten (1978) (Rose Garden)

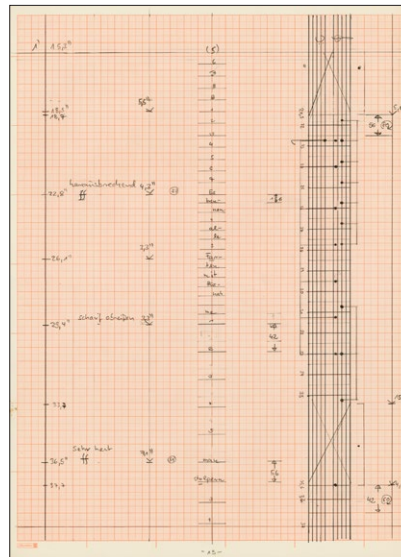
Audio drama with a narrator, music box, and electronic sounds – 3 movements, 17 min 34 sec

Concert version premiered in Cologne in 1979

WDR production 1978 with Ursula Cantieni (narrator) und Klaus Damm (programmable music box), first broadcast May 23, 1979



„Rosengarten“,
music Box controlled by punched cars
(above), manuscript page (right)



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