



Hello Micha

Hi Lisa!

Thanks for your questions. Looking forward to see the interview at space-ibiza.com!

You graduated from the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, is it fair to say that the surrounding liberal Dutch culture had an impact on your early artistic inklings?

Of course, for young Dutch artist Amsterdam is the place to be. In the time I was studying at the Rietveld there still was the squatter movement and there were lots of possibilities for showing your work or getting together in alternative spaces, and artist run initiatives in squads. This was a time with space for underground culture, and that was very inspiring. The liberal mindset of that culture was a good breeding ground for art that was rebellious and free.

You had a dream of contemporary art that was way ahead of its time in the late 1980's and obviously poured this vision into your own company (Metadreams) in 2001, did you also envisage your success at that time?

No. Although every artist probably wants to be successful, wanting to be successful should never be the main drive of your work. I was just happy doing what I loved, so I could put a lot of energy in my work. In the end if you love what you do, and do what you love it will always pay off.

You are a VJ pioneer! How does it feel to know that a major talking point of the WMC in Miami this year will be the first DJ deck that allows manipulation of video, the Pioneer DVJ-X1? You were doing this back in 1988; do you imagine DJing will become more interactive and dazzling in the next year or so?

It's great to see how big VJing has become over the years. Really cool also to see that companies are coming out with new equipment to facilitate a bigger growth. We are living in a multi-media age, so we can't live on music alone anymore. Visuals will become an integral part of electronic culture, and in the future DJ's will become Media Jockey's

How has VJing evolved in 2004 for you from the psychedelic 'summer of love' type graphics with day-glo trance music as accompaniment, and do you still do events?

VJing has become massive. Last year I did an 8 hour set with 'Tiesto in Concert'- The world's first stadium concert for one DJ. There were 20.000 people, and I was working with a huge LED screen that is as bright as the lasers. For these big events VJing is an important communicative element to bring the people together. In terms of style things get more sophisticated. Because of faster computers more complex 3D animations are possible, and the usage of our own software mixer 'Videoflux' which we have developed in the past 5 years, makes the mixing so much more advanced. It's now much easier to switch and mix through various clips so the interaction with the music becomes much tighter and the shows look a lot better.

What happened during your 'Blue Period,' were you inspired by Pablo Picasso or was it something to do with the lady Claudia who appears in your art?

'Blue Period' obviously refers to Picasso's series that he painted as a young artist. As a sort of joke as well. I made that series around 1990, and it has a very limited pallet in blue hues. I was working as a commercial paintbox operator in the day time to be able to work with the most advanced computer of that time, and was doing advertisement all day. Constantly making things more beautiful then they are, and telling lies for the advertisement industry. For my free work I wanted to stay away from that aesthetic at

the time. The works from 'Blue Period' are very layered and moody. Composed of samples of 'cultural fall-out'. It was the time of the Gulf War, and Dark Techno.

In your own work topics of peace, love, happiness, drugs, popular culture, icons, idols, cartoons, fetishes and beautiful women deal with our cultural obsession with physical beauty, manipulation and the result of a new religion made of false values, and entertainment. Your messages are powerful – Do you think our society is sick?

Yes our society is sick. But that doesn't mean we have to be. From the media and the governments there seems to be a constant pressure to conform ourselves to be mindless consumers and tax payers, to pray the mantra of capitalism. We should never forget we are free however, to create our own reality and value systems, which is what a lot of early house culture was all about.

Your clients have included Coca Cola, McDonald's, Swatch, Heineken, BMG, Marlboro, ID&T, Samsung, Phillips and loads more... Is it ever difficult to mix business on this scale with true art derived from the heart?

It can be really difficult, but then again, I don't take any assignment that I'm offered. Most of the time these brands come to me because they want a 'hip' image. So then I can push the envelope and 'inject' some different content in their identity. I also try to talk to them and tell them they should transform their strategy to become 'good company', to be closer to their consumers and do community projects. Give back to the people instead of shamelessly enriching themselves. I think in the future companies will be judged on that. For my first Coca-Cola commercial I managed to put in a guy wearing a Che Guevara T-shirt, a girl in a 'Make Love, Not War' T-shirt (just before the war in Iraq), and girls licking each others faces. The commercial was sold to 25 countries, a lot in South- and Central America too. It's fun to stretch the image of a company in directions they never would imagine, to sort of pile your own layer of meaning on top of theirs. Also by doing commercial assignments I can finance my own art, and am not dependent on government subsidies, which gives me more freedom.

You have a rare combination of philosophic and creative elements together with a scientific, mathematical mind to apply this artistic flair to software programs and so forth, can you be a natural at both branches of learning?

I'm a really 'alpha' type of guy, never good at math & physics at school. But slowly I learned to understand the computer and software by working a lot with it. Now I think you should never limit your idea about being alpha/beta. It's very interesting to try to combine and develop both sides.

What artists (past or present) visual and/or audio wise can you personally relate to?

I really like the early days of modern art when everything still had to be discovered. This was a time of such innovation. I like surrealist and dadaist painters for their attitude and playfulness, particularly Max Ernst, Picabia, Man Ray. I like Dali, whom I think was the first 'Pop' artist, Andy Warhol for further integrating art and everyday life, Joseph Beuys for his idea of a 'social skulptur', and Nam June Paik for his playful technology. People from the sixties, like Ken Kesey, Timothy Leary and Terence McKenna also inspired me. I was inspired by the Do It Yourself ethic from Punk, and early House and I'm always inspired by music which is a great passion in my life.

What do you think of our kinky taste in the UK for shock art a la Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin over the past decade?

Although I really like some of the 'Brit Art' and think it's sincere, I also think it's one of the best marketed art-movements in the history of art. Charles Saatchi (the advertisement mogul) managed to completely hype and market the scene with money, acquisitions, press and shows. And it seems to work:) The attempt to push it into the 'eternal value' sort of range, like he is doing in the set and setting of the new Saatchi museum on the Thames doesn't do the work so much good sometimes. It seems a bit 'over-important' in contrast with the content of the work.

You've said previously that night clubs are "where the new spiritual background is and where art is happening now, instead of the church it's the club. The house of love..." Should we therefore be turning the Tate into a night club or clubs into galleries?

I certainly would like museums to be more swinging, and clubs to be more arty :)
Cross-over culture is where it's at !

You first brought VJ'ing to Ibiza in 1997, have you been back since?

Every year. Sometimes for a short trip with some performances, sometimes for 3 months like in 1999 when we were organizing 'Club Love' at KM5 for the whole season, doing projections in the garden and DJ's inside. Although clubbing gets more and more commercial on Ibiza, like anywhere in the world, it's still a great island with a great vibe that I love to visit again and again.

Do you have any more projects or exciting new stuff to mention here to our readers?

'Videoflux', our VJ mixing software will be released this spring and available for the VJ community from www.videoflux.com . I'm really proud how good the program has become.

I've been working on a big Hollywood movie as the designer of the animated transitions and titles. It's coming out the 16th of June, and it's called 'Around the World in 80 Days'. I will be working on a new series of artworks, and of course I will on Ibiza☺

Many thanks!