

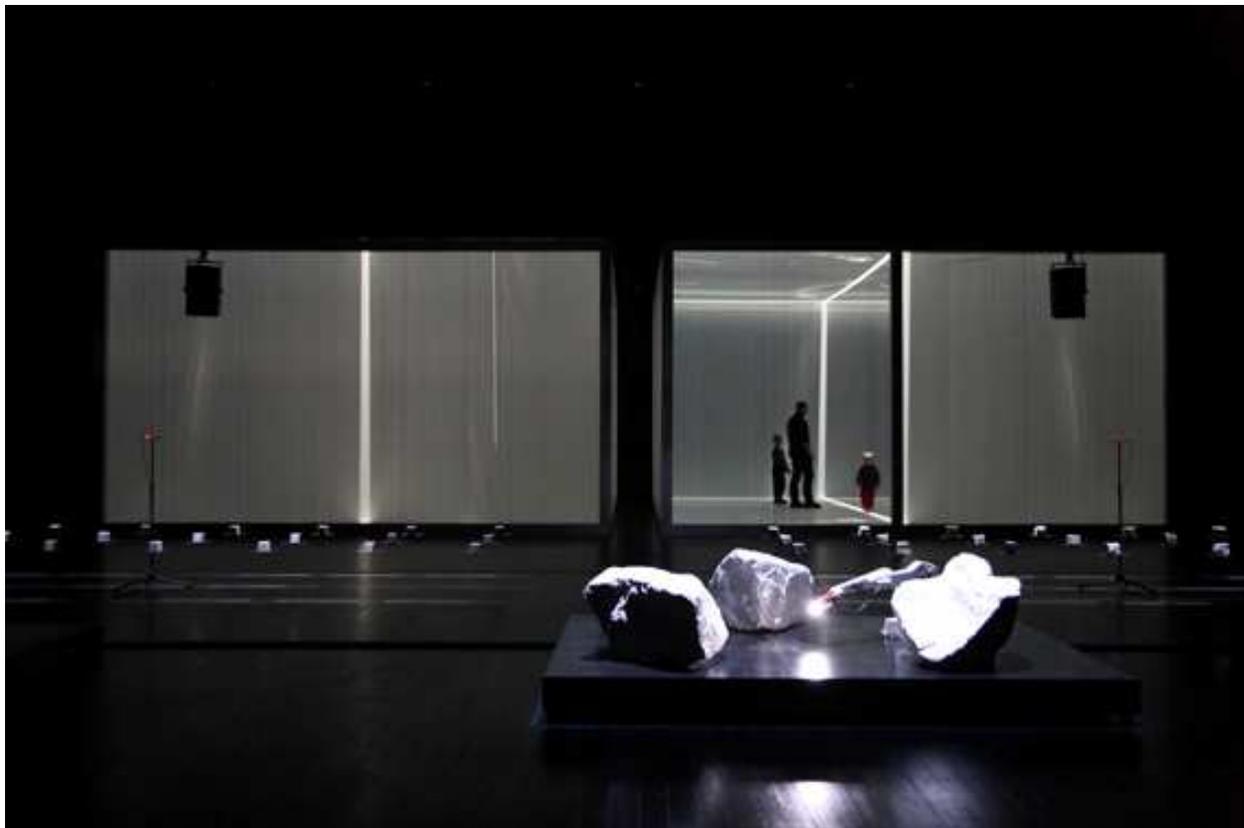
Yamaguchi, 11. 11. 2010

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

carsten nicolai + marko peljhan

POLAR^m [mirrored]

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM), Yamaguchi, Japan.
Opening Saturday, November 13, 2010



The premiere presentation of the situation polar^m [mirrored] by Carsten Nicolai and Marko Plejhan will be presented on Saturday, 13 November 2010, at the YCAM Center in Yamaguchi, Japan. The installation explores natural radiation phenomena and confronts them with the limits of human sensorial perception. Our understanding of the basic indeterminacy and the non-linear intelligence that one finds in nature's apparent randomness and noise, is limited by the physical characteristics of our senses. The installation offers an unusual insight into the complexity of those natural structures. Like its predecessor project, polar, that was created at the Canon Artlab in Tokyo in 2000 and that won the Prix Ars Electronica for Interactive Art in 2001, polar^m [mirrored] was created by the German artist Carsten Nicolai and the Slovenian artist Marko Peljhan. The exhibition is curated by Yukiko Shikata (guest curator) and Kazunao Abe (YCAM).

Nicolai and Peljhan are two internationally active artists who both deal with questions of art, science and technology and who have been collaborating occasionally since 1997, when they both took part in the documenta X contemporary art exhibition in Kassel, Germany. Both artists are researching and designing methods of environmental observation based on information and sensor technologies. With **polar^m [mirrored]**, they are proposing new perspectives on the global ecosystems. Their new work consists of two mirrored cubical spaces (one accessible and one not), a field of radiation generators and a system of radiation observatoria. It probes our understanding of the intelligence of nature and of human existence through the prism of radiation phenomena and their visualisation and sonification.

polar^m [mirrored] follows the conceptual traces of the initial **polar** project which was concerned with the assumption of the global communications networks as an intelligent matrix. The initial thesis of **polar** was that the human created networks, with their exponential growth in complexity, begin to mimic indeterminant phenomena as we find them in nature itself. In that project the inherent intelligence of global networks and their qualities were analysed through a logical and deterministic system, based on the relationship between language, semantics and networks. The result of that analysis was then projected into an observation and events space and a dictionary of terms that grew over time. The visitors interactively affected the analysis system. In the first **polar** the matrix of cognition of the Solaris¹ ocean was the inspiration for a human created communications and cybernetic system, whereas **polar^m [mirrored]** ventures into a more in-depth understanding of the Solaris ocean.

The **polar^m [mirrored]** landscape explores the noise intelligence present in ephemeral and apparently random radiation phenomena through micro and macro transitions. Its spatial setup questions the relevance of the viewer, her or his presence within the space, and potential influence on it through the indeterminancy principle. The focus is on the work of art as an autonomous construction in a large, potentially infinite structure enveloped in an ocean of radiating particles.

Visual radiance together with different types of radiation (electromagnetic, α , β , γ) and associated sub-atomic particles are the dynamic triggers of the **polar^m [mirrored]** algorithms. These algorithms sonify and visualise the events transmitted from the instruments present in the landscape (geiger counters, cloud chamber, high frequency receivers, and granite radiation generators observed by robot-controlled sensors). The soundscape is generated through the coupling of indeterminant radiation events. The sounds are spatialised using otoacoustics which generates them in the inner ear, making it impossible to locate them in physical space. Processes of nature, both man made and cosmic, which normally elude human perception, are temporarily brought down to a human scale.

¹ Stanislaw Lem, Solaris (1961) in Andrei Tarkovsky, Solaris (1972)

carsten nicolai + marko peljhan

POLAR_m
[mirrored]

Concept, structure and systems: Carsten Nicolai + Marko Peljhan
Sound programming and systems display: Nibo, Carsten Nicolai
Robot and sensor systems: Danny Bazo (MAT, UC Santa Barbara)
Visuals programming: Wesley Smith (MAT, UC Santa Barbara)
Architecture and hardware: Rob Feigel Office, Vorschub, Zavod Projekt Atol, C-Astral Ltd.
Technical support: YCAM interlab
Curated by Yukiko Shikata (guest curator) and Kazunao Abe (YCAM)

Organized by: Yamaguchi City Foundation for Cultural Promotion
in association with the Yamaguchi city board of education.
Additional grant and program support:
Ministry of Culture, Republic of Slovenia,
University of California Insitute for Research in the Arts - Integrative Methodologies
Corporate sponsor: Shiseido
Production support and assistance:
Daniel Klemm
Media Arts and Technology program UCSB
Zavod Projekt Atol
Equipment support: Japan Synchrotron Radiation Research Institute (JASRI)
Technical support: YCAM interlab
Produced by: Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media YCAM

CARSTEN NICOLAI

Carsten Nicolai, born 1965 in Karl-Marx-Stadt, is part of an artist generation who works intensively in the transitional area between art and science. As a visual artist Nicolai seeks to overcome the separation of the art forms and genres through a holistic artistic approach. Further aspects of his works consider the integration of error and chance as well as the implementation of mathematical, physical and natural phenomena and theories. He is also interested in self-organizing processes, for example the growth of snow crystals.

After his participation in important international exhibitions like "documenta X" and the "49th and 50th Venice Biennale", Nicolai's works were shown in two comprehensive solo exhibitions at Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Germany (*anti reflex*) and at Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, Germany (*syn chron*) in 2005. In 2007 he had further extensive shows in Zurich and New York. Besides performing in club and concert halls, Nicolai also presented his audio-visual pieces at museums like Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou in Paris, Kunsthaus Graz or Tate Modern in London. Additionally he pursues projects with diverse artists such as Ryuichi Sakamoto, Ryoji Ikeda (cyclo.), Blixa Bargeld, Michael Nyman, Mika Vainio or Thomas Knak (opto). He started collaborating with Peljhan in 1997 with the wardencllyffe series of events, later the Solar performance and the polar series of works.

MARKO PELJHAN

A native of Slovenia and a theatre and radio director by profession, he founded the arts and technology organization Projekt Atol in the early 90's and cofounded one of the first media labs in Eastern Europe, LJUDMILA in 1995. He has been working on the Makrolab, a unique project that focuses on telecommunications, migrations and weather systems research in an intersection of art and science from 1997-2007, the Interpolar Transnational Art Science Constellation during the International Polar Year and is currently coordinating the Arctic Perspective Initiative art/science/tactical media project focused on the global significance of the Arctic geopolitical, natural and cultural spheres.

Peljhan has also been the flight director of ten art/science parabolic experimental flights in collaboration with the Microgravity Interdisciplinary Research initiative and the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre, creating conditions for artists to work in alternating gravity conditions.

He is the recipient of many prizes for his work, including the 2001 Golden Nica Prize at Ars Electronica together with Carsten Nicolai for their work, polar, and the UNESCO Digital Media Prize for Makrolab in 2004. During 2008, Peljhan was appointed as one of the European Union Ambassadors of Intercultural dialogue.

His work was exhibited internationally at multiple biennales and festivals (Venice, Gwangju, Brussels, Manifesta, Johannesburg), at the documenta X in Kassel, several ISEA exhibitions, several Ars Electronica presentations and major museums, such as the P.S.1 MOMA, New Museum of Contemporary Art, ICC NTT Tokyo and others.

He holds joint appointments with the Department of Art and the Media Arts & Technology graduate program at the University of California Santa Barbara and was appointed as Co-Director of the UC Institute for Research in the Arts in 2009, where he is coordinating the art/science Integrative methodologies initiative. He has been collaborating with Carsten Nicolai since 1997.