CARSTEN NICOLAI
unidisplay

May 5 - June 17, 2012

Artist and musician Carsten Nicolai is a leading figure in contemporary art today. Known for his conceptual, mathematical approach, he works within a minimalist aesthetic, a transitional space between art and science. He is equally active in the contemporary art world and on the electronic music scene, where he performs under his stage name, alva noto.

MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL
Québec

Strongly influenced by scientific systems, Nicolai often employs mathematical and cybernetic models, grids and codes; he is especially interested in loop structures and self-organizing systems, such as the formation of crystals or snowflakes. "His artistic approach is a cross-section of science and contemporary music practices. Throughout his auditory installations and his music, he exploits the limits and creative potential of codes, crypted formulas and other logical systems that structure our world. In order to do this, he bases himself on solid knowledge ... for his projects and expositions."[1]

Nicolai is interested in sound as a physical phenomenon. As he explores the faintest of tones, he captures their subtle variations and attempts to make sound waves visible. In performance, he accompanies his sound compositions with projections whose intensity fluctuates according to the energy flux of the sonorities. His creations investigate the boundaries of perception.

For the inaugural edition of the *International Digital Arts Biennial*, the Projections series is presenting Nicolai's latest installation, *unidisplay*. The installation unfolds against a long projection wall with two mirror walls on the side, thus visually expanding like a universe. *unidisplay* offers an examination of semiotics and the laws of perception. The work operates with a number of modules of different visual effects that interfere with viewers' perception, through optical illusion, jitter, flicker, after-image, movement, complementary colour effect, and so on.

The basic visual, made up of sequences, motifs and graphic translations of various units of time measurement, acts as a world clock and evokes the inter-twining of time, between past, present and future. The installation is created with Derivative's TouchDesigner[2] software which Nicolai has used for the past while for his alva noto live performances with a triple-screen projection.

Nicolai suggests that "*unidisplay* can be regarded as an open archive of forms of visual representations, which gradually extend over the years. Rather than offering any definite solutions, the exhibition aims to investigate the idea of a universal language."
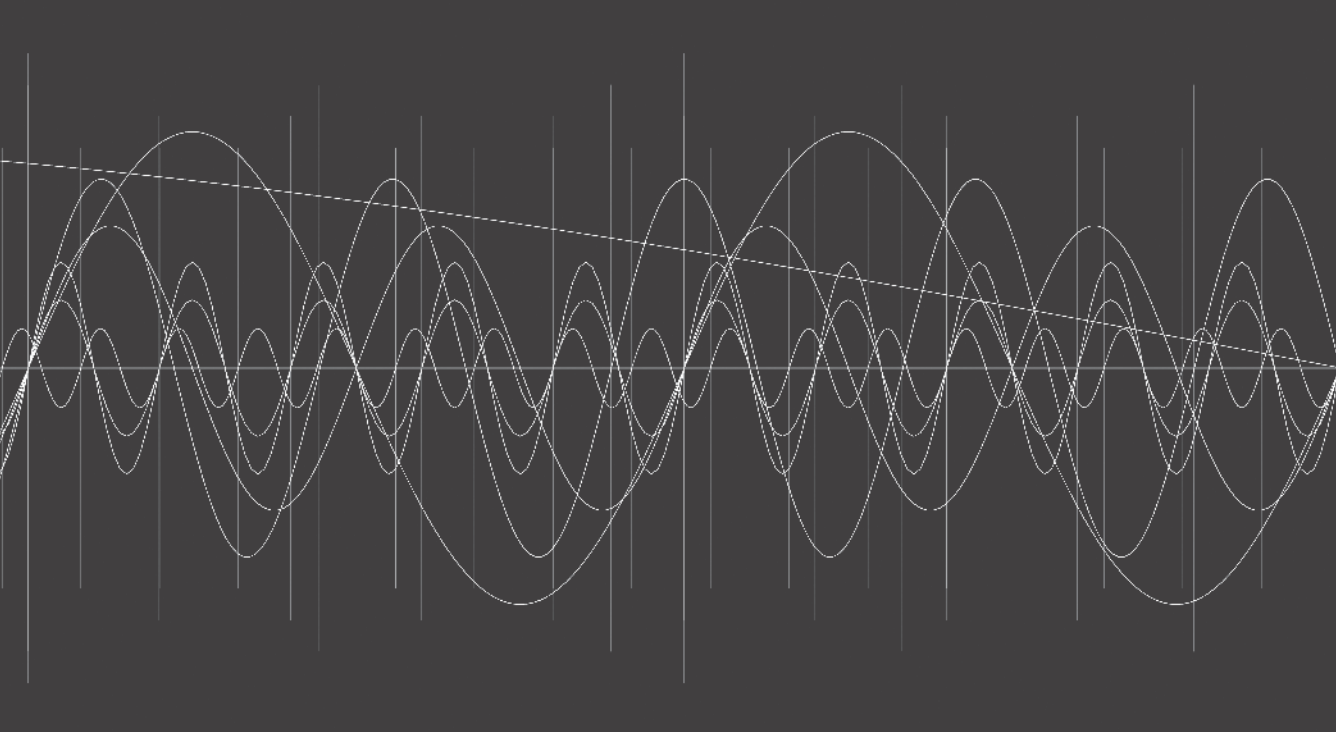
LOUISE SIMARD, Head of Multimedia Events

BIAN
Biennale
internationale
d'art numérique
International
Digital Arts
Biennial

50 1962 2012
Goethe-Institut
KANADA

Born in 1965 in the former East Germany, **Carsten Nicolai** lives and works in Berlin. In 1994, he founded noton.archiv für ton und nichtton, a platform for conceptual and experimental projects in the realm of music and the visual arts, which he merged in 1999 with Rastermusic, founded by musician and graphic designer Olaf Bender. The result was Raster-Noton, a label that quickly made a name for itself in minimal electronics, where the exploration of frequencies and sound sequences enters into a dialogue with modular graphic creations.

Following his participation in such prestigious international events as *Documenta X* and the 49th and 50th *Venice Biennale*, Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt, Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin and the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst in Ghent held his first major solo exhibitions: *anti reflex*, *syn chron* and *audio visual spaces*. In 2007, the show *Carsten Nicolai: static fades*, at Haus Konstruktiv in Zurich, traced twenty years of his career. Recently, in 2011, *pioner* was presented at CAC in Vilnius, Lithuania, at Galerie EIGEN + ART in Leipzig, Germany, and at The Pace Gallery in New York. Nicolai has taken part in numerous group exhibitions, including the *Yokohama Triennale*, Japan, in 2011, the second *Moscow Biennale*, in 2007, and *Sonambiente 2006* in Berlin. His work has earned him several awards, most notably the 2001 Golden Nica, top prize at the *Ars electronica* event in Linz, Austria.

Carsten Nicolai has produced many collaborative projects with, among others, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Ryoji Ikeda (*cyclo.*), Blixa Bargeld (*anbb*) Michael Nyman, Mika Vainio and Thomas Knak (*opto*). Under the stage name alva noto, he has performed solo at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou in Paris, Kunsthaus Graz in Austria and Tate Modern in London. On Friday, May 4, at 7 p.m., the artist premieres his performance piece *univrs (uniscope version)* at the Musée.

PHOTO
unidisplay, 2012. Courtesy of the artist,
Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin and The Pace Gallery