



SAMUEL BESTER VIDEO

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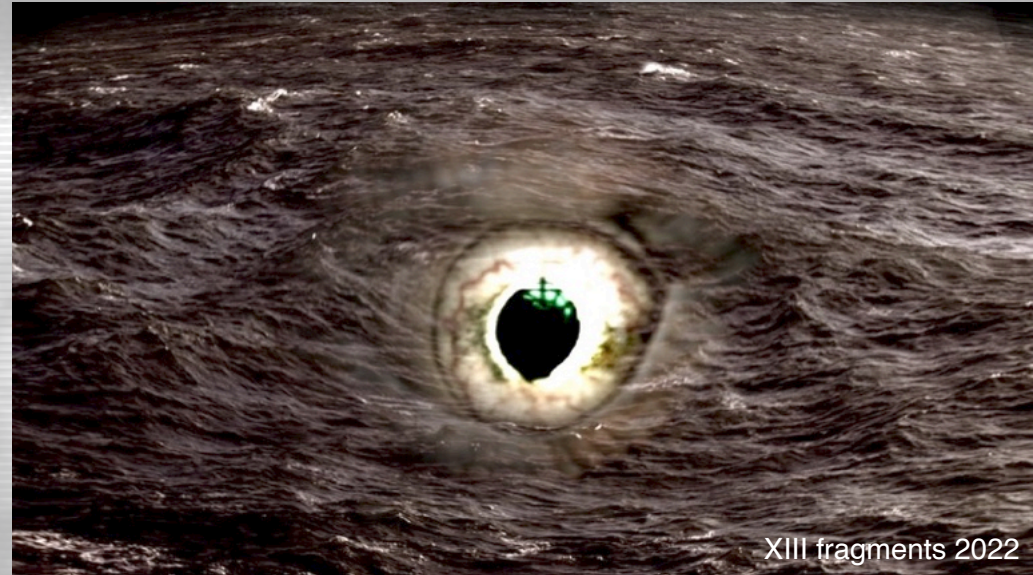
BIOGRAPHY

Franco-German born in 1975 in Geneva, Samuel Bester was introduced to art at an early age. He studied arts in Nîmes and then at the Arts Décoratifs in Strasbourg, France where his teacher Jean-François Guiton introduced him to video art. Poetry and philosophy are also his main literary inspiration to enrich the visual subconscious that guides him.

By exploring ambiguity through nuance, distortion or accident, Samuel Bester increases the dynamics between perception, interpretation and emotion. Using an often metaphorical poetic language, he amplifies curiosity by blurring apparent meanings, thus producing unexpected mental images. Time and memory always play a key role. His protean work (sound, images, installation) is visible via short film festivals, galleries, concerts or shows.

Simone Dompeyre (*Traverse-Video*), about Samuel Bester :

Samuel Bester proves that we can only speak of video imperfectly, in a truncated approach because it is of the order of the sensory. That it is a plastic body, a fabric of tactile and virtual signs at the same time.



XIII fragments 2022



Le rêve de la pêcheuse, 2017

FILMS



[previews on Vimeo](#)

Selective filmography:

NARCISSE 12'22 2023

He desires and is desired, he inflames and burns at the same time. What he sees, he doesn't understand, but what he sees he is on fire for. What separates lovers is so small. From his own eyes he dies. "I am he. My own image doesn't deceive me. I am burning with love for myself. Oh, I wish I could leave my own body! But the two of us, together, in one breath we will die." Based on "Narcissus and Echo" from Book III of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, translated by Marie Cosnay.

DOUCE-AMÈRE 1'43" 2023

The video was inspired by Mathieu Karsenti's piano compositions, which were inspired by the great French perfumer Serge Lutens, who created the fragrance Douce-amère. This fragrance offers contrasts of sweet and bitter notes, happiness and sadness, and is both exciting and touching. The bitterness appears in dissonant accents, taking its time to reveal its sweetness. This dichotomy is explored in abstract strands, evoking internal conflicts that we sometimes examine with tenderness. Sweetness takes precedence over bitterness, becoming exhilarating and intoxicating, but with an underlying melancholy that balances this vivid and paradoxical sensation.

XIII fragments 11'23" 2022

13 fragments of stories, of lives and deaths, of small moments or great tremors, where mystery thickens, where light reveals but darkness always lurks, where palpable tension evokes an underlying narrative, a tragic story surrounded by love. 13 audiovisual fragments inspired by a Vietnamese tale.

ET APRÈS ? TOUT L'INVERSE [AND THEN ? ALL THE OPPOSITE] 5' 2020

Video that proposes to take a look at the post-containment world. David Poullard and Camille Bonaldi's displays on the streets of Marseille allowed the realization of these poetic little films.

VideOvide - Hermaphrodite 10' 2019

Based on Hermaphrodite from book IV of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* translated by Marie Cosnay.

Le rêve de la pêcheuse [The dream of the girl diver]

13'23" 2017

Film inspired by the 1814 print of Hokusai called *The Dream of the Fisherman's Wife* (蛸と海女) itself inspired by the tale of Princesse Tamatori. This work is part of the

shunga (erotic art book) *Kinoe No Komatsu* which describes the misadventures of a girl diver defying a king dragon, god of the sea, to recover a stolen jewel. From this tragic tale, Hokusai offers a very eroticized vision where the monster is protected by undertaking octopuses seduced by the princess. This video uses data moshing to mix bodies and textures in an underwater arabesque saturated with colors.

causette 13'23 " 2016

Causette is the term which was proposed in France to translate the English word "chat" used to define the "conversation between several people connected at the same time to a network, who exchange messages being displayed in real time on their screen". Video makes exchanges more fluid.

[video] 8' 2016

[video]: I see, I seize by sight.

The Bushwac serie 5' / 3' / 2' / 4' / 3' 2008

A series of 5 videos made around the music of Steve Buchanan.

Sylt à perte de vue [Sylt in sight] (documentary, HD)

50' 2008

The island of Sylt in Northern Germany is in danger. Each year, sea storms destroy a little bit more of this invaluable landscape. Faced with the drama of the announced disappearance of the island, man answers frenetically trying to preserve it.

Sönemböör 13' 2006

Fifth part of a work begun in 1996 on the island of Sylt. Sönemböör ("to propose sand" in Frisian) evokes the construction, the modeling of the landscape. On the one hand we try to preserve a place by building protections but on the other hand we contribute to its loss by the very consequences of these constructions.



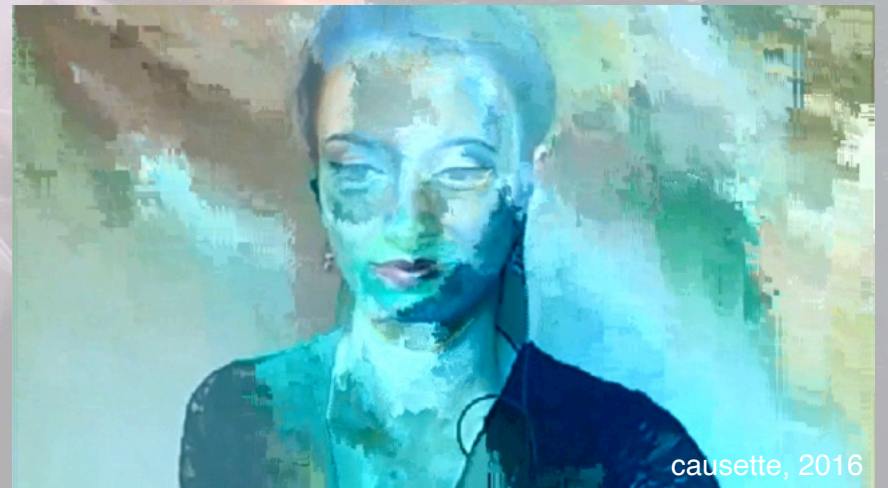
VideOvide - Hermaphrodite, 2019



Le rêve de la pêcheuse, 2017



Et après ? Tout l'inverse, 2020



causette, 2016



XIII fragments, 2022



[video] , 2016

David Finkelstein about *Le Rêve de la Pêcheuse* (The dream of the girl diver) (2017) published in *Lake Ivan Film Journal* 2023.

The *Dream of the Girl Diver* is a sumptuous and mesmerising 14 minute film by Samuel Bester, inspired by *Dream of the Fisherman's Wife*, an 1814 shunga (erotic art book) by Hokusai, the artist famous for creating *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*. Bester uses the technique of datamoshing, a method of blending digital video footage together by hacking into the compression data, to create a powerfully sensual evocation of Hokusai's tale, a strange form of erotica, where a diver reaches ecstasy with her octopus lover.

Bester is highly effective at exploiting the "watery" qualities of datamoshing, like a digital form of animated watercolour painting, to evoke Hokusai's watery love encounter. Through the magic of datamoshing, male and female body parts morph into octopus tentacles, engorging and slithering with curious exploration. The breathing and pulsing of the octopus' body swells the surfaces of breasts and fingers and animates folds of fabric. The sinuous movements of the tentacles manage to embody male and female arousal simultaneously. The pulsating suckers lining the tentacles are alive with erotic suggestion.

The sparse, effective musical score, by Bester and Jean-Marc Montera, recalls the sounds of the shakuhachi flute and the koto. The music is mixed with the erotic banter between the diver and the octopus, taken from the text of the Hokusai shunga. Their breathless love-words are

given an erotically charged reading by Kate Pinault and Naoyuki Tanaka. The octopus's voice is multiplied with a "chorus" effect, as if all eight arms are speaking in unison.

"Boundaries and borders gone; I've disappeared," exclaims the woman, as the watery washes of datamoshed color merge the fabrics with the skin and the glistening tentacles, encrusted with shiny scales like a living, bejeweled embrace of arms.

The erotic activity depicted is sensual and diffuse: an alert but relaxed pursuit of pleasure, where fingers ramble from one body part to another, the whole body becoming erogenous. The music, as well, drifts from one chord cluster to another, suspended in the pleasures of the moment. Color and imagery run over the surface of the screen, bathing the viewer in a liquid erotic energy field. When the sexual climaxes do come, at the end of the film, they seem to swell spontaneously up from the water.

The *Dream of the Girl Driver* is disturbing and powerful precisely because its evocation of the alien, forbidden world of Japanese tentacle erotica is so powerfully alluring. The effect at is at once classic and contemporary. The highly decorative, sparkling tapestry of the fabrics intermingled with cephalopod writhing and human coitus suggest a dream of Klimt's Japanese-inspired paintings come to life and engaging in oceanic intercourse. The highly pixelated effects and transitions, unique to datamoshing, are a distinctly digital approach to filmmaking. Bester invites western viewers to dive into an alien culture and an alien species with all our senses open and receptive to new kinds of pleasure, and you won't be sorry if you take the plunge.

David Finkelstein

Marie Martin about the serie : *Bi di Wik*, *Biike*, *Ofskäär*, *Kumm Weer* and *Sönemböör* (1996-2006)

Intelligence of machines. The legacy of Jean Epstein in contemporary experimental documentary.

On the Sylt side, concerning the ethical stakes of ecology in a globalized capitalist regime, the gesture of Samuel Bester's work, modest and lucid, consists in presenting itself as an offering and a revelation, bringing to light a present whose heart is now only accessible in the intermittent. From the first of his pieces, *Bi Di Wik* (1996), the filmmaker tackles the work of Epsteinian motifs: the foaming ebb of the sea, the pulverization of the sand, the montage of interdependent series... Their resumption in saturated and unreal colors, in another place, another time, between various disfiguring machines, indefectibly links beauty to loss. However, in the last burst of the final shot, which appears after a few seconds of darkness, there remains the obstinate evanescence of the luminous signal of a lighthouse in the night, whose syncopated rhythm persists on the retina at the same time as the sonic force of the wind in the ear, even after their disappearance.

Marie Martin



Marc Mercier about *Sylt à perte de vue* (documentary, 2008)
published in the booklet of the DVD edition by *Lowave*

 **watch the film (50mn)**

If you discover the creative documentary *Sylt à perte de vue* (2008), after having seen the five experimental films, you will be surprised. You will see a dynamic city, tourists with sequences that have nothing to envy to Jacques Tati's *Vacances de Monsieur Hulot*, a kite manipulator, a row of windmills... The island is anything but deserted. Especially when the summer season comes, so much so that the authorities had to forbid access to certain beaches or cliffs to limit the damage. It is the general mobilization, inhabitants, scientists, to counter the inexorable fate of the island.

If in *Bi di wick*, Samuel Bester has set the scene, it is clear that the play being played out there will be fatally tragic, that no setting, however well set up, will be able to cope in the long run with the irresistible power of nature. Nature never claims its rights. It takes them. This is the chronicle of a death foretold.

The lesson that can be drawn from the relentless struggle of the men and women of Sylt, and this is perhaps what differentiates humans from their environment, is that the end does not condition the means. Man can resist despite everything. Witness this village, Rantum, (nicknamed the "fleeing" or "flying" village), which was swallowed up eight times by the sand and rebuilt as many times further on, despite everything. The bones of the cemetery, lost on the surface of the dunes, become toys for laughing children. Death itself is tamed. It is the reign of the ghosts.

The entire tragic history of the island of Sylt, the heroic struggle of its inhabitants to survive despite the

disproportionate power of the adversary, is contained in the few film sequences that open *Sylt* as far as the eye can see. The images are taken from a 1934 film, *Der Schimmelreiter*, by Hans Deppe and Curt Oertel, with the wonderful actors Mathias Wieman and Marianne Hoppe. A man harangues the crowd, urging them to build a dike to counteract the violence of the sea. Some time later, a tidal wave will sweep away everything in its path, sowing death and desolation.

The inhabitants of Sylt will never lose sight of the fact that life is stronger than anything... Samuel Bester's films, like birds, are there to remind us of this. The island has wings.

Marc Mercier



Simone Dompeyre about ***Analogia*** (2014) published in the catalog of the 2015 festival *Traverse Video*.

Seeing a video by Samuel Bester shakes up many neuronal connections... the crosshatching, the intersecting movement, the accelerated movement of non-image provoke the eye and the mind. One looks for the analogy with the pact of reading with which the title is charged, which seems to play with us since Analogia.

The French is based on the Latin word meaning: the resemblance or conformity of various elements. Thus the analogical image reproduces the signal to be recorded -audio, video- in a form similar to the referent on a support; the audio signal on the tape follows the same amplitudes as the sound wave, even if with more or less fidelity.

Analogia composes a score of disturbance of this resemblance: it gets carried away in distortion, flickering, background noise, crying. The trembling seizes the field, the frame; the line conjugates itself in verticals, horizontals, sinusoids, when the total black is not replaced by the television snow and its characteristic sound effects... the referential trace is badly handled. From the beginning, a challenge is launched to the viewer as well as the refusal of any localization; to ensure the non-exposure of a non-story, the reframing is immediate, before an over-framing on foliage in the distance and a blurry mountain. [Nothing is spared, neither the genre - fragments of fiction are scratched - nor the spectator whose appetite for stories is somewhat mocked - a man holds a lamp and if in the diegesis he would sink into a cellar, in Analogia he sinks into the blackness of the non-image that invades the field, and if the cry of pain is perceptible, it is without a corresponding image and is

followed by a snippet of dialogue. [Plato thus distinguishes thought from doxa: Images / Real objects = Opinion / Science. Godard launches there the spun metaphor between the cinema and its children, distinguishing the cinema/video = art/ culture. Video/cinema = aesthetics and technique/philosophy. Analogia hears it but makes video give back everything it can from cinema by the tape, adopting the experimental practices that preceded it.

Simone Dompeyre (Traverse-Video)



Analogia, 2014

INSTALLATIONS

 video reportage
on samuelbester.com

2022

- ***Le rêve de la pêcheuse*** at festival *Traverse Video*, Toulouse

2018

- ***Le rêve de la pêcheuse*** at group exhibition *Gruppenbild*, Bremen

2017

- ***Le rêve de la pêcheuse*** at *Arcade PACA*, Aix-en-Provence
- *Parcours Révélation*, **Chroniques biennial**, 7 videos

2016

- ***Le Banquet***, video mapping for the exhibition *Le banquet de Marseille à Rome*, Marseille

2015

- ***L'autre côté*** at *Portes ouvertes Consolat*, Marseille
- ***L'envol, module 3#&4*** at *Féeries nocturnes*, Crévoux

2014

- ***L'autre côté*** at *octobre numérique*, Arles. **Jury award.**

2013

- ***L'envol, module 1,4&5*** at Archives Départementales, Marseille
- ***Le trésor des marseillais*** at the Museum of archeology, Marseille (commande)

2012

- ***L'envol, module 3*** at 25th *Instants Video Festival*, Marseille
- ***L'envol, module 2*** at festival *Images Contre-Nature*, Marseille
- ***la sieste*** at *48h chrono*, la Friche, Marseille
- ***L'envol, module 1*** at *Campagne Video*, Le Favril

- ***la sieste*** at *Nuit des musées*, Eu
- 2011**

- ***L'envol, module 1*** : pré-visions du ciel at 24th *Instants Video festival*, Marseille
- ***L'autre côté*** & ***la sieste*** at 2nd festival *espacetemporaire*, Geneva.

2010-11

- ***la sieste*** on the *Zuid* screen, Amsterdam.

2009

- ***l'autre côté*** co-realized with Sophie-Charlotte Gautier, at the 22nd *Instants Video festival*, Marseille.
- **Group exhibition** of films & photographs at the *Kamp Hüs* gallery, Sylt, Germany.

2008

- **Group exhibition** of films & photographs à la galerie Länge * Breite, Sylt, Germany puis Vill at the gallery Hühn, Gevelsberg, Germany.
- **installation** of videos pour Video Landscapes, Fordham gallery, New York.

2007

- ***Entre deux*** co-realized with Sophie-Charlotte Gautier, 20th *Instants Video festival*, Marseille.
- **exposition** de films & photos à la galerie Alte Post, Sylt, Germany.

2006

- ***1 + 1 sur le fil*** co-realized with Sophie Charlotte Gautier, Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie, Strasbourg.



L'autre côté, Marseille 2009



Le trésor des Marseillais (scénographie) 2013



L'autre côté, Genève 2011



L'autre côté, Arles 2014



la sieste, Amsterdam 2011



L'envol module 3#, fées d'hiver 2015

Nathalie Poisson-Cogez about *L'envol module 1* published in *50°nord art magazine* 2012

The co-creation of Samuel Bester, Sophie-Charlotte Gautier, Cathryn Boch and Véronique Vassiliou, *L'envol - module 1* pré-prévisions du ciel, also participates in this shift of perception and poetic writing. In the starry night, the globe of the weather station is transformed into a magic lantern reminiscent of the beginnings of cinema. With his feet on the ground and his head in the clouds, Samuel Bester admits: I dream a lot and that makes me happy. The take-off of a rocket evokes for a short moment the likely disasters of technology, quickly swept away by the magic of words. The glow of the lanterns hanging from the trees of the apple orchard evokes the words of Georges Didi-Hubermann in *Survivances des lucioles*: The dance of the fireflies, this moment of grace that resists the world of terror, is the most fleeting, the most fragile thing that exists.

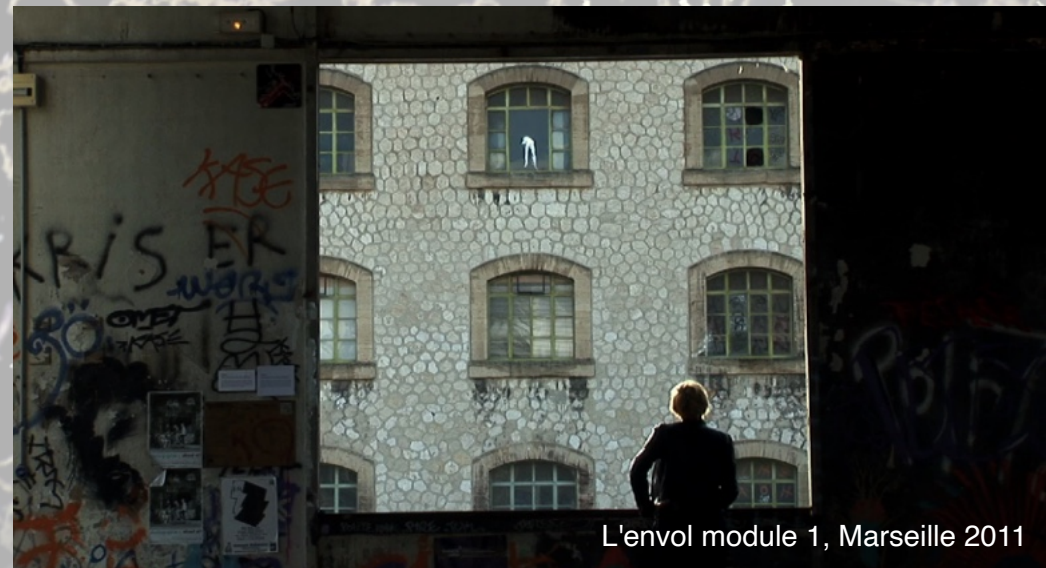
Nathalie Poisson-Cogez



L'envol module 1, Le Favril 2012



L'envol module 1, Archives Départementales 2013



L'envol module 1, Marseille 2011

François Kahn & Yves Gerbal about *L'autre côté* (2009, octobre numérique Award 2014)

A device that creates surprise in the heart of our daily environment. Entitled The other side, this work proposes to us in a rather playful way to displace our glance on an environment which by dint of being familiar becomes almost transparent. [...]

The artists implement here a principle that scientific research constantly uses to decipher reality: by shifting the point of view we modify the very nature of the object to observe. [I hope to bring a dreamlike dimension to the public space, to create a surprise effect. The interactive dimension offers the possibility of meeting anyone. Once in operation, the installation will escape me and that is so much the better.]

François Kahn

One will not reproach this installation for the simplicity of its device. This kind of minimalism which gives to this creation its enigmatic character, and at the same time the possibility to be approached by all. Because this vaguely scrutinizing eye, much less cousin of Big Brother than they of Magritte and Bunuel, questions the passer-by without giving him any answer. Not easy however, to divert the homo urbanus from his path. [...] One can only be delighted to see the reactions, laughter or interrogations, of the passers-by who, for once, find on their urban path a kind of small signal, a discreet lighthouse, a poetic wink that suggests to them not to forget

that the glance, never must lose its capacity to let itself be surprised and amazed.

Yves Gerbal



LIVE PERFORMANCE

video reportage
samuelbester.com

2022

- Video creation for the concert "*L'arbalète Magique*" with **Musicatreize**.

2021

- Video creation in real time for the dance show "*D'une rive à l'autre*" with **collectif Skalen**, rotatives de la Marseillaise

2018

- Video creation for the theater company **Le Facteur indépendant** from Julie Villeneuve.
- Video creation for the concert "*Chanter l'icône*" with **Musicatreize**.

2017

- Video creation for the theater company **Sketch'Up** *Espèce d'humains toi-même*, 2015
- Video creation for the theater company **écrire un mouvement** *Chto*
- concert with **Jean-Marc Monterra & Ohmodron**, Hyères

2013

- Video creation for the dance **Skalen** *Wave[s]*, Sons de plateaux, Marseille

2012

- Video creation for the dance **Skalen** *Wave[s]*, Dig@ran festival, Val D'Aran, Espagne & nuit des musées, Marseille

2011

- Video creation for the dance **Skalen** *ex_pose*, festival Nightshot, Carcassonne.

2010

- concert at **Nuits d'hiver**, Vieille Charité Marseille.
- concert from **Nissenenmondaï**, festival de Marseille.

2009

- Video creation for the dance **Skalen** *Ex_pose*, Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseille.

2008

- Video creation for the dance **Skalen** *If I...*, la Chartreuse, Villeneuve lez Avignon, Monterrey (Mexique), les Bernardines, Marseille.
- Video creation for the dance **Skalen** *Les Instants_e*, la Bo[a]te, Marseille.



Le Rendez-Vous, Prague 2006



Wave[s], Marseille 2013



If I..., Avignon 2008



Chanter l'icône, Toulon, 2023



Entre le ciel et l'eau, Salon de Provence 2007



Fantaisies, Baux de Provence 2003



Le Rendez-Vous, Prague 2006



D'une rive à l'autre, Marseille 2021



Ex—pose, Marseille 2009

ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC MUSIC

 [Listen on Soundcloud](#)

2024

- ***Freak !*** 6'00"

2023

- ***Thésée et Médée*** 10'46"

2022

- ***Orphée et Eurydice*** 10'00"
- ***Daphné*** 9'03"
- ***Deucalion et Pyrrha*** 9'03"

2020

- ***Le récit d'Aréthuse*** 8'20"

2018

- ***Baume Sourne*** 5'20"
- ***Les chants d'Orphée- Pygmalion*** 7'50"

2017

- ***Les songes*** 10'

2016

- ***XXI^e numérique 1*** 4'40"
- ***Vingtième analogique 3*** 6'20"
- ***Vingtième analogique 2*** 6'34"

2014

- ***Vingtième analogique 1*** 2'00"

2010

- ***Ekke Nekkepenn*** 9'05"

Marc Mercier about **Ekke Nekkepenn** (2010)

The inhabitants of Sylt shudder to hear a tale about a sea monster that no one can name. This is the heart of the matter. The unspeakable. How to defend oneself when one is unable to name the enemy? It is not for nothing that the most vulnerable part of humanity has been given the name of child. This word comes from the classical Latin *infans*, which means "who does not speak". We remain children as long as we are not able to name what surrounds us, to name what protects us, loves us, wishes us well..., and what threatens us, destroys us, pulls us towards death. [...] It is one of the assets of music to be able to express the unspeakable. Yes, the word is well chosen here: *ex-press*. To make go out, by a pressure, what is contained, held, retained by the sea, like the juice of a fruit.

This is why we can speak of a sound evocation about Ekke nekkepenn, or a music outside the limits. Out of the limits of the sea and out of the limits of what we commonly call music. This composition is still video, it gives to see. It is even televisual since it gives to see from far. One could even venture to say that Samuel Bester is inventing a televisual composition, so much so that what he brings to our attention is transformed, by means of an electronic system, so that the evoked object (the monster) is constantly deterritorialized. The monster is not perceived in situ. It is tracked by the technological imagination, it is surrounded by the sensitive, it is out of reach.

But don't think you'll get away with it. The monster is well there. What we perceive is perhaps, at the end of the day, only our unspeakable inner music.