

Interview for "Cologne 7th Fest"

Cologne International Videoart Festival



Cologne OFF * 2011

videoart in a global context

VIP - Video Channel Interview Project



VIDEO PROJECT ENVIRONMENTS

Alexei DeBronhe

Belarusian independent filmmaker, musician, audio-visual artist.

biography: <http://and.nmartproject.net/?p=4232>

Interview: 10 questions

1. Tell me something about your educational background

Basic

2004 — Belarusian State Arts College named after I.O. Akhremchik. Course — contrabass.

2006 — Minsk State Musical College named after M.I. Glinka. Course — contrabass, musical pedagogy.

2011 — Belarusian State Academy of Arts. Course — Film and TV directing.

2011 — Minsk Filmshcool. Course — Filmmaking.

Additional

2009 — Final Cut Advanced Training, Belarusian State TV and Radio Company

2011 — New Media and Audiovisual Art Course, Audio Visual Academy

2. When, how and why started you filming?

Since childhood. First I was playing toys with my brother, there were various robots and mutants and cars, I murmured creating soundtracks, like scoring some special effects that we had in our games. My brother was always acting for the bad boys and me, as a producer of all our "films", I was always a good boy, a winner. Later on I started drawing cartoons, different stories that were similar to the movies of late 80-s, early 90-s, like some horror films or thrillers, you know. I also created scores, end credits, inventing unreal names and once I got so into it that these end credits took 20 pages. My imaginary actors followed me in my cartoons, playing different parts in different "films". Yes, "films" that's how I called my cartoons. Another game was an opening night. I drew posters, stuck them onto the door of my room, it was my imaginary cinema. Today I would call my brother a pirate — he always managed to steal the cartoon, read

it before the “first night” and never paid me with our imaginary money for my improvisational screenings. And it was meant to be like this – I had to turn the pages of the cartoon, voicing over all the heroes and murmuring some music.

Over some period I was devoting more time to music than to cinema, but I always carried my passion for the movies in my heart. And that’s how it all turned out. Right now these are my two inseparable worlds – cinema and music.

3. What kind of subjects have your films?

I can’t predict what I’d create. I feel that I’m developing and searching constantly, I’m madly curious and attentive to the details, Sometimes it bothers. Topics are varied – social and philosophic. At times experimental or horrors. Feature and documental. Might be even action thrillers. Whether a movie would be superb or a failure doesn’t depend on a genre. All genres are cool, what really matters is a director and a film itself. My latest work deals with the philosophy of space, its hidden energy and sacrality, that I feel with my heart, my soul and some other senses. This is a new genre of the documental cinema, which I created and explained theoretically. I call it Cinemalism (<http://vimeo.com/27274898>).

4. How do you develop your films, do you follow certain principles, styles etc?

I always say that creating a film is a many-sided complex process and the result can be alike.

Adapting literary piece is one of the ways, but I believe that too much “bookishness” can make the film lack the air. Often the scriptwriters create a terrific story but they may not feel the movie principles and peculiarities, they remain just writers, not scriptwriters. The script should live naturally but only on papers but at the film set. You should always follow the right proportion, because cinema is a complex art, a fusion, you should never forget about the perceptive, emotional part of it. I brood my films, nurture them, feel them, search for their emotional key. When I have the luck to find it, it starts living its own life. >From now on you can’t predict anything. It grows by itself and all you can do is only guide it and direct it. I’m always excited and scared by all the stages of film creating at the same time. They influence each other and blending different proportions of it, you can get an unexpected result...

- Idea that is born in your mind. This is a mental part of work, going on in your head.
- This part I call manufactory. Here we write a screenplay, draw storyboard, using our hands, eyes and mentality. You should take your time to mull everything over, build logical bridges and the essence of plot. The trick here is the possibility to get deep into literature, losing cinematic style. The main thing here is to stay away from verbal labyrinths that lead you out of it.
- Shooting period. On the set the process goes vice versa, unlike the ideas you grounded in your text. You see that the characters are far from being ideal, you may lose your shooting mood. The deeper you got into stage 2, the larger can be the gap between your fantasy and the reality.
- Editing stage. This is a completely different world, which can help, if understood correctly, to unveil the shades and tones of the film that were previously unseen and hidden in your subconsciousness.

Cinema screening. You take a look at your work through the eyes of the audience. Here you can feel the real strengths and weaknesses of it. You can follow and analyze all the stages of your work – whether you stayed true to your idea during all the stages. It’s important that this stage gives you the opportunity to reflect upon whether you are flexible enough or too much to divert and chance the concept you invented during the first stage.

5. Tell me something about the technical equipment you use.

I’m just starting my career and don’t really love to talk about all these technical stuff. Now it can be some kinds of DSLR cameras, some old vintage Soviet optics and editing programs. Tomorrow everything can change. All these technologies appear and vanish so rapidly, they broaden the opportunities of the filmmakers and lessen the number of crew needed on the set. Personally I think that the fewer people on the set – the better. Today cinema is gaining more and more arthouse features. I appreciate the

possibility to follow the thoughts and ideas of the director, knowing that no one was pressing him to do this or that just because he can really do everything by himself.

When there are lots of people between the author and the audience, the film threatens to fall into pieces, lose its comprehensiveness and the complex emotional energy.

Then I feel like I lack some energy from the screen, because it was made for “the audience” not for the person. It’s like being partly deprived, fooled. When a film is directed to everyone and to no one personally, it never gives a whole of it to anyone. That’s horrible.

6. The field of “art and moving images” (one may call it videoart or also differently) is manifesting itself as an important position in contemporary art. Tell me more about your personal position and how you see the future of this field (your personal future and the future of “art and moving images”)

I love the art process in motion. It shows us new horizons and fields for some creative activity. I think we’re standing at the beginning of something big, it’s like the stone age and we can’t even fully comprehend what’s going on and what awaits us. Cinema, audiovisual art and art on the whole are just a bud that’s still waiting to bloom. Motion design, street art, live cinema – these are only small bits of something new that will once span a new whole form of alternative art. I anticipate some stupendous discoveries, which may shock us and make us reconsider many things.

7. How do you finance your films?

I can call myself an independent filmmaker and I suppose that lack of money gives more freedom. You are not being pressed by those who have given you some sponsor help. No budget helps you feel fit, stay in constant search of new forms and solutions, of some creative ways, unique approaches and thinking out of clichés. Max results with min budget. I don’t know why, but the rule that works in art is the fewer redundancies, the higher efficacy. Of course, I start searching for some financing through some crowdfunding websites, special organizations and grants. But even when I find something, be it an organization or a person, interested in my project, I do everything to leave the creative process kind of detached, out of their pieces of advice.

8. Do you work individually as a video artist/film maker or do you work in a team? If you have experience in both, what is the difference, what do you prefer?

I have already answered this question in the 5 point. What I’d like to add is that it’s crucial not to lose the charisma and inner energy of the film while working on a large project. I guess it’s really hard during some blockbuster shooting. Perhaps that’s why all these big blockbusters look so dead and unnatural.

9. Who or what has a lasting influence on your film/video making?

I don’t think I have any influences or authorities. I’m inspired by various light and spiritual substances, elusive and intangible. And of course the real art in all its diversity.

10. What are your plans or dreams as a film/video maker?

It’s a secret.

You can watch some works online here

<http://vimeo.com/byzondpictures>

(Source: http://vip.newmediafest.org/?page_id=785)