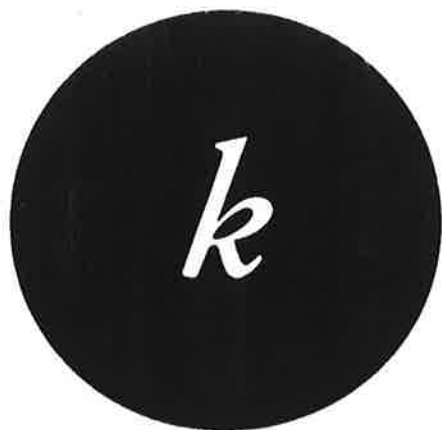


E KITCHEN



TM

International

THE KITCHEN

The Kitchen Center
for Video - Music - Dance
Performance - Film and
Literature



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Welcome to *before and after ambient* — the first of three inaugural events of the **Electronic Cafe™ International** at The Kitchen. The Kitchen has joined an international network of high technology cafes that will offer vanguard artists the opportunity to develop new forms through experimentation and collaboration with new media — particularly video teleconferencing.

On November 10, we invite you to experience *Cafe Barbie* in honor of the publication of MG Lord's illuminating new book *Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll*. The event will occur in both theaters, and our **Electronic Cafe™** will link up with interviewees for the book in Paris, Denver, Santa Monica and San Diego. On November 12, we will present *Three Cities / Multimedia Teleconcert* featuring Morton Subotnick, David Rosenbloom, Steina Vasulka, Leo Smith and J.B. Floyd. This event will occur simultaneously at The Kitchen in New York, Electronic Cafe in Santa Monica and Studio X in Santa Fe via the **Electronic Cafe™ International**.

Additionally, JoAnn Jansen (our dance curator) is working with the **Electronic Cafe™** in Santa Monica this fall to create a live collaboration between choreographers in New York, in Santa Monica and in Paris. And, we are continuing our monthly **International Drumming Circles** that link up with percussionists in California, Paris and Rio. The next drumming circles will be on November 20 and December 10 at 3pm. Please call John Maxwell Hobbs here at The Kitchen for further details.

This marks the beginning of a whole new era for The Kitchen and the constituency of artists we are building around the world. Thank you for your support of all the artists who have gathered here this evening and we hope to see you here again at The Kitchen.

Halekafa, Inc.

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Lauren Amazeen
Executive Director

THE KITCHEN

presents

before and after ambient

An Inaugural Event of **Electronic Cafe™ International** at The Kitchen

November 4-5, 1994

before and after ambient is a two-day event that brings together a wide range of artists from different points of view whose work all relates to the term "ambient." Ambient music and art implies a non-linear structure which evolves organically. Its focus is more on the total environmental effect which is created than on specific moments, performers, or formal details. It often is characterized by repetition, abstraction, and extended time parameters. The result is a form in which the presentation and the work being presented are unified in one aesthetic idea.

This program utilizes The Kitchen's full performance facilities, creating an expanded two-floor performance space with full audio and video connections. Our new **Electronic Cafe™** facility expands the physical boundaries of The Kitchen to a virtual space which encompasses a studio in London and a performance space in Santa Monica. **before and after ambient** is an experiment whose form is being shaped by everyone involved. Thanks for participating!

--Ben Neill
Music Curator

For The Kitchen

Executive Producer LAUREN AMAZEEN

Music Curator BEN NEILL

Director of Aesthetic Information Systems JOHN MAXWELL HOBBS

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ALEX KAHN

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For Electronic Cafe™ International

Directors and Founders KIT GALLOWAY and SHERRIE RABINOWITZ
Electronic Cafe™ Liaison/Aesthetic Information Technology Specialist DANIEL P. McVEIGH

Friday, November 4

First Floor

Zoar (with film by Bill Morrison and lighting by Scotto)

Jaron Lanier

Flora (a video by Tod Machover)

Cypher 7

Soldier String Quartet (music and video by Phill Niblock)

Video Animation by Jeremy Dawson and Dan Shrecker

Second Floor

DJ Olive

Tetsu Inoue/Terre Thaemlitz

Christian Marclay

DJ Spooky

Video by Feedback

Sensory Resonance Mind Machines by Ray Strano

Electronic Cafe™ hookup with Santa Monica

Saturday, November 5

First Floor

Cypher 7

Future Sound of London (live audio from their London studio)

Jaron Lanier

Flora (a video by Tod Machover)

Ben Neill (with projections by Jim Conti)

Zoar (with film by Bill Morrison and lighting by Scotto)

Video Animation by Jeremy Dawson and Dan Shrecker

Second Floor

DJ Olive

Future Sound of London (live audio from their London studio)

Tetsu Inoue/Terre Thaemlitz

Christian Marclay

DJ Spooky

Video by Feedback

Sensory Resonance Mind Machines by Ray Strano

Electronic Cafe™ hookup with Santa Monica

writing ambient music

Not since the futurists has a musical movement inspired the writing of so many manifestoes. Ever since Brian Eno sat down to explicate the aesthetics of "discrete music," every attempt to discuss ambience has begun with an elaborate discussion of its history. In addition to this historiographical urge, many manifesto writers have also felt the necessity to place that history in terms of the music's metaphysics--its transcendent value. Today,, in the mad dash to answer the question, "What is ambient music?"--typically asked of record companies and magazines trying to nail down the latest craze among *young people*, manifesto making has become a boom industry. It used to be that the British had a corner market on this sort of popular culture sociology and marketing hybrid. Who can forget the punk polemics of Malcolm McClaren or the excess-rhetoric of Paul Morley? Certainly the careers of the Sex Pistols and Frankie Goes To Hollywood owed their success largely to the musicological marketing of McClaren and Morley respectively. The rise (and rise) of ambient music, has presented us Americans with an opportunity to catch up in the manifesto department. Central to this exercise is the felt need to contextualize ambient music within the musical avant garde and, more specifically, the developments of electronic music. Whether the writer begins with Brian Eno's polemics from the 1970s or extends back to John Cage's *4'33"*, a score for silence first performed in 1952, no ambient explicator seems to be able to resist the desire to historicize the movement. For that is what the advocates of ambience (among which we count ourselves) most wish to proclaim, the significance associated with a bona fide musical movement. Whether the manifesto is Terre Thaemlitz program for a new age of metaphysics or our own declaration of a materialist music, the intention persists to establish the singularity of an ambient genre. Perhaps the need to polemicize in writing stems from the desire to explain the manifesto-impulse. Or rather, to give a grounding and a context to a form of music which so often makes claims of transcending context. For if the musical genre is indeed this transcendental trip to higher states of consciousness (typically anticipated in idealist, immaterial terms), over and above culturally-determined experience, then there would be no need for a manifesto. General intelligibility of the music would render the need for writing obsolete. And yet what ambient compilation hasn't included some sort of new age sermon? Just pick up the compilations on Moonshine, Silent, Astralwerks, Beyond Records, etc. While individual artists may not release as specific statements as those written by Youth for the Art of Noise "Ambient Collection" (1989), many artists include credit lists that, by evoking the name of his or her precursors, compose a sort of history for themselves. Mixmaster Morris' catalog of references on the Irresistible Force CD is just one example of this. Similarly, the iconic lexicon that graces many album covers with spacemen, dolphins, cyberhippy graphics, appropriated Eastern symbols forms another type of manifesto writing. Which brings us to the music. Just as specific images have been canonized as summarily "ambient" so too an entire catalog of sounds have been

collected and authorized as officially ambient in significance. All of these examples serve as a sort of language system to express and to define the form of music called ambient. However, isn't it contradictory that something transcendental be reduced to language at all? This is the great contradiction within ambient music--a contradiction that poses many possibilities for pleasure. In the same breath that ambient music is stylistically described as ethereal and mystical, its experience is radically sensual. The most obvious example of this truth was put on display at the "ambient-in" held in San Francisco featuring Space Time Continuum, Irresistible Force and Pete Namlook. In the same moment that sight and sound beckoned participants to give up their material states for a "higher state of mind," the most electric element in the event was the pressure of a hundred bodies strewn around the floor like a giant libidinal slumber party. We might do well to remember what Brian Eno said about ambient music being the people who experience sound. After all, it is the channelization of sound waves through the physical corpus that forms the experience of music. This subject brings us to those projects by artists that explore the physiology of sound frequencies. While not traditionally categorized as ambient artists (perhaps because of the materialism of their work), artists such as Etant Donnes, The Hafler Trio and the V2 group of sound experimentalists have conducted a number of remarkable sound sculptures using amplified frequencies generated internally and externally by physical objects including the human body. The Hafler Trio's own attempts to extend their range into more danceable forms (the recent "H30H" and "Designer Time" albums) and discrete forms (the "Cosmic Trigger" album) may bring them closer to the boundaries of a rigidly defined ambient music. We might also look into the recent work of Pete Namlook where musical ambience is composed from processed voices in conversation (on "The New Consciousness"). Nevertheless, it is not our purpose to assert a correct aesthetic for all ambient musicians. Rigid musical academicism is the one element of Theodor Adorno's legacy we wish not to inherit. Rather, our concern, as always, is a matter of use for pleasure. That is, extreme, excessive pleasure directed against the anti-democratic structures. The pathway is always already that of transformation. We believe transformation begins in the context of our relations. Ambient music is that context, that starting place. It is both the amplification of our situation and, via transmission, its transformation. Perhaps this is the impulse that lies behind writing ambient music. While we may find comfort and even liberal bliss in a transcendent musical language--we are reminded of the Lutheran piety of Bach, and the Catholic ecstasy of Verdi--writing is the material context of music's intelligibility: not what the music lacks, but what the rhetoric of music's transcendence denies us. The more we write, the more we amplify, the more we frustrate our metaphysical urge. Perhaps it is an urge whose suspension is long overdue.

--Dont Rhine

excerpt from "din: An Introduction to the Political Uses of Sound"

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Astralwerks Records
Instinct Records
Subharmonic Records

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