

A P E S T A A R T J E



- I'd like to know a little biographical information about you, such as how old you are, where you grew up, your schooling... Any sort of information that could help readers to understand how you got to be who you are today.

Koen Holtkamp : I'm 24 years old. I was born in Laren, The Netherlands but have spent the majority of my life in the U.S. Mostly in and around New York. I studied Film, Video, Photography, Art History and Sound at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, The New School for Social Research in NYC and Pratt Institute of Art in Brooklyn.

- Which friendly piece of advice would you give to someone who wants to start his label ? What used to be tape-only labels are now CDR-only labels. Do you think it makes it easier for people to start their label and run less risks ?

Labels should take more risks. It seems as if the internet has made it a lot easier to run a record label in that in some respects it has made the world a smaller place.

- To me the role of a label should be to discover new acts, help them get promotion, distribution, spread the word on their creativity. It seems that could be the motivation behind your label. Right ?

Yes. Most of the things you mentioned are certainly a large part of the motivation. We are not so concerned with discovering new acts as apestaartje exists as a collective as well as a label and was mainly set up to promote and distribute the audio works of the collective. That said, we have expanded a bit over the past few years and have begun to work with other artists from all over the world whom we think are doing something truly unique and feel a particular affinity with.

- Could you introduce us to some of the acts on your label ? (names, how you met, anecdotes...)

This is the basic core of the apestaartje collective at the moment:

Brendon Anderegg : Audio works as anderegg. He is the proper 'musician' of the group and is quite adept at playing various instruments. Apparently he's been focusing on the cello over the last year so I'm curious how that will effect his music. We have been friends since the sixth grade. Currently resides in Portland, OR but will be moving to NYC shortly.

Collin Olan : Audio works as Collin Olan. By far the most technically proficient of the group as far as programming etc. We have no idea what he is doing half the time but it sounds great. Currently resides in Chicago, IL.

Chi Hyun Kim : Designer and co-creative director of in house design team col_r and co-label coordinator. She has been working with letterpress and bookbinding recently. We have several book projects planned for the future. Currently resides in Brooklyn, NY.

Koen Holtkamp : Co-creative director of in house design team col_r and co-label coordinator. Audio works as aero, n/a and 1/2 of 'a silent partner'. Currently resides in Brooklyn, NY.

We all met in Chicago in and around the School of the Art Institute. Basically we started the label as a means to distribute our work to a larger audience.



- **I have noticed in your list of distributors that you use mail order-lists rather than proper distributors, or better say a mail order-lists that have extended their activities and sell to some very specialized Indie record stores. But they do not sell to chain stores. So do you think that it would be useless for your records to reach those music supermarkets ?**

No, not useless but we are not willing to compromise in order get into a chain. While we may not get into the big chain stores by working with the smaller distros we have complete control over our products, how much they sell for, how they are packaged etc. We are also begining to distribute some non apestaartje titles via our website that we feel relate to what we are doing and are a bit harder to come by. Mostly from various labels from Tokyo that are associated with Minamo (cubic music, 360 records etc) as well as Jason Kahn's cut records, out of Switzerland, and a few other things.

- **Do you wish to keep your music within a certain circle of specialized connoisseurs ?**

No, I really would like for as many different types of people to hear the music as possible but at the same time I try to be somewhat realistic in accepting that the audience for the type of work that we are creating is somewhat specialized.

- **Or did you chose to keep things, prices under control and thus avoid mass-distribution in certain countries ?**

Apestaartje began very much as a do it yourself project and has continued to be run that way. One of the main reasons that we chose to go that route, starting our own label rather than sending out endless demos to other labels was so that we could have complete control over our own products. From how they are packaged to how they are priced.

- **Today, there are more and more chain stores and less and less passionate/smaller record shops. How are you affected by that (de)evolution ?**

Well being that we are a relatively young label (founded in 1998) it's hard to gauge that sort of thing. But I would guess that it makes it rather difficult to find our cds outside of major cities.

- **What gave you the reason, or motivation to start your label ? Weren't you satisfied with other labels' music ?**

I didn't really have anything to do with other labels one way or the other. Brendon (anderegg) and I have been good friends since middle school and have both been obsessed with various types of music for at least that long. Several years later after collaborating on various projects and trading cdrs for awhile I became particularly enamored with a piece that he had given me and decided that more people should hear it. So one evening we went out for a drink and I told him that I wanted to start a label and put out his music. We discussed it for awhile and it developed into the idea of doing it as a collective. We decided that we should pool our resources and do a little compilation. This became the first Apestaartje release a 3 inch cd titled 'small record (or wait)' released in 1999. After taking up a brief hiatus to concentrate on various other things like finishing school we released our next cd 're : martin arnold 'alone, life wastes andy hardy' in 2001 and have gradually expanded things since then releasing a few more cds each year.

- **How would you describe a typical Apestaartje act ?**

I would hope that there is no such thing as a typical Apestaartje act. While I'm willing to admit that we do have a particular sound and aesthetic I think we each bring different things to the label and I hope we can continue to expand the concept of the label in the future.

- **How did you chose the name of the label ? Why ?**

Probably not the best choice from a marketing standpoint ...as nobody here can pronounce it. apestaartje is a Dutch word/expression. I was born in The Netherlands and am still a Dutch citizen and sort of wanted to use something from my background. The direct translation is 'little monkey's tail'. I chose this for various pretty simple reasons. It's the nickname dutch people use for the @ symbol. @ being a symbol used to specify a location ...a label being a location for music. Also I've been somewhat obsessed with monkeys for as long as I can remember. I still have a small stuffed animal collection which consists solely of monkeys. But basically it's just a name. I like the way it looks visually, I thought it had an interesting off-kilter sort of balance. There is a bit more to it but that's the short version.

- **Most labels have an example, or a favorite other label which they like, and you ? Any label you could say was an influence on you ?**

Growing up I was heavily influenced by several DIY labels like Dischord. But as far as labels that are more directly related to what we are doing stylistically speaking, I would say Touch has been a label that I have admired over the years for putting out consistently high quality and unique recordings without getting caught up in trends. And of course Jon Wozencraft does an amazing job with the design.

- **Any label that you think has been influenced by yours ?**
- **You pay a lot of attention to packaging and your website is good-looking. Could you give us details on the person in charge of the design ?**

Thanks. We consider the packaging/design etc to be equally as important as the actual audio. All of our packaging is done by our in-house design team 'col_r' (pronounced color) which consists of Chi Hyun Kim and myself. It's one of the only really equal collaborations I've been a part of as far as each of us bringing different ideas and skills to each project and I feel really lucky to be able to work with her.

- **What is according to you the most beautiful record/art-object you ever issued ?**

I really couldn't say. Generally I'm most excited about whatever we're working on at the moment.

- **Often people do not consider "microsounds" to be rich and believe that very few is happening... Often associating it with the theory of "less is more", whereas a lot of things and ideas can be noticed in the music of many so-called "microsound" artists.**
- **Would you say that this is because many listeners :**
 - a) do not listen**
 - b) do not care**
 - c) can't understand the subtelties**

I try to avoid terms like 'microsound'.

- **Could you give us some precisions on the actual scene in Chicago, New-York ? Any other label, activists that you feel close to ?**

We are not really part of any scene that I am aware of. Most of the labels, musicians etc that I feel close to are rather far away geographically speaking. I would love to go to Tokyo and play with Minamo and some of the other folks over there.

- **Anything to say on the musical situation of USA today ?**

The U.S. is such a big place I find it difficult to try and encompass the entire musical situation. The situation for the arts in general here is a bit sour when it comes to funding and that sort of thing as compared to Europe where people seem to appreciate and embrace different kinds of art much more readily.

- **Is there anything that you regret or that you'd change if you could ?**

No. It's definitely been a learning process as I really had no idea how to run a record label when we started this whole thing but I've enjoyed about 99% of it.

- **Any album or band that you wish you had issued on Apestaartje ?**

No. ...Well if I had to say maybe minamo's first album 'wakka'.

- **What are your goal as a label. Futureplans ?**

Our basic goal is to continue doing this and expand it into various ways working in different mediums (we have several book projects planned as well as a DVD some time in the not so near future). We are planning on expanding our live activities with a european tour in the works for some time in the spring/summer of 2003. Also anderegg is doing an apestaartje sub label called Snail Article which will concentrate mostly on vinyl only releases. The first release is a split LP by aero and anderegg (each artist contributing a side long track). This should be out around the end of Sept.

- **Upcoming releases ? Please give some details on every band, name of the record, etc...**

We've just put out two new discs which should be making there way out into the distant corners of the world right about now. The first is a compilation called 'colour and pattern' featuring lengthy tracks by Minamo, an electro-acoustic quartet from Tokyo who specialize in an extremely gradual form of improvised music, NYC based DJ/improviser and electronic music producer, I-sound (To Roccco Rot etc) in collaboration with NYC multi-instrumentalist Daniel Raffel and two solo tracks by Berlin guitarist Jorg Maria Zeger of the electro-acoustic trio Perlonex. Also just released is the first installment of a new series of 3inch cds concentrating on field recordings and other non-overtly musical audio called 'listen'.

It 's the debut release by Chicago sound artist/improvisor Collin Olan titled 'rec01'. It basically consists of a recording he made using homemade microphones to capture the sound of ice melting from within the ice. The next two discs will come out around the new year. A Minamo full length cd and a compilation titled 'object set and motion' featuring tracks by duul_drv from Winnipeg Canada, tu-m from Pescara Italy and Collin Olan from Chicago, USA. We have a lot of exciting things in the works for 2003 but I can't discuss them quite yet. This is just the beginning.

Discography listed Chronologically :

V/A- 'small record (or wait)' (staartje003) 3inch cd

Feat : Anderegg, a silent partner and n/a released 1999

V/A- 're : martin arnold. 'alone, life waste's andy hardy' (staartje007) cd

Feat : Fennesz, Anderegg, Akira Rabelais, n/a , a silent partner, pimmon and steve roden. Released early 2001

anderegg- 'when rectangles roll under cities' cd (staartje005) cd
Released late 2001

aero- 'pretend' (staartje009)
Released late 2001

V/A- 'Colour and Pattern' (staartje011) cd
Feat. Minamo, I-Sound and Daniel Raffel and Jorg-Maria Zeger.
Released Aug. 23 2002

Collin Olan- 'rec01' (listen001) 3inch cd
Released Aug. 23 2002

Some other upcoming releases featuring apestaartje artists :

anderegg- track on tu-m mp3 label to be released in Sept ?

anderegg/aero- split LP on apestaartje sub-label Snail Article to be released Sept/Oct

aero- 'generally speaking' track on tu-m mp3 label to be released in Sept ?

aero – 'As Is' track on upcoming 360 records (Tokyo) compilation curated by Minamo's Tetsuro Yasunaga

aero- track on upcoming 3 inch cd compilation on umu-disc (Tokyo)

aero + Jon Leone- 'over+ under' for videopopminuto DVD compilation (Italy)

collabortaive audio/video piece with chicago video artist Jon Leone.

For more informaton please check out our web site : www.staartje.com