

TOM BOGAERT

Black noise & sputnik power



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I - Black Noise (2008)

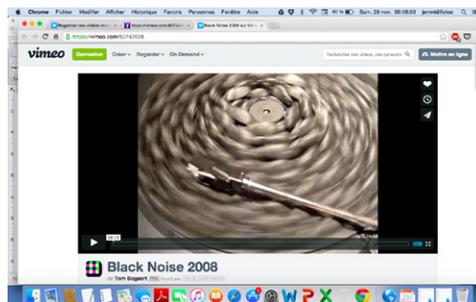
Black Noise is the soundtrack to Genocide. Black licorice candy mice cover a turntable.

As the needle bumps along over their backs, it generates a rhythmic pounding eerily reminiscent of tribal drums and machine guns.

During the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, the hate radio station "Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines" (RTLM) borrowed metaphors from the world of aggregate animal formation as 'swarming' and 'infestation' to stir the killers to action with a lively mix of entertainment,

pop music and hate. On a catchy tune, the star DJ blared death tallies like sports scores.

The title 'Black Noise' alludes to a blatantly racist emotional disconnect. It examines how a radio frequency became a channel for crystallized hatred. Black Noise is also the technical



Black Noise Tom Bogaert 2008 - <https://vimeo.com/60742628>

term for silence. Sputnik Power (Egypt 2014) Sound installation.

In the early 1950s, the moon became a plausible goal for space travel and Sun Ra was fascinated by the possibility—in fact, he talked about it so much that some musicians took to calling him "the moon man." Around this time, Sun Ra also claimed to have been abducted by aliens who transported him to Saturn (he told this story many times with remarkable consistency in detail). In the summer of 1969, when the world was excitedly awaiting the flight of Apollo 11, Esquire magazine asked contem-

porary popular figures for their suggestions for the first words on the moon. Sun Ra, then at the height of his fame, eagerly penned a poem in response:

Reality has touched against myth
Humanity can move to achieve the impossible.
Because when you've achieved one impossible
the others

Come together to be with their brother,
the first impossible. Borrowed from the rim
of the myth. Happy Space Age To You. . . .
Sputnik Power (2014) refers to Sun Ra's belief
in "Pyramid Power," the alleged supernatural
or paranormal properties of the Egyptian
pyramids and objects of similar shape.

With this power, even model pyramids are
said to preserve foods, sharpen razor blades,
improve health, function as idea incubators,
and trigger sexual urges—among a number
of other dramatic effects. Sun Ra was a strong
believer in "Pyramid Power" and was often
seen wearing a copper wire "pyramid hat."

Background

Bogaert's "1971, Sun Ra in Egypt" is an ongoing research project based on the life and work of Sun Ra that exists as a series of performances, lectures, installations, videos, art objects, and a related publication.

The project takes as its starting point Sun Ra's 1971 visit to Egypt, and many of the related works playfully insert Sun Ra's life and legacy into the conceptual, pop, and minimalist zeitgeist of the New York art world of the 1960s and 1970s.

About Sun Ra

The legendary American jazz pioneer, mystic, poet, and philosopher Sun Ra was



born Herman Poole Blount, but changed his name to Le Sony'r Ra after a visionary experience led him to believe that he came from the planet Saturn. From then on, Sun Ra was fascinated by both outer space and ancient Egypt, and incorporation of the Egyptian sun god Ra into his name was the first of his many invocations of ancient Egypt's culture and beliefs. Famous for his music as much as his eccentricity, Sun Ra's unique sonic productions reflected his mix of new age mysticism, black nationalism, Freemasonry, Kabbalah, Rosicrucianism, and other non-Western cosmologies. From the mid-1950s until his death in 1993, Sun Ra led a band called "The Arkestra", which continues to perform its eccentric mix of free jazz, bop, and electronic music under the leadership of Marshall Allen.

Tom Bogaert - Sputnik Power (Egypt 2014)
Sound installation
<https://vimeo.com/104707091>

Tom Bogaert came to art over a decade ago after practicing refugee law. His artistic practice is organized through long-term research projects that often examine the intersection of humanism and human rights, politics and entertainment, and art and propaganda. Bogaert is currently working on a project inspired by the apocryphal story that Sun Ra - the legendary African American jazz pioneer, mystic, poet, activist and philosopher - travelled to Haiti and visited Port-au-Prince during his "lost years" somewhere in 1960 - 1961. "Sun Ra in Haiti" will be presented at the 4th Ghetto Biennale in Port-au-Prince in December 2015.

