

::: interview questions for kevin wienke (alluvial)

1. please tell me about yourself, and how the label started.

The label was started in 1998 while I was living in the state of Michigan. I started it on my own with the John Hudak "Don't Worry" cd. Once i moved to the state of Minnesota, I joined forces with my friend Scott, who is the other half of the label. He was about to release a cd from Koji Marutani called "Pataphysics". Since we both had the same sorts of ideas and musical tastes, we decided to join up together. It made no sense to have two labels.

2. what is the concept of the label? why did you name the label "alluvial"??

My profession is as an archaeologist. I generally have worked on Native Indian village and hunting sites all around the United States. So, I have a distict interest in soil and stones. Geology in general. "Alluvial" is a geologial term that describes the deposition of sediments by water. Alot of the music I was listening to reflected the natural environment, so it seemed like a natural union of ideas to me. We have tried to release music that is consistent with these ideas. Sometimes in the music, but very often in the packaging and ideas behind the overall approach to the label.

3. how did you hook up with the arists that you're releasing? do you accept demos? if so, please tell me where to send them.

Generally, we approach the artists we want to release music from. We are both avid listeners, so we know what is going on at any given time. We do accept demos (to be sent to our PO Box). Often, we do not want to release this music, but some times we do (Augur and Seth Nehil, for example).

4. all the artwork is beautiful and they each have different taste of design and packaging.. do you decide on the packaging according to the music and ask different designers that suites the concept?

We have an overall aesthetic concept that we like- natural tones, textured papers, and geologic things- stone, soil profiles, etc. And we hate jewel cases! But, we always leave the design of the releases to the artists. They have nearly complete control. Often, the artists we work with will design packages that reflect the aesthetic we tend to use for all of our releases.

5. i read that janek schaefer visited your place which turned out to be the wonderful release of "weather report". please tell me about him and his sound works from your point of view.

Yes, Janek was here on a grant from a local arts institution that he won. I did not know him, but he had heard of Alluvial and contacted me before he came. He was here for a period of two months, and he and I got to be good friends. I assisted him early on with launching one of his weather balloons that ended up being used on the Weather Report cd (photos are in the front of the booklet in that cd). He had very specific ideas of what he wanted to do with the composition and we talked at great length about packaging, etc. It sort of seemed natural to me that we would play a part in releasing the cd. Seeing that we are a label based out of where he composed the work, and that it fits in with what we tend to do, it seemed natural. We paid for the majority of the release of Weather Report, but Janek contributed through his own AudiOh! Room label as well. Janek also did all of the design of the packaging and it turned out beautifully. The booklet ended up being a photo diary of his entire stay here.

6. i've traveled around the great lakes before and it's surprising that your label is based in minnesota. because here (or maybe in most countries) these kinds of music comes from large cities..do you find any difficulties in running a label there? are there any

record shops and events that supports the kind of music that you release?

Well, I am originally from Buffalo, New York on Lake Erie (very close to Toronto, Ontario). Scott is originally from Chicago, Illinois. So maybe that is where your big city idea fits in. But no, it is not difficult to run the label from here. Although we don't get a lot of support from local record stores. There aren't that many people here that listen to this kind of music. We tend to sell most of our records in Japan and Europe anyway. Actually, Minneapolis, Minnesota is a fairly big city (about 350,000 people). It is an odd place to see such a big city because it is so far north and the winters can be so cold. But overall, there is a good arts community here, particularly with theatre and the visual arts. The Walker Arts Center is one of the best multi-media arts insitutions in the U.S.

7. is the government in your country open to helping out and developing new cultures? like for some countries in europe, even small artists can receive funds to play abroad.

Among many, many problems that we currently have in the United States with the government, funding of the arts is one of them. Most funds for the arts (like that that funded Janek's visit, for example) come from private sources. There is public funding available, but too often, there are political agendas attached to the use of that money. The United States can be a maddening place. The right wing politicians have essentially taken over the public culture of the U.S., and all too often what they would refer to as the "arts" needs to adhere to a religious ideology (i.e. Christian), or at the very least, the arts cannot not be at odds with that dogma. This nationalistic tendency has gotten much, much worse since September 11, 2001. At this point, I am afraid that the only thing the U.S. government is open to doing with different cultures is conquering them, or bullying them into agreement with their policies. If this ideology is questioned in a public forum (or by the arts), that person's loyalty to the country is questioned by the government. I'm sorry to rant, but it is true.

One last example: An Italian musician that I know who has played the U.S. recently, had to lie about why he came to the U.S. He could not tell them that he was here to play music, or they would not have let him in. He had to say that he was here to visit friends and just happened to bring his guitar with him. The government could not collect taxes on his performances, you see.

8. do you know anything about the japanese experimental music scene?

Yes, I have always tried to follow the Japanese scene as closely as I can. Alluvial has released music from Koji Marutani, Sukora, and Kuwayama-Kijima. Several years ago, I was listening to alot of the noise scene- Merzbow, Masonna, Government Alpha, MSBR, etc. But lately, I have come to appreciate more subtle forms of music. Utah Kawasaki, Minoru Sato, and Jio Shimizu come to mind. Ryoji Ikeda is a genius.

9. any future plans on your label?

Next up, we will be releasing an LP from French composer Yannick Dauby. After that, I don't really know. I would love to do something with Massimo Toniutti, and hopefully that will happen. We have heard alot of good things recently, and we are currently trying to sort through those. This winter, we will finally establish a website.

::: DISCOGRAPHY :::

Alial Straa "Tunnels/Stairwell" (cd-r)
The Lumbering Intransitive "Dream of the Alial Straa" (cd-r)
Seth Nehil "From Cloud To Seed" (lp)
Hands To Croatoan (cd-r)
Augur "A Slender Thread of Silence" (cd-r)
THU20 "Nancy/Het Archief" (cd-r)

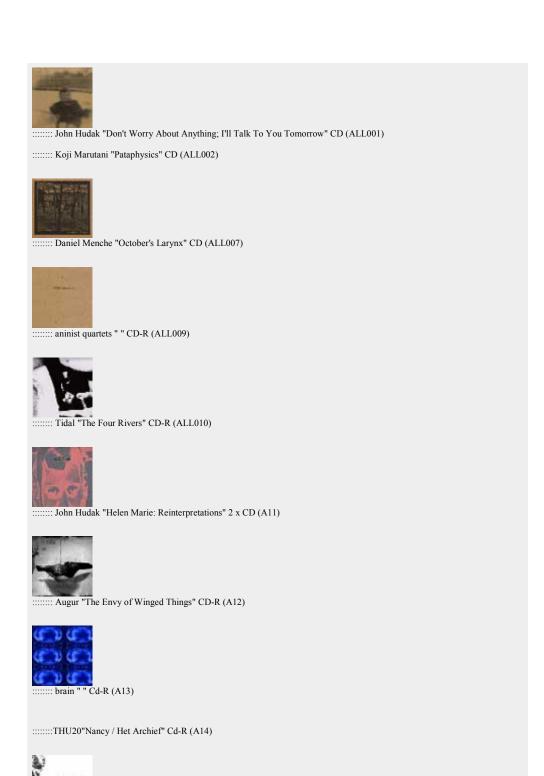
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:::: Mem "It Was A Very Good Year" CD (ALL016)



::::::: Janek Schaefer "Weather /Report" CD (A17)



:::::::: Kuwayama-Kijima "01.05.10" CD (A15)