

Curriculum Vitae - Jos Smolders

Biography



Jos Smolders (1960) was raised in a relatively remote village in the south of the Netherlands. He is self-taught. Reading every book available in the small hometown library Smolders developed an interest in art. Which lead to various exercises in the creative field. An inquisitive mind and insatiable drive to explore the sonic world lead Smolders towards music outside of the traditional realm.

In 1980 he settled in Delft to study architecture at the technical university. Experimentation with sound, which had started tentatively in his mid-teens, now had an almost continuous place in his activities. In 1986 he started the electronic improvisation collective THU20. Smolders also started writing down his ideas on music and reviews for Vital, a magazine that had been started by Frans De Waard¹. There have always been multiple things going on in Smolders' life. Solo music, music for and with other artists, writing interviews and reviews, performing, producing. Since 2012 he added to that list mastering of music and, as a consequence of his love of classical electronic music, the restoration of old tape music.

The music of Jos Smolders is always on the border of abstraction and narration. Like a classic De Kooning painting is both abstract and concrete. Concrete, everyday sounds meld into intricate layers of sound. Sometimes it's harsh though not for long because things are constantly evolving like a river of also constantly changing matter. The works sometimes can be experienced as landscapes are objects, at other times they are quite moving and the listener is carried away with narrative of sound.

More about Jos Smolders online : [Linktree/jossmolders](https://linktree.com/jossmolders)

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¹ A facsimile edition can be ordered at <https://www.kormplastics.nl/vital-the-complete-collection-1987-1995/>

Timeline

- 1975 – 1979 First experiments with guitar, organ and tape recorder
Writing of short stories and poetry
Paints with various techniques
- 1980 Starts study of architecture at Technical University Delft
Start experimenting with electronics in various bands
Discovers the music of Stockhausen, Schaeffer, Cage, etc.
Starts solo experiments with tape music. Decides to fully concentrate on sound as artistic expression (leaving poetry, painting, architecture)
- 1985 Writes several essays on the underground and academical culture
- 1986 First musical publications
- 1987 – 1995 Writes essays and reviews on electronic music for Vital magazine. Regular contributions until 1995.
- 1987 – 2022 Starts electronic improvisation quartet THU20 with performance throughout Europe and releases on vinyl, cd and tape.
- 1988 - 2002 Coöperation with Atty Bax, audio for performances and sound installations
Formal education of composition and sound structure by Joost van de Goor
- 1994 Coöperation with artist Alexander Korsmit, audio for sound installation
- 1998 Develops earlabs.org as a news portal for underground electronic artists
- 1999 Start of one of the first online music labels, Laboratoire Moderne, dedicated to beginning experimental composers
Start of an online portal where small, new artists can present their work
- 2000 Performance and talk for cultural capital of Europe, Brussels
- 2001 Success of earlabs.org leads to its demise. End of the portal. Earlabs.org continues as a gateway for audio news and a platform his own music
Performance and talk for cultural capital of Europe, Rotterdam
- 2001 – 2024 Many solo projects, performances also in combination with other artists
- 2012 – 2024 EARLabs.org is a platform for musical services.
- Production advice
 - Audio mastering
 - Audio restoration
 - Postproduction for audio and video productions
- 2024 Presentation of Textuur 4 composition at the acousmonium in Paris, a commission by GRM
Presentation of Textuur 1 at MFR festival, Amsterdam
Artist in residence at GRM

Reviews

Textuur 2 The minimalist sounds we hear aren't minimalist. It's not a particular frequency singular waveform or a standard white or coloured noise ... Hell no. Jos knows what he is doing sound-wise, and in its minimalism lies the strength of its complexity. Or the other way around, but believe me, it's really hard to design sounds that sound simple on the outside but so complex on the inside. Knowing Jos and having seen him perform live on several occasions, I can only say he excels in his field of expertise. Gorgeous release. **Vital Weekly, 2024**

JOS SMOLDERS präsentiert mit **Textuur 3 [Register]** & **Textuur 2 [IIII - - -]** seine von Pierre Schaeffer und von 'Yucatan', einem Gedicht des Minimalisten Carl Andre (1935-2024), angestoßene Untersuchung des Übergangs von Objets Sonore in Objets Musicale, im Hinblick auf deren vollständigen Abstraktion, frei von allen physikalischen und psychologischen Anhaftungen. Während Andre eingeschnappt war über das als Kompliment gemeinte 'konkret' für sein Poem, fand Smolders in 'Weben' eine Metapher für seine 'Permutationen' der Computerstimme in einem Whole Foods-Supermarkts als Basismaterial für 3. Textuur 2 besteht aus rhythmischen Teilen sowie einfachen Sinuswellen-Drones und untersucht Drone für Drone und Break für Break die Extermination von IDM in elektroakustischer Abstraktion. So wie er bei 3 das Ohrenmerk lenkt auf die Degradierung von Menschen zu Kunden und von Kunden zu *Register 1, 2, 3...*, die nach der Pfeife eines Automaten tanzen. Ob die stottrige Verhackstückung und Modulation des Konkreten zu SIRR- und Wummerwellen, zu Tierlauten oder Meeresrauschen, allerdings dem Siegeszug der Automaten und Idioten... – gibt es eigentlich noch Lemminge? **BA 125, 2024**

Spaces is an aesthetic exercise that is mostly interesting for how Smolders navigates these different museum spaces. While his compositional style doesn't deviate too far from what is initially heard, the two hours that comprise this double album move by relatively quickly. Especially notable is "Traum des Künstlers," a series of short tracks whose recordings were sourced from Museum Küppersmühle. Smolders explains that while the museum was rather quiet during his visit, two specific "characters" were present: the ticking of a climate monitoring device, and a raucous child. We hear both of these elements throughout all five compositions and while the stitched-together editing here is more obvious than elsewhere, it's a surprisingly fun sequence that gets at the heart of *Spaces*: every person's visit to a museum is wholly unique, irreplicable. **Tone Glow magazine, 2018**

Collaboration with Frans De Waard / WaSm Fieldrecordings of everyday sounds that are molten by electronic processing and cast into purely musical forms. Piano or vibraphone notes from which the envelopes are chiseled away to give them smoother shapes. Bass drones that are so deep and warm that they almost acquire a tactile quality. A delicate spatialisation of sounds in the mix that makes listening to this album the exploration of a room in which sound objects are distributed, some in the spotlight, some in dark corners. An interplay between raw and 'dirty' field recordings and radio static and 'clean' modular electronics which ensures that the changing surfaces which the music presents to us alternate between rough and smooth. All these aspects contribute to the sculptural, three-dimensional feel of this music. However, 'sculptural' should by no means be mistaken for 'static'. The album also has a flowing, oceanic quality that might appeal to fans of musique concrète composer Bernard Parmegiani as well as to those of Detroit's techno-funk legends Drexciya. And, of course, to anyone who liked Jos Smolders's most recent water-themed solo album "Submerge/Emerge" on Crónica! **Attenuation Circuit, 2020**

Live presentations

I think that the most important part of a live performance is the immediacy, the fact that performer and audience are together in one room. I don't play a preconceived score but most times I improvise.

I bring with me a few electronic devices and I have a vague notion of 'where I want things to go'. But



once I start or have started the most important part is to listen to the situation and move from there.

I have learned to be aware of what goes on in the audience and find ways to draw the listener into my circle of concentration.

That way all those present go the same journey but each experienced from a different perspective.

Below are a few links to my performances on Youtube.

- Live at Faq Festival (Toonzaal, Den Bosch)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEFvzURRhGo>
- Jos Smolders and Frans de Waard at Sonic Acts (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=118T05T79g8>
- Jos Smolders and Roel Meelkop at Noodlebar, Rotterdam
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLgRouGU7Wg>
- THU20 at Worm, Rotterdam
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVRvCNTwoR8>
- Desktop performance
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=td5O1JLq5-k>

(Incomplete list of) WORKS

Albums

1986	I Could Be God	cassette
1987	Yes Yes Oh Yes	cassette
1988	SCRTCHD	cassette
	Corrupted Bellybuster	cassette
	Mama - Study Of A Human Tongue	cassette
1989	Junkie On Hiss Snag	cassette
1990	Freebasing A For Is Me	vinyl
	THU20 - Eerste Schijf	cd
1992	No Is E Monocle	vinyl
1994	Music For CD-Player	cd
1999	THU20 - Derde Schijf	cd
2002	Music For Kalx.com	cd
2003	The Goem Variations #1	online
	A-Z Blender	online
2004	Textures And Mobiles	cd
2005	Habitat	cd
2008	Gaussian Transient (Megaphone)	cd
2010	The Drone Gnome	cd
	THU20 - Groningen	online
2014	Jos Smolders & Yiorgis Sakellariou – A B - A - B	cd
	THU20 - Nijmegen	cassette
	Modular Works 2014Q2	online
	Modular Works 2014Q3	online
2015	Modular Works 2015Q1	online
	Modular Works 2015Q2	online
	Modular Works: 2014Q4	online
	Jos Smolders Staplerfahrer – MDKLNKRT Sessions	online
2017	Nowhere: Exercises In Modular Synthesis And Field Recording	cd
2018	Haarvöl, Jos Smolders, Orphax, Machinefabriek – Dream Sequences Volume 1 Orphax Reframed	cd
	L'Oreille Couverte	cassette
	Spaces	cd
	Untitled XV (Stereo Mix)	cd
	Resonance (Archival)	online
2019	Modulisme Session 008	online
2021	Submerge-Emerge	cd
	Bagatellen	cassette
	Jos Smolders & Jim O'Rourke – Additive Inverse	cd
2023	Jos Smolders & Guido Nijs – Smolders / Delaere / Nijs	vinyl
2024	Textuur 3	online
	Textuur 2	cd

Textuur 1

cd

Singles & EPs

1999 Jos Smolders / Goem – Aarrghll....!! / Motormix

vinyl

2010 Esprit Flottant

cassette

2013 30 Years (Rauw)

cassette

Compilations

1999 Scrtchd / Abstract Art

cassette

2005 Garet* / Lloyd* / Smolders* / Ubeboet – Territorium

cd

2010 Various Sampler Contributions

online

Audiovisual works

1999 Alexander Korsmit & Jos Smolders* – Maybe One Thousand
Buddhas For One Dream With Hidden Noise

music for exhibition

2012 Atty Bax - Lust Beast Forest

music for exhibition

2013 Mark Lyken - The Terrestrial Sea

audio for video

2014 Mark Lyken - Mirrorlands

audio for video

2015 Mark Lyken Boneshaker

audio for video

2022 Mark Lyken - Notes From A Low Orbit

audio for video

2024 Mark Lyken - House Of Gloss

audio for video