

## Brainwashed - Sudden Infant, "Noise In My Head"

Written by Craig Dunton

Sunday, 13 November 2011 20:42 - Last Updated Sunday, 13 November 2011 22:53

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Joke Lanz has been a constant in the worldwide noise scene for over two decades and has always stood alone as a unique and inventive artist, impossible to pin down but always innovative. This book presents the history of the project, as well as a massive documentation of Lanz's life and prolific performance art career, of which I was less familiar, but found captivated nonetheless.

[Marhaug Forlag](#)

Along with his frequent collaborator Rudolf Eb.er (Runzelstern & Gurglestock), Lanz is part of the Schimpfluch-Gruppe collective, who are perhaps the closest antecedents of the Vienna Aktionist movement of the 1960s. Lanz's performances work well as a distillation of that "big four": he sometimes displays the graphic brutality of Hermann Nitsch or Rudolf Schwarzkogler, but also includes the somatic intensity (and absurdist humor) of Gunter Brus or Otto Muehl.

The bulk of the book is comprised of photographic documentations of performances, with a few examples of Lanz' own action scores and documentations, which run the gamut between specific, heavily annotated descriptions to joyfully crude stick figure sketches with scrawled text.

My familiarity with Sudden Infant is mostly on the audio end of his art, which often encompasses harsh noise, electro-acoustic sparseness, and occasionally comedic attempts at punk rock. A Sudden Infant record is just as likely to be disturbing, harsh feedback as it is a gleefully fun piece of actual "music." While that facet of his career is only represented by album and flyer images, it still conveys that duality of joy and darkness that the sounds on them do.

The selection of essays that are included perfectly reflect the duality of Sudden Infant. Leif

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Elggren's stream of consciousness poetry coincides Lanz's more artsy endeavors, while the world's loudest elementary school librarian Daniel Menche writes of his first meeting with Sudden Infant in his brilliantly comedic, vulgar manner. With other contributions from Drew Daniels, Steve Underwood, and a long-form interview between Lanz and *As Loud As Possible* editor Chris Sienko, the textual element of this tome is varied, although somewhat brief.

As the first publication on his own imprint, Lasse Marhaug has clearly put his heart and soul into this project, documenting Lanz's work as both a curator and as a fan. Personally I would have like to have seen more text included, but I understand that this is intended to be a presentation of his art, not a description or explanation of it. Most of all, I'm happy to see such a unique performer receive this kind of exposure, rather than being relegated to the world of obscure websites and poorly photocopied fanzines.