

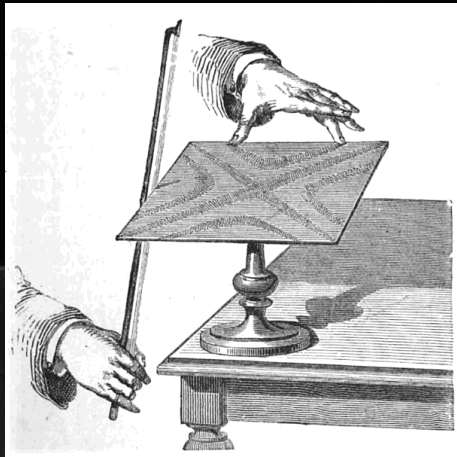
An Old-New Genre: Visual Music

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<http://vizualzene.hu>

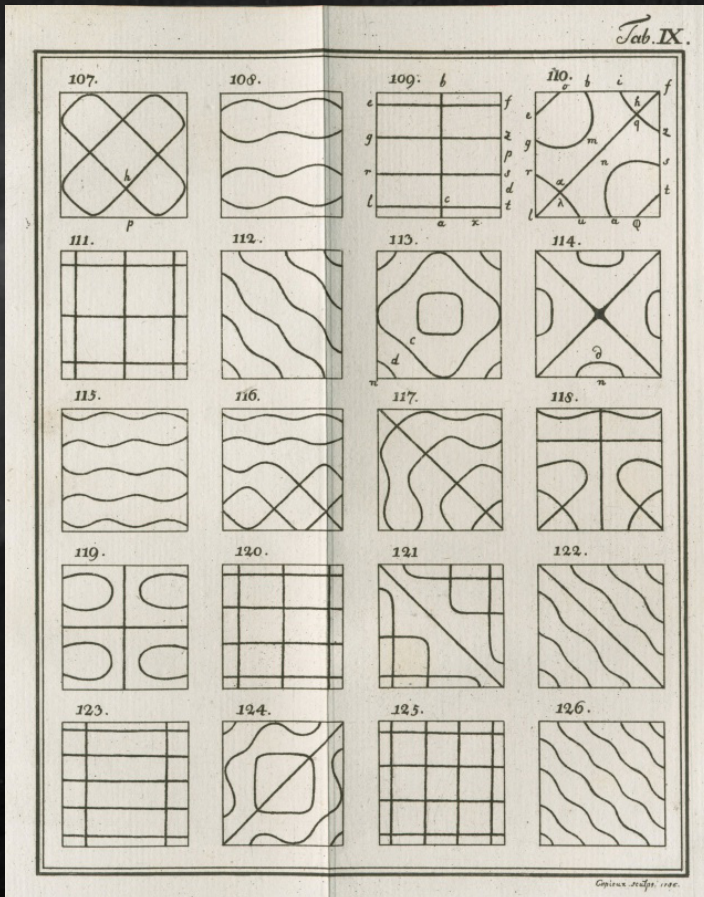


1. Chladni – plate

(Source: William Henry Stone: Elementary Lessons on Sound, London: Macmillan, 1879, p 26, fig 12)

2. Chladni – 1787, “Entdeckungen...”, Table 9

Online: https://monoskop.org/Ernst_Chladni (2018. 03. 19)



Ernst Chladni strewed fine sand over a metal plate which he set into vibration by moving a violin bow along its edge. Sliding off the points of most intense vibration, the sand formed different, complex patterns (1787).

“It was strewn with fine sand, and Jonathan, by means of an old cello bow which he drew up and down the edge from top to bottom made it vibrate, and according to its motion the excited sand grouped and arranged itself in astonishingly precise and varied figures and arabesques. This **visible acoustic**, wherein the simple and the mysterious, law and miracle, so charmingly mingled, pleased us lads exceedingly; [...]”

Thomas Mann: Doctor Faustus, The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend. Translated from German by H. T. Lowe-Porter, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1948., pp. 17-18.

Mann **based the character** of the father of the hero of the **novel**, Adrian Leverkühn, **on Chladni**.

visible acoustic = **visual acoustic** = **visual music**

1. Common structural basis of different senses

“Common structural basis of all types of sensation ... being hidden creative possibilities in structural correspondence ... – **synchronisation** of different senses ...”

Gyorgy Kepes: The Language of Vision, 1944.

There are **similar components of different media**, (so similar of different arts):

rhythm, *form*, *counterpoint*, dynamics, time, space, harmony, contrast, pattern, repetition, consonance, dissonance, dimensions, etc.

2. Concise definition of Visual Music

- More than three hundreds years old history
- It gets newer and newer impulses at present
- **Music for the eyes** (Hear the picture, see the sound!)
- :: music-like thinking, construction
- :: synchronisation
- Passage among different media

General definition of VM:

Such **structurally integrated intermedia works**, in which **sounds and images are given equal importance** and are **developed either simultaneously** (or in constant awareness of each other).

(The genre is known for producing exciting experiments to match, synchronize (and sometimes a-synchronize) sound and (motion) picture. The **different media** are not perceived as one complementing the other, but are **built together**; one is **determined** by the **other**.)

Visual Music (so) is a specific type of art. It is principally the **use of musical/sound structures** that refer the visual (and audio-visual) expressions.

Different transcoding:

The sound/music can be **transformed** into visual/pictures by various means (see **visualisation**). A solution in the opposite direction can be imagined too, when the visual elements are converted into sound (see **sonification**).

Visualisation and sonification are **wider-ranging category** than Visual Music.

The **correspondences** between sounds and pictures can be:

- **synchrony**
- **a-synchrony**
- **“synchresis”**

At the point where a sound event and a visual event meet in **synchrony**, the effect of **“synchresis”** (Chion, 1994) becomes particularly prominent.

3. Three main **categories** of Visual Music

STATIC VM	Makes an attempt to give the music a visual shape	2D, 3D – Abstract fine art can be connected to this	Sound is not united	eg. Paul Klee, Henri Nouveau and Gábor Palotai
DYNAMIC VM	Expanded structures in time (like music)	Abstract film/video can be connected	Silent or sound motion picture	eg. Viking Eggeling and Éva T. Bortnyik–Csaba Tubák
PURE VM	You hear what you see (and you see what you hear) Synchrony	Role of electricity/computer – Can be interactive, live electronics performances, computer as instrument	Sound is united	eg. Norman McLaren, Andrea Szigetvári and Zsanett Szirmay



Paul Klee: **Fugue in Red**. Watercolor, 1921.

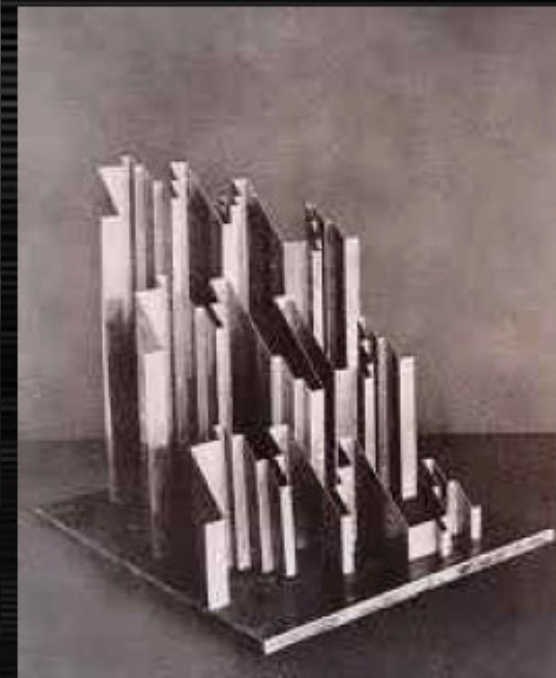
Klee became intensely preoccupied with the parallels between music and painting. He perceived a clear visual connection to the structural articulations found in music. **Focusing on polyphony and counterpoint**, Klee produced his watercolor "Fugue in Red".

The correspondence is not so strict, rather based on associations.

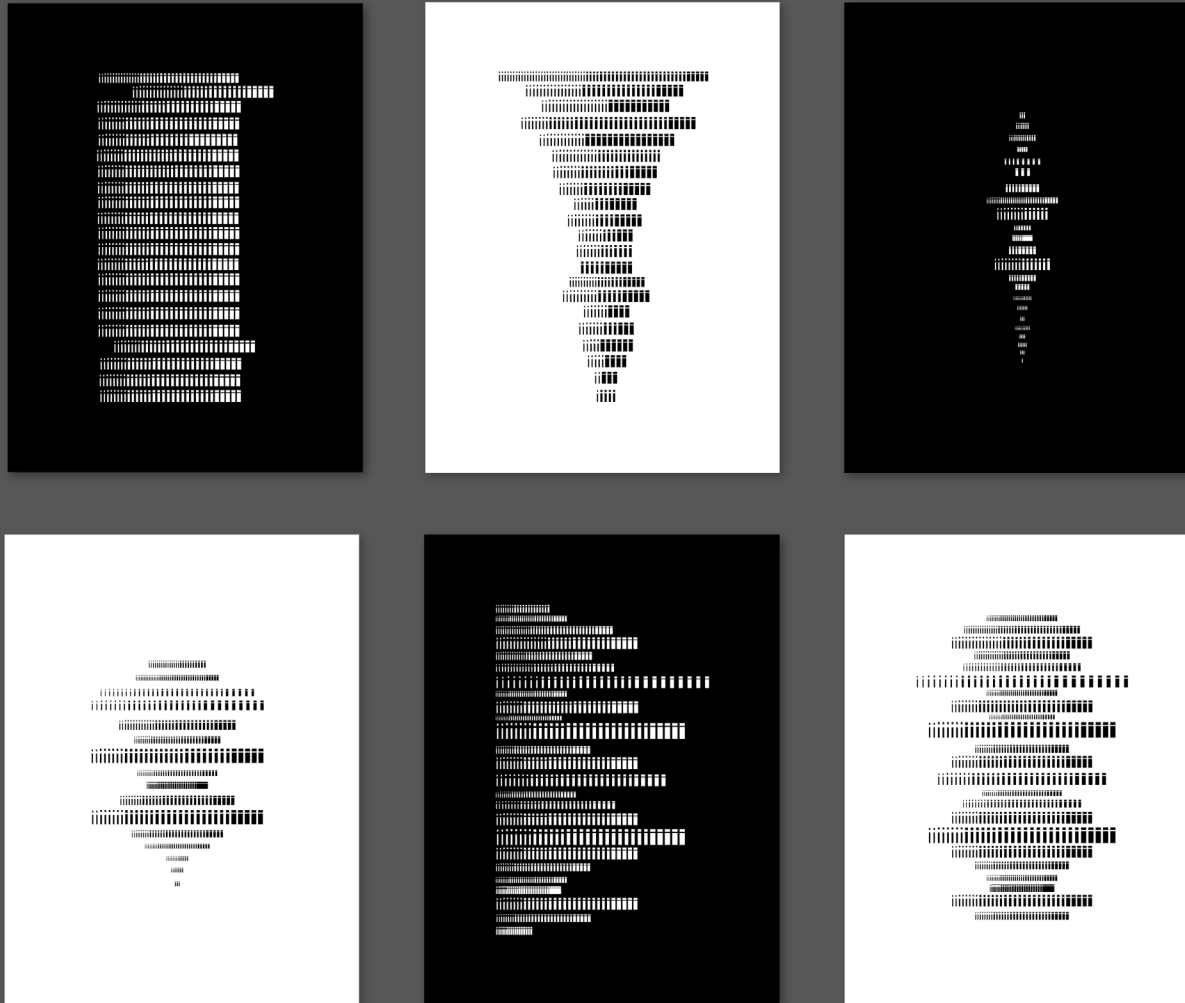
Henri Nouveau (Neugeboren Henrik): **Bach, es-Minor Fugue**. Plastic representation of Bars 52-55, stainless steel, Bauhaus, 1928.

It is a **mechanical** three-dimensional **system** (transposition) of musical notation.

"Static" and the same time "Pure" Visual Music (see later).

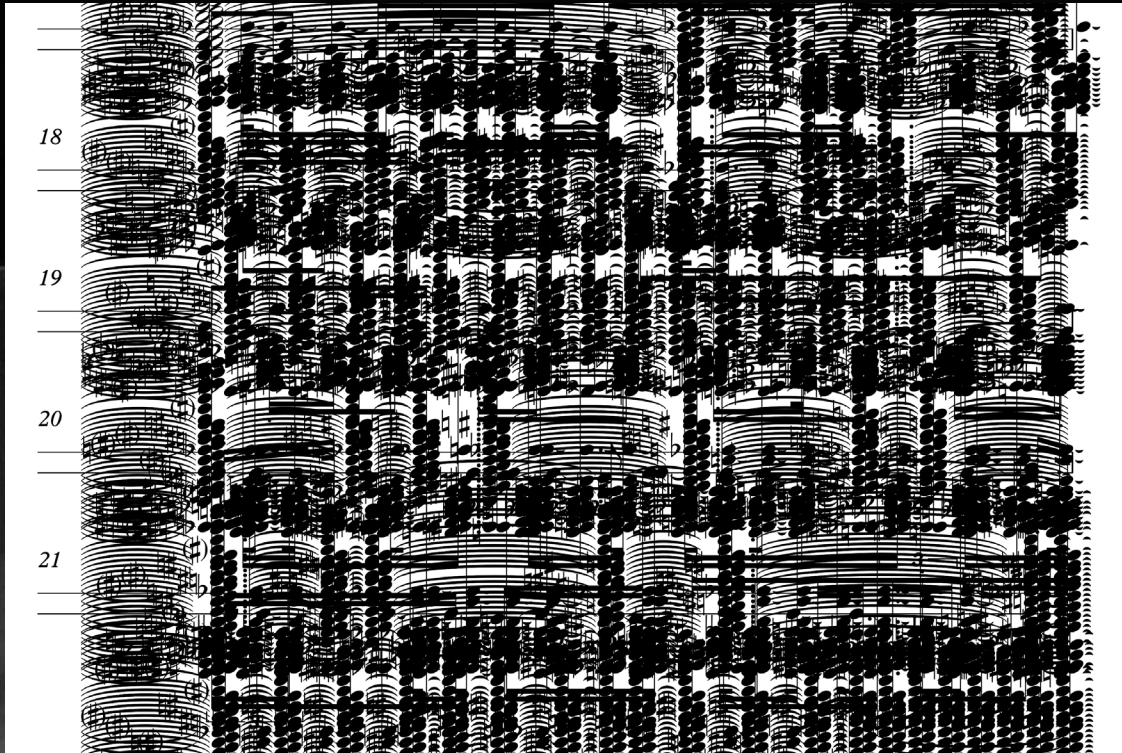


EQ is a device used in equalization (audio) for frequency-dependent processing of audio signals.



Palotai's graphic series can be interpreted as (modern) musical notations.

Gábor Palotai: The Pitch of the Equalizer. Graphics series (1-6), Digital prints, 50x70 cm, 2018.



Hardly to play these scores, but its (visual) structure (notation) is similar to music.

What could be contemporary music? (see Cage, data-visualisation, sound-art...)

Time-based structures have a common roots (see Kepes, etc.).
»» The life is time(based)...



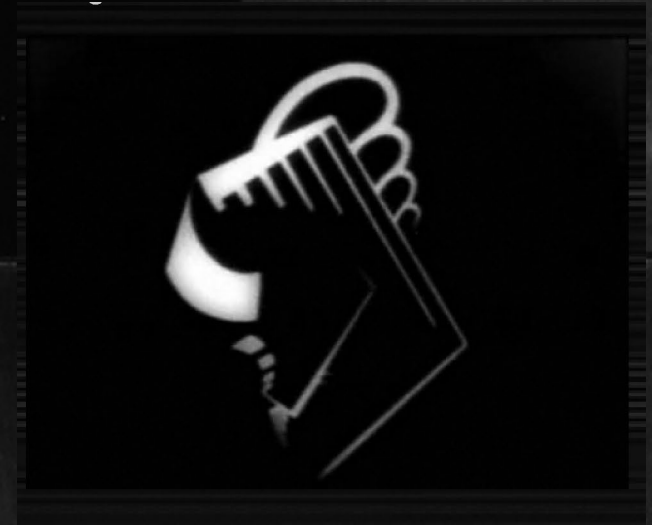
Vince Briffa: Ripples in a Pond.
Installation, different media, 2018.

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Viking Eggeling: **Symphonie Diagonale**. Silent film, still, 1921.

Symphonie Diagonale (Diagonal Symphony) is one of the **earliest works in abstract film** and at the same time precursor of “Dynamic Visual Music”.

The **rhythm** of the film is created by the infinitely **variable** interplay of **contrasting** abstract forms arranged along vertical and horizontal axes.



T. Bortnyik/Tubák (Éva T. Bortnyik, Csaba Tubák, Ádám Tubák):

N-Dimension. Video-installation, still, 2012-2018.

They project computer animated light structures on two glossy, black, square-shaped surfaces positioned at a perpendicular angle to one another. The light compositions, which move according to shifting rhythms, reflect from the two surfaces back onto one another, producing a **multi-dimensional visual effect**.

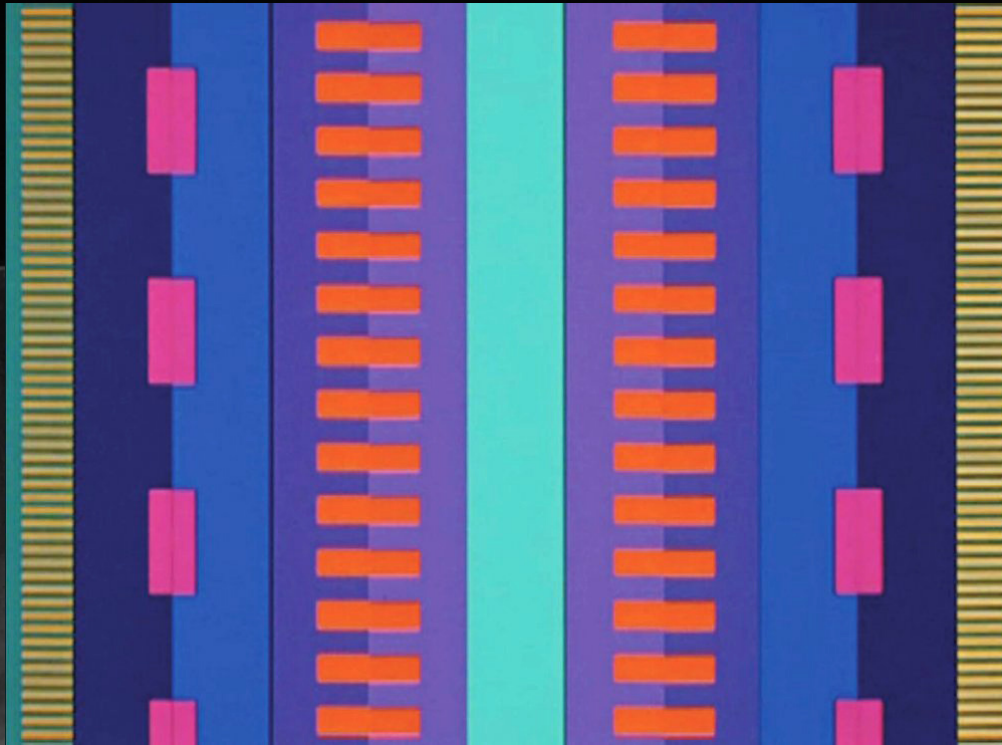


László Zsolt Bordos / BORDOS.ArtWorks: **A-Synchron**, 3D mapping works of art.
Adelaide Festival of Arts, Australia, audio-video documentation, 2015.

Between the Dynamic and Pure Visual Music.

The works of Bordos lead to the “Pure Visual Music”.

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Norman McLaren: Synchrony. Animation film, still, 1971.

<http://www.fruitoftheforest.com/canadian-experimental-animation/>

To produce the film's musical soundtrack, McLaren photographed rectangular cards with lines on them.

The audiences see the shapes that they are also hearing, as sound.

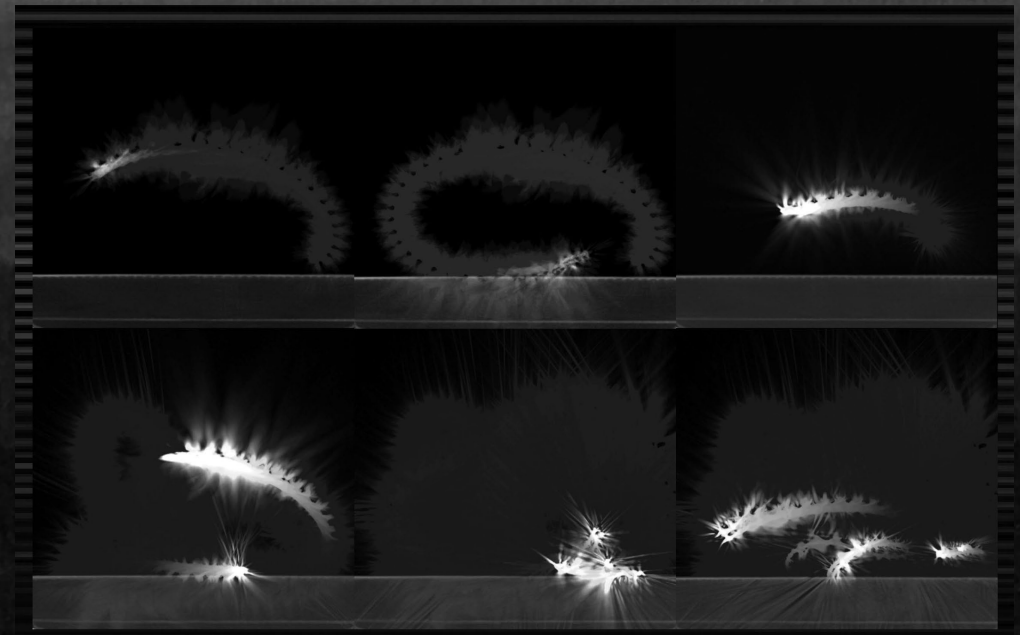
He had experimented with this technique for creating notes through patterns of stripes on the soundtrack area of the film from the 1950s.

Andrea Szigetvári: CT. Live electronics, 2010.

CT is an audiovisual piece realised purely in Max and Jitter, applying Zsolt Gyenes' 100 second **Computed Tomography animation as a visual source.**

To create an experimental CT-scan, the frames of slices of metal wires were photographed and animated, creating unexpected results in the form of abstract moving images.

Different sonic interpretations of the same visual gestures are **produced by an interactive music system, in which parameters are modified in real time by the performer/artist.**





Zsanett Szirmay: Sound weaving project.
Different media, installation, from 2014.

The project uses the **traditional** cross-stitching **pattern** of Hungarian and other folk embroidery **transforming into sound** by a **punch card music box**.

In this case, the punched stripe acts as the **scores**.

As part of the project and transformation, embroidery patterns turned into **laser cut textile pieces**.

Online: <http://soundweaving.mome.hu/en/>





Matyou Galea:

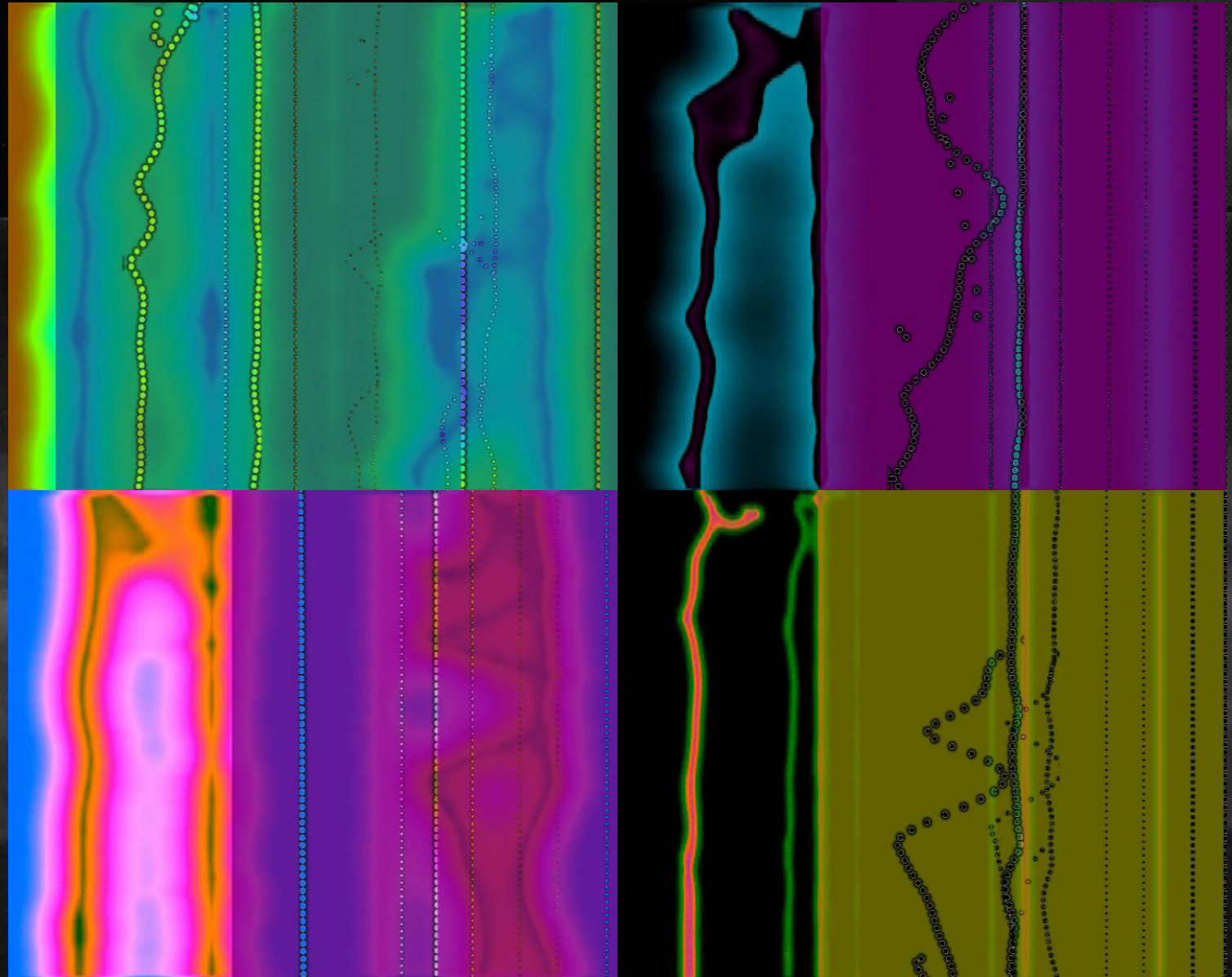
Contactless Soundscape Tapestry.

Tapestry, electronics, MIDI, 2018.

It's character is **generated by** the 2D visual forms (tapestry/picture connected with the **sensors**), **moving human figure/s** and the **whole environment**.

The piece with its **complexity** is **beyond** the **Pure Visual Music's** category.





Zsolt Gyenes: **Synchrony Opus 130**. Audio-video/Visual Music, stills, 2017.

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