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## Interview with Lea Brugnoli

Transcript of an interview conducted by Sara Luna Ruíz in the framework of "AV Assemblies. Conversations on Sight and Sound," a project by Ana Carvalho, Cornelia Lund, and Sara Luna Ruíz.

### Who is Lea?

**Location:** Germany / Italy

**Field:** Media Architecture

### Profile:

Lea Brugnoli is an Italian Media Architect based in Berlin. Her work focused on interactive and immersive installations. Video projection mapping is at the core of her practice, particularly within performative spaces. She specializes in exhibition design for performances, cultural events, and museums, creating site-specific visual environments that combine architecture, technology, and live media.

Lea taught video mapping at the Bauhaus University Weimar. She is the creative director of the International Fulldome Festival Montevideo, Uruguay. In Berlin, she is creative director of VJ Open Lab and co-curator of FAB Dimensional — Expanded Animation exhibition.

→ <https://leabrugnoli.com/>

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### Early Career & Projection Mapping

- Lea, I would love to start by asking how you entered the world of projection mapping and VJing. What was your path into this scene?

There are projection mapping festivals like Genius Global. When I was studying, there was a residency for young artists, and I started participating every year. That's where I learned projection mapping. During my studies, I worked a lot with new technologies. After finishing university, I moved to Berlin. I already had experience organizing festivals and cultural events, and I've always done projection mapping myself as an artist. I discovered the VJ scene more actively in Berlin about three years ago. I organized a special VJ Open Lab for the Festival of

Animation Berlin, focused on animation. We invited animators who also perform live, and it was a beautiful experience. After that, we continued working more actively, organizing more gatherings and experimenting with different formats.

Over time, the team has changed. Some people left, new ones joined. Since 2017, new women have become part of the collective. Someone always leaves, someone new arrives — but we want to continue this specifically with FLINTA artists.

## **Women in the VJ scene**

- How do you see the role of women in the Berlin VJ scene?

Yes, it's very important in this technology-driven industry to have a group that supports us — a space where we can learn without judgment or pressure from men. We also have a Berlin women's WhatsApp group. I can add you. I have been to the Video Mapping Festival gathering in Lille, France. There is a special panel for women in the industry.

There's also a list being created where we track how many women participate in each festival in Europe and worldwide — not only artists, but also organizers — to monitor gender equity.

## **Collaboration & Open Platforms**

- When you organize these events, how do you understand collaboration — philosophically speaking — especially in a field influenced by open-source culture?

For me, the most important thing is to create an open platform for experimentation. Ideally, artists can present work that is unfinished, try new ideas, and feel safe — without pressure if something goes wrong. It has to be inclusive and free for everyone. We should also include more advanced artists for inspiration, but without making it too formal. Sometimes artists think we are very organized and well-funded — but we're not. We don't have grants. We do it because we enjoy meeting and creating together.

The team is also open — if someone wants to join, they're welcome. We share the workload. Right now, it works well because one of us handles audio, another is a video editor with a strong camera setup, and I document and do projections. It should be fun — without stress. Before each event, I'd like to organize workshops so artists can meet and grow together.

## **Curation & Format**

- Do you have selection criteria for artists, or is it completely open?

I'd like to sometimes curate around themes — one month animation, another month TouchDesigner, another focused on a specific software or topic. But it's also important to leave space for newcomers, especially in a city like Berlin where new people are always arriving. I'd also like to start events with one or two short curated performances, and then open it up for free experimentation. We're also working on a system where multiple laptops can connect and project together — like a collective “mega VJ.”

That's how I started in Berlin. There used to be a place called Spectrum where open jams happened. It's beautiful because it's not just your own piece — it's something built collectively.

## **Art & Politics**

- Do you see a political dimension in this kind of performance? Do you think VJing is political?

VJing is not widely recognized as an art form. Many people only associate it with clubs and techno music, without reflecting deeply on it.

The general perception isn't very artistic or serious — but of course it can be political. It's a skill you learn and can later use for many purposes: projection mapping, guerrilla projections, performance.

Personally, I prefer live projection mapping. The live aspect interests me most.

## **Future Plans & Sustainability**

- What are your future plans?

The main challenge is funding. If we had public funds, we could pay artists — maybe even ourselves — and make it more regular and sustainable.

We could also organize a larger annual festival.

Right now, we're in talks with a private sponsor, Miles (car-sharing), to project on buildings around the city. That might happen in November in Berlin.

## **Scene & Networks in Berlin**

- Which places or venues do you consider relevant within the VJ scene?

There is Studio 1111, which hosts open jams with three projection walls (<https://studioiiii.de/>). Berlin is very inclusive. If you contact the right person, you can usually perform somewhere. Even if you're not paid much — or at all — it's important to document your work with photos and videos. That visibility helps you build a presence in Europe.