

Creative directions and evolutions with The Grrrl

 By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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Inka Kendzia, best known for her VJ-ing skills; behind the decks and in front of the audio-influenced video montage amazingness that she creates under the moniker The Grrrl, tells us how it all began, the concept behind recent video for Mr Sakitumi (her husband and musical soulmate) and how "ideas can lead to cultural evolution".

How did you get into VJ-ing?

I started off being a designer and then a film editor, when Peter Robson "Sightori" the Grandmaster VJ, pioneer of the Cape Town VJ scene, invited me to work together with him for the Krushed&Sorted "Acid Made Me Do It" album launch. He asked me to edit together one VHS tape while he was editing another one, all to the tracks of the album. Putting the tape together was the first time I got into visual sampling, as my day job involved taking shot footage and editing to script, now I could completely reinterpret this and had free rein - yay. On the night, another first: seeing and then pushing the buttons and playing with a video mixer, the Panasonic MX 50 - a classic and the best analogue video mixer for VJ s, ask any of those old-schoolers ;) There were many moments on the night when I completely forgot how anything worked and which button did what - all of this, of course, in front of the audience, but I was completely hooked and fell in love with VJ-ing- thank you Peter!







What was the inspiration behind the video you created for Mr Sakitumi's Jungle Jimmy?

We really wanted to create something handmade and tactile, real and fun. The music and title inspired the character and embodiment of the Jungle Jimmy. When we chatted to the amazing textile artist Bev Hodgen from GEN, she showed us Nick Cave's soundsuits (not the Bad Seeds Nick Cave), which sparked off even more ideas and we just happily bounced onwards from there. The idea was always that fun handmade characters are woken by moving to the beat; this makes the world come to life, which is a collective Jungle Jim: macro and micro cosmos mirroring our collective unconscious awakening in a fun and colourful way.

How did you create it technically?

I sketched out various parts of the song with rough ideas for characters representing parts of the beats; Bev sewed the suit and all the characters and puppets. We experimented with their individual bounce and movements while they were half made. The elements were then placed and stitched onto the suit in stages. Once we were set up to shoot, we animated the various puppets by hand working around the resting suit from the best camera angles. We then asked her son to brave the heat wave and climb into the suit to bring it to life for the full-body dance scenes - at short intervals, for fear of him melting.

How would you describe your style as an artist?

Tactile, light-hearted yet thoughtful, fun, feminine, fabulous.

You have worked with some amazing artists and at some amazing events. What have been your personal highlights?

As an event, the visual feast for the opening night of the Loeries 2010 created for H-Factor was such an inspiration. I was awestruck at seeing the stop-motion elements we had handmade at a larger-than-life scale across all screens. Working as a visual architect and seeing a space change like that, completely, was just amazing. The technical spec on such a large scale for this is, of course, beyond your normal screen set up at a festival. The Sakifo Festival in Reunion has been so supportive of South African artists. Playing for Blackalicious while here was, of course, great because of their conscious content. And it is always the best to travel the world with the Mr Sakitumi - of course, we got to experience the Pitch Festival together. We are the very first act to play for that brand new festival for ever :)

Would you consider The Grrrl to be your alter ego? Tell us something your fans would never have guessed about you, Inka Kendzia?

I am German, I play drums and the Asian version of my alter ego is "the gllll".

You and [Mr Sakitumi](#) (Sean Ou Tim) make quite the power couple. What's it like collaborating and performing with him? How did you two meet?

We met surrounded by music. I love performing with him. It is, of course, the best to know we are both moving in the same creative direction.

How do you manage your time and sanity with VJ-ing and the party lifestyle with your day job as director at [IIIEIIIE](#)?

I am lucky to be my own boss, which affords me quite a bit of flexibility. It gets tough at times when deadlines overlap, but I love what I do for both day and night job: passion is quite a powerful driving force. On the upside, lack of sleep also creates an interesting headspace.

What's the significance behind the name [IIIEIIIE](#)?

I have always been fascinated by ideas, how they are the spark that can change things on a massive scale. The definition of a meme and how ideas can lead to cultural evolution, it is what connects us all, this passing along of information and it is pretty much what I do as the grrrl and as part of meme. It fascinates me.

Who influences you as a VJ?

For my imagination, Michel Gondry inspires me. I love storytelling and try to weave this into VJ-ing whenever I can.

[imperial bass walker](#) from [meme](#) on [Vimeo](#).

If you could be characterised as an animal what would it be and why?

A griffin, flying not just in my dreams - fantastic.

Any exciting future plans you can share with us?

The concept for the next video for Mr Sakitumi is nesting and ready to hatch. We are hoping for the video as an art installation as well. Also I am chatting with Goodluck to create visuals for their performance and collaborate with them to take their shows to the next level on an all-round experience beyond the visuals, it is all super exciting. I am also working towards being a visual director for live shows on a large scale; a visual architect for a band or event of any kind - commercial, festival, dance or art.

For more on The Grrrl go to www.facebook.com/thegrrrl and mememotion.tv

Photos by Timmy Henny

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