

The Chaos Chronicles



“My name is Lukas Zpira.

life coincidences and personal choices have made me a nomad, a privileged observer of a world i've been traveling for 10 years from east to west, north to south from dreamlike situations to those which haunt our worse nightmares.

if we consider what's happening to our world a crime, then you may call me its witness”

-A brief presentation :

-I was born in April 1966 in northern France. I didn't pursue formal studies, choosing instead to learn through the many experiences life has offered. In 1993 I took on the name of Lukas Zpira, an anagram of my civil status. I had recently joined the art collective ADADA in Avignon and was an active member for a period of three years, experimenting with painting, installations, writing and photography. It was during that time that I became aware that my work was first and foremost conceptual and could not be expressed solely with one medium.

I left ADADA in 1996 to turn towards body art. Thanks to my performances and various work with body modification I acquired international recognition and began traveling to various countries around 2000.

-My daughter Mayliss was born in november 1995. She began to travel with me as early as 2000. In 2005 she started correspondence school in order to follow me for longer periods of time without interrupting her education. She naturally became my assistant, taking a deeper interest in arts and began to study drawing and photography as part of her preparation for her entry at International Center of Photography in New York.

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-A few artistic references - I / Bødy Hacking & Bødy Hacktivism :

I created Bødy Art in 1996, the first european studio specializing in body modification techniques such as sub cutaneous or transdermal implants and scarification. These techniques, being quite avant-garde at the time, are nowadays experiencing a vast popularization.

In 2000 I organized and self-financed the 6 month long event ART-KØR.OO, coinciding with the Avignon festival themed "La Beaute" .

For this event I invited numerous artist, jurists, sociologists and anthropologists, amongst these Philippe Liotard, David Lebreton and australian artist Stelarc participated in lectures on the questioning of the modified body and the future of mankind.



For this occasion I opened the gallery Weird Faktory, a 150m² space in which a series of performances and exhibitions were presented on a regular basis right up until 2003.

In parallel to this event I also created the "Kollektif ART-KØR", an informal group of performers who got together for various events with numerous artistic collaborations. Some of these collaborations included artists such as writers Tarik Noui and David Defendi, performer and founder of Materia Prima company Didier Manuel a.k.a. ODM, music group Von Magnet, low/high tech hackers and programmers Spectre, VJ and musician duo Ouraken and my wife and performance partner Satomi Zpira.

The collective has to this day presented over 100 performances worldwide, from the United States To Japan, Australia and New Zealand, Central and South America as well as most european countries. The collective is still active today.

In 2002, encountering members of these intellectual and artistic circuits, who were tackling respectively the notion of the modified body and the realization of various misunderstandings and implications that emerge from the nature of this topic, prompted me to develop the concept of "body hacking".

In 2004, in order to better define my work, which was to this day perhaps misconstrued, I elaborated further on the concept by writing the "Bødy Hacktivism" Manifesto.

see hyperlink : www.hackingthefuture.org

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-A few artistic references - II / Bløw Yøur Mind Photography :

From 2002 I started photography again, a medium which I had given up due to unsatisfying results after my first experience.

Throughout the years I developed my own technique, which was first inspired by French photographer (and also my teacher) Gnom, through his light painting. I have also been strongly influenced by German expressionism, as well as Man Ray's photographic works. I also learned to utilize light in my work following a meeting in New York with Dutch photographer Hans Nelemann.

Though the technique I use is mainly found in black and white photography I work in color with a long exposure time and a single light source for all my photographs. I try to take full advantage of the chromatic aberrations of the digital cameras I use, making my work easily recognizable.

My photographic work has been featured in various galleries such as Kinokuniya in Tokyo, and Subterranean in Osaka where my photographs encountered a rapid success or Abnormal gallery in Berlin (Germany) and Poznan (Poland), to name a few

i have also shot some series for brands such as Larare Chaussures (France), May Inc jewellery (Japan) Villain accessories (Japan)

In 2005 "Onanisme Manu Military II", a book on my body modification work was published by Hors Edition in France, followed by my first monograph "Tokyo Love Doll" in 2008, a work devoted to an oneiric character created by my wife Satomi, published in Japan by Editions TREVILLE / Pan Exotica.



see hyperlink : www.blowyourmind-production.com

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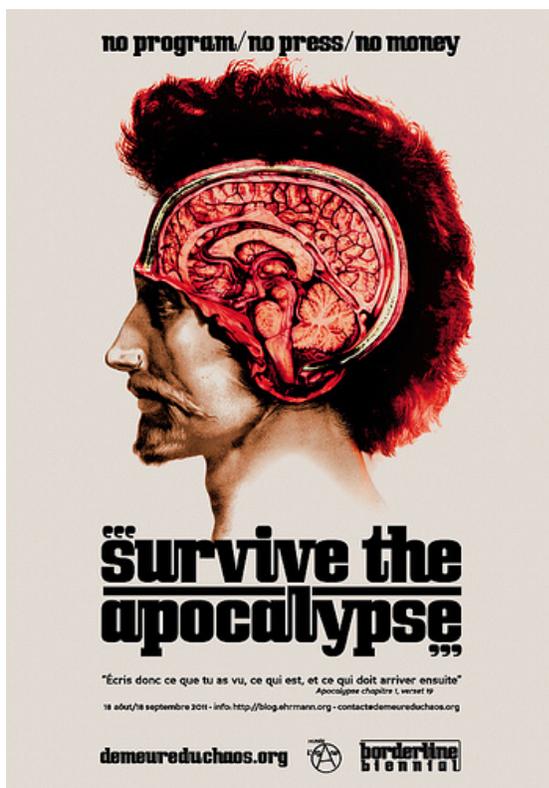
-A few artistic references - III / Abode of Chaos - Borderline Biennale

In 2005 I met artist and entrepreneur [Thierry Ehrmann](#) CEO of ARTPRICE and owner of the famous Abode of Chaos with which an artistic and friendly relation was born.

The Abode of Chaos became a laboratory where the kollektif ART-KOR inaugurated the bunker, which was placed on the premises to present various performances.

Many "premieres" occurred here, including on various occasions with members of Materia Prima company.

Materia Prima was in charge of the first Biennale which took place at the Abode of Chaos.



While elaborating the Chaos Chronicles, a project I had started in the form of a blog in 2011, which concentrates on geopolitical events shaking up our society today, the idea of taking this opportunity to write a statement came up which was followed by the organizing of a Biennale. The ongoing political clashes and economic crash gave birth to many performances.

I was designated as curator for the 5 week long event which featured over 70 international artists and guests speakers. This event's main goal was to question how our world is evolving in a chaotic manner, with each week featuring a specific theme including :

**-Japan Apocalypse - Hacking /T.A.Z /Uotpies
Pirates - Obsolete Body/Body Hacktivisme -
Les Cavaliers de l'Apocalypse/Vanitas -
l'Histoire de l'Oeil**

Together with the film crew of the Abode of Chaos, notably Kurt Ehrmann and Loic Mably, I directed the five presentation videos of 1 or 2 minutes each, which were filmed with a Canon 5D. For each thematic I co-directed a one hour film featuring the afore mentioned presentation, parts of the performances and interviews with the artists Luc assisted me create the special effects used in the films and became my mentor for the Chaos Chronicles.

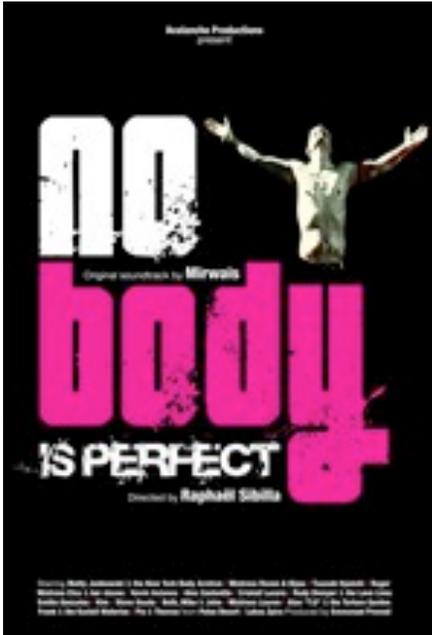
For this occasion I was able to collaborate again with film director Luc Serrano, who I originally met back in 2000 during ART-KOR.

see hyperlink : <http://borderlinebiennale.tv>

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-La Genèse - I / Contre Culture :

The nature of my work and my personal experiences has allowed me to meet many people involved in counter-cultures all over the world. It is through these connections that I began to travel in 2000.



It is also at that time that I took my first steps towards the world of documentary.

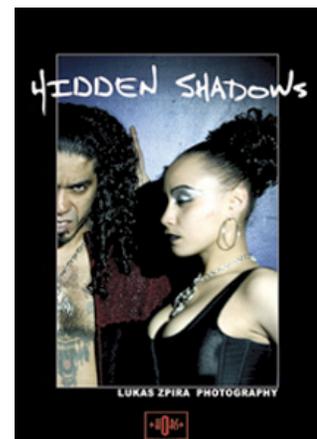
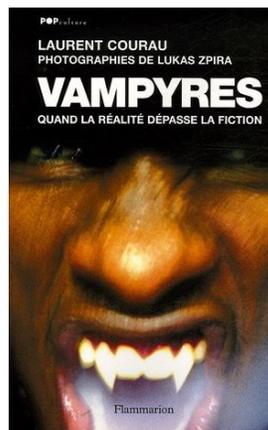
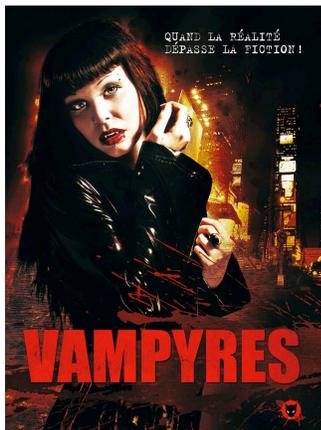
I was approached by National Geographic, Discovery Channel and the learning channel as a consultant on topics related to the body..

In 2001 I was contacted by Avalanche production and film director Raphael Sybilla, to work on the project '*No Body Is Perfect*'. Along with the title, which I chose, I found most of the characters who were to feature in the film.

Raphael followed me to the United States, South America and Japan. We worked on this project for 6 months, where I began to use a video camera and filmed images for the making of.

I got in touch with Laurent Courau in 2002, for whom I had done some interviews for his blog www.laspirale.org, with the suggestion we work together on a project called 'Hidden Shadows' - a Harlem based "vampire" clan mostly made up of black and Puerto Rican members with which I had done some photo shoots during a trip to New York. We spent 4 years on the project, giving birth to a 9 minute special for Arte France, an eponymic movie, a book published by Flammarion as well as a monograph by Hors Edition.

Filming all the japanese sequences as well as the final scene for "Vampyres" allowed me to extend my knowledge further in all the steps involved in production as well as to improve on my experience in manipulation of the camera.



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-Genesis - II / Nømadism etc

...My life as a nomad began in 2003 after a fire destroyed everything I had.

The internet then became my preferred tool. I use various online communities as well as an extensive mailing list as means of promotion for the numerous blogs and websites I elaborated which focus on my artistic activities, but also to plan the itineraries for my travels.

I became a enthusiast of the "dry lab" method as it allows me to quickly put my photos online, send files to art galleries for exhibitions or to magazines for publication. I keep my equipment down to the bare minimum, project proposals and specifications as simple as possible and basic needs minimal. One hand luggage and a small bag, everything else must fit in a single suitcase and able to be carried by a single person.

By the end of 2011, it became clear that The Chaøs Chronicles was a logical step next step - after all those years of traveling, all the people who crossed our path and the incredible experiences lived. It was inevitable to me that these experiences had to be shared. These are the chronicles of a world oscillating between two centuries, a voice-over road movie, somewhere between a mystical quest and an artistic wandering punctuated with hazardous and improbable encounters and testimonies.

The arrival of cameras such as the Canon 5D Mark II has opened the path for new technologies combining top notch photography possibilities alongside full HD video ability making this nomadic project possible.



The acquired experiences in the realm of documentary has been an enriching experience, but I had felt there was a sense we were missing out on something between the weighty production and invasive filming team. It seemed difficult to keep a certain spontaneity, giving the final result a sense of mise-en-scène or falseness which was not quite what I was seeking.

I had the theme and the title in mind long ago. An observation of our world, a statement I had developed in the form of a blog in 2010 - a manifesto, a kind of

assessment or philosophical pondering on the violent changes occurring around me, put in parallel with current events. The first series shot following this thematic was "Amores Perros", about dog fights in Mexico.

see hyperlink : www.thechaoschronicles.org

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-The Road trip - Part 1 : *US Coast to Coast*

The blog served to frame the work as it unravelled, and also supported the project which slowly matured during the Borderline Biennale. Encountering various artists during this event led me to reflect on the state of our world.

I took the opportunity of [Mario Barth's](#) invitation to Las Vegas in September 2011 to take the leap for this coast to coast trip. Mario Barth, a good friend, made his fortune in the tattoo industry and offered us the airfare to and from the U.S. Equipped with a Canon 5D and 2 Canon G12 as back up, I began this journey with my daughter Mayliss who was to celebrate her 16th birthday upon arrival in New York. To embark on this journey with her seemed important, to confront our two different point of views and the paradoxes ensued was crucial

She was in charge of all the photographs that would feed the blog, which helped us find the funds to continue our adventure. We left with barely \$1,200 USD in our pockets and a rental car that we had to pay for upon arrival at our last destination. Without any plans and hardly a glance at a map, the journey proved to be an initiatory... wandering.. adventure. We had estimated 2,500 miles in 4 weeks on the road. It took us 6 and 7,500 miles ! This adventure became a quest for the American dream which imposed itself upon us.



Las Vegas-Death Valley Junction-Darwin-Troja-Los Angeles-Fullerton-Palm Springs-San Diego-Tijuana-Tucson-Arcosanti-Red Rock Canyon-Flagstaff-Grand Canon Village- Wislo-Gallup-Albuquerque-Santa Fe-Fonte Vista-White River National Park-Woody Creek-Little Woody Creek-Aspen-Biena Vista-White Sand Nat. Park-Roswell-Lubbock-Forth Worth-Dallas-Waco-Houston-Kountze-Woodville-Baton Rouge-New Orleans-Slidell-Laurel-Mendehall-Jackson-Memphis-Waverly-Nashville-Nolenville-Louisville-Lynchburg-Tullahoma-Watertown-Elisabethtown-Chicago-Detroit-London (canada)-Washington-Philadelphia-New York...

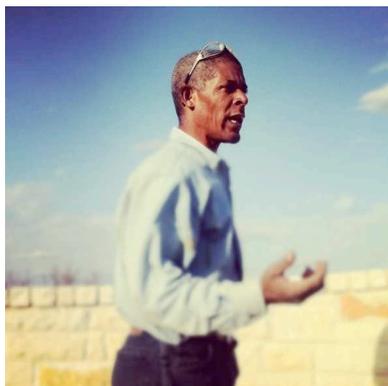
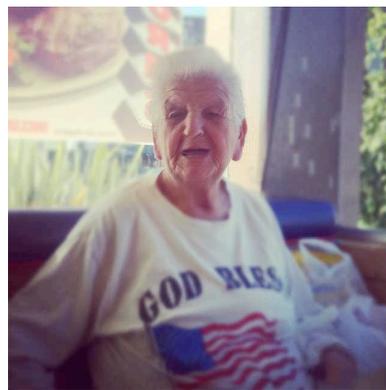
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The list of cities visited is long, the red marker line of our trajectory impressive, but what is interesting is what lies within the interstice of this line, traced by our a priori certitudes. We discover America on its knees, flirting with its own image, torn between hope and despair, clutching onto its dreams and flag to better reassure itself. It has been the magnifying glass of the occident for so long, but perhaps with the collapsing of the Twin Towers the emblematic symbol of the empire's fall was foreseen.

“white trash beautiful” of Everlast set the tempo of our voyage and Bobby McFerrin's "Don't worry, be happy" the over all mood. Led by our desires and encounters, we were free as the wind.

We often slept in the car or on a couch when our search on the internet for a willing host is fruitful. Unfortunately "couch surfing" isn't as promising as we had hoped but still enabled us to make some of the most interesting connections of this trip. We sometimes negotiate the use of a shower with Motel maids where we often find ourselves spending the night in their car park or for a quick access to the internet.

We would upload the first images on the blog and on www.Ulule.com in order to find sufficient funds. We got most of the sponsoring from Mario Barth and The Organe Museum, owned by Thierry Ehrmann, who granted us \$3000 USD each. Without them this trip would not have been possible. Other supporters also contributed to the project and helped us finish the journey.



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-The proposal

From our trip we brought back over 16 hours of footage and more than 200 photos. In parallel I also began to write about the journey.

The idea from the beginning was to create a documentary series, its format yet to be defined depending on the distribution.

The "US Cøast to Cøast" is the first step...

[Luc Serrano](#) has now joined us and taken the role of artistic director and technical consultant. Also bringing his experiences in production, his presence is a great help to give shape to the Chaøs Chronicles.

At this stage of the project, **we are seeking a production company** that could give support during the writing process, help us locate a film editor, provide us with logistical and financial assistance and take care of the distribution.

Other chapters of the Chaøs Chronicles are imminent including - **Japan ; from Hiroshima to Fukushima ; Europe ; China ; Russia ; Australia ; South America ; and Africa**. The project will build itself according to travel opportunities and/or current events.

We have already begun to film and photograph in Japan, which would have formed the second offering on the chronicles, however destiny has lead us in another direction..



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- Aout 2012 - Road trip - Partie 2 : *Central America*

In the past few months many opportunities have arose. I have been invited to present performances and conferences in Caracas (Venezuela), Guadalajara (Mexico) and San Jose (Costa Rica). From our scheduled arrival until our estimated departure date we have 6 weeks to discover this transitory continent nestled in-between both americas. Enough time to dig deeper into our chronicles..



I have started to stir up a few contacts enabling us to add San Salvador (Salvador) Guatemala City (Guatemala) as well as Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama to the journey. For this trip I have equipped myself with an Olympus OM-D, much smaller and easier to manipulate than the Canon 5D but this new acquisition still allows me to film in full HD.

Our airfare between Europe and Central America as well as some of our costs will be taken care of. We expect to depart around the 20th of August..

We require an additional \$6000 USD to cover all other expenses such as inland traveling, food and accommodation..

The time is now, it's too late to step back

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The Chaos Chronicles - Manifesto :

We have no other choice but to build a better future. Nostalgia can only bring us to drown ourselves deeper into conservatism and fear, making us mere puppets of a history which writes itself with the exponential speed of the web. Let's face it, the Towers have fallen and with them many utopias. But new utopias will rise from the ashes and take over. It just might be a bit more difficult this time around.

We have entered the 21st century, naively filled with hopes and pagan fears, without really grasping the paradoxical dimension of a world penetrating its biggest technological and philosophical challenge in its history, yet simultaneously sinking hastily into chaos.

Sure modern prisons are painted white.

But still they remain only walls.

Berlin's has fallen only to be replaced by ramparts in Israel, Mexico or elsewhere.

World wars are no more. They have become tribal, economical, and technological. But the crises are global.

Africa is still a bloodbath

Asia is still hoping for spiritual osmosis, seeking a new economy meanwhile losing itself in ancestral wars. Its map hacked by machete and its borders traced with tanks.

South America will soon belong to gangs and cartels.

Australia and New Zealand, fearing potential contamination by foreign germs, protect and filter their borders with a fine comb. Not leaving much space for anything other than tourists, students or investors. As far as Aborigines and Maoris are concerned, it's a matter of choice between ghettos and gangs or posing for post cards.

Europe was merely built on an economical logic and is nothing more than a myth.

Nevertheless the world is opening up

Low cost airlines have emerged, dissolving the notion of distance, announcing the shifting of nations and the circulation of human masses, humans who are tugging hard at their leashes. All of this required solutions...

The "primal" solution ?

9/11 came and the Twin Towers gone, serving as a pretext to install more regulation and establish new laws limiting mobility. Certainly borders are seemingly opening up, only to better justify more control thus less freedom.

Aren't the towers simply the symbol of our traumas and neurosis?

But if you play the game, no problem! Biometric passports, finger prints, eye scan, immigration stamps, files, data, records, intelligence.

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You have:

-a credit card
what number?

-social security
what number

-a phone
what number?

-money
how much?

-an address
where?

-a return ticket
where to!?!

Nomadism becomes Vagabondism. Change the term and you change the meaning. From a free man you become a suspect. You become a disturbance for you government which doesn't know what to do with you. You scare those who are already scared of the future, scared of the unknown, of unemployment, scared of others, of the strange and the strangers, of the young, the black and the yellow.

If you were lucky enough to have a cultural specificity you might end up in a reserve. You'll finish as a curiosity for future anthropologists. You will be ostracized because you frighten others, for you are rootless, one who doesn't owe anybody anything, as if there was something free in this world.

Who knows, soon there just might be a tax on spirituality, an organism to control the exchange of ideas.

It has already begun

Almost everybody is an accomplice; since man has traded his dreams for desires our society doesn't tolerate unprofitable utopias it can't control.

If we don't do anything we'll end up keyword prisoners.

Lukas Zpira