

Pia Marais grew up in South Africa, Sweden, and Spain. She studied sculpture and photography in London, Amsterdam, and Düsseldorf before going on to study film at the German Film & Television Academy (dff) in Berlin. She made several shorts, including *Loop* (1996), *Deranged* (1998), *Tricky People* (1999), and *17* (2003). After several engagements in the film business as a casting director and assistant director, she made her feature debut with *The Unpolished* (Die Unerzogenen, 2007), which screened at many international film festivals and won various prizes, including the Tiger Award in 2007 in Rotterdam. Her second feature film *At Ellen's Age* (Im Alter von Ellen, 2010) was developed in the Résidence du Festival de Cannes.

Walter Mercado is an internationally renowned astrologer and psychic. He has dedicated more than twenty-five years inspiring and captivating the multitudes with his advice and accurate predictions. This highly successful Spiritual Master is at the helm of a conglomerate of services that bring enlightenment to more than 120 million people who turn to him each day for advice. His impressive television repertoire includes: *Walter y las Estrellas* (Walter and the Stars) a segment of Univision's highly rated magazine program, *Primer Impacto* (First Impact) *Walter Mercado y los Signos del Amor* (Walter Mercado and the Love Signs) and *El Show de Walter Mercado* (Walter Mercado's Show). He is also recognized for his daily horoscope columns, which appear in New York's *El Diario-La Prensa*, Miami's *El Nuevo Herald*, Puerto Rico's *El Nuevo Día*, and also newspapers in Bogota, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Quito and San Salvador. He also publishes a magazine, has written several books among which Warner Books published his latest title, *Beyond the Horizon: Visions of the New Millennium*.

Dan Paluska is an artist and engineer who works in kinetic, robotic, and various other media. He has BS, MS and ABD from MIT in Mechanical Engineering. He has been on the Discovery Channel, the cover of *Wired* magazine, and been the recipient of the Prix Ars Award of Distinction for Interactive Art (with Jeff Lieberman). He is inspired by the ideas from lean manufacturing, evolution, the open source community, and market economics and how these might help us to build tools that help us collaborate better. Currently he is working on setting all of his information free.

The Product is a Berlin-based spatial and media related design studio. Over the last years the studio has focused on interactive installations, augmented objects, physical interfaces, and generative systems. The designs are located at the interface between the virtual and the physical world. More than just an investment in digital media itself, the studio is interested in its intrinsic properties: the responsive, the interactive, the procedural, the volatile, the many, the precise, the playful, the narrative... in short the "signature of the digital." Hence the procedurally shaped pieces of wood, the computationally processed sheet of paper, or the mechanical construction plays an equally important role in our work as a projector, a sensor, or a micro-controller. The studio strongly believes that technology can be transformed, by sharp thinking, technological competence, and formal sensibility, into a meaningful, warm and emotional something.

Paul Ryan is an artist whose video work has been presented in Japan, Turkey, France, Germany, Holland, Spain and throughout the United States, including at "The Primitivism Show" at The Museum of Modern Art and "The American Century Show" at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Ryan authored *Cybernetics of the Sacred* and *Video Mind, Earth Mind*. His articles have appeared in numerous journals including *IS Journal*, *Millennium*, *Leonardo*, *Terra Nova* and *Semiotica*. NASA published his Earthscore Notational System. Ryan was part of the early video movement, founded and edited a bioregional magazine in North Jersey, and co-founded and directed the Gaia

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Institute at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. His design for an Environmental Television Channel has been presented at the United Nations. Ryan studied with both Marshall McLuhan and Gregory Bateson. His teaching experience includes New York University, SUNY New Paltz, The Savannah College of Art and Design, and Parsons School of Design. Currently he is a member of the core faculty at the Graduate Communication Program at the New School in New York City.

Hannes Schmidt received his fine arts diploma in 2003 from the Hochschule für Kunst und Design Burg Giebichenstein/Halle. He is the recent recipient of the Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg grant. His work has been shown internationally, with exhibitions at Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna; DUMBO Center of Arts, New York; DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens; Evas Arche und der Feminist, New York-Berlin; and Nice & Fit Gallery, Berlin. He has upcoming exhibitions at Pro Choice, Vienna; Basso, Berlin; and at the Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart.

urbikon is a team of architects and landscape architects with different professional backgrounds and orientations. According to the requirements of the different projects the team is extended with specialists including economists, artists, craftsmen, designers or scientists. For each project a taskforce is put together to be able to follow our interests on different scales. Our activities reach from furniture design over building construction over urban design strategies to communication design. Located in Leipzig and Berlin, Germany, urbikon was founded in 2002 and team members include Kai Dolata, Lola Meyer, Sebastian Stiess, and Jan Bovelet.

Leah Whitman-Salkin works as a freelance editor and writer in Berlin. She currently contributes to *Kaleidoscope* magazine, Manifesta publications, and various artists' and curatorial projects and books.

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