

KINGS OF LABEL monika enterprise

ONCE A MEMBER OF LEGENDARY NOISE BAND EINSTUERZENDE NEUBAUTEN, GUDRUN GUT OWNS AND RUNS BERLIN'S MONIKA ENTERPRISE AND IS ONE OF THE PEOPLE MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CAPITAL CITY'S RECENT MUSICAL RENAISSANCE. ONE OF THE STRONGEST VOICES IN GERMAN MUSIC TODAY, SHE'S ALSO A PRETTY STRONG PERSONALITY. WE HAD TO BEG FOR MERCY A COUPLE OF TIMES WHILE INTERVIEWING HER, BUT NO PAIN, NO GAIN...

WHY MONIKA ENTERPRISE INSTEAD OF 'MONIKA RECORDS?' IT SOUNDS SO SERIOUS.
GG: It's not so serious for us in Germany. We had a really cool television series called *Raumschiff Enterprise*, like the Starship Enterprise. That is where I took it from. I think an enterprise is something exciting, something (where) you don't know how it will end. It's an experience.

IS THERE ACTUALLY A PERSON NAMED MONIKA?

GG: It's a fish! Seriously, I had a goldfish called Monika. But she committed suicide, sadly. But now she lives again!

HOW DIFFERENT IS RUNNING A LABEL AND PLAYING MUSIC FOR YOU?

GG: Well, after years of having the life of an artist, with all its instabilities, it was quite relaxing for me to have a 'normal' thing—to work at daytime and have an office, et cetera. But I really didn't expect it to be so much work to run a label. It's endless but it's rewarding as well, and it always has to do with music that I like. All the Monika releases somehow have to do with my dreams and visions, without me having created them.

IS IT JUST AS SATISFYING AS MAKING YOUR OWN MUSIC?

GG: I guess. It's a yes and it's a no. Both making music and label work can be pretty depressing.

HOW DO YOU PICK YOUR ROSTER OF ARTISTS?

GG: It takes long for me to sign an artist. They are all original artists that have impressed and entertained me, and that I feel add something to the scene. They all have something to say. Basically, no copycats. I need each release to stand on its own and represent an important step forward. Monika is not really a genre label—we are interested in artists. Monika puts a light on them and lets them shine like sparkling stars. Like now I just saw this fantastic Australian drummer named Laurenz Pike. We have a 10" coming out with a nine minute drum solo by him. Maybe that's not commercial thinking, but I love to hear stuff like this! Who brings out a nine minute drum solo nowadays? Monika!



WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A FEW ARTISTS HERE AND THERE, MONIKA HAS A VERY FEMINIST FEEL TO IT. WOULD YOU RATHER ONLY SIGN FEMALE ELECTRONIC MUSICIANS?

GG: No way! I'm trying to have a good mixture of male and female. Maybe a bit more female, but look at other labels! They only have male music! That is the problem!

YES, IT IS A PROBLEM. HOW DO YOU FEEL THAT WOMEN HAVE CHANGED THE LANDSCAPE OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC?

GG: Since I have a weekly radio show, I don't have to feel it. I can see it in their releases. Unfortunately, there are not so many! If you see it as a landscape, we are the colorful flowers out there.

DO YOU EVER FEEL PIGEONHOLED BY THE FACT THAT PEOPLE ASSOCIATE YOUR LABEL WITH FEMINISM?

GG: What's a pigeonhole? The dick in your hand is better than the pigeon on the roof?

HUH?

GG: God. Listen. Yes, I'm always interested in the female voice in music, and yes I do listen more carefully there. Since pop music is one of the main guides of our social life and personality, I think it's just fair and pretty necessary to have an equal male/female ranking. I don't really want to start the argument that 'female music is different from male.' It really doesn't matter as long as we can hear the female voice.

UNDERSTOOD.

GG: We now started the series '4 Women No Cry,' which is about female artists/composers/performers in the field of electronics and songwriting from all over the world. (The idea is) to introduce them to listeners who would not buy a whole album of a new artist, but would maybe invest the money to get to know four new artists. And you know, to tell you the truth, nobody really associates Monika as a feminist label! Monika is associated over here as a small but high quality indie/electronic label.

I'M SORRY FOR EVER SAYING THAT. SO WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF YOUR LABEL?

GG: Guess what? I am German, and we want Monika world domination! 🍷