



Global	Local	Music	Interact
<a href="#">News</a>	<a href="#">Events</a> <a href="#">WMC</a>	<a href="#">Reviews</a>	<a href="#">MyRA</a>
<a href="#">Features</a>	<a href="#">Photos</a>	<a href="#">DJ Pages</a> <a href="#">Charts</a>	<a href="#">Inbox</a>
<a href="#">The Feed</a>	<a href="#">Clubs</a>	<a href="#">Labels</a>	<a href="#">Forums</a> <a href="#">Latest</a>
<a href="#">Newsletter</a>	<a href="#">Submit Event</a>	<a href="#">Podcast</a>	<a href="#">Competitions</a>

Julia.deangeli / Last online 02 Mar 2010

## Features

- [Home](#)
- [Archive](#)
- [RSS](#)

### Ellen Allien: Her utopie

The BPitch Controller has crafted a world of creativity: Label boss, fashion designer, international DJ, album artist. RA's Todd L. Burns catches up Ellen Allien on the eve of her sixth full-length to take stock.

"Warp? No, Warp is too good." Ellen Allien is bristling at my comparison of the vaunted UK imprint to her own mini-empire BPitch Control. Nonetheless, the label—which is celebrating its tenth year of operation—is one of the few electronic music labels that can house acts like Modeselektor, Paul Kalkbrenner, Telefon Tel Aviv, Apparat, AGF/Delay and Jahcoozi and have it all make sense. Allien's guiding force has always been simple intuition: Do I like it? Let's find a way to do it.

That same mentality has served her throughout her entire career. From the early '90s when she was a resident DJ at some of Europe's most famous clubs, including her hometown gig at Berlin's E-Werk, to her fashion line, which has just unveiled its seventh collection, Allien has been creating her own vision of the world, her own utopia.

Perhaps the most celebrated of her creative endeavors are her albums, each of which have been produced in tandem with producers which have helped her realize her sound. Her latest, due out in May, was put together with Tobias Freund, and follows experimental effort *Sool*. It's among her poppiest work, featuring plenty of guitars and vocals over the course of its tightly constructed ten tracks. "I was ready to write songs again," she explains succinctly. But before we get to that, we begin by talking about her recent vacation. She tells me how she's "just came back from a forest," where she's done "some yoga stuff." She laughs. "That's not very techno, is it?"

**But it's nice to have time off. You're quite busy running the label, making records, doing the fashion line.**

Yeah, but everything [has come together quite naturally.] When I came to music, I was very young. I played with friends in cellars making music without any recording. Just for fun. So when I started DJing, it was so boring to be *only* a DJ, to go to the record shop on Wednesday, buy all the records and then play only the records of other people.

And then when I started BPitch, there were no labels around in Berlin, just two or three. Like MFS with Paul Van Dyk. I did one record with them, and I couldn't do it anymore. I had to start my own. The same with the fashion. For years we were doing merch, and then we started to make skirts for the girls and printing them, but it was hard to find good shapes that you can print on, so it was...yeah...OK...let's make fashion. Everything has fit together like a puzzle. I think creativity isn't: If you're a DJ, you're a DJ. If you're a record producer, you're a record producer. If you're a painter, you're a painter. If you're creative, you're creative. You can do anything. We tell the artists to do what they want at BPitch. Make hip-hop, make techno, make whatever.

Feature series

- [RA Poll](#)
- [Breaking through](#)
- [Clubbing in...](#)
- [Label of the month](#)
- [Machine Love](#)
- [Playing favourites](#)
- [Top 10 festivals](#)
- [Under the gun](#)

Recent features

- [Ellen Allien: Her utopie](#)
- [Breaking through: Cottam](#)
- [Label of the month: Third Ear](#)
- [Under the gun: Pinch](#)
- [Top 10 April 2010 Festivals](#)
- [Breaking through: Canyons](#)
- [Ewan Pearson: Mix work](#)
- [Danton Eeprom: Confessions of a French techno producer](#)
- [Reboot: Frank-Main-House](#)
- [Scott Grooves: A new day](#)
- [Machine love: Dennis Ferrer](#)
- [Label of the month: NonPlus+](#)
- [Joris Voorn: A dedicated mind](#)
- [Playing favourites: DJ Sprinkles](#)
- [Top 10 March 2010 Festivals](#)
- [RA Poll: Top 100 tracks of the '00s](#)



Looking back over the past year of the BPitch catalogue, it's striking to see the diversity of the acts that you've released. Moderat, Jay Haze, AGF/Delay.

We are a bit old-school. Most newer labels focus in one style for the marketing, it's easier to sell. You have strategies, you push in one direction. I can't do that. There's no freedom in that.

You started long enough ago that you can now still get away with being that diverse. Nowadays if you start a label, distributors will force you to push in that one direction to ensure that you'll be able to stay financially afloat.



Exactly. I like the concept of BPitch. We just signed Jahcoozi and We Love—this new band from Italy that makes electro indie pop—and then we have things like Jay Haze, a techno record from Chaim. Things from wherever. We try to present Berlin, in a way. All kinds of music styles.

Why do you think BPitch is still around, when labels similar to your own have disappeared?

I think everything started like a family business here. Some of these people are still with us, some people are with us business-wise. The family business keeps everything compact. Of course it's not this way anymore so much. If we sign a new artist, it's not because they come to BPitch because of the family feeling with us. They want to come because it's big or has a name behind it.



Does that worry you?

No! It's just different. It's completely opposite of what I felt when we started. I've started to realize this for a few years

now. We are completely between these two [ideas]. But the family business thing has kept us together in a way. Even if it was going down and up. Well, it was never really down. But maybe it looked that way from the media, the hype was over. But, in the end, the family feeling kept things going—especially for me. And also the new signings, and the success of our own artists like Modeselektor or Paul [Kalkbrenner] with the movie. Paul and Modeselektor are now gone, doing their own labels. So it's again new.

pure behrouz  
with special guests  
**Steve Bug**  
**Livio & Roby**  
**Alex Neri**  
Opening Set by  
**Addy**  
**March 25**  
Buddha Gardens at  
Karu & Y, Miami

Click for details & tickets



Does right now feel like a new beginning for BPitch?

It's not a new beginning. It's just that we have time now to push other people. For us, it's good. We had a good period, we pushed each other very high. It was very beautiful to see, the socialism thing was very interesting to see how the artists changed when everyone was busy. You're not so close anymore, but how you can keep the relationships, and how the music comes together at the end. It's just a flower. You give it water, and one leaf falls, you give it water again and one leaf grows. It's an interesting journey for me to run a record company, this mechanism of creativity and trying to follow the new rules of capitalism.

In almost every interview I read with you, I've seen you use the word "capitalism." Is this a bad thing for you?

No, it's good. We can't calculate things. Sometimes I will get a track, play it and get a great reaction. I'll think that it's the hit of the night, the next hit for BPitch. Then we'll bring it out, and there'll be no reaction, no chartings. Just me. [laughs] I love that. You don't know what is coming out at the same moment, who is jumping on what and why. So all we can do is look inside at how we work in the office, how we work together, to make sure that it's social. Is it with your heart and with your brain? If it is, then it's fun and great.

Are there any specific records that you can talk about that you've played out that haven't gotten much of a

**reaction when you released them?**

There are many! But all I can say is those that I didn't expect would be so big. Things like the Tiga remix of Tomas Andersson, which became so huge. I always expected Modeselektor to be big, I was always sure. Paul Kalkbrenner, we didn't expect his album to be so huge. It was quite new for us to do a soundtrack to a movie, something completely new, so we weren't sure.

It's nice, though, that you can't calculate this. But it's not so important at the end. Sometimes I make compromises, because I don't want to have my ego in the way. If people are with us for a very long time—and they really believe in something—and they say, "Hey, I can't do better than this." Then that's the way it comes out. Because it's not possible for me to say, "No." Otherwise you can't work very well together for the next few years.

**Have you ever felt like you've compromised in your own work? Perhaps because of a deadline or something.**

Well, deadlines are always good. But I find that the longer I work on something, it doesn't get better. It's just different. When I'm working on a track in the studio, I work in a very punk style. I'm not so nerdy that I have to work it out so that everything has to be there, there and there.

**Let's talk about the new album. This time around, you worked with Tobias Freund. Why did you decide he was the person to work with on *Dust*?**

I don't make music very often, so when I'm recording it has to be friendship. Otherwise, I could never go with someone in the studio. Tobias is really fun to hang around, whether you're making music, smoking a joint, enjoying a party at Panorama Bar or having dinner with him. And the good thing about Tobias is that his studio is quite close to where I'm living. So I simply had to walk over and we'd get to work quite quickly.

**How was it different from working with AGF, as you did on the last album?**

I've been friends with AGF for years, she's kind of a hero to me. It's like a sister relationship. When I made the album with Apparat, it was quite poppy. All of these melodies, all of these strings. I was ready to do something really minimal, I had to do something like that. I didn't care whether people hate it or love it. And I loved her production, her style. Of course, her place at the time was also very close to mine as well.

**That seems to be a very important issue for you.**

Yes! *[laughs]* Because you can record very fast or you can pick something up from home really quickly if you need it. It's very important for me.

**It seemed like you could tell very easily that AGF had produced the last album by the way that it sounded. With *Dust*, though, I don't get that sense. It sounds more like an Ellen Allien record.**

I guess maybe that's because I've come back a little bit to my old pop thing. I sing more on this record. And when I sing there are always more guitars and strings or something. With AGF, it was a process of cutting back, to make something abstract. I felt like writing songs again, I felt like I had something to say.

**What did you want to tell people?**

There is one story about how I met my boyfriend at Panorama Bar called "Flashy Flashy." That feeling of being between the world and something else. *[laughs]* This feeling is very strong. Back in the day at E-Werk, you had the same feeling. And it's still the same feeling here in Berlin. The clubowners have done a very good job of keeping that feeling of the old days. There's one song about when I fall and get up again. There's another track about how to come back after a fight or something to the good point [in a relationship]. It's all about my life here at this moment. It's about hope, it's about between the disco lights, it's about dreams. I try to make the lyrics abstract, though. I don't want people to understand exactly what I'm saying, so that people can put it on their own life. It's very important that people can dream with my music. I don't know if people can do that, but I hope so.

Related links /

Label: **BPitch Control**


Words / **Todd L. Burns**

Published / Wed, 10 Mar 2010

 **1 Comment**



### More on Ellen Allien

 [Add as favourite](#)

Latest DJ Chart

**Ellen Allien March 2010 Top 10**

Reviews

**Ellen Allien - Watergate 05**

**Ellen Allien - Lover**

Upcoming dates

-  Mar 10 **Boogybytes Vol. 05 & Watergate..**
-  Mar 12 **BLOC 2010 - Day 1 at Butlins R..**
-  Mar 19 **Bpitch Control 10th Anniversar..**
-  Mar 20 **Bpitch Control 10th Anniversar..**

News

[James Zabiela mixes Life](#)

[We Love Sounds adds The Revenge, Paul Ritch](#)

[Ellen Allien returns with Dust](#)

[Kompakt tour returns to Australia](#)

Other recent features



About  
Contact  
RSS feeds

Get involved  
Bookmark RA  
Submit event

Take me to the top  
Send me to a friend

Breaking through  
Cottam



Copyright © 2010 Resident Advisor Ltd.  
All rights reserved. [Terms & Privacy](#).