

**ARTIST: ELLEN ALLIEN // BIOGRAPHY**

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Berlin – I grew up feeling surrounded by the Wall. I lived on the small island of West Berlin. Border controls on Sunday excursions, the rummaging through bags, the military. It was scary. But the quote “All quiet on the western front” still didn’t really apply, as lots of things were happening that wouldn’t have been possible anywhere else. The island of West Berlin was a destination for creative minds in search of alternatives. Music was and still is my outlet. Alongside tinkling on the electric organ, teaching myself how to read notes and my jukebox with a collection of singles in my room, my ears were first intrigued by the revolution of Neue Deutsche Welle. It was fantastic! For the first time people were singing in the language you could hear out on the street: Ideal, Grauzone, Nina Hagen – pop meets punk. Things happened so fast. Minimal sounds made from machines entered the charts. For me it was Kraftwerk’s “Model” that changed everything. I discovered that pop also worked without any frills. My side of Berlin provided a home for the curious, those who were going against the flow.

However, it was only when the Wall came down that Berlin became Berlin again – the city that lets me breathe. After spending a whole year in London I realized that despite the acid jazzhouse euphoria there, only one place felt like home – Berlin, the city of possibilities. Being able to breathe, to drive and walk wherever and with whoever I wanted. And no more borders. I was immediately fascinated by East Berlin, by this atmosphere of curiosity and get-up-and-go. There was room for experiments. Electronic music united East and West.

I started to focus on music and art. At first that meant playing the saxophone, learning about fashion, hanging out in rehearsal rooms and taking classes in acrobatics. To finance it all, I worked behind the bar in the Fischlabor, which happened to be the meeting point of the up-and-coming music network. I mixed my first tapes and suddenly became part of the emerging Berlin techno scene, which started out in empty industrial buildings, houses and cellars. Ellen became Ellen Allien.

Courage

Berlin nightlife. I had my own radio show on KISS FM, worked at the Delirium record store and finally founded my first label Braincandy. It felt as if music had swallowed me whole. With Braincandy I made a serious attempt at releasing the kind of abstract techno I liked best. I’d had enough of compromising. Some of it was just the courage to pave my own way.

The closing down of the first big Berlin techno clubs was a setback for the scene, though I interpreted it as a sign to get something new going in the midst of disorientation. The party series BPitch Control was a good start. I wanted to hang on to the music, to materialize it, so I founded BPitch Control Records.

The parties were no longer just memories, now people could take them home, too. The label was mainly an organ for me and other people who I found talented and worth supporting. To me, BPitch control is glamour, community and exchange platform all at the same time.



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Productive

As a DJ I have always tried to connect genres, styles and audiences. I want to feed people new music and capture their interest. I want to fill the room with sound. And I have always been searching for an acceptance of what exists. We all live in the here and now!

And it was that common thread that I wanted to share with the audience. When I DJ, body and music become one, they become brainy. To me, music was always the only way to soar through epic parallel worlds, to relax, to experience excess, to find myself.

Music is both my motor and my outlet.

As a producer, music is a playback of my emotions and moods. I tease them out of me with alternating technical devices. Music becomes a chronicle, each album is a work from a period of my life, which grounds me after the stress of DJ-jetting. Albums are like diaries. With my first album "Stadtkind" I wanted to express my close relationship with the city I live in. It was like an explosion. "Stadtkind" is my homage to Berlin. The testing, work and experimentation with the structures and the sound spectrum of electronic music then became more and more crucial for me. I used my various compilations and remixes to beam myself into the musical cosmos. With my next album "Berlinette" I processed what I had experienced after the release of "Stadtkind". It was like a flash of lightning, I was everywhere and everyone around me was euphoric and supportive. "Berlinette" illustrates all that and it is also my very personal discourse on what is possible in the world of pop music and abstract sounds. Then I released my third album "Thrills". It moves back and forth between constant excitement and playing the ARP 2600 and other analogue instruments. Changing studio equipment keeps the productions flowing. Techno is still what I'm about. It's minimal, reduced, deep and rough at the same time. I would say that techno and I have developed together.

Sensual

In my work, graphics, music, artwork, visuals and fashion merge.

Body

Dance, space and lust for life overspill. I search for the fulfilling dance. Body, belly and brain start to swing and uplift me/us. Music is the drug – nothing else!

Travel

Travelling with my record case, living out of the suitcase. The hotel is my home. Experiencing new worlds and cultures and accepting them; understanding, how things work in other places. Sharing views and politics. A club unites people without words. It's the music that speaks.

Recognizing the beauty of the world and absorbing the otherness. Home is far away and not important. It's the unknown that attracts my attention, and I want to know it!

The mix

The mix is everything. I push myself to the absolute limit, sweating, and the thrill is that the room will become our room.