

FISCHERSPOONER

Fischerspooner is an art pop performance project created and helmed by Warren Fischer and Casey Spooner that makes music, dance, fashion, film and photography. Their work fuses fine art and pop culture, as in their renowned outsider pop shows bursting with stage effects presented in both art galleries and traditional concert halls. Their full-length albums of music include *#1*, a punked-up digital party record trussed with conceptual lyrics; and *Odyssey*, a rich emotional fantasia with a deep, expansive sound. Fischerspooner's third album *Entertainment*, a sophisticated pop epic bubbling with hooks, releases in May, 2009.

Fischer and Spooner met at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where they collaborated on performance art pieces. Years later in New York, Warren was starting his career as a commercial director and Casey was ready to move on after a nine-year tenure with the experimental theatre company Doorika; both were looking for a new creative outlet. Eager to rekindle their collaboration, they attempted a TV pilot but became more interested in the digital soundtrack Warren had composed for the show.

Between 1998 and 2000 the duo wrote a spate of cool electronic tracks to accompany an ambitious new performance idea. The music was perfectly pitched for the turn of the millennium: a pure digital statement equally informed by Spooner's love of pop confection as by Fischer's classical training and background in the seminal math-rock band Table. The show, a smash-up of pop extravagance undercut by experimental theatrics, was carried off with aplomb by Spooner, the flamboyant trickster front man, and driven home with Fischer's pulsating, addictive beats. With the help of an ever-expanding network of dancers, singers, designers, and artists, the performances grew into large-scale arena-style pop spectacles staged in galleries and nightclubs.

After an unlikely debut at the Starbucks on Astor Place, subsequent shows jumped between clubs like Limelight and Baktun and art world venues like Jack Tilton Gallery, P.S.1's Warm-Up series and a staging within Rikrit Tiravanija's "Apartment 21" installation at Gavin Brown's enterprise. Fischerspooner unveiled their first solo show at Gavin Brown in March, 2000 with a series of marathon performances, five sets per night for five nights, that cemented their reputation as a pioneering, uneasily categorized creative force. In 2001 they followed up with a supersized version of the show in Los Angeles, and returned to rock New York in 2002 with a kaleidoscopic spectacular at current gallery Deitch Projects, concurrent with the premiere of their short film "Sweetness."

Self-releasing the music at first, Fischerspooner amassed a dedicated international following during the heady first flowering of the digital music era. White labels and an underground vinyl release with DJ Hell's International DeeJay Gigolo Records positioned them as a figurehead of the burgeoning electro movement. Meanwhile, their hyper-stylish performances at clubs like WMF in Berlin and Pyramid Club in New York left packed houses awestruck. Intense press attention led to a record deal with club pioneers Ministry of Sound, which drove "Emerge" into the UK Top 40, leading to an appearance on *Top of the Pops*, and landing them a worldwide exclusive with Capitol Records.

After a few years of touring the U.S. and Europe, the duo began the grueling work of writing *Odyssey*. No longer a grass-roots operation making pop-art on a laptop, Fischer and Spooner grappled with themselves and each other, a process reflected in the emotional depths attained on the record. Opening the writing process to collaborators, the duo attracted a diverse group including songwriting powerhouse Linda Perry, art-pop pioneer David Byrne, and renowned intellectual Susan Sontag, who contributed the lyrics to "We Need A War." Other contributors included longtime engineer and collaborator Nicolas Vernhes (Fiery Furnaces, Black Dice), L.A. producer Tony Hoffer (Beck, Air), and French producer and songwriter Mirwais (Madonna).

To accommodate their new sound, musicians were added to the live show. During the rehearsal process, Fischerspooner presented the Excellent Workshop salon series at their studio in Williamsburg, Brooklyn where myriad artists were invited to show photography, sculpture, painting, video and performances. In 2005, after a sold-out premiere at New York's Canal Room, the band embarked on a summer-long residency at Ibiza's Man-U-Mission, the largest nightclub in the world. Performing every Monday night to tens of thousands, they spent the rest of the week headlining clubs and festivals from Oslo to Istanbul.

In 2006, Fischerspooner shared a bill with Michael Stipe, Bright Eyes and Rufus Wainwright for the "Bring 'Em Home Now" concert, marking the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. The group anchored Deitch Projects and Paper Magazine's second annual Art Parade, crowning the procession with a dazzling float overflowing with musicians and dancers dressed by vanguard London designer Gareth Pugh. Casey also appeared as Laertes in the Wooster Group production *Hamlet*, which included two new Fischerspooner songs composed for the show using Shakespeare's text.

The first tease of what was yet to come arrived in 2008 with two singles released on Paris-based cult label Kitsuné. "The Best Revenge" a driving, synth-layered pop number, was featured on Kitsuné's *Maison 5* compilation, and "Danse en France," a slung-back, slinky dance track had a hit remix by D.I.M. A commission by choreographer Stephen Petronio resulted in an 18-minute adaptation of

“Danse en France” used as the score of their piece “Beauty and the Brut,” garnering notice in the New York Times after its world premiere at the Joyce Theater in May.

In June, Fischerspooner was included in the exhibition “It’s Not Only Rock ‘n’ Roll, Baby!” at the Brussels Centre for Fine Arts along with Patti Smith, Yoko Ono, Laurie Anderson, and Brian Eno. In one area they premiered “Get Confused,” a multi-wall music and video installation hailed as the show’s highlight by Frieze magazine. In another part of the museum were Fischerspooner themselves presenting “Rehearsal in Progress,” a live-in development process for their new performance open to the public during museum hours six days a week for three weeks.

Using inspirations as diverse as Japanese theatre and the early years of the U.S. space program, this new performance continues Fischerspooner’s alchemical synthesis of experimental theatrics and pop spectacle. The work was developed at the Performing Garage in New York with artistic consultation by The Wooster Group, and featured in the 2008 Sao Paulo Bienal, staged inside the iconic Oskar Neimeir building.

In May, Fischerspooner will release *Entertainment*, their third full-length album. Recorded over a two-year period with producer Jeff Saltzman (The Killers, The Sounds) the music marks a further maturation of the group’s sound. Written and recorded independently in a carriage house in Brooklyn, the primary collaborators this time were an intimate circle of artists working on the live show: Ian Pai, Ben Bromley and Sam Kearney. The album’s special guests include actress/performance artist Ann Magnuson (Bongwater), UK musician Gabriel Olegavich (Lady Sovereign, Spektrum) and electronic collagist Steven Stein (Double Dee & Steinski).

A taste of the unexpected, full of surprise flavors, Fischerspooner looks forward to unleashing their new work in 2009: *Entertainment*, an album aswirl with ideas and fresh sounds, and an electric stage show bridging the worlds of art and pop.