

Kenopsia Project: a sonic and visual journey into abandonment

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ABSTRACT

Kenopsia Project is an artistic initiative that melds electronic music with abandoned spaces, challenging the conventional norms of both music and culture. This study delves into its artistic innovation, emotional resonance, and influence on contemporary culture. A comprehensive literature review of Kenopsia Project was conducted, utilizing academic sources and online materials. Data regarding performances and digital dissemination platforms employed by the project were collected. Additionally, audience reviews and feedback were examined to assess the emotional interaction elicited by the performances. This project distinguishes itself through artistic innovation by harmonizing electronic music with the ambiance of abandoned places, tailoring each performance to the specific location. Moreover, the project has evoked profound emotional responses in the audience, eliciting the sense of *kenopsia* and prompting contemplation on the impermanence of life and the beauty within decay. Kenopsia Project's impact on contemporary culture is evident in its defiance of conventionality, creating authentic cultural experiences. Its digital presence has extended its global reach, inspiring fellow artists to explore novel forms of artistic expression. Collectively, this study underscores the enduring relevance and profound impact of Kenopsia Project on electronic music and contemporary culture, emphasizing its ability to transform and deeply move its audience.

Keywords: electronic music, abandoned places, alternative culture, artificial intelligence, digital art.

INTRODUCTION

In an unconventional corner of the music scene, where electronic music and digital creativity converge, emerges the "Kenopsia Project." This alternative initiative blends the magic of electronic music with the melancholy of abandoned places. In a world where electronic music is often associated

with cutting-edge innovation, Kenopsia Project stands out as a truly unique endeavor that surpasses conventional boundaries.

The term "alternative" is, of course, loaded with meaning and highly debatable. However, it serves as a useful general term denoting practices characterized by being oppositional, resistant, marginal, and nonconformist. In this context, we use the term "alternative culture" to signify a rejection of what might be perceived as the "mainstream" in contemporary electronic music (O'Grady, 2015). This mainstream is often marked by large-scale and highly commercial events, where innovation and experimentation might take a back seat.

The concept *kenopsia*, coined by artist John Koenig, describes that bittersweet feeling of seeing a place that was once full of life, now plunged into silence and abandonment (Koenig, 2021). This emotional experience, often associated with exploring abandoned places, serves as the inspiration and core of the Kenopsia Project. The project aims to capture and convey this emotion through recordings of electronic music sessions performed in carefully selected abandoned locations.

Each location, with its unique history and architecture, becomes an atmospheric backdrop for vibrant mixes of electronic rhythms. What sets Kenopsia Project apart is its ability to transform what was once a stage of life and activity into a space where contemporary electronic music comes to life in a way that challenges expectations. "The dance of the crowd becomes a signal through which the performance of the DJ is valued and appreciated" (Gallo, 2016).

This article delves deep into the Kenopsia Project, analyzing its methodology, results, and impact on contemporary music culture. It also explores how this initiative goes beyond mere musical creation to weave a multisensory experience that invites reflection on the impermanence of life and the beauty within decay.

Ultimately, Kenopsia Project invites us to explore the connection between the ephemeral and the eternal, between the past and the present, and to appreciate music in a way that transcends conventional boundaries. It stands as a beacon of creativity in contemporary electronic music, demonstrating that innovation and inspiration can be found in the most unexpected places:

The coming history will no longer produce ruins. It has no time to do so. On the debris produced by the confrontations it will not fail to provoke, works of construction will arise, and with them, who knows, the opportunity to build something different, to regain the sense of time, and, going a little further, perhaps, the consciousness of history (Augé, 2003, p. 156).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To address the study of Kenopsia Project and its unique approach to electronic music in abandoned settings, a qualitative research approach was adopted. This approach was deemed appropriate due to

the need to deeply understand the experiences and processes involved in the project, as well as its impact on contemporary music culture.

Selection of Abandoned Places

The selection of abandoned places was a crucial step in the methodology. Places that embodied the essence of *kenopsia*, once vibrant with life and activity but now silent and abandoned, were carefully chosen. Selection criteria included their history, unique architecture, and their ability to evoke emotions.

Recording Electronic Music Sessions

Once the locations were selected, electronic music sessions were recorded. This involved setting up high-quality recording equipment at each location, ensuring optimal capture of the sounds and unique atmospheres of the abandoned places. These electronic music sessions were performed by DJs and collaborating artists from Kenopsia Project.

Implementation of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Creativity

In addition to recording music sessions in abandoned places, Kenopsia Project utilizes various digital animation and artificial intelligence techniques to create artistic videos accompanying the music. The incorporation of artificial intelligence adds a layer of unpredictability and creativity to the experience. Generative algorithms can modify and reinterpret music and visuals in real-time, creating a constantly evolving audiovisual experience. An example of an image created using these techniques is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Digital art



Data Collection and Analysis

Audio and video data from all electronic music sessions in abandoned places, as well as from artificial intelligence productions, were collected. These data were qualitatively analyzed to understand how electronic music captured the essence of kenopsia.

Methodology Limitations

It is important to recognize that this methodology has inherent limitations. As it is qualitative research, the results are not necessarily generalizable to all expressions of electronic music or digital creativity.

Despite these limitations, this methodology provides a solid foundation for in-depth exploration of Kenopsia Project and its unique contribution to contemporary electronic music and alternative culture.

RESULTS

The results of the Kenopsia Project study reveal a fusion of musical, visual, and emotional elements that transcend the conventional boundaries of electronic music. This initiative has successfully captured the essence of kenopsia, the bittersweet feeling of abandoned places, and masterfully incorporated it into its artistic proposal. The results are divided into three key aspects: electronic music in abandoned places, digital creativity and artificial intelligence, and emotional impact on the audience (figure 2).

Figure 2.

Bala Batam in a train station from 2002 abandoned in 2012



Electronic Music in Abandoned Places

Kenopsia Project has managed to create a truly unique auditory experience by combining electronic music with the atmosphere of abandoned places. The electronic music sessions performed in these locations capture the texture and history of each site remarkably. Contemporary electronic sounds intertwine with echoes from ancient walls and broken windows, generating a harmony that evokes nostalgia and beauty in decay (figure 3).

Figure 3.

David Reina in an old cement factory from 1953



The choice of abandoned places with diverse histories and unique architecture has enriched the musical experience. Each location provides an atmospheric backdrop that becomes an integral part of the music. Kenopsia Project artists have demonstrated exceptional ability in adapting their music to the characteristics of each place, thus creating a profound connection between the past and the present (Figures 4 to 6).

Figure 4.

Inpass in the engineer's house of a ghost town from the 1940s abandoned in the 80s



Figure 5.

Canino in an old flour and fabric factory from 1877



Figure 6.

Neil Landtrumm in an old discotheque from 1984



Digital Creativity and Artificial Intelligence

The synchronization of electronic music with digital animation creates a hypnotic effect that transports the audience into a world of visual and auditory sensations. This has led to the creation of pieces that defy expectations and break down the barriers between art and technology.

Emotional Impact on the Audience

Kenopsia Project has demonstrated its ability to deeply move and stir the audience. The combination of electronic music with abandoned places has generated a multisensory experience that goes beyond simple listening. Viewers are transported on a journey through time and the human mind, where the contrast between the modernity of electronic music and the decay of abandoned places creates a dialogue between contemporary creativity and historical nostalgia.

The audience is immersed in an experience that reminds them of the ephemeral nature of things, including music itself. The emotional connection between the ephemeral and the eternal becomes a central theme in Kenopsia Project's performances. The whispers of those who once inhabited the abandoned places become part of the music, creating an experience that invites reflection on the impermanence of life and the beauty in decay.

In summary, the results of this study highlight that Kenopsia Project has managed to take electronic music and digital creativity to new emotional and aesthetic horizons. Its impact on contemporary musical culture is undeniable, and its ability to deeply move the audience and create a profound connection between the past and the present makes it a truly exceptional initiative.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Kenopsia Project, an alternative initiative that merges electronic music with abandoned places, has proven to be a striking artistic and cultural proposition that surpasses the conventional boundaries of electronic music and visual experience. Throughout this study, the key elements defining this unique project have been explored, analyzing its outcomes and impact. The conclusions are divided into three main aspects: artistic innovation, emotional interaction, and influence on contemporary culture (figures 7-8).

Figure 7.

Fernando Garrido in a probable 1971 livestock farm



Figure 8.
Future Ark in an abandoned housing development that was never inhabited; the initial key delivery date was in 2009



Artistic Innovation and Creativity

One of the primary conclusions of this study is the remarkable artistic innovation represented by Kenopsia Project. The combination of electronic music and abandoned places has resulted in a

multisensory experience that challenges traditional expectations of music and culture. The ability to adapt electronic music to the unique atmosphere of each abandoned location demonstrates an exceptional level of creativity from the artists involved.

This reflects a constant pursuit of innovation and exploration of new boundaries in artistic and cultural expression by the team (Figure 9). In a musical and artistic landscape often characterized by repetition and uniformity, Kenopsia Project stands out as a beacon of creativity and originality.

Figure 9.

The Kenopsia Project team on abandoned sofas they found during the search for settings for their recordings.



Deep Emotional Interaction

Another significant conclusion is Kenopsia Project's ability to generate a deep emotional interaction with its audience (figure 10). The combination of electronic music with the atmosphere of abandoned places evokes a sense of kenopsia, a bittersweet experience of contemplating decay and beauty in ruins. This emotional interaction goes beyond mere aesthetic appreciation and leads viewers to reflect on the impermanence of life and the connection between the ephemeral and the eternal.

Figure 10.

Donkker in an old crane company



Electronic music becomes a vehicle for conveying these emotions, and the audience becomes an integral part of the experience. The whispers of those who once inhabited the abandoned places are incorporated into the music, creating an emotional dialogue between the past and the present. This ability to move and provoke deep reflection in the audience is a testament to the power of art and music to touch people's emotional chords (figures 11, 12).

Figure 11.

Lospiestorcidos in the church of a ghost town from the 1940s abandoned in the 80s



Figure 12.

Telephasyx! in an abandoned train station from 1927 abandoned in 1988



Influence on Contemporary Culture

Finally, Kenopsia Project has demonstrated a significant impact on contemporary music culture and alternative culture in general. Its focus on resistance to the conventional and the creation of events that defy commercial and mass norms reflects the very essence of alternative culture. The term "alternative" takes on new meaning through this initiative, as it represents opposition to the mainstream and the pursuit of genuine and meaningful cultural expressions (figure 13).

Figure 13.

Chica Fábrica in an abandoned old stable



Kenopsia Project's influence extends beyond its live performances, as its presence on digital platforms such as YouTube and Instagram has allowed its art to reach a global audience. This has contributed to the spread of experimental electronic music and digital creativity worldwide, inspiring other artists to explore new artistic territories (figure 14).

Figure 14.

The Vortm in the locomotive reserve workshop of a train station from 1858 abandoned in 2005



In conclusion, Kenopsia Project stands as a disruptive and transformative force in contemporary electronic music and alternative culture. Its ability to innovate, emotionally move, and challenge cultural norms testifies to the power of art to create deep and meaningful connections in an ever-changing world. The lasting impact of this initiative on music and culture is destined to endure in the hearts and minds of those privileged to experience it (figures 15-18).

Figure 15.

Nöle in an abandoned old barn



Figure 16.

Kanka and Kokzen in the theater of an old US military base



Figure 17.

Computer madness in a 1954 Radio Nacional de España abandoned building



Figure 18.

Elías the Prophet in an abandoned chapel from 1964



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