

.W Over the course of his life John Watermann worked with almost every conceivable artistic medium. In many ways, he was the epitome of the "total artist"; almost every element of his life being in some way his own artistic project.

As a young man in his native Germany he worked as a photographer and documentary filmmaker, also etching, painting and writing. His experience as a youth in Germany in the Second World War influencing his work from then right through until his death.

Following his move to Australia Watermann worked as jeweller, opening a number of shops in Sydney with his longtime Australian partner Barbara Heath (an accomplished jeweller in her own right) and meanwhile continued to write, paint and even sculpt. Eventually, after traveling the east coast of Australia in a self-built sailing boat, Watermann settled in Brisbane and began to produce his music.

He first released his music in 1989 in the form of the album "Warmth is the Fifth Room". Like most of his releases, the LP appeared in a run of very few copies on his own label "Nightshift", and was consequently almost impossible to find.

Over the next 10 years he released numerous albums and contributed to a number of compilations, both under his own name as a solo artist, in collaboration with others (such as Merzbow) and under a number of pseudonyms (including Radio Mull, Spinal Machine and Total Disease). Also, apart from his music, in the 1990s he created an interactive cd-rom work "Rose is a Rose" and published the webzine "Lean Yellow Supporting".

Sadly, on April 2nd 2002 John Watermann died suddenly of an infection resulting from his ongoing treatment for cancer. Having in the final year of his life returned to painting and writing (alongside a burgeoning interest in cooking), he still had vast plans for future projects.

Among these unfulfilled projects were plans to collaborate with Frans de Waard on a new release. Although only preliminary discussions on the collaboration took place and Watermann never completed any work towards the project, Watermann's source material that was to be the basis of the work now serves as a basis for this tribute release.

Despite his vast artistic output, Watermann has been known almost exclusively for his music and even then his work remains largely undiscovered, perhaps for no other reason than its sheer unavailability. In many ways Watermann could be considered a classic example of the artists' artist, his work influencing many far more prominent sonic alchemists. And perhaps then this release serves as a record of Watermann and his influence, documenting the respect he reserved from his peers and, hopefully, introducing his work to a new audience.

~ Ben Byrne (Producer of the radio documentary "Watermann")