Ken Vandermark

Ken Vandermark (USA 1964) is an avant-garde composer, improviser, saxophonist/clarinetist, curator, and writer; in 1999 was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in music. He moved to Chicago from Boston in 1989 and has worked continuously from the early 1990s onward, both as a performer and organizer in North America, Europe, Latin America, Japan, and Ethiopia, recording in a large array of contexts, with many internationally renowned musicians (such as Fred Anderson, Ab Baars, Martin Blume, Peter Brötzmann, Sylvie Courvoisier, Tim Daisy, Kris Davis, Dieb 13, Hamid Drake, Terrie Ex, Mats Gustafsson, Elisabeth Harnik, Steve Heather, Didi Kern, Kent Kessler, Christof Kurzmann, Thomas Lehn, Paul Lytton, Joe McPhee, Andy Moor, Jason Moran, Ikue Mori, Joe Morris, Matthias Muche, Paal Nilssen-Love, Eddie Prevóst, Mette Rasmussen, Tom Rainey, Eric Revis, Jasper Stadhouders, Chad Taylor, John Tilbury, Mars Williams, and Nate Wooley).

His current group activity includes the bands Edition Redux, Lean Left, The DKV Trio, DEK, his large ensemble Entr’acte, the ongoing Momentum projects; duos with Terrie Ex, Christof Kurzmann, Damon Locks, Paal Nilssen-Love, Mars Williams, and Nate Wooley; and work as a solo performer. Ken co-founded Catalytic Sound in 2012, an organization dedicated to the economic sustainability of creative improvising musicians, and since then has been its director. In 2014 he began Audiographic Records, an independent music label. Since June of 2015 Ken has been co-curator of Option, a music and interview series held at Experimental Sound Studio in Chicago. Half of each year is spent touring in Europe, North America, Latin America, and Japan; his concerts and numerous recordings have been critically acclaimed at home and abroad. Ken’s activity as a writer includes liner notes for a variety of recordings; and contributions to the eighth edition of John Zorn’s Arcana: musicians on music, the music journal Sound American, the Spanish language periodical, “El Estado Mental,” and “Catalytic Quarterly.”