

Leverage

Eileen Simpson & Ben White



Artists Eileen Simpson & Ben White often work outside the gallery, preferring to work in other public spaces: online, in clubs, magazines, shops and cinemas. Most recently they established the **Open Music Archive** a collaborative initiative to source, digitise and distribute out-of-copyright sound recordings. www.openmusicarchive.org

For *Futuresonic 2006* they present **Leverage** which centres around the creation and animation of *copyleft* licensed 12 inch vinyl scratch tools containing a range of samples, beats and extracts made from the out-of-copyright blues, jazz and folk music housed in the archive. For the exhibition *Instrument*, the project is presented at 'beta stage' where vinyl test pressings can be sampled in scenario akin to the record shop listening area – with the option to skip through the rare original recordings, new remix tracks, short vocal snippets, percussive noises, samples, breaks and beats.

In the hands of a turntablist, the record player is revealed as a hardware instrument – one that needs vinyl software to operate. The DJ's instrument can only be activated using a set of vinyl tools, in the same way that computer hardware requires an operating system and a suite of software to function. Unlike the conventional battle record, which samples unlicensed commercial recordings, the **Leverage** scratch tools are assembled entirely from out-of-copyright material – and so exist outside commercial and bootleg economies. The project adopts the form and structure of the battle record to build open vinyl code – which, like free/libre and open source software, is distributed freely.

Collaboration is central to the activity of the DJ who constantly combines, re-works and extends existing creative output. The artists promote collaboration and seek to explore its significance and value for creative production. For *Instrument* they invite scratch DJ **Parkertron** and filmmaker **Kid Jenson** to participate in the project – a collaboration which is documented through a video, shot by Jenson, featuring Parkertron testing the **Leverage** records.

The project encourages open creative exchange and demands that subsequent creations are licensed under identical terms. Through **Leverage** out-of-copyright and *copyleft* material is inserted into an existing network of production to prise open new possibilities.