

THE THIRD EAR

In the same way that the “third eye” is a metaphor for a real or imagined sensory organ that perceives less tangible matter, conceivably, the “third ear” also perceives a realm located somewhere beyond what can be immediately verified. *The Third Ear* exhibition, hosted by Fellows of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, invites five Los Angeles Based artists working with visual approaches to sound to participate in an exhibition that investigates the aural in contemporary visual art. Inspired by a subtitle to a recording by artist and composer Maryanne Amacher, *The Third Ear* explores the space between sound and visual cognition through contemporary sound art practices in Los Angeles.

This is a companion publication to the exhibition and we hope it also acts as a work of its own. Organized by artist and curator Chiara Giovando and designed by Neil Doshi, it includes work from Jules Gimbrone, Chiara Giovando, Mette Hersoug, Alison O’Daniel and John Wiese.

Anamnesis

An effect of reminiscence in which a past situation or atmosphere is brought back to the listener's consciousness, provoked by a particular signal or sonic context. Anamnesis, a semiotic effect, is the often-involuntary revival of memory caused by listening and the evocative power of sounds.

Alison O'Daniel uses narrative to weave between film, sculpture/painting and performance. Her work builds visual, aural, and haptic vocabularies through sound, color, material and form. In O'Daniel's sculpture, sound becomes physical, becoming 'quasi-closed captions' for music.



Alison O'Daniel, *The Tuba Thieves*, HD video still, 2013, image by Meena Singh

The Tuba Thieves (2014), a film by Alison O'Daniel, reverses the usual process of filmmaking by starting with original musical scores commissioned from three composers that experiment with the boundaries of sound. O'Daniel then used the music to imagine a narrative that weaves together historical moments.

Subtitles translate the musical score by Christine Sun Kim, a Deaf composer who responded to a list of references in order to create one of the scores for *The Tuba Thieves*.

"The film's sound is sculptural, visual and tactile, engendering a corporeal understanding of the aural sphere. Further, sound becomes physical in sculptures I consider 'quasi-closed captions' for music, inviting access through material, shape, color, form. The sculptures' titles originate from the screenplay, circling back to film narrative through static object."

-Alison O'Daniel



Alison O'Daniel, *Ethan's Score*, cut wood, gold foil tape, paint, deer antler, 2013

From a series of sculptures and paintings that attempt to translate the experience of listening to commissioned scores made for O'Daniel's film *The Tuba Thieves*.

5 | 5
A | A

oc | oc

1 | 5 | 5
5 | 5

paper crumble piles drip

:33



5 | 5
4 | 4

c | 5
oc | 5

pile - blossom - open grow tree tree forest

1:20



branch - scrap - tree tree - in - face wind

(down - up) bf bf

1:38



ALL-YOU, HERE. I, SIGN. BELIEVE, ALL YOUR PAST, EXPERIENCES,
MEMORIES, SIGHTS, TOGETHER, SHOW, WHAT-FOR, UNDERSTAND. NO.
THIS MOMENT, ONE, PERSPECTIVE, (PERSPECTIVE) SWALLOW, INSIDE...

SOUND OF MAKES SOUND OF

DOG TOY = PRAIRIE DOG
WOODEN SPOONS = HORSES
HAND ON SKIN = THE WIND
MY VOICE = MY MOTHER'S VOICE

Jack Donovan Foley (1891–1967) began what is now known as Foley art in 1927. He had started working with Universal Studios in 1914 during the silent movie era. When Warner studios released its first film to include sound, *The Jazz Singer*, Universal knew it needed to get on the bandwagon and called for any employees who had radio experience to come forward. Foley became part of the sound crew that turned Universal's then upcoming "silent" musical *Show Boat* into a musical. Because microphones of the time could not pick up more than dialogue, other sounds had to be added in after the film was shot. Foley and his small crew projected the film on a screen while recording a single track of audio that captured their live sound effects. Their timing had to be perfect, so that footsteps and closing doors synchronized with the actors' motions in the film. Jack Foley created sounds for films until his death in 1967. His basic methods are still used today.

Echo, a phenomenon observed in nature, is the simple or multiple repetition of a sound emission, linked to a reflection in the space of diffusion. The term comes from Echo, a mythological nymph condemned to never speak first, but only repeat the last syllables of others.

John Wiese is an artist and composer living and working in Los Angeles, California. His focus is on sound works rooted in montage, typography as a system of abstraction/communication, and image making—utilizing these various forms to evoke a concept of poetic cinema. In recent years he has begun combining these practices in the form of video—exploring the imaging of sound events, how visuals can evoke an impression of sound, the possibilities of documenting performances, and what these forms can reveal.



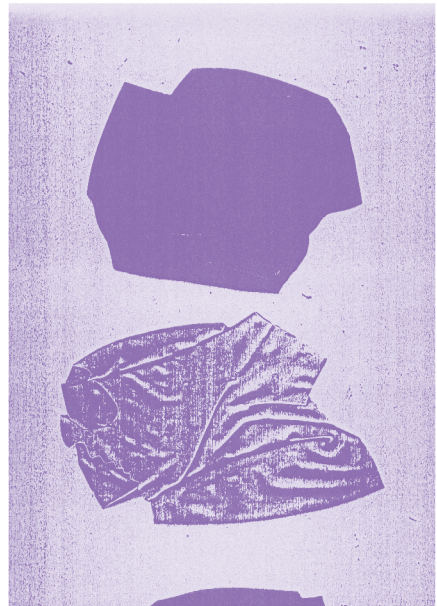
John Wiese, *Deviate From Balance*, HD video stills, 2013

In the video work titled *Deviate From Balance*, a woman blows up a balloon until it pops. This action is repeated with various colors of balloons, each becoming a diffused and ambient color in silence until its dramatic and abrupt end. It is the middle space of a blown up gently changing monochromatic color field that makes up the majority of the video, punctuated unpredictably by the swift bursting of the balloon. The installation uses the soft color ambience as a medium for anticipation or conversely, detachment.

Remnants of balloon fragments



John Wiese, *Deviate From Balance*,
ink jet print 1, 27 x 40, 2013



John Wiese, *Deviate From Balance*,
ink jet print 2, 27 x 40, 2013

Anticipation

Someone waiting for a sound to appear will “pre-hear” –that is, he or she will actually hear – the expected signal, even if no sound has been emitted. This effect can be observed either in the expectation of an unknown sound, every rustling then becoming a potential sign, or in familiar situations where the listener anticipates in her or his own mind, a foreseeable (or for-hearable) sonic future.

Anticipation (cont.)

If anamnesis is most often an involuntary phenomenon, anticipation, on the other hand, may appear when one expects too much. We may dread a sound, or we may be eager to hear it, but either way that sound seems to be heard without being actually emitted.

A semantic compositional effect characterized by the feeling of non-fulfillment of a heard sound sequence: the sound seems to be suspended, awaiting continuation. This effect leaves the listener in a state of uncertainty, indecision, or powerlessness. In its aesthetic dimension, suspension corresponds to the principle of incompleteness of a work; in its psychosociological dimension, it refers to waiting.

Jules Gimbrone is an artist and composer. Gimbrone approaches sound and composition through the lens of architectural, sculptural and choreographic interplay. Concerned with a tension between conceptual systems and their inevitable demise, Gimbrone's work exposes multiple failures and queries of the pre formative body.

Sound is slippery, unruly, awkward, shape shifting, and everywhere. Sound travels via vibrating mediums. Sound is a disturbance that challenges the solidity of form. Sound is spooky action at a distance. Sound seeps into locked rooms, into bodies. Sound doesn't care who or what you are. Sound is tender. Sound is violent. Sound is a system that we are a part of. Sound is political and private. Sound shows seams and structures. Sound is a canary in a coal mine. Sound maps out non-space. Sound is the subliminal and the sublime. Sound is annoying and loud. Sound is a special interest for those who study it. Sound studies you. Sound is a laughing animal. Sound doesn't like choices. Sound wants us to all just get along. Sound recognizes differences. Sound feels like it was born too soon. Sound feels like it is an alien, like it is from the future. Sound can sneak up on you. Sound can put you to sleep. Sound can't be bought and sold. Sound is all. Sound is not often seen. Sound is a place of worship. Sound is easily desecrated. Sound wants more listening and less doing. Sound is not yet here.

-Jules Gimbrone

spooky

adjective \spü-kē\
: strange and frightening

: ghost, specter, soul

action

noun \ak-shən\
: an act of will

: a thing done
: an operating mechanism
: sexual activity

flesh

noun \flesh\
: the soft parts of the body of an animal or person

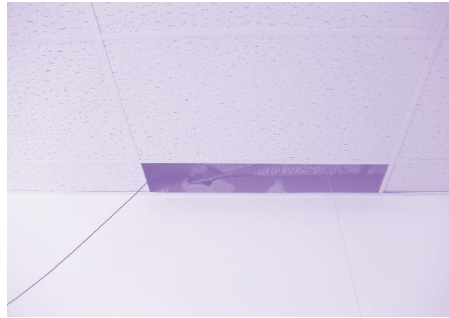
: the skin of a person

: parts of an animal used as food

wedge

noun \wej\
: a piece of material, with one pointed end and one thicker end that is used to split, to fit into a space, to separate two things stuck together,

: something that is shaped like a triangle or wedge
: something (as a policy) causing a breach or separation



Jules Gimbrone, *Spooky Action \ Flesh Wedge*, installation still from *The Third Ear*, FOCA office space, condenser, dynamic, and contact microphones, mixer, amp, tactile transducer speakers, metal chair, blue paint, modeling clay, 2014.



Mette Hersoug, *Your Hands and Fingers Glisten Ice Cold Like Michigan*, video and sound installation, 2014

VISUAL, SOUND & TEXT SOURCES:

3D Objects rendered from objects found at foreclosure sites in the Los Angeles area.
Sound of foreclosure riots collected from YouTube videos of foreclosure protests 2009-2014.
Sound of crowd cheering taken from various YouTube videos of Chris Brown's live shows 2009-2014.
Text excerpt from advertisement by Realty Executives Premier Marketing Group.
Text excerpt from advertisement by Promontory Club Real Estate Commercials.
Text excerpt from the advertisement campaign "We Believe" by Coldwell.
Text excerpt taken from the song "She is a brick house" by The Commodores.
Text excerpt taken from Chris Brown's song "Deuces" extended version.
Text excerpt taken from article by Cleveland Daily Banner: "Foreclosure eviction riot of 1933 bears similarities to current woes".

Refers to the presence of a sound that partially or completely masks another sound because of its intensity or frequency. An analogy to the visual mask, it allows us to extend the study of acoustic masking by emphasizing its anthropological ambiguity. Linked to the ritual, the mask hides something or leads one to believe something else; sometimes it hides only to better reveal.

Mette Hersoug approaches the use of sound in her work as a tool for investigation into overlaps and slippages between existing cultural systems. She makes multi-layered associations between pieces of sonic and visual information in order to create new alternate hybrid-narratives.

Mixing segments of appropriated sound from foreclosure riots during the height of the U.S. housing crisis, with elements of pop concerts, Hersoug uses the pop lyrics of Chris Brown to explore contemporary relationships to house and home. The concept of shelter as both a basic necessity and an expression of wealth and excess is a central theme in this work.

The work draws from various forms of language surrounding "home," including advertising and commercial real estate propaganda, pop-culture, and news media coverage of recent financial collapse. Hersoug weaves together a multi-layered sonic and visual fabric of associations in order to investigate the production of desire, perceived status, and sensationalized fear produced by these various languages. Using 3-D graphic imaging of objects found at foreclosure sites, and a 7-channel surround sound audio component, Hersoug envelops the viewer in a kind of liminal space, where we float like a shattered chair, between lived cultural narratives, economic crisis, real and potential revolt and poetry.

Some Notes on Space and Chance, Sound and Sonority
— Andrew Berardini

Marcel Duchamp for instance began thinking about music not as a time-art but as a space-art. He made a piece Sculpture Musicale, which means different sounds coming from different places, and lasting, producing a sculpture which is sonorous and which remains.

— John Cage, Interview, 1991

Most music is metaphor, but Wolff is not. I am not metaphor either.

Parable, maybe. Cage is sermon.

— Morton Feldman in
"Remembrance" by Tom Johnson,
September 1987

Here, they haven't entirely let chance take over.

By these tunes however, John Cage had given up on music trucking emotion, ideas, expression, soundly flushing sturm und drang, some ghost of sequence hung around, harmony was mostly incidental. After '46, pagethumbing the philosophy and music of India, he got more keen on making music that would "sober and quiet the mind, thus rendering it susceptible to divine influences."

He wished to praise silence without always using it. To clean everything away.

Here space is silence, each break a pause. In my dreams, Cage the writer composes a book sheafed only with blank pages, reams of white. Readers pore over every page deepened and stilled by such quietude. And perhaps, somewhere, Duchamp laughs.

Four players, four parts, four seasons. Three composers all friends. One Roll of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance says Mallarme. Neither would three or even four, one assumes.

Do we have anything in music for example that really wipes everything out? That just cleans everything away?

— Morton Feldman in a lecture, 1982

I'm a prose writer so my fragments will be inevitably prosaic. Prose can't entirely let chance take over either. Phillip K. Dick wrote *The Man in High Castle* dictated by the *I Ching*, a Cage and Feldman fave. I love the serendipity and cruelty of chance, but the accidents of inspiration and the stumbling discovery of meandering research are enough or nearly

Space and silence leaves things open. Cough or fart in *4'33"* and you and your body unwittingly become players in that symphony of silence. Listen carefully to it performed and you can hear stomach rumblings, dreams churning, one fellow hot and exhausted, his breath a sweetly wheezing sussuru, nodding in the middle.

up the rest. If you whisper these words into the ear of the person sitting next to you, your hot breath, the music of the words stripped of meaning, but arranged just so, might be even better.

There they are *sonorous*.

enough. The sound of words, the sensual curve and cuts of letters, the smooth facility of this page you're holding make

In these tunes we have a break, Standard notation, those symbols standing in for notes on fields framed by Western chords, halves and wholes, drawn and quartered, eighthed, sixteenth(!) dancing in adagios after the clarion salvo of the clef, bassed or trebled, the whole thing signatored and then maybe scored.

When the tight tyranny of composer's instructions loosen up, suggest actions instead of sounds, disappear the tight lines of the staff, the tease and suggest of disorder in white fields, notations that inspire actions rather than simply noting them: The freedom is frightening. A lifetime of discipline denies it. The hard, precise surety of sheet music can't easily be broken in a single composer, a single player, a single song. Or four.

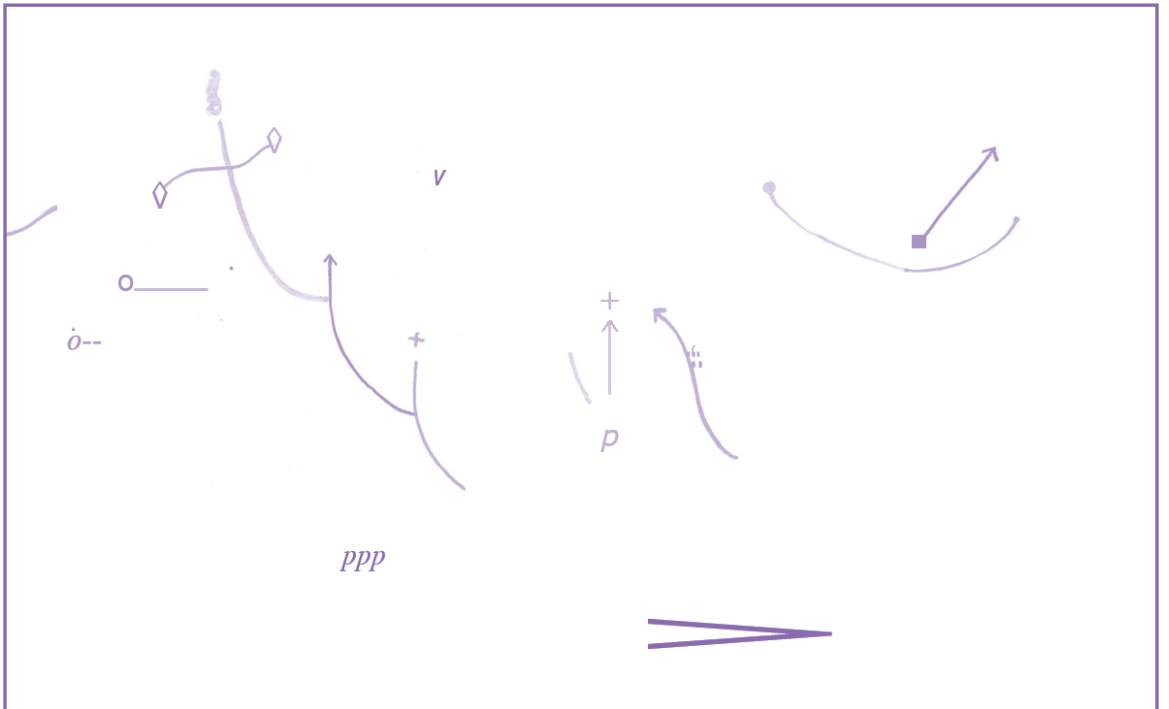
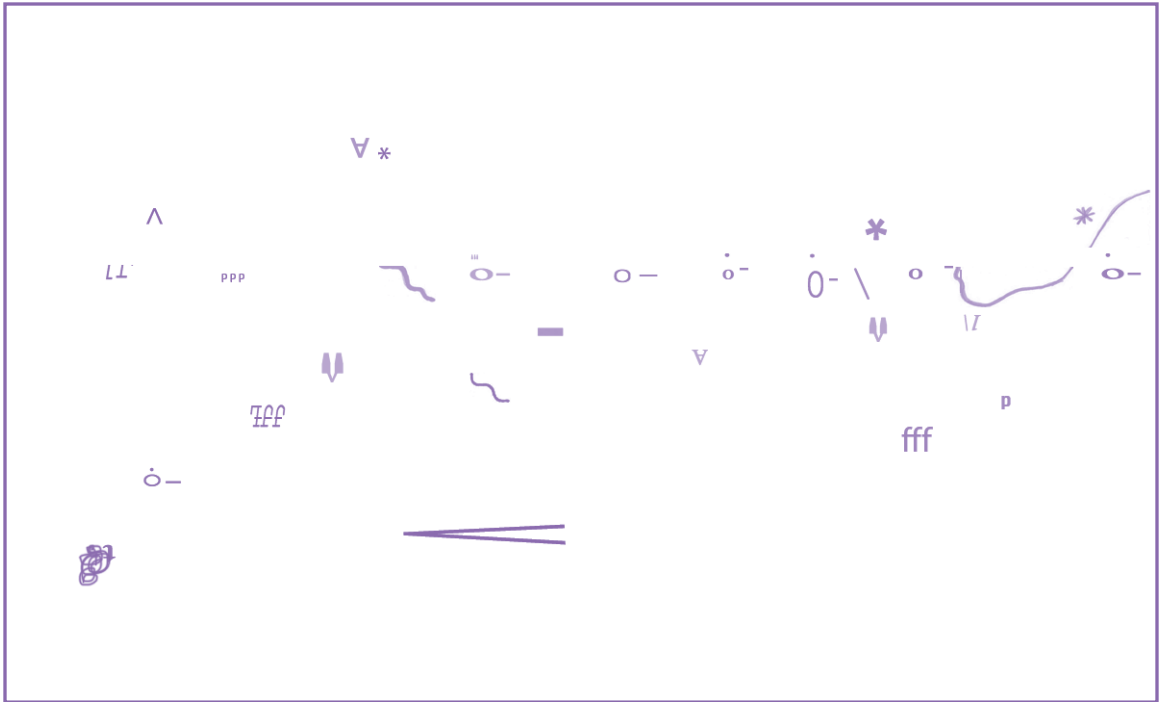
The Calder Quartet is from Los Angeles. This doesn't explain their adventurousness, but feels like it should. They contain the tension between the known and the unknown, precise excellence and the potential for failure in experimentation, the elite and the everyday, not only stringing the spectrum of music makers from rockers to vanguardists, candelabra and wigs to David Letterman, but also in their friends and collaborators outside chambers and clubs. Not unlike the gang of composers performed here surrounded with the work of their friends, mentors, and students, they regularly conspire with artists and writers and are not coincidentally named themselves after one. The last piece here by Christian Wolff is arranged by an unclassifiable arranger, an all of the above artist and maker from LA too, Chiara Giovando. She connects players through colour. I'm moved by the thought of it.

I, you, they, us are making this up as we go along. We have oceans of experience behind us maybe in making sounds, and the freedom to forget it all in an instant, to make our next move unexpected, to make noise if we must, whatever gives us pleasure.

Another compositional instruction, a finishing non-move: "Do not release pedals till all sounds have ceased."

Music, this music, is merely instructions for an experience, to be experienced in any way you like, improvised in any way you see fit for as few or as many as you want.

If you throw this away, please crumple it first. The sound is so much more satisfying.



Chiara Giovando is an artist and curator. Based in experimental music practices her work embraces collapse and chance. She makes installation, performance and film/video works that explore sculptural instances of sound as a material that inhabits space; her work often plays with activating and altering psychoacoustic perception. Giovando performs with violin, voice and subsonic frequencies.

This score is for four players, each player is designated a color. The score uses a symbol system for sound developed based on a composition by Christian Wolff. * = Burst of sound, V = sharp and fast, + = low, very low.

Excerpt from directions for *Edges (1969) Adaptation:*

Four players each play single symbols at any time they choose. They each begin alone – there is no designation as to who begins – and so there may be disruption or awkwardness.

Develop a pattern from the sounds – take a long as you need to. One player follows the other. The pattern should become rapid as soon as possible.

The pattern should sustain itself through three emotional states:

1. Joy at having found the pattern
2. Boredom with the pattern
3. Frustration from boredom with the pattern

Continue to play the pattern until there is an emptying out of all expectation surrounding the pattern and it seems you have forgotten the pattern.

All quotes in margins are from, *Sonic Experience, A Guide to Everyday Sounds*, Edited by Jean-François Augoyard and Henry Torgue, originally published in French in 1995 by Editions Parenthèses. Special thanks to Sam Rowell for sharing this exceptional text with me.

Pg. 5, *All Things Considered*, "Jack Foley: Feet to the Stairs", NPR, March - April, 2000

Pg. 14, 15, Program notes by Andrew Berardini, for Calder Quartet's performance of *Edges Adaptation*, 1969, arranged by Chiara Giovando, held at the Barbican, London, 2013

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Ubiquity

The difficulty or impossibility of locating a sound source. At most sound seems to come from everywhere and from nowhere at the same time. At least, sound seems to come from many sources and a singular source. Diffused, unstable, omnidirectional sound presents an intrinsic tendency toward ubiquity – in fact it is impossible to delimit or materialize the “locating” of a sound. Inversely, the notion of ubiquity, immaterial in principle, could not be better evoked than by sound – it can not be seen, it does not manifest itself, and yet it appeals to most all of our senses.