

The Sweet32 Speaker Interrupter-Switcher Installation Thing (Ceci n'est pas la haute fidélité)

James Schidlowsky

June 4 – 18, 2016

Vibrational Array

The *Sweet 32 Speaker Interrupter-Switcher Installation Thing (Ceci n'est pas la haute fidélité)* is a self operating continuously regenerating sound installation. Unlike a piece of composed music, with finite beginning and end points, time signatures, parts and movements, the piece is not defined by time, but rather unfolds over time, and exists throughout the time gallery visitors allot to experiencing it. Its structural and functional components occupy physical space, as its sounds territorialize the acoustic space with shuffling sibilants, tones, crackles and pops that resonate within the confines of the space, seeping through the walls that cannot contain their vibration.

Electronically generated sound is diffused through 32 of the 94 speakers in the array. Each active speaker filters the sounds passing through it, effecting changes in texture, clarity, tone, and colouration of the signal as it moves from speaker to speaker, around the diffusion surface and reflecting off the physical structure of the gallery space. The signal is generated by electronic sound boxes designed to operate within a set of parameters in order to achieve certain aesthetic results that would not be attainable in a purely random system. The resulting composition is one that is in flux, with patterns and sequences that emerge over time, while the element of unpredictability remains constant as the possible permutations in the sequence of generated sound are open-ended.

Even though sound and vision are inexorably linked, with one sense bolstering the other, what you see here is not necessarily what you hear as the preponderance or dominance of the eye can lead to impressions or conclusions that are unsound. The piece may benefit from a parsing of the senses before joining them together and experiencing the sum of its parts. Look at and listen to the piece separately as well as together.

The symmetry of the floating rectangular panels suspended from above command a presence in the space favouring an initial visual engagement. Each panel serves as a canvas for the microcosms of salvaged speaker cones whose varying shapes and sizes add relief-like dimension to the sculptural aspect of the installation. The speaker wires cascading down from the panels form lifelines to the electronic boxes whose steady and pulsing light emitting diodes hint at the parameters that regulate and animate the system. The collective magnetic field of the speakers exercise their law of attraction drawing you closer to examine their forms.

“The ephemeral in art yields to time and accepts it as it is with all of its unpredictabilities. All passage of time is fugitive and fragile, to enter into the heart of it implies travelling through time, giving it its rhythm, its direction, intensity and its unease. In other words, an entirely musical sort of wisdom... The ephemeral is not time itself, but its vibration becoming perceptible.”(Buci-Glucksmann, 26) Focusing on the sound

of *The Sweet 32 Speaker Interrupter-Switcher Installation Thing* as it unfolds over the expanse of time is like sitting atop a wave that remains on the precipice of cresting, but never breaks. Seek out a place to settle into and take a last look at the sculptural form of the installation. Close your eyes, and shift your focus to the sounds cycling through the diffusion system, moving through patterns and motifs, like a succession of refrains that delimit the outlying space. Every iteration of sequenced sound flows into the next with a rhythmicity punctuated by signal interruptions built into the system. Listening can be approached as a meditation on ephemerality, entailing an active engagement with the present moment over a period of time. Though fleeting, every sound leaves a trace as it reflects off surfaces, bringing the entire space alive through vibrational force.

Andrea-Jane Cornell

James Schidlowsky (b. 1965, Canada) is an experimental sound, video and electronic artist based in Montreal, QC. From his first forays into music (playing guitar as a teenager), his work has evolved into a creative exploration of experimental, electro-acoustic, electronic and improvisational sound. He is featured in numerous recorded releases, DVDs and live performances (both solo, and group). Since 2003 he has been a frequent host to radio programs emphasizing the sonic arts, and has performed several radiophonic works and improvisations live on-air. Self-taught in electronic circuitry, he began building electronic sound boxes in 2010. He completed his first electronically-controlled sound installation in late 2012. James has collaborated with sound artists Alexandre St-Onge, Émilie Mouchous, Simon Brown, Will Eizlini, Magali Babin, a_Dontigny and Érick d'Orion.

Andrea-Jane Cornell holds an MA in Media Studies, with a specialization in soundscape studies. A gleaner of sonorities, she transforms and transmits sound matter in performance and across radio transmission channels forever attempting to elicit the sharawadji effect. An elusive sonic phenomena, the sharawadji effect occurs when a fissure in the expected outcome of an sonic environment erupts into an all encompassing moment wherein time is suspended. Cornell is a member of the hypnotic duo *Le fruit vert* (los discos enfantasmes, MUTEK, Tone Deaf), and her susurrations convolve with Tim Darcy's spoken-words (NNA Tapes, Suoni Per il Popolo). Her meditative sound fields have been presented at Signal and Noise (Vancouver), Modern Fuel Vapors Series (Kingston), Kunstradio (Vienna), and Free103point9 (New York). She is currently developing a piece using rhythms that mimic involuntary functions of the autonomic nervous system for a performance at Radio Revolten in Halle, Germany in October 2016.

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