



Curatorial > LINES OF SIGHT

With this section, RWM opens a line of programmes devoted to exploring the complex map of sound art from different points of view organised in curatorial series.

LINES OF SIGHT is a bi-monthly programme, which takes its name from the interconnected points of the global resonant space created by radio and other wireless technologies. From out of the extraordinary array of music that plays on this world-wide stage, we will follow threads as diverse as musical notation and non-linear composition, and introduce artists who explore the ideas around transmission as a medium for creative expression.

Curated by Barbara Held and Pilar Subirà.

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Barbara Held is a flutist, composer and sound artist, whose current focus is the rhythmic relationship between music and video image. She has commissioned and performed an idiosyncratic body of new repertoire for flute by both Spanish and American composers, and was the creator and producer of "Music at Metrónom", a series of concerts of experimental music that gave special support to collaboration between musicians and visual artists. She believes in the responsibility of artist/curators to take a turn at presenting each other's work.

<http://www.barbaraheld.com/>

Pilar Subirà is a percussionist, a sought-after performer of new music and frequent member of various orchestras and chamber ensembles. For the past 15 years she has been presenting a daily program in the classical music channel of Catalunya Ràdio.

Sound mastering by Ferran Conangla.

You can submit your questions, comments and links to:
linesofsight@gmail.com

LINES OF SIGHT #1

Transmission, translation, revelation >>> the performance score

LINES OF SIGHT #1 takes inspiration from recent projects concerning the musical score; musical, sociological, biological explorations of how our minds and intuition translate and transmit music.

The compositions on this program have been realized from scores as varied as an interactive computer software controlled by a live performer, verbal instructions that undermine a pre-recorded playerpiano recording, data from a gps navigational system that converts geographical position into mathematical sounds, a text by Jacques Derrida and three superimposed similarly evanescent matrices of differently white numbers.

01. Playlist

- 01 Matthew Marble and Seth Nehil, "Ecclipsis" (excerpt), 2003-2005
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- 03 Yolande Harris, "Taking Soundings," 2006-2007
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- 05 Jens Brand, "New Methods for Circular Breathing, #3 / Player Piano & Piano Player," 2001-2006 (performed by Clemens Rave)
- 06 Yasunao Tone (Zeena Parkins, harp), "The Origin of Geometry: An Introduction," 2006

02. Track description

01
Matthew Marble and Seth Nehil
"Ecclipsis" (excerpt)
2003-2005

This track is the result of a collaborative project of composition between Seth Nehil and Matthew Marble. Like a chain reaction, sound files were sent back and forth from New York to Portland and this piece grew as the two composers listened and responded to one another.

Tools of Mind is a small but rich anthology integrating artists' performance scores with creative processes culled from various fields of thought and deed. Taken together the pages of this book offer a mosaic of imaginative models, illuminating the mind as an instrument of creative ecology, an instrument with infinite applications and translations: If you got it, use it!

Featured artists include Peter Ablinger, Seth Cluett, Pauline Oliveros, Yasunao Tone, Adam Overton, the San Francisco Rebar collective, Jonas Baes, Tara Rogers, Scott Smallwood...



Also featured: weaverbird architecture, African mButi village design, interpretations of stone, heartbeats in ancient Greece, plant morphology, Shaker choreography, and more.

Tools of Mind was published in November, 2007 in conjunction with the Usufruct exhibition, curated by Seth Nehil, at the Linfield College Art Gallery in McMinneville, OR.

More info:

Matthew Marble
<http://virb.com/mattmarble>

Research
<http://www.ncrar.research.va.gov/>

Seth Nehil
<http://www.sethnehil.artdocuments.org>

FO A RM Magazine
<http://foarm.artdocuments.org/>

02
David Behrman
"Long Throw, Beginning"
2007

Performed with a prepared Piano and guitar, *Long Throw* was commissioned last year by the Cunningham Dance Company as a music piece to be paired with the dance "eyeSpace", completed by Merce Cunningham in 2007.

The title "Long Throw" refers to the long history of the Company. The piece includes references to John Cage's 1947 piano piece, "Music for Marcel Duchamp". The music reflects the six-decade time span from 1947 to 2007 by combining a piano part, with preparations similar to those used by Cage in his Duchamp piece, with 21st-century music software and sound-sensing technology.

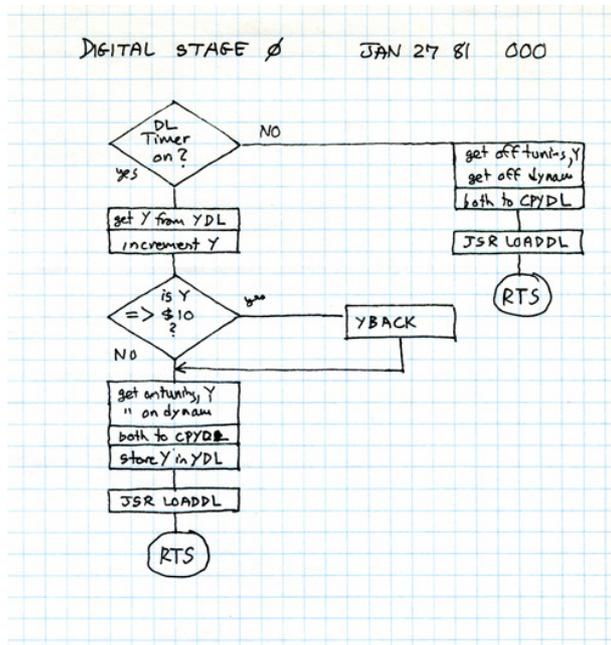
"Long Throw" was made with performance roles for the core musicians of the Cunningham Company in mind: Christian Wolff, Takehisa Kosugi, John King and Stephan Moore. In addition to the prepared piano part, the piece also calls for performances by several musicians playing violin, viola, and electric guitar. Its software was designed by the composer.

More info:

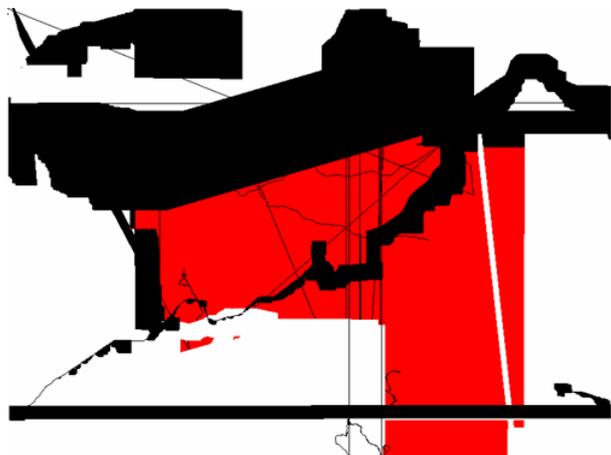
David Behrman
<http://www.lovely.com/bios/behрман.html>

03
Yolande Harris
"Taking Soundings"
2006-2007

"Taking Soundings" is a project researching navigation and orientation in physical space, and its relation to sound and image in performance. I'm looking into satellite navigation using GPS and old style celestial navigation using tables and sextant, as a way to explore a continuity between navigation technologies, instruments, observation and calculation. I'm particularly interested in the conceptual impact this has on our understanding of location, stasis and motion. It's through sound that I want to try to address a physicality in our awareness of location and navigation."



[David Behrman, *Leapday Night*, 1981]



[Yolande Harris, *Taking Soundings*, 2006-2007]



[Yolande Harris, *Taking Soundings*, 2006-2007]

"Sleeping on the deck of a boat... the sun sets, the moon rises, the moon sets, the planets follow it across the sky, the sun rises... the sun sets, the moons rises, the planets follow it, the sun rises, the moon sets.... the sun sets, the planets follow it, the moon rises, the sun rises, the moon sets... I am melting into the coordinates of an inaudible soundscape, I am mutating into sound, but with what tools will I navigate? I can turn to the toothed whales and bats to try to learn their techniques. I can turn to mathematics, to technologies of navigation, to programming sine waves from my navigational data. I can try to recreate my sonic coordinates by converting my geographical position into mathematical sounds. My music of the spheres! Have we come full circle? I wanted to locate myself, physically, emotionally in my navigation through my sound, to bring my body down to sound, to engage in my physicality, but I continually seem to float, buoyancy brings me bobbing back to the surface."

Yolande Harris

More info:

Yolande Harris

<http://www.yolandeharris.net>

"Taking Soundings"

<http://www.yolandeharris.net/takingsoundings.htm>

Steim

<http://steim.org/projectblog/?p=77>

Mutamorphosis

<http://www.mutamorphosis.org>

Sun Run Sun : sonic navigations by Yolande Harris

<http://sunrunsun.nimk.nl/>

04

Robert Ashley

"Trio I" (excerpt from "White on White"), 1963

Premiere performance by: Jennifer Choi (violin), Alex Waterman (cello), David Watson (guitar) at Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York

July 26, 2007

"Robert Ashley's graphic scores of the 1960's and early 70's continue to open up essential questions about the act of composing and where it is situated inside a social experiment. At the very center of his work is not only the proposal to radically change iconographies or semiotic ideas of musical notation, but to change how we read them. The social aspect of performance is focused into the act of collective reading.

Printed by Will Holder, this performance completes a period of two years of work, wherein the score for this piece was worked into its present state. The original score asks us to 'imagine that it is printed in the following manner...' Will has created a surface for the musicians that comes in and out of view, creating a choreographed reading that becomes part of the act of performance. The three matrices of three different printed white numbers on an off-white page are superimposed creating the visual melting-into-one-another of signs. The sound world has a similar feel of almost evanescent sounds that meet for a moment and then disappear."

Alex Waterman



[Robert Ashley, *White on White*, 1963]



More info:

Robert Ashley
<http://www.robertashley.org>

"agapē", exhibition and concert series (curated by Alex Waterman)
www.miguelabreugallery.com

"Between Thought and Sound: Graphic Notation in Contemporary Music"
(exhibitions)
<http://www.thekitchen.org>

Alex Waterman
<http://www.alexwaterman.com>

05

Jens Brand
"New Methods for Circular Breathing, #3 / Player Piano & Piano Player"
2001-2006

The piano player first performs and records himself on a Yamaha Disklavier. In live performance, he tries to suppress the keys of the player piano at the same time the machine plays them, so ideally there would be nothing to hear. Apparently he fails (not failing is not possible).

More info:

Jens Brand
<http://www.jensbrand.com>
<http://www.g-turns.com>

06

Yasunao Tone
"The Origin of Geometry: An Introduction"
2006
Performed by Zeena Parkins (harp)

"This piece was written for harpist Zeena Parkins for my concert at Experimental Intermedia in New York on December 19th, 2006. As the title shows it is based on a short excerpt from Jacques Derrida's lengthy introduction to Husserl's 'Origin of Geometry', which is appendix B in 'The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology'.

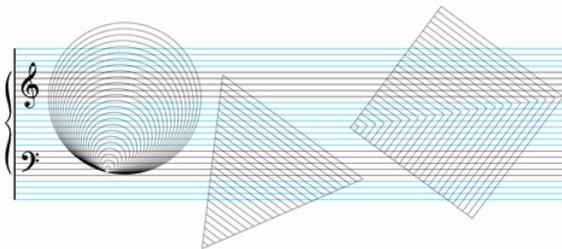
"My typical method for generating sound has been converting text into electronic sound with various technological devices and replacing the text completely with sound so that no trace of the text remains. However, in this piece I let the text speak itself and it remains as text without conversion. Sound is generated by the notation made of the combination of three different geometrical shapes of on acetate-circles, squares, triangles-overlays with the piano stave and structural graph – a kind of Lacanian *matheme* – indicating to choose silence/sound and a shape. Although the piano stave is used it only indicates the string to be played, not pitches."

Yasunao Tone

More info:

Yasunao Tone
<http://www.lovely.com/bios/tone.html>

Zeena Parkins
<http://www.zeenaparkins.com>



[Yasunao Tone, *The Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, 2006]



03. Transcription of the interviews

"The book is called *Tools of Mind*. It is skimming off the theme of the exhibition, *Usufruct*, which is a term that describes the social use of resources such that one engages in a creative way with whatever they are already using. For me, amongst all the performance scores and other material I have included in the book, the weaverbird is the epitome of what *Usufruct* is. The weaverbird is a bird that builds its nest by collecting things from its environment, just what's lying around, and it takes these objects and with refined craftsmanship builds a beautiful nest. But the interesting thing about how it builds its nest is that it doesn't use a blueprint as we would to build a house or a museum or some other building.

It does have a blueprint, but the blueprint is the bird's body itself. In other words, it only builds the walls at such a distance that its neck and beak can reach to put the piece of straw or grass or whatever it takes hold of, and it's that kind of model that really interested me in approaching this anthology, which is basically finding different kinds of models both from nature and from artists. Both use these models to either project something into the future, an act into the future, or in the case of the weaverbird, we have the blueprint of its process that is a way of retracing the process of the weaverbird in the construction of its home. A lot of the performance scores are, as scores tend to be, ways of generating an action that hasn't happened yet. In between these performance scores, I've inserted different models, plans designs and developmental processes from a wide variety of sources that look backwards and try to analyze how something came to be, how this action took shape in a previous time. The book itself emphasizes the mind as an immediate resource that we have access to in the same way that the weaverbird uses the objects around its environment to build its home. We have the mind as a resource to recompose and recombine ideas in order to facilitate future actions. That's really how I approach the score. In relation to the theme of transmission, again with the weaverbird, he is essentially transmitting the form of his body into the form of his home. It is that kind of motion that really interests me."

Matthew Marble

October 2007, Portland, Oregon

"Over the last three years of putting together these shows on graphic scores and dealing with the issues of what I've come to think of as a social act of reading, at the forefront of what this work does, what graphic scores do, is to ask the performers to gather together and not just go through an act of interpretation as they normally would, but in effect, to translate. That act of translation can sometimes go as far as to come up with a new notation system, even further along than the actual visual or graphic notation suggests. So graphic notations in a sense can be read as visual information that needs to be translated, they can be directly felt and re-embodied into sound, but in effect the work that I've really focused on is work that doesn't stay fixed on the page, it needs to be discussed, rewritten, and then interpreted, so foregrounded in that whole process is production, and the production of reading, and that also becomes part of the performance. The performance of reading together and of producing this new work and knowing that even though you can re-notate and put it on a page, that page is just as ephemeral as a performance, that nothing is fixed. That's what is so beautiful. Scoring in general is the fixing of music in time, it is a mnemonic process, it puts things in a place where they don't have to move again, and performance takes that thing in time and puts into another time. In effect, the rescoring of visual notation is in an in-between place. It is something new, but is something that, like performance, can only exist once.

I think that what Pauline Oliveros, her work has done, and Bob Ashley, is to challenge the idea of composer/performer, Bob calls it a moment of consolidation. That moment when the two become one has to do with focusing on the reading, the piece of music coming out of a graphic score, is also focusing on what it means to compose music in this late capitalist period of production when the issues of production are completely different. There is no other space, rehearsal space, funding, there is no garage for the garage band, and we've gotten to a point where the work still happens because of an urgency, you have to do it yourself, you find a way, through collaboration. We need a social network to



create even an individual's music. This is important to remember now, in the age of MySpace we can create our own music in our own room and put it out, it's important to remember where the place of social process happens, what is that as a location, where is it. In the last year there have been major changes here in New York in terms of where this music can happen. One of the main spaces in New York, Tonic, has closed down. What was interesting out of the protesting is that real estate is no longer a solution. We're at a crisis point where we can't afford the real estate any more. The idea of space and place, a capital bound notion is no longer possible. I couldn't help but think, this is not a bad thing, music may be bound for the street, or it may be bound for no fixed location seems to me another alternative for distribution, we have to deal with how does the music get out, how does it travel, how does it speak, where does it have its sounding, and I think that it brings up a lot of interesting questions. "

Alex Waterman

October 2007, New York

04. Additional info

Exclusive interview with William Winant, producer of *Goodbye 20th Century* together with Sonic Youth

Lines of Sight: I'm interested in knowing how your collaboration with Sonic Youth on the *Goodbye 20th Century* CD came about, what it was like playing with Sonic Youth, how they approached the scores.

William Winant: They asked me to do a project with them, we had already done an in-store concert together, they had their own label and they asked guests to play with them on the SYR record series. It was kind of an open ended thing, and it could have been an improv kind of thing similar to what we had done live, but I thought that it would be best to perform these open ended scores. That's something I have more experience with and I thought it would be more interesting than going in there and doing an open session or writing songs. I thought that they would be able to do it really well.

Lines of Sight: Do they come from a classical music background?

William Winant: No. I think that Thurston's father was a music teacher or something, they're basically rock-and-rollers, but they like and listen to classical music.

Lines of Sight: How did you structure the work together?

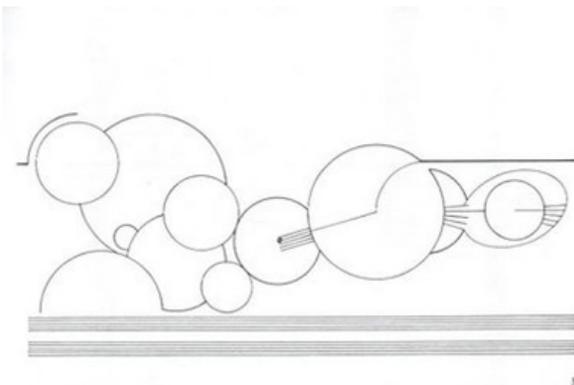
William Winant: First we talked about what scores we would do. I sent them some scores and they came up with some pieces that they wanted to do. Lee wanted to do the Nicholas Slonimsky song with me, so I made up an arrangement of that, they wanted to do Steve Reich's "Pendulum Music", the Yoko Ono piece, and the Maciunas piece. I threw out ideas, they came up with ideas, and we spent 3 or 4 days recording together. They also invited people to come and play with us.

Lines of Sight: They were interested in Fluxus?

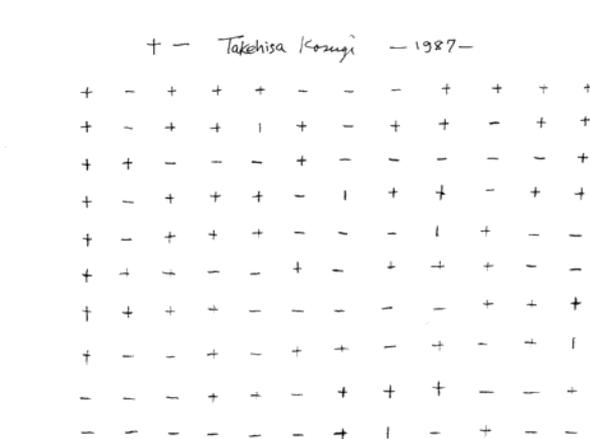
William Winant: Yes, we did at least 2 Fluxus pieces.

Lines of Sight: Did you rehearse?

William Winant: We got all the scores together and came up with an idea of what we wanted to do. At that time I was co-teaching with Pauline Oliveros and I asked her if she would be interested in writing a piece for us. So she wrote us a piece. I sent in the Christian Wolff piece, the Jim Tenney, the Cage pieces, also I had the score to "Treatise". Kosugi was also in town, and we ended up playing a piece of his. We went to the studio, picked a piece to do, we talked about it, people had questions, we decided who was going to be in the piece, we would rehearse, discuss and then start to record. Some pieces were easier to do than others.



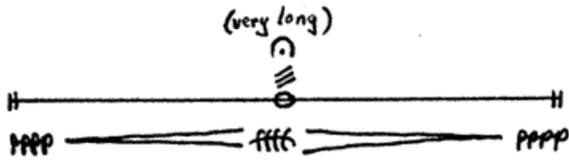
[Cornelius Cardew, *Teatrise* (detail), 1967]



[Takehisa Kosugi, *+*, 1987]



HAVING NEVER WRITTEN A NOTE FOR PERCUSSION
for John Bergamo



James Tenney

8/6/71

[James Tenney, *Having Never Written a Note for Percussion*, 1971]

Some of the prose pieces were easier to understand, some of the other pieces we had to work through and discuss them. Jim Tenney's postcard piece was kind of easy right away, just one idea, so we could start rehearsing it right away, recording the Yoko Ono piece was very straightforward, or the nails in the piano, other pieces took more time like the Christian Wolff or the Slonimsky.

Related info:

Sonic Youth

Goodbye 20th Century

1999

<http://www.smellslikerecords.com/sonicyouth>

Produced by William Winant and Sonic Youth in 1999, Sonic Youth's *Goodbye, 20th Century* featured works by avant-garde classical composers such as John Cage, Yoko Ono, Steve Reich, Christian Wolff and Cornelius Cardew played by Sonic Youth along with several collaborators from the modern avant-garde music scene, such as Christian Marclay, William Winant, Wharton Tiers, Takehisa Kosugi and others.

"[Sonic Youth] and I decided to do work by contemporary avant-garde composers that we could all learn together. I chose most of the pieces and had Lee Ranaldo contact some of the composers and collect scores from the various publishers. I knew I'd have to find things that would work with these specific people and their instruments, either as a solo, quartet, quintet, or sextet. I chose graphic scores with open instrumentation and varying degrees of indeterminacy written into them. Plus, between myself, Jim O'Rourke and the composers who were at the session -Takehisa Kosugi and Christian Wolff- we were able to explain how the compositions were supposed to work".

"[Among the pieces we recorded was] James Tenney's *Having Never Written a Note for Percussion* from his postcard series. [Tenney] had all these compositions for solo instruments that were musical analogs of Zen koans, musical questions to ponder that would bring enlightenment. The one we did was originally for solo percussion, which I orchestrated for the band." William Winant

The Genesis of SYR4

http://arts.ucsc.edu/faculty/Winant/winant_interview.htm

Article: *Roots in Outer Space* by Kyle Gann: *Sonic Youth Covers Hits from the '60* (published in December 22 - 28, 1999)

<http://www.villagevoice.com/music/9951.gann,11182,22.html>

Article: *Glorious Noise Returns* (published in December 12, 1999)

<http://www.sonicyouth.com/history/reviews/latimesyr4.html>

Takehisa Kosugi

+ -

1987

http://homepage1.nifty.com/iberia/score_gallery_kosugi1.htm

Yoko Ono

Voice Piece for Soprano

1961 autumn

http://homepage1.nifty.com/iberia/score_gallery_ono.htm

James Tenney

Having Never Written a Note for Percussion

1971

http://homepage1.nifty.com/iberia/score_gallery_tenney1.htm

<http://artofthestates.org/cgi-bin/piece.pl?pid=28>



05. Additional links

Alvin Lucier, *Quasimodo, the World's Greatest Lover*, 1970, for relays of amplification systems

This piece was written for "any person who wishes to send sounds over long distances, through air, water, ice metal, stone or any other sound-carrying medium, using the sounds to capture and carry to listeners far away the acoustic characteristics of the environments through which they travel". This link documents a recent realization by Laura Cameron / Matt Rogalsky transmitted via international web connection.

<http://so-on.be/?id=844>

Reflections/Reflexionen

It is a bi-lingual edition of Lucier's scores (including *Quasimodo*), interviews and writings was published by MusikTexte, Koln (1995). It is available through Lovely Music.

<http://www.lovely.com>

Steve Lacy, scores

Each of Steve Lacy's scores provides not only the contours of his musical lines to be repeated and meditated upon before jumping off into improvisation, but is made with special inspiring dedications, quotations, drawings, photos – a whole world distilled onto a sheet of music paper.

<http://www.stevelacymusic.org>

Musical actions by Catalan poet Joan Brossa

Sleight of hand for musicians, small solos drawn from the observation of his musician friends and collaborators in Barcelona's creative art scene of the 60's and 70's.

<http://www.fundacio-joan-brossa.org/engl/obraescenica.html>

Radio Event No. 3: Furniture Mix by Anna Halprin

A score for radio audience by dance choreographer and intermedia artist Anna Halprin that was transmitted by KPFA radio on November 20, 1969. Listeners are encouraged to re-arrange their furniture at home in time to music played over the air and then to visualize a fantasy which occurred to them in the process.

http://www.archive.org/details/RE3_11201969

***Organizing Chaos*, exhibition organized by P.S.1 Senior Curatorial Advisor Neville Wakefield**

Organizing Chaos was a group exhibition investigating notions of chance and determinism on view in the P.S.1 First Floor Main Gallery from May 24 to October 8, 2007. Featuring works from the 1950s to the present, the show was particularly focused on the musical scoring of ambiance, the ways in which randomness is scripted into structured systems, and how order is imposed upon the indeterminate.

Organizing Chaos was physically centered around the Luke Fowler video, *Pilgrimage from Scatter Points* (2006). The 45-minute piece incorporates archival footage and documentary material about British composer Cornelius Cardew's Scratch Orchestra, an improvisational group that utilized found, graphic scores rather than traditional sheet music. Similarly, the exhibition also included Bruce Nauman's textual component to his 2001 installation *Mapping the Studio I (Fat Chance John Cage)*. Comprised of a printed log recording the chance events in the artist's studio, it is a banal yet humorous record.



Also featured is John Cage's *4' 33"* (1952), a seminal score of ambient sound in which the musician is instructed not to play for the duration of the piece. Robert Smithson's *Rundown* (1969) and Christian Marclay's *Guitar Drag* (2000) introduce randomness into the natural landscape asphalt and other molten liquids are poured over a cliff in Smithson's film, and Marclay's video records the sonic destruction of the instrument as it is pulled along a road. Other works included installations by Hans-Peter Feldmann and Tomoko Takahashi, which both highlighted the cumulative power of photographs; a sound piece by Stephen Vitiello that layers barking dogs and firework explosions; and a film of drifting soap bubbles by Rivane Neuenschwander and Cao Guimaraes that realizes the abstract forms of atmospheric conditions.

http://www.ps1.org/ps1_site/content/view/270/70/

http://www.ps1.org/ps1_site/content/view/297/102/

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