

# sleek

*Magazine for art and fashion*



# sound silence



30

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If you happen to be wandering around the bucolic scenery of the Pennine hills overlooking Burnley in Lancashire, you might hear a penetrating choral sound blowing in the wind. Don't worry, you're not hallucinating, and no, God is not trying to send you a message. It's *The Singing Ringing Tree* that you're hearing, a 3-metre high construction of galvanized steel erected as part of a series of 21st century landmarks, or «Panopticons», across East Lancashire to symbolize the

renaissance of the area. Designed by architects Mike Tonkin and Anna Liu, the tree harnesses the energy of the wind to produce a slightly discordant sound covering a range of several octaves.

08: Excerpt from the wind playing with THE SINGING RINGING TREE, 2007.



TONKIN LIU: *The Singing Ringing Tree*, 2007. Photo: Mike Tonkin (left), John Lyon (right).



In a site-specific performance at Bergenhus Fort in Norway, Urstad takes Cleopatra's monumental obelisks from ca. 1500 BC as a point of departure to explore the two major manmade phenomena that define historical time: construction and technology. In the performance, a parade of dancers, gymnasts, saxophone players and motorcyclists converge – professionals whose work is all based on rhythm. Some are carrying cassette radios that are then used as building blocks in a modern obelisk, made of technology instead of stone. The cas-

sette recorders produce a soundscape of processed signals – a mash-up of Morse code, binaural beats, and a cacophony of languages from radio stations around the world. The 50-minute performance begins at dusk and ends at nightfall, and suggests an arcane ritual performed in honour of the god of technology.

09: MAIA URSTAD – excerpt from audio component of performance *Cleopatra's Needles*, 2000.

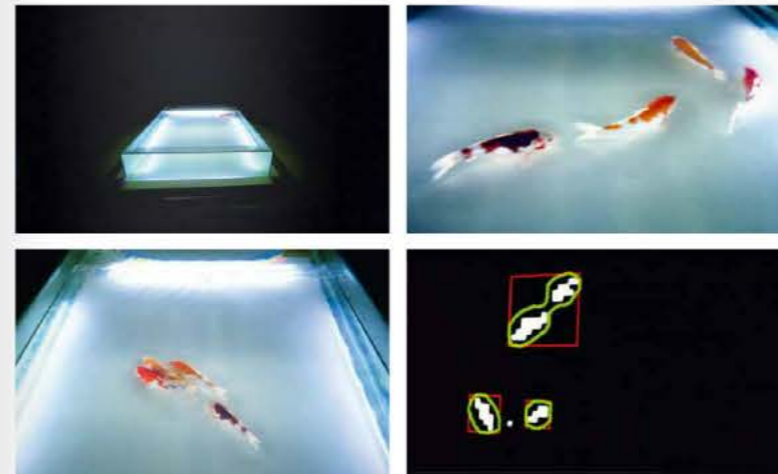


MAIA URSTAD: stills from video documentation of *Cleopatra's Needles*, 2000. Concert performance at Bergenhus Fortnes, Bergen 2000, 100 cassette-radio players, 5 dancers, 40 actors, 12 bikers, 12 veteran gymnasts and the saxophone quartet *Waldman Quartet*. In collaboration with Svein Ole Kirkbørn (costumes and scenography) and Yngvar Jullin (visual direction). Photo: Svein Ole Kirkbørn.

Alex Tyson's cross-media experiments document attempts at visualizing music. In this sound installation, viewers are invited to play their own MP3s through an interactive sound system. But this is not your normal iPod DJ party; koi carps are remixing the tracks. The fish's movements function as the parameters for mixing a pair of tracks. The animal carries the mashed-up sound around the space and alters its musical layers, modifying them to build continuity between the swimming and the levels of distortion. These can vary

from intense reverberation to a simulation of hearing underwater. Who said that fish were silent!

10: ALEX TYSON and VIVIAN CACCURI – excerpt from audio component of *Submersed Songs*, 2008.



ALEX TYSON and VIVIAN CACCURI: *Submersed Songs*, 2008. Multimedia installation, aquarium, koi fish, digital mapping system, speakers and audio devices, HD video, ipsoara.com.

Science knows of about three hundred species of wood-boring insects. At their larval stage, they are commonly referred to as woodworms. Only when the larvae emerge (after two to three years of nothing but eating) and the insects leave the wood (a fatal decision as they will die shortly afterwards), are the characteristic holes created. Prior to seeing them you can hear them, and there are woodworm experts who can distinguish different species by their munching sounds. Sound artist Zimoun's recording of woodworms at work is «natural»

in that it contains the genuine sound of live woodworms in an actual chunk of wood. But the focused set-up of the piece and the technical precision of the recording result in abstraction, and the crisp audio track is the aural equivalent of watching game through field glasses.

11: ZIMOUN – excerpt from audio component of *25 woodworms*, 2009.



ZIMOUN: *25 woodworms*, 2009. Wood, woodworms, microphone, sound system. Photo: the artist.