

AMPLITUDE

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
SOUND ARTS MFA SPRING EXHIBITION

Curated by Wave Farm

Carla Cisno
Nolan Lem

Alice Emily Baird
Cameron Fraser
Chatori Shimizu
Frank Spigner

OPENING RECEPTION April 16, 2015 6-9 P.M.

ON VIEW April 17-April 30, 2015

60x60 WAVE FARM MIX / AMPLITUDE LIVE April 30, 2015 5-9 P.M.

PIONEER WORKS

159 Pioneer Street Brooklyn, New York 11231

AMPLITUDE

Galen Joseph-Hunter

WAVE FARM

Vibration and resonance, environmental sonification and transmission, kinetic and mechanical sound, and the connotation of cadence are the central ideas that move throughout *Amplitude*, an exhibition centered on the third floor gallery and distributed throughout Pioneer Works. *Amplitude* features new work by Columbia University School of the Arts first-year Sound Arts MFA students; and thesis projects by the newly established program's first graduates, Carla Cisno and Nolan Lem.

Informed by the traditions of sculpture, video art, composition, and computer music, the works exhibited in *Amplitude* are unified by their essential consideration and foregrounding of sound.

In **Carla Cisno's** *Eyes on the Horizon Perhaps*, oscillation caused by transducers, as well as the vibration of viewers, activate an artificial site where dust matter transitions and transforms, triggered

by the passage of time. Located in both of Pioneer Works' stairwells, the installations *HiveMind* (in the north stairwell) and *Triadic Attractor* (in the south) by **Nolan Lem** employ kinetic and responsive objects to fill these otherwise hollow spaces with dynamic and progressive sound.

Alice Emily Baird's sound and video work, *A Sincere Apology*, explores vocal timbre and its relationship to the perception of sincerity through choreographed performance and audience response. **Cameron Fraser's** *Lost High Roller* is installed both in the first-floor gallery of Pioneer Works and its adjacent garden. The work is a duet comprised of found field sounds played by Fraser's interior musical chandelier, which are then transmitted back to the exterior space. In *Somewhere Close*, **Chatori Shimizu** uses contact microphones to reveal the living sounds embedded in natural materials, which are buried inside sculpted synthetic forms. **Frank Spigner's** *Parallelism* exposes and amplifies the mechanization of energy, electricity, and technology in a duality of physical and virtual space.

A formal or conceptual interest in sound unites these artists and the works featured. Likewise, it is this focus on sound that defines Columbia

University's new interdisciplinary area of study, which leads to a Master of Fine Arts degree in Sound Arts awarded by the School of the Arts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Douglas Repetto

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE
ARTS SOUND ARTS MFA PROGRAM

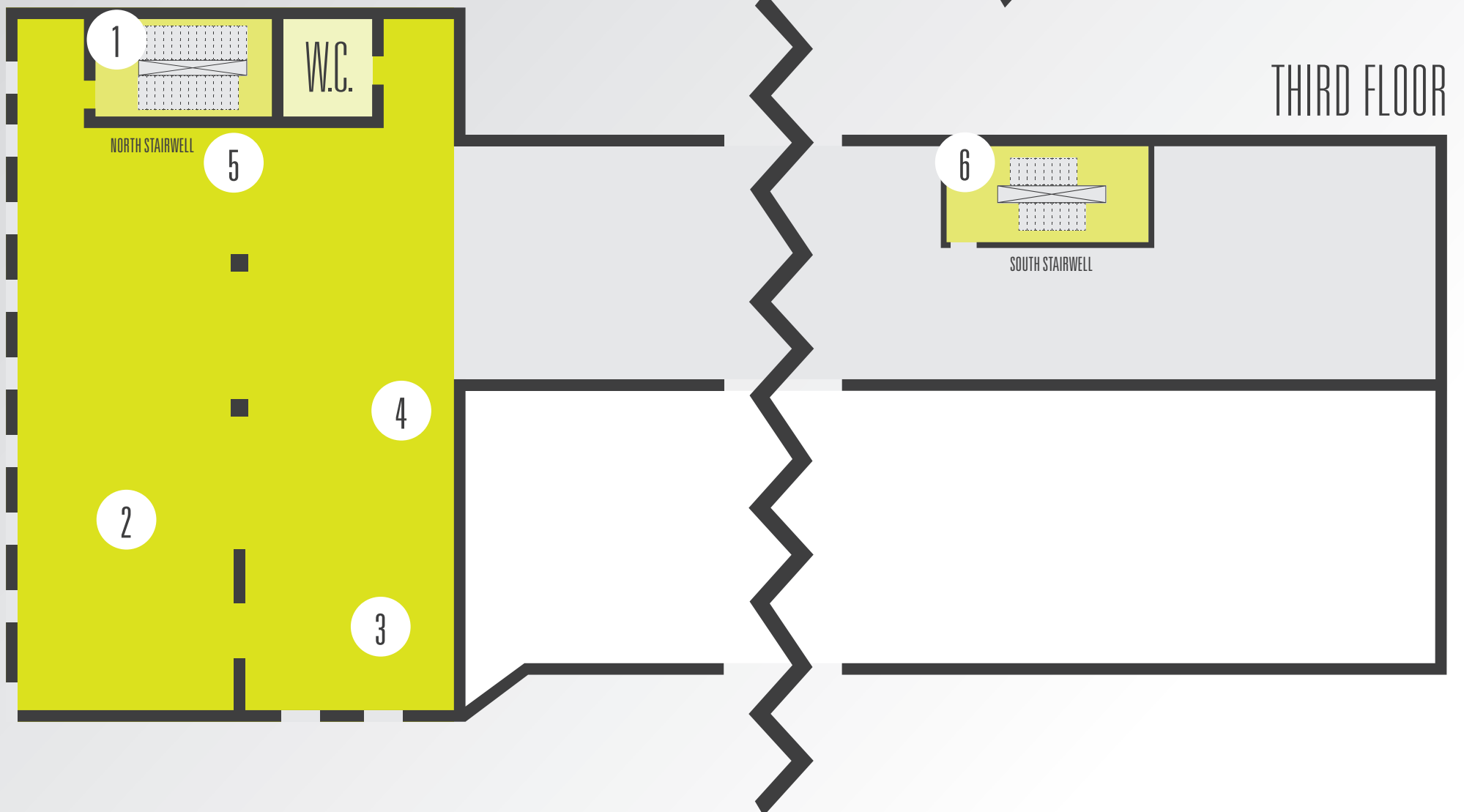
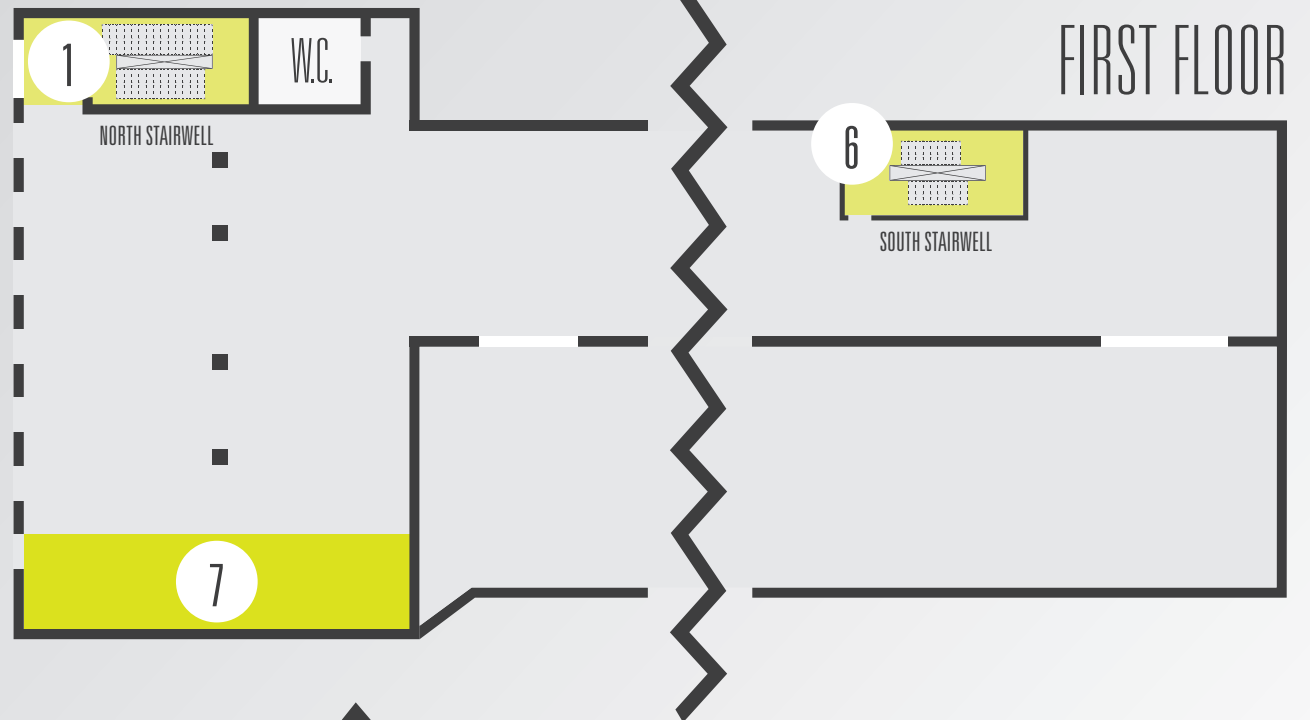
Sound Arts is a deeply interdisciplinary program, and thrives thanks to the generous ideas and energy contributed by friends, colleagues, and collaborators from across Columbia University, New York City, and beyond. We'd like to say a special *amplified* thank you to the faculty, deans, staff, and students at the Columbia University Computer Music Center, Department of Music, and School of the Arts Visual Arts Program; Dustin Yellin, Gabriel Florenz, Ella Marder and their colleagues at Pioneer Works; Galen Joseph-Hunter, Jess Puglisi, Tom Roe, and Echo at Wave Farm; Clocktower Radio; Tali Hinkis; and you—thanks for listening!

AMPLITUDE

Pioneer Works | April 16-30 2015

1. NOLAN LEM*
2. CARLA CISNO*
3. CHATORI SHIMIZU
4. FRANK SPIGNER
5. ALICE EMILY BAIRD
6. NOLAN LEM*
7. CAMERON FRASER°

*THESIS WORK
°CONTINUES IN GARDEN





CARLA CISNO

As a sound and media artist, Carla Cisno's work is concerned with the experience and occupation of space and time. She designs open, permeable, *animate* environmental forms that explore perception as a multi-sensorial, fictional, and cultural construction of reality. Applying acoustic behavioral models to electric signals transduced into other materials, Cisno investigates the complexity of the emotions that affect our notion of landscape and our understanding of nature. Her intentionally *con-fused* sensorial categories of touch, hearing, and vision generate indeterminate, "hybrid" geographies of perception and simultaneously offer a new "partitioned" experience of the sensible.

Cisno received her Bachelor of Music at the Zurich University of the Arts in Interpretation & Performance in 2005. Following that, she joined the postgraduate applied research program ALPes—Art, Lieu, Paysage, Espace Sonore at Geneva University of Art and Design—to pursue her interest in sound, art, architecture, and technology. She has been in residence and produced multimedia performances, installations, and compositions for international organizations including Fabrica research and communication center in Treviso, Italy; The Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada; the Swiss Ballet Professional School in Zürich; and TanzFabrik in Berlin. Recent exhibitions include work at the Triennale di Milano, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA), Tokyo Experimental Festival, Biennale Bern, ART Basel, Klangspuren, and The Transart Festival. Cisno currently lives in New York City and is an MFA candidate in Sound Arts at Columbia University School of the Arts.



EYES ON THE HORIZON PERHAPS

Between real and—how to say its contrary? No matter.

—S.BECKETT, *ILL SEEN ILL SAID*, 1982.

Borrowing a line from the late Beckett's novel and experimenting with a form of suspension of matter through time, dust, and vibration, *Eyes on the Horizon Perhaps* is an artificial site, an entropic topography—or a landscape of process. A large surface, made of industrial non-toxic materials and organic pigments, is partially disturbed by the oscillations of transducers installed underneath, as they capture the visitors' steps and the consequent structural vibrations that propagate through the floors of Pioneer Works. The original formlessness of dust and other residua is thus exploited as a potential *operative condition*,¹ in which sound and time will act as a *complicating force*.²

¹ Rajchman, John. 1998. *Constructions (Writing Architecture)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

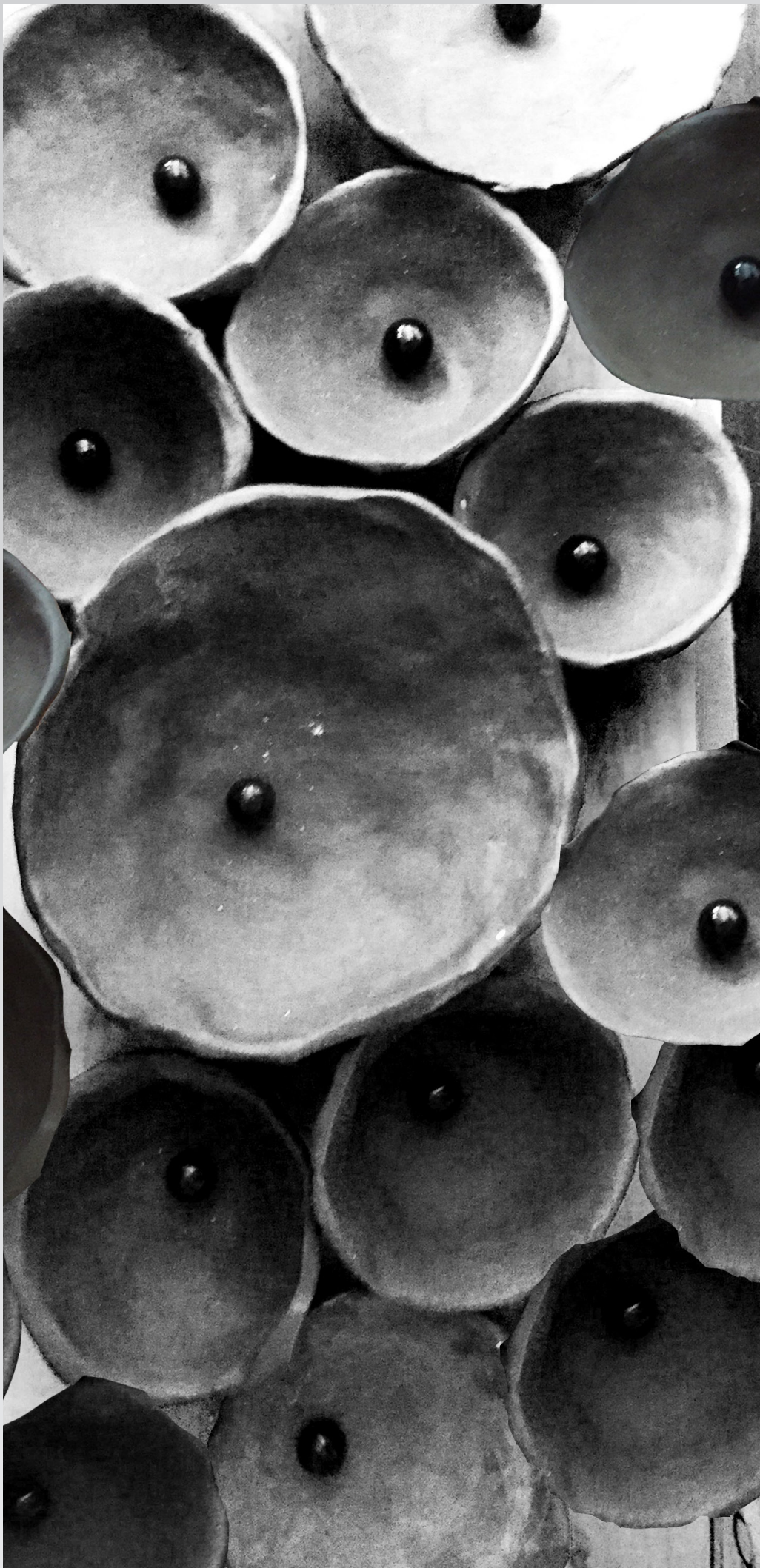
² Rajchman, John. 2000. *The Deleuze Connections*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.



NOLAN LEM

Nolan Lem is a sound artist, composer, and instrumentalist whose work is concerned with sensory perception and employs material systems with physical computing made manifest in a broad range of mediums. Influenced by the emergence of sonic phenomena contained within dynamic systems, Lem's installation-based work is often comprised of composites and aggregates of interconnected sounding objects that create dense textures of sonic mass. Borne out of an engineering, compositional, and academic convergence pertaining to his hybrid background, Lem's work explores ideas relating to self-organizing behavior, swarm theory, multiplicities, and system and network theory. His sonic systems are often composed of multiplicities of sound objects whose motional behavior generate emergent, sensory phenomena.

Lem has exhibited in New York at the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History, the Wallach Art Gallery at Columbia University, and Riverside Park; as well as at the Spencer Art Museum in Kansas, and the NIME (New Interfaces for Musical Expression) Conference, among others. He has received commissions from the West Harlem Art Fund, the Hall Center for the Humanities, and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Lem's music has been performed across the U.S. and internationally including Norway, Ireland, Italy, Switzerland, and Finland. He holds degrees in jazz saxophone performance and Electrical Engineering. He studied computer music with George Lewis and Brad Garton and sculpture with Jon Kessler, Douglas Repetto, and Rikrit Tiravanija. Lem currently lives in New York City and is an MFA candidate in Sound Arts at Columbia University School of the Arts.



HIVEMIND

NORTH STAIRWELL: *HiveMind* explores the sonic potentials latent in ceramic vessels as a means by which to activate the interior architecture of the southern stairwells inside Pioneer Works. In doing so, it exposes the emergent acoustic resonances of white, red, and porcelain bowls, in both movement and sound. A host structure is populated by colonies of clay vessels with ceramic marbles rotating about the inner bowls. This structure recalls nested cellular formations and uses the concept of the hive mind as a paradigm from which to distribute sound. *HiveMind* surveys the acoustic potential of ceramics by allowing different vessels to be resonated by modulating the speed of the applied pushing motion. When this motion matches the natural rotational speed of the marble in the bowl, the marble begins to rotate and loop with more velocity thereby amplifying the characteristic resonance of the bowl. Because each bowl contains a different resonant frequency (or “pitch”), clusters of similarly sized bowls can be brought out to the auditor’s perceptual fore, creating densities of polyphonic mass. The visual motion induced by this effect is itself a type of resonance as the trajectories of the rolling balls illustrate the synchronous characteristics of coupled oscillations.

TRIADIC ATTRACTOR

SOUTH STAIRWELL: *Triadic Attractor* is a physical and coupled oscillator system that focuses on the interplay of agonistic forces involved in the transduction of energy into movement, movement into sound. This hanging structure, installed at the top the northern stairwell, explores the perception of momentum as a restoring force.



ALICE EMILY BAIRD

A Sincere Apology

A Sincere Apology is the first manifestation of Baird's exploration into the perception of sincerity. Most often measured through variances in physical gesture and demeanor, here the artist employs vocal attributes including tone, speed, and dynamic to examine whether a scale can be linked to authenticity in terms of sincere expression.

Made manifest in sound and video recordings, Baird's work features a diverse cast who have been engaged to perform a series of apologies. At Pioneer Works, audiences become active participants in Baird's assessment, contributing their own feedback and evaluation with regards to the degree of sincerity for each apology they experience. The data and observations collected at Pioneer Works will inform subsequent iterations of Baird's ongoing project.

Writes Baird, "Awareness of sincerity has become a preoccupation of mine, and I believe understanding authenticity is an important ideal for our emotional life. On my arrival to the U.S., sincerity was a cultural barrier with which I struggled. I found that the voice has a significant role in the perception of sincerity and there are many sonic properties to the voice which seem to be understood differently. Apologizing requires in most cases a strong presence of sincere voice and by focusing on the speed, inflection, and loudness of a particular utterance I hope to begin to understand further how these properties illustrate sincerity."



CAMERON FRASER

Lost High Roller

A symphony of the city, *Lost High Roller* is a meditation on the tapestry of sounds found in New York City. Fraser's installation coaxes musical moments out of the environment to reveal a living composition. It interprets the buzz of our smart phones, the call of morning birds signaling dawn, and planes scraping overhead as melody. Chords and rhythm emerge from this urban Aeolian harp. *Lost High Roller* echoes the sonic landscape of Red Hook from a corner of the Pioneer Works garden. The chandelier-like sculpture inside parrots the melody of the garden's soundscape by plucking the same notes it finds outside. *Lost High Roller* highlights an interior/exterior interplay, or sonic window, between a lifeless brick wall and the two worlds it bridges.

Fraser writes, "It is between brick walls that people live out their lives, working, struggling, eking out everyday. Red Hook was a port neighborhood, dubbed in 1992 by *LIFE* magazine as the "crack capital of America." The sounds of Red Hook now are not the sounds of Red Hook's past—the scream of police sirens, the ghosts of Hooverville. Pioneer Works, an inconspicuous three-story brick building, sits on an old industrial street, once the home of slaughterhouses and factories. The building itself has a sort of darkness, a memory of molten iron and raging fires. Lingering sounds trigger memories. A plane flies overhead and sustains one note as it glissandos downward and passes by. The constant sound of big rigs lumbering down the street and the chatter of birds have melodic relationships to one another. If you tune your ears to any environment, you begin to hear these hidden melodies and histories."



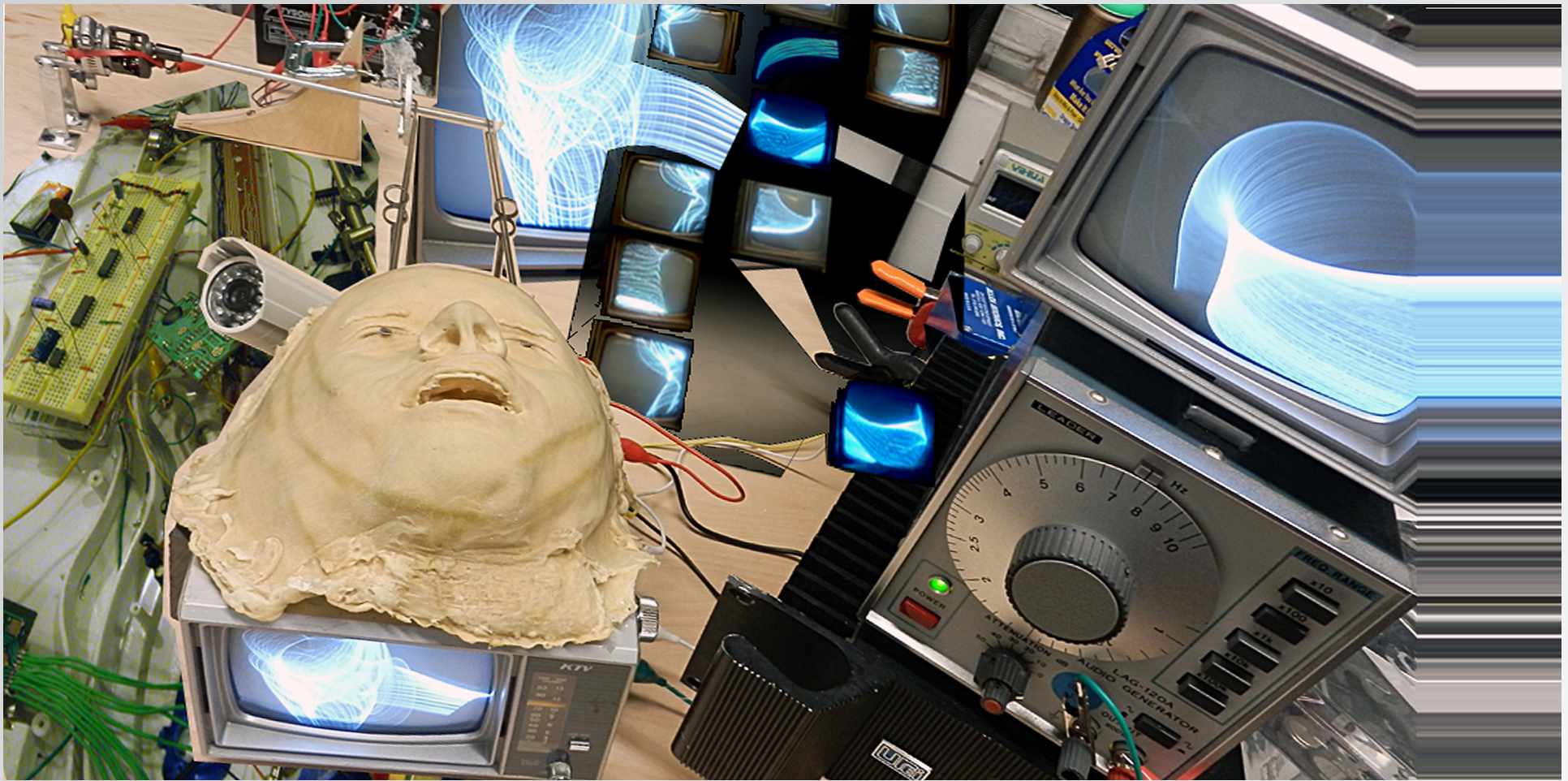
CHATORI SHIMIZU

Somewhere Close

Somewhere Close invites listeners into an intimate space for listening. The installation is a rebuttal to audio post-production technologies and efforts that strive to attain a commercial definition of perfection. Shimizu asks if these strategies strip sound too far, leaving it solely as mathematics and algorithms.

In *Somewhere Close*, contact microphones are applied to different specimens of wood and produce sound in real time. The sonic characteristics originating from these natural materials, housed inside of polystyrene forms, produce a chorus of changing vibrations in the space. Shimizu strives to envelop listeners into the soundscape of a familiar location, “somewhere close.” His environment is subtle yet submerging.

Shimizu writes, “The sound is not perfected by digital modifications; each noise produced by mere random chance does not have any artistic meaning. It is not programmatic music—it’s the nature singing.”



FRANK SPIGNER

Parallelism

Frank Spigner's kinetic and sculptural work explores alternate histories, the institutionalization/socialization of humans and machines, and the duality of virtuality and actuality. The installation *Parallelism* reflects social, perceptual, and political themes which include commodity fetishism, surveillance, and anarchism.

Spigner foregrounds exposed circuitry and mechanical parts, the repurposing of audio surveillance bugs and CCTV cameras, and hacked consumer electronics in an aesthetic leveling of the hierarchy between apparatus and object.

Writes Spigner, "In much of my work, I'm interested in creating mechanisms in which electricity, movement, and various forms of energy are constantly transforming via transducers and sensors in real time, allowing interactivity and the controlled introduction of noise at each stage, often employing crude, yet effective analog systems. I try to keep my process and methodologies as transparent as possible. I never mystify or obscure parts of my work or process and I never decorate."

SPECIAL EVENT: THURSDAY APRIL 30 2015

60x60 Wave Farm Mix 5 P.M.
Amplitude Live 6 P.M.-9 P.M.

60x60 Wave Farm Mix features sixty sixty-second works, created with, for, and about radio and transmission. Included are works by *Amplitude* artists Cameron Fraser and Chatori Shimizu. Co-presented by Vox Novus and Wave Farm.

Amplitude Live is a sonic happening featuring performances and ecstatic utterances from artists in the Columbia School of the Arts Sound Arts program. Chatori Shimizu, Frank Spigner, Alice Emily Baird, Nolan Lem, and Cameron Fraser will each premiere new works, and friends of the program will also participate. Curated by Cameron Fraser.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

The Sound Arts MFA is an interdepartmental program offered by the Visual Arts MFA Program in association with the Department of Music and the Computer Music Center.

Columbia University has been at the helm of sound innovation for over fifty years with faculty specializing in composition, improvisation, music theory, musicology, installation, sculpture, instrument building, acoustics, music cognition, and software development. Faculty from the Computer Music Center, along with colleagues from Composition, Visual Arts, and Engineering, led the development of the new interdisciplinary area in Sound Arts that leads to the Master of Fine Arts degree awarded by the School of the Arts. arts.columbia.edu

PIONEERWORKS

CENTER FOR ART AND INNOVATION

Pioneer Works is a platform for innovation in contemporary arts and science and an incubator for cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Their Civil War-era brick and timber building in Red Hook, Brooklyn houses exhibitions, performing arts, classes, lectures, art residencies, science labs, and publications. Founded in 2012 by artist Dustin Yellin, Pioneer Works is a model for integrated, multidisciplinary experimentation and collaboration that is too often missing in traditional institutional and educational settings.

pioneerworks.org



Wave Farm is a non-profit arts organization that celebrates creative and community use of media and the airwaves. Wave Farm programs provide access to transmission technologies and support artists and organizations that engage with media as an art form. Major activities include the Wave Farm Artist Residency Program, Transmission Arts Archive and Wave Farm Radio; WGXC 90.7-FM; and the Media Arts Assistance Fund, a Regrant Partnership with NYSCA, Electronic Media and Film Program. wavefarm.org