ROOT OF TWO

PERFORMANCE SERIES

May 7, 4 PM: Maya Dunietz and Roscoe Mitchell
This special opening performance will feature the legendary saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell with Maya Dunietz inside the seventeen vibrating pianos of √2.

June 8, 7 PM: Lori Goldston and Kyle Hanson
In this two-set performance, Lori Goldston and Kyle Hanson respond to √2. Goldston is a master of color, texture and expression on the cello, playing a concerto of lyrical abstract beauty. Hanson is a non-traditional accordionist and composer, who will play uplifting and motivating compositions.

August 11, 7 PM: The Fugu Plan
Comprised of vocalist/composer YUKA and musician Shanir Ezra Blumenkranz, The Fugu Plan explores traditions of ritual, tribal, and spiritual music through the customs and folktales of Japan. The performance includes a second set of wild improv that “haunts” into √2—inserting objects into the pianos, and intervening in the vibration system through various means.

September 17, 4 PM: Dorian Wood, Carmina Escobar, and Possibilities of Milk
Carmina Escobar and Dorian Wood will respond to √2 with their powerful hypnotizing voices—exploring the spaces above, against, along and inside the dystone vibrations of the pianos. Possibilities Of Milk—a new, loud kraut rock improvisation band by Maya Dunietz, David Lemoine, Haggai Fershtman and Daniel Meir will perform their wild, unhinged sound in and amongst √2.

This gallery guide is available in Spanish at bemiscenter.org/media/pdfs/summer2021.pdf
Esta guía de la galería está disponible en español en bemiscenter.org/media/pdfs/summer2021.pdf

The title of the piece 25Hz ~ 25fps refers to the moment in which the speed of the speaker (25 hertz) meets up with the film rate (25 frames per second). At that point, synchronization occurs, creating an illusion of stillness and exposing the blindness of video.

The exploration of the sound and body relationship continues with Brain on a plate and Mechanical Lungs, both from 2022. While 25Hz ~ 25fps silently heightens the body, these two works emit sound while creating more meditative spaces that reference nature, imprvisation and interdependence. Mechanical Lungs invites the viewer to gaze in between the three breathing rhythms. Brain on a plate gives a key to the exhibition. It asks—where is the sound? Is it in the space? In the objects? In our body? Inside the brain? Together these works set the stage for active, deep listening that continues throughout the exhibition.

Emanating from gallery two is the singular work √2 (2022)—comprised of seventeen pianos drilled with transducers and connected to powerful amplifiers. These pianos, which Dunietz refers to as “mammoths,” spend their second life humming, roaring, shaking and radiating out the composition through their bodies. When one walks through the installation, or places their body on or against a piano as it speaks, the body of the visitor mixes with the sound of the pianos which mixes with the architecture of the space—creating an entirely new experience for the viewer to gaze in between the three breathing rhythms. Brain on a plate gives a key to the exhibition. It asks—where is the sound? Is it in the space? In the objects? In our body? Inside the brain? Together these works set the stage for active, deep listening that continues throughout the exhibition.

An ever-evolving sonic pulse winds its way through the exhibition to which 25Hz ~ 25fps (2022) sets the stage. As a silent work that emits movement in lieu of sound, it asks the audience to listen physically. Through a large-scale silent projection, Dunietz explores the physicality of sound by removing the auditory elements and emphasizing rhythm.

Maya Dunietz engages with sound as a composer, musician and a visual artist. In Root of Two, she has created a four-month long performance, in collaboration with the spaces of Bemis and the body of the visitor walking through those spaces. As a practitioner, Dunietz explores notions related to psychoacoustics, resonance and the embodied experience—which changes depending on objects’ location within a given architecture and the viewer’s proximity to them. While engaging with the four galleries of Bemis Center, the score expands in both time and space. The movement of sound between the interior and exterior of each designated area creates links between the bodies moving through and spending time in those spaces and with the works. As Dunietz’s work grows in dimensionality, Root of Two is a complex introduction to the sensory impression of sound.

A prepared piano has sounds temporarily altered by placing objects or on or between the strings, such as bolts, screws, rubber erasers. Lockwood’s Piano Transplants are iconic compositions and site-specific installations that also expand on the history of the piano as an object and instrument. Taking pianos that were beyond repair, Lockwood burned, drowned and planted them in English gardens, focusing on elemental and natural sound sources and interdisciplinary interventions, where the piano became played by its environment and contextual circumstance. With Beuys, Infiltration for Piano became about silencing. Covering the instrument with gray felt, he condemned it to silence. In 2012, Dunietz removes the shackles from the instrument and from their voices. Using this transducer technology, she resurrects each piano and by removing the human element from the equation, the pianos are free to express themselves and speak to each other, and we are free to interact with them in new, unimaginable ways.

In gallery three, the viewer enters first into an almost pitch-black room, adjusting to the darkness by using their hearing. Immediately, Dunietz connects to our primal instincts—how sound initially (and still continues) to help us navigate space. Air Sculpture (2013) creates a mapping of spaces through a collection of sounds and tones, transforming the viewers into a constantly morphing auditory landscape. Through a five-way sound system, field recordings of Algeria, Morocco, India, and France created by Dunietz and her late friend Ghedalia Tazartes are juxtaposed into a geological narrative, taking the viewer on an imaginary journey to the world outside this room. Playing with auditory perception: the work evokes physical dimensions and qualities that play with auditory memory.

Bemis Surprise (2022) is a collaboration with David Lemoine that emerged from Dunietz and Lemoine’s time as artists-in-residence at Bemis Center in fall of 2021. Inspired by their time at Bemis and combing the fourth-floor materials lab a.k.a. Bemis thrift store, this work acts as an autobiography of two artists, who not only collaborate and inspire one another, but in fact share lives and children together.

“[Sound] flows through the environment as temporal material lending dramatically to the experiences we have of being in particular buildings, and with particular people.”
–Brandon LaBelle

“But, as the music left my home and went from piano to piano and from pianist to pianist, it became clear that not only are two pianists essentially different from one another, but two pianos are not the same either. Instead of the possibility of repetition, we are faced in life with the unique qualities and characteristics of each occasion.”
–John Cage

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