

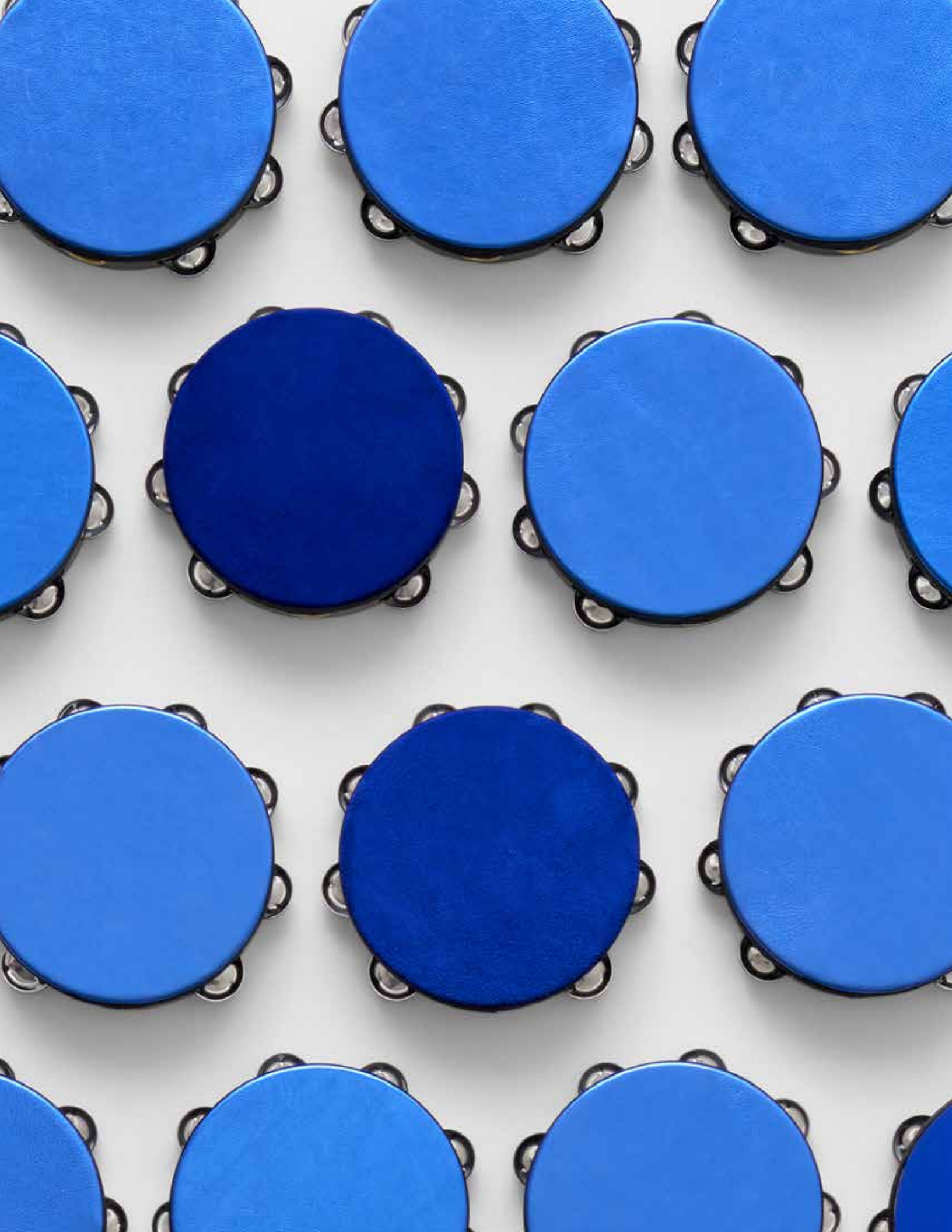


# Sound Vision

HARMONIOUS  
RELATIONSHIPS  
IN ART  
AND MUSIC







*Sound Vision*



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HARMONIOUS  
RELATIONSHIPS  
IN ART  
AND MUSIC



This catalog is published on the occasion of the online exhibition *Sound Vision: Harmonious Relationships in Art and Music* presented by the Lehman College Art Gallery/The City University of New York, December 18, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

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Title Page: Jorge Wellesley,

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EXPLORE

# Sound Vision

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## Director's Foreword

Co-curating *Sound Vision: Harmonious Relationships in Art and Music* has been one of the happiest creative experiences of my career. It has also been one of considerable trials, though, as the physical exhibition that was to accompany this volume was halted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In starting this project some three years ago, I was blessed with a talented colleague and warm collaborator in the form of Alva Greenberg, who had prior experience with the subject matter, having curated the successful exhibition *On Another Note: The Intersection of Art and Music* for the Lyman Allyn Museum in 2017. She has been a dedicated, flexible and creative partner. Our shared goal going forward together in 2019 was to expand, adapt, and reconsider the dozens of contemporary artists we found working with music as their inspiration.

As the battered file folders of clippings littering my office attest, I have long been drawn to the idea of organizing a project of visual art around the theme of musical instruments. My interest in the topic sprang less from any talent as a musician, amateur or otherwise, but rather from an ongoing interest in the ideas put forth by the 18th-century English artist William Hogarth in his seminal 1753 book *The Analysis of Beauty*. His theory that the “S-shaped” or cyma curve and serpentine lines are filled with the greatest liveliness, the greatest beauty is proven justified in the line of every cello, every saxophone, and every grand piano illustrated in the work of the three dozen artists on the pages that follow. At its core, this exhibition is an investigation into beauty, both visual and aural.

Many artists attempt to transform the intangible and ineffable qualities of sound into physical form, allowing viewers to see music in art. Just as the human senses of sight and sound have always been interrelated, visual art and music have long been complementary – the presence of one is capable of heightening perceptions of the other. Today, music is a constant – sometimes happy, sometimes relentless – companion to our daily lives. There is no

## Foreword

escaping it. In elevators, waiting rooms, restaurants, and through earbuds, our lives are lived with a soundtrack as background accompaniment, in a world where silence can breed anxiety. In their own experience of sound, visual artists are inspired to use the auditory language of music as “source material” for the creation and translation into their visual work. All of the artists maintain distinct aesthetic visions using diverse materials to create work that is, by turns, elegant, rugged, satirical, metaphorical, powerful, and meaningful.

The symbols and allegories of music and the sounds – both vocal and instrumental – are referenced in the great historical and mythological themes of such varied works as Michelangelo Caravaggio’s *Lute Player* (1595), William Hogarth’s *The Rake’s Progress* (1732-1734), Nicolas Poussin’s *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1634-1636), William Harnett’s *The Old Violin* (1886), and Henri Matisse’s *The Piano Lesson* (1916). All of these artists strove to express the spirit of music through color, line, and abstract forms. The contemporary artists selected for this exhibition have embraced the challenge of making music the core of their creative process by turning the music into some form of visual manifestation. Their approach can be as direct as an artist transposing a specific piece of music into an artwork or an instrument into a sculpture, or as opaque as using a natural phenomenon – the human heartbeat – to create a fascinating rhythm.

*Sound Vision* presents an eclectic visual mix across a range of media, including sculpture, painting, video, and mechanical work. The observant viewer will recognize three broad thematic areas, as the artists explore the relationship of the shape of the musical instrument and the sculptural form; examine how visual artists incorporate actual music into their work; and depict musicians working at their craft.

Many people assisted to create this exhibition. I thank the artists whose creation of

the beautiful works seen here are truly a balm to the soul during troubled times. Their creativity is a constant joy and source of renewal. Within Lehman College, I am particularly grateful to President Daniel Lemons, who has been a true advocate for the Gallery and offered us strong support during the College’s long, COVID-related closure, a time when we worked together to move our ongoing public mission online. Susan Ebersole, Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Executive Director of the Lehman College Foundation, has been a dedicated supporter of the arts at Lehman College, providing enthusiasm, resources, and thoughtful advice as the Gallery continues its development. All of our devoted board members, co-chaired by Marina Garde and Dolly Bross Geary, have worked determinedly to further the mission of the Gallery. I am lucky to have such a wonderful staff at the Art Gallery. Deborah Yasinsky, Curator of Education, organized the accompanying education programs for the exhibition, and Mary Ann Siano, Grants Associate, worked to acquire the funding that allows us to undertake such ambitious programming. Laura De Riggi, Curatorial Assistant, organized a myriad of loan permissions and created the beautiful 3-D online exhibition that accompanies this volume. As on a number of our publications, Mary Shustack did a fine and careful job with our editing, exhibiting great patience with our delayed schedule and myriad changes. Michelle Frank created the beautiful design that frames the works on these pages. I owe my special thanks to Kevin Ritter, my curatorial sounding board. Thank you always for your love and support.

I hope the works in this catalog bring pleasure and that *Sound Vision: Harmonious Relationships in Art and Music* will create a moment of beauty and reflection on your own relationship with music and art.

Bartholomew F. Bland





**ALVA G. GREENBERG**

## *Thoughts on the Relationship Between Art and Music*

Art and music have long held hands. The 21st century has seen an increased blurring of the divisions among artistic categories, which has led to a growing crossover of genres. Actors turned directors turned writers turned visual artists proliferate the creative fields. Today, artists and performers can flourish in multiple categories at any one time. Take, for example, David Byrne: We primarily think of him as a musician, but he attended both the Rhode Island School of Design and the Maryland Institute College of Art, is listed on the artist roster of Pace Gallery in New York and opened a musical, *American Utopia*, on Broadway in 2019.

While making the shift from musician to visual artist appears to happen fairly frequently, it is harder to find instances of the reverse. Painter Romare Bearden stands out as a major artist of the Harlem Renaissance who also composed music, while artist-designer Harry Bertoia created a series of *Sonambient* works on which music could be created from the sculptures themselves.

The strong connection between art and music contains many parallels, and the language of visual art mimics that of music. In both, we talk about color and tone and gesture. We discuss the lyrical qualities and harmony or discord of a painting or sculpture.

*Sound Vision: Harmonious Relationships in Art and Music* is not about artists transitioning. It is about exploring how the three dozen artists represented investigate ways in which the aural and visual constructs of music can inform their art. The artists in this exhibition have taken instruments and concepts of composition and played with them – with humor and intellect, some using historical references, some expressing political opinions, many leaving haunting effects.

## ALVA G. GREENBERG

Mark Applebaum's pictographic score, *Metaphysics of Notation #6*, takes the form of a work on paper filled with dangling symbols and empty spaces. It was not necessarily created as a "pure" work of visual art but is a musical score that has been uniquely interpreted on many occasions, based on the formal designs of its notation. The inclusion of his work in *Sound Vision* illustrates how artfully the composer's mind can work and how skilled the musicians must be to comprehend a score through seemingly random images rather than traditional notation.

Jane Benson's *Pencil (Guitar)* works in much the same way. It seems at first glance simply slyly inventive but has been used to make drawings that have been interpreted by musicians. The instrument thus morphs into the composer. Benson's musical invention for *Song for Sebald* is teased from the text of W. G. Sebald's novel *The Rings of Saturn*. Benson uses a mat knife to carefully cut away from the text all but the vocal scale (do, re, me, etc.). Each "role" in the novel is then sung with that scale. Benson's is an intellectual approach that requires a commitment to listening and understanding in much the same way as reading a novel by Henry James does.

Song is incorporated in *Sound Vision* by several other artists. It provides a partial portrait of Rachel Perry with the presentation of collaged lyrics in her *Soundtrack To My Life: Freedom By George Michael (Copy Shop), 2017*. Maureen McCabe brings humor to her *Pennies from Heaven* as real pennies rain down from the hand of a cherub suspended in a stormy sky. In stark contrast is Whitfield Lovell's *After an Afternoon*. Its 37 vintage radios evoke the pre-Civil Rights era with a soundtrack that includes Billie Holiday singing *Yesterdays* and *Strange Fruit*.

Not surprisingly, instruments themselves abound in *Sound Vision*. Carlos Estévez transforms a clarinet, *Soliloquio (Soliloquy)*, and a violin, *Circunloquio (Circumlocution)*, into marionettes with mournful faces that imply certain tones these instruments might make. Paul Villinski's *Fable* uses a violin spouting butterflies to evoke a light and soothing sound. Kahn & Selesnick inspire the invention of outrageous scenarios in their three works from the *Book of Fate* series. What might the *Two Fool Cart* musicians be playing, perched as they are on what looks like an ice floe strewn with red and white paper carnations?

On a completely different note, Anita Glesta in *Cardiac Harmonium* exposes her heart to us, literally, by using the visuals and sounds of her own echocardiogram mixed with other images and music. Ana Flores also offers an intimate moment with her dancing couple spinning atop a turntable that plays Cuban jazz. Their twirling shadows invoke the nostalgia of memory. These quieter explorations could not be more different in mood from the blasting notes that seem to emanate from the silent canvases of Allan Skriloff's up close portraits of jazz musicians.

We all have our personal relationships to music, our individual playlists filled with ideas and tones we are used to. What each of the artists in *Sound Vision* offers is a perspective on music that in some way startles. There is an alchemy in their collective ability to take music and make it into art that can give us new insights. Certainly, they provide explorations that we have not undertaken on our own. Once taking in *Sound Vision*, then, will we ever view those playlists of ours in the same way again?





*Catalog of Exhibition*





**DANCE OFF**, 2015  
Mixed media collage on paper, 48 x 72 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

## DERRICK ADAMS

The jubilant musical imagery Derrick Adams (b. 1970, Baltimore, Maryland) employs in his collage of bouncing and brightly colored notes and treble clefs, seems to burst forth from the drab television set. *Dance Off* was created by the artist as part of a series of works that explore the ubiquitous aspect of television in the American home and how it transmits, distills, and alters African American culture. Growing up on the bouncy jingles of “Sesame Street” and “The Electric Company,” the artist has said, “TV becomes like another person in your house, or rather, your TV becomes your leader.” Adams is not necessarily condemning the consumption of media but reflecting on how it changes our perceptions of the world, noting “even if you don’t watch TV, you are informed by the other people around you who watch it.” Although the imagery in *Dance Off* implies the joy of a musical party, a mode in keeping with the celebratory aspect of much of Adams’ most recent work, the viewer is left to reflect on the confines of musical ecstasy constrained to an “inside-the-box” experience. Speaking of TV production and musical performers in present-day videos, he notes, “They are speaking in an extremely edited way.”





**TAMBOUR, 2013**

Lace, tambourine, and music stand

59 x 18 x 18 inches

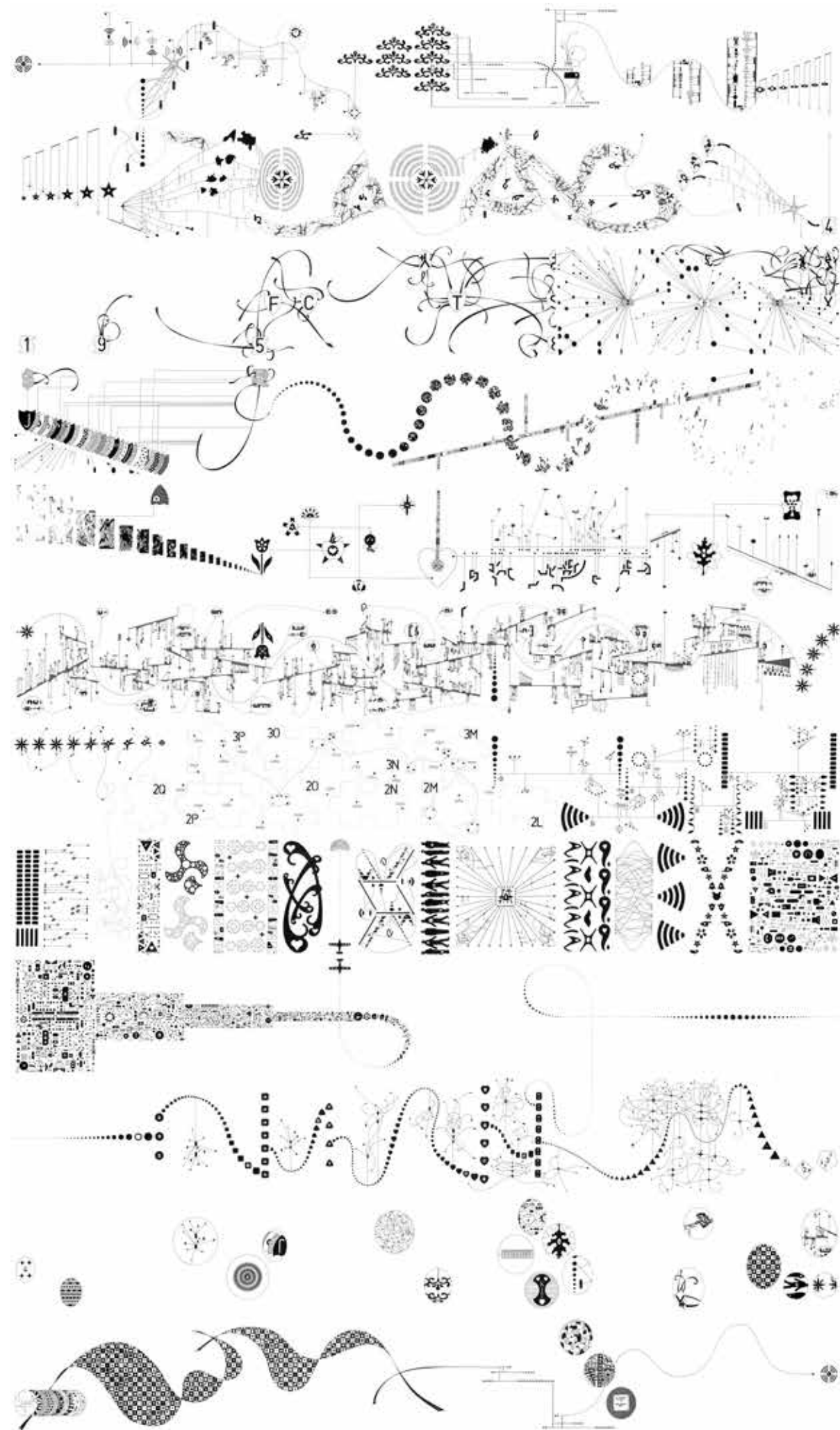
Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery

© 2021 The Estate of Terry Adkins /

Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

## TERRY ADKINS

Terry Adkins (b. 1953 Washington, D.C.; died 2014, New York, New York) frequently created works that, though silent, are imbued with a sense of the mysterious and the eternal. They seem as if they might spring to life and begin to play of their own volition. Mounted on a musical stand, the tambourine, encircling heavy lace that suggests a mantilla or a wedding veil, appears mournful and celebratory at the same time. *Tambour*, although ghostly, carries the hope that someone might begin shaking that tambourine - it leaves the viewer with an open sense of possibility. Adkins was known for his ability to transform found objects in a compelling way that allowed their history to resonate poetically with the viewer. Adkins' works incorporating musical instruments let the viewer reflect on how music is made and how it might sound emanating from his creations. Tellingly, Adkins' art installations were often called *recitals*, frequently centering on historical figures significant to the African American community, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, John Brown, and Sojourner Truth.



**METAPHYSICS OF NOTATION, 2008**

Print, 39 x 25 3/4 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

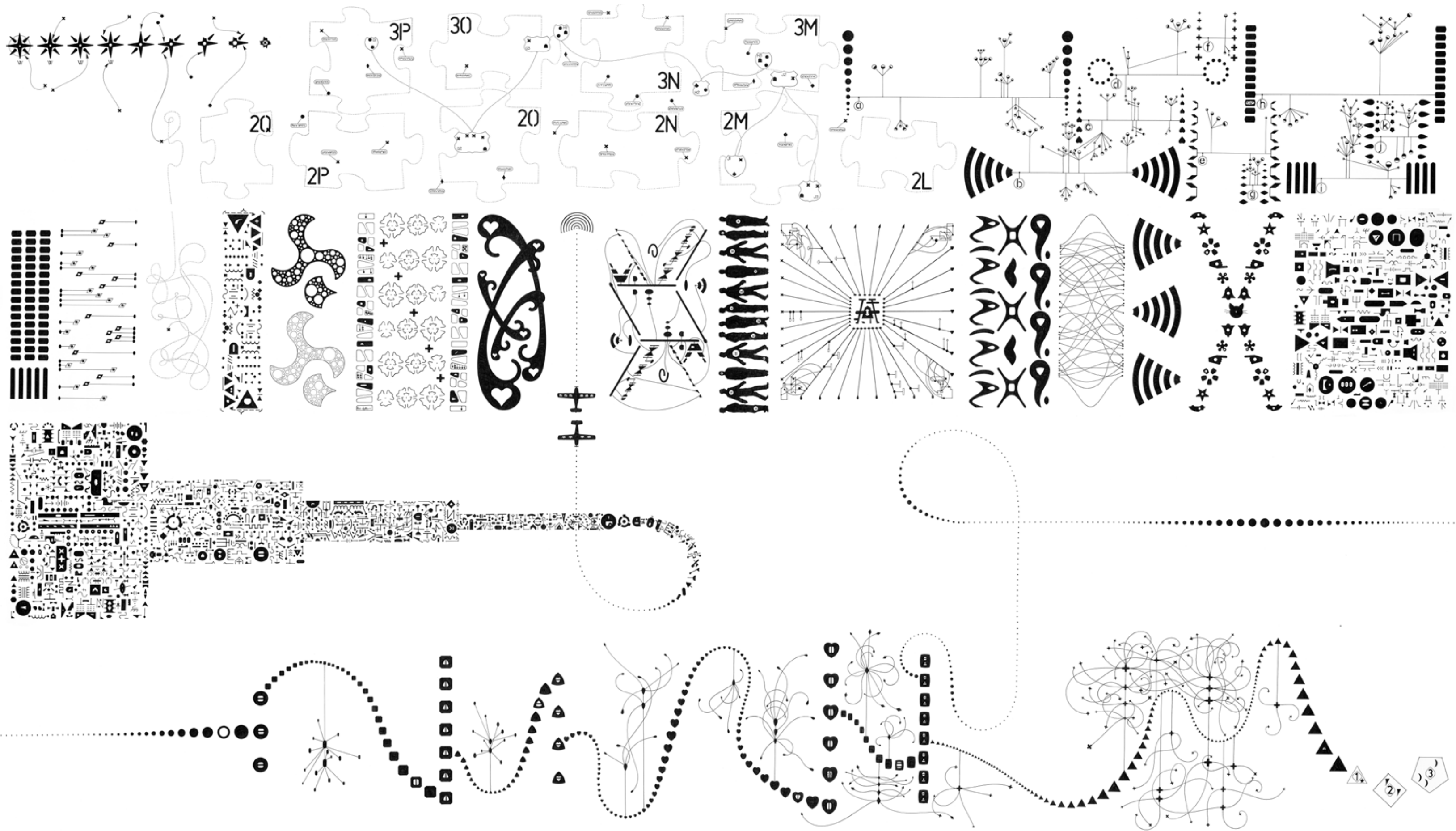
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## MARK APPLEBAUM

Unique in this exhibition, composer and artist Mark Applebaum (b. 1967, Chicago, Illinois) walks a perfect tightrope between music and art in *Metaphysics of Notation*. Commissioned for the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, Applebaum originally had the idea of painting a large room with pictographic notation that would be “playable” art. He eventually created 12 large works on paper, turning them into a massive pictographic score, and the original work generated 45 separate performances played directly from his artwork. Critics have debated whether the work is principally a visual design or chiefly a musical score. Applebaum says, “I don’t have any formal training as a visual artist whatsoever... any ability I have to pull off the technical is a consequence of years of manuscript preparation - the orthography of making musical scores.” The title indicates he is attempting to grapple with the old question of “the chicken or the egg:” Does the idea of the music come first in the mind before being translated to the page or does the visual representation come before the music. The artist notes the formal beauty embedded in written musical scores, “the places where it is sparse, the areas where it is dense, the balance of the circular vs. rectilinear.” Balancing two of the greatest arts, Applebaum creates a hybrid form of visual elegance and aural beauty.



MARK APPLEBAUM





**RECOMPOSITION** (Standing Nude), 2018

Violin, sectioned and set in resin; gesso

15 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 11 <sup>8</sup>/<sub>10</sub> x <sup>4</sup>/<sub>10</sub> inches

Courtesy of the artist and Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery

## OLIVER BEER

To create his two-dimensional sculptures, Oliver Beer (b. 1985, Kent, England) slices through objects with surgical precision, embedding the pieces in resin so that only their edges remain visible, set flush with the gesso surface. He thereby transforms three dimensions into two, creating a “physical Cubism.” In his most recent works, Beer incorporates elements from his grandmother Oma’s piano. Oma was prevented from studying music by her father, himself a violinist. She did not make her first composition until the age of 87, which – unable to transcribe herself – she communicated to her teenage grandson through a combination of singing and drawing. Without any musical training, Oma was never able to play this piano and, poignantly, this silencing of her music is represented through the silencing of the piano keys, which was also the artist’s childhood instrument. As Beer notes, “Although my grandmother was born in 1913 – the sentiment behind (her story) is still relevant in the 21st century when music is both a force of inclusion and exclusion. I wonder what music my grandmother could have made if the patriarchal society of her day had not excluded her from mainstream musical culture, and I feel conflicted about how Oma’s music has only now become audible through me.”

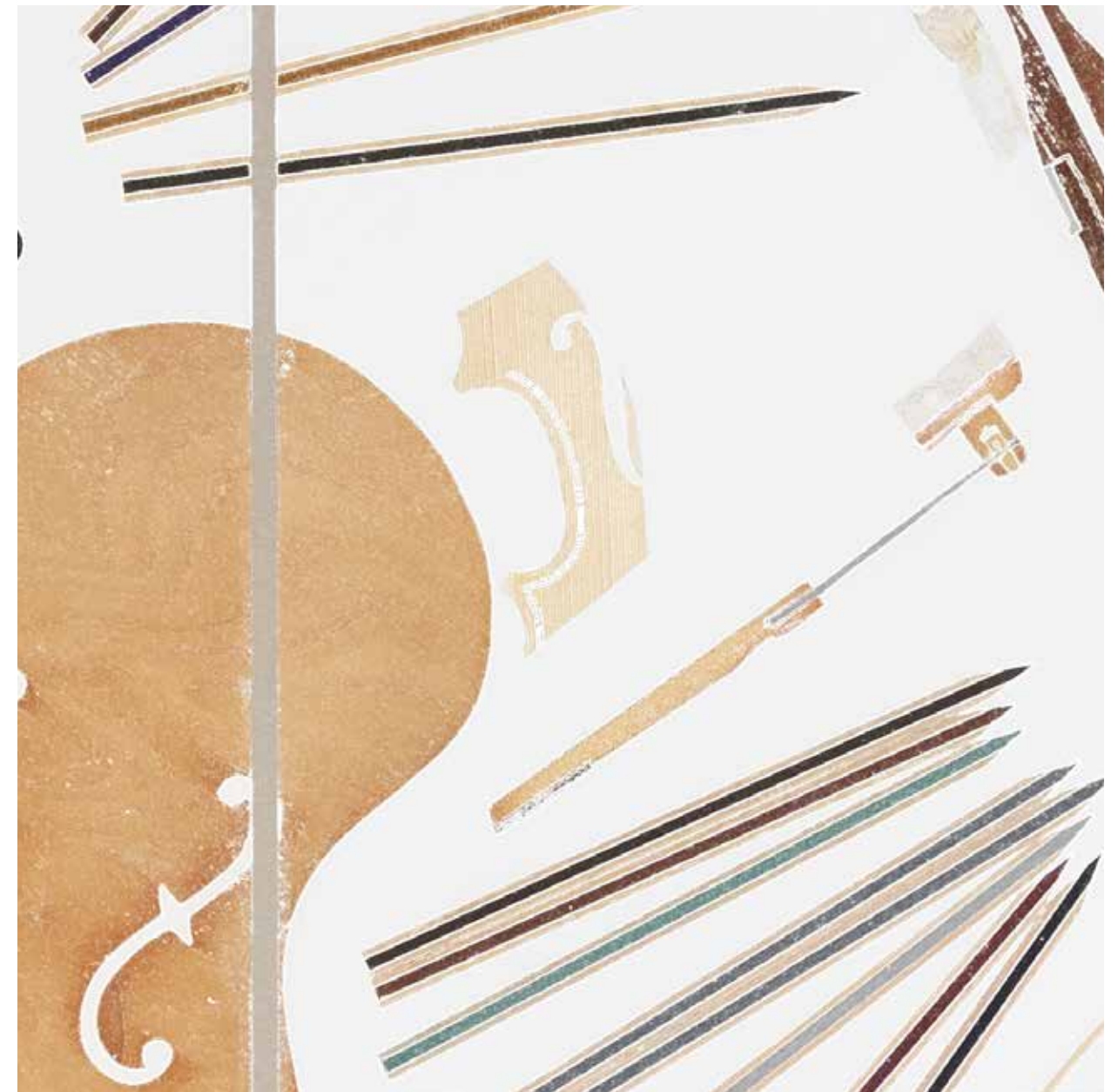


OLIVER BEER



**RECOMPOSITION** (Lovers), 2017  
Violin, sectioned and set in resin; gesso  
18 ½ x 29 x ¾ inches  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery

OLIVER BEER



**RECOMPOSITION** (Two Women Playing Music, after Kitagawa Utamaro), 2020  
Fragments of the artist's grandmother's piano, cello, colored pencils, paintbrush, chess pieces, domino pieces, organ pipe, metronome fragments, laughing gas canister, books about music, tobacco pipe, violin fragments, bag pipe, one-string fiddle, sectioned and set in resin; gesso  
Open: 52 1/5 x 39 1/3 x 1 1/2 inches  
Closed: 52 1/5 x 19 2/3 x 3 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery





**SONG FOR SEBALD, 2017**

Hand-cut archival inkjet prints, headphones,  
Plexiglas, MP3 players, plywood and foam,  
59 1/4 x 38 1/2 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Priska Pasquer Gallery

Photograph by Steven Probert

DETAIL FOLLOWING PAGE

## JANE BENSON

*The idea*

The idea of excision, cutting away, and the haunting beauty of the spaces that remain is an ongoing theme in Jane Benson's (b. 1973, Thornbury, England) work. In *Song for Sebald*, the artist explores separation and belonging through the writer W.G. Sebald's novel, *The Rings of Saturn*. Benson transforms the physical text of the novel using a simple knife. By cutting out every part of the text except the syllables of the musical scale – do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do – she uncovers the “potential music” of Sebald's prose: a set of notes hovering inside the novel, divorced from the original text. From that point of excision, Benson finds the novel's “music” through a process that links author, artist, composer, and performer. Each of the novel's ten chapters produces a movement created collaboratively by composer Matthew Schickele; in each, the music is guided by the spaces between the excavated syllables Benson has cut and its emotive lyric is suggested by Sebald's original prose. Benson's multi-stage process creates gaps and absences in order to stitch them together over time and across media, in a process of collaboration that links together nationalities, disciplines, genders, and fields of creative work.

JANE BENSON

la so la  
re re  
ti re  
ti  
la fa  
re  
la re ti  
so  
re so re  
re re  
re



163

re ti  
re re re  
la la  
re re mi ti re  
re re  
re ti  
re so re re re  
re  
re re la ti  
re re tire  
la ti  
re so re re fa  
re re  
re fa re  
re re  
so  
re re tire  
sore re la  
re re  
re so ti  
re re mi

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la ti  
ti re re  
mi re  
re re  
re ti re  
re re  
la do so



re ti

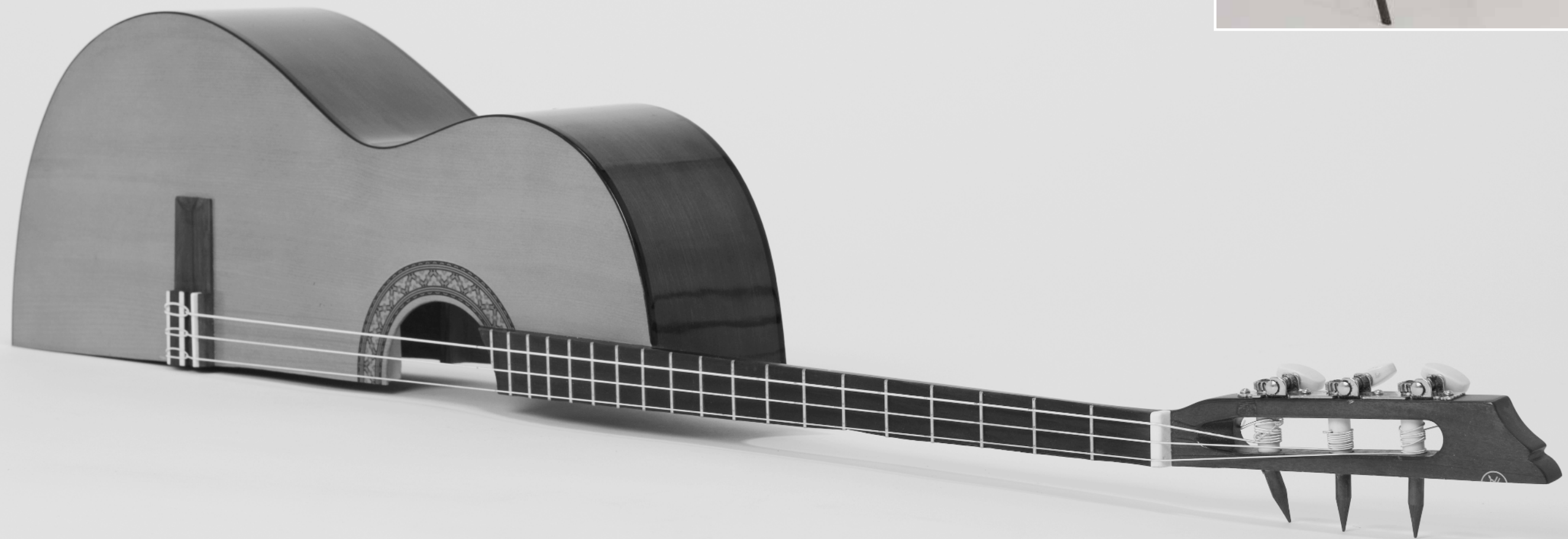
re la  
ti mi re re  
ti ti la ti  
re  
so la

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**JANE BENSON**

**A PLACE FOR INFINITE TUNING II**, 2015  
Hand-cut oud and viola, artificial flowers,  
plywood, mirrored Plexiglas and steel,  
Velcro, latex paint,  
49 x 49 x 43 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Priska Pasquer Gallery



**PENCIL (GUITAR)**, 2013  
Digital c-print, 26 x 29 ½ inches  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Priska Pasquer Gallery



**I WRITE THE SONGS, 2009**

Video, 3:00 minutes

Original commissioned by the Drawing Center  
and the River to River Festival

Courtesy of the artist

Photography: Peter Sterling

DETAIL FOLLOWING PAGE

## SUZANNE BOCANEGRA

In *I Write the Songs*, Suzanne Bocanegra (b. 1957, Houston, Texas) realizes her vision through a series of props including tables, ropes, and a kiosk connected to a stage with a clothesline and pulley system. The artist says, "On each table, I placed recycled music scores collected from music conservatory libraries alongside writing tools. Once a participant has completed a work, it is taken to a crow's nest atop the central kiosk, hung on the clotheslines, and transferred to the stage where the works are distributed among four musicians. Playing in concordance with the other quartet members, each musician interprets the drawing placed before her as she wishes... the music ebbs and flows naturally from intimate solos to dense group jams. Each musician proceeds at his own pace, after which the music is placed back on the clothesline and makes its way back to the kiosk. In the bottom of the kiosk is a music bindery, where the individual drawings are bound together, documenting the event and making it possible for future musicians to repeat it. A live feed camera over each musician's shoulder projects to the monitors the image of the drawings the musicians are interpreting into music, as they are interpreting them. In this way, the audience is able to see at any given time the drawing that is being performed by the musicians, allowing each artist/composer to follow the complete progression of his or her drawing."



SUZANNE BOCANEGRA





**THE FIVE SENSES**, 1995  
Cibachrome print with mahogany frame  
51 x 61 inches  
Image courtesy of the Estate of Sarah Charlesworth  
and Paula Cooper Gallery, NY

## SARAH CHARLESWORTH

*Remember*

A member of the Pictures Generation, Sarah Charlesworth (b. 1947, East Orange, New Jersey; died 2013, Canaan, Connecticut) carefully recreated imagery from art history in her work, translating the paintings from their historical sources into contemporary photographs. As the artist said, “To live in a world of photographs is to live in a world of substitutes.” Here, she draws on two images that explore music’s relationship to allegory. In *The Five Senses*, Charlesworth was inspired by 17th-century French painter Lubin Baugin’s *Still Life with Chessboard (The Five Senses)*, 1630. Charlesworth carefully selected each prop in the photograph to match the images of the original painting, selecting everything down to the nearly identical carnations and lute. Charlesworth creates a visual parallel for each of the five senses: taste (wine and bread), touch (velvet bag and playing cards), smell (carnations), sight (mirror and chessboard), and sound (lute and musical score), each object lovingly rendered in the delicate shading and composition of Baugin’s original oil painting. Charlesworth based *Allegory of the Arts* on a 19th-century photograph, which likely explains the restricted color palette, designed to reference the monochrome of early photography. Here, Charlesworth presents the objects representing “the Arts,” including the bust (sculpture); the palette (painting); and the violin and score (music), heavily covered with dust, perhaps suggesting their archaic place in the contemporary world dominated by video and photography.



**SARAH CHARLESWORTH**

**ALLEGORY OF THE ARTS, 1995**  
Cibachrome print with mahogany frame  
51 x 41 inches  
Image courtesy of the Estate of  
Sarah Charlesworth and Paula Cooper Gallery, NY





**CIRCUNLOQUIO (CIRCUMLOCUTION), 2012**  
Mixed media, 80 x 8 x 10 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

## CARLOS ESTÉVEZ

Carlos Estévez (b. 1969, Havana, Cuba) uses marionettes, whose bodies are created out of the forms of musical instruments, to create art that has both a whimsical delight and a silent poignancy. His bodies are not animated with life but hanging limp on their strings. His figures seem sadly uninspired by the music that their bodies have the potential to make. In this way, Estévez's work walks a line; on the one hand, suggesting his character's unrealized potential but balancing that with the possibility that at any moment they might begin to play the music within themselves. Estévez underscores the relationship between the human body and musical instruments. In *Circunloquio* (Circumlocution) the artist draws the visual parallel between the s-curves of the violin and the sinuous line of the hips, waist, and breasts of the female body; a visual relationship most famously depicted by Man Ray's Ingres' Violin. In Ray's 1924 photograph inspired by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *La Grande Baigneuse*, 1808, Ray transforms the female body into a musical instrument by painting sound-holes on her back, playing with the idea of objectification of the body. But Estévez does not just confine himself to the violin, also employing the clarinet, the harpsicord, and a plethora of other instruments to create an array of different body types – an orchestra of humanity.



CARLOS ESTÉVEZ



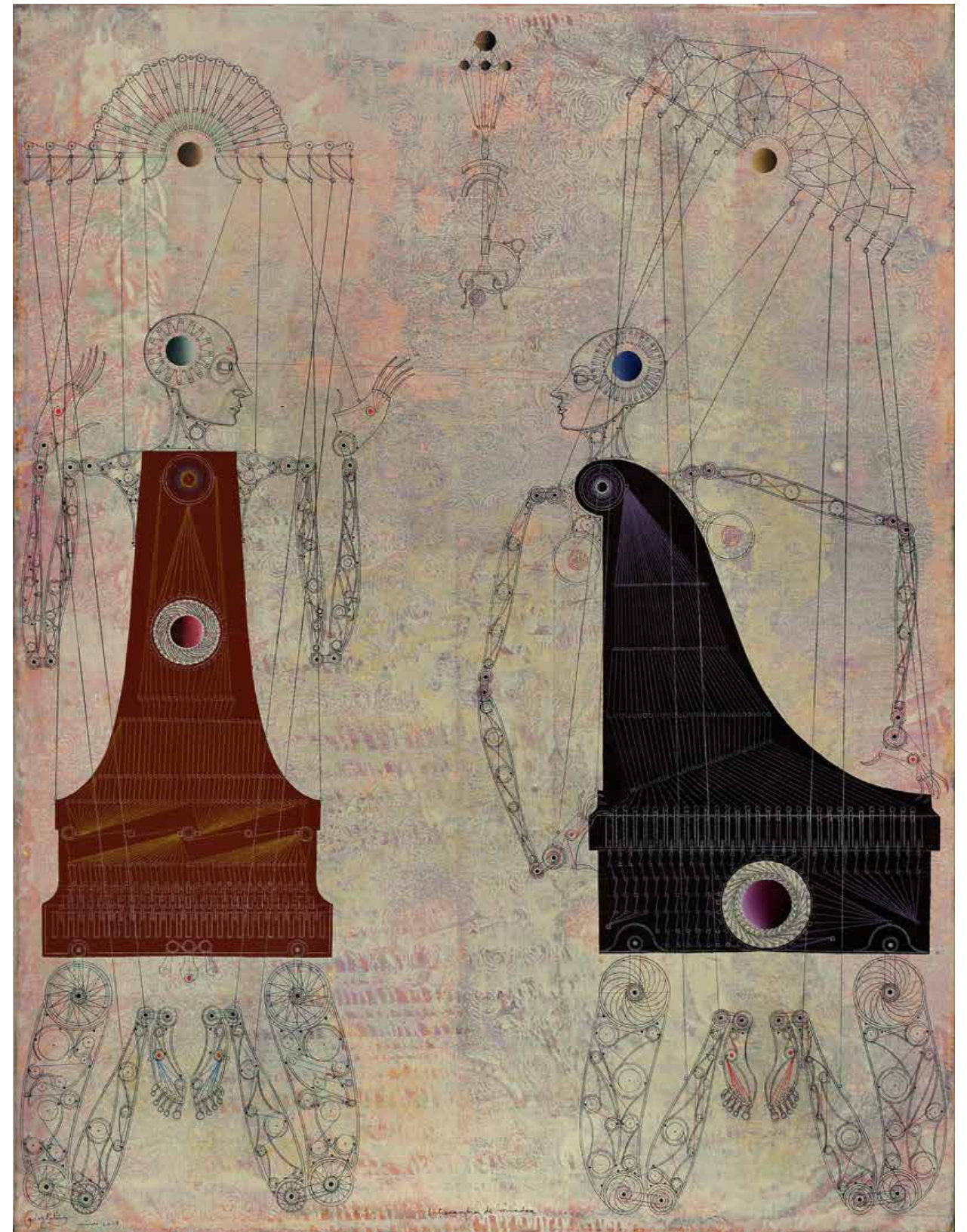
**INTERCAMBIOS DE MIRADAS**, 2015  
Oil and watercolor pencil on canvas  
60 x 46 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



CARLOS ESTÉVEZ



**SOLILOQUIO (SOLILOQUY)**, 2012  
Mixed media, 80 x 8 x 10 inches  
Collection of the artist



**INTERCAMBIOS DE MIRADAS**, 2015  
Oil and watercolor pencil on canvas  
60 x 46 inches  
Courtesy of the artist





**HAVANA DANCERS**, 2012  
Video, 37 seconds  
Courtesy of the artist  
Video by Kris Craig

## ANA FLORES

Ana Flores (b. 1962, Havana, Cuba) shows us two figurines, frozen in mid-dance, but their kinetic energy comes from a rotating turntable. Revolving, they keep time to the lushly romantic score. In the background, blurred shadows are created by the projection of low misty lighting, making the figurines appear monumental and imbued with fluid movement. Flores allows the viewer to witness her moment of theater, revealing the device that seems to bring her figures to life, thereby creating an unexpected poignancy. Although whimsical, the figures suggest that the splendor of romance may demand a certain deception. Flores fled the island of Cuba with her family as a girl, only returning in 2002, after a more than 40-year absence. Works like *Havana Dancers* emphasize her creation of a distinct sense of place. Her return to Cuba resulted in her redefined sense of identity and vision. She frequently looks at Cuba's historical tumult by utilizing recycled toys, puppets and furniture, a tribute to the creativity and resourcefulness that is displayed by the people on the island.

**ANA FLORES**



**HAVANA DANCERS, 2012**  
Video, 37 seconds  
Courtesy of the artist  
Video by Kris Craig







**DRAMATURGIA DE LA VIDA MISMA  
(DRAMATURGY OF LIFE ITSELF), 2018**  
Charcoal on Paper, 60 x 45 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Dot Fiftyone Gallery, Miami

## GONZALO FUENMAYOR

Gonzalo Fuenmayor's (b. 1977, Barranquilla, Colombia) finely rendered charcoal drawings play with and subvert various colonialist tropes of tropical culture. A through line of his work is questioning the idea of what a Latin American artist should be and how tropes and stereotypes impact expectations of subject matter. In his more Surreal art, palm trees burst into grandiose architectural settings, creating an unsettling atmosphere. Many of Fuenmayor's drawings have a discordant note that contrasts objects of the manmade world with a Nature that is threatening. In *Dramaturgia de la Vida Misma* (Dramaturgy of Life Itself) there is breaking down the "instrument" of civilization. The artist shows us a delicate harpsichord destroyed by the upward, violent thrust of a phallic palm tree, splitting the instrument in two, and rendering its music silenced. In one sense the picture reminds us of the fragility of stringed musical instruments and old wood, as the humidity of the tropics is always their enemy, a source of warping destruction. In a similar work (not in the exhibition) showing the destruction of a musical instrument, *The Monopoly of Patriotism*, the artist draws a piano marooned in the tall grasses of a savannah, pierced by hundreds of arrows. Fuenmayor reminds us that the attempt to bring the Western culture to "primitive" peoples might engender a violent reaction.





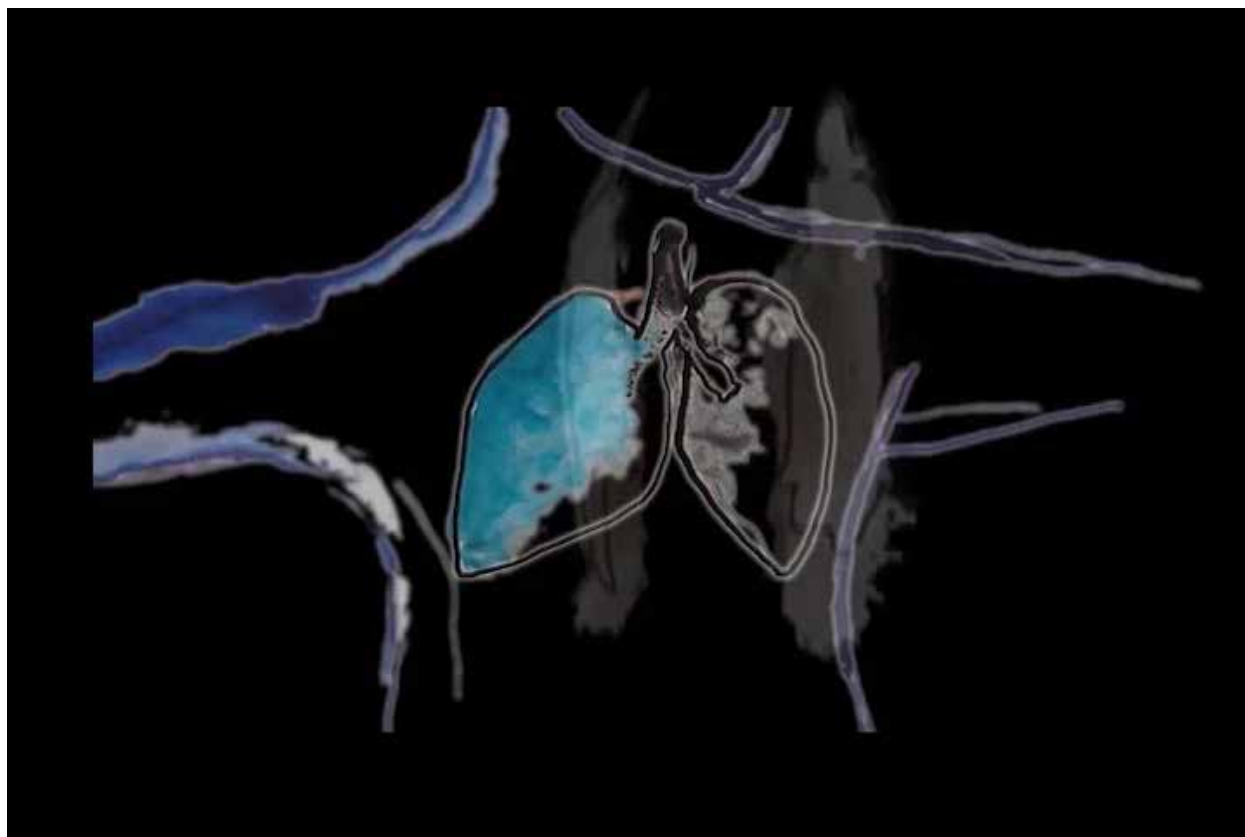
**MY LITTLE VIOLIN, 2009**

Steel, wire, motor, ostrich feathers, violin  
15 x 30 x 22 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

## ARTHUR GANSON

Arthur Ganson (b. 1955, Hartford, Connecticut) is best known as a sculptor of Rube Goldberg-like machines that underscore the existential nature of human existence. The artist describes himself as a cross between an engineer and a choreographer. While his machines don't serve a practical function, Ganson creates them to explore the world, his relationship to it, and to encourage his audience to meditate on ideas. In *My Little Violin*, he creates a sculpture both romantic and creepy. The 1938 song *You Go to My Head*, popularized by Ella Fitzgerald, is played at a dramatically slowed-down speed that deepens the voice into a low moan. The music is accompanied by the sound of the grinding gears powering the mechanical arms that softly stroke the body of the violin with ostrich feathers. The combination of the longing in the recorded music, the hard, glossy surface of the violin, and the almost palpable sense of featherweight touch led the artist to humorously say, "It seems that they were meant for one another." Ganson has said, "I find (playing) the violin in many ways more attractive than the guitar... even more attractive in some ways than making sculpture. I think this is because playing music involves my body in time and space, and it's very much a meditation."



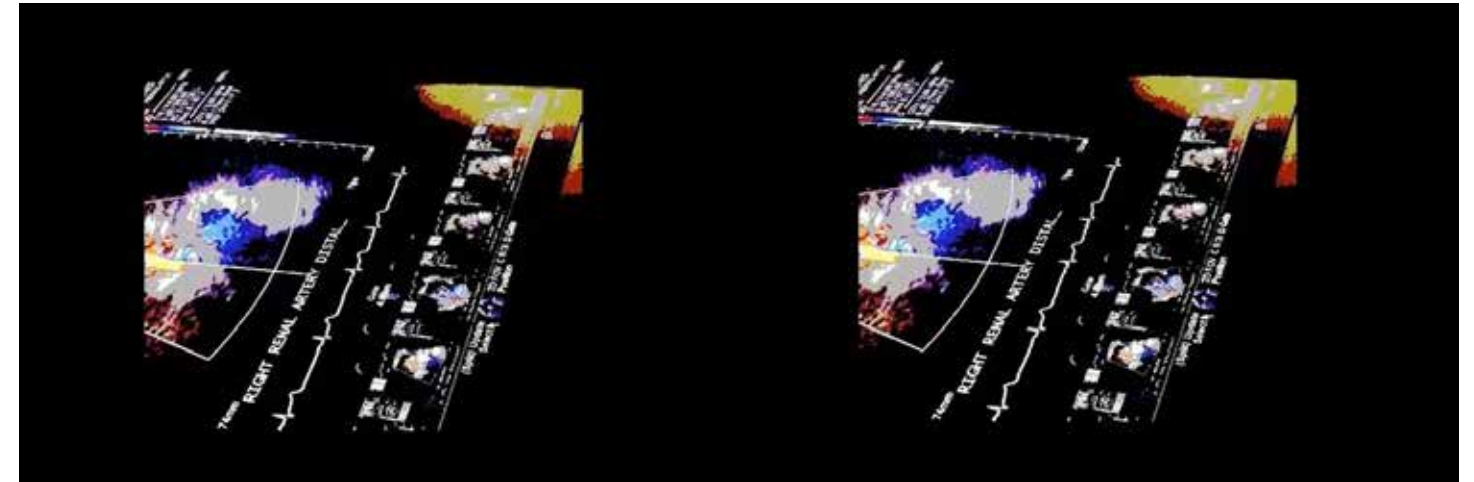
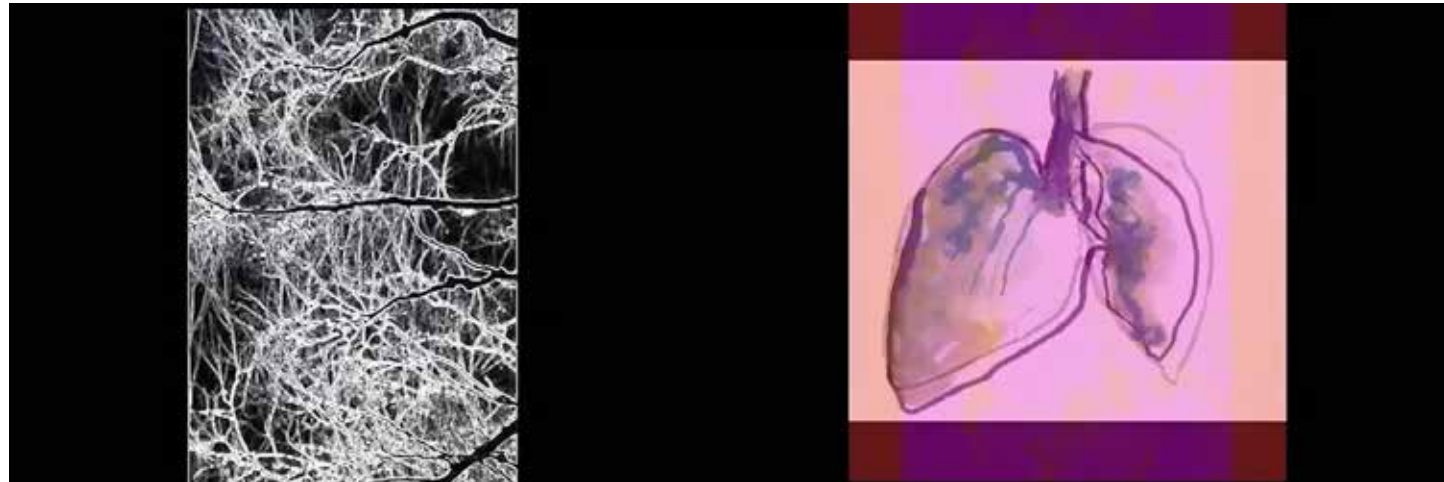
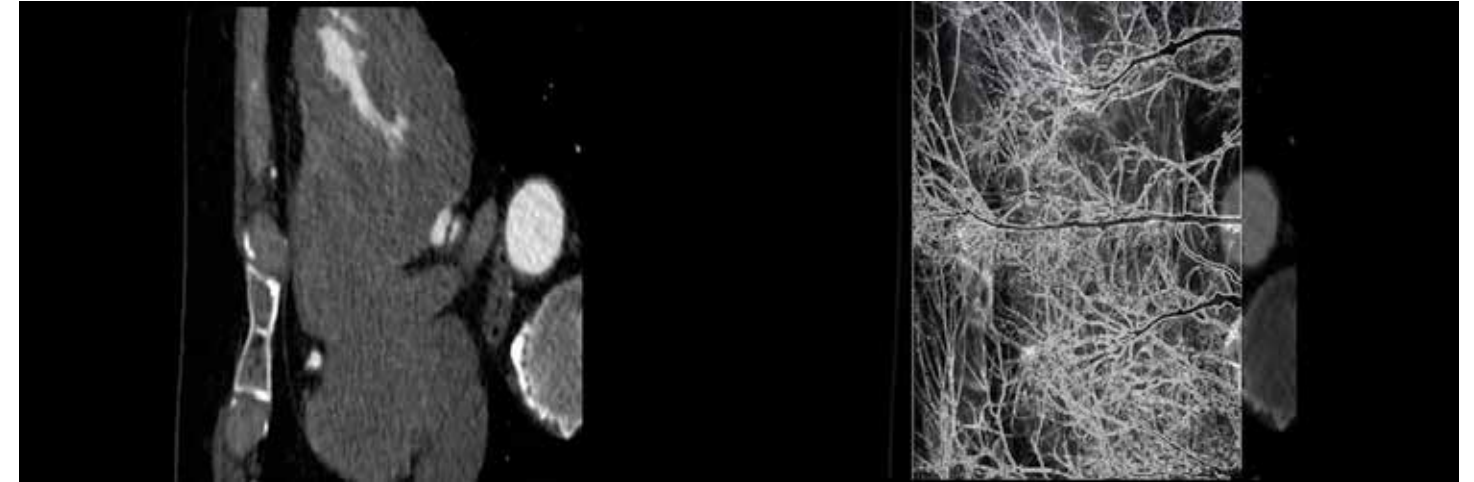
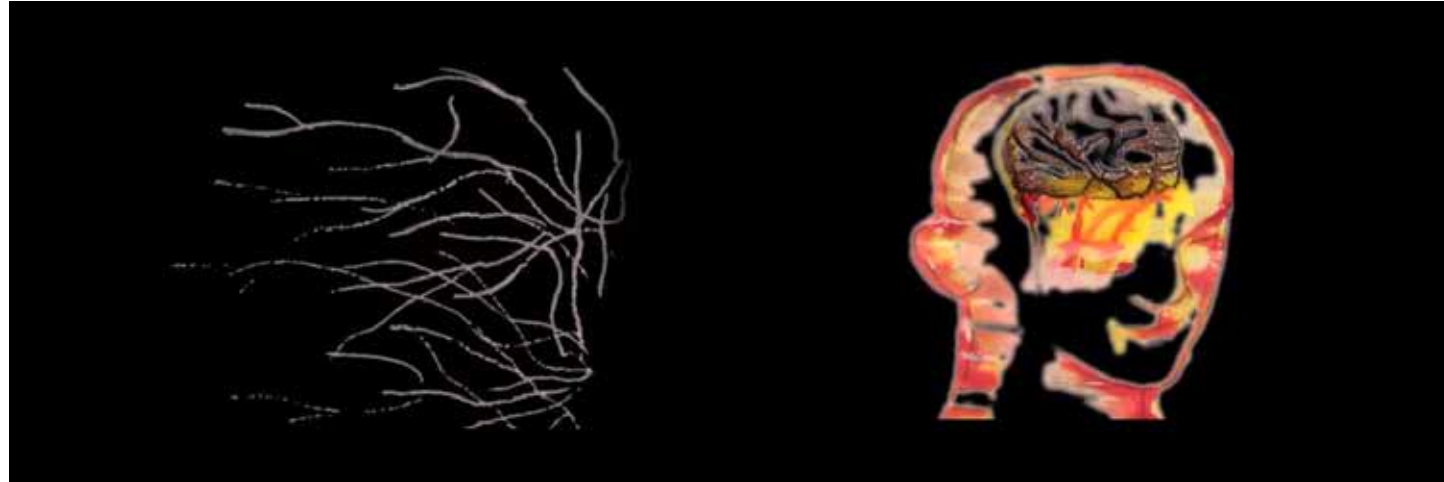


**CARDIAC HARMONIUM**, 2019  
Video, 8:18 minutes  
Courtesy of the artist

## ANITA GLESTA

Anita Glesta (b. 1958, New York, New York) has long been fascinated by the human body. Her interest in “the heart as a metaphor” was spurred when she experienced a disturbing cardiac event, the nature of which her doctors could not pinpoint. Although the artist made a complete recovery, the experience propelled her toward thinking about the enigmatic mind-body connection, which remains not fully understood by science. In creating her videos, Glesta recorded cardiograms and MRIs, combining them with animation shot in slow motion using a Plexiglas box, medical imagery, blooms of ink, depictions of organs, and soundtracks inspired by the rhythms of the human body. *Cardiac Harmonium*'s swelling chords are drawn from the shifting tempo of the human heartbeat, falling in and out of time, suggesting normal function, then of adrenaline, and cardiac crisis. The heartbeats that flutter across her animation are poetically interspersed with images such as the frantic flapping of a dove's wings, that variously suggest the rise of the spirit, the intense labor of the beating wing, and a metaphor for the Angel of Death.

ANITA GLESTA



**CARDIAC HARMONIUM**, 2019  
Video, 8:18 minutes  
Courtesy of the artist





**GUITRUM, 2016**

Wood, Duracal, wood putty, synthetic strings, hardware,  
Delrin, 13 x 21 x 8 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York  
Photo © Eric W. Baumgartner

## MARÍA ELENA GONZÁLEZ

María Elena González (b. 1957, Havana, Cuba) presents a sculpture that also appears to be a fantastical musical instrument. Two drums are wrapped in a continuous band of wood that makes a distinctive s-curve through the instrument. The unusual title of the piece seems to suggest a mashup of a “guitar” and “drum,” tantalizing the viewer to about the music that may emanate from this unusual instrument. González has long been interested in sound and, more recently, in music, as it relates to the visual arts. Her earliest works dealing with sound came while on an arts residency, when she noted the visual parallels between the distinctive white bark of a birch tree and of a cylindrical player piano roll. The visual parallel intrigued her, and she began a series of works that merged ideas of the natural world and music. The artist is particularly noted for the elegant geometric forms in her sculptures, and says, “My interests with the tactility of sculpture and the primacy of form, the allure of materials and craft, and recombining materials and ideas, are of a primary nature to me.”



**VIOLIN DRESS, 2013**

Wood, steel, violin, and cello strings, various materials,  
84 x 40 x 32 inches  
Courtesy of Andrew Edlin Gallery

**BRENT GREEN**

*Brent*

Brent Green's (b. 1978, Baltimore, Maryland) "violin dresses" are hoop skirt-style structures made of wood, cloth, steel, and violin and cello strings. The sculptures are interactive, and they can be worn and, when rotated, played as instruments by bowing the strings. The "dresses" are intended as sculptural installation, set design, and performance costumes, conveying a multitude of interpretations. This "wearable art" conveys the bell-like sway of hoop skirts, and the confining elements of women's period costumes. Music is central to Green's work, and he began his artistic career as a writer and musician before he started drawing cartoons to visualize his music. Green's work has a slapdash, handmade, folksy quality imbued with sharp, satirical approach, which has led one critic to compare his sensibility to Mark Twain's. His humor, and sentimentality, DIY aesthetic and fantasy portray our internalized struggle with the onslaught of societal negativity and despondency. The ability to put on your own jerry-rigged "violin dress" sculpture, move through the gallery, playing your own song, while literally dancing to your own tune, suggests the triumph of the fantastical over the day-to-day dreariness of the mundane.





**PIANO PRINT (YELLOW OCHRE), 2014**

Woodcut monoprint on paper

74 1/2 x 72 1/4 inches

Edition 1 of 1

Courtesy of Marianne Boesky Gallery

## JESSICA JACKSON HUTCHINS

In *Unicorn and The Key*, Jessica Jackson Hutchins (b. 1971, Chicago, Illinois) presents her family heirloom baby grand piano, which she has dramatically altered for her art. The mythical unicorn is referenced by the large phallic ceramic horn or tusk sitting atop the piano's cover. Hutchins has distressed the surface of the piano with gashes, marks and graffiti. These interventions to the piano lid were done to create several large-scale woodcuts, such as *Piano Print (Yellow Ochre)*, which highlight the patterning of the marks on her piano's surface. A result of these prints and woodcuts is the staining of the piano's keys in a variety of hues, the result of the ink leaking for the prints pressed on the piano's lid. A key is carved on the lid of the piano bench, and a lumpish form has been stuffed into the seat, rendering the bench unusable and the piano difficult to play. Hutchins' transformation of her musical instrument into sculpture, allows us to see the continuum between utility and art. In Hutchins' work, nothing is wasted. The wood pieces and shavings removed from the piano to form the wood-prints were recycled by the artist into collage. Reflecting on the wood that was transformed to make the piano, Hutchins continues the unending transformation of organic material.



JESSICA JACKSON HUTCHINS



**UNICORN AND THE KEY**, 2010  
Piano, bench, glazed ceramic, printing ink  
Piano with horn: 75 x 57 x 54 inches  
Bench: 26 1/4 x 27 3/4 x 18 inches  
Courtesy of Marianne Boesky Gallery







**THE PROPHET OF THE DITCH**, 2013  
Archival Pigment Print, 32 x 32 inches  
Courtesy of Carrie Haddad Gallery

## KAHN & SELESNICK

A bizarrely dressed quartet playing a lute, a violin, an accordion, and a xylophone appears upon a stage in front of a painted theatrical backdrop of a castle. These ragtag players are seemingly directed by a man in a dunce cap, the proverbial “fool” of the title, with an outstretched hand, as if he is about to sing. The photograph is filled with visual signifiers of unknown meaning, including red-rouged eyes on three of the women, bird and fish motifs on one of the costumes, and thick collars of flowers on the players. Other images in the series include horns of incredible length and seemingly fantastical instruments that recall Steampunk, operated by a figure completely covered in tarot cards, which obscure the identity. The figures are shown actively playing instruments, and the photographic compositions by the artistic partnership of Nicholas Kahn (b. 1964, New York, New York) and Richard Selesnick (b. 1964, London, England) make use of discovered, invented, and forgotten histories. The artists often present a cheerily post-apocalyptic vision of the world, inhabited by an absurdist theater troupe they call the *Truppe Fledermaus*. “We’re like a kind of traveling circus,” says Kahn, speaking about himself and Selesnick, as well as about their fictional theater troupe.



**KAHN & SELESNICK**

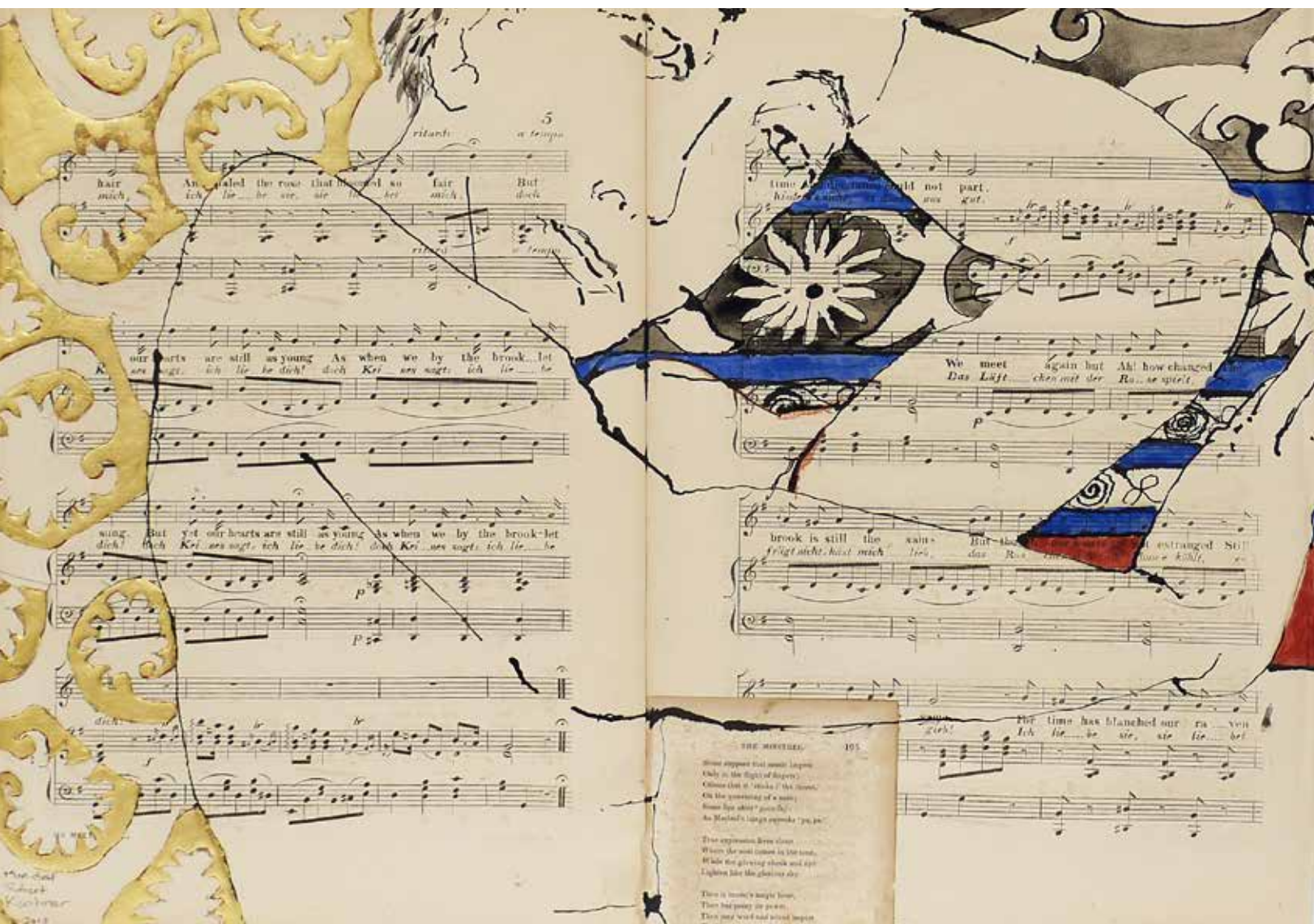


Book of Fate Series  
**TWO FOOL CART**, 2018  
Archival Pigment Print, 30-inch diameter  
Courtesy of Carrie Haddad Gallery



Book of Fate Series  
**FOOL REVISED**, 2018  
Archival Pigment Print, 30-inch diameter  
Courtesy of Carrie Haddad Gallery





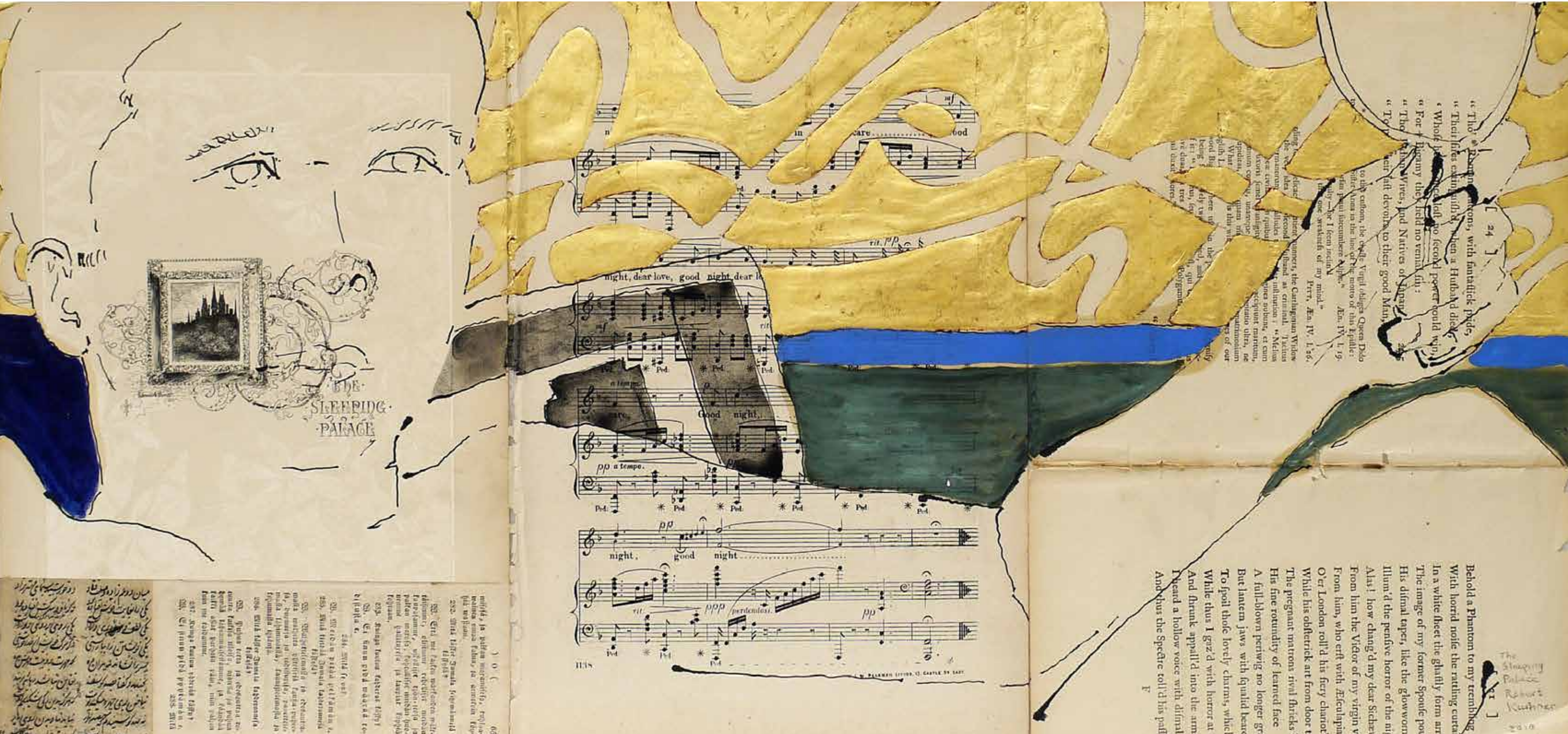
**MINSTREL, 2010**  
Acrylic, oil, ink, ink wash gold leaf,  
and collage on antique paper  
13 1/2 x 19 1/4 inches  
Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery

## ROBERT KUSHNER

Robert Kushner (b. 1949, Pasadena, California) is one of the major figures of the Pattern and Decoration Movement of the 1970s. His series of collages uses historical musical scores to decorate and ground his compositions. Here, he incorporates pages of musical notes with the poem “The Minstrel” drawn from the 1839 volume of *Ladies' Cabinet Fashion, Music & Romance*, which begins “Some suppose that music lingers/Only in the flight of fingers/Others that it ‘sticks i’ the throat/On the quavering of a note.” These drawings of figures, elaborated on collages of antique sheet music and book pages, continue his exploration of drawing images in ink and oil paint over found historical papers. The printed pages that Kushner has used span the globe and the centuries – many were collected on his travels or were gifts from friends. Kushner draws from the models in his studio, directly onto his collage of pages, introducing gold leaf and areas of color. With classically inspired figures influenced by the drawings of Matisse, Kushner’s finished works are deeply romantic and offer several layers of possible interpretation: there is both the literal reading of the underlying text and the opportunity to decode the compositional and spatial logic of the patterned and gilded elements.



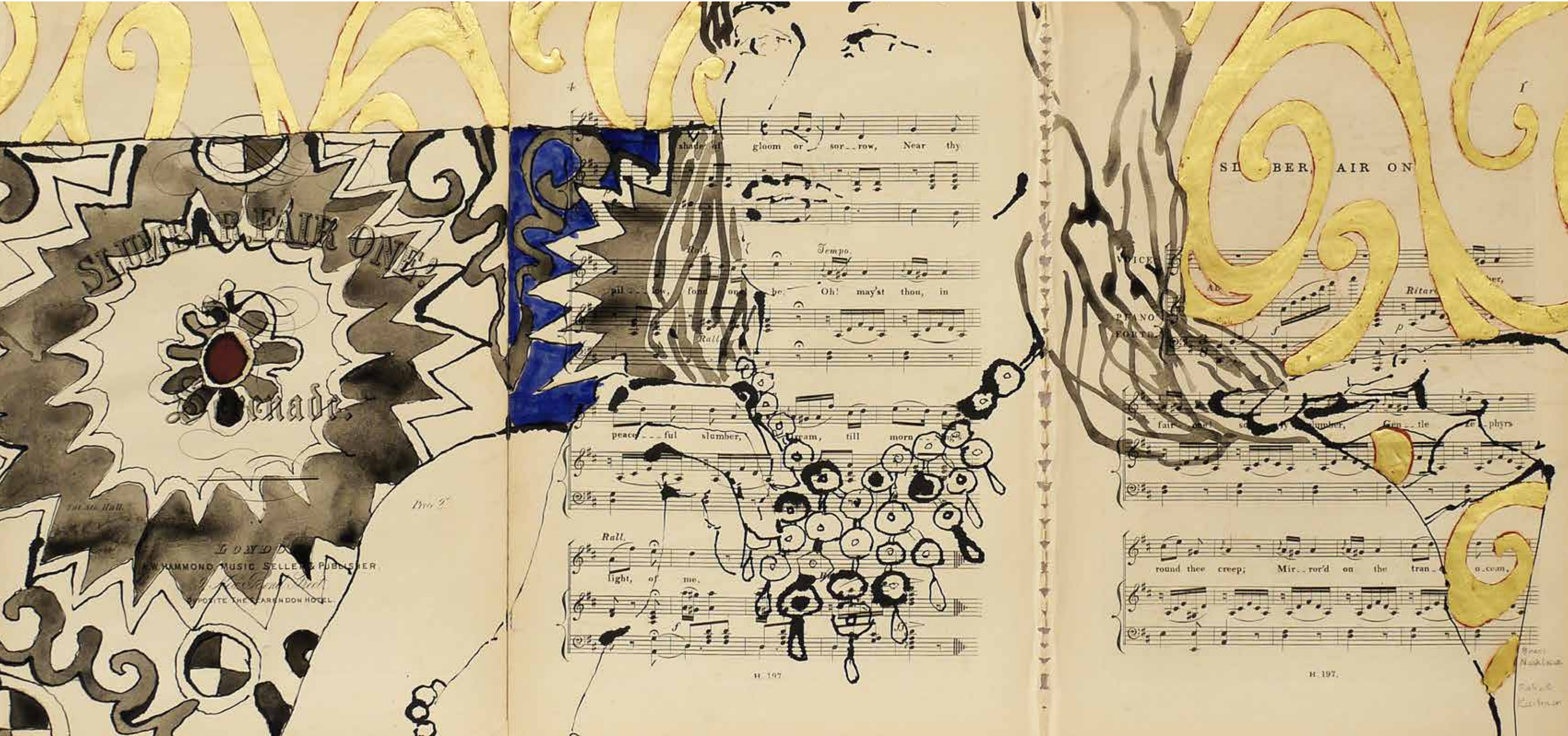
ROBERT KUSHNER



**THE SLEEPING PALACE, 2010**  
 Acrylic, oil, ink, ink wash, gold leaf, and collage on antique paper, 13 1/2 x 30 inches  
 Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery



ROBERT KUSHNER



**BRASS NECKLACE, 2010**

Acrylic, gold leaf, oil, and ink on antique paper, 13 1/2 x 29 inches  
Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery





**ARDOR**, 2003  
Charcoal on wood, zither  
30 x 28 x 4 inches  
Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery

## WHITFIELD LOVELL

*After*

In *After an Afternoon*, artist Whitfield Lovell (b. 1959, The Bronx, New York) creates a soundscape emerging from within a tableau of 37 stacked antique radios. The visitor can hear the low voice of Billie Holiday singing the 1939 composition “Strange Fruit,” the song that protested the lynching of Black Americans, which reached a peak in the early 20th century. The bracing shock of the lyrics pierces the nostalgia of Holiday’s voice, which is reminiscent of the golden, fading light of an autumn afternoon, the worn devices conjuring the sounds of a past not so long ago, and not so far away. Other excerpts in the sound piece include World War II-era news read by Walter Winchell and excerpts from *The Marlin Hurt and Beulah Show*, symbolizing the dramatic tonal shifts that daily occur on radio as performers move from poetic introspective moments to more prosaic information. Lovell’s work has consistently explored the past using found material culture in dramatic juxtapositions with portraiture. *Ardor* consists of one of Lovell’s trademark, portraits done in charcoal on found wood contrasted with a zither, an instrument consisting of a flat sounding box with numerous strings, placed on a horizontal surface, and played with the fingertips. Like many of Lovell’s works, the relationship between the instrument and the woman remains enigmatic.



WHITFIELD LOVELL



**AFTER AN AFTERNOON, 2008**  
Radios with sound  
59 x 72 x 11 inches  
Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery





**IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO**, 1987  
 Mixed media, 9 x 14 x 1 1/2 inches  
 Courtesy of the artist

## MAUREEN McCABE

Maureen McCabe (b. 1947, Wollaston, Massachusetts) is a masterful collagist, and careful note of her artful collages will uncover many intimate moments of satisfaction where musical imagery melts into her delightful compositions. Inspired by the work of such famous collage artists as Joseph Cornell, McCabe's collages consist predominantly of drawn images, personal keepsakes, gold, silver, and found objects such as toys, prints, coins, tokens, cards, antiques, talismans, and magic relics. Nothing in the boxes is random; instead, each is focused on a distinct theme, often with the suggestion of a narrative. In *It Takes Two to Tango*, the title appears beneath a bar of music and above a miniature dance diagram with instructions for dancing a tango. A hummingbird, famed for constant movement in mid-air, instead sits expectantly on a branch, as though waiting for the music to begin. On the opposite side of this diptych a pair of tango dancers embrace passionately - the mood is charged with romance. Likewise, *Pen-nies from Heaven* has a background of music from the famous 1936 song transformed into a charming tableau of a cherub showering the earth with manna from the skies. Finally, *Ouija* shows the infamous fortune-telling parlor game with the plaintive lyrics "Oh, won't you tell me oui-ji" hovering above a composition of four disembodied hands playing the game of spirits.

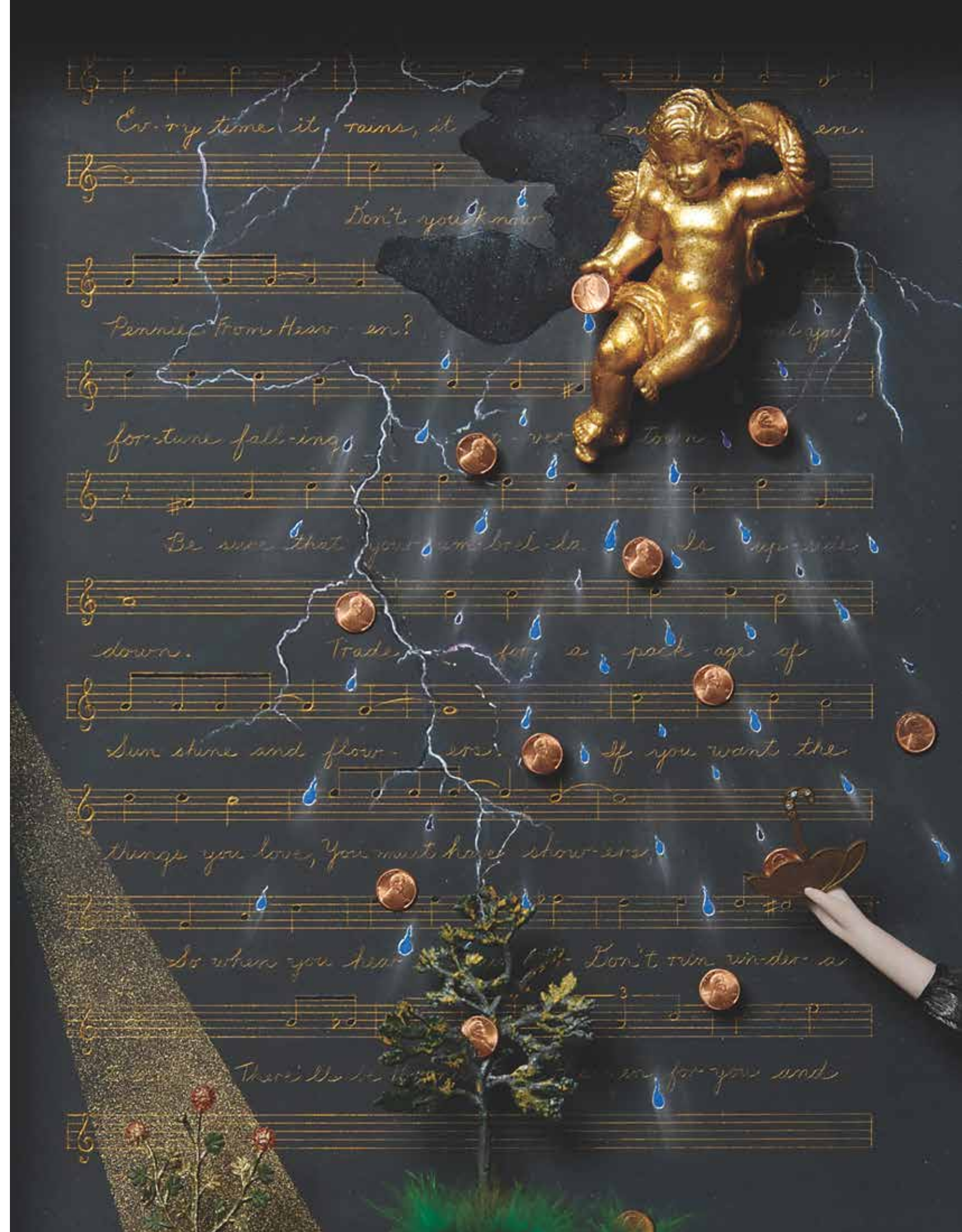


MAUREEN McCABE



**OUIJA**, 2013  
Mixed media, 13 1/2 x 13 4/5 x 2 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

OPPOSITE  
**PENNIES FROM HEAVEN**, 2002  
Mixed media, 15 3/4 x 13 3/4 x 4 1/4 inches  
Courtesy of the artist





**HONEY SIT IN, 2020**

Pigment on Indigo dyed Gampi paper  
25 x 38 1/4 inches

© Jason Moran; courtesy of the artist and  
Luhring Augustine, New York.

FOLLOWING PAGE

**BLUE CAMINTHA, 2020**

Pigment on Indigo dyed Gampi paper  
25 x 38 1/4 inches

© Jason Moran; courtesy of the artist and  
Luhring Augustine, New York.

## JASON MORAN

Jason Moran (b. 1975, Houston, Texas) created the abstractions that include *Honey Sit In* and *Blue Calaminta* during the global Covid-19 pandemic. On the surface, Moran's work is reminiscent of the work of Mark Rothko, the New York School painter, who also worked with painterly, irregular blocks of color that seemed to imbue his compositions with a spiritual aspect. But embracing the political, Moran's work during 2020 was influenced by the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and the uprising for justice that followed. The compositions that arose have a decidedly elegiac quality, that allows for somber rumination. Moran is internationally acclaimed as a jazz pianist and composer, and he values the interdisciplinary relationships between music and visual artistic practice. To create this series, Moran placed a sheet of paper on a piano and recorded his fingers on the keys. The movement of his hands is tracked in layered lines of saturated pigment and washes of color, tracing the pull of gravity or the creases of the paper. These works are the material record of Moran's private performances. Moody and abstract, varying hues of blue run throughout the works, rife with associations ranging from expressions of melancholy, references to musical "blue notes" and the Blues.



JASON MORAN





**SOFT SAXOPHONE (BLACK AND WHITE), 1992**

Lithograph

34 7/8 x 43 3/4 inches Edition of 30, 8 AP, BAT, 4 PP, 2 WP.

Courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

Image provided by Brooke Alexander Inc., NY

© 1992 Claes Oldenburg

## CLAES OLDENBURG

Claes Oldenburg (b. 1929, Stockholm, Sweden) is famous for his large-scale replicas of everyday objects. In 1992, the Pop artist created a series of works based on musical instruments, returning to a subject matter that had fascinated him since the 1960s. *Soft Saxophone (Black and White)*, sitting gracefully upright, has been compared to such various forms as the curves of the female figure or the torque of a twisting tornado. One critic noted that Oldenburg's monochromatic color scheme, "gives the saxophone a melancholic air, as the print conjures a slow-moving ballad or moody blues piece." This print was related to several "soft" three-dimensional sculptures of saxophones, part of a group of works created around the theme of forced air, including objects from clarinets to perfume spray bottles. Oldenburg's engagement with the form of instruments has led to varied sculptures (many of them created with his collaborator and wife Coosje van Bruggen, 1942-2009), including works based on the viola, saxophone, clarinet, French horn, sheet music, and metronome. Musical instruments proved the perfect objects for the artists to explore metamorphosis, the changes in material objects, and concurrent shifts in meaning.





**THE UPSETTERS, KING AND QUEEN, 2013**  
Mixed media, Jesonmite cast masks, vintage stereos,  
turntables and speakers.  
Courtesy of October Gallery

## ZAK OVÉ

Two large totems rise up in front of the viewer, but rather than being composed of the expected wood or other traditional materials, these figures are made of vintage sound-system pieces embedded with African masks. The works underscore the centrality of music in the life of Zak Ové (b. 1966, London, England), a multi-media artist born in London to a Trinidadian father, Horace Ové, a successful Black filmmaker whose work deeply influenced his son. Speaking of *The Upsetters, King and Queen*, the artist describes them as symbolizing, “probably the only religious experience for me through my childhood. I am using ‘religious’ in a quasi-way, in a sense of divinity that always inspires and pushes me forward into things. The sound system had galvanized a community it was able to speak to. And whatever came through this interface was a language that spoke about culture, spoke about the past, it spoke about pride.” Committed to the role of the artist in advancing social justice, as his father’s generation did, the artist asks, “As the first generation born in Britain, I have to ask myself how do I carry this on?”

ZAK OVÉ



**REMIX CULTURE**, 2013  
1970s turntable, cast Jesmonite African skull  
and mixed media  
19 7/10 x 33 1/2 x 9 4/5 inches  
Courtesy of October Gallery



**REMIX CULTURE 1**, 2013  
1970s turntable, cast Jesmonite African skull  
and mixed media  
15 7/10 x 24 4/5 x 5 9/10 inches  
Courtesy of October Gallery





**BAKELITE ROBOT, 2002**

Single Channel Video (color-silent) with  
LCD monitors and vintage Bakelite radios  
48x 50 x 7 3/4 inches  
Courtesy of Gagolian  
© Nam June Paik Estate

## NAM JUNE PAIK

Referred to as the “Father of Video Art,” Nam June Paik (b. 1932, Gyeongseong, now Seoul, Korea; died 2006, Miami, Florida) developed an interest in making or arranging performative actions and musical compositions, many of which incorporated edited audiotape placed into sculptures. *Bakelite Robot* was produced as part of a series late in Paik’s career, when the artist was working in New York. This example is a smaller than life-size sculpture, consisting of nine vintage Bakelite radios making up the “body parts” of the robot. Found in antique stores and vintage shops, the playful colors of the radios – red, black, orange, yellow, and green – combine to form a whimsical humanoid figure, one that is suggestive of both primitive man and the promise of future technological advancement. Paik has removed the front dials of the radios, creating hollow spaces into which television monitors have been inserted. These television monitors screen videotape specifically developed for the artwork, composed of vintage footage from robot and science fiction films and recordings of vintage robot toys. The robot does not move, instead being frozen in motion, although the videos provide a kind of animating life force, creating a sense of movement, situated at the “joints” of the figure. Bakelite had been developed in 1907 by Belgian-born chemist Leo Baekeland in Yonkers, New York, and was one of the earliest plastics to be introduced into the modern home. Today, objects of the material are avidly sought by collectors for their nostalgic quality, but in its time, Bakelite was a major technological innovation. So, too, Paik plays with the idea of looking wistfully backward and hopefully forward to tomorrow.



**SOUNDTRACK TO MY LIFE:**

**FREEDOM BY GEORGE MICHAEL (COPY SHOP), 2017**

Magazine clippings and polyvinyl adhesive on Kozo paper

91 1/2 x 38 1/2 inches

Courtesy of Yancey Richardson Gallery

DETAIL FOLLOWING PAGE

## RACHEL PERRY

Rachel

Rachel Perry (b. 1962, Tokyo, Japan) is an inveterate collector of source material, and she is best known for works that are deeply personal, created from everyday items or detritus she collects herself, often amassed over a number of years, and imbued with personal significance.

The materials Perry employs are modest, ranging from supermarket labels and receipts to twist ties and fruit stickers. In her *Soundtrack to My Life* series, comprised of a series of large-scale collages based on the lyrics of popular songs, Perry suggests a subtle political critique of the role popular music plays in our working lives. Music is frequently used as a device to influence both consumer and worker behaviors, from speeding up factory workers to soothing shoppers with Muzak. In her *Soundtrack* series, Perry compiles the lyrics of popular songs overheard as background music while moving through her day-to-day chores such as visiting the grocery store, the bank, or the doctor's office. The collages are made by cutting individual letters from the artist's collected junk mail and the format appears as a kind of huge ransom note suggesting the hostage-taking of consumers by marketing forces. As Perry notes, the songs are "intended to relax us into a frenzy of spending or simply blunt us from experiencing true awareness: this aural gauze saturates the space with predictable sound, and homogenizes our lives. Sound, in this way, exerts control. Pop music becomes political."



HERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW I THINK IT'S TIME TO DO YOU SO THE RIES  
SOMETHING DEEP INSIDE OF ME HERE'S SOMEONE ELSE I'VE GOT TO BE TAKE  
BACK YOUR PICTURE IN A FRAME TAKE BACK YOUR SINGING IN THE  
RAIL I JUST HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND SOMETIMES THE CLOTHES DO NOT MAKE THE MAN A L /  
WE HAVE TO DO HOW IS TAKE THESE LIES AND MAKE THEM TRUE SOMEHOW  
ALL WE HAVE TO SEE IS THAT I DIDN'T BELONG TO YOU AND YOU DON'T BELONG  
TO ME YEA YEA FREEDOM FREEDOM FREEDOM YOU'VE GOTTA  
GIVE FOR WHAT YOU TAKE FREEDOM FREEDOM FREEDOM YOU'VE GOTTA GIVE IT  
WHAT YOU'VE KEPT HEAVEN KNOWS WE SURE HAD SOME FUN BOY WHAT A KICK JUST A  
BUDDY AND ME WE HAD EVERY BIG SHOT GOOD TIME BAND ON THE RUN BUY WE  
WERE LIVING IN A FANTASY WE WON THE RACE GOT OUT OF THE PLACE I WENT BACK  
HOME GOT A BRAND NEW FACE FOR THE BOYS ON MTV BUT DAY THE WAY  
I PLAY THE GAME HAS GOT TO CHANGE OH YEAH NOW I'M GONNA GET



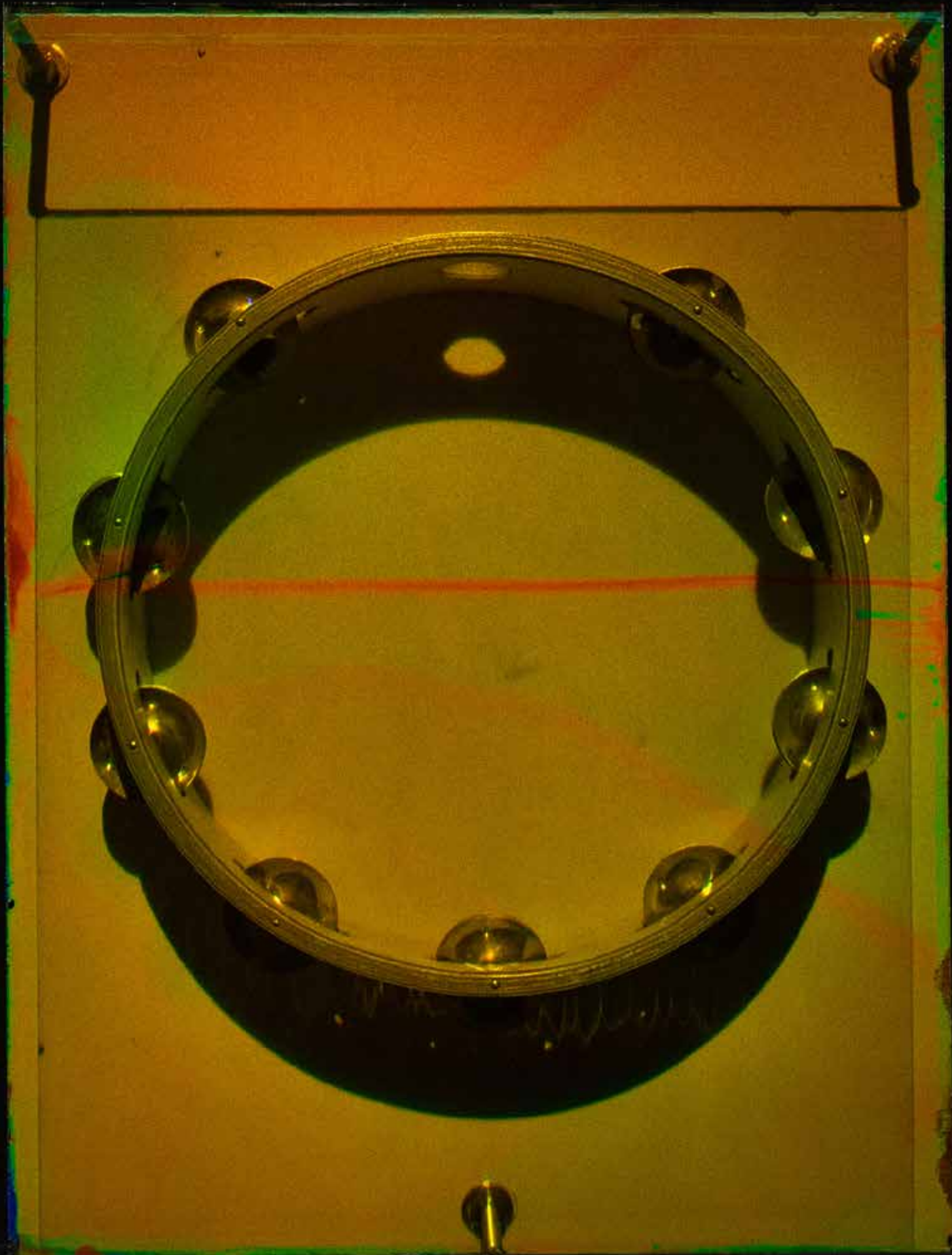


**PIANO CHAIR**, 2011  
Digital Animation  
Duration: 3:52 min  
Courtesy of the artist and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York, Hong Kong, Seoul, and London

## ROBIN RHODE

Robin Rhode (b. 1976, Cape Town, South Africa) is inspired by youth street culture and art history. In Rhode's work, urban walls become his canvases, static images are put into motion, and the artist becomes a performer and street interventionist. In the dramatic video *Piano Chair*, a young man with a blackened face, elegantly dressed like a *maestro*, systematically attempts to destroy an animated drawing of a grand piano set against a stark white wall with cracked plaster. He first pelts the instrument with rocks, then attacks it with a machete and a hatchet, defacing it, and setting it on fire and hoisting it into the air with a noose in a hanging, before kicking away the chair. This ritualistic attempt to "murder" the piano is accompanied by brief notes and chords. The piece references the extreme racial violence of life in South Africa, merging ideas of extreme refinement and brutality into a single jarring, and exceptionally effective, work. *Piano Chair* was inspired by the South African jazz composer Moses Molelekwa, a rising star of South African jazz, who was tragically found hanged in 2001.





**TAMBOURINE**, 2016  
Denisyuk hologram on glass,  
12 x 16 inches  
Courtesy of Johannes Vogt Gallery

## MATTHEW SCHREIBER

The promise of music hangs in the air, but is never realized. In *Tambourine*, Matthew Schreiber (b. 1967, Cleveland, Ohio) creates a shimmering hologram that is as ephemeral as the echoing reverberations of a fading musical note. In his work, Schreiber cleverly plays with the relationship between music and the visual arts, suggesting that they are, ultimately, both ephemeral and eternal. The tambourine, considered a joyous instrument associated with celebration and exultation, is here silent and seemingly encased in a Plexiglas box. But the artist has captured a ghost, and the instrument is merely a trick of the light. Depending upon which angle the viewer observes the piece, the tambourine emerges and fades, its solidity a mirage. Schreiber is part of a group of “light and space artists” working across varying mediums including light sculptures, holography, and photography. He uses experimental materials and techniques to create aesthetic effects that don’t necessarily appear contemporary, but rather, timeless. The artist says, “I allow the audience to build their own experience by the static and silent quality of most of my installation. This way I am not controlling time. This method creates focus and meditation.” Here, the artist creates a modern *memento mori*, suggesting that moments of music, and of pleasure, can never be satisfactorily captured for long but must be embraced in the moment.





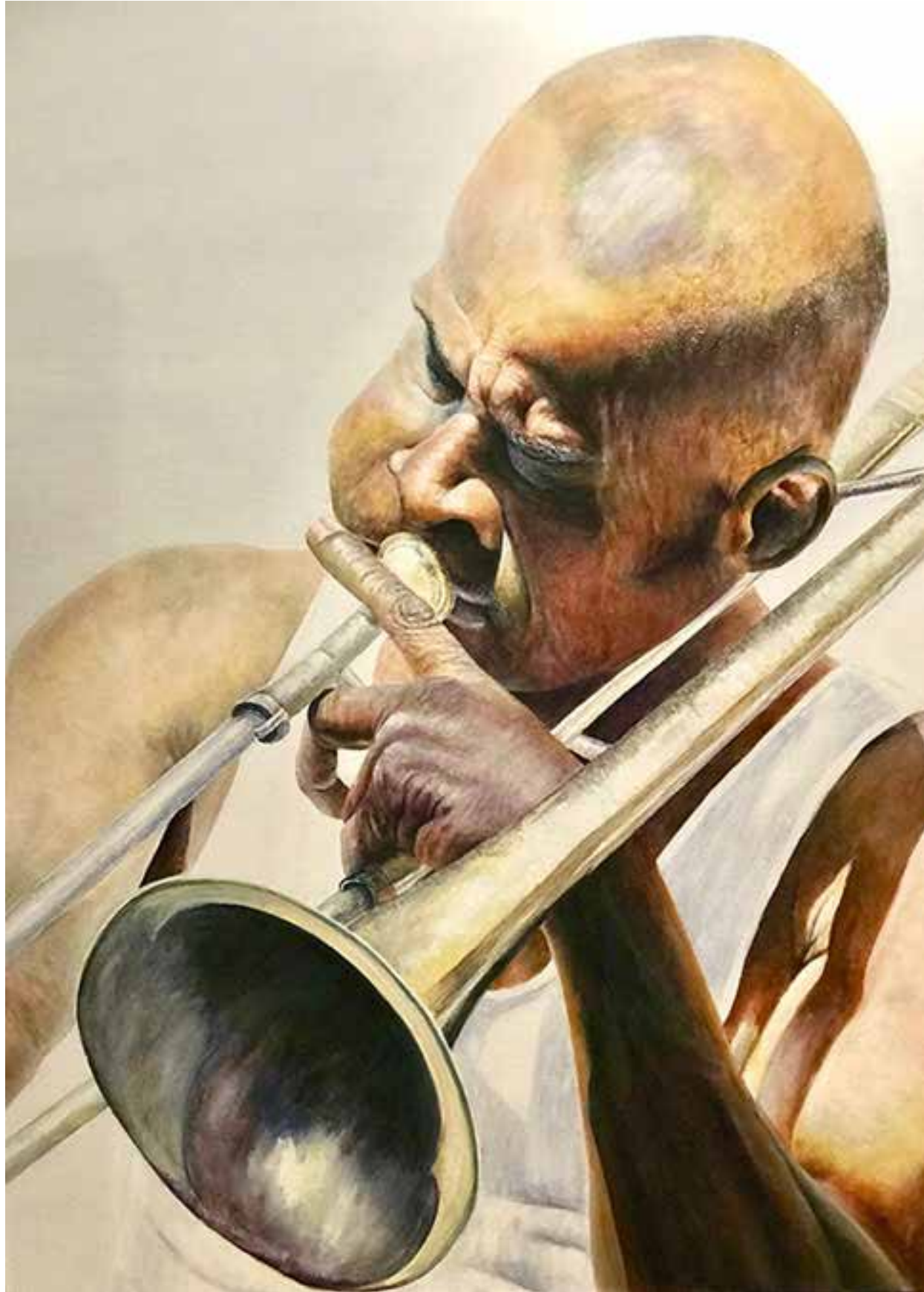
**MAN PLAYING TUBA**, undated  
Oil on canvas  
40 x 30 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

## ALLAN SKRILOFF

With a background in design, Allan Skriloff (b. 1944, Queens, New York) has a magnificent sense of composition. His series of up close portraits of Black New Orleans jazz musicians are remarkable for the way they combine grace with a focused depiction on sustained effort. Many of the artists in *Sound Vision* chose to focus on the beauty of music, the elegance of the instrument's form or the emotional resonance of the sounds produced. But Skriloff focuses on the physical act of music making, the sheer energy required to pull from brass instruments – trumpets, trombones, and tubas – the distinctive sounds of New Orleans jazz. His paintings are exercises in physiognomic distortion. The musicians, nostrils flared and brows pulled low in concentration, suck in the vast quantities of air they will need to expend to make their joyful noises. Skriloff brilliantly catches that moment of silence, just before the great exhale that will produce sound. The artist recognizes the inherent theatricality of this pose, and the instruments, hugged close to the body and joined at the mouth, become almost biological extensions of the human figures. Here, man and instrument conjoin and operate as single, complex organisms dedicated to making music.



**ALLAN SKRILOFF**



OPPOSITE  
**TROMBONE PLAYER**, undated  
Oil on canvas  
50 x 38 inches  
Courtesy of the artist



**WHITE TRUMPET**, undated  
Oil on canvas  
30 x 38 inches  
Courtesy of the artist





**MY SONG TO SING, 2013**

Ink, acrylic, paper and fabric collage on wood panel  
84 x 84 x 2 inches  
Private Collection  
Photo: Jason Mandella

## SHINIQUE SMITH

*SM* In *My Song to Sing*, Shinique Smith (b. 1971, Baltimore, Maryland) creates a joyous pinwheel of work that seems to celebrate the affirmative power of music and its ability to bring forth powerful visual art. Smith says that she begins each of her works with words of affirmation. Often, these affirmations will be bits of popular song lyrics or the poetry of Walt Whitman, which become inscribed with her brushstrokes. Her colorful materials in *My Song to Sing* are the past exhibition postcards and announcements from all of her former solo exhibitions up to the date of creation of this new work, as well as printed fabrics with details of her paintings and sculptures. Thus, the artist's past becomes present, and serves as a reminder that nothing is ever wasted in a creative endeavor. Smith's title is inspired by Whitman's *Song of Myself* and its famous first line, "I celebrate myself, and sing myself." Although a formal abstraction, Smith's work functions as both a self-portrait of the artist and as a reflection of her art career at a turning point. Smith takes her history and transforms it into the perfection of the Fibonacci spiral, the geometric form whose growth follows the golden ratio, getting wider for every quarter turn it makes. The inherent joyfulness of this spiral found in Smith's created work is recognizable in nature. It is the pattern of the sunflower, and the artist regards this geometry as a reference to the transformation of the divine within.





**SMOKY SAXOPHONE**, 2015  
Fumage on panel  
30 x 20 inches  
Courtesy of Adelson Galleries

## STEVEN SPAZUK

Steven Spazuk (b. 1960, Montreal, Canada) depicts the fluttering of small birds around a series of smoky instruments, employing his signature use of fire in a process called *fumage*. His exceptional mastery of the technique of sculpting traces of smoke and soot into distinctive compositions makes his work instantly recognizable. Spazuk's creations carry a feeling of airy lightness. The tiny avian creatures seem about to alight on the smoldering instruments. Fluttering feathers, the wafting smoke, and the suggestion of notes on the breeze, all combine to create a distinctly ephemeral quality. Spazuk's panels are akin to looking skyward to search the clouds for shapes and patterns. They seem to threaten to dissolve and re-shape themselves at any moment. The smoky saxophone, cymbal, and bass guitar all seem to be a visual play on the rhythmic beat of "hot" music. As the artist says, "Fire to me is so inspiring. Fire consumes, warms, and illuminates, but can also bring pain and death; thus, its symbolic meaning varies wildly, depending upon the context of its use. I mostly use it to talk about life's fragility. ... The soot deposit on paper is extremely fragile, it can easily be altered by any contact. Anything that brushes or touches the soot will leave its trace. ... That medium is now part of me."

**STEVEN SPAZUK**

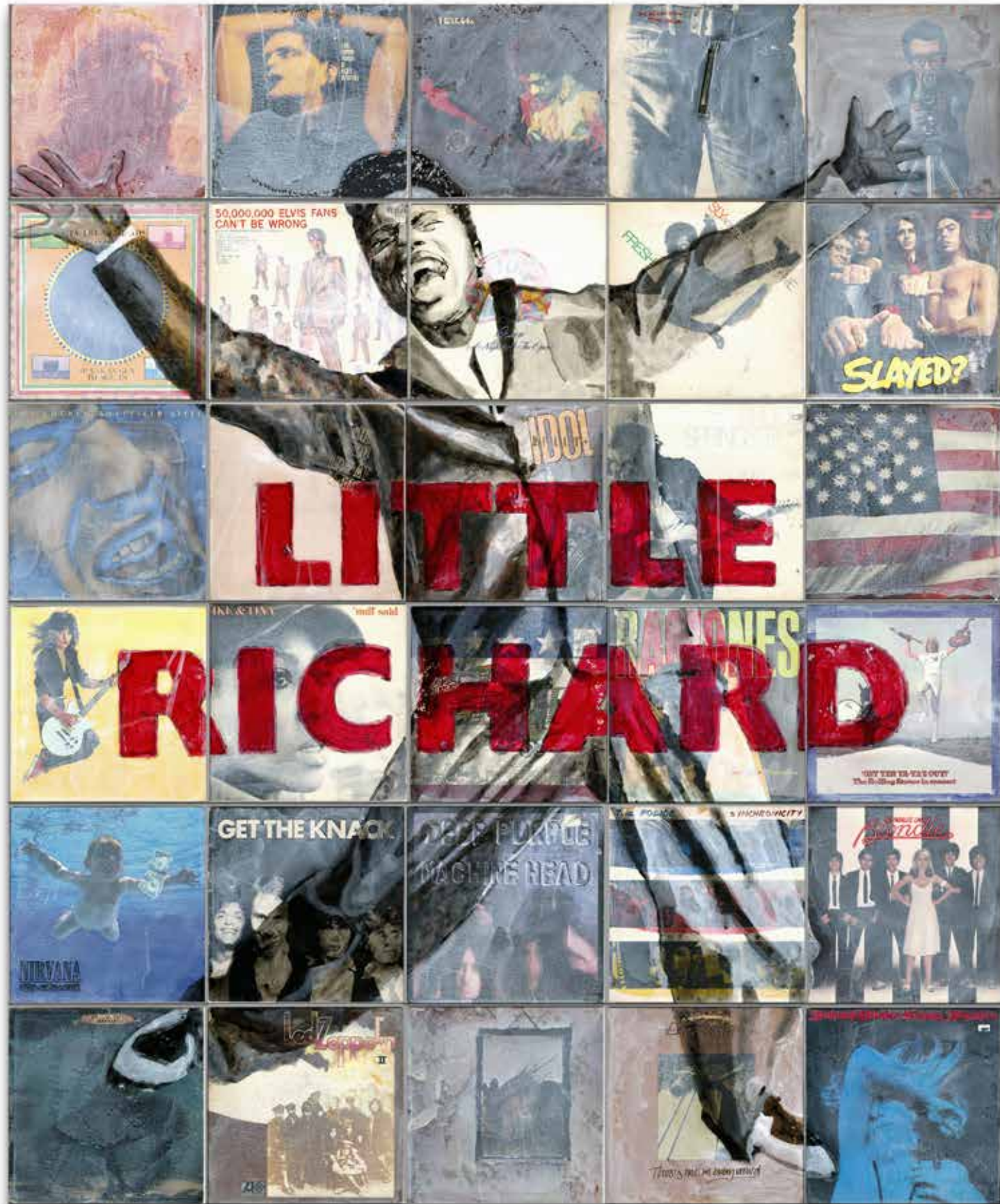


**BASS GUITAR AND CHICKADEES, 2015**  
Fumage on panel  
20 x 16 inches  
Courtesy of Adelson Galleries



**CYMBAL, 2015**  
Fumage on panel  
20 x 16 inches  
Courtesy of Adelson Galleries





**NUFF SAID, 2017**  
 Acrylic paint on LP album covers and magnets  
 75 x 62 inches  
 Courtesy of Wetterling Gallery Stockholm  
 and Private Collection

## DOUG AND MIKE STARN

Doug and Mike Starn (b. identical twins, Abesecon, New Jersey, 1961) have long embraced music and popular culture. Among their visual explorations is a series of pixilated portraits painted on record covers. The record covers are hung with magnets on metal blacking plates, so that the individual record covers can be removed from the composition and the record within each cover can be removed to play the original album stashed inside. The magnets also allow each album to be flipped as the viewer chooses, so that the composition may vary on a whim. In *Nuff said*, the central image is occupied by a dramatic image of Little Richard, in full performance mode, mouth open wide singing, with arms and legs spread across the composition. Little Richard, the stage name of Richard Wayne Penniman, was known for his energetic performances of such popular 1950s rock 'n' roll hits as *Tutti Frutti* and *Long Tall Sally*. About this use of pop culture, the Starns note that, "Modernism is a very intellectual movement, and beauty's been out of fashion in the art world for quite a while - it's seen as corny. We don't feel that way at all. We rework the Old Masters because they inspire us - and this is where we differ from Appropriationism. That movement is rooted in cynicism, but we truly love the images we rework."



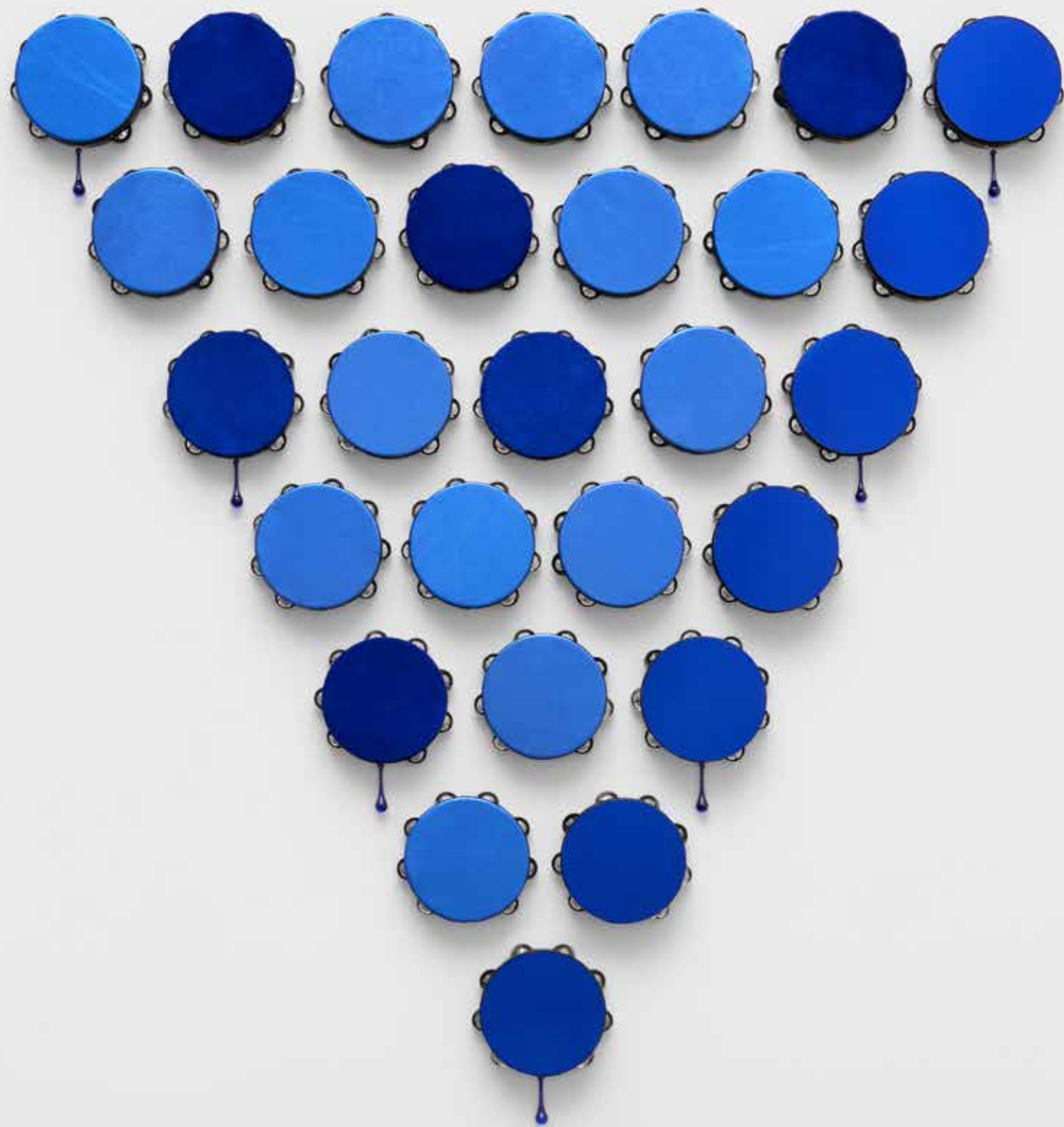


**COYOTE**, 2015  
Coyote skull, wood, metal string  
10 1/4 x 3 1/2 x 3 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

## KAZUMI TANAKA

Kazumi Tanaka (b. 1962, Osaka, Japan) creates a fantastical musical instrument out of the skull of a coyote, and her work is a reminder of the ancient and central role bones, both animal and human, have played in the making of music. Tanaka being raised in Japan deeply informs her practice. The artist grew up in a house that remains evocative to her for its use of materials, alternating wood, stone, bamboo and paper. In her 20s, Tanaka moved to New York City to continue her work as an artist, and her conceptually complex works involve her childhood memories of Japan. The artist says, "My evocative work addresses the connection between the ephemeral nature of memory and the tangible mementos of history. It is a continuous search filtered through time and distance." Tanaka's recognition of the inherent beauty of the coyote skull is reminiscent of the powerful desert skull paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe merged with more whimsical creations, such as Pablo Picasso's *Bull's Head*, 1942, a found-object artwork formed from the seat and handlebars of a bicycle. Tanaka finds the "hidden music" that can be drawn out of any object to create a playable work of art, a result both eerie and charming.





**A CHANGE IS GONNA COME (OH YES IT WILL), 2018**  
Tambourines, metallic leather, suede, reflective Plexiglas,  
grosgrain ribbon, lampwork glass  
71 x 68 inches  
Courtesy of Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco

## LAVA THOMAS

Lava Thomas (b. 1958, Los Angeles) employs bold geometric patterns of repeating tambourines painted in a spectrum of tones to create arresting compositions. She finds inherent beauty in the shape of musical instruments and the repetition of form that encourages the eye to seek the variety of minute surface detail. Music has played a central role in Thomas' life. A significant portion of her visual work derives its meaning from the music she heard growing up in and around the church. Her tambourine "compositions" are often named for significant songs related to the Civil Rights Movement. Here, Thomas names her work for Sam Cooke's famous 1964 protest song. Although *A Change Is Gonna Come (Oh Yes It Will)* is a wall installation, Thomas varies the form of these sculptural works, at times hanging the instruments so the viewer can walk in and around them, becoming surrounded by the possibility of music, made by the breeze. She also changes the color of the tambourines according to the intended mood of the piece, from rosy pink to mournful black. The artist explains, "I approach the tambourine as a ready-made object loaded with meaning: as an egalitarian instrument rooted in cultures around the globe, it speaks to our common humanity. It's often played in the context of activism and heard during protest marches to amplify demands for justice."



**FABLE**, 2010

Found cello and aluminum cans, soot, wire  
96 × 65 × 16 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

**PAUL VILLINSKI**

A kaleidoscope of sooty-black butterflies bursts forth in a sinuous curl in this sculptural work by Paul Villinski (b. 1960, York, Maine). The artist is best known for his large-scale installations of butterflies made from recycled materials, mostly from aluminum cans. Like most traditional fables, Villinski's work contains a touch of magic. Tellingly, the artist refers to the butterflies' physical creation from base metal as "alchemy," the medieval idea of the transformation of matter. The idea of the beer can as a vehicle for intoxication and transformation has a powerful meaning for an artist, like Villinski, recovering from addiction. The distressed surface of the cans, compressed against asphalt or the tires of trucks, can be seen upon close inspection, traces of their modest origins before being "upcycled" into pieces of dazzling beauty. Musical instruments have long been an integral part of Villinski's oeuvre. Many of his butterflies emerge from guitars or phonographs, their butterflies carved from the vinyl of vintage recordings. *Fable* is among Villinski's finest works – the composition is perfectly and delicately balanced, the swirl of the insects offset by the curves of the instrument. The charred body of the cello becomes a wooden chrysalis, and the endpin of the instrument, a jabbing punctuation keeping the whole sculpture afloat. How many angels can stand on the head of a pin?





**MY WORK SHOULD BE...**, 2015

Watercolor on paper  
27 ½ x 39 3/10 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

**JORGE WELLESLEY**

Tick Tock, the metronome keeps time, like the throbbing pulse of artistic inspiration. Jorge Wellesley (b. 1979, Havana, Cuba) plays with words, images, and sound, noting that his series *My Work Should Be ...* comes from his obsessive investigation of the relationship between truth, reality and language. The artist says, "Each piece of the series is an adjective of how I would like my work to be. The most important thing in this idea is to take from the cultural references of the viewer the most creative thinking possible. (In each work) there are two antagonistic parts: text and image. Each one of them is a fragmented information that is complemented by the other to draw a word. For example, 'Sensible' (translated to mean 'Sensitive') and 'Contemporanea' (translated to mean 'Contemporary'). In 'Sensible' the treble clef and note completes the word that shows up as an appreciation of the art, that is indeed the sense of the whole series, while 'Contemporanea' describes my work as I would like it to be, here, using the metronome that metaphorically sets the tempo for seeing contemporary reality." As the artist says, "Language is an abstraction like music - its sound can convey more than its own meaning."

JORGE WELLESLEY



**MY WORK SHOULD BE...**, 2015  
Watercolor on paper  
27 ½ x 39 3/10 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

*de la source "My work should be..."*

*Wellesley*





**WODAKOTA**, 2017  
Mixed media sculpture  
48 x 24 x 15 inches  
Courtesy of the artist

## MICHAEL KELLY WILLIAMS

Michael Kelly Williams (b. 1950, Neuilly-sur-Seine, France) draws on influences from world cultures and ancient times, folk art, and African art to create his sculptures inspired by Surrealism, Afro-futurism and Funk aesthetics. He often employs found objects in his work and has said, "I use materials that are loaded with power or symbolic properties. I have found remnants of musical instruments, which to me still resonate with sound and music. I use materials that are charged with their prior usage and practice." Although born in France, Williams attended school in Detroit, Michigan, before eventually moving to New York City, where he furthered his artistic pursuits. Works like *Wodakota* and *Samta* become crosses between wall sculpture and heretofore-unknown musical instruments. *Wodakota* combines such seemingly disparate items as the body of a violin, a garden rake, and shells to create a cohesive aesthetic experience, while *Samta* employs the ephemeral incorporation of a watermelon, which implies, variously, fruitfulness, life force, and African-American stereotypes. Williams says, "When creating my sculptures, I find discarded objects then reassemble them in meaningful ways. I look for materials that call to me. I may be attracted to the pure form, but usually it is the energy radiating from the object in an animistic way."

**MICHAEL KELLY WILLIAMS**



**SAMTA**, 2017  
Mixed media sculpture,  
50 x 19 x 12 inches  
Courtesy of the artist







**WHEN CAN WE START PLAYING**, 2012  
Japanese paper construction  
15 x 15 inches  
Private Collection, Courtesy of Forum Gallery,  
New York, NY.  
© Cybèle Young

## CYBÈLE YOUNG

Cybèle Young (b. 1972, Toronto, Canada) asks a humorous question in *When Can We Start Playing*. The piece is composed of two shelves. On one, a tiny grand piano stands in danger of lurching precariously over the edge. On the other is piled the refuse of cut paper, the “raw material” used to build the instrument. Although charming to look at, the artist suggests that any attempt to “play” the piano will lead to disaster. Gratification must therefore be postponed. Young is known for her miniature works cut from fine Japanese papers. Usually, she will take familiar motifs and create certain visual paradoxes. The artist says, “I juxtapose sculptures to create a sense of dialogue or play between them. I approach my work in series and components, ultimately building an ongoing inventory of personal experience and observation. I compile these in various arrangements to create communities that interact and form new relationships - much like the small, seemingly insignificant moments in our everyday lives that come together to create unexpected outcomes.” Young masterfully creates miniature dramas that appear to play out before our eyes. The artist leaves the viewer to imagine a myriad of possible endings to the narrative she sets up. These manifest as miniature theatres - one-act plays, where shifts of scale and perception occur. Despite the absence of the human form, there is an implied presence, where viewers can project themselves into other worlds. .



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