

Joel Ong

Artist Statement

Goethe was the first to describe architecture as frozen music. Through an invisible connection, sound and space inform each other, implicating physical architecture as a sonic witness.

Echoes reverberating from and through the walls intertwine with memory and construct a musical profile of every space we've ever known in our minds.

One of my earliest sonic memories was the sound of the room that I studied in as a kid - it was small, boxed, had only one window, and it echoed with a resonant ring when I stole a few moments every hour to kick a ball against the wall.

What is your earliest sonic memory?

Systems/Polyphony

My works often begin in improvised ensembles where members come in the form of live instrumentalists, robotic assemblages, scientific apparatus, and digital data. They begin as experimental objects released from their original intent and made to intertwine as polyphonic resonances, emphasizing the processes of communication and the unfolding informative relationships between them.

I am inspired by organic flux and transitional states such as those found in the wind and tides, and aim to express a nostalgia for what we remember as natural rhythms. Understanding more about our relationships with our environments is an interdisciplinary process, and at the core of my work is a commitment to explorations across different disciplines.

At the same time, every environment has a unique rhythm, a pattern and a lineage. My work proposes that the quintessential human nature is founded in constant adaptation and perennial motion, creating a rhythm through which we constantly improvise with our surroundings. I build instruments that rely on quotidian, pedestrian processes to subtly make shifts in the sonic environments. My digital, narrative works propose ways we might reinterpret universal concerns in conservation, migration, home and identity.

Most recently, I explore the idea of the serial migrant as a common identity, collecting memories from visitors and developing strategies for locating these narratives within the flux of social media and online data streams. I also utilize experimental 3D printing as a way to ornament these processes.

An artist with an interest in composite digital, biological environments, my research studio is programmatic, mobile, invisible, synthetic and noisy. My ideal gallery is often like its visitors, nomadic and transitional.

Joel Ong

Bio

Joel Ong is Assistant Professor in Information Design and Creative Data Visualization at the Department of Computational Arts at York University. His research and pedagogy explore critical perspectives of digital culture at the intersection of art and science through practice led studio work in physical computing, environmental sensing and data aesthetics. His work also emphasizes community and collaboration through accessible workshops, community art programs and citizen science.

Ong attained his PhD in Digital Art and Experimental Media from the University of Washington, and is an alumnus of SymbioticA, the Center of Excellence in Biological Arts at the University of Western Australia, and the National University of Singapore where he majored in Life Sciences and Sonic Arts. He is a visiting artist and instructor at the UCLA Art Science Center. Ong has an international record of artistic activity and conference presentations. View a non-exhaustive portfolio of his work at www.arkfrequencies.com.

Chad Gunderson

Artist Statement

The sculptures in this show are a continuation of my exploration into the liminal space between naturally occurring formations and man-made items.

Taking an alchemical approach to ceramic materials, I seek to merge geologic elements with plastic veneers and saturated colors. The result is an amalgamation of consumer items, rocks, 8-bit video game sprites, minerals, and more. Each piece is a playful, yet suspicious investigation of my relationship with planet Earth in our constantly changing environment.

Bio

Chad Gunderson grew up in Minnesota and aspires to be a world traveler, but misses canoeing the waters of his home state. He received his MFA from Arizona State University, Tempe (2011) and completed his BFA at Minnesota State University, Mankato (2007). Despite his Masters' degree, he owns a 96 ct. set of Crayola Crayons and still plays with Legos. Chad also awaits the day that commercial space flight is affordable.

He likes rocks.

Chad Gunderson

Untitled

Archival print

2018

Chad Gunderson

Untitled

Cast ceramic glaze and acrylic with wood base
2018

Chad Gunderson

Untitled

Cast ceramic glaze and acrylic with wood base
2018

Chad Gunderson

Untitled

Cast ceramic glaze and acrylic with wood base
2018

Chad Gunderson

Untitled

Cast ceramic glaze and acrylic with wood base
2018

Chad Gunderson

Untitled

Cast ceramic glaze and acrylic with wood base
2018

Joel Ong

Genetic Poetry v1

2018

A computational algorithm creates random phrases only using letters that represent the 21 amino acids that are present in our bodies for translation. The ease of synthetic coding of genetic material today presents fertile ground at the intersection of combinatorial literature and molecular genetics.

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Mound (for Hans Haacke)

Soil, acrylic box, *arabidopsis thaliana*, *p.syringae*, genetic poetry
2018

Mounds of Arabidopsis carrying strains of genetically modified *p.syringae* grow over the duration of the show. The bacteria carry copies of the phrase "terra et venti" (between the ground and the wind/breath) and is housed in terrariums reminiscent of the early condensation cubes of Hans Haacke. This piece emphasizes a systematic approach to environmental arts especially with respect to invisible, elemental processes.

Mick Lorusso and Joel Ong

Drachen of Aletsch: Songs to Aeolian Microbes

Part of a series of experimental performances of the collaborative project Umwelt Microbiana by Mick Lorusso and Joel Ong. Here Lorusso spoke to the ancient microbes trapped in the Aletsch glacier in the Swiss Alps, and sang to microbes floating in the air, relating to the local concept of the glacier as a Drachen (dragon). This performance of inter-species communication was an acknowledgement of these microbial ancestors as bearers of wisdom and information across changing climates, and questioned if ice-nucleating bacteria in the air could help more snow fall on the glacier and prevent further melting.

Mick Lorusso and Joel Ong

Drachen of Aletsch: Songs to Aeolian Microbes

Samples collected from Lorusso's expedition to the Swiss glaciers were processed at the Coalesce Center for Biological Art at SUNY Buffalo as part of a Bioart residency . In the samples from the Aletsch glacial pools forming on the surface of Aletsch Glacier, 2 aerial microbes were found of the genus *Pseudomonas*, and *Polaramonas*, These species are known to travel across the planet on high altitude global air currents, and as a result they exhibit many variations in genetic code. What kinds of environmental memories could the microbes have stored latent in their DNA? What stories might these microbial witnesses hold through their epic journeys across the earth's climates?