

e-music

>news



The Last Gun, sounds in armed disconcert

A shotgun, with holes in its barrel transforming it into a double flute, played through a juxtaposed mechanics, inflating compressed air, and guided by Arduino-based programmed board to “play” the US army export market in the last decade through alternating melody and upbeat tunes depending on rise and drops in sales. This is “The Last Gun” by Constantine Zlatev (with the collaboration of Kostadin Ilov and Velina Ruseva). In the installation, the artist decided to place both the gun and the graph on a screen hanging from the ceiling with transparent wires and so “suspended” in the air, as if the judgement towards the symbolic presence of a gun would be equally suspended. The (changing) instrumental music reinforces this ethereality, creating an aura of sacrality which is contrasted by the rude rhythmic sounds of the mechanism. The contrast among the static and moving elements creates an uncanny orchestration, allowing the work to float and tidily disconcert.



Micro-ritmos, AI orchestrating bacteria

If early cybernetics was tied to the development of self-regulating machines, later the discipline expanded to simulating the complex interlinking of different processes within whole ecosystems. The nomadic artist collective Inter-specifics situates itself within this wake. Their work “Micro-ritmos” is a sensorial space formed by the interactions between biological processes, digital computation and the human senses. The piece is driven by electrical signals originating in bacterial cells obtained from soil collected on location, which are amplified and used to trigger an array of flashing lights. Here the lights are captured by cameras connected to computers which use machine learning algorithms for pattern recognition. A form of AI maps the light sequences to sound generators and to an 8 channel speaker system. Spectators can attempt to decode the perceived patterns, or else sit back and be mesmerised by the resulting effect. The technology utilised is all open source and well documented on artists’ websites.
> Matteo Marangoni



Ad lib., discreet machine requiem

Medicine and music have a history, going back to shamanic traditions that live on within contemporary practices aiming to heal through sound. Michele Spanghero taps into this notion obliquely with “Ad lib.”, a disquieting sound sculpture in which medical equipment is used to sound a set of organ pipes. The title of the work is musical terminology for “at discretion” which gives freedom to the player over parameters such as how many times to repeat a number of bars in a musical score. The sound produced by the sculpture is a continuous drone interspaced by the regular rhythmic pattern of the breathing machine, a frozen fragment that only allows for variation by flipping the switch off. Under its aesthetic and minimalist cover the work raises questions over our efforts to artificially extend life by replacing bodily organs with machines. The reference made to the musical requiem, seems to suggest that keeping patients in a frozen state of suspense has the purpose of facilitating the mourning of those who will continue living.
> Matteo Marangoni



machine brut(e), temporal monolithism

The correlation between sound and architecture has been frequently articulated on the notion of space as the primary medium through which sound and structures can be expressed. Rarely, instead, have specific architectural principles been applied to sound, applying this kind of transdisciplinarity to composition. Following this perspective, “Machine brut(e)” is a series of ten sound sculptures by Mo H. Zareei (aka mHz), an Iranian musician, artist and researcher, attempting to reflect Brutalist architecture. In his installation, he shows ten compositions played by different combinations of sculptures, but all composed with patterns (normally one or two bars long) repeated in endless loops, metaphorically mimicking the grid-based geometry of Brutalist architecture. In Machine brut(e) Zareei wants to realise what he defines as a “temporal monolithism” so each sculpture is carefully positioned in each composition, and a block of raw concrete (béton brut) is also symbolically featured.