

SOUND
IMAGE

Not Necessarily In The Right Order

Greenwich University Stephen Lawrence Gallery, London, UK

Looking through the big windows facing onto Stockwell Street from the outside, it looks like something under construction – or in the process of being dismantled. A tangle of oil cans and rusted grill pans hangs from a tatty bit of old rope above a scattering of screws and bottle caps sprayed across the floor; things strewn about here and there; a ladder, seemingly abandoned. But on the inside, the whole room is alive. Deep bass throbs pound out from a pair of big Genelec subs in opposing corners; an array of seven suspended speaker cones, seemingly ripped from car stereos and old hi-fis, all crackling and crunching like very angry Rice Krispies; a megaphone slung from the rafters going po-po-po-po-po-pock. Everything is still, but it bears the trace of human activity – like a crime scene, or the site of some dreadful accident.

Just over a week ago, the sounds I'm hearing now were being made live by Dirty Electronics (aka John Richards) and Dushume (Amit D Patel) before a modest crowd perched nervously around the edges of the room as if they were worried they might get hit by something and inadvertently become part of the show (one or two came close). The pair stalked the room like two rather shy prize fighters, the latter sending white noise screaming from his phone to points all over the room and occasionally crashing into the grill pan mobile, sending them clanging; the former tweaking a miniature army of little circuits or delicately placing tiny motors buzzing and bashing around inside a tin can.

Jet black ink ran from two hospital drips down a roll of paper attached to another woofer, setting it shaking as it fell, producing something like a Robert Motherwell – if Motherwell had just drunk a small vat of taurine based energy drinks. The sounds from the performance were recorded. Now, in the absence of the performers, those sounds continue to haunt the room they were made in like so many unquiet spirits.

Not Necessarily In The Right Order is an exhibition crammed with ghosts. Carol Wyss and Dominic Murcott's *Skizzen* feeds images

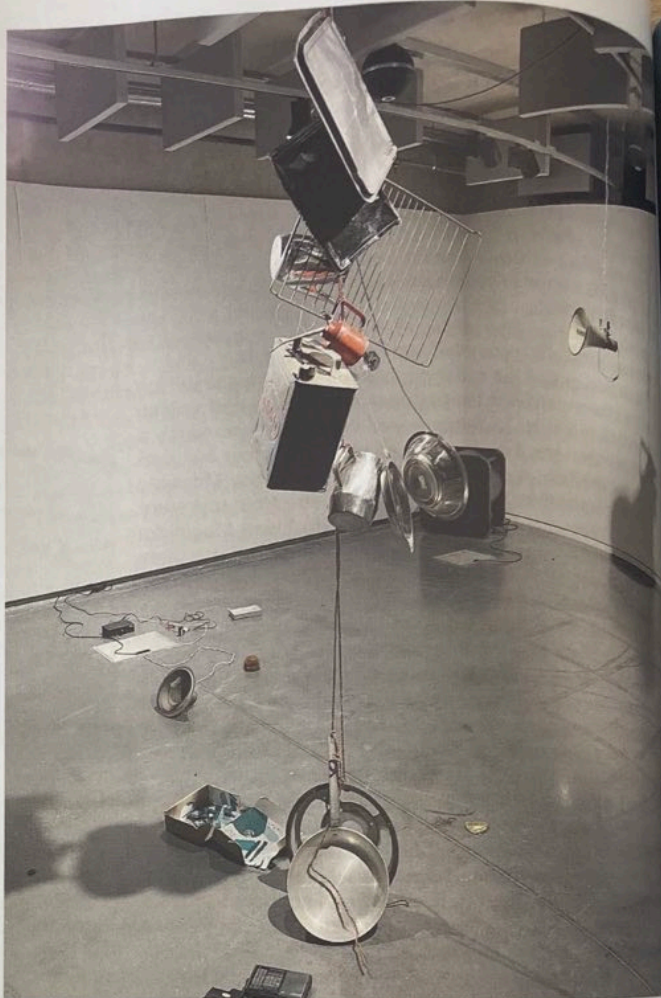
of old bones through a player piano roll. As the spool turns, Wyss's images make a macabre animated accompaniment to Murcott's Nancarrow-esque pianola trills. The pair later collaborated on another work, *Head Piece* (also included here), which places the viewer inside someone else's skull. You find yourself surrounded by five large prints of the cranial interior, shot in rich black and white with long, dramatic shadows, as if to resemble cave landscapes. To accompany this, Murcott has produced a score made entirely by rubbing, scratching and tapping on real human bones, sounds which worry away as you look around like thoughts trying desperately to escape.

But the show as a whole is far from austere. The title, after all, comes from an old Morecambe & Wise TV comedy sketch. "You're playing all the wrong notes!" guest star André Previn screamed at Eric Morecambe after a skylarking performance of Grieg's piano concerto. "I'm playing all the right notes," Morecambe insisted, "but not necessarily in the right order." To match this comical spirit, curator David Waterworth has arranged the works so they all interrupt and intrude on each other, creating an overall cacophony of electronics and piano sounds and bone

scraping noises, all battling for airspace in a wild aleatoric symphony.

Few works exemplify this spirit better than Graeme Miller's simultaneously haunting and hair-brained *Cat Print*. 30 years ago, Miller's beloved pet Mr Squidgett took a walk across the keyboard of a Yamaha Clavinova and – intentionally or not – composed his first sonata. Fortunately, the floppy disk inside the piano recorded the cat's performance for posterity, much as piano rolls once preserved the playing of Rachmaninov or Busoni. Now, long after the cat's death, the piano still plays its worn and smudged keys following Mr Squidgett's every nuance, moving seemingly of their own accord, as if possessed by some capricious avant gardist spook. Utilising the full range of the keyboard, interspersing atonal flurries of notes with long, gaping silences, it could almost be the work of some feline Ferneyhough. The notes are all there – just not quite in the right order.

Robert Barry



Installation View, Not Necessarily In The Right Order 2013

TERR

Actress
Abo Ssan
Batu
Beatrice D
Dawuma
Dennis Bo
Donato D
Exotic Sin
Hudson M
Josey Reb
Lolma & I
Low Jack
The Mast
Paquita G
Patrick B
Still Hous
Tikiman
Upsammy
more to be anno