



SOFT REVOLVERS

Myriam Bleau
www.myriambleau.com

video:
<https://vimeo.com/96750177>

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Project description

Soft Revolvers is a music performance for 4 spinning tops built with clear acrylic by the artist. Each spinning top, 10' in diameter, is associated with an 'instrument' or part in an electronic music composition. The tops are equipped with gyroscopes and accelerometers that communicate wirelessly with a computer where the motion data collected (speed, unsteadiness at the end of a spin, acceleration spikes in case of collisions) informs musical algorithms designed in Pure Data. LEDs placed inside the tops illuminate the body of the objects in a precise counterpoint to the music, the positioning of the lights creating visually stunning halos around the tops. A camera placed above the performance table provides video feed that will be projected back on the screen behind the artist, making the projections an integral part of the performance.

With their large circular spinning bodies and their role as music playing devices, the spinning top interfaces strongly evoke turntables and their related subcultures. Some of the mappings between gestures and sound have been borrowed directly from the bimodal behaviour of turntables: at slow speed, the sounds produced can remind of scratch solos, with the characteristic unstable pitch variations. At full speed, the spinning tops act like normal turntables playing vinyls, in this case, playing pre-composed material.

The performance *Soft Revolvers* brings forward the concept of performance specificity: the interfaces become an integral part of the art piece and are not meant to be played by other performers or used in other contexts. This concept of performance specificity marginalizes this work from the dominant trends in new musical interface design, where versatility and virtuosity – the capability for an interface to encourage and allow for the development of a skilled interaction through long term practice – are generally privileged. It is interesting to note that these two characteristics have been imported directly from the traditional instrument paradigm.

Embracing performance specificity leads to an inevitable revision of methodology in the creation of new musical interfaces. When versatility cease to be an imperative, it becomes possible to create interfaces that convey strong symbolic connotations, intimately related to the musical discourse. *Soft Revolvers* exemplifies this idea, by integrating non-instrumental, or everyday objects as performance tools. I believe that such objects, in this case spinning tops, engage audience members in a particularly intricate manner, awakening subconscious physical memories of their lived experience with those objects, in terms of behavioural expectations, function and symbolic connotations. The public can anticipate the physical rules that will guide the performance and thus actively participate in the tension and release dynamics at play.

CV Myriam Bleau

education

2015: Masters in Electroacoustic Composition, Université de Montréal.

2013: Undergraduate classes, Mixed Composition, Université de Montréal.

2012: BFA Jazz Studies, Concordia University

selected performances and installations

2015

Soft Revolvers. ISEA. Vancouver, CA. August 2015.

Antichambre. Audiovisual Installation. Collaboration with Myriam Boucher. ISEA. Vancouver, CA. August 2015.

Soft Revolvers. Cluster Festival. Winnipeg, CA. March 27-April 3 2015.

Collaboration piece with Architek Percussion. Cluster Festival. Winnipeg, CA. March 27-April 3 2015.

Antichambre. Audiovisual Installation. Collaboration with Myriam Boucher. Nuit Blanche. Montréal, CA. February 28 2015.

Soft Revolvers. Mois Multi. Quebec City, CA. February 7 2015.

Toys of the Future. transmediale. Berlin, DE. Jan 28 - Feb 1 2015.

2014

Soft Revolvers. Audiovisual performance. NEXT Festival. Bratislava, SK. November 27, 2014.

Soft Revolvers. Audiovisual performance. ICLI. Lisbon, PT. November 23, 2014.

Soft Revolvers. Audiovisual performance. Music Tech Fest, Centre Pompidou. Paris, FR. November 22, 2014.

Soft Revolvers. Audiovisual performance. International Sound Art Competition, Radical dB Festival. Zaragoza, ES. November 20, 2014.

Antichambre. Audiovisual Installation. Collaboration with Myriam Boucher. Carrefour des Arts et des Sciences. Montreal, CA. 9 novembre 2014.

Soft Revolvers. Audiovisual performance. Carrefour des Arts et des Sciences. Montreal, CA. 9 novembre 2014.

Soft Revolvers. Audiovisual performance. AKOUSMA Festival. Montreal, CA. November 5-8, 2014.

Soft Revolvers. Audiovisual performance. EARZOOM Sonic Arts Festival. Ljubljana, Slovenia. October 17-19, 2014.

Soft Revolvers. Audiovisual performance. Network Music Festival. Birmingham, UK. September 24-26, 2014.

Soft Revolvers. Audiovisual performance. Sounds Like Festival. Saskatoon, SK. July 26, 2014.

Soft Revolvers. Audiovisual performance. CIRMMT Symposium, Montreal, CA. June 5, 2014.

Origami. Sponge duet with Martin Marier. New Interfaces for Musical Expression. London, UK. July 2, 2014.

Project toBeContinued. Stazione di Topolo. (a 24h online music marathon). March 24, 2014.

Photomaton. Installation/performance. 20th anniversary of Cegep Saint-Laurent's electroacoustic program. Montreal, QC. January 29-February 2, 2014.

Origami. Sponge duet with Martin Marier. eBuzz, Université de Montréal, QC. January 30, 2014.

2013

Photomaton. Installation/performance. Salon : Data. Eastern Bloc, Montreal, QC. October 23, 2013.

Photomaton. Electroacoustics. Cyprus Electronic Music Festival, Cyprus. June 2013.

Photometry. Installation/performance. eBuzz, Université de Montréal, QC. January 23, 2013.

2012

The Fountain. Electroacoustics. CEC's Athena Mix. Hartford, CT.

The Fountain. Electroacoustics. CEC's Athena Mix. Preston, UK.

The Fountain. Electroacoustics. CEC's Canada Mix. St. John's, NL.

The Fountain. Canada Mix premiere's. Vancouver, BC. October 2012.

artist residencies

Music for Telegraphs. subnetAIR. Salzburg, Austria. October-November 2015 (6 weeks).

conferences and artist talks

Soft Revolvers and performance-specific interfaces. Artist talk. EARZOOM Festival. Ljubljana, Slovenia. 17-19 octobre 2014.

Recontextualiser l'expérience musicale: Introduction aux arts médiatiques. Conferences. Projet SEUR. Montreal, QC. July-August 2014.

Recent performances and installations. Artist talk. IMDA (International Marketplace for Digital Arts). Elektra Festival. Montreal, QC. May 30, 2014.

Recent performances and installations. Artist talk. Labsessions #5. SAT (Société des Arts Technologiques). Montreal, QC. December 17, 2013.

bursaries and distinctions

2014

Finalist for *Jeunes mécènes pour les arts* award for the project *Music for Telegraphs*. The final selection will be announced on November 11th, 2014.

Travel grant. Digital Arts. Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

Bursary for excellency. « Fonds Lise Bachand et Lionel St-Jean ». Université de Montréal.

Bourse du Comité des études supérieures de la Faculté de musique. Université de Montréal.

2013

Electroacoustic studies bursary. Université de Montréal

2012

CEC's 60x60 finalist: The Fountain selected for Athena Mix and Canada Mix.

2011

In-Course Bursary for Excellency, Concordia University.

2010

Montreal International Jazz Festival award. Winner of the Oscar Peterson competition.

Special Project Grant. FASA, Concordia University.

selected music projects

NOYS. solo electronic/performance project. 2014.

Bump: experimental music group with live electronics, jazz and rock influences. 2012-2013.

Mykalle Bielinski: electronic arrangements for the singer-songwriter/spoken word artist. 2011-2013.

The Commission, hip hop group: leader and guitarist. 2010-2014.