



**Public Arts Commission  
North Adams, Massachusetts**

**Meeting Minutes**

**April 30, 2018**

The North Adams Public Arts Commission held a public meeting on April 30, 2018 at the Eclipse Mill Gallery at the Eclipse Mill Artist Lofts, 243 Union Street #102, North Adams.

Members Present:     Julia Dixon, Chairperson  
                              Eric Kerns, Vice Chairperson  
                              William Blackmer  
                              Cynthia Quiñones  
                              Gail Kolis Sellers

Absent:                 none

Also Present:         Michelle Daly

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Dixon called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Kerns moved to accept the Public Arts Commission minutes from its March 14, 2018 public meeting. Quiñones seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

**ELECTION OF SECRETARY**

Dixon moved to nominate Blackmer as Secretary. Quiñones seconded. Blackmer accepted. All voted in favor. None opposed.

#### PROPOSAL: MCLA BCRC'S SHEARER SOUNDS CABINET

Michelle Daly, Director of MCLA's Berkshire Cultural Resource Center, provided information and answered questions about the submitted proposal to site a sound installation by artist Brian Trelegan under the Mohawk Theater marquee on Main Street as part of DownStreet Art 2018. *That Certain Age* is a sound installation using a Shearer Horn-inspired cabinet that plays still images converted to sound from the movie *That Certain Age*, the movie that played at the Mohawk Theater on opening night in 1938. The Shearer speakers of the time used Sprague components in their construction.

Quiñones asked about the sound level and commissioners agreed that the piece should operate during the day. Kerns asked about signage for the artwork and suggested adding the North Adams Public Arts Commission logo to descriptive/title signage, identifying the process by which public artwork are approved for display. Kerns further asked if the artwork will be included on the MoCA walking art map. Daly advised it will be. Also discussed was whether the artwork will be insured regarding theft/damage, which it will be under MCLA's general liability policy. Kerns suggested that cinder blocks be added to the box to further prevent theft. *That Certain Age* will be displayed from the end of June through the last week of September or first week of October. Commissioners Dixon and Quiñones will draw up a draft contract between the city and MCLA.

Dixon moved to accept the proposal with suggestions. Sellers seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

#### OLD BUSINESS: MASS MoCA CONTRACT UPDATE

Dixon reported that she communicated with Larry Smallwood of MASS MoCA re: the contract involving the Harmonic Bridge sound installation at the Route 2 overpass. No contract was provided, but MASS MoCA's description of the artwork and an Artnet article about the piece were submitted on the record to the PAC as "documentation" of Harmonic Bridge.

#### CULTURAL DISTRICT UPDATE

Dixon reported that the cultural district core group has not met since the last Public Arts Commission meeting. No update at this time.

#### PUBLIC ATTENDEES CONCERNS

None present.

#### MEMBER CONCERNS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Dixon advised future items to include new Public Arts Commission members and draft contract language.

#### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Public Arts Commission will be set via online poll as needed.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to discuss, Dixon moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Blackmer seconded. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

William Blackmer, Secretary



## **CITY OF NORTH ADAMS PUBLIC ART APPLICATION**

The North Adams Public Arts Commission thanks you for your interest in submitting a proposal. The steps of the proposal process are as follows:

1. Email a letter of inquiry, along with any specific questions you may have, to [publicarts@northadams-ma.gov](mailto:publicarts@northadams-ma.gov).
2. Submit your COMPLETE application to the North Adams Public Arts Commission (PAC). You may email a PDF application, drop off a hard copy application, or submit an online form. If submitting digitally, please email all attachments to [publicarts@northadams-ma.gov](mailto:publicarts@northadams-ma.gov).
3. If all materials are included, the PAC will ask you to present your proposal during a PAC meeting. Meetings are scheduled as needed. If the application is not complete, the applicant will be notified. Only COMPLETE applications will be placed on a PAC agenda.
4. During the meeting, the application will be reviewed by the PAC for compliance. Applicant attendance is required; the PAC will work with the applicant as much as possible to determine a meeting date and time.
5. The PAC will approve or deny the proposal, as well as offer suggestions and recommendations to the applicant.
6. If approved, the applicant will enter into an agreement with the City of North Adams.

All applications submitted for consideration by the PAC must include all information and materials requested. The PAC will not review the application until it is complete.

Please note: The City of North Adams is not funding public art proposals and/or projects at this time.

To submit a hard copy application, please download and complete the PDF application, found at <https://www.northadamspublicart.org/contact>

All applications submitted for consideration to the North Adams Public Arts Commission (NAPAC) must include all information and materials requested in Part I (Written Proposal) and Part II (Support Materials). The NAPAC will not review the application until it is complete.

*All files sent should be named in the following convention: NAPAC/ First Name/Last Name of Applicant/ year.file such as: NAPACMSmith2016.doc*

## **PART I: WRITTEN PROPOSAL**

### **A. Application Submittal Date**

4/26/18

### **B. Contact Information**

Name: Michelle Daly

Address: 51 Main St.

City: North Adams

State: MA

Zip: 01247

Cell Phone: 413-662-5253 (work)

Home Phone:

E-mail: michelle.daly@mcla.edu

Your Role In The Proposal (*check all that apply*)

☐

Artist

☒

Curator

☒

Commissioning organization

☐

Other

### **C. Title of Proposed Work**

That Certain Age

### **D. Desired Location of Proposed Work**

Please select one below and provide a project location map. If flexible on the location please select "Any available location."

☐

Street

☐

Trail

☒

City-owned building

☐

Ornamental or functional structure

☐

Park

☐

Any available location

If location is specific, please name the location and/or provide the location's address.

In front of the Mohawk Theater

**E. Physical Project Description & Purpose Statement (300 words maximum)**

As an attachment, describe the proposed work in the most literal terms possible, including concept, medium, placement, size/dimensions, approximate weight, and any specific requirements such as access to electricity, water, etc. Briefly explain how the proposed artwork meets the NAPAC's core principals.

**Core Principles**

- Enhance the community's visual environment
- Promote awareness of the city's social, cultural, and historical composition
- Encourage a spirit of collaboration
- Expand public knowledge of the visual arts

**F. Project Narrative (4 pages maximum)**

As an attachment, please include the following:

1. Detailed project description including a broader explanation of the proposed work. This should include a detailed description of the project concept, project materials, construction, installation and life expectancy of the work. Project description should include any special requirements such as access to electricity, water, etc.
2. Timeline for design, fabrication and installation of the work.
3. Explanation of how the artwork will contribute to both residents' and visitors' experience of North Adams.
4. Explanation of the required maintenance for the function and preservation of the work.

**G. Illustration(s) of Proposed Work**

Please include at least one sketch, drawing, digital illustration, or maquette of the proposed work. Proposal illustration(s) should accurately and clearly describe the proposed work.

**PART II: SUPPORT MATERIALS**

**A. Artist Portfolio**

Please submit a minimum of 6 images that are a representative sample of previous artwork. Include with the written proposal of a list of titles, dates, media and descriptions for support image(s).

**B. Artist Statement**

Brief statement created by the artist about his or her own work.

**C. Curriculum Vitae (CV)\* or Artist Resume**

This may include artist website or links to web resources.

\*Overview of experience and other qualifications.

I certify under penalty of perjury that to the best of my knowledge and belief the foregoing statements and answers submitted with this application are in all respects, true and correct. I understand that submittal of incorrect or false information is grounds for invalidation of application completeness, determination or approval. I understand that the City of North Adams Public Art Commission, other city Boards and Commissions and the North Adams City Council might not approve what I am applying for, or might set conditions on approval.

Applicant Signature: Michelle Daly

Date: 4/26/18

## **APPLICATION ATTACHMENT CHECKLIST**

All applications submitted for consideration to the North Adams Public Arts Commission must include all information and materials requested in Part I (Written Proposal) and Part II (Support Materials) of this application.

### **Part I – Written Proposal**

Location Map

Physical Project Description (300 words maximum)

Project Narrative (4 pages maximum)

Illustration(s) of Proposed Work – at least one sketch, drawing, digital illustration, or maquette of the proposed work

### **Part II – Support Materials**

Artist Portfolio

Artist Statement

Curriculum Vitae (CV) or Artist Resume



## Physical Project Description & Purpose Statement (Attachment E)

### Concept:

-This is a sound installation using a speaker cabinet inspired by the Shearer Horn (a speaker design used in cinemas starting in the late 1930s and a product of Sprague customer, Western Electric). The sound piece uses film stills from *That Certain Age*, the opening night feature at the Mohawk in 1938. These still images are turned into sounds using software and arranged to create the piece.

### Dimensions:

-80"x48"x30" (w x h x d)

### Weight:

-approx. 50 lbs.

### Medium:

-wooden speaker cabinet with weatherproof stain  
-single-channel sound piece played over two 8" speakers

### Requirements:

-power source and extension cord to power small 50 Watt amplifier and media player

### Location:

- centered under Mohawk marquee, a few feet in front of entrance doors

### Placement:

-set on concrete under marquee, freestanding

### Purpose Statement:

*That Certain Age* is a sound artwork/installation that connects to the city's historical and social core in two ways. The sound work or score is created in response to the first movie shown at the Mohawk in 1938 – *That Certain Age*. The visual/aesthetic structure of the work will be constructed in reference to the historic Shearer cabinet. A 1930's theater sound technology that featured Sprague components in its construction. This merging of North Adams history, with its connection to social and industrial significance is reflected, transformed and recontextualized by artist Brian Trelegan. As a sound work and installation it also expands the public knowledge of what public art is.

Project Narrative (4 pages maximum) As an attachment, please include the following: 1. Detailed project description including a broader explanation of the proposed work. This should include a detailed description of the project concept, project materials, construction, installation and life expectancy of the work. Project description should include any special requirements such as access to electricity, water, etc. 2. Timeline for design, fabrication and installation of the work. 3. Explanation of how the artwork will contribute to both residents' and visitors' experience of North Adams. 4. Explanation of the required maintenance for the function and preservation of the work.

## **1. Detailed Project Description**

The proposed artwork will be installed as part of DownStreet Art 2018. As a program of MCLA's Berkshire Cultural Resource Center, DownStreet Art commissions and curates a wide range of public works of art to enliven downtown North Adams. Past projects include six large mural projects, numerous temporary galleries, performance projects, temporary and site-based installations including DownStreet Art Thursdays and working with 100+ artists every year to engage the North Adams community, provide opportunities for emerging and experience artists and connect all members of the community with quality arts experiences.

DownStreet Art has commissioned artist Brian Trelegan to engage with the history of the Mohawk Theater. Trelegan's work considers technology in context and shows us how we're becoming increasingly comfortable with attaching emotion to it – and how rapidly it ages and fades out.

His proposed project combines sound and installation and uses metasynt software to transform pixels into sound. For this work, he will use image stills from the 1938 film *That Certain Age* – the first movie shown at the Mohawk Theater. Using the software, he will create a sound score from the movie imagery. The sound work will be amplified by two 8" speakers constructed into a shearer cabinet. This link, demonstrates the software's ability - <http://www.uisoftware.com/MetaSynth/videos/>

This constructed cabinet will be constructed of wood and weather stained. Designed as a free standing object, the cabinet will aesthetically reference the shearer cabinets of the 1930s. A technology designed for theaters. The shearer cabinet and many of its components were designed contemporaneously to those at Sprague electric. Evoking this golden age of industry and cinema.

The project does require access to electricity from within the Mohawk theater, and we've been in communication with Suzy Helme and Bill Meranti to secure access. We plan for this to be a temporary work, installed for the DownStreet Art season from the end of June to the end of September.

**2. Timeline for design, fabrication and installation of the work.**

Design: Complete

Fabrication: June 2018

Installation week of June 25

Installed June 28 – September 27

De-installation Week of October 1

**3. Explanation of how the artwork will contribute to both residents' and visitors' experience of North Adams.**

The work will add to a growing list of public artworks around the cultural district/downtown core of North Adams.

The Mohawk Theater with its art deco marquee is an important physical and emotional connector between historic and contemporary North Adams. Activating the Mohawk as proposed by the artist, with his attentive reference to the Mohawk's history pays homage to this nostalgia. His innovative take however does more than remind of us this past, it pushes our understanding of the space into the present as he merges new and old technology to reinterpret this historic space.

It also provides a physical connection between cultural hubs of activity at the east and west ends of Main St, and will draw visitors around the corner to/from the Eagle St with its new influx of creative businesses and the eagle street initiative projects.

**4. Explanation of the required maintenance for the function and preservation of the work.**

We do not anticipate any maintenance will be required as this is a temporary work.

However, DownStreet Art staff will monitor the condition of the work for the duration. The work will be placed under the marquee, and finished with a weather proofing stain further reducing any potential deterioration. DownStreet Art staff will also monitor the structure and electronic components at least weekly to make sure they remain in good working order.







# ALMOST ZERO

NEW WORK BY BRIAN TRELEGAN

FEBRUARY 25 – MARCH 11, 2017

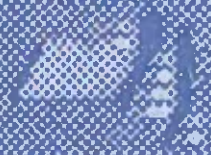
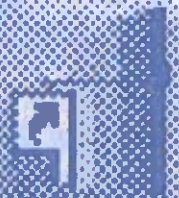


"There's so much random material,  
so many references to different media in your work –  
do you do any specific reading or research before making art?"

"Almost zero."

Conversation with the artist, Sept. 23, 2016







## Foreword

Brian Trelegan stops tinkering, for a bit, to show us the results so far of his experiments with software and dated technology in *Almost Zero: New Work by Brian Trelegan*. Trelegan begins by scanning familiar images or recording snippets of sound, before stripping them of their context to point out their previously overlooked details and nuances. By using Photoshop to not correct, but create images through intentional distortion, and Metasynth to stretch and loop sounds, Trelegan gives material form to the digital and reminds us of the emotion lodged in mechanical systems. Covering two floors of the former American Legion building, this solo exhibition presents works in a variety of media, including digital compositions, sound art, photography and video.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the help of many different individuals.

First, I am so thankful for the eagerness and financial support of Emily Watts, who steadily pushed this entire exhibition forward. The essential generosity of Herbert Allen and Susan Song in helping with graphic design, photography and printing made this exhibition's distinctive presentation possible. Significant contributions toward printing also came from the Williams College Art Department, the Williams College Vice President for Campus Life Office and Excelsior Printing. Additionally, the support of the Williams College Entertainment Committee provided for a smooth opening.

This exhibition began with conversations





with Brian Trelegan in Elle Pérez's Contemporary Photography seminar, and I would like to extend my thanks to Brian, for helping me think about chance and minutiae, and for his generous collaboration to realize this exhibition. Deepest thanks go to Elle Pérez for encouraging me to keep asking questions, and for pushing me to back up my interpretations. Furthermore, Brad Wells' guidance in approaching and working with sound art was immensely helpful in shaping the text for and presentation of this exhibition.

I would like to thank Laylah Ali and Kevin Murphy for their patience and support in finding a space for this exhibition, and Stefanie Solum for championing this project from the start. *Almost Zero* could not have been possible without Bob Wright, Dave Waynick and Joe Moran in Facilities and David Boyer in Campus Safety and Security, whose planning and professionalism made for an easy installation. Furthermore, the extensive equipment setup and printing was streamlined by Jim Lillie, Rick Lescarbeau, Megan Mazza and Daniel Goudrouffe.

My deep appreciation goes to Larry Smallwood for helping with layout and sight lines, and Max Sopher for creating a clear exhibition map to navigate the works. Special thanks go to Justin Sardo and his design expertise, for providing a beautiful and elegant presentation of all exhibition material. I am indebted to Grace Fan, whose exceptional photography helped document this exhibition. I would also like to thank Ade Omotosho and Terence Washington for their close reading and feedback on the catalogue essay.

For their kind words and unwavering enthusiasm, I'd like to thank Hiram Butler, Josh Pazda and Michael Conforti. Finally, I am tremendously grateful for my friends, who keep me grounded and motivated, even in the face of setbacks. Jad Hamdan, Andrew Rhee, Tasia Mochernak, Malcolm Moutenot. Thank you.

**Alex Jen**  
Curator

## Means to No End: Tinkering and Sentiment in the Work of Brian Trelegan

Alex Jen

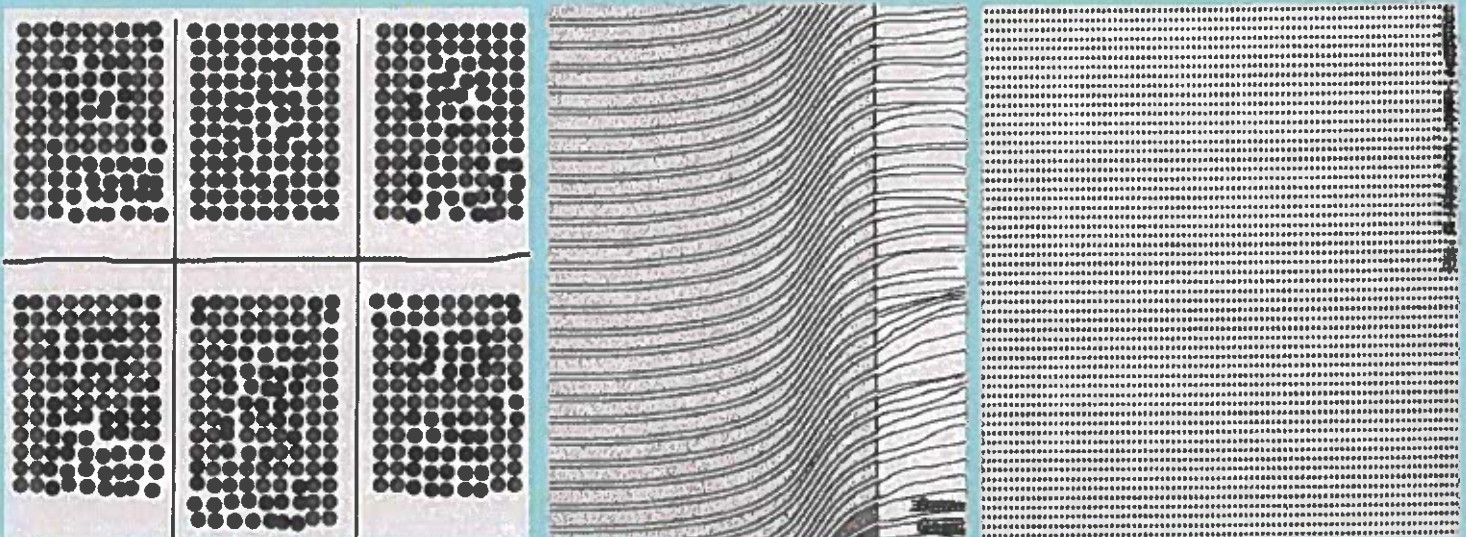
Brian Trelegan's photographs, digital compositions, sound pieces and videos seem carefully composed and layered, but they're not. Trelegan works fast, using the camera, scanner or digital recorder clumsily – but deliberately so, letting their processes push back against his artistic decisions. This is not to say the work is not considered; rather, Trelegan spends months at a time with the things he's interested in with no expectations, just thinking about their implicit and explicit meanings. The work arises from this thinking and a subsequent tinkering, often with a fair amount of chance.

Trelegan's first references in his work were to kids' toys – educational tapes, keyboards, stuffed animals – which were close to him, but "goofy" at the same time. There's a certain sense of bliss to them, but also nostalgia – and it's in the gap between the two that Trelegan mines for contradictions. Toys, for all their innocent charm, can be unsettling and mysterious, their cloying character perhaps a little dishonest.

"[Kids' toys are like] a weird emotional stew where you can't pick out one thing – maybe an evolved version of being afraid of something in the closet."

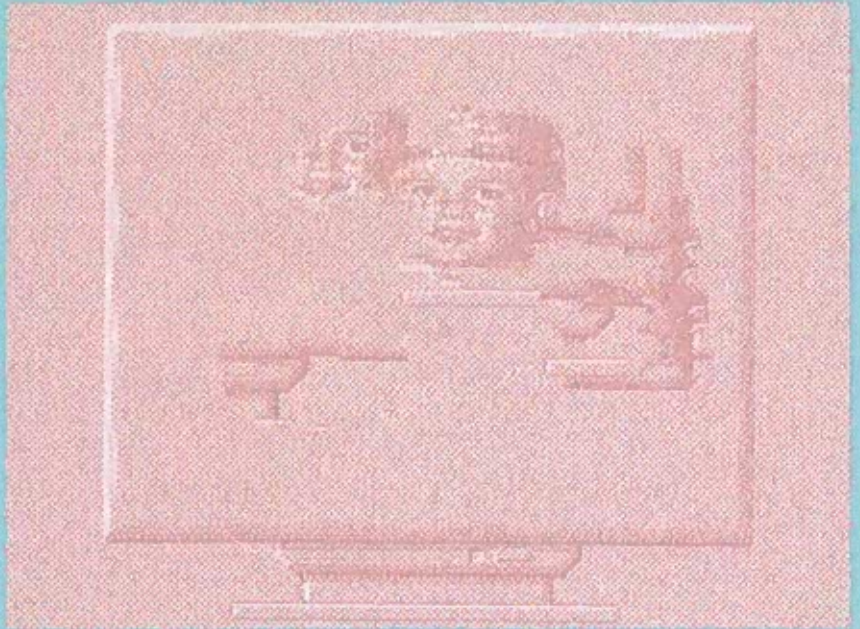
Paradox permeates Trelegan's work, his themes inextricably linked to his cut-and-paste working method. Trelegan strips his subjects of their context, cropping, blurring and distorting them to obscure their meaning – stitching together mismatched parts to create digital patchworks. It's a process that allows him to tread between the literal and the abstract, giving figurative imagery new forms and textures.

To understand how an intentionally slapdash editing process is Trelegan's own way of creating, we can begin with his *Infographics* – crude, digitally marked-up scans of data taken from an old book about designing infographics. Trelegan wanted to explore patterns with an op art quality and was struggling with the work of Bridget Riley, partly because his attempts to be as precise kept failing. He decided to be less careful.





## Dearest, Dearest Wife;



By zooming in on certain graphics and scratching out the captions of others, Trelegan denied the patterns of their perfection – he wanted to keep viewers entranced with their optical illusions, but only up to a point. *Untitled (Infographic #2)* vibrates, the dots restless and ready to jolt out of their aligned array, while the break in *Untitled (Infographic #6)* suggests a digital nib unexpectedly getting caught on the paper, causing a slight but quick tremor where the lines don't line up. But *Infographics* also considers Trelegan's interest in human error rendered digitally, in the sometimes ironic inefficient nature of a technology expected to be efficient. If *Infographics* is a patchy op art made from letting error counter found patterns, then *Computer Manuals* is Trelegan's very own minimalism, sourced from the dated ordinary. The works are large, pared down inkjet prints with imagery taken from Windows 98 and its accompanying *For Dummies* and *Visual Basic For Dummies* instructional books. The color palette is a muted, soft pastel, and from up close and far away the works resist focus –

creating a wavy moiré pattern, similar to when you try to photograph a computer or TV screen.

In *Dearest Wife*, there are words we can't quite make out, somehow behind the surface. That's because the pages of the *For Dummies* book are quite thin, and content from the next page shows through when Trelegan scans them. Here, those words are trapped, adding a melancholic quality to the works' empty, isolated messages. "Dearest, Dearest Wife" was lifted from a sample Microsoft Outlook 98 email, and the "RoboBabe" in *Hopeless Romantic* was a punch line to a now strange and outdated joke imagining an artificial lover.

The *Computer Manuals* are like digital, minimal paintings. Although they are printed on enhanced matte paper, they have a rough, pulpy appearance, the texture digitally transferred. Additional texture comes from the manuals themselves, which were printed in halftone, a method of printing using same-color dots that vary in size and space apart to generate different gradients. It's the same printing process used for newspapers,



## BASIC STEPS FOR BEGINNERS



where the paper feels dusty and the ink comes off onto your fingers.

By scanning the pages and then blowing them up, Trelegan pixelates the halftone, digitally distorting an old distortion. It's a decision that highlights Trelegan's interest in confusing technology to expose its glitches. For *Childhood Homescreeen*, Trelegan used the spot-healing brush in Photoshop, typically used for touch-ups, with a wide brush, dragging it through a child's face until it was distorted, repeated and multiplied from trying to fill in the erased area with the information around it.

With *Computer Manuals*, Trelegan calls attention to old social structures to present a feeling of connection that was once there, but has since faded. It's a way to explore the digital displacement, or cleft between human interaction and its digital translation that exists today – that paradoxical ambiguity that allows a text or email to be confused as full of feeling or coldly distant. Trelegan works by splicing old and new technology, creating communal pieces that bring people together to consider how technology itself is communal – or not.

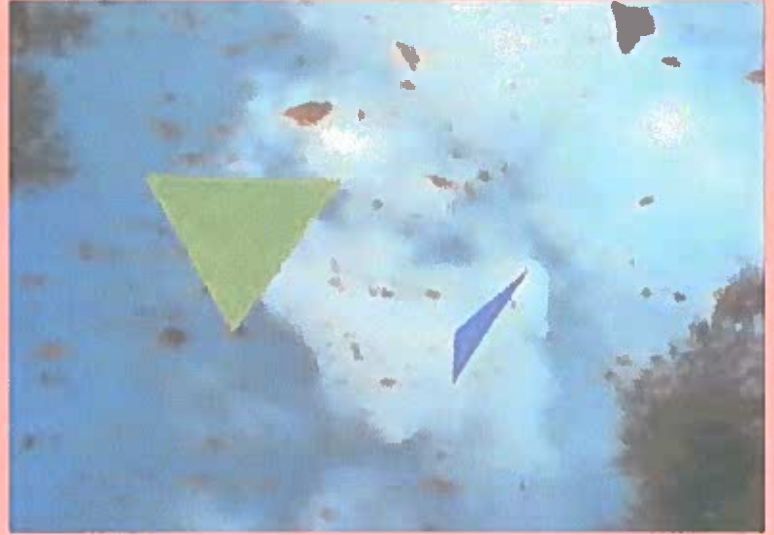
As seen with "RoboBabe" in *Hopeless Romantic*, there is something strange about

looking at "the future" as perceived in the past. In conversation, Trelegan brought up the House of the Future, an attraction at Disneyland that saw over 20 million visitors during its 10 year run from 1957 to 1967. A video promoting the house promised how technology would make everything easier, with microwaves, a sink that adjusted to height and a push-button phone with a closed-circuit television receiver to see who was at the door.

It seems silly today, but Trelegan's work makes us think about technology in context, showing us how we've become increasingly comfortable with attaching emotion to it – and how rapidly it ages and fades out. Trelegan works by manipulation until he loses track, often with no end goal in sight.

"Why tinkering? I think it's fun, that's the main reason. I think there's an aspect of finding new spaces within programs where things don't work like they should. Having the shifty, abstract, pixelated image or illustration come out and surprise me."

His influences and development growing up weren't explicitly art-related, either. Trelegan's grandmother liked "gestural and sloppy folk art," and from eight years old on, he was engrossed by "messy, urban



skateboard art" like that of Mark Gonzales. But in his house, Trelegan says there "wasn't any art on the walls or anything – my parents didn't care too much about that." That didn't seem to matter, though, because as an artist, Trelegan sources from anything and everything.

Growing up, Trelegan remembers memorizing an entire American Kennel Club book – everything from the breed to the standard weight to the country of origin of each dog in the volume. And with a book on racecars, too – gathering facts and information, though they might not seem immediately interesting, was always something Trelegan did – and still does.

"There was always a lot of music playing in the house, too. My dad really likes the blues, so there was a lot of that. He used to rap Run-D.M.C. lyrics to me when I was in the tub, too. My dad has this weird memory where he just remembers the lyrics to all these old songs from commercial jingles, and he would repeat them randomly, out of context."

Information saturation before its time, from a young age, perhaps.

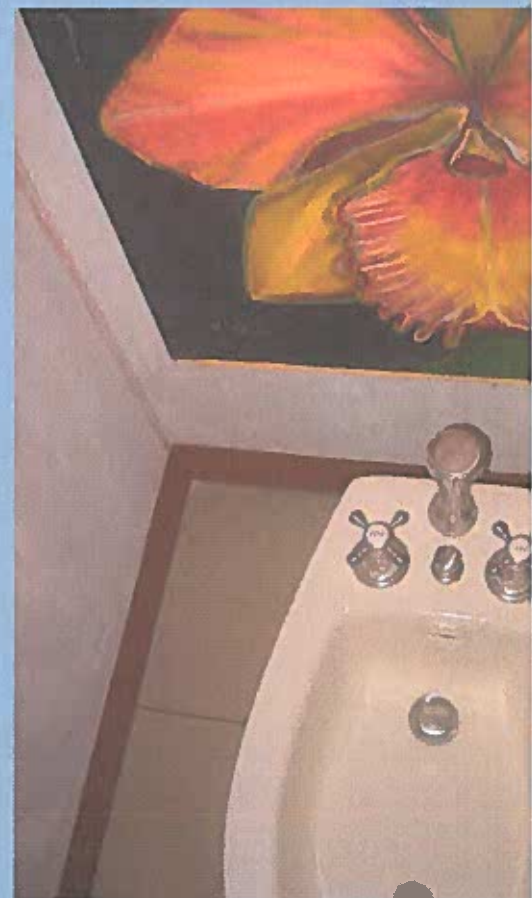
*Basic Steps for Beginners* is an absurd video that has us think about this saturation.

The hovering, block letter title comes from the introduction to an instructional ballroom dancing video – in the work, Trelegan digitizes small bits of PSAs and infomercials that were on VHS and loops them, making the dull uncomfortably funny. *Basic Steps* builds until it inundates us with information – hollow, but felt; minimal, but overwhelming in large doses.

The photographs that make up *Greely Road Extension* further explore the mundane that *Basic Steps* taps into; but here, the associations are fragile and eerie. Trelegan takes pictures of a bidet, an old exercise machine, various trinkets found in his grandmother's basement – but what is unsettling is how he conveys passed time with a tinge of sadness. He achieves this partly by subtly collapsing the perspective in the photographs and removing any directed light and accompanying shadow. The chair in *Getting Up (On the Shelf)*, neither big nor small, looks like it could be in the corner of the basement or a dollhouse room. *Keeping Warm* is flat and cartoon-like, the logs useless and the brick wall leading nowhere.

Objectively speaking, the photographs in *Greely Road Extension* are not "good photographs." They're poorly lit and pixelated





beyond clarity, not to mention there is almost no detail and glare seems to be emphasized. But that's because Trelegan doesn't like to follow the rules of the medium. "Nice" photos, Trelegan says, follow a certain framework that make them beautiful.

"For an advertising image, [those stipulations regarding lighting, clarity, etc.] are probably true. For my work, it doesn't matter. I like to play around with the medium, and if there are rules in place, I make new rules, play by those for a bit, shift them, and then play by those..."

Trelegan's photographic distortions add mystery to the subject, placing them in a very specific digital context, which Trelegan believes has yet to be accepted.

"People don't seem to like the digital-ness of the digital. I think it has to do with being ahead of the nostalgic curve, in a way. We can look back at film photography and see its [blemishes or smudging in emulsion], and that somehow makes it authentic, nice and intriguing. If you translate the same lighting or processing mistakes to a digital image, people are like 'ugh.' Maybe someday they'll be like 'ooh.'"

Perhaps Trelegan's blurring in *Greely Road Extension*

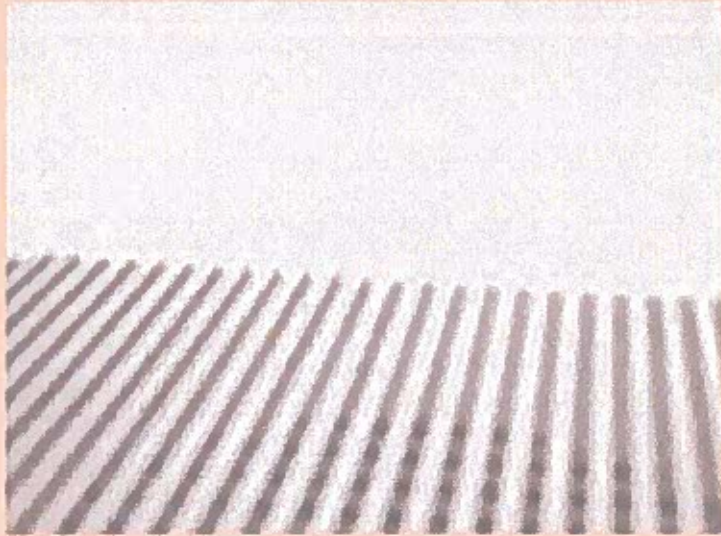


speaks to a contemporary fading of images and their meanings. In *Landscapes*, however, Trelegan moves from the technique's symbolic qualities and uses distortion and framing formally, to add a patina and shape workaday objects into abstract compositions. As a whole, the series resists black-and-white photography's tendency to emphasize deep, full blacks and grays. Instead, *Landscapes* is largely blown out, making the subjects stark, vulnerable and hard to identify.

Trelegan's photography counters Charles Peirce's idea of indexicality, or truth claim that there is a one-to-one relationship between the object photographed and the resulting image. Of course, the argument that photographs can be deceitful and can be made to convey a specific point is not new, but that is outside the scope of his work. Rather, Trelegan's work highlights the inherent, minute distortion with photography as a documentary account.







"If you bump up that distortion from reality to the photograph, there's more mystery and depth to the photograph, because it represents both what you experience, and an altered version of that experience at the same time."

Exploring the gap between firsthand experience and a digital, secondhand account is a broader goal of Trelegan's work that crosses mediums. According to Trelegan, the same gap exists when recording sound. Even with the best microphone and recording equipment, there is still some difference, some trace not picked up.

"Imagine you paid for a concert, and you go there, and it's just an MP3 player hooked up to a PA. You're going to be pissed. There's something different about direct, live sound."

Trelegan uses the recording process to pick up on background noise or raise static or warp different remnants to both give sound a finish and allow it to gradually envelop you. The structure of his pieces is simple; he stretches sounds apart, altering their pitches and tempos, looping phrases at a time. In a culture saturated with images and white noise, the work is about listening closely to notice minute changes in rhythm and texture.

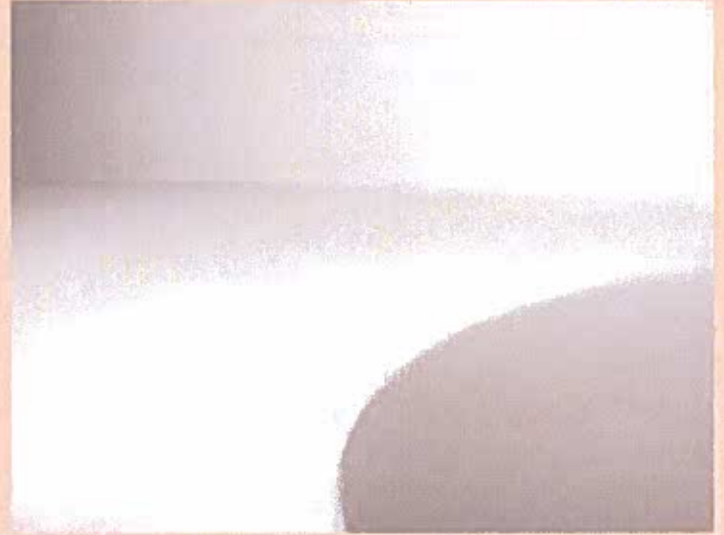
"I feel like our ears are not trained to focus, usually. We're not trained to have our ears be doing a lot of work – they supplement something seen."

Trelegan's sound pieces have a gross, digital quality and are punctuated with high pitched noises reminiscent of a bad electrical connection. Just as he bends the rules of "good photography" in *Greely Road Extension* and *Landscapes*, Trelegan pries open digital recording, acting against its perfect, streamlined ideals.

"The general consensus is that [digital distortion in sound] is bad, because it sounds harsh and destroys the clarity of the recording."

But Trelegan doesn't agree, citing the analog distortion in rock music like The Strokes', that gives them a gritty, harsh sound. For *Is This It*, The Strokes' debut studio album, producer Gordon Raphael said in an interview with *Sound on Sound* that he just "destroy[ed] sounds – taking sounds, disintegrating them and then bringing them back" by running them through "RAT distortion pedals and overdriving amps or preamps." Raphael set up microphones in unexpected spots to have sound travel, and had lead vocalist Julian





Casablanca sing through a small Peavey practice amp, which was itself then miked, for a muffled but explosive sound full of static.

The Strokes can't be divorced from their tense, distressed sound. For Trelegan, it's only a matter of time before digital distortion catches up. Though his sound work isn't quite the same, there are parallels – the pieces don't have explicit emotional overtones; however, they make you think twice about processed sound. They slow you down and put you in a space to contemplate noises, details previously unnoticed.

*NYT* starts out with some faint static, and is immediately punctuated by slightly pitched thumps. The association is that of a steady heartbeat, or something living, which seems to be confirmed by Trelegan's introduction of a wet bubbling into the piece. Just when you think there is a steady rhythm, Trelegan brings in an offbeat dry zap – soon everything is subsumed by a vacuum-like drone that fades into a metallic reverb. Listened to on headphones in a narrow room, *NYT* uneasily places you at the center of something artificial but growing.

Trelegan created *NYT* by scanning every single image from the cover of the September

12, 2016 issue of *The New York Times*, and putting them into Metasynth, a program that assigns each pixel in an image an x-value for duration, and a y-value for pitch. Each pixel is a random note, essentially, and Trelegan uses Metasynth to compact the pixels in each image into a single sound, which he then edits before using as a sample. It's a process that reminds us of the human interference behind a technology that masks us. Trelegan takes a relatively detached documentary image and translates it into something digital but immersive, akin to its real initial experience.

*Pop Drone* is subtler. Trelegan recorded and compressed the sound of 100 party poppers being set off into one sample, which he then pitched and time stretched to create several sounds. The piece is incredibly restrained, the choice and use of certain samples deliberate. *Pop Drone* is a bit of a marathon, slowly leaking and filling the room with a mid-range hum. The piece puts you in a space where you can't hear anything else, where you are immediately aware and washed over by its ambience that blurs background and foreground. *Pop Drone* rewards patience and close listening. It feels odd to emerge; normal sounds feel loud.





Combining elements of *NYT* and *Pop Drone*, *SP Cries* has us forget its synthetic makeup. At first, the piece is grating. It starts with a shrill, descending cry, reminiscent of squeaky linoleum. *SP Cries'* sound is distressing, but more defeated than urgent. The spiraling sound is a snippet from a toy synthesizer low on batteries, a once pleasant song distorted. The piece gives us this pitched motif bare only for a moment, however – it is soon punctuated by a steady, lonely electronic hum, which is oddly comforting. It counters the synthesizer's cry and gives us something to focus on.

Central to Trelegan's work in sound is a feeling of numbness, which he achieves by building on simple synthesizer variations. Using a sustain pedal, he pulls certain sounds apart, leaving them to echo and layer on top of each other. It's an effect that builds slowly but surely, leaving you in a daze as the reverberations continue.

Trelegan invites us to consider the seemingly ironic sadness in lurching distortion and glitched sound, which can be heard in recent music – Bon Iver's *22, A Million* is a good example. On the album, frontman Justin Vernon sings through the Messina, a sound

processing device like a vocoder or Auto-Tune, which allows him to split a melody into different harmonies to be rearranged in real time. The Messina allows Vernon to mask his voice until it emerges warbly and fractured.

And yet, though Vernon's voice is so coated, it is still deeply fragile because it wavers, existing as strained, painful pieces stitched together. "715 - CRΣΣKS" shudders with a similar magnetic sound to Trelegan's *Pop Drone*, though the latter is accompanied by a light, rebounding buzz. Both pieces are pointed in their sparsity, too. *Pop Drone* slowly builds and blankets you with a digital murmur; "715 - CRΣΣKS" is stark with nothing but Vernon's altered voice – it feels strange when the pieces pause or end.

For Vernon, however, the distortion is an accompaniment that supports his voice. Emotion can still be expressed through his lyrics or feathery falsetto. For Trelegan, distortion is his sole instrument, emotion is conveyed through pure digitality. We can refer to the signal-to-noise ratio to better understand Trelegan's sound pieces. The SNR is a measure that compares the level of a desired pitch to the level of extraneous noise. Typically, we like an equal balance of signal to



...the sound field as a frenzied bunch of different frequencies. His sound work is hard to place because it sometimes is a muddy collapsing of frequencies, making their depth hard to perceive.

Almost Zero culminates with *Office 3-Space*, a sculpture that melds Trelegan's work in digital composition with his minimal, ambient sound. The work consists of a table fan that hangs from the ceiling, lightly blowing on a trail of continuous feed computer paper that is suspended from the fan's own electrical cord. A sound piece that almost embodies electricity moving – a full, ripe, pitched, extended vibration – plays alongside the billowing sculpture.

The sound component, which is sampled from the printer's noises as it printed out the paper, is marked by a circular hum that stays constant over steady but light static. Built over it are ambient sounds that are more pitched, with a lighter, more lucid drone. Overall the melody consists of just three different ascending and descending pitches, a slow and gentle cadence. The sound piece begins

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noise, or even a bit more signal than noise.

Trelegan uses sounds that do not have clearly recognizable pitches. These appear in the sound field as a frenzied bunch of different frequencies. His sound work is hard to place because it sometimes is a muddy collapsing of frequencies, making their depth hard to perceive.

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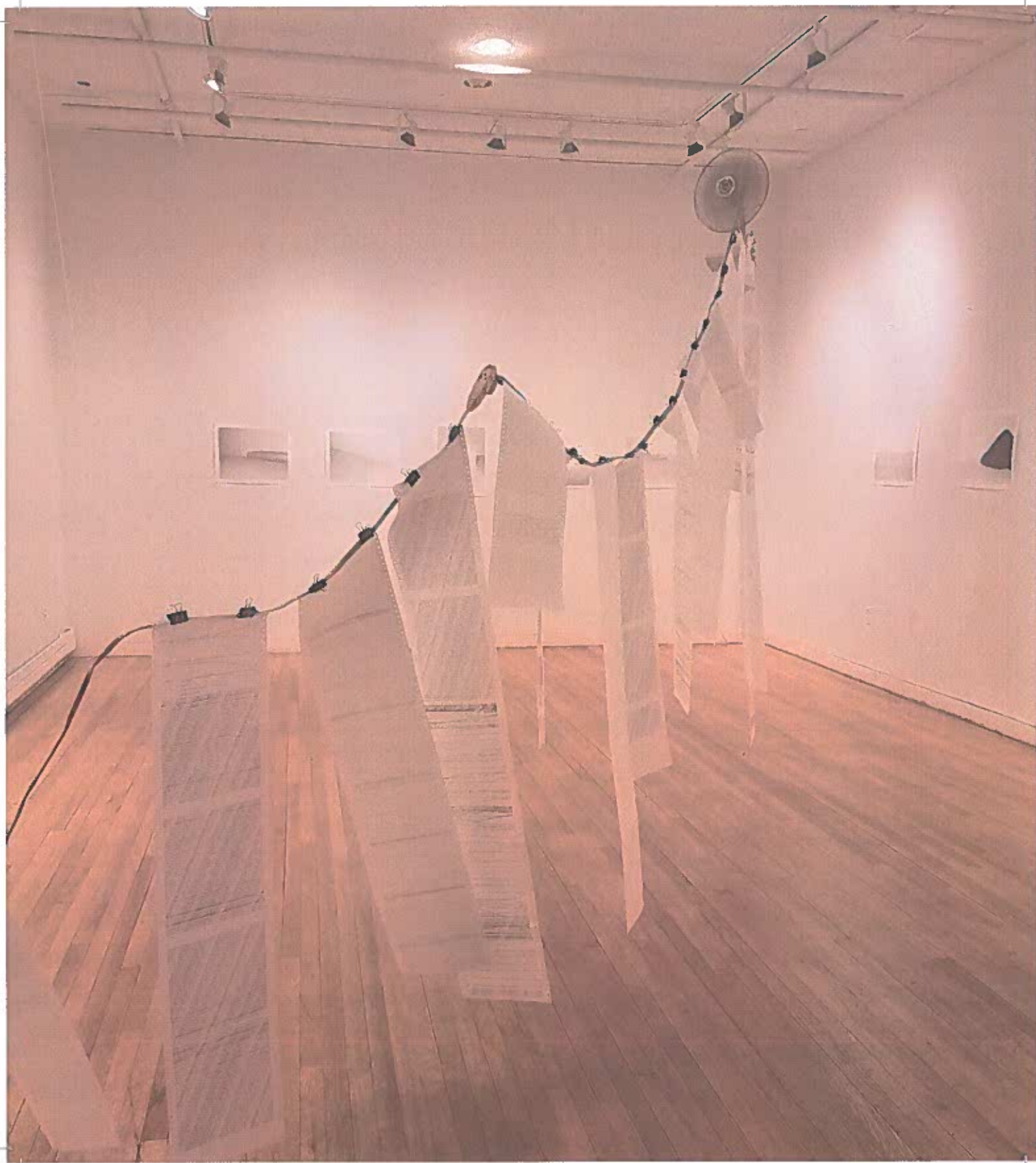
and ends with its spare circular hum, and for a few seconds you can hear the quiet spin of the fan and slight rustle of the paper.

The simple melody is grounding and evocative, curiously both melancholic and optimistic at the same time. That's because, as Brian Eno said in a *Trouser Press* interview in 1982, "ambient music allows many different types of attention ... [it creates] a sense of place that complements and alters your environment." The sound component of *Office 3-Space* acts like what Mark Richardson of *Pitchfork* calls a "sonic mirror" in regards to Eno's 1975 *Discreet Music*, "reflecting back at the listener whatever [emotions] he presents to it."

The sound provides an air of peace and longing as you look closer at the sheets of paper that hang from the fan's cord. Trelegan says that the billowing paper is a physical manifestation of *Office 3-Space's* sound component. Slow and undulating, the slight movement of the paper is a visual metaphor for the seemingly imperceptible changes in Trelegan's soundscape.

The sheets of paper have been printed with lines of text that read "A-Z" and "0-9." The lines have been crammed onto the page in a







tight mess. "A-Z" is printed over itself until the ink smears and the text obliterates itself, creating a sharp tension. On other sheets, letters and numbers are stretched, they form skeins that veer off in different directions like sinuous branches, broken wires. They create a loopy-doopty, wavy pattern à la Sol LeWitt – the same letters and numbers here are like zippers that spread open and create empty voids.

There is no narrative content to these blocks of text, but perhaps because we expect text to be justified and appear in perfect order, the act of their aggressive effacement and disorder gives the sheets an abstract, urgent quality.

To produce the sheets, Trelegan used an Apple ImageWriter II, a dot matrix printer introduced in 1985, to produce test sheets. But Trelegan purposely interfered with the printing process, twisting the roller, used to load paper initially and clear any jams, as it printed. What the printer spat out was random; Trelegan tinkered and played with the roller until it printed out test sheets with the formal compositions he desired.

From a distance, the sheets glimmer. There's a consistent diagonal line, a gradient that cascades down, from the misaligned strings of text as "A-Z" or "0-9" ends and starts over mid-line. It's almost 3D when the lines bunch up.

In addition to their formal qualities, Trelegan asks if numbers and letters can be emotional. Can information, mechanically typewritten content, blocks of text, strings of code – be sentimental? One would think absolutely not, but the fact is these nonsense strings of numbers and letters are to be rearranged; they are building blocks for expressing how we feel. Stripped of context, the text feels cold – but give it a user, some ambiguity and some human error and we're reminded that technology supplements and connects us. Then again, technology also distances us, replacing our in-person interactions. It's unresolved.

*Office 3-Space* is meant to be viewed as

you walk along and around it. The sheets of paper hang like curtains, each string of sheets alternating between their printed and unprinted sides.

The result is a pattern that fluctuates between white and black, of information, and then information withheld. It's a gentle detail, but it causes you to see the piece from different angles. Trelegan refers to a similar effacement, or hiding, of information below the surface in *Dearest Wife*, from his *Computer Manuals*. The paper appears fragile and transparent in both works, able to be seen from both sides.

And so *Office 3-Space* clearly presents a theme that runs through Trelegan's work. It reminisces a waning human interaction, it hints and suggests and wants viewers to come together and observe. It's ironic that an art about digital displacement would bring people together, yet it is also oddly reassuring.

In the last sheet of computer paper, a half-size sheet located at the end of the wire and near the ground, the lines are printed absolutely perfectly and aligned center. It is a block of text with no misprints, overprints, smears. Did the printer, machine, technology run smoothly, without any kinks? Or do they remain, traces of the human element cleverly masked by Trelegan's ruse?



RoboBabe (not resp

## Credits

(PAGE 1)

CLOUDSCAPE, 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED INKJET PRINT, 42 X 42 IN.,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGE 2)

BILLBOARD, 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED INKJET PRINT, 42 X 22.5 IN.,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGE 4)

UNTITLED (INFOGRAPHIC #2), 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT,  
42 X 42.5 IN., COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

UNTITLED (INFOGRAPHIC #6), 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT,  
33 X 42 IN., COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

UNTITLED (INFOGRAPHIC #5), 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT,  
42 X 44 IN., COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGE 5)

DEAREST WIFE, 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT, 42 X 40.5 IN.,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

CHILDHOOD HOMESCREEN, 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT, 42 X 31  
IN., COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGE 6)

BASIC STEPS FOR BEGINNERS (VIDEO STILL), 2016,  
SINGLE CHANNEL VIDEO WITH SOUND, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGE 7)

BASIC STEPS FOR BEGINNERS (VIDEO STILL), 2016,  
SINGLE CHANNEL VIDEO WITH SOUND, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGES 8 & 9, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT)

GETTING UP (ON THE SHELF), 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT,  
44 X 33 IN., COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

KEEPING WARM, 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT, 44 X 33 IN.,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

VIEW FROM THE BENCH, 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT, 44 X 33 IN.,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

FLOWER OVER BIDET, 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT, 33 X 44 IN.,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGE 10)

LANDSCAPE #14, 2016, EPSON ULTRACHROME K3 PRINT, 19 X 13 IN.,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

LANDSCAPE #18, 2016, EPSON ULTRACHROME K3 PRINT, 19 X 13 IN.,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGE 11)

LANDSCAPE #2, 2016, EPSON ULTRACHROME K3 PRINT, 19 X 13 IN.,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

LANDSCAPE #1, 2016, EPSON ULTRACHROME K3 PRINT, 19 X 13 IN.,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGE 12)

SAMPLER AND LOOPER USED TO CREATE SOUND WORK,  
PHOTOS BY BRIAN TRELEGAN

(PAGE 13)

OFFICE 3-SPACE (DETAIL, SCANS OF CONTINUOUS FORM PAPER), 2016,  
OSCILLATING FAN, EXTENSION CORDS, BINDER CLIPS, PERFORATED CON-  
TINUOUS FORM PAPER, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGE 14)

OFFICE 3-SPACE, 2016, OSCILLATING FAN, EXTENSION CORDS, BINDER  
CLIPS, PERFORATED CONTINUOUS FORM PAPER, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE,  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

(PAGE 16)

HOPELESS ROMANTIC (DETAIL), 2016, HP 70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT,  
42 X 34 IN., COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

"People don't seem to like the digital-ness of the digital. I think it has to do with being ahead of the nostalgic curve, in a way. We can look back at film photography and see its [blemishes or smudging in emulsion], and that somehow makes it authentic, nice and intriguing. If you translate the same lighting or processing mistakes to a digital image, people are like 'ugh.' Maybe someday they'll be like 'ooh.'"

Brian Trelegan



**ALMOST ZERO: NEW WORK BY BRIAN TRELEGAN**  
**FEBRUARY 25, 2017 - MARCH 11, 2017**  
**CURATED BY ALEX JEN**

THIS EXHIBITION IS SUPPORTED BY EMILY WATTS, HERBERT ALLEN, SUSAN SONG,  
THE WILLIAMS COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT, THE WILLIAMS COLLEGE VICE PRESIDENT  
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GRAPHIC DESIGN FOR THIS CATALOGUE  
AND ALL EXHIBITION MATERIAL BY JUSTIN SARDO

COVER:  
*IN THE KITCHEN*, 2016  
HP-70 PIGMENT-BASED PRINT, 44 x 34 IN.  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



# Brian Trelegan



## CV

### **EDUCATION:**

**2017** Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, East Madison, Maine

**2017** Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, BA, Studio Art (with Honors)

### **SOLO EXHIBITIONS:**

**2017** *Almost Zero: New Work by Brian Trelegan*, Curated by Alex Jen, Former American Legion Post 152, Williamstown, MA.

### **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:**

**2016** *Berkshire Art Association College Fellowship Show*, Lichtenstein Center for Arts, Pittsfield, MA

**2016** *SEEN YR SHOW: Williams College Senior Studio Art Show*, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA

### **AWARDS AND HONORS:**

**2017** Guest Artist-in-Residence, WEX, Inc.

**2017** Hubbard Hutchinson Memorial Fellowship, Williams College

**2017** Karl E. Weston Prize for Distinction in Art, Williams College

**2016** Class of 1960 Scholar, Williams College

**2016** Berkshire Arts Association College Fellowship

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

**2017** Inside WEX: WEX Guest Artist in Residence

**2017** *Almost Zero* exhibition catalog: Means to No End, Tinkering and Sentiment in the Work of Brian Trelegan

**2017** The Williams Record: 'Almost Zero' reconsiders subjects of nostalgia

**2015** The Williams Record: The Artist Otherwise Known As... Brian Trelegan '17

### **TEACHING:**

**2016** Teaching Assistant to Amy Podmore, Sculpture, Williams College, Williamstown, MA

**2016** Teaching Assistant to Amy Podmore, Sculpture Expanded, Williams College, Williamstown, MA

**2015** Teaching Assistant to Amy Podmore, Introduction to Sculpture, Williams College, Williamstown, MA

## Brian Trelegan – Artist Statement

I am a collector and a tinkerer. These roles guide my practice. I search thrift stores, tag sales and family basements for obsolete technology, both analog and digital. I actively find ways to use these devices incorrectly. Pushed beyond its intended use, each piece of technology reveals distinctly human emotion. And the resulting glitches and distortions not only convey emotion, but lend a tangible nature to the electronic realms often seen as formless. The artist's hand can show through layers of technology, and that hand can remind us of the humanity and melancholy contained within the devices we have left behind.



ROUTE 2 UNDERPASS AT  
MARSHALL STREET

NEAR THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF  
THE MUSEUM PARKING LOT

**Bruce Odland**

American, born 1952

**Sam Auinger**

Austrian, born 1956

***Harmonic Bridge*, 1988**

Tuning tube, computer, sound system, speakers

Plays constantly from 8 AM to 10 PM

Sam Auinger and Bruce Odland have extracted harmonies from everyday spaces since 1987. They have found rich resonance in an old traffic tunnel in Strasbourg, a Roman amphora in the Forum, and the West Side Highway in New York. Their collaborative works tune public spaces, sifting through noises and isolating harmonies in found sound.

In the MASS MoCA portion of this multi-part project, *Harmonic Bridge*, low sounds roll and drone under the Route 2 overpass half a block from MASS MoCA. Entering the space under the bridge, one becomes aware of a turning eddy of sound in the midst of intersecting streams of traffic. Cars pass by heading north or south on Marshall Street and east or west on the Route 2 bridge, but this linear motion is counterpoised by a rolling, humming C as calming as the rhythm of ocean waves. Although cars stream by, pedestrians lose the impetus to move forward, derailed by this cool pool of sound with its mysterious, chant-like hum. *Harmonic Bridge* presents an aural cross-section of North Adams, a slice of the city in the key of C, comprised of the fundamental note and its overtone series.

To produce these rolling tones, the artists affixed two 16-foot tuning tubes to the guardrail on the north side of the bridge on either side of the overpass. The length of the tubes determines the fundamental tone: a sound wave at such a low pitch is 16 feet long and must be generated (whether for sound art or a pipe organ) with a 16 foot tube. Inside each tube, a microphone is placed at a certain harmonic interval (the 5th in one tube, the 4th in the other).

These locations emphasize the harmonic and give a slightly different timbre to the two Cs. (The difference in timbre between the two tuning tubes is analogous to the difference in timbre between a cello and a violin playing the same note: though the pitch is the same, the sound is slightly different).

As traffic passes by, its noise generates a sympathetic resonance in the columns of air inside the tubes. High-pitched sirens and even voices generate higher harmonics, while the low rumble of trucks creates low ones. The sound is carried from the microphones in the tubes to a control room, where the sound signal is then amplified and transmitted to the concrete cube speakers under the bridge. There are no electronic effects added. The sounds have been simply extracted from the traffic noise above, as one might extract precious metal from a baser substance. The pedestrian hears one tuned layer of city sounds, and strains to separate the harmony from the traffic on Marshall Street. The work requires that we focus our ears on it, and we walk away from the experience as the composer John Cage would have us: hearing music everywhere. The bridge becomes an instrument played by the city revealing hidden harmonies within the built environment.

The only visible elements placed under the bridge by Odland and Auinger are the two concrete cube speakers. They are simple cubes, undecorated save a small tire imprint that suggests the connection between the sound and the traffic. Yet the space there is visually transformed by the harmonies. The sound focuses one's attention on the majestic columns, the elegant proportions, and grand scale of the area, which, combined with the droning, somehow sacral tones, brings to mind a gothic nave. The speakers themselves offer places to sit while listening to the bridge and provide a pleasant respite. Once an imposing barrier between Main Street and the museum, the underpass is transformed into a resonating sonic gateway.



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## The Sound of MASS MoCA

by Minou Roufail



[MASS MoCA entrance courtyard with clocktower](#)



[Ron Kuivila Building 12 \(detail\) 1998](#)



[Ron Kuivila Building 12 interior view](#)

"Earmarks," July 3-Oct. 20, 1998, at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, Mass. 01247.

Remember MASS MoCA? Well, after over a decade of anticipation (and a cool \$18.6 million from the state of Massachusetts), the new arts center created out of a 780,000-square-foot, 19th-century mill complex in North Adams is scheduled to open in next spring, scarcely nine months hence. Initially conceived by Guggenheim Foundation director Thomas Krens as a museum of Minimalist and conceptual art, MASS MoCA is now billed as a "multidisciplinary center" encompassing performing and media arts.

As a prelude, MASS MoCA director Joseph Thompson has organized "Earmarks," a series of sound installations at the museum and surrounding environs. The exhibition signals MASS MoCA's move from a "static display hall" to a high-tech, multi-media space, as its seven installations explore the use of sound in site-specific art.

Two of the best works in the show, Christina Kubisch's *Clocktower Project* and Ron Kuivila's *Building 12*, focus on the history of the Sprague Electric Company, which occupied the MASS MoCA factory complex from 1940 to 1985. When the company shut down, its century-old clocktower fell silent. Kubisch has revived the clockworks electronically by digitally recording the sounds made by scratching and striking the tower's bells. Solar panels regulate the sound of the bells according to the weather and time of day. Sunny days ring sharp and clear, while cloudy days are softer and denser. *Clocktower Project* is easy to miss, yet inescapable.

Also interwoven with MASS MoCA's site is Kuivila's *Building 12*. Addressing the Sprague Electric Company's erstwhile standing as the leading producer of electronic capacitors, Kuivila incorporates these gadgets, along with rotating mini-speakers and stun guns, into a room-sized, interior and exterior installation. Best seen at night, the work uses high-voltage wires festooned on a brick façade to generate a field of electrical sparks. In the melancholy, fluorescent interior, receding rows of empty chairs and company documents recall the room's commercial past. Poignantly evoking the absence of Sprague's employees, the electronic armature fills the vacant space with buzzing movement.

Also historically resonant is *KABOOM*, an organic installation by Alvin Curran and Melissa Gould sprouting on a cow pasture on Stone Hill, behind the Clark Art Institute in nearby Williamstown. Inspired by a story about Sterling Clark's art collection, presumably stashed in a safe zone during the Cold War, Gould used fertilizer to encourage the grass to spell out the word KABOOM in 300-foot-high letters. Curran's sound montage features Gould singing *America the Beautiful* along with orchestral tracks and explosive noises broadcast from speakers at the top of the hill. This was the show's only comic piece – and now the cows have eaten it!

The other works in "Earmarks" are less concerned with specific histories. Bruce Odland's and Sam Auinger's *Harmonic Bridge* transforms traffic noise from the nearby Route 2 overpass into music that can be heard through loudspeakers underneath the bridge.

Ed Osborn equipped *The Walkway*, located outside a building on Main Street, to broadcast



[Route 2 overpass,  
site of Harmonic Bridge by  
Bruce Odland & Sam Avinger  
1988](#)



[Ulrich Eller  
Between Buildings  
1998](#)

"audio images" of passersby. Electronic sensors convert the movements of pedestrians into sounds that are projected back to them from speakers underneath an awning.

In *Between Buildings*, Ulrich Eller fills an alleyway with speakers, covered in red plastic bags and suspended from overhead cables. Random noises altered by the acoustics of the alley blare from the sculptures.

Finally, Windsor Lake is the site of *Seestück/Hörstück*, a piece by collaborators Roswitha von den Driesch, Jens-Uwe Dyffort and Klaus Lebkucher. In this work, which translates as "see-thing/hear-thing," audio-rigged buoys playing excerpts from German romantic poetry and bird and bell noises float across the lake. Like Kubisch's *Clocktower*, sound is triggered by atmospheric changes. According to the condition of the water, the sound is either steady and smooth or fragmented and choppy.

If "Earmarks" is any indication, the opening of MASS MoCA will turn out to have been well worth the wait.

MINOU ROUFAIL is a writer who lives and works in New York.

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