

Juan Sorrentino. Music as an Epiphany of the World

Finding himself on a hill one day, the artist set about listening to its sounds and directions. Later, he built a giant cone that could render the interrelation of matter in the indissoluble bond of space-time. This cone was to be the instrument for revealing the world's sound textures, thereby extending a survey of ecosystems. A further gesture toward understanding its mysteries.

The artist Juan Sorrentino's exhibition *La música como epifanía del mundo* [Music as an Epiphany of the World] is marked by the beat of technique, sound, and the perception of nature. Sorrentino presents a set of four cores of works that bring together his knowledge as a musician, a sound artist, a sculptor, carpenter, and metal worker. The horn that bears tidings of the relations of this world takes the shape of a monumental steel cone in *Space Scanner*; a vocal trio recites poems that, as they get diluted in time, reveal spatial resonances; one hears the rending of burned trees dragged over a wall, scratching their volume and leaving a record of the path they trace. The mythological natives of this liturgy are the *Mancuspías*, a set of "music boxes" that evolved toward mutant sculptures. The aim here is a hybrid ensemble of sound-producing objects.

The voice of the orchestra is personified with the *Teleféricos*, vertical speaker sculptures that lift skyward from the ground lines of poetry that have been recorded over and over again till they've lost their definition and leave audible only the resonant harmonies of their spaces. This vocal trio, which pays tribute to the composer Alvin Lucier in the technique of his "I A Sitting in a Room," offers an experimental exercise in impermanent poetry. The shift of the speakers in a repetitive action of ascent and descent accentuates the mechanical movement of *Quebrachos*, fragments of hard-wood quebracho trees dragged over a wall like bodies in motion. This work echoes Sorrentino's native province of Chaco, a territory assailed with relentless tree clearing and exploitation of its natural resources. In the piece *Quebrachos*, the material and conceptual removal of the "hill-city" is direct. Might this mechanical dance be what marks the composition's underlying rhythm?

Inspired by the concept of a *mancuspía* taken from the writing of Cortázar—as one of the author's names for various imaginary animals—, Sorrentino creates works that replicate acts as simple as they are magical in the way they reveal nature to be an inexhaustible source of sensory and aesthetic resources. Those sources of Sorrentino's *Mancuspías* are sound-producing objects conceived out of fragments of found pieces of wood, iron, and elements of ironmongery. Each piece amasses within itself a sounding spirit: a unique music one can listen to only through its body-like sculptural *dispositif*.

The composition of the *Mancuspías* answers to formal sorts of needs, whereas the music comes into being through a gesture linked to the singular realization of each. The audios are single pieces that arose out of a sonority implicit in the production process of an object. Here the sound sculptor is using the tools of the carpenter and ironmonger, working on the audio tracks much as he does with the pieces of wood and iron. These

correspondences of sound and process are connected more with the resources of trades than with the artifices of effects, and they closely follow a universe of nuances of their own through their transposition. Audios polished, burnished, and burned; with their source always out in the open.

Sorrentino's sounds don't *imitate*, but rather, they contain its recording and that of the manipulation process subsequent to the move from their place of origin. In the case of *Space scanner*, the work provides a sound survey of the space, giving visibility to the acoustic dimension of its surroundings. Its sculptural quality and its movement replicate the geometry of the circle as a sacred figure. The piece is composed of a steel cone that floats over a conical raft in a pond and it spins on its axis projecting white noise, a noise that contains all the frequencies of the audible spectrum. The projection of this sound over the materiality of space allows for a gauging of the vibrational intermeshing that make up this outdoor area. The scan reveals the particular reactions to this 'white' stream: ricochet, absorption, reflection, color; a reflective and immersive ecosystem of behaviors. Though *Space Scanner* was conceived in nature, its placement in the exhibition space of a gallery takes stock of the acoustic behavior of the specific milieu as a single diagnostic, a state of consciousness about a specific territory.

Music is the architecture of this landscape, an evocation of the cry of life out of minimal gestures, free of any shrillness. A vision at once earthly and heavenly. Cavernous, enveloping. Sound points the ear to the world's proportion.

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