

SOUND OFF: Silence + Resistance  
Curated by Abigail Raphael Collins

1 Baseera Khan  
*Acoustic Sound Blanket, profile view, Documentation 04*, 2017  
Inkjet print  
At the 2017 Woman's March at Washington Square Park, New York City.

*Acoustic Sound Blanket, No! in the Name of Humanity Documentation 01*, 2017  
Inkjet print  
At the 2017 Woman's March at Washington Square Park, New York City.

2 This collection of images and texts is curated by Eve Moeykens-Arballo and Tess Carota. It brings together documentation of several silent protests. While by no means an exhaustive exploration of historical and present silence and resistance, this research will continue to evolve and accumulate over the course of the exhibition, culminating in a bibliography of sources and texts.

3 Kameelah Janan Rasheed  
Excerpts from *Éditions Michel Obultra Box*, 2019  
Vinyl, inkjet prints

4 Lawrence Abu Hamdan  
*Rubber Coated Steel*, 2016  
HD video, 21 min

In May 2014, Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank (Palestine) shot and killed two teenagers, Nadeem Nawara and Mohamad Abu Daher. The human rights organization Defence for Children International contacted Forensic Architecture, a Goldsmiths College-based agency that undertakes advanced architectural and media research.

They worked with Abu Hamdan to investigate the incident. The case hinged upon an audio-ballistic analysis of the recorded gunshots to determine whether the soldiers had used rubber bullets, as they asserted, or broken the law by firing live ammunition at the two unarmed teenagers.

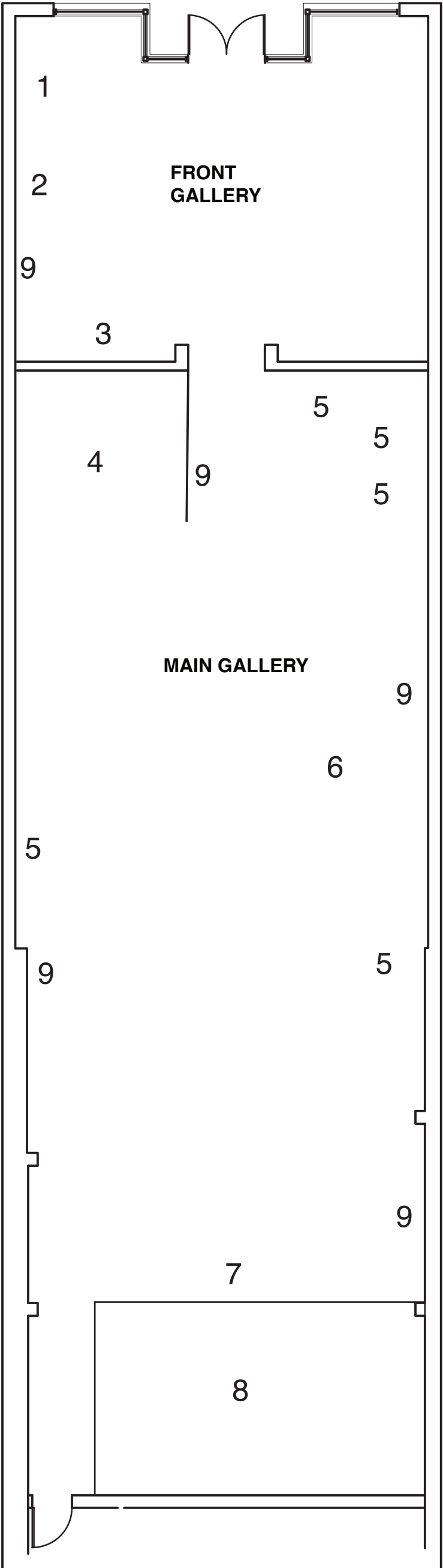
A detailed acoustic analysis, for which Abu Hamdan used special techniques designed to visualize the sound frequencies, established that they had fired live rounds, and moreover had tried to disguise these fatal shots to make them sound as if they were rubber bullets.

These visualizations later became the crucial piece of evidence that was picked up by the news channel CNN and other international news agencies, forcing Israel to renounce its original denial. The investigation was also presented before the U. S. Congress as an example of Israel’s contravention of the American-Israeli arms agreement.

A little over a year after Abu Hamdan completed his report, he returns to the case of Abu Daher and Nawara in his exhibition Earshot. Expanding on the original body of evidence, he has created an installation encompassing sound, photographic prints, and a video to reflect more broadly on the aesthetics of evidence and the politics of sound and silence.

The video, *Rubber Coated Steel*, is the main part of the installation commissioned by Portikus and acts as a tribunal for these serial killing sounds.

The video tribunal does not preside over the voices of the victims but rather seeks to amplify their silence, fundamentally questioning the ways in which rights are being heard today.



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Artwork Checklist

5 Nikita Gale  
THREE DIMENSIONAL REST, 2019  
Edition of 5  
Concrete, terrycloth

The walls in the gallery have been punctured and plugged with terrycloth concrete “rests” which transform the ambient neutral flat surface of the wall into a frame. In the case of architecture, walls, sidewalks, and streets act as ambient and abundant divisions of space most often being formed from concrete or another comparable material.

Terrycloth is a material that absorbs both moisture and sound and is often used in DIY scenarios where the absorption of high levels of ambient noise is needed to create a quieter atmosphere. It’s a material that gestures toward the improvisational and ad hoc attitude of creative practices that exist outside of the mainstream.

In Western musical notation, the “rest” is a rectangular symbol that indicates a pause (or rest) in playing for the performer or voice in a composition; during a rest, the performer, while not playing, is performing a silence that ultimately frames the sounds produced around it. Silence is not nothing, and while it is "an invention of the hearing" (Ilya Kaminsky), is also relative, and in most cases, the rest that calls for the silence of one performer makes room for another performer to be recognized.

6 Sharon Hayes  
PAROLE, 2010  
Four-channel video installation  
Plywood, projection, monitors  
Dimensions variable  
HD, color, sound  
36 mins

Parole is a four-channel video installation composed of semi-autonomous video “scenes” that accumulate to form a narrative without a story. Focused on a central character who records sound but never speaks, Parole teases out multiple relationships between politics and desire, intimacy and estrangement, speaking and listening, voice and body.

The video installation is composed of footage of performed events in New York, London, Frankfurt, and Istanbul, Turkey as well as staged footage of this sound recorder in various private and semi-public locations.

**Production Credits**  
Sound Recorder: Becca Blackwell  
Speakers (office): Gladys Girabantu, Lea Robinson, Peggy Shaw, Elizabeth Whitney, Nikki Zialcita  
Speaker (classroom): Lauren Berlant\*  
Speakers (public performances)\*\*:  
Frankfurt: Sharon Hayes, Cornelia Kaus, Marie-Jolin Köster  
London: Sharon Hayes  
Istanbul: Gizem Aksu, Seyhan Arman, Tuna Erdem, Barış Ger, Sanem İlçe, Sema Semih, Aybike Esin Tumluer  
New York: Oliverio Rodriguez  
Dancer: Nikki Zialcita  
\*Lauren Berlant’s lecture was written and developed by Berlant.  
\*Performance texts were written by Sharon Hayes.  
Additional textual material includes: James Baldwin, from his lecture at UC Berkeley, April 1974.  
Directors of Photography: Ava Berkofsky (office, apartment, dance studio); Yoni Goldstein & Meredith Ziekle (classroom), George Lyon (X-Initiative)  
Assistant Camera: Ruthie Doyle (office, apartment, dance studio)  
Additional Camera Operators: Jason Hall, Özcan Vardar, Javier Bosques  
Art Director: Abigail Collins (office, apartment, dance studio)  
Grip: Karl R. Lee  
Production Assistants: Yael Frank, Feliz Solomon  
Technical Consultant: Harold Batista  
Sound Mixer: Chad Birmingham  
Choreographers: Nikki Zialcita, Mary Tateossian  
Installation Architect: Nanna Wülfig  
Additional Script Material: Leanne Chen-Keenan, Hye Young Chyun, Maggie McBrien, and Anam Sethi  
Interior Locations generously donated by La MaMa ETC, Yvonne Rainer and Martha Gever, and Abigail Collins.

Special thanks: Brooke O’Harra, Andrea Geyer, Hans Kuzmich, Matthew Buckingham and Jane Anderson.

7 Baseera Khan  
Acoustic Sound Blanket, AP, 2017  
Felt, silk, cotton, gold custom thread embroidering, cut out  
90 x 85 inches

8 Pauline Boudry + Renate Lorenz  
Silent, 2016  
Installation with HD, 7 min,  
Performer: Aérea Negrot

Silent starts with an interpretation of John Cage’s score 4 33 from 1952. The score is conceived for any instrument and instructs its performer(s) not to play their instrument(s) during the entire duration of the three parts of 30“, 2’23“ and 1’40“.

The musician Aérea Negrot performs the score on a rotating stage, placed on Oranienplatz, a public square in Berlin where a refugee protest camp took place between 2012 and 2014. In a second part of the film she performs a song, which has been composed for the film. Silent has been described either as a violent experience, as in being silenced, or as a powerful performative act of resistance, as it has been carried out by various disobedience movements around the world. Silent asks how both moments are intertwined. It focuses on the performance of a silent act, which might allow for agency, strength and even pleasure without erasing the traces of violence and vulnerability. The film suggests a dialogue between being silent and sounding rather than seeing them as mutually excluding.

Music by Miguel Toro and Aérea Negrot  
Director of Photography: Bernadette Paassen  
Sound: Felix Andriessens  
Make-up: Nuria de Lario  
Color Correction: Matthias Behrens (Waveline)  
Sound Design: Rashad Becker

Song text:  
Dear President,  
Your profile is vague,  
You have no arms, no hair, no legs, and no sex  
Your enemy is your lover  
I need make-up, underwear and hormones!  
Dear visitor,  
Are your optimistic,  
When our country is at war?  
Is freedom more masculine than genocide?  
Is a lie more feminine than allies?  
What is the difference between terror, horror, and war?  
What is the difference between museum, artwork, and enemy?  
It sounds all the same to me!

9 Aliza Schvarts  
Sibboleth, 2016  
Interactive sound installation via 5 2”x2” QR codes,  
22:51min

Using the technology of QR code—which has begun to replace traditional wall labels in contemporary galleries and museums— this work intervenes in the structure of knowledge production within the exhibition space. The piece consists of six QR codes which gallery-goers are invited to scan with their smartphones. Instead of a traditional audio-tour, listeners hear a narration of the space that employs the low bass frequencies of heavy metal music and binaural-beat inducing sound waves (which produce a sonic effect in the brain of the listener).

Using sonic materiality as a critical tool, the work makes audible the disciplining force of “taste” and aesthetic value, which weighs heavily on the seeming neutrality of exhibition spaces and their didactic texts. Please scan QR codes using your smartphone camera. Or, download a free QR code reader app from Google Play or the Apple Store. You must listen with headphones. Anyone who wishes to experience the piece but doesn’t have headphones or a smartphone please ask the front desk for a device.

WARNING: This piece makes use of loud sound and binaural beats. You should not listen to binaural beats if you are under 18, pregnant, wear a pace maker, have a heart condition, or are prone to seizures.