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BEMIS X CENTER

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April 6, 2022

Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts Presents

Maya Dunietz: Root of Two May 7 — September 18, 2022

Solo Exhibition of Newly Commissioned Sound Works Opens at Bemis Center



Maya Dunietz. *Five Chilling Mammoths*, 2021. Installation view at Artists Residence Herzliya. Photo by Dor Even Chen.

Omaha, Neb. — Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts presents *Root of Two*, a major solo exhibition by Tel Aviv-based sound artist Maya Dunietz from May 7

through September 18, 2022. Comprised of 8 sculptures and room-sized installations unfolding across Bemis Center's expansive galleries, Dunietz has composed a four month long performance. As the viewer engages with each work, the works become an ensemble, connecting across the galleries through the viewer's encounters.

Dunietz creates an unexpected sensory experience with each work, penetrating and exploring different aspects of her oeuvre, which expands over a 25-year career as a composer, musician, and sound artist. However, as sound materializes, the pieces evolve and intertwine, allowing for a transformative experience. In the traditional sense, the works are independent as discrete objects, and yet resonate with each other sonically, visually and physically as visitors walk through the galleries.

Commissioned for the exhibition, Bemis Center will present one of Dunietz's most largest works to date, $\sqrt{2}$, from 2022. Composed of seventeen pianos, donated from people throughout Omaha and the region, they are envisioned by the artist as beasts grazing on the Great Plains — they roar and sing, tremble and snore, and seemingly come alive through transducers embedded in each piano. Programmed through computer software and physically linked through a network of cables, the transducers “play” on (and through) the pianos a new score by Dunietz that explores the infiniteness and irrationality of the square root of two. Her composition continuously searches for that perfect middle ground, but never quite attains it. Visitors are invited to touch, stroke and lay down on and amongst these groaning beasts, feeling the sound through their bones, as well as their ears. Through her varied practice, Dunietz explores psychoacoustics, and this work is a prime example of how the interaction of the sounds from the pianos mixes with our human experience, expanding how sound is perceived.

Of the 8 featured works, 7 were created by Dunietz expressly for this exhibition. Several of these pieces involve in-depth creative collaborations, which highlights an important factor of Dunietz's artistic practice as both a musician and visual artist. For this exhibition, she developed pieces with friends and colleagues: David Lemoine, Daniel Meir, Ghedalia Tazartes, Amit Drori, Asi Oren, Eyal Fogel, Uri Sinai, Yair Reshefuri Sinai, Eyal Fogel, Yoel Peled, Asi Oren, and Shirel Inglese.

“After five years of working through various ideas and stages, including Maya’s residency at Bemis Center in fall of 2021, we are thrilled to open this expansive and important exhibition at Bemis,” Rachel Adams, Bemis’s Chief Curator and Director of Programs and the exhibition’s curator, states. “Maya’s practice is extremely collaborative, which is something we value greatly. Her works make one think about sound in new ways especially through all your senses, which really speaks to her thoughts on equity. Adding this exhibition to Bemis Center’s history of originating innovative exhibitions, while also tying into the new Sound Art and Experimental Music Program, is exciting.”

Root of Two will be accompanied by a scholarly exhibition catalogue, published by X Artists’ Books and designed by Omnivore. Contributors include, Rachel Adams, Chris Cook, Maya Dunietz, Michael Pisaro, Galit Eilat, Ariel Ashbel, Chen Tamir, Marcella Lista, Ran Kasmy Ilan and Keren Rosenbaum.

RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Maya Dunietz: Root of Two Opening Reception

May 7, 3-6 PM

***Root of Two* Performance Series**

*This series will take place inside Bemis’s galleries, so performers can respond to specific works within the exhibition.

May 7, 4 PM CT: Maya Dunietz and Roscoe Mitchell

This special opening performance will feature the legendary saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell with exhibiting artist Maya Dunietz on pianos. They will play inside the herd of 17 vibrating pianos of *Root of Two*.

June 8, 7 PM CT: Lori Goldston and Kyle Hanson

This two-set performance will include Lori Goldston on solo-improvised cello and Kyle Hanson, a non-traditional accordionist and composer.

August 11, 7 PM CT: The Fugu Plan

Fronted by the elusive vocalist/composer YUKA, and accompanied by master musician Shanir Ezra Blumenkranz, The Fugu Plan’s hypnotic songs, sounds, and

performances are an otherworldly live experience. The two sets will include both a classic Fugu Plan concert exploring traditions of ritual, tribal, and spiritual music through the secret customs and ancient folktales of Japan and a second set of free and wild improv set inside the exhibition in which YUKA and Shanir will “hack” into *Root of Two* in various ways, inserting objects into the pianos of the herd, hacking into the vibration system and other forms of intervention.

September 17, 4 PM CT: Dorian Wood, Carmina Escobar, and Possibilities of Milk

For the closing performances, Dorian Wood and Carmina Escobar will use their powerful and hypnotizing voices with, above, against, along and inside the droney vibrations of the 17 pianos. In the final performance, Possibilities Of Milk — a new loud kraut rock improvisation band by musicians and sound artists Maya Dunietz, David Lemoine, Haggai Fershtman and Daniel Meir — will unleash its powerful, wild, and unhinged sound throughout the gallery.

Additional Public Programs

May 14, 2PM: Exhibition Tour with Rachel Adams, Chief Curator and Director of Programs

3-5 PM: Sound Workshop with Crank Sturgeon

September 1, 6PM: Exhibition Tour with Rachel Adams, Chief Curator and Director of Programs

September 17, 2 PM: Catalogue Release and conversation between Maya Dunietz and Rachel Adams

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Maya Dunietz is a composer, performer and sound artist, working in the uncommon space between music, visual art, technological research, philosophy, and performance. For the past thirty years, she has performed and exhibited widely internationally. Her compositions have been commissioned by renowned ensembles and performers including Saar Berger (Ensemble Modern), Meitar Ensemble, Bat Kol Choir, and the Hyperion Ensemble, among others. She was guest professor as the Schusterman Resident at CalArts and as a guest artist at

the Cité internationale des arts. Some of her most important site-specific sound installations have been exhibited at the Centre Pompidou, Palais de Tokyo Paris, Arnolfini Gallery Bristol, Reykjavik Arts Festival, and the Jerusalem Botanical Gardens. Solo exhibitions include The Centre Pompidou, Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, and Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art. Her installation *Thicket* is part of the collection of The Centre Pompidou.

All programs are Central Time. RSVP and in-person and virtual attendance details including Bemis Center's Covid Safety Policy and requirements can be found at bemiscenter.org/events.

Bemis Center Gallery Hours: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; Thursday 11:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.

SUPPORT

Maya Dunietz: Root of Two is generously supported by commissioning sponsor, VIA Art Fund. The exhibition is also supported, in part, by the Albert and Eleanor Feldman Family Israel Foundation, Artis, the Nebraska Arts Council and Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and Omaha Steaks.

Exhibition and Public Program Admission: Free

Gallery materials are available in English and Spanish.

Access details can be found at bemiscenter.org/accessibility.

For more information about Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, visit bemiscenter.org.

About Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts

Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts facilitates the creation, presentation, and understanding of contemporary art through an international residency program, exhibitions, and educational programs to inspire an open and diverse dialogue on the critical issues that give shape and meaning to the human condition.

PRESS CONTACT

Rachel Adams, Chief Curator and Director of Programs

rachel@bemiscenter.org / 402.341.7130

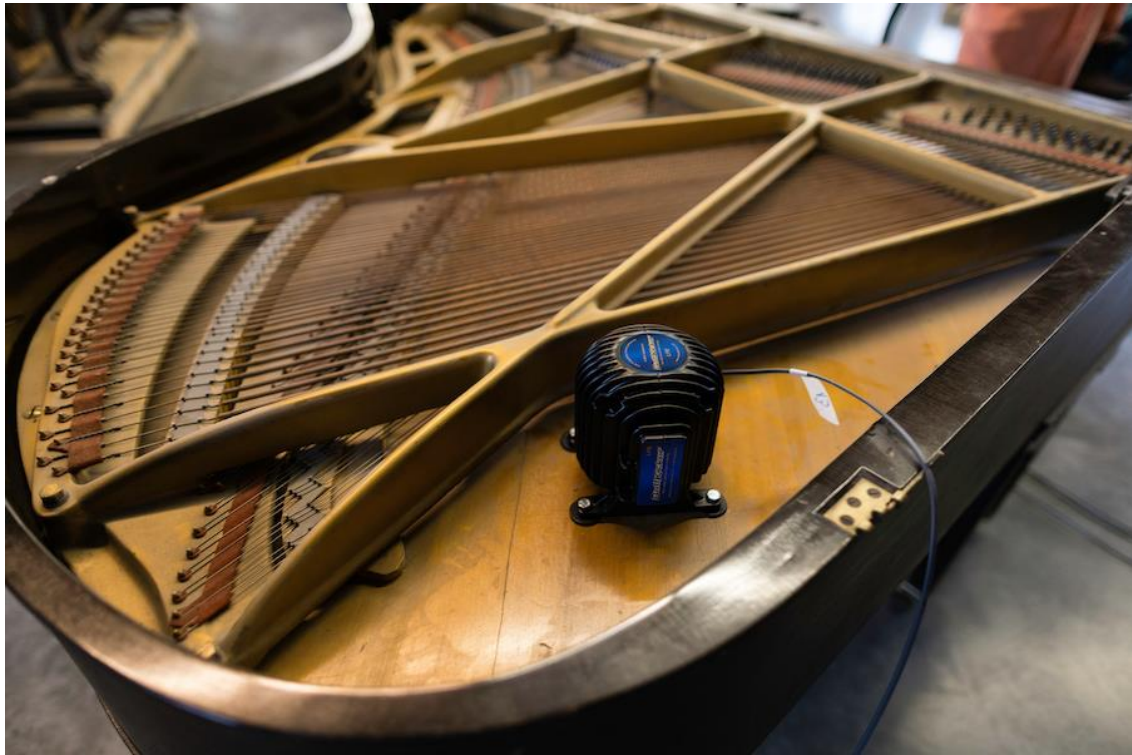
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Maya Dunietz. Photo by Dudi Hasson courtesy of the artist.



Detail of one of the 17 pianos used in the the Exhibition. Maya Dunietz received the collection of pianos from various donors in Omaha, Nebraska. Photo by Colin Conces.



Maya Dunietz and David Lemoine, Bemis 2021 Artist-in-Residence. Photo by Colin Conces.

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Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts | 724 S. 12th Street | Omaha, Nebraska, 68102

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