

Receiver

Appau Jnr Boayke-Yiadam,
Frazer Merrick, Joe Namy,
Nastassja Simensky

Sunday 2nd October to
Friday 23rd December 2022



'Receiver' brings together four artists who consider sound in relation to innovative technologies, and our understanding of place. It explores Essex's historic and current relationship with broadcasting pioneering audio technologies, the movement of people and cultures, and the unique soundscapes of its coastline and estuaries.

This group exhibition recognises the increasingly vibrant developments within contemporary art practice that uses experimental sound and broadcast, as well as highlighting the renewed importance of these mediums to connect communities in the digital age. This project builds upon 'FPG Sounds', an ongoing online commissioning programme begun in Autumn 2021 to support the development of original audio works by practitioners based in South Essex. Together these acknowledge Southend's long and rich history of innovators working across sound and broadcast, from the development of EKCO radio to its alternative music scene.

In conjunction with this exhibition, Southend's Central Museum will celebrate the centenary of EKCO Radio with a collection display opening 24th November 2022 of their original radio and television cabinets, some of which were commissioned from famous architects such as Serge Chermayeff and Wells Coates.

For 'Receiver', new commissions by the artists respond to key themes:

Appau Jnr Boayke-Yiadom has created a new installation titled *During: Electric Current 2022* where people are welcome to contribute a music track, spoken work, conversation or any form of sound recording they have not heard in a while or are eager to share. All formats are welcome, including Vinyl, CDs, Cassette Tape and MP3s, to bring into the gallery to download. Together these recordings will form a soundscape that updates throughout the exhibition to reflect the breadth of likes and interests of people in Southend-on-Sea. The material shared will generate an ever-growing playlist where each track shared will be added and incorporated into a compilation mix, creating a listening space where visitors can listen back to music or a recording they love, have not heard in a while, or would like to share with others. This playlist also generates the motion of the

moving image work on the monitor. The imagery presented within this new installation is all photographed in Southend by the artist.

This project reflects on how sound reaches us in unexpected ways, alongside its ability to create and change culture. Southend-on-Sea's rich and widely established sonic history is an example of a place where marginalised voices have created communities and spaces where they can hear themselves and effect the shape of the mainstream music culture in Britain. Boayke-Yiadom works across multimedia installation and performance to create installations with multi-layered references, highlighting cultural collision.

For a new work titled *Arcadia*, **Frazer Merrick** presents an audiovisual installation of fairground lights that transmit the sound of field recordings from seaside resorts along the Essex coastline, including Walton, Clacton, and Southend. The audience can interact with this work using a handheld listening device to convert the light back to sound, exploring Merrick's recordings of cacophonous arcade machines, brash illuminations, and the joyous laughter of people visiting them. Southend has a long history of illumination, and Merrick explored this with recordings made at the recent LuminoCity festival in February 2022, recordings of which were explored in his FPG Sounds commission, *Hidden Sounds of Play*, an electromagnetic soundscape of Southend's arcades, rides and illuminations. Merrick is a sound artist who uses field recording, circuit bending and instrument building to create carnivalesque experiences which explore the act of play.

Joe Namy explores the historically connected kinship between radio culture and agriculture in a new installation at Focal Point Gallery and as a public artwork on Southend-on-Sea's Pier. The project, titled *Dub Plants + Estuary Acoustic Radio* dips into radio waves first transmitted across the Estuary in 1920, where the first live entertainment broadcast was streamed from Marconi's Chelmsford workshop. This technology was later pirated in 1944, when one of the earliest works of electronic music was created using radio technology to dub a transmuted zaar healing ceremony by the visionary composer and creative ethnomusicologist Halim El Dabh in a radio studio

in Cairo. Radio waves planting new sounds and dreams for growth and healing.

For 'Receiver', Namy expands this idea into an immersive installation containing bamboo plants and sounds for growth and regeneration. Plant biodata is translated into bass lines and amplified along with sonic frequencies scientifically calculated to promote plant growth, mixed with a playlist developed from workshops with Southend's Project 49 group for adults with learning disabilities and Dagenham's Ab Phab' youth club, creating intros for dream shows. These sounds are broadcast in the gallery and online on Focal Point Gallery's website, accessible also from a QR code on a panel overlooking the coastline from Southend Pier, as a reminder of the Estuary's association with pioneering broadcast technology. Namy is an artist, educator, and composer, often working collaboratively and across sound, performance, photography, text, video, and installation on projects that focus on social constructs of music and organized sound.

For 'Receiver', **Nastassja Simensky** has made two new works. Presented as a single channel video work with 5:1 sound, *Ythanceaster: Atoms on the Wall* is the first in a four-part moving-image work, drawing on the history of transmission and broadcast in Essex. Radio is utilised both as a tool to make moving image, and as means to reflect upon the changing politics of land use. In *Leaky Transmissions*, slow-scan television (SSTV) images and text are transmitted using amateur radio. Through this process, images and texts experience distortion, marked by interference from radio waves, the architecture and sounds in the gallery. The resulting SSTV images will be hosted on a website and the devices controlling the live transmission will be located at FPG. Working both collaboratively and as an individual, Simensky makes writing, place-specific performances, events, sound work and films as a form of ongoing fieldwork.

For the last two years, Simensky's research has focused on Bradwell and the Blackwater Estuary on the Essex coast. Here, she has used ham radio to generate experimental audio recordings; contact microphones to record vibrations; coil receivers to record electromagnetic signals; and hydrophones to record sounds in the intertidal mud of the estuary.

List of works

Appau Jnr Boayke-Yiadom

During: Electric Current 2022

Digital fabric print, sound panels, digital fabric print seat cushions, record player, cassette player, CD player, MP3 Aux cable, looped video (10min 3sec), 27" cube monitor.

Frazer Merrick

Arcadia 2022

Sound transmitted by light

Joe Namy

Dub Plants + Estuary Acoustic Radio 2022

4 channel sound, bamboo trees, biodata sonification sensor, bass synth, contact mic, transparent window vinyl, laser cut Perspex sheet

Nastassja Simensky

Ythanceaster: Atoms on the Wall 2022

HD video with multichannel sound, 16 minutes 30 seconds

Display cabinets:

Nastassja Simensky

Leaky Transmissions 2022

Aluminium, RaspberryPi, Baofeng handheld radio, LCD monitor, polycarbonate and acrylic.

With thanks and support from Southend-on-Sea City Council, Arts Council England and The Ampersand Foundation.



Appau Jnr Boayke-Yiadom, 2022

Audio Descriptions and Transcripts of Sound Works

Appau Jnr Boayke-Yiadom

Audio Description of *During: Electric Current 2022*

A selection of pop, indie, folk and rock music, together with spoken word pieces submitted by the people of Southend and visitors to the City. Tracks will be added to the playlist throughout the exhibition, please contribute!

Frazer Merrick

Audio description of *Arcadia*

Arcadia explores the hidden electromagnetic soundtrack of Essex's coastal arcades with a vibrant lighting display that transmits sound to a handheld listening device. The installation uses colourful cabochon lights, inspired by Merrick's research into Southend's historic illuminations and the modern day arcade signage seen at coastal arcades along the Essex coast. A technique called pulse width modulation has been used to modulate the power sent to the lights with audio. This means that when the light is shone at a solar panel, the electricity created holds the waveform of the audio file – so when we amplify it we can hear the original audio. The colour of the light has no impact on the sound.

All the recordings are made at arcades alongside the Essex coastline. Using specialist microphones, Merrick captured a mixture of acoustic and electromagnetic sounds. Including the sounds of the people, the place and the machines themselves – such as the magnetic fields from arcade machines and the rhythms of flashing arcade signage.

Colour	Audio Source	Audio Description
Red	Flashing lights, Punch Bag Machine, Walton Pier (EMF recording)	Distorted bass sound playing a fast rhythm on a single note.

Colour	Audio Source	Audio Description
Orange	Children winning on the 2p Minion Game, Walton Pier (Acoustic recording)	Ambient sound of an arcade with cartoon 'woo-hoo' sounds emitting from a 2p game, sounds of coins falling into the tray below and sporadic cheers from children winning.
Yellow	Flashing LEDs, Sit On Motorbike Game, Clacton Pier (EMF recording)	An electronic sounding high pitch note played repeatedly, gradually getting faster and then slower.
Green	Multicoloured LEDs, Ocean Pearls Arcade Machine, Walton Pier (EMF recording)	An ethereal high pitch drone with periodic low frequency hum and even higher pitch beeping.
Aqua	Floor LEDs, Gaiety Arcade Clacton (EMF recording)	A cluster of high pitch notes slowly drifting sharper and flatter in unison.
Dark Blue	Children Laughing, Mad Wave Ride, Walton Pier (Acoustic recording)	Two children laughing as they get shaken by a sit-on ride within the arcade, with the hum of the arcade in the background.
Purple	Scrolling Text on a Flashing Sign, Adventure Island, Southend (EMF recording)	An ominous low frequency drone with an endlessly repeating note higher pitch note above.

Colour	Audio Source	Audio Description
Pink	Esplanade Light Tower, Southend (EMF recording)	Magical and sparkly high pitch melodies with a subtle reverb.

Joe Namy

Audio description of *Dub Plants + Estuary Acoustic Radio*

This immersive sound installation is made up of window vinyl design, 4 bamboo trees, and a 4 channel sound track, with an extended sculpture that is located at the Southend Pier made from a custom designed sheet of see through Perspex acrylic and a sound track.

The 4 bamboo trees each have their own soundtrack. The first tree you encounter in the window corridor has a soundtrack of a low tone or hum that is the frequency of 1,000hz which plays sporadically. This sound is based on scientific experiments that test the effects of specific frequencies on various plants to help generate growth.

The next bamboo tree has a soundtrack made from workshops with the Southend's Studio 49 and Barking and Dagenham's Ab Phab. We asked participants to introduce their dream radio show with songs that encourage growth. The songs and intro were edited together to create a 1h19m mix.

The 3rd bamboo tree in the corridor is linked via sensors to a system that uses sensors attached to the tree's leaves to capture slight electrical differences the tree emits as it grows, which are then translated into sounds through a bass synth. If you touch the tree you can hear the changes through the bass tones.

The last bamboo tree is connected to a sensitive contact mic that amplifies every movement the plant makes.

Nastassja Simensky

Transcript of Ythanceaster: Atoms on the Wall

a single stroke of a deep bell gives way to radio static
voices hum adjusting to hold the same notes
a single violin starts with warm bowed notes, as radio static and hum fades

violin continues - radio static and incomprehensible voices fade slowly in, and out

repetitive short blips and beeps

violin crescendo and electronic reverb

violin continues - softly shifting to a rolling melody

radio static returns with barely audible voices, obscuring the violin

Sharp clap (!)

(!)

deep echoing sound, like a large bell being struck
deep echo subsides, blue tits and small birds chirp, crickets thrum
electronic notes bubble and whir

small birds chirp

booted feet slowly crunch dry grass and gravel

walking stops, while electronic notes continue to bubble and whir
a geiger counter ticks, distant voices interrupt, echoes of the former power station wash-down room

a warm male voice emerges from the left '...these are some of the oldest buildings on the community'

'the community started in 1946 in this area, in tents'

'using the Nissen huts from the airfield nearby'

'but now we call this the tractor shed, where we keep the lawn mower'

'and we call this one the cow shed...' (voices trail off as they

plucked violin
violin joins playing longer notes
radio static interrupts violin
data transmissions and radio static mingle, increasingly obscuring
the violin

Big Screen Southend Associate Programme

An accompanying programme of artists' moving image by Appau Jnr Boayke-Yiadom, Kelly Ann Buckley, Frazer Merrick and Nastassja Simensky is presented on Big Screen Southend, located adjacent to the gallery in Elmer Square.

Screened daily from 11am to 5pm on Big Screen Southend until 23 December 2022.

Films in order of screening:

Appau Jnr Boayke-Yiadom, *DURING: ADAPTIVE RHYTHM*, 2019
HD Video, duration 15:46 minutes, 2019

Appau Jnr Boayke Yiadom presents an excerpt from *During: Adaptive Rhythm* which translates the documentation of an acrobatic performance into a spatial sound installation and tonal moving image work.

The excerpt shown has been mixed into a two-channel stereo mix from the original setup of a single large-scale projection and surround sound (7:1) speakers placed around the exhibition space. On site, various drum percussionists are invited to respond to the visual and sonic details of the work in a live session. Both within and outside of exhibition hours. The subsequent audio recording is later edited in situ and incorporated into the video. This piece is ever evolving and currently incorporates seven different percussionists. Furthering into the future new percussionist and different forms of drums will be incorporated each time the work is exhibited in a surround sound format.

The segment of this project screened on Big Screen Southend shows the Japanese percussive Taiko drum played by Aki and was made is a response to the Musical Instrument Collection of

the Horniman Museum, London.

Kelly Ann Buckley, *Med Selkies (Det ar som morkast innan gryingen) / With Mermaids (It's Is Darkest Before Dawn)*, 2022
HD Video, duration 10:07 minutes, 2022

Med Selkies (Det ar som morkast innan gryingen), or *With Mermaids (It's Is Darkest Before Dawn)*, is an audio-visual work which is developed from a live performance created by Kelly Ann Buckley for the FPG Sounds event 'Control Voltage' in February 2022. As part of this performance, Buckley experimented on stage with water, live sampling and looping it into a sonic experimental piece. The work is continuation of her recent commission as part of FPG Sounds titled 'Echoes In the Fossils'.

A transcript of the original story and poem informing the video work can download and read by clicking here.

<https://www.fpg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Med-Selkies-Det-ar-som-morkast-innan-gryingen-With-Mermaids-Its-Is-Darkest-Before-Dawn.pdf>

Original story and poem: Kelly Ann Buckley
Poetry developmental editor/contributing writer: TJ Keenan
Music composition and sound design: Kelly Ann Buckley

Frazer Merrick, *Electromagnetic Fields of Clacton Arcades*, 2019
HD Video, duration 03:23 minutes

Electromagnetic Fields of Clacton Arcades shows a collection close-up shots of arcade machines around the coastal resort of Clacton. Using a variety of electromagnetic microphones, Merrick listens to the lights of the animated lighting displays from arcade machines, rides and signage.

Frazer Merrick, *Clarkes Fish and Chip Shop*, 2022
HD Video, duration 00:33 minutes

Frazer Merrick, *Las Vegas Arcade*, 2022
HD Video, duration 00:24 minutes

Frazer Merrick, *Submerge Installation*, 2022
HD Video, duration 00:23 minutes

Frazer Merrick, *Promenade See Saw*, 2022
HD Video, duration 00:23 minutes

Frazer Merrick, *Promenade Light Tower*, 2022
HD Video, duration 00:20 minutes

Clarkes Fish and Chip Shop, Las Vegas Arcade and Promenade Light Tower were all recorded during Merrick's commission for FPG Sounds, *Hidden Sounds of Play*. Each of these individually titled films show the hidden soundtrack of the vibrant signage that illuminates Southend in the evening. *Submerge Installation and Promenade See Saw* also form part of the same work, with these films documenting public interactive light art installations that formed part of Southend's Luminocity festival in February 2022. All these films mix acoustic sound with electromagnetic sound, allowing the listener to bridge the gap between the two aural planes and hear the lights in the context of their surroundings, such as the people and the place.

Colloquy, HD video with stereo sound,
5 minutes 57 seconds

Built during the interregnum at Chatham in 1654, The London formed part of the English Squadron sent to collect Charles II from the Netherlands and restore him to the throne in an attempt to stem the political crisis following the death of Cromwell. In 1665, The London sank after a gunpowder explosion whilst leaving Chatham. The wreck of the 'London' lies in two parts just 400m apart, close to commercial shipping lanes in the Thames Estuary at Southend.

The estuary is defined, traversed and shaped by precise routes, a process by which matter is turned over; a simultaneous exposing and burying. Dredging operations deepen the shipping channel in the Thames Estuary to make way for the largest container ships in the world. Displaced silt and aggregates obscure the water column whilst above hard core for the urban regeneration of London is transported up-river, remaking social and material stratification. Sonar and geophysical surveys offer up an expansive, though imprecise and fragmented map of the seabed. Penetrating the opaque body of water, this digital view generates a two-dimensional compression. Devoid of a horizon it offers only an illusion of perspective, skewed by data knitted together to

reveal evidence of the past and provide data for strategic projections of the political, economic, social and environmental future. Machine vision and data mining for corporate analysis pushes against local and situated knowledge of those who live and work in the inter-tidal zone.

Nastassja Simensky produced this work in 2014. Composer William Frampton wrote a composition in five movements, scored for string quartet and soprano using the numeric data from hydrographic scans of the 'London' as a source material, extracts from Samuel Pepys diary and fieldnotes from archaeologists excavating the wreck. The composition was performed by the Ligeti Quartet from the local cockle boat, Indianna, as it drifted across the breadth of the wreck, connecting the two sites.

Thanks to Graham Harwood, Steve Meddle, Mylo Browne, John Hannon, William Frampton, Rachel Duckett and Ligeti Quartet.

About the artists

Appau Jnr Boakye-Yiadom works across multimedia installation and performance, combining ready-made objects, sculpture, photography sound, archive and self-produced moving image to create installations with multi-layered references, highlighting cultural collision. Incorporating snippets of film footage and fragments of sound into works, as well as collaborating with musicians for live improvisation.

Selected recent exhibitions and performances include: Southwark Park Gallery 'Before: Socialized, Circularized, Linearized, Artificialized, Corrupt Time' (2022); 'During: Compliments', Fruitmarket, Edinburgh (2022); 'Live Art Commissions', The Roberts Institute of Art, London (2022); 'During: Changeable Behaviour/Behavioural Change (Here Soon)', Quench Gallery, Margate (2021); 'Solos', Goldsmiths CCA, London (2020); 'Jerwood Solo Presentations', Jerwood Space, London (2019); and 'Before: Adaptive Rhythm', Black Tower Projects, London (2018).

K-A-B is the solo audio and art project of Kelly Ann Buckley. She

is a composer/producer/artist and journalist. Her compositions range from contemporary songs with lyrics to instrumental underscores, from experimental soundscapes to sound design. Sounds are often found and sampled from her own field recordings. She particularly enjoys improvising with nature to create music and sound projects. Often, these experimental projects – usually documented – will take on a life of their own, resulting in questions, essays and visuals.

Frazer Merrick is a sound artist who uses electromagnetic field recording, circuit bending and instrument building to create carnivalesque sonic experiences. Frazer's work is curious, interactive, and collaborative. He has performed a gig underwater for Essex Book Festival, recorded an award winning binaural soundscape of Walton pier for BBC Radio 3, and was selected as one of Sound and Music's New Voices for 2020. Frazer is currently developing the Photon Smasher, a range of instruments which turn light into sound.

Joe Namy is an artist and educator, often working collaboratively across mediums - in sound, performance, sculpture, and video. Namy's projects focus on social constructs of music and organized sound, like the pageantry and politics of opera, gender dynamics of bass, colours and tones of militarization, migration patterns of instruments, and the complexities of translation in all this - from language to language, from score to sound, from drum to dance. He hosts a monthly DJ residency on Radio alHara called Rhythm on Rhythm; and is currently artist in residence for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham setting up the Becontree Broadcasting Station, an online radio station serving the Becontree estate.

Nastassja Simensky is an artist who often works collaboratively to make writing, place-specific performances, events, sound work and films as a form of ongoing fieldwork. Leaky Transmissions is an ongoing body of artwork and research Nastassja is developing through a PhD at the Slade exploring changing land-use and the potential of collaborative fieldwork involving artists and archaeologists. Commissions and residencies include: artist-in-residence at West Dean College; commission for Radar, Loughborough; SHERDS, Nottingham Contemporary; Zu Gast bei den KunstVereinenRuhr, Urbane Kunst Ruhr; Brightspot, Diaspore Project Space; Material Culture Unearthed, In-situ

Brierfield; Radiophrenia, Centre for Contemporary Art Glasgow; Estuary Festival: Points of Departure; Fictive Dreams, ICA Singapore.

Thanks

From Joe Namy:

Project 49, Ab Phab Youth Club, Somerset House Studios
Makerversity, Clatters Machines, Spad Electronics, Laura Trevail,
Tom Richards, Becontree Broadcasting Station

From Nastassja Simensky:

Warren Harper, The Othona Community, Rebecca Lee, Angenita
Teekens, Malcolm Hardy, Hannah Wallis, Hugh Nicholson, Ian
Bartlett, Jim Brouwer, and the Chapel of St. Peter on-the-Wall.

Chapel performance of Atoms on the Wall - The Keeling Curve
Audio from Rings on Water - Nastassja Simensky and Rebecca
Lee

From Focal Point Gallery:

Ben Avery, Shaun Badham, Maddie Banwell, Simeon Corless,
Hayley Dixon, Alessia Franchi, Josh Langan, Anna Nesbitt,
James Ravinet, Tom Richards, Hazel Sankey, Paul Siggins, Kana
Waiwaiku, David Watkins, and all the Artists.

Relaxed Times

We operate a lights up relaxed time every Thursday and Sunday between 11am and 12pm when the exhibition is adapted to be brighter if generally dimly lit for artistic or preservation purposes, and open specifically for visitors with autism, Tourette's or anyone who may benefit from a relaxed attitude towards movement and noise making or a lighter environment. Amendments to sound will also be made.

Digifest 2022

Saturday 22 October to Friday 28 October 2022

Join us for this year's Digifest celebrations! All workshops are FREE or low cost and open to all abilities. The 2022 programme is set to inspire you to explore creativeness through the ever-growing digital world. Taking inspiration from our new exhibition; 'Receiver', we aim to develop artistic ideas through moving image, music and sound.

For more information visit: <https://www.fpg.org.uk/event/digifest-2022/>

Railway Bridge Commission: 'ESSEX @WAY from keyboard?' by Georg Morl

On Southend High Street until 23rd October

Focal Point Gallery is pleased to present a new temporary public artwork by Essex-based artist George Morl with Elm Class of Nancealverne School in Penzance, consisting of two new site-specific works for the annual railway bridge commission on Southend High Street. Reflecting on 100 years of radio broadcasting in the county and Southend becoming a 'Gigabit City', 'ESSEX @WAY from keyboard?' is a digital collage that illustrates the importance of communication devices and online communities for disabled and neurodivergent people.

About Focal Point Gallery:

Focal Point Gallery supports the production and presentation of new and recent contemporary art that challenges us to think and feel differently about locality, our sense of self and the importance of communities. Our wide-ranging and pioneering artistic programme is relevant to local and national audiences alike, through exploring current concerns that also resonate internationally. Based in Southend-on-Sea on the Thames Estuary, FPG's activities take place in locations across the region with our reach extended by working collaboratively with like-minded partners.

As a key focus of our output, Focal Point Gallery's learning programme aims to engage people of all ages in current debates around contemporary art, and looks to extend and develop new audiences. We consider the philosophies and working methods of the artists in our exhibitions programme as the starting point for inspiration, aspiration and discussion in the community. On this basis, the gallery seeks to proactively engage with a wide range of local community groups, schools, young people and children.

Focal Point Gallery also curates and commissions an on-going programme of artist moving image, screened daily on Big Screen Southend; a permanent outdoor video facility located adjacent to our main gallery space in Elmer Square.

Donate

Focal Point Gallery is a not-for-profit organisation, which relies on support from grant-giving bodies, trusts, businesses and individuals for its exhibition, learning and public programmes. All donations directly support these programmes and our ambition to support great art across Essex.

www.fpg.org.uk



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