

Drum Listens to Heart: Part II

Curated by Anthony Huberman

Organized by Diego Villalobos

CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art

Part II: November 9 - December 17, 2022

→ **Exhibition Overview**

Drum Listens to Heart: Part II is the second part of a three-part exhibition, and this part presents several video-based works. The series brings together an international roster of artists exploring rhythm, pulse, music, cultural history, healing, power, freedom, and control.

→ **About *Drum Listens to Heart***

This exhibition, along with the accompanying performances and programming, weaves together various forms of **percussion**—physical and socio-political, literal and metaphorical. Together, the works juxtapose instances of physical impact and vibration with forms of command, emancipation, and community-building.

Drum Listens to Heart is centered around an action foundational to human existence: to strike an object against another. The simple act of beating is not only a tool for fabrication and mark-making, but also for oppression and control—to strike or to beat down. In opposition, *the beat* has also been used as a means to break free, to express independence, and to establish language in the face of oppression. Without needing words or images, the percussive can threaten forms of authority and voice a powerful demand for freedom.

→ **For Reference**

Source: [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)

“Percussion”: per·cus·sion | \ pər-ˈkə-shən

1: the act of percussing: such as

a: the striking of a percussion cap so as to set off the charge in a firearm

b: the beating or striking of a musical instrument

c: the act or technique of tapping the surface of a body part to learn the condition of the parts beneath by the resultant sound

2: the striking of sound on the ear

3: percussion instruments that form a section of a band or orchestra

“Polyrhythmic”: poly·rhythm | \ ˈpā-lē-ri-thəm \

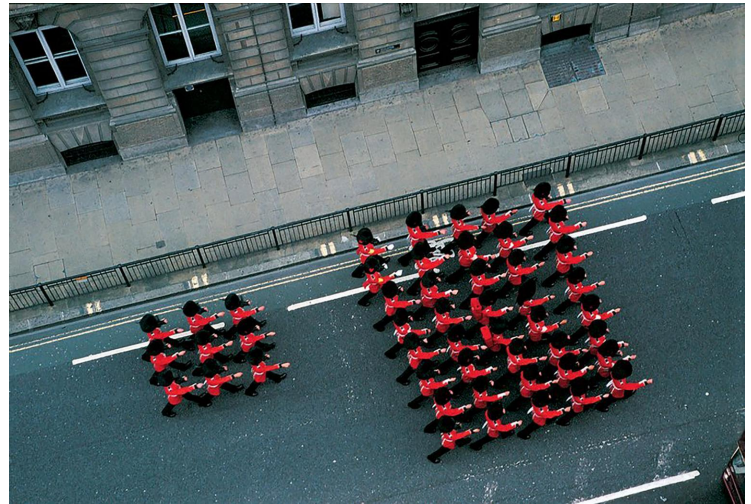
1: the simultaneous combination of contrasting rhythms in music

→ **About the Artists**

Part II Artists:

Francis Alÿs,
(b. 1959, Antwerp, Belgium)

Guards opens with a scene of a single British Guard pacing through the streets of London. This soldier is joined by a second, who magnetically “snaps into formation” with him. They attract more and more soldiers as they march through the city, eventually uniting sixty-four soldiers. Bit by bit, the *polyrhythms* of independent bodies are transformed into a single meter of a military march.



Guards, 2004

Installation composed of *Guards*, single channel video projection, 30 min, color, sound; and *Shoeshine*, annex video on monitor, 32:49 min (loop), color, sound.

American Ledger No. 1, 2022

Performance score on flag, dimensions variable.



Raven Chacon (b. 1977, Fort Defiance)

This piece visually mimics the layout of the American flag. It presents a *score*, or an arrangement or plan for making a piece of music or a performance. This score is based on the story of the founding of the United States, including moments of contact, violence, building, erasure, destruction, and rebirth. Chacon’s score suggests that stories, like music, do not have to be told in the same way forever. Within notation there is room to reconsider, reinterpret, and revolutionize.

Theaster Gates (b. 1973, Chicago, USA)

Gone are the Days of Shelter and Martyr, 2014
Single-channel color video, 6 minutes 31 seconds

This video is set in a debris-filled church. The St. Laurence Catholic Church once stood on the South Side of Chicago, where the artist Theaster Gates has centered his work as an urban planner. He also leads a musical ensemble called The Black Monks. Their voices fill the sanctuary in this video, accompanied by the sound of a mournful cello. During their performance, they flip heavy broken doors. These crash to the ground with resounding thuds, reanimating the abandoned church with raw percussive force.



The Third Part of the Third Measure, 2017
HD, color, sound, 43 minutes, 43 seconds



The Otolith Group
(Founded 2002, London, UK)

This video opens with a male actor reading a speech. The address was originally delivered at Northwestern University by a composer and musician, Julius Eastman. The musical compositions he would perform that night have controversial titles—Crazy N*****, Evil N*****, and Gay Guerrilla. The speech addresses his reasons for giving these titles. After the actor finishes reading, four pianists begin playing Eastman's works. They sit at shiny black baby grand pianos as though they are behind the control board of a spaceship. The four pianists are the “Gay Guerrillas” Eastman discussed in his speech: queer fighters from the future who give courage and fortitude as we face continued horrors including disease and police violence.

Lucy Raven (b. 1977, Tucson, USA)

Shape Notes, 2016

Photographic animation, color, sound

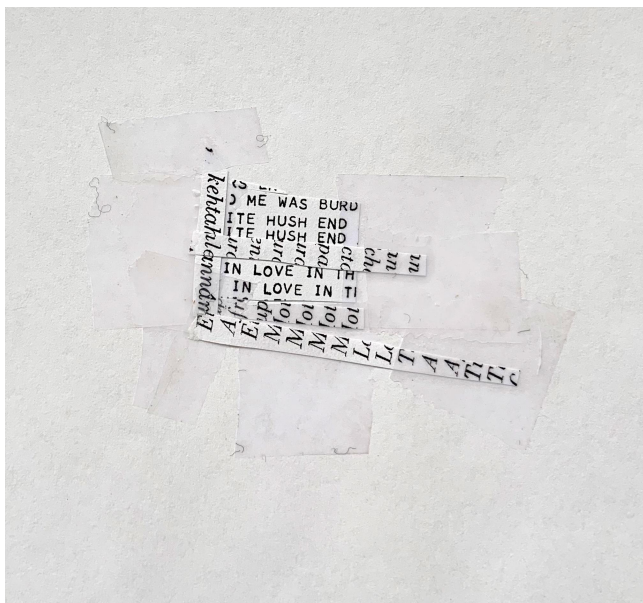
Made with hundreds of still photographs, this stop motion animation records a musical performance. Avant-garde musician Earle Brown's 1963 composition "Calder Piece," is meant to be performed using one of sculptor Alexander Calder's famous mobiles as an instrument. The hanging sculpture moves and rotates each time one of the percussionists strikes it. Brown conceived of the object not only as an instrument but also as a conductor, with its movements providing indications to the performers about what to play next. Raven's animation amplifies the jerky, jostling score.



Susan Howe (b.1937, Boston) & **David Grubbs** (b.1967, Louisville)

Concordance page 82, 2022 (detail of collage)

Represented in the exhibition by letterpress prints, 6 x ½ x 8 ¾ in. each.



Susan Howe finds rhythm in found language and inserts a break within the beat of language. Pages from her poetry collection *Concordance* consist of collages made with found words. She collects this language from sources including poetry and literature, nature field guides and legal documents. When read aloud, language starts, stops, sputters, and erupts again, in percussive rhythms. Single pages of poetry are turned into one-minute recordings she made with the musician David Grubbs. These are played every fifteen minutes throughout the duration of all three chapters of the exhibition.

→ **Recommended Questions for Discussion**

Before your visit...

1. What does percussion mean to you? What comes to mind when you first hear this word?
2. What are forms of percussion that you interact with everyday?
3. Can you think of any examples of percussion that are:
 - Physical
 - Social
 - Political
 - Literal
 - Metaphorical?

During your visit...

1. How do you experience the artworks included in the exhibition as expressing the percussive?
2. Which works challenge your conception of percussion?
3. Part II of this exhibition includes several video-based works. How do they relate to each other? How do the different works of art in the show respond, correlate, harmonize, or repercess with one another?

After your visit...

5. How has your perception of percussion changed?
6. Which of the artworks motivated you to think about the percussive as a social or political concept?
7. After considering the artworks included in the exhibition, can you think of an example of anything in another artwork or in everyday life that is a metaphorical example of the percussive?

→ **Related Programming**

Live music performances (curated by Diego Villalobos):

November 26, 10pm: Nkisi (at The Lab)

December 17, 8pm: Moor Mother Ensemble (at The Lab)

January 21, 8pm: Ikue Mori, William Winant, Valentina Magaletti, and NOMON (at The Lab)

February 25, 8pm: Raven Chacon and Music Research Strategies (at The Lab)

Lectures, screenings, and other events:

November 11, 6pm: an audio-visual presentation by April and Lance Ledbetter, the creators of Dust to Digital and its popular social media channel featuring musical practices from around the world.

December 8, 6pm: Pots and Pans: a lecture about protest and the politics of percussion by the drummer and scholar Daniel Akira Stadnicki.

January 26, time tbd: Josiah Luis Alderete curates a night of poetry readings, exploring the poetics of percussion and how language can expand a beat.

February 16, time tbd: Anthropologist Pascale Boucicaut organizes a meditation on percussion and Caribbean spirituality.

→ **Upcoming Parts of the Exhibition**

Drum Listens to Heart Part III: January 17–March 4, 2023

Opening Tuesday, January 17

Part III artists: Raven Chacon, Trisha Donnelly, David Hammons, Consuelo Tupper Hernández, Susan Howe & David Grubbs, NIC Kay, Guadalupe Maravilla, Rie Nakajima, Haegue Yang, David Zink Yi

→ A Syllabus for Drum Listens to Heart

Listening to Percussion

Barthes, Roland. [*Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*](#). Translated by Richard Howawrd. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991. ***

Brennan, Matt. [*Kick It: A Social History of the Drum Kit*](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Chion, Michel. "Three Listening Modes." 1993. In *The Sound Studies Reader*, edited by Jonathan Sterne, 48-53. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Hopkins, Candice. "Sounding the Margins: A Choir of Minor Voices." Lecture at Small Projects, Grønnegata 23, Tromsø and the Norwegian Association of Curators, Tromsø, Northern Norway, June 14, 2016. <https://vimeo.com/178828368>

Rensius, Phillip, and Lisa Blanning, eds. [*Nothing Sounds the Way it Looks*](#). Bern: Norient Books, 2021

Robinson, Dylan. [*Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*](#). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2020. ***

Robinson, Dylan, and Cam Scott. "Send and Receive: Dylan Robinson," Zoom lecture at Send + Receive, A Festival of Sound, Winnipeg, Manitoba, May 6, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNCav2i7Bak>

The Percussive as a Drum

Agawu, Kofi. [*The African Imagination in Music*](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Blades, James. [*Percussion Instruments and Their History*](#). Revised ed. London: Faber and Faber, 1984.

Hart, Mickey. [*Drumming at the Edge of Magic*](#). San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Hopkins, Candice, and Raven Chacon. "The Forum//Raven Chacon & Candice Hopkins." Zoom Lecture at The Lab, San Francisco, CA, December 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfRstOWrIbl>

Elms, Anthony, Celeste DiNucci, and Mark Christman eds. [*Milford Graves: A Mind Body Deal*](#) Los Angeles: Inventory Press and Ars Nova Workshop, 2022.

Mowitt, John. [*Percussion: Drumming, Beating, Striking*](#). Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

The Percussion as a Spirit

Chacon, Raven. 2022. [For Zitkála-?á](#). First ed. N.p.: New Documents, 2022.

Deren, Maya. [The Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti](#). New York: McPherson & Company, 1953.

Cahill, Zachary. [Theaster Gates: Every Square Needs a Circle](#). Chicago: Richard Gray Gallery, 2020.

Hurston, Zora N. 2009. [Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica](#). Edited by Henry L. Gates. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

Redmond, Layne. [When the Drummers Were Women](#). New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Wayne Cook, Cynthia. [From the Center: The Drawings of Luke Anguhadluq](#). Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1993.

Thompson, Robert F. [Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy](#). New York: Vintage Books, 1984.

Percussion is Political

Agudio, Elena, Anna Jäger, Saskia Köbschall, and Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, eds. [I Will Draw a Map of What You Never See: Endeavors in Rhythmanalysis](#). Berlin: SAVVY Contemporary and Archive Books, 2019.

Attali, Jacques. "Noise: The Political Economy of Music." 1977. In *The Sound Studies Reader*, edited by Jonathan Sterne, 28-33. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Fletcher, Annie, and The Otolith Group. "Eastman is the Matter at Hand." Panel discussion at the Sonic Acts Festival in the Flemish Cultural Center de Brakke Grond, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, February 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBG4XNzjVe8>

Gilroy, Paul. 2019. ["Rhythm in the Force of Forces": Music and Political Time.](#) *Critical Times* 2, no. 3 (December): 370-395. <https://doi.org/10.1215/26410478-7862525>.

Ginwala, Natasha. [Museum of Rhythm](#). Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2018.

Hamdan, Lawrence Abu. "The Sonic Image." Zoom lecture at Berkeley Center for New Media, April 5, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8sW10Z49eg>

●°; The Wattis Institute

Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. *All Incomplete*. New York: Minor Compositions, 2021.

Howe, Susan. *Concordances*. Cambridge: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2020.

Lefebvre, Henri. *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life*. 1992. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

Moten, Fred. *In the Break*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. ***

Moten, Fred. *Black and Blur (consent not to be a single being)*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017. ***

Moten, Fred. *Stolen Life (consent not to be a single being)*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018. ***

Moten, Fred. *The Universal Machine (consent not to be a single being)*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018. ***

McNeill, William H. *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill and Human History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2007. *Listening (Perspectives in Continental Philosophy)*. Translated by Charlotte Mandell. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.

Reed, Ishmael. *Mumbo Jumbo*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.