

Negative is an exhibition of sound, video, and their material carriers.

On the window, a thin layer of fat¹ scatters the light of two projectors, affixing the image to the surface of the glass. The image has been rescaled, doubled, and cut to fit the size of the window. It has been edited for and by the architecture. Slight differences in the projectors cause a persistent colour imbalance between the two images.

In the video, we see what appears to be the stylus² of a record player as it passes back and forth through the threaded grooves of an acetate dubplate.³ Dust and fragments of plastic gather and break apart around the needle as it moves. In fact, the video is a meticulously reconstructed *mise en scene*, a piece of miniature theatre built from pigment, copper, and acetate.⁴ As the faux needle moves, it continues to carve the surface, allowing pigment to pile up into the microscopic incisions left on the plate.

In the gallery, four suspended microphones work as lures to catch sounds (both live and pre-recorded) and redistribute them in the space. A simple software protocol delays the feed before it returns. Nothing is kept or recorded.⁵ Everything is simply delayed, repeated, and displaced. Here too, the architecture is the editor. The distinct resonances of each room (and they are very distinct) colour the sounds before they are fed through the system and allowed to gradually decay. The continued presence of sounding bodies in the space keeps the system in continual instability.

In each of these three gestures, we encounter the material of one media becoming another. The milk makes possible the movement between light and image. The stylus between plastic and sound. The microphone between sound and electrical current. All these might be cast as forms of touch.

(1) The fat in question comes from a thin film of buttermilk applied in layers to the window. As the milk dries, flat globules fuse together making an opaque surface that traps and scatters light. As a technique for projection, buttermilk has its roots in the late 17th century, in laboratories in Germany where it was a key component in experiments that would lead to photography. By the 19th century, buttermilk was used commonly in the theatre, where it was deployed for special effects.

(2) Etymologically, a stylus is a writing tool. By carving out a part of the dubplate, the needle inscribes a recording of sound onto the physical material of the plate. When the same process is reversed, the stylus becomes a reading tool, turning the carved grooves of the record back into sound. This process continues to damage the record. The stylus continues to carve as it reads.

(3) Dub plates are typically made from aluminium with a plastic coating. During times of war, when metal was scarce, glass occasionally replaced aluminium as the support structure. Unlike vinyl records, which are pressed from a single master negative, the process of making a dubplate is sequential. Each record must be freshly cut, and this process takes the length of time of the recorded sound. Dubplates are rarely sold publicly, since their fragile surface makes them unsuitable for repeated listening. The most plausible root for the word dubplate, comes from "doubling."

(4) Acetate is a flexible bioplastic made by combining plant cellulose (from cotton or wood pulp) with various acids that cause it to harden. It can be found in glass coatings, cigarette filters and playing cards. The material was largely developed for film and photography, where it replaced the more flammable nitrate as a material substrate for images. Attempts to produce a fully synthetic acetate have until now been unsuccessful.

(5) In this respect, the process is more related to derangement than to surveillance.

Marina Rosenfeld is an artist and composer based in New York and Berlin. Working across the disciplinary boundaries of music, performance and improvisation, video, sculpture and other visual forms, her works have interrogated the fundamental conditions of sound and music since the 1990s. Institutional solo presentations include the Park Avenue Armory, the Museum of Modern Art, Portikus, The Artists Institute (NY), the Serralves Museum, Kunsthau Basel, the 2024 Gwangju Biennial, the 2001 and 2008 Whitney Biennials, the 2016 Montreal Biennial, the radio program of Documenta 14, and others throughout Europe, North and South America, Asia and Australia. Working with a palette of original dub plates, Rosenfeld has also performed and recorded improvised music also since the late 1990s. She is the recipient of the 2024 Alpert Award in Visual Art, and was a 2024 Artist in Residence at La Becque, Switzerland, EMPAC Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, New York, and the Emily Harvey Foundation in Venice, Italy. She is currently a 2025 fellow of the DAAD in Berlin, in Arts and Media. In 2026, a survey exhibition will take place at the Substation, Melbourne.

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