

22 Jul – 4 Nov

2018

# Sensory Agents:

## Sounds of Len Lye Sculpture



Room Brochure

- 24 Morton Subotnick *Silver Apples of the Moon – Pt 1*, 1967**  
audio recording, 16:40 min., looping  
From *Silver Apples of the Moon – The Wild Bull* (1994 reissue) (Wergo)

In 1967, Morton Subotnick released the landmark *Silver Apples of the Moon*, the first electronic work commissioned by a recording company (Nonesuch). Subotnick created the album while an artist in residence at the Tisch School of the Arts of New York University, using the Buchla modular synthesiser, which he helped design and develop.

- 25 Ann McMillan *Earth Song Metals pt. 1*, 1976**  
¼" open reel audio recording, 3:15 min., looping

*'Based entirely on sounds of Len Lye sculpture – and dedicated to him – used as source material.'*  
– Ann McMillan

- 26 Ann McMillan *Gong Song*, 1969**  
audio recording, 9:15 min., looping  
From *Gateway Summer Sound: Abstracted Animal & Other Sounds* (1979) (Folkways Records FTS 33451)

*Gong Song* is made entirely from sounds produced by *The Gong*, a sculpture by Frederick Kiesler. The sculpture, struck by a mallet, was recorded for source material by McMillan.

The recording was produced on the occasion of *Sound Art*, an exhibition presented at the American Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York, in 1969.

- 27 Ann McMillan *Syrinx*, 1978**  
audio recording, 4:37 min., looping  
From *Gateway Summer Sound: Abstracted Animal & Other Sounds* (1979) (Folkways Records FTS 33451)

Ann McMillan manipulated animal noises beyond recognition with electronics. The record sleeve notes on *Syrinx* read; 'Made from thrush sounds and some pan percussion. 'Syrinx' is a bird's organ of sound production, as well as the name of a Greek goddess who, to avoid Pan's advances, turned herself into reeds. Pan picked the reeds and from them made his Pan pipes.'

Commissioned by dancer Carolyn Bilderback. Her company, the Carolyn Bilderback Dance Theater, presented at the Judson Dance Theater and Dia Center for the Arts in New York City.

- 28 *Notes on 'Particles in Space'*, date unknown**  
ink on paper, 267 x 244mm

- 29 Len Lye *Particles in Space*, 1980**  
3:17 min., digital transfer, 16mm, B&W, sound  
Courtesy of the Len Lye Foundation. Digital version by Park Road Post Production and Weta Digital Ltd, from material preserved and made available by Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision.

- 17 'Contemporary Voices in the Arts' at the YMHA, February 27 1967**  
gelatin silver print and ink on paper, 280 x 252mm  
Photo: Adelaide de Menil, New York

At the table starting with Stan VanDerBeek standing in the background left (continuing clockwise) are Jack Tworkov, Billy Kluger, Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Robert Creely and David Vaughn (who managed the group's performance). At left in tweed coat, a question is raised by John Hightower, Director of the New York State Council on the Arts, to which Len Lye (sunglasses on forehead) prepares to answer.

- 18 'Contemporary Voices in the Arts' at the YMHA, February 27 1967**  
gelatin silver print, 280 x 252mm  
Photo: Adelaide de Menil, New York

- 19 'TV Dinner: Homage to E.A.T.', event programme, Contemporary Voices in the Arts, 1967**  
ink on paper, 330 x 266mm

- 20 'Contemporary Voices in the Arts', *The Village Voice*, March 9 1967**  
ink on paper, 278 x 212mm

- 21 Len Lye *Instructions for 'Jump Fish'*, 1967**  
ink and pencil on paper, 200 x 212mm

- 22 'Contemporary Voices in the Arts', tour poster, 1967**  
ink on card, 600 x 264mm

- 23 Len Lye and Morton Subotnick *Manipulated 'Twister' & 'Blade' (+Mort)*, 1968**  
¼" open reel audio recording, 6:56 min., looping



8 'Sculptures Spin in Recital at Museum',  
*The New York Times*, April 6 1961, by John Canaday  
 ink on paper, 355 x 211mm

9 *Len Lye with 'Grass'*, 1961  
 gelatin silver print, 202 x 254mm  
 Photo: Albert Gruen

10 *Buffalo Festival of the Arts Today*, programme brochure,  
 Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York, 1965  
 ink on card, 137 x 730mm

11 'Gallery Exhibit of Sound and Silence May Blow a Fuse',  
*The Kansas City Times*, November 3 1966,  
 by Bill Ellingsworth  
 ink on paper 290 x 382mm

12 Excerpt from 'Kinetic Sculptures at Berkeley',  
*Art Forum*, May 1966, by Philip Leider  
 ink and pencil on paper  
 251 x 170mm

13 *Spring Arts Festival*, programme brochure,  
 University of Cincinnati, 1967  
 ink on card, 528 x 211mm

14 Len Lye 'Loop' at Howard Wise Gallery, 1966  
 gelatin silver print, 205 x 246mm  
 Photo: Newsweek Magazine

15 'Len Lye's Bounding Steel Sculptures',  
 exhibition invitation, Howard Wise Gallery, 1965  
 colour photographic slide

16 Len Lye 'Fish' Tings & Tollings, 1967  
 1/2" open reel audio recording, 12:45 min., looping

1 Jack Ellitt *Sound Constructions*, c. 1930s  
 audio recording, 9:02 min., looping

This recording comes from a two-sided acetate disc that Len Lye's biographer, Roger Horrocks, recovered from Ellitt's possessions after the composer's death. Notes on the recording's label indicate the disc is a transfer from a recording made on film stock, a medium Ellitt was working with in the early 1930s.

2 Jack Ellitt *Homage to Rachel Carson #2*, 1987  
 audio recording, 16:26 min., looping

*Homage to Rachel Carson #2* comes from the Jack Ellitt tape reels recovered by Roger Horrocks. Sounds of water and birds are heard alongside Ellitt's spoken narrative detailing memories of his friendship with Lye. This juxtaposition invites comparisons with Lye's personality as bird-like and restless, and reflects his long-term engagement with environmental issues (the track's title referring to conservationist Rachel Carson, author of the 1962 book *Silent Spring*).

3 Louis and Bebe Barron  
*Main Title from Forbidden Planet*, 1956  
 audio recording 2:18 min., looping

From *Electronycs, 20th Century Early Electronic, Noise and Experimental Music. 1920-1960* (2015) (The Wire Recordings)

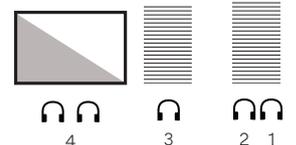
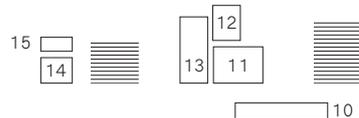
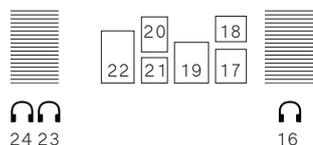
4 Ian Hugo *Bells of Atlantis*, 1952  
 10 min., digital transfer, 16mm, colour, sound

*Bells of Atlantis* was produced by Ian Hugo in collaboration with electronic music pioneers Louis and Bebe Barron and Len Lye, whose abstract colour effects create a dreamlike superimposition of images.

5 Len Lye 'What Are Tangibles', excerpt from  
 'Music and Movement', 1958  
 ink on paper, 280 x 226mm

6 Len Lye *Len Lye Rehearsal – Music Schedule*, 1961  
 ink and pencil on paper, 280 x 212mm

7 *Tangible Motion Sculpture by Len Lye*, press release  
 Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1961  
 ink on paper, 279 x 211mm



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*'Without trying, but 2 ½ dimensioning my kinetic steel figs,  
what happened? Why, the other ½ (or maybe an extra quarter)  
dimension came out of its own accord, as sound.'* – Len Lye

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Unless otherwise stated, all works courtesy Len Lye  
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