

(In)Form – MadArt Interview Question

You created the audio compositions from a variety of collected sounds, how did you approach this compilation, and how does it diverge or relate to your other work?

In the Western canon, found sounds, or, everyday object as instrument, have been a growing part of the percussion instrumentarium, with distinct markers in notated percussion repertoire all along the 20th century. With instruments like brake drums, glass bottles, or slats of wood being a part of my earliest percussion education, this limb of musical lineage has consistently influenced my research and practice. I began deeper explorations in experimental sound-making with found sounds around 2015. I'm drawn not only to the practicality of small handheld objects from daily life (affordable and easy to travel with) but to the expansive and surprising types of sounds that can be evoked. My practices of Deep Listening (see Pauline Oliveros), embodied music making, and decolonizing my sound input and sound output (see Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening*) have patiently led me to the subtleties of the sounds and silences around us.

While my divergent musical work (songwriting, notated compositions, historical and contemporary percussion performance) is rooted in these sound worlds, the sound designs I crafted for *(In)Form* are a raw expression of this research and practice.

When Nate and I began our collaboration, I had just finished a sound design for a research project centering on the emotional labor performed by working artists. For this piece, I recorded a series of improvisations with a collection of single sounds, weaving them together in a DAW until something of its own emerged. Upon hearing it, Nate was interested in the ways this piece invited him to be present and embodied. He invited me to follow this intuitive process for the *(In)Form* sound component.

I gathered sounds I was interested in and borrowed materials from Nate's installation build (wool, beeswax, Alaskan Cedar blocks). I visited Nate's home on Vashon Island to capture field recordings on his property, on the ferry ride to and from, and to record on-site improvisations in his garage with various hand tools. There, I also recorded the slow deep breaths of Nate Clark and his partner Michelle Lassaline for the Net installation. I spent time recording long-form improvisations with each found sound, seeking their truest resonances. What I used in the final pieces were often the sounds that emerged toward the end of a 30 or 40-minute improvisation. I went through multiple phases of recording, editing, and weaving. Each emerging draft led me to new sounds and I repeated the process. I chose not to use traditional percussion instruments or traditional implements like sticks, mallets, and beaters to activate the sounds. Rather, the sounds were activated by my hands, my voice, by another of the same sound, or by a differing sound in the collection.

Nate wanted the sound component to invite the viewer toward a slow and patient engagement through the space and to converse with the unique sonic properties emerging from the sculptures themselves. This informed speaker placement in the space, microphone placement in recording, and my recording methods. For example, I would often physically move sounds between microphones to record an organic stereo L - R pan, later sculpting all files to be both interlocking and variable amongst one another by simple manipulation of the full range of pan and dynamics. In the back of the space, we placed a stereo pair of speakers ~25' apart, hovering over each of Nate's domes, looping one 25-minute sound design. Above the largest dome in the front of the space, Nate suspended a stereo pair of speakers above the rim of the dome, each one placed on either end of the 7-foot diameter, looping another 25-minute piece. We also placed a speaker just behind/above the Net, where a 15-minute breath-piece was looped.