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Cecilia Dougherty: The Fourth Space & Aleksei R. Stevens: Moving Parts@PARTICIPANT INC



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PARTICIPANT INC | 253 East Houston Street, New York, NY 10002

PARTICIPANT INC presents *The Fourth Space*, a video installation by Cecilia Dougherty, with *Moving Parts*, a sound installation by Aleksei R. Stevens. *The Fourth Space* comprises impressions of place from several angles: a straightforward record of unrehearsed daily life in four specific locations (*The Third Space*); a low-tech microcosm revealing the horror of necessity (*The Third Interval*); an attentive regression into spiritualism at Brighton Beach (*Tetragrammaton*); mining desire from the endless imaginary architectures of freely downloadable 3D modeling software (*The Scenography*); and, finally, from the unreality that is realism to a reopening of the spaces within a universe of analog video (*The Fourth Space*).

Moving Parts is a six-channel generative sound installation based on the rhythms and resonances of the built environment. The source sounds fall into three categories: “close-up” recordings of building noise (humming fans, buzzing lights, municipal water, chugging machinery, etc.), wide stereo ambient recordings of public spaces throughout New York City, and recordings of instrumental improvisations inspired by these field recordings. The installation continually combines and recombines these sounds in real time

according to a set of behavioral patterns, resulting in an ever-changing texture. The complete work includes a performance element, a graphic score for small ensemble.

A central concern of Cecilia's videos: What is seeing? What is being seen? Who made me? Do you like my shirt? (Laurie Weeks) Known for her subversive video biographies that shift queer representation from mainstreamed pop cultural love stories to challenging explorations of identity, language, assimilation, and love, Dougherty's new works are not especially committed to realism, and make reference to French novelist, essayist, and filmmaker Georges Perec's *Species of Spaces*. With his characteristic experimental word play, lists, and attempts at classification: The subject of this book is not the void exactly, but rather what there is round about or inside it. (Georges Perec) Less interested in categorizing than in observing what may be an arbitrary set of circumstances such as time of day, weather, geography—the apparent purpose and associations of these “species of spaces” are unburdened by submitting them to the fictions of electronic mediation.

Dougherty's five video works consider three types of space: the physical and architectural space of streets, buildings, corporations, apartments, kitchens, bedrooms; historical space, places that have meaning beyond the present or whose meaning originates in another time, places that represent turning points in a chronicle of events, such as “this is where the first shot of the revolution was fired”; and places that have meaning beyond the obvious: “this is where I fell in love,” “this is where so-and-so was murdered,” for example. Dougherty includes psychic space in this continuing investigation, which involves representation and metaphor, as well as ideas within the logic of perception, abstraction, and poetic syntax. Dougherty collects images without preconceived notions regarding what the images might determine, but rather to locate where the body ends and where its surroundings begin; and to make visible the electronic other of spaces and places, to open up the record of what is observed and insert it into the function of the body—sight, memory, position, movement—in the creation of each everyday anew.

Cecilia Dougherty works in video and photography. She has been making experimental videos since 1985, and her themes have been largely about psychology, language, sexuality, outsider interpretations of popular culture, and everyday life. Her videos have been screened extensively in the US and abroad, including the New York Film Festival, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New Museum, NY, Irish Film Center, Dublin, the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio, and at every major gay/lesbian film festival in North America and Europe. She has had numerous gallery screenings and retrospectives, including *Vox Populi*, Philadelphia, Pacific Film Archives, Berkeley, *Thread Waxing Space*, NY, the Nelson-Atkins Museum, among others, with works ranging from essay to documentary to narrative and video installation.

Aleksei R. Stevens is a composer and sound artist living in Brooklyn, New York. His work brings together traditional instruments with found sound and interactive electronics. Stevens has had his music performed at venues in the US and abroad, including The Stone, The Tank, Symphony Space, Carnegie Hall, Chelsea Art Museum, White Box, and many others, and has presented work in festivals including *Make Music NY* (New York City), *Ear to the Earth* (New York City), *Source* (Washington, DC), and *Tevereterno* (Rome). Recent collaborators include Jessica Schmitz, James Moore, Jennifer Stock, Jessie Marino, Okkyung Lee, Vongku Pak, Kathy Supove, Madeline Shapiro, Joan La Barbara, Joel Chadabe, Matthew Wright, Alvin Scott, and others. Ensemble commissions include *Flexible Music* and *Mantra Percussion*. In 2008, Stevens was the recipient of a MacDowell Colony Fellowship, and earned a Masters Degree in composition from Manhattan School of Music in 2006, where he studied with Nils Vigeland and Joel Chadabe.

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