

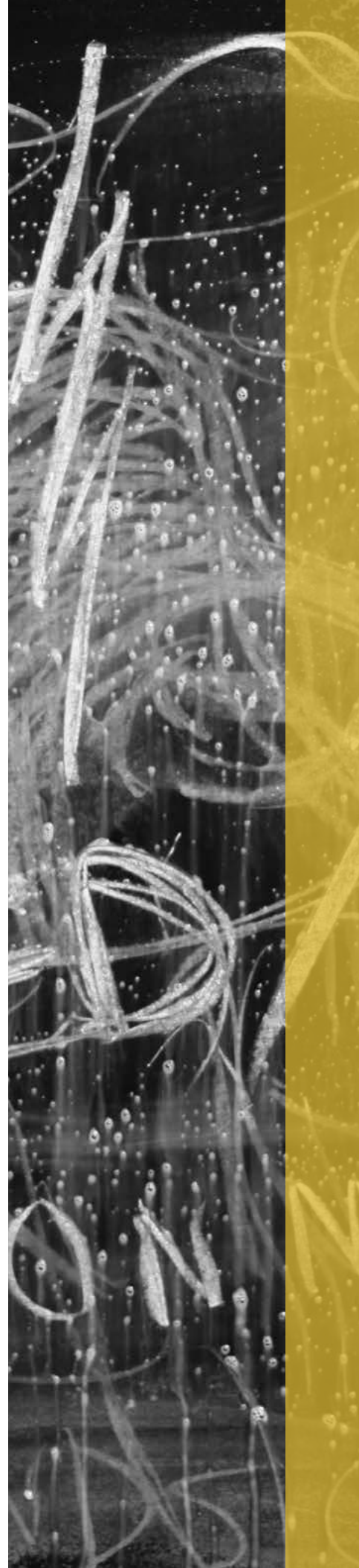
LAURIE ANDERSON: The Weather

ACCESSIBILITY BROCHURE

Sound and Visual Descriptions

HIRSHHORN

 Smithsonian



Laurie Anderson: The Weather

Wall Text:

Laurie Anderson is one of the leading multimedia artists of our time, known for her extraordinary performances that combine captivating storytelling with music and visual effects. A pioneer in the artistic use of electronic technology, she has worked with nearly every major technological innovation from the 1970s to today—synthesizers and vocoders, CD-ROMs and virtual reality—while maintaining a deeply humanistic perspective inflected with humor, emotion, and social critique.

This exhibition, her largest to date in the United States, traces the vast range of Anderson's career through her groundbreaking early performances, her achievements in the worlds of music and video, and several new installations responding to the changing landscapes of our time. Throughout the galleries, Anderson paints and tells stories on the walls, disrupting the conventional museum voice and guiding visitors on an intimate journey through her work in her own words. As digital technology and performance occupy an increasingly prominent place in contemporary art, Anderson has led the way with inventive work that has indelibly influenced art, music, and popular culture for more than forty years.

Curated by Robert and Arlene Kogod Secretarial Scholar, Associate Curator of Media and Performance Art Marina Isgro.

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This project has received support from the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

GALLERY 1

Drum Dance

From *Home of the Brave*

1986

Video (black and white, sound; 0:53 min.)

Courtesy of the artist

Sound description:

Anderson, wearing a suit embedded with sensors, taps on different parts of her body to trigger electronic drum sounds, including deep thuds, higher-pitched thumps, and light and quick staccato effects. At the end of the performance, the audience applauds.

Visual description:

Laurie Anderson stands on a stage, wearing a white jumpsuit and white shoes. The background is almost entirely dark. Anderson begins to dance, banging her fists across alternate sides of her chest, then lifting her right knee to strike it with her right hand. As she dances and touches her hands to her body, she activates sensors embedded in the jumpsuit, triggering electronic drum sounds. Touching her chest activates deeper thuds; touching her knees generates higher-pitched thumps; and grasping sensors in her hands produces high, cymbal-like sounds. The camera pans out to a wide shot of Anderson dancing on the stage. It then pans back in, with a closer shot of Anderson's hands drumming on her knees and face. The video ends with Anderson facing away from the camera, with both hands in the air, as the audience begins to applaud.

Windbook

1974/2021

Book of encoded dreams, wooden box and fans

Courtesy of the artist

GALLERY 1 (CONTINUED)

Wall Text:

Laurie Anderson: Life and Works

1947: Laurie Anderson is born in Chicago on June 5.

1960s: Studies painting at the Art Institute of Chicago and plays violin in the Chicago Youth Symphony.

1969: Graduates Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude from Barnard College in New York with a major in art history.

1970: Studies at the School of Visual Arts in New York with Carl Andre and Sol LeWitt.

1971: While a graduate student in sculpture at Columbia University, joins the downtown art scene with Gordon Matta-Clark, Richard Nonas, Philip Glass, Trisha Brown, Suzanne Harris, and Dickie Landry.

1972: Creates early performances including the *Institutional Dream Series*, in which she sleeps in public places to study her dreams.

1973: Has her first gallery exhibition at Harold Rivkin Gallery in Washington, DC.

1974: Vito Acconci chooses her for a solo exhibition at Artists Space, New York.

Stages her first full-fledged performance, *As/If*, at Artists Space. Wearing skates frozen in ice, plays the violin and tells stories in front of projected text. Performs a related work, *Duets on Ice*, in New York and Genoa, Italy.

1975: In her first film sculpture, *At the Shrink's*, projects her image onto a clay form while she tells a story about visiting a psychiatrist. She considers the medium "a way of doing a performance without being there."

1976: Stages a variety of film performances called *For Instants* at major uptown institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

1977: Invents the Tape Bow Violin, one of several innovative musical instruments she will develop with Bob Bielecki. It allows her to play audio palindromes, words and phrases pronounced both forward and backward.

Performs *Songs for Lines/Songs for Waves* at The Kitchen, New York. Experiments with voice, audiotape, and violin and further develops her signature technique of performing with projected images.

Studies vipassana meditation at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts.

Shows *Jukebox*, an installation in which visitors choose from twenty-four audio tracks performed by Anderson, at Holly Solomon Gallery, New York.

1978: Establishes herself as a pioneer of interactive installation with *The Handphone Table*, part of MoMA's Projects series. The work allows visitors to use their bodies to conduct sound through a table.

1981: Records a surprise hit, the single "O Superman", which reaches number two on the British pop charts. Signs with Warner Brothers and makes her first album, *Big Science*, with the label.

1982: Receives a Guggenheim fellowship.

1983: Brings performance art into the mainstream with *United States*, an epic eight-hour performance exploring American life staged at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and international venues.

1984: Releases her second major album, *Mister Heartbreak*.

1986: Releases her concert film *Home of the Brave*. The film includes *Drum Dance*, in which she activates percussive sounds using her body as a drum.

GALLERY 1 (CONTINUED)

Produces *What You Mean We?*, a television program commissioned by the PBS series *Alive from Off Center*. Introduces her “clone,” a small, male version of Anderson who also appears in videos and live performances.

1990: Creates the *Personal Service Announcements*, short, parodic videos on topics from the gender pay gap to military spending, a series that frequently airs on VH1.

1991: Travels to Tibet.

Works with Peter Gabriel and Brian Eno on Real World Experience Park, an unrealized theme park in Barcelona, Spain.

Presents *The Speed of Darkness*, a solo performance on the future of technology.

1992: Meets musician Lou Reed in Munich. The two live and work together, marrying in 2008.

Cofounds the Women’s Action Coalition in response to the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill congressional hearings.

1993: Tours *Stories from the Nerve Bible*, a complex multimedia performance addressing the Gulf War, and publishes a survey of her work with the same title. Invents the Video Bow, which captures and projects images of her audiences. Begins the Green Room, a website linking her to a digital audience.

1994: Releases the album *Bright Red*, coproduced with Brian Eno.

1995: Releases *Puppet Motel*, one of the first artists’ CD-ROMs, with Hsin-Chien Huang. Players navigate a virtual building filled with stories, music, and Anderson’s archive.

1997: Directs *Meltdown*, a multimedia festival in London, inviting Salman Rushdie, Bill T. Jones, Bob Wilson, and other friends to participate.

1998: Creates one of the earliest live-streamed artworks with *Dal Vivo (Life)* at the Fondazione Prada, Milan. The installation streams a real-time video of a man incarcerated miles away onto a full-scale sculpture of his body.

1999: Develops the Talking Stick, a digital instrument that breaks audio into tiny segments playable in various ways, with Bob Bielecki and Interval Research Corporation. Incorporates it into *Songs and Stories from Moby Dick*, based on Herman Melville’s epic novel.

Begins to study tai chi with Master Ren Guang Yi.

2000: Premieres *Songs for Amelia Earhart*, based on the pilot’s log of her last flight, performed by the American Composers Orchestra, New York.

2001: Releases the album *Life on a String*, coproduced with Hal Willner.

2003: Becomes NASA’s first artist-in-residence, culminating in her solo performance *The End of the Moon*. The work is part of a series—including *Happiness* (2002), *Dirtday!* (2012), *The Language of the Future* (2016), and *The Art of Falling* (2018)—emphasizing text and lyrics.

Tours with Lou Reed in Europe.

Helps create the opening ceremony for the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens.

Musée d’art contemporain, Lyon, France, produces *The Record of the Time: Sound in the Work of Laurie Anderson*, which tours internationally until 2005.

2005: Creates *Hidden inside Mountains*, a film about nature, artifice, and dreams commissioned by the Japanese Expo in Aichi.

2007: Wins the prestigious Dorothy & Lillian Gish Prize for her artistic contributions.

GALLERY 1 (CONTINUED)

2008: Tours *Homeland*, a politically engaged work addressing the Iraq war, Wall Street, and other topics. Releases the album *Homeland* on Nonesuch Records.

2009: Produces *Nothing in My Pockets*, a sound diary for radio, with ACR/France Culture.

2010: Creates and tours *Delusion*, a multiscreen performance on life and language.

Codirects the Vivid Sydney Festival in Australia with Reed. They present tai chi events and *Concert for Dogs*, a musical performance at a low, dog-friendly frequency.

2011: Stages events supporting the Occupy movement.

Shows installations, photographs, and videos in the exhibition *I in U (Eu em Tu)* at the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, São Paulo, Brazil.

Exhibits drawings and multimedia work in *Forty-Nine Days in the Bardo* at the Fabric Workshop, Philadelphia.

2013: Following Lou Reed's death, stages a series of events celebrating his life and work inspired by Tibetan Bardo texts and rituals.

2015: Releases *Heart of a Dog*, a critically acclaimed film about time and memory.

Presents *Habeas Corpus*, a major installation at the Park Avenue Armory, in collaboration with Mohammed el Gharani, one of the youngest detainees at Guantánamo Bay. Streams live video of El Gharani from Ghana, exploring the disparity between his story and the US government's account of his life.

Creates and tours *Landfall*, a work about Hurricane Sandy, with the Kronos Quartet.

Presents *Concert for Dogs* in Times Square as part of the Midnight Moment series.

2016: Serves as guest director of the Brighton Festival in England.

2017: Makes the virtual-reality work *Chalkroom*, which allows viewers to fly through an enormous structure of words, drawings, and stories, with Hsin-Chien Huang. Wins Best VR Experience at the 74th Venice International Film Festival.

Wins the Wolf Prize, a prominent international arts and science award.

Opens a long-term installation at Mass MOCA, North Adams, Massachusetts.

2018: Publishes and tours the book *All the Things I Lost in the Flood*.

Creates the *Lou Reed Drones*, installations using feedback from Reed's guitars placed against amplifiers, which she stages at St. John the Divine, New York, and elsewhere.

Tours the performance *The Art of Falling*.

2019: Receives a Grammy award for *Landfall*.

Creates the annual Lou Reed Tai Chi Day, marking Reed's thirty-year study of martial arts.

Writes *Here Comes the Ocean*, a large ensemble work, for Reed. It is performed at the Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg, Germany, and the New Zealand Festival of the Arts.

Teaches spatial sound at the Princeton Atelier.

Leads the Virtual Reality jury at the 76th Venice International Film Festival.

Shows the virtual reality pieces *Aloft*, *Chalkroom*, and *To the Moon*, created with Hsin-Chien Huang, at the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes.

2020: Becomes artist-in-residence at the Australian Institute for Machine Learning and pursues new branches of artificial intelligence.

GALLERY 1 (CONTINUED)

Creates *Party in the Bardo* series for Wesleyan University, fulfilling her longtime dream of hosting a radio show in the middle of the night. Episodes air at 4 am.

Releases the album *Songs from the Bardo*, a collaboration with Tenzin Choegyal and Jesse Paris Smith exploring the Tibetan Book of the Dead, with Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. The album is nominated for a Grammy award.

In New Zealand, creates and presents *The Calling*, a work for her niece Thea Anderson, in collaboration with Maori artists.

2021: Appointed Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard University. Presents a series of six lectures on Zoom titled *Spending the War without You*.

Begins composing an opera called *Ark* (working title), which will appear in the Manchester Festival in the near future.

Salute

2021

Eight flags on robotic arms, custom software, sound, and text by the artist

Mechanical design and programming by Smooth Technology

Courtesy of the artist

Sound description:

The sound in this gallery emanates from both the moving flags and speakers playing electronic music.

The flags produce a variety of sounds as they move in a looped sequence: a low scraping sound as the poles' metal tips slowly drag across the steel floor; a loud staccato sound as they tap the floor, out of sync with one another; and a regular banging sound as they hit the floor in unison. As the flags rise and wave from side to side, their satin fabric catches the air with whooshing, rustling, and flapping sounds.

The electronic music begins with a low rumbling mechanical sound and a single chime followed by wordless singing in a female voice. The melodic voice fades and the mechanical sounds grow deeper. These are interspersed with sounds of birds chirping and string instruments. The music picks up in tempo, with regular drum sounds that then gradually fade out. There are low buzzing sounds, and then electronically distorted scraps of the beginning of the US national anthem and the howl of a wolf. A train horn blows twice, followed by electronic buzzing and clanging sounds mixed with those of the train passing. These are followed by a faint, whispering. Electric guitar, bass, and percussion are interspersed with sounds of birds chirping and wolf's howls. A mechanical voice speaks inaudibly and then is interrupted by the sound of a ticking clock. The distorted anthem, the wolf's howls, and the trumpet sounds repeat, interspersed with rustling and whooshing sounds.

Visual description:

The installation consists of eight red flags arranged in two evenly spaced rows of four on raw steel floors on either side of a large gallery. The flags are made of bright red satin fabric and measure about four by six feet. Each flag is mounted on a flagpole attached to a robotic mechanism and a base, which is covered in black fabric. The robotic arms move up and down and wave in a programmed rhythmic motion, sometimes moving together and sometimes individually. The flags wave in the air and periodically drag along the gallery floor.

Wall Text:

When love is gone,
There's always justice
And when justice is gone,
There's always force
And when force is gone,
There's always Mom.

So hold me, Mom,
In your long arms
In your electronic arms
Your military arms
In your arms
Your petrochemical arms
Your electronic arms.

—"O Superman," 1981

GALLERY 3

Citizens

2021

Clay figures and looping video projection

(color; sound)

Clay fabrication by Maria Dusamp

Courtesy of the artist

Sound description:

The audio features the repeated sound of nineteen knives scraping against honing steel. The high-pitched scraping is broken by an occasional clang of metal striking metal.

Visual description

Nineteen glowing figures, each about nine inches tall, are arranged in a straight line on a low platform in a darkened room. The people depicted, some sitting and some standing, represent a variety of ages and genders and are dressed in different colors. Each person holds a large knife and scrapes it on a sharpening rod, working with distinct movements and at different rates.

Run On

2021

Text projection

Courtesy of the artist

Chalkroom

Created in collaboration with Hsin-Chien Huang

2017

Projected video adapted from virtual-reality piece

(black and white; silent; 10:39 min.)

Courtesy of the artists, with support from Ministry of Culture, Taiwan

GALLERY 4 (CONTINUED)

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089986280348253421170679.

Ah, yes . . . shall I repeat that? Beauty in all its forms. Funny how hatred can also be a beautiful thing. When it's as sharp as a knife. When it's as hard as a diamond. Perfect.

And when we die, our bodies turn to diamonds, to teacups, not just to chalk and carbon. Too many people are taking Prozac. That's what I think. This fake cheeriness that's everywhere now is really getting me down. I mean, can't we simply walk around and be ourselves?

Funny how human males can get so excited by pornography. When they see a picture—it can even be black and white—they can get excited. Is this simply a case of poor eyesight? Is it feeble-mindedness? Or is it their amazing imaginations? . . .

They say that if you think technology can solve your problems, then you don't understand technology and you don't understand your problems.

Twiddledee dee. Twiddledee dum. Twiddledee dee. Twiddledee dum. Twiddledee dee. Twiddledee dum.

My hindsight just isn't what it used to be. The eyes in the back of my head. Zero the counter. Zero the counter the counter the counter, please. Zero the counter. Zero the counter. Zero the counter.

I keep telling my problems to people I don't even know. What is that all about? I'm a stranger in your town. Like a meatball in a wine glass. Like an ostrich in cleats. A dog with honey on his nose eats everything he sees.

These are some things that make me really sick. Just so you know. Stop me if you've heard this before. Hey—hey—OK, OK, OK. Hey—hey—OK, OK, OK. Hey—hey—OK, OK, OK. Ya got me there, pal!

A midnight swim in a petri dish. Dancing in the moonlight with her wigwam hair. O oooooooooo ah ha ha ha oooooooooo yes. Oh, yes! What can I say? Do you remember? I do. I do.

Her eyes were shining like two very old lucky dimes. The city was in bits. The years 1959 and 1960. I remember them well. They were like two little girls wearing twin clothes. You could hardly tell them apart. And I—and I—my heart—my heart was broken. And it was . . . it was . . . just broken. Just completely broken. Broke broken. As in heartbroken.

Other broken things . . . broken homes broken codes broken dreams broken records . . . broken English broken rules broken legs broken spirits broken horses broken promises . . . broken broken all broken . . . all broken. . . . Sit right down and write yourself a letter a letter a letter try to know yourself and feel better.

Cook and eat your own head. That's what I say. Death, that jerk, that crook, what a creep. Showed up in the new machines. Get the new machines . . . maybe you know what I mean by this. Maybe not. Maybe you do. On second thought on third thought on fifth thought. . . .

Death, that jerk, that crook. What a creep! Oh, yes. Yes. Oh, yes. What can I say?

Today I'm too depressed to do anything at all. I talk for myself and other strangers.

Of shipwrecks, palm trees, beaches littered with rotten coconuts.

What? Come closer. Here, darling. It is so good to see you! It's been ages! How was your pandemic? You know, we really must have lunch one of these days. Call me! Don't forget!

I mean, I'm stranded in this room with all these drawings and it just gets so claustrophobic! Stuck here with this nutty psychotic raven the size of a small Volkswagen. And I'm telling you the days are

GALLERY 4 (CONTINUED)

OK but the nights . . . the nights . . . the nights . . .
They turn off all the lights and for twelve hours it's
completely dark. I mean, this is no picnic! Then
again, picnics are rarely picnics, with all those ants
and the mayonnaise in the chicken salad going
bad and Uncle Al complaining like he always does.
Kvetch kvetch kvetch kvetch kvetch yaddah
yaddah yaddah yaddah. . . . Kvetch kvetch yaddah.
Yaddah. Yaddah.

"Deaf ears" doesn't even begin to describe the
profound silence between them. Goodness is just
an idea that we carry in our hearts. How heavy it is
sometimes, don't you agree? Thanks for listening.
Thanks a lot. Just one more thing, I myself never
need help. Even when everything is going terribly,
I say, everything's fine. I'm a liar. When someone
calls in the middle of the night and says, "Oh, gee! I
hope I didn't wake you!" I say, "No, you didn't wake
me. I was up. I'm always up up up up up up up up that's
me. Wake me. You can never wake me. Wake me.
You can never wake me."

Smoke . . . smoke . . . mister, want some smoke?

In North America every road leads to a phone.
The number you requested . . . four two three . . .
three five . . . zero . . . zero . . . can be automatically
dialed by saying the word yes or the word zero,
zero . . . zero . . . one. . . . Callers using a rotary
phone, please hold and an operator who will assist
you, will assist you. WWW dot com /// period //
asterisk ampersand / dot dot dot, interspecies
communications . . . WWWWWW dot com.

Where there's smoke, there's fire. What is the smell
of sadness? Smoke gets in your eyes. Smoke gets
in your eyes. Smoke gets in your eyes. What is the
color of cold for you? Smoke gets in your eyes.

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States
of America, and to the republic for which it stands,
one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and
justice for all."

These are strange times . . . very strange.

The republic for which it stands fall for me fall for
me fall for me fall for me.

The excited states of America. The delighted
states of America. The benighted states of
America. The indicted states of America. The
ignited states of America. The blighted states of
America. That just about covers it.

There are so many flags, and everyone's carrying
one. . . . And our current national anthem? Just a
series of questions written during a fire. But hey!
Hey hey hey hey look look the fire is still raging the
sun on the East Coast is red from the fires on the
West Coast. Pick up this flag and . . . what? Wave it?

A flag is a warning . . . the red in the morning. Pick
up a flag. Don't let it drag. There are so many flags.
There's not just one flag. . . .

The sides come together. The blue and the black.
The black and the blue. The same to you . . . Yeah,
all the same to you.

I call her pohcahandtis. I mean, where did she come
from? Did anyone invite this person? Not me!

Ten reasons this country is really great . . . Number
one. It's wider than it is tall. . . . Number 2, it's a young
country. . . . Like Gertrude Stein said, may I quote,
"The United States is the oldest country in the
world because it's been in the twentieth century
the longest." Unquote. Number 3, we invented
superheroes. Number 4, everyone is rich. Or at least
potentially rich. Number 5, we love speed. We love
love love love love love love love love love love
speed, the faster the better. Let's get it over with is
what we like to say. We love love love love love love
love love love love love love speed.

Citizens! We live in a fantasy land. . . . Um um um
um um um um um I cannot think of any more
reasons we are so great. OK OK OK yay yay
team. Yay team. Good for us! Uncharted
uncharted uncharted uncharted uncharted
uncharted uncharted.

GALLERY 4 (CONTINUED)

You never were one for crying too much. Except to show how much you love people. Accept his love now—it's imperfect, but then again so are you.

Know thyself, know thy selfie.

The country's on fire. Look around you! The whole place is on fire! CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED CODE RED.

Wow, that makes me so tired. Wildfires. Coral reefs and rising seas. We go into the unknown . . . the irreversible. . . Uncharted unprecedented. Hurricanes and wildfires. And now all the animals are gone.

What war is this?

Give us your tired and your poor. Give us your tired and your poor. Give us your tired and your poor. Give us your tired and your poor.

This land is their land. This land is their land. This land is their land. From California to the New York Island. Oh say can you see. Through the perilous fight. We're storming the Capitol we know that we're right. . . . Is it human nature? Francis Scott Key. "O say can you see, by the dawn's early light, what so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming." What a song! Say, is that a flag over there? Hmmm . . . I couldn't really say. It's pretty early in the morning. It's . . . like . . . dawn. It's like dawn dawn dawn dawn dawn. Say . . . could that be the star-spangled banner they were always talking about? Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, and this be our motto: "In God is our trust," on the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes, what is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep, as it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?

So, I smile and say, "When a lovely flame dies, smoke gets in your eyes." Smoke gets in your eyes.

Smoke gets in your eyes. Smoke . . . gets in your eyes. I am without my love (without my love). Now, laughing friends deride tears, I cannot hide. Oh oh oh oh. Smoke gets in your eyes.

Smoke gets in your eyes. Smoke gets in your eyes. Smoke . . . smoke . . . that old smoke . . . smoke gets in your eyes.

If permanence were really the criterion for success, then rocks and stones would be the ultimate success stories. They just sit there. Getting smaller and smaller. . . . Grinding down to sand . . . eventually everything will be pulverized.

I don't know why I never write about the night. When I fell in love, I was always thinking of other things. One of them was a winter sky. Another one was free. And then there was a TV that showed people who were dead. But when they said this is the way the world has to go, they meant it in a layman's sense, not in the spiritual sense.

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

In the morning in the morning in the morning in the morning in the morning in the morning in the middle in the middle in the middle in the middle. In the morning in the morning in the morning in the morning in the morning in the morning. In the middle of winter the light of the day has no color but the light of the night the light of the night the light of the night the light of the night has the color of a dead man's bones a dead man's bones a dead man's bones. A dead man is made of sun I am the sun I am the sun I am the sun. And you are the one the one the one the one the one the one. If you were to take me into your body, would I be the same?

GALLERY 4 (CONTINUED)

Change, in all its forms. Coins of bright water on the sidewalk. The look in the eyes of a newborn junkie. Formication, the definition of formication is the sensation of being covered with ants. . . . Oh, God, I've lived in England and I've lived in hell. I'm a bachelor. How you say? I myself am a bachelor. Say! What if you could talk to your dog! Wouldn't that be a handy thing? I think so. . . .

So many things haven't been invented yet, like a micro machine that can climb up the ends of your broken hair and repair the split ends. Presto! Perfect hair. What do you think? Self-cooling clothes and self-heating clothes. I mean, if all those billionaires are going to Mars, then why can't we have a little R&D money for these things? Asking too much? I don't think so, mister.

The future. The future. The future is full of so many incredible perfect things. Complications, implications, imperfections, injections, infections. There are six million other words too. Certainly enough to say whatever you feel like saying at any given time. *Guten tag. Wie gehts?*

East. The edge of the world. West. Those who came before me. I dreamed I was a dog in a dog show and my father came to the dog show and he said, "That's a really good dog. I like that dog."

Sometimes we want what is too far away. Sometimes when I'm talking to someone, we run out of words. Like a hand grenade in a lady's glove. Like an unpredictably long silence. Sometimes I think and think and think and think and then when I try to talk, only a few words come out and they're the wrong words. They're just warm air with a random sound in them. Meaningless.

Take a word like "oh," for example. . . . "Oh" can mean a million times a million times a million different things. "Oh" can mean "Oh, yes, my love, I know." "Oh" can mean "Oh, no, never." "Oh" can mean "I never liked you. And I never will." The word "Oh" is empty. A zero. A nothing.

So many things in nature are very empty. Take a shell. Or a hollow cactus plant. Empty. Empty. Very empty. Zero the counter. The counter, please. Zero the counter. Death, that jerk, that crook. What a creep. Showed up in the new machines. Get the new machines. Maybe you know what I mean by this. Maybe not. Death, that jerk, that crook, what a creep. OK, now I'm going to say the word elegant one hundred times as fast as I can . . . elegant elegant elegant elegant elegant elegant elegant elegant elegant elegant. OK, that was only twelve times. People who talk to their computers are seriously fooling themselves. In my opinion, you might as well be talking to your electric pencil sharpener. Know what I mean?

The time is now eight o'clock pm and one second. The time is now eight o'clock pm and two seconds. The time is now eight o'clock pm and three seconds. The time is now eight o'clock pm and four seconds. And so on.

When you read the newspaper to yourself, do you hear a voice? Or are you just moving your lips and reading in total silence? Or, let's assume for a second that you really do hear a voice. Is that voice your own voice? Or is that the voice of someone else? For example, your uncle Alf, or President Roosevelt, or Bette Midler? Your fortune, one dollar. One dollar, please. . . .

You know there are lots of things that are just by nature impossible. Like trying to take a walk with a library. This is an impossible thing. Futile. You can run, but you just cannot hide. Sorry. Sorry. I'm thinking back to the golden days, when I was never sorry.

When there's an argument between a human and an angel, the human will win every time. Why? It's because humans are capable of having many contradictory ideas all at once. And angels can have only one thought at a time. They're simplistic, that's it. Say! How much does the earth weigh?

GALLERY 4 (CONTINUED)

Exactly. Got any idea? Any idea at all? A guess? Even a wild guess? I didn't think so. It's a tough one.

Dreams are the music of the pause. The pounding of my heart, of clockwork. As in tick tick, and so on. Did you know that 123456789 divided by 123456789 equals one? Yesterday I heard the blood beating in my wrist! Boom boom. Boom boom. Man, that was creepy! Somebody's going to end up crying.

And by the way, I'm dragging around. My passion? Gone. Your fortune? One dollar. You know? OK OK OK . . . hum, dee dum . . . hum, dee dum . . . dum diddy dum diddy, hey . . . la dee da, hum dee dum, hum dee dum. God, I love that song.

Damn, damn, damn. The destination disk is full. The hard drive is full. The apps drive is full. Please check the scratch disk on your hard drive. I'd like to go back into history and meet cave people. They made their clumsiness into an art form. . . . But, so what . . . But, so what . . . But, so what . . . But, so what . . .

I'm a little teapot, short and stout, tip me over and pour me out. Did you know that Edgar Allan Poe wrote that song? God, I love that song. Written by the same guy who wrote the stuff about the raven.

I believe that if animals have rights, they should also have responsibilities. Why should they get away with things like stealing each other's eggs, and ripping off each other's antlers, when they have no real survival need to do these things? When they're just doing really mean things for sport, for the fun of it. Life in wartime. A walking shadow.

Did you know there's a certain kind of crow in Japan and they live with deer and what they do is so strange. I'm in the room as that one can you believe it? I hope so. What am I doing dum dum. Dum, diddle dee dum . . . Dum dum. Dum, diddle dee dum. Diddle dee diddle dee diddle dee diddle dee diddle dee . . . dum. . . I'm feeling good. I'm feeling fine. Why? Because God is my boyfriend. . . .

I'm having a very bad day today. Yes. Yes. What is the purpose of panic? Should I sacrifice a goat? I'm thinking back to the golden days when I was never sorry. . . . My mind's a blank. Like, blank . . . blank . . . blank . . . blankety blank blank.

And books are the way the dead talk to the living. . . . But here's the truth—and you can take it from me—not even a cowboy will shoot someone who's already dead. Thank you. Thank you. Ma'am. Thank ye kindly. Much obliged.

The future belongs to crowds. Your name here.

In a book. On an old scrap of newspaper. And written all over it was your name . . . this is the bitter price of your fame. Like Balzac said, "Fame is the sunshine, the sunshine . . . of the dead."

Oh, oh, oh. Look, look, look. Look. Love Dick and Jane walking in their book. See Jane run. Run run run runrunrun. Run run run runrunrun. Run run run runrunrun. Run run run runrunrun.

Love is a detective . . . An introspective detective.

Now I'll read from my address book. Here are all the Bobs in my book. Bob Davis, Bob Ezrin, Bob Fitzgerald, Bob Hurwitz, Bob Isherwood, Bob Jason, Bob Ludwig, Bob Manning, Bob Stein, Little Bobby T, Bob Telson, Bob Thurman, Bob Westrop.

Despotic as all get out. There are so many hearts looking for the new world. It's staggering. Unbelievable. Too too too much. Too too too much. Too too too. Too too too.

In the postmodern world, there is no such thing as changing the subject. A sideshow. A smoke screen. A passing landscape . . . And this town, where is it? It's a day's ride in a child's toy. You are out of memory. You are out of memory. You are out of memory. You are out of memory. You are out of memory.

Crazy loners rocked my cradle. Never got much sleep. You know, sometimes when you hear people

GALLERY 4 (CONTINUED)

screaming, as in eeeeeeeek! Eeeeeek! Ow! Ow! Ow!
Ouch ouch ouch eeeeeek. It goes in one ear and out
the other. And sometimes when you hear people
screaming, it goes right into the middle of your head
and stays there, forever. Did I drink some poison
that I don't remember now? Did I? Did I? Did I? My
mind's a blank. A blank piece of paper.

The purpose of art is to provide what life cannot.
Do you actually believe this? I repeat: The
purpose of art is to provide what life cannot. As
if it had a purpose! Hahahahahahahahahahahah
ah ha hahahahahahahahahahahah ah
ha hahahahahahahahahahahah ah ha
hahahahahahahahahahahah ah ha.

Fast forward to the swamp. Cut to the restaurant.
Cross fade to long train. Cut! Cut! OK! Action!

When you eat a steak, did you know that you are
shredding the equivalent of one hundred billion
copies of the Encyclopedia Britannica? Here's a
question. And here's another question . . . what the
heck am I doing in this room with a canoe and a big
dumb raven? I mean, a raven that just sits there!
What a joke . . .

What is fashion? The tight clothes of the Nazis,
their love of black leather . . . No wonder the Maoist
styles never caught on here in the States. They are
so baggy . . . so unflattering. . .

So . . . What brings you here to the nation's capital?
A vacation? Business trip? . . . Maybe you have a
previously scheduled meeting with Joe Biden?
Uncle Joe, as we call him now?

Why is everyone yelling? They are still very
very very very upset with the election results
but that was a year ago and no they want to just
keep talking about it—over and over over and
over how they were cheated . . . always a topic
that can take up a lot of mind space . . . how you
were cheated out of your rightful dues . . . how
someone cheated you.

I don't know why no one pointed out the meaning
of the name of the vice president—or veep, as you
might say. Even during the election, no one puh
puh puh puh puh puh puh pointed out that the vice
president and puh puh president of the Senate
is named Kamala Devi Harris. . . . OK OK, Kamala
means lotus and devi means goddess . . . Can you
believe it? We have Lotus Goddess as our veep!
Madame Lotus Goddess to you, sir. Or Vice Potus
Lotus Goddess. Only in America. Let me repeat:
Vice Potus Lotus. Goddess Vice Potus Lotus.
Goddess Vice Potus Lotus. Goddess Vice Potus
Lotus. Goddess Vice Potus Lotus. Goddess.

Heavy-duty hombres, spin doctors, critics of all
kinds. Zero the counter. Zero the counter, please.

Sometimes I just don't have a clue about who I
really am. Know what I mean? Do you really?

OK OK OK. It started with money. It started the
day Nixon took the country off the gold standard
and money became just numbers floating out
in cyberspace. Reaching a whole new level of
abstraction. Then records disappeared. Then
record stores and phone booths disappeared.
Evaporated! Gone! Poof! Never to return. The
streets became quiet because the children got sick
because they hardly ever moved. All the children
were fat and sick, sneezing all the time, choking on
the air. They were prey to every disease.

Please make sure your mask is on and that you
only remove it to take sips of coffee and then you
have to put it back . . . Please make sure your mask
is on. Please make sure your mask is on.

Pictures were everywhere and pictures began
to replace things. Screens were everywhere you
looked. Hey, mister . . . hey, you! . . . mister . . . the
one in the shorts . . . you look like someone who
would enjoy talking to a plaster bird. Am I right?

With a hey and a hey and a hey nonny no. With
a hey hey hey hey hey nonny nonny. You know?

GALLERY 4 (CONTINUED)

My background is kind of interesting. As a motivational speaker, I've learned to say certain things in certain ways. Most of my cassettes are available in the lobby at a reasonable price. I believe in cassettes, I really do. . . .

As I said, at NASA I worked on communications issues with Russians. We wanted them to use our satellites and our phones. But the Russians didn't want to use our phones because they were afraid of the bill. And good thing, too!

At NASA, the last guy I talked to had these large Byzantine eyes that never blinked. Unless, of course, our blinks were perfectly synchronized and I never saw them. I suppose that kind of thing can happen . . . what do you think . . . ?

Vee gates? Vee gates? Vee gates? Vee gates? Vee gates? Vee gates?

Ah . . . dead stars their light still trapped in time. The dark emotion that came a great distance to reach me. The sky. The land. The sky. The land.

Just please don't tell me about any more new ideas or introduce me to any more new people or new products or new colors because they're just going to remind me of the originals. They're just going to be crummy copies. Crummy copies crummy copies crummy copies crummy copies crummy copies crummy copies.

Then again the Dalai Lama said that artificial plants are A-OK since they remind you of the real ones. Ah. The state of things. And the things that keep disappearing. Pictures of things and things with pictures in them.

And then there's the audience, composed mostly of my relatives. Not particularly friendly ones. The rest must have just slipped out for a smoke. Maybe they'll never be back, and really do I care? Not a whit! Not a fig. Not a bit!

Iota iota iota iota iota iota iota iota iota.

But I live in an old warehouse down by the river. As a self-employed and self-motivated spy, I've been filing these reports for years now. So watch what you say or you could be an item in my report. Or a feature on my blog.

The only problem is that recently I've been running out of invisible ink. *Tant pis*, as the French are wont to say. I want to say . . . I want to say . . . I want to say . . . I want to say . . . I want to say . . . I make speeches all the time to myself, but they are full of despair. This black Irish despair. You probably know exactly what I'm talking about . . . or do you?

You know in hotels it's funny how immediately possessive you can get about what's called quote unquote my room and how hard they try to convince you that it hasn't just been quote unquote vacated moments before your arrival. The pillows still hot. The air still vibrating with the sounds and smells—the voices, the aftershaves of the last guest. Quote unquote. Ah yes you emerge. Into a world filled with quote unquote crud . . . new plastics and new elastics.

And I always imagined I would be a troubadour walking around France, the haystacks in the background and the cattle lowing and lanes full of flowers. And at night robbers and sex in the air everywhere and perfumes to hide the reeking piles of offal. And so it was only a picture book really. That's all it ever was. Just a picture. Another picture. Or was it a figment? Was it a figment a figment a figment a figment a figment a figment a figment of my imagination?

The sky. The land. The sky. The land.

Visual description:

A rotund, almost cartoonish sculpture of a parrot, painted bronze with a greenish patina, sits on a metal perch about four and a half feet tall. The bottom part of the bird's beak moves up and down, as if it is speaking.

GALLERY 4 (CONTINUED)

The Witness Protection Program (The Raven)

2020

Foam, fiberglass coating, and paint

Courtesy of the artist

Visual description:

A larger-than-life sculpture of a sleek, black raven, with a glossy, reflective surface, sits directly on the floor. It is four and a half feet tall and nine and a half feet long. The beak and head are depicted in a simple manner, with slight indentations indicating the eyes and a curve outlining the beak. The neck is smooth, giving way to more detail in the wings, where intricate linear patterning and deeper shadows indicate feathers.

To Carry Heart's Tide (The Canoe)

2020

Wood, resin, and paint

Courtesy of the artist

Visual description:

A gold-painted canoe sits on a low platform. The canoe appears to have been broken across the middle and mended with patches of wood. Where it has been repaired, the canoe is slightly wider, jutting out in a boxlike shape and breaking the sleek curve of the boat. Puddles of resin appear to seep out of the remaining cracks.

What Time Can Do (Shaking Shelf)

2021

Wood; plastic, ceramic, and metal objects; electronics; and sound

Courtesy of the artist

Sound description:

The audio begins with a distant, repeated train whistle. The chugging of the train increases in volume as the horn sounds twice more. The clanking wheels, scraping of metal, and rhythmic thrum of the engine suggest that the train is getting closer. The plastic and ceramic cups on the shelf begin to shake and clatter as the sound of the train increases. The sound is now a chaotic din, creating an aural illusion of the train passing by the shelf. The sound of scraping metal ebbs and flows in volume as the cups shake.

Visual description:

A horizontal wooden shelf is mounted to the wall. On it are about twenty cups and other vessels of various shapes and sizes, including a champagne flute, two stacked champagne coupes, a metal creamer, and a ceramic teacup and saucer with a floral design. Over the course of a three-minute sequence, the cups and mugs vibrate and sometimes move slightly across the wooden surface, shaken by the recorded noise of an invisible passing train.

Sidewalk

2012

Shredded pages from *Crime and Punishment*, projected video (color; sound; 10:40 min.), and text by the artist

Originally commissioned by The Glenbow Museum, Calgary
Courtesy of the artist

Sound description:

The audio consists of instrumental music combining various styles. It begins with an upbeat rhythmic tune with repeated strumming on string instruments, then fades into a deep synth song with choral undertones. Natural sounds, such as chirping bugs and croaking frogs, become audible. The deep tone of the synth persists beneath the nature sounds, then changes abruptly into a repetitive melody featuring strumming guitar and violin. The music shifts to an electronic sound in a slightly higher pitch, with piano, and then shifts again to a slow, melodic tune played on piano with violin beneath. A violin then plays a quiet, plucky tune. The violin stops abruptly, and stringed instruments play a simple, rhythmic tune. A folksy violin song plays, accompanied by a faint echo. This is followed by an electronic song with a tinny, rhythmic beat and an electric violin. The low synth returns, with the faint tones of a melancholy violin. Then a rich chorus of violins plays in conversation with one another as they come in and out of harmony. The plucky violin returns and is soon accompanied by a mournful violin, reaching a crescendo. Layered violins play an upbeat, rhythmic tune. The heavy synth returns, with subtle changes in tone and volume. A mournful violin plays over the synth, taking precedence as the synth fades into silence.

Visual description:

Six videos are projected side by side onto a long, rectangular aluminum container that sits on the floor. The container is filled with shredded paper printed with the text of Fyodor Dostoevsky *Crime and Punishment*. The videos create a visual collage made up of a variety of images and clips; often, the imagery is very similar or even identical across all six. Descriptions of the video content in order of appearance are as follows:

- Women in nurse uniforms making beds, with close-up shots of their hands on the bedsheets. The slightly grainy video is initially black and white and then becomes saturated with red.
- Horizontal panning close-up of a woman with her hair pinned up. The black-and-white footage is solarized, reversing the tones: what was black is now white, and what was white is now black.
- A young girl in a swimming pool, the water rippling around her body as she dips her head in and out.
- A series of wooden buildings and fences surrounded by trees; perhaps it is a farm. Every other video is upside down.
- Footage from the perspective of a person climbing a diving board ladder with people swimming below.
- Abstracted video of a black-and-white cat with vertical cuts creating a textured surface. The video has tones of green, brown, and white, as if the cat were walking in nature.

GALLERY 5 (CONTINUED)

- A clock with a white face and black numbers. The time is 12:55. The video takes on a yellow tone.
- Color footage of a nurse holding a brown stuffed bear, taken from the perspective of a person lying down. Some of the videos are upside down.
- Abstracted video of a textured black-and-white surface.
- Black-and-white images of a girl moving in a slowed-down motion similar to dancing.
- A pixelated close-up photo of a woman in color and black and white. The image blinks and strobos.
- Close-up video of a man talking, with focus on his mouth. The video pans across the surface of a paper on the floor in a horizontal direction.
- Abstracted video of a textured yellow, black, and white surface.
- A pixelated silhouette of a person, with periodic movement around their body.
- Color video footage of people outside, surrounded by trees, with a small building and a fire pit. The video shifts into black and white.
- Abstracted video of a textured black-and-white surface.
- Black-and-white cartoon-style video of a waitress in a uniform. She is writing on a menu notepad.
- Horizontal panning close-up of a woman with her hair pinned up. The black-and-white footage is solarized, reversing the tones: what was black is now white, and what was white is now black.
- The video of the woman with her hair pinned up blends with footage of a person in a swimming pool.
- Abstracted video of a textured black-and-white surface.
- Video fades to black, then begins again.

The Lake

Video (black and white; silent; 1:52 min.)

Courtesy of the artist

Wall Text:

We lived by a lake, and every winter it froze. We skated everywhere. One evening I was coming home from the movies and I was pushing my little brothers Craig and Phil in a stroller.

I decided to take them over to the island to look at the moon, which was just coming up. But as we got close to the island, the ice broke and the stroller sank into the dark water. And my first thought was "Mom's gonna kill me!"

And I remember the knitted balls on their hats as they disappeared under the black water. So I ripped off my jacket and I jumped into the freezing

water and dove down and got Craig and pulled him up and threw him on the ice. Then I dove down again, but I couldn't find the stroller. It had slipped down the muddy bank, further down under the ice. Then I dove in again and finally found the stroller and Phil was strapped in and I ripped the strap off and pulled him out and pushed him up onto the ice. Then I ran home, one twin under each arm, frozen and screaming. I ran in the door and I told my mother what had happened and she stood there and said, "What a wonderful swimmer you are. And I didn't know you were such a good diver."

And when I think of her now, I realize that was the moment I had been trying to remember.

GALLERY 5 (CONTINUED)

Scroll

2021

AI-generated text sourced from the Bible and the artist's writing

Courtesy of the artist, the Art Intelligence Agency, and the Australian Institute for Machine Learning

In case with *Scroll*:

Scroll is a collaboration among Laurie Anderson, the Art Intelligence Agency, and the Australian Institute for Machine Learning. It was created from the imagination of a deep artificial neural network, interpreting English translations from the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic texts of the Bible and inspired by source material from the works of the artist.

Wall text for *Scroll*:

Left:

And if there is an animal in the world,
it must be a bird.

There must be some other animals
alive who can talk to animals
Yes, there must be other kinds
of animals on the earth
But please don't tell me about them!

There are pairs of people who are
the same animal
And those who are not animals can
never be the same.
But when the animal hears that word,
He pairs his ears to the animal's ear
and names it night.

Ah, the old days.
Some nights now Noah dreams he
sees his boat leaving the dock.
It's just another day on the planet Earth.
Only this time it's with an animal friend.

—Genesis 1:26–31

Right:

We need a boat, Noah
And God said: Make it light
So the Lord could bless it.
But Noah didn't want to make the flood
He wanted the water to be clear.

Clear.
So that Noah could build a boat
That would be safe on the water.
But Noah was walking on water.
He walked on water
When there was no water.

And water took him far out on the edge
of the known world, into the unknown
Where there is no other water.
No other life. Just water.
Without a beginning or end.

A boat on its wide range of water.
Empty as a parking lot.
Empty like a parking meter.

—Revelation 22:13–20

**Yedioth Ahronoth Horizontal/
Die Zeit Vertical**

2020

Newspaper

Courtesy of the artist

**New York Times Horizontal/China
Daily Vertical**

2020

Newspaper

Courtesy of the artist

**Chinese World Horizontal/Wall Street
Journal Vertical**

2020

Newspaper

Courtesy of the artist

**Crossed Crosswords (New York Times
Horizontal/New York Times Vertical)**

2020

Newspaper

Courtesy of the artist

**Object/Objection/Objectivity
(Fully Automated Nikon)**

1973/2003

Silver gelatin prints and text panels

Courtesy of the artist

Wall Text:

A Story about a Story

I want to tell you a story about a story. And it's about the time I discovered that most adults have no idea what they're talking about. It was the middle of the summer when I was twelve. And I was the kind of kid who was always showing off. I have seven brothers and sisters, and I was always getting lost in the crowd. And so I would do practically anything for attention.

So one day I was at the swimming pool and I decided to do a flip from the high board, the kind of dive when you're temporarily magically suspended midair and everyone around the pool goes, "Wow! That's incredible! That's amazing!"

I'd never done a flip before. But I thought: How hard could it be? You just somersault and straighten out right before you hit the water. So I did. But I missed the pool. And I landed on the concrete edge and broke my back.

I spent the next few weeks in traction in the children's ward at the hospital. And for quite a while I couldn't move or talk—I was just sort of floating. I was in the same trauma unit as the kids who'd been burned, and they were hanging in rotating slings sort of like rotisseries or spits—machines that would turn you around and around so the burns could be bathed in cool liquids.

Then one day one of the doctors came to see me and told me that I wouldn't be able to walk again. And I remember thinking: This guy is crazy! I mean, is he even a doctor? Who knows? Of course I was going to walk! I just had to concentrate, keep trying to make contact with my feet. Convince them, will them to move.

GALLERY 5 (CONTINUED)

The worst thing about this was the volunteers who came every afternoon to read to me. They'd lean over the bed and they'd say, "Hello, Laurie!" really enunciating each word as if I'd also gone deaf. And they'd open the book: "So, where were we? Oh, yes! The gray rabbit was hopping down the road, and guess where he went? Well, nobody knows! The farmer doesn't know. The farmer's wife doesn't know." Nobody knew where the rabbit had gone, but just about everybody seemed to care.

Before this happened, I'd been reading books like *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Crime and Punishment*, so the gray rabbit stories were kind of a slow torture.

Eventually I did get on my feet, and for two years I wore a huge metal brace and I got very obsessed with John F. Kennedy because he had back problems, too, and he was the president.

Much later in my life, when someone would ask what my childhood was like, sometimes I would tell them this story about the hospital, and it was a short way of telling them certain things about myself, how I had learned not to trust certain people and how horrible it was to listen to long, pointless stories like the one about the gray rabbit. But there was always something weird about telling this story that made me very uneasy. Like something was missing.

Then one day, when I was in the middle of telling it, I was describing the little rotisseries that the kids were hanging in. And suddenly it was like I was back in the hospital, just exactly the way it had been. And I remembered the missing part.

It was the way the ward sounded at night. It was the sounds of all the children crying and screaming. It was the sounds that children make when they're dying.

And then I remembered the rest of it. The heavy smell of medicine, the smell of burned skin. How afraid I was. And the way some of the beds would be empty in the morning and the nurses would never talk about what had happened to these kids; they'd just go on making up the beds and cleaning up around the ward. And so the thing about this story was that actually I had told only the part about myself. And I'd forgotten the rest of it. I'd cleaned it up just the way the nurses had.

And that's what I think is the creepiest thing about stories. You try to get to the point you're making, usually about yourself or something you learned. You get your story and you hold onto it, and every time you tell it you forget it more.

Institutional Dream Series

1972–1973

Coney Island / January 14, 1973 / 4–6 pm (1 of 2)

Coney Island / January 14, 1973 / 4–6 pm (2 of 2)

**South Street Seaport / The *Lettie G. Howard*
starboard berth / December 10, 1972 / 11 am–2 pm**

**Night Court / 100 Centre Street / December 29,
1972 / 10:30 pm–1 am**

**Women's Bathroom / Schermerhorn Library,
Columbia University / April 3, 1972 / 1–4 pm**

Prints on board

Courtesy of the artist

Wall Text for *Institutional Dream Series*:

In *Institutional Dream Series*, I decided to sleep in various public places to see if they would influence my dreams. I chose places like public bathrooms, a park bench, the public library. I would try to get as tired as possible and then fall asleep.

Initially I wanted to do this because I was interested in taboos. Public sleeping is discouraged, although not illegal; it seems to violate an unspoken social contract that requires awareness. People who are unconscious are obviously very vulnerable. Also, I thought that these public places would be pretty uncomfortable and that there was a good chance this discomfort would influence the dreams I had.

Coney Island

January 14, 1973, 4–6 pm

I lie down near the water, which is at low tide. It is bitterly cold and the sand is damp. I pull my turtleneck sweater over my face. After several minutes, I begin to relax and lose consciousness. I am trying to sleep in different public places to see if the place can color or control my dreams. At the moment, this seems like a crazy idea. I can hear the tide coming in. The water is beginning to cover my frozen feet. I'm not sure whether I'm asleep or awake, so I keep my eyes shut tight. After a couple of hours, I hear a loud, rushing drone. It sounds like a giant wave is rolling toward shore. I jump up and start to run. A large helicopter is hovering directly overhead.

GALLERY 5 (CONTINUED)

South Street Seaport

The *Lettie G. Howard* starboard berth

December 10, 1972, 11 am–2 pm

I lie down in the starboard berth and dream about a white desert in which every plant is labeled in tiny writing.

Night Court

100 Centre Street

December 29, 1972, 10:30 pm–1 am

The first case up is robbery and assault. The courtroom is noisy and full of people. I rest my head against a wall running the length of the courtroom. I drift off slowly.

I have the impression that dark shadows or clouds are scudding across the courtroom just below the ceiling. When I wake up, I realize this sensation is produced by the peaked cap I am wearing, which, with my head's periodic bobbing, alternately obscures and reveals the bright lights that hang near the ceiling. I wake up just as the judge is confiscating our camera. "You understand, of course, blackmail is illegal," he is saying. But he only makes a show of taking the film out of the camera and then hands it back.

Women's Bathroom

Schermerhorn Library, Columbia University

April 3, 1972, 1–4 pm

I lie down on the couch, where I can see the women coming in and out of the bathroom. I put a notebook over my face and place my contact lenses under my tongue. I dream that the library is an open-air market and all the stacks are stalls stocked with vegetables.

GALLERY 6

The Beach

The House

Canoe

Guantánamo

A Flower

And I Too

Autumn

Red Trees

2021

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of the artist

Habeas Corpus

2015

Foam sculpture and projected video (color; sound; 35 min.)

All wall text by the artist

Originally commissioned by the Park Avenue Armory, New York

Courtesy of the artist

Visual description:

The darkened gallery contains a video projected on a thirteen-foot white foam sculpture of an armchair with a man seated on it; a mirrored ball hanging from the ceiling; and five wall texts. One of these appears in handwritten script, which reads, "I have chosen to be here virtually because I am not allowed to come to this country and I have some things to say. Mohammed el Gharani."

The video projection shows a larger-than-life image of Mohammed el Gharani. El Gharani is a young man with medium-dark skin and cropped black hair. He wears wire-rimmed glasses and sits with a hand in his lap. He is wearing an olive-green short-sleeved shirt, brown khaki pants, and gray and blue sneakers with bright yellow shoelaces. He wears a black watch on his right wrist and a silver ring on his right ring finger.

In the gallery, lights pointed at the mirrored ball send moving dots of white light across the walls, carpeted floor, ceiling, and people.

Sound description:

Mohammed el Gharani tells his story, speaking with a slight Arabic accent.

Full transcript:

Silence, then Mohammed el Gharani speaks:

So, in the prison, it wasn't allowed to study anything. I mean, no books, no pen, no papers, nothing. So I was trying to learn English. So I had to use soap to write letters every day. Like, three letters every day. So I was in the cell block then,

where I had to hide the soap from the shower, bring it back to my cell, and hide it in the, in the room, because if they find it they will take it away, and it will be punishment if they found it. So I had to use the soap on the door, writing the, the ro—the words every day. And, like, three letters a day.

Then, you know, when I heard the guards talking, so I asked the brothers who speak English what the meaning in Arabic. So when they tell me the meaning, so I have to write it, and with the meaning. So, you know, I have to write every day, three words at least. So that's what . . . that's how I learn English.

So, yeah. So I had to put some water on the soap and stick it underneath the door, so when they open the door, they won't see it. When I come back, I have to take it out and continue. So that's how, you know, learn English. Yeah.

Yeah, you know, when first we got to Guantánamo, it was in [inaudible] so in [inaudible] the guards was insulting us. You know, you know, if the person, even if you don't understand the language, when he's talking to you, you know from his face that if he's insulting or not. So they were using the N word and F word when they are always calling me. And I didn't know the meaning, so I asked the brothers. That was the, one of the first words, you know, I learned in Guantánamo. So I had to ask the brothers, you know, "Why, why doesn't call you . . . why is calling me the N word?"

And they say, "Okay, because of this and that." So now I understand. So anytime when I heard them

GALLERY 7 (CONTINUED)

calling me the N word, I had to prepare a surprise for them, to stop them calling me N word, so.

That was one of the, you know, first letters, or first words, yeah.

Yeah, it was so nice that so many people send me books when I was there. And a lot of books came, and message from people who were supporting me, to keep me hope . . . to keep my hope up. Um, it was really nice, and I would like to tell them all. So, yeah.

Thank you.

Silence

El Gharani continues speaking:

I was born and grew up in Medina, Saudi Arabia. And, uh, I was working when I was nine years old. I had to, because I had to be able to pay electricity bill and water, too, and support my family. And then when I was fourteen, fifteen years old, someone said, "How long you want to do that? You have to do . . . go education to get better life."

And I know it's not easy for normal child, fourteen, fifteen years, to travel. But my life wasn't normal life, so I had to travel, and for better life. So that was my begin . . . that was, that was how my story begin. So.

Yeah, one of the funny story happen when I was in Guantánamo. One of the brother saw a dream that, uh, he told one of the, I mean, uh, you know, one of the soldier, one of the people there told him that he saw a dream that submarine come in. People coming in a submarine to release us, to help us escape the prison. So the same day he told them the story, we saw the whole night helicopters and, you know, boats, and the whole night, people, they were looking for this submarine, so we were laughing. It's one of the funny, funny nights for us. So, yeah.

Yeah, well, first I saw the Armory. You know, it's a nice place, big place, but it's remind me that when I was taken to, you know, one of the airplane, when

I was going to Guantánamo, and it was, like, similar big hangar. And I didn't know where am I. So they, when they took us to Guantánamo, the first, let's say, six months, we didn't know where we are. Then when we ask everybody, no one giving us answer. We were just guessing. Maybe Bahrain, maybe Oman, because it's, like, peo—some people say the similar weather.

But later, you know, somebody say this is Cuba. When I heard Cuba, I was like, where's Cuba, 'cause I'm not good on geography. So somebody said, "It's Guantánamo." "Where's Guantánamo?" And somebody say, "Okay, this is, you know, Caribbean, you know, close to America." And I said, "Okay, we in America." Then I was happy, because America was good justice, 'cause that's what I know about America. But later, there's no justice. They said, "There's no justice for you. There's no law for you." So that was, you know, yeah. That's what happen.

After I got released, I was, I start reading about, you know, slavery, and how the thing happened, and I went visit one of the slave port, and I saw the cell, and I saw the prison. The way they were taking people. And I saw the shackles, everything. And it's like, similar, similar with my story, because they took us, you know, by force, and we didn't know where we going. The same thing, they didn't know where they going.

And, you know, the shackle they shackled us is a similar shackles. You know, and, uh, it was terrible thing, and you don't know where you going, and you don't know why you going. So it was, you know, it was similar thing, and I saw the, the rooms and how the, small the, uh, you know, the room, and there is no way to, you know, to air to come in. So I was thinking, I was like, "Wow, man, this is still happening. I mean, we in . . . we in, like 2000-something, you know, and slavery is still happen, but in a different way, but is still the same thing." So I was, like, sad, you know? So, yeah.

GALLERY 7 (CONTINUED)

Female voice:

Just say one thing. I live in Africa now.

El Gharani:

Yeah, you know, I'm . . . I'm living in Africa, and I, I moved around, and I saw this, this places, and I was not happy about it, so, yeah.

Silence

El Gharani continues:

And one of the time they moved me from Camp Delta to Camp Five, which is a new building they built, and the first day, the interrogator told me that "We build this prison for people who never go home. Stay here forever. And one day my grandson will come and interrogate you. And we throw the key inside the ocean."

So, and it was, you know, it was too hard for me. But I really didn't know that one day I be a free man, wa—and walking by the same ocean he told me he throw the key in, as a free man. So I was sitting and thinking.

Yeah, you know, I was in, uh, cell block, and, uh, you know, we had, you know, uh, spraying the last pepper spray, and the [inaudible] team coming up, and the following morning, they said I have to go appointment. So the guards came and took me to the appointment. And I didn't know that it was the call from the judge from US. And my lawyer called, and he said, "Now, we listening to the court hearing now. And the judge is, uh, called Leon. He will, you know, he will now get in, he will tell us the final decision he made."

So I was like, "Okay," you know, I was scared, because it's like, big thing. So I was listening to him, and he was talking, talking. And my mind did . . . went somewhere else.

Female voice:

Laughs

El Gharani continues:

'Cause I really don't know what's gonna happen. Then, the end of the call, the guard start jumping. I was like . . . and jumping and happy and crying. And he's telling me, "He's releasing you! He said you're going home!" I was like, "He's really saying I'm going home?" Then I had to, you know, go down, you know, like we pray, you know, to thank God. That's it. Then they take me to Camp Iguana. Yeah. So it was wonderful.

So, after the judge, the judge, uh, you know, the, the, the release from the judge came out, it was in January 2009. They took me to Camp Iguana, which is, you know, better than the rest, you know, because you have little, little, a little freedom. So from there, I was there, and I was thinking, for the brothers who was still in cell block, and who were still suffering.

You know, then I was thinking to call Al Jazeera, or someone outside, to tell them what's happening, because at that time, Obama just came to the office, and he was saying that everything, you know, fine, and he was gonna close the place, and, you know, the situation now is different. So at the same time, nothing different. I mean, everything get worse.

So I was thinking to send a message to the world. And the only way I can do is through the phone call, when I, you know, when, you know, when I try to call family, then I can talk to Al Jazeera. And that's the only way I can do. So I had . . . I called Al Jazeera, actually. Someone called Tamir [inaudible] who's one of the brother who was in Guantánamo with us. So I found him, and I told him what's happening, you know? That everything is bad, and you know, brothers still suffering and everything.

So after I called him, like, one week later, you know, the guards came and called. They told me that colonel wants to see me. And I was like, "Okay." Then I went there, and he said . . . he was shouting

GALLERY 7 (CONTINUED)

at me. “Why you call Al Jazeera? Why . . . ?” He say, “Why you call people outside, and why you tell people what’s happening here?”

I was like, “You know, you’re an idiot. You’re stupid. You know, whatever you’re doing here, it’s gonna go out, sooner or later, because you people are torturing us.”

So then, you know, then I start telling him who did, who did this, who did that, and who broke my tooth, who hurt my back, who did this. Then he’s telling me, “Enough, enough.” You know, he doesn’t want me to, to continue. So that was, you know, the Al Jazeera call.

Silence

El Gharani continues:

Yeah, no, Chakir Khan is a really st—great man, and I named my, my boy after him. And I met him in a jail, and he’s a really great man, and he’s a very strong brother. And from the day one, he told us to, to stay and unite, and stick together. We can face all the troubles coming to us. So we start from the day one, you know, it’s fighting against the injustice. And he speaks good English, and understand Americans, and understand what’s happening.

So he was the . . . I mean, he’s a hero, because that day, from the, from the beginning, when they just open the prison, you know, no, no one can talk. No one can stand up and tell them that what you’re doing is wrong. You know, everybody’s scared. But Chakir, he was telling them that. Even though they take him to cell block, they punished him, they, you know, they start put him in cell block, and, you know, he, he never give up, and he’s telling us that we should stand up and stick together, and, you know, fight against the injustice.

So American, they hate him so much, because he’s telling even the guards, explaining to them that, why you doing this, you know, what we have done. So, you know, he’s really nice guy if you know him,

but same time, he never give up. He always fighting for our rights, and his rights. So that’s why, you know, we all like him, because he’s our hero. And he always tell us that if someone, you know, try to give us problems, we have to resist back. But if the guards, you know, they are nice, we have to be nice.

So what he was telling us was, just make sense. So, you know, to talk about Chakir, you know, I need to talk about him the whole day and night, because we spend so many years together. So that’s why I named my brother . . . my, my boy after him. So, he’s a great brother, and, yeah.

So, like I was saying, to talk about Chakir, you know, it’s like, you know, Chakir had lot of great stories, and lot of great actions in, in the prison. So one of them that Chakir was telling me, you know, I should calm down, I should not, you know, cause, you know, problems, and this and that. But if the thing is make sense, and he would do it, you know.

For example, they took us to the recreation, I and Chakir. At the same time, but separately, you know? So, and, uh, we didn’t go out for, like, weeks. We didn’t see the sun. We didn’t see the fresh air for weeks. So that day was sunny day, so I, I decide to take my shirt off, because my shirt off, to, you know, to get some sun.

So one of the guards told me that I have to put my shirt on, back on. Otherwise he would take me in. So Chakir asked the guards why. You know, we haven’t come out for weeks. So he took his own out, and he said, “Okay, go get the team. You know, we won’t go back. Go bring the six men to take us back for us.”

So we had to stay for, like, three hours, you know. The rule is one hour, but we stay for three hours because we refuse to go back, and they were like, you know, they were not sure if they wanna bring the team or not. But the, in the end, after three

GALLERY 7 (CONTINUED)

hours, after the sun is gone, Chakir say, “Now, put it, put it back on.” And he put his own back on. Now he said, “If they come, we go, because, you know, we got, we got the point.”

You know, the sad thing is, Chakir is still there, you know? So . . .

Fourteen, I think. Fourteen years.

Sounds of crying; silence

El Gharani continues:

As-salamu alaykum, everyone.

My name is Mohammed el Gharani, and welcome, everybody, and nice to meet you.

At first when I saw the Armory pictures, I was like, it’s the same place when they took me to the airplane hangar, it was a big hangar, and I didn’t know where am I, and from there they took me to, you know, uh, Gitmo. It was all confusion. You don’t know where you going.

And when I get to Guantánamo, the first interrogator, you know, I asked him, I was like, “Where is my lawyer?” You know? He said that “You are here, and, you know, no lawyer for you here.” I was like, “Why?” you know? He said, “This is not America.” But I said, “You are American interrogator, and you are American people, and American army. So how I can get a lawyer?”

He said, “This is not American land. That’s why.”

So I was like, “Okay.” And, uh, you know, I told him the example of the Saturday fishing for the Jewish, when God said you can’t have fish on Saturday. They fish on Friday, they send the net on Friday, they collect the fishing on Sunday, and they said, “We didn’t fish on Saturday.” So God punish them anyway, because, you know, they play with the law.

Wall Text:

Definition

hā·be·as cor·pus

\ 'hā-bē-əs- 'kôr-pəs\ noun

1: Latin for “*you should have the body*”;

2: an order to the prison from the court to produce the body for trial;

3: protection against unlawful imprisonment.

Quote in Mohammed’s handwriting

“I have chosen to be here virtually because I am not allowed to come to this country and I have some things to say.”—Mohammed el Gharani

Quotes

“Habeas corpus secures every man here, alien or citizen, against everything that is not law, whatever shape it may assume.”—Thomas Jefferson, 1798

“The practice of arbitrary imprisonments have been, in all ages, the favorite and most formidable instruments of tyranny.”—Alexander Hamilton, 1778

Habeas Corpus

Captured, imprisoned, and tortured for seven years from the age of fourteen, Mohammed el Gharani was one of the youngest detainees at Guantánamo Bay. The US government accused him of being, among other things, an Al-Qaeda operative in London when he was eleven years old. Yet he had never been outside Saudi Arabia.

He was released without charge by a US federal judge in 2009. There was no explanation and no apology.

Between October 2 and 4, 2015, an image of El Gharani was beamed live from West Africa into the drill hall of the Park Avenue Armory in New York City. Today El Gharani is still stateless.—Laurie Anderson, 2021

From the Air

2009

Clay figures, projected video (color; sound; 5:19 min.),
and text by the artist

Clay fabrication by Maria Dusamp

Courtesy of the artist

Sound description:

Laurie Anderson tells a story in an animated tone.

Full transcript:

I live in downtown Manhattan next to the West Side Highway, right near a major tunnel into the city. And for the last three years, my corner has been a police checkpoint, and there are constant sirens and blockades. And during orange alerts, motorcades of police cars go screaming up the highway as they train for maneuvers, and across the street, hidden at the end of the pier, there's the new FBI headquarters.

And so lately I've tried to get out of town as much as possible, and so I've been going on these long ten-day walks. Last spring I decided to go to the mountains, and the idea was to take a trip with my dog, Lolabelle. Now terriers are working dogs. They're all about security, and they're bred to protect borders, and so they do constant perimeter checks looking for any suspicious holes or breaks in the walls, little irregularities.

I took Lolabelle to California, up into the northern mountains to a little isolated cabin near a Zen monastery. Most days we walked down to the ocean, which took several hours, and we almost never saw anyone on the trails. Lolabelle would trot in front of me on the path—checking it out, doing a little advance work, a little surveillance.

Occasionally, out of the corner of my eye, I'd see some turkey vultures circling in this very lazy way—way up in the sky. I didn't think much about it. And then one morning, suddenly, they were—swooping down right in front of me, and I could smell them before I could see them, this

wild and super-funky draft of air like somebody's really, really bad breath. And I turned around and they were dropping down through the air, lowering themselves straight down vertically like helicopters, with their claws wide open, right on top of Lolabelle.

And then I saw Lolabelle's face. And she had one of these brand-new expressions. First was the realization that she was prey and that these birds had come to kill her. And second was a whole new thought: it was the realization that they can come from the air. I mean, I never thought of that! A whole 180 more degrees that I'm now responsible for! It's not just the stuff down here, the roots, the trees, the dirt, but all of this, too. And the rest of the time we were in the mountains, out on the trails, she just kept looking over her shoulder and trotting along with her head in the air.

And she had a whole new gait. Really awkward. Not with her nose to the ground, following the smells, but pointing straight up. Sniffing. Sampling. Scanning the thin sky. Like there's something wrong with the air. And I thought, Where have I seen this look before? And I realized it was the same look on the faces of my neighbors in New York in the days right after 9/11, when they suddenly realized, first, that they could come from the air, and second, that it would be that way from now on. It would always be that way. We had passed through a door. And we would never be going back.

Visual description:

Two video projections on two small figurines placed next to each other. The figurine on the left has a video of Laurie Anderson projected onto

GALLERY 8 (CONTINUED)

it, so it appears as if a pocket-sized Anderson is sitting on a comfy armchair. The figurine on the right is slightly smaller and has a video of Anderson's dog projected onto it, so it appears as if a pocket-sized dog is sitting on another comfy armchair as Anderson's companion. Anderson is a light-skinned white woman with short brown hair. She is wearing a red sweater over a light-colored collared shirt, blue jeans, and shoes. As she speaks, she gesticulates with her hands. Her dog is small to medium sized, with mostly white fur, a brown nose, and brown circles around its eyes.

Scrim Text:

From the Air

Wall Text:

From the Air

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GALLERY 8 (CONTINUED)

All Things Fractured: Lola in the Night Sky

2011

Aluminum and light

Originally commissioned by the Fabric Workshop
and Museum, Philadelphia

Courtesy of the artist

Excerpts from selected performances

1975–2018

Video (color; silent)

Courtesy of the artist

GALLERY 9

Viophonograph

1977/2010

Instrument and electronics

Courtesy of the artist

Digital Violin

Designed by Max Matthews

1985

Violin with Synclavier interface

Courtesy of the artist

Tape Bow Violin

Created in collaboration with Bob Bielecki

1977/2010

Instrument, magnetic tape, and magnetic tape
playback head

Courtesy of the artist

Tilt

1996

Aluminum level and speakers

Courtesy of the artist

Talking Stick

Created in collaboration with Bob Bielecki and
Interval Research Corporation

1998

Aluminum instrument, electronics, and controllers

Courtesy of the artist

The Handphone Table

1978/recreated 2017

Wood and electronics

Collection of the Exploratorium, San Francisco

Sound description:

When activated, ambient electronic sound with a muted quality emanates from the table. Some sections are more melodic, resembling guitar strumming or tinkling piano keys, while others are noisier, featuring rumbling and bass tones.

Songs for Lines/Songs for Waves

1977

Video of performance

18:35 min.

Courtesy of the artist

Sound description:

Anderson plays words forward and backward using the Tape Bow Violin, then plays low, droning sounds on another violin while accompanying herself with higher-pitched humming.

Full transcript:

Anderson, speaking: This is a song called "When the Cat's Away."

(Anderson plays the Tape Bow Violin, producing a string of unintelligible, distorted words. Some sound like the French phrase "C'est dommage.")

Anderson: This is a song called "Hurry."

(Anderson plays the Tape Bow Violin, producing a string of distorted words in various pitches, some of which sound like the word "hurry.")

Anderson: No one see me.

(Anderson plays the Tape Bow Violin, producing distorted repetitions of the words "no," "no one," "see," and "see me.")

Anderson: And the last one, "I Become, Might Be Done."

(Anderson plays the Tape Bow Violin, producing

distorted repetitions of the words "I become, might be done.")

Anderson then plays low, droning sounds on another violin while accompanying herself with higher-pitched humming.

Duets on Ice

Performances in New York City, 1974, and

Porta Soprana, Genoa, Italy, 1975

Three texts and nine color photographs

Courtesy of the artist

Self-Playing Violin

1974

Violin, media player, and speaker

Courtesy of the artist

Sound description:

The violin plays a composition in a minor key with a looping structure.

The Sweetness of Music

2010

Ashes, clay, and glue

Courtesy of the artist

Neon Violin and Bow

1982/1985

Metal and neon bulbs

Courtesy of the artist

Selected posters

Benefit concert, The Kitchen, New York, 1978
United States, Parts I–IV, Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York, 1983
Mister Heartbreak, Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto, 1984
Natural History, Saga, Copenhagen, 1986
Stories from the Nerve Bible, Annenberg Center, Philadelphia, 1993
Songs and Stories from Moby Dick, 1999
The End of the Moon, Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Karlsruhe, Germany, 2006
Home of the Brave, 2006
Delusion, National Concert Hall, Taipei, 2012
Courtesy of the artist

Performance Panel Texts:

As:lf

1974

LIVE: We talked about simultaneity. He said, now
TAPE: We talked about simultaneity. He said, now
Think about what you're saying and just
Think about what you're saying and just
Say it. But I always seemed to be a little
Say it. But I always seemed to be a little
In front of or behind the words. It was
In front of or behind the words. It was
Hard to synchronize. Words would surface,
Hard to synchronize. Words would surface,
The flow would go on, then other words would
The flow would go on, then other words would
Surface.
Surface.
My violin teacher told me the same thing.
My violin teacher told me the same thing.
Concentrate on the sound, hear it, play it,
Concentrate on the sound, hear it, play it,
All at once.
All at once.

For Instants

1976

William Faulkner used to sit on his porch at night and people from town would come up to see him. Most of them knew they would eventually be characters in one of his books, so they would stand around on the dark lawn, chatting, trying to show their best sides.

Faulkner had a way of talking to these people. Whenever anyone said something he considered "out of character," he would shade his eyes, lean out of the darkness, and say, "Ah, could you move away? You're blocking the light."

United States Parts 1–4

1983

This is your captain. We are going down.
We are all going down together.

Put your knees up to your chin.
Have you lost your dog?
Put your hands over your eyes.

Jump out of the plane.
There is no pilot. You are not alone.
This is the language of the on again, off again
future
And it is digital.

Mr. Heartbreak

1984

Good evening. Now, now I'm no mathematician, but I'd like to talk about just a couple of numbers that have really been bothering me lately. And they are zero and one. Now first let's take a look at zero. Now nobody wants to be a zero. To be a zero means to be a nothing, a nobody, a has-been, a clod.

On the other hand, almost everybody wants to be number one. To be a number one means to

GALLERY 10 (CONTINUED)

be a winner, top of the heap, the acme. And there seems to be a strange kind of national obsession with this particular number.

What Fassbinder film is it?

The one-armed man walks into a flower shop
And says: What flower expresses
Days go by? And they just keep going by endlessly
Pulling you into the future.
Days go by
Endlessly
Endlessly pulling you
Into the future?
And the florist says: White lily.

Stories from the Nerve Bible

1992

Oh, it's so beautiful. It's like the Fourth of July.
It's like a Christmas tree, it's like fireflies on a
summer night.
Here, I'm just going to stick this microphone out
the window and see if we can't hear a little better.
Can you hear it?
Hello, California. Can you hear us? Come in. It's so
beautiful. It's like the Fourth of July.

East: O Little Town of Bethlehem—rockthrowing
capital of the world.

West: those who came before me

Up: the true meaning of the word "arise"

Songs and Stories from Moby Dick

1999

The skeleton dimensions I propose to set
before you
I shall read to you verbatim from my arm
where I had them tattooed in my days of
wild wanderings.
But as I wished the other parts of my body
to remain a blank page for a poem I was composing

I did not trouble with the odd inch.

If you want the odd inch, then go to a whale
museum. That's what museums are for.

End of the Moon

2004

From 2003–05, I was the first artist in residence
at NASA. I think they invited me to do this project
because I'm a multimedia artist and they thought
I might come up with some sexy techno project
like bouncing light off one satellite onto another
and lighting up the dark side of the moon. So when
I said I was going to do a long poem, their faces
really fell. "A poem? Why would you do a poem?"

One of the things I learned there was that artists
and scientists have a lot more in common than you
think because scientists don't know what they're
looking for either.

Delusion

2010

Ah, America! Yes, and that will be America.
A whole new place. Just waiting to happen.
Broken-up parking lots, rotten dumps. Speedballs,
accidents, and hesitations.
Things left behind. Styrofoam. Computer chips.

And when the tears fall from both my eyes,
they fall from my right eye because I love you.
And they fall from my left eye because I cannot
bear you.

Party in the Bardo

2021

You know the reason I really love the stars?
It's that we can't hurt them, we can't burn them,
we can't flood them or blow them up.
But we are reaching for them,
we are reaching for them.

GALLERY 10 (CONTINUED)

Label for The Handphone Table:

The idea for *The Handphone Table* came to Anderson when she was writing on an electric typewriter and, in a moment of frustration, put her head in her hands, elbows on the table. She heard the sound of the humming typewriter transferred through the wooden table via the contact points of her elbows. The vibration traveled by bone conduction through her arms and into her inner ear. *The Handphone Table* (“*When You We’re Hear*”) was originally made for the Projects series at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1978. This version was made by Anderson and the Exploratorium in cooperation with MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts. The music was composed by Anderson.

Up to two visitors at a time may interact with *The Handphone Table*. To experience the work, place your elbows in the depressions on the table and put your hands over your ears.