



Rhythms, Voices, Rituals –

An exploration of sound as a medium to reflect, mourn, meditate, and heal.

21-22 November 2024
Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice

Venice's iconic Palazzo Contarini Polignac will host *Rhythms, Voices, Rituals*, an immersive two-day event combining auditory, visual, and performative projects that invite us to reflect on how we can harness sound and music as spaces of nurture. The programme explores sound as a medium for reflection, mourning, meditation, and healing, creating a ritual of release that channels visceral, primordial energy through shared sonic experiences.

Across cultures and throughout history, sound and music have been powerful tools for building community, fostering belonging, and strengthening solidarity. Curated by Kasia Sobucka, this programme explores themes of identity, resilience, ancient wisdom, mourning, and reflection. It invites audiences into a restful space, where sound vibrations blend with echoes of ancient texts and stories of resilience. This shared experience evokes collective memory and fosters a deep sense of human connection. Here, sound becomes a vessel of care and a shelter.

The programme unfolds over two chapters of live performances, showcasing some of Poland's most compelling artists — **Wojtek Blecharz**, **Ewa-Maria Śmigielska**, **Karolina Grzywnowicz**, and **Zorka Wollny** — alongside British artist **Philomène Pirecki**. Audiences are invited to experience an immersive sound installation by Wojtek Blecharz, where sound shapes both space and bodies. The concert explores laments as acts of collective mourning and witnessing, including vocal healing practices alongside a neon light installation by Ewa-Maria Śmigielska (from the Phoenix Mantra exhibition). Zorka Wollny presents an acoustic performance, that weaves vocals through ancient Egyptian texts translated from papyrus. Karolina Grzywnowicz's Palestinian lullabies, evoke a form of resistance rooted in sleep and song. Philomène Pirecki offers electronic and ritualistic compositions, exploring the inner rhythms of the body, states of flow and resistance through sound immersion.

Each artist presents a powerful commentary on the intersection of personal and collective narratives, from the resonant echoes of ancient texts to the resilient contemporary voices.

Programme:

Day 1, 21 November 2024

Wojtek Blecharz & Ewa-Maria Śmigielska feat. Nathan Julius, *Rhythms of Lament*, *Rhythms of Lament* **5:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

(A durational auditory experience, sound installation)

The *Rhythms of Lament* invites the audience into a shared space for contemplation and reflection. It's a continuous auditory experience shaped by vibrating transducers, wireless speakers, a live performance by Nathan Julius (countertenor), and a neon light installation by Ewa-Maria Śmigielska.

The first chapter of the performance features a recording of the sound of an artillery shell, a relic from the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, now transformed into a sound installation composed for 19 wireless speakers. Played with mallets by American percussionist Ryan Nestor, the shell emits a gong-like resonance — a reflection on its violent past, recast into a meditative hum. This gesture of 'diffusing' the bomb by turning it into an instrument opens space for the collective release of sorrow and places a question about the nature of the sound: am I experiencing a sound bath, or am I bathing in the sound of destruction?

In the second chapter of *The Rhythms of Lament* audiences are invited into a participatory situation featuring transducer speakers transmitting rhythmical vibrations rippling through the bodies of the listeners, creating waves that travel through the bones and muscles and providing a visceral experience that blends rest and healing with deep sonic immersion. The closing part of the performance is a cycle of 3 songs *Berlin Prysm* for voice, piano, and 5 wireless speakers — an intimate lamento for the spirits of those who have passed away. The loop made of 3 chapters will be repeated 3 times in a 3-hour music installation.

In this journey, the forces of destruction and healing converge, providing a moment to pause, reflect, and be enveloped by a collective meditation on sound's transformative power. The *Rhythms of Lament* emerges from the deep need for shared expressions of melancholia, offering a space where grief and sadness can be felt and released. The soundscape becomes an alchemic ritual of transformation, where destruction is reconfigured as a sonic meditation — a collective act of mourning and solidarity.

Written by: Wojtek Blecharz and Kasia Sobucka

The neon light *I'm rising* by Ewa-Maria Śmigielska comes from her *Phoenix Mantra* installation, which is a continuation of the *Follow the Dragon* (2021) project — a monumental performative sculpture presented at the Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko. Its integral element was Wojtek Blecharz's music.

The duo's joint projects usually take the form of complex site-specific installations, in which the interpenetration of visual matter and sound is important. The creators invite the viewer to actively explore these intermedia spaces, just like in the case of *Transcryptum* (2013) or *Follow the Dragon* (2021), or to experience them in a bodily, performative fashion, as best exemplified by the projects implemented at Nowy Teatr in Warsaw: *Body-Opera* (2017) and *Wobec* (2018).

Written by: Magda Figzal-Janikowska

Wojtek Blecharz — music, concept

Nathan Julius — countertenor, piano

Ewa-Maria Śmigielska — neon installation from Phoenix Mantra exhibition

Kasia Sobucka — curator

Ryan Nestor — recordings of artillery shell

Nicolas Navarro Rueda — costumes

Day 2, 22 November 2024

Karolina Grzywnowicz, *Bedtime* **3:00 pm – 7:30 pm**

A listening session featuring Palestinian lullabies *Bedtime* presents a poignant collection of lullabies sung by Palestinian women, recorded in refugee camps like Aida, Dheisheh, and Qalandiya. These songs, rich with cultural memory, offer comfort and resistance against the erasure of identity in the face of conflict and displacement. Intertwined with ambient sounds from daily life in the camps, these lullabies carry personal and collective stories, blending nostalgia for home with the harsh realities of exile. This listening session stands as a powerful political statement against the oppression of sleep deprivation as a tool of torture. Through these songs, Grzywnowicz amplifies the voices of Palestinian women, revealing how the simple act of singing a lullaby becomes an enduring form of resistance and cultural preservation.

Zorka Wollny, *May You Embrace Me*

5:00 pm – 8:20 pm (20-minute performance at the start of each hour)

Zorka Wollny's acoustic performance *May You Embrace Me*, is based on ancient Egyptian papyruses from Elephantine Island. Zorka transforms these millennia-old texts into an evocative contemporary musical performance. Invited vocalists breathe new life into the writings, resonating with universal themes of longing, belief, and connection. The minimalist acoustic approach emphasizes the emotional power of these ancient stories, while Zorka's compositions merge past and present in a space where history and personal reflection collide.

Aperitivo

7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Join us to meet the artists and curators involved in the project.

Philomène Pirecki, *Hypnagogia/Oxygenate*

8:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Sonic exploration of body rhythms and states *Hypnagogia/Oxygenate*, developed by Philomène Pirecki, delves into the liminal space between wakefulness and sleep. Using her own heartbeats, breathing, and vocalizations, Pirecki crafts a sensory experience shaped by delta and theta brainwave frequencies. As the performance weaves between dissonance and harmony, the work evokes the fragile, yet potent, boundary between consciousness and dream. The result is an immersive, visceral exploration of bodily rhythms, emotions, and psychic resonances.

All events will take place at Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Dorsoduro, 874, 30123 Venice

Organiser:

Arts Territory is a not-for-profit arts organisation with a mission to support artists in creating new work. It works across borders and facilitate dialogue between artists, curators and communities internationally. Operating as a nomadic, fluid and open agency, Arts Territory offers a new model of arts commissioning, supporting radical artistic experimentation, research and collaboration, alongside testing new forms of curation and expanding the agency of curating. Arts Territory realises hybrid live events, multidisciplinary exhibitions, festivals, and symposia around the globe as well as commissions content online for its journal and online space. Founded by curator Kasia Sobucka, initially as a vehicle to develop creative links between Polish and UK artists and creatives, Arts Territory is now global in scope reaching beyond particular identities and provides a platform for curators and artists from a variety of backgrounds to work together. Within this spectrum, Arts Territory still continues to on supporting Polish artists living in the UK and working with Polish communities in London. www.artsterritory.org

Ditto Foundation is a not-for-profit arts organisation with a mission to support Polish artists abroad.

Production: VeniceArtFactory

In Collaboration with Palazzo Contarini Polignac.

This project is co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland from the Culture Promotion Fund.

Event Details:

Dates: 21–22 November 2024

Location: Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Dorsoduro, 874, 30123 Venice

Opening hours:

21.11.2024 — 5 pm – 8 pm

22.11.2024 — 3 pm – 9 pm

Tickets: free entry

www.artsterritory.org

For Press Inquiries:

Dobromiła Błaszczuk: dobromila@artsterritory.org

Instagram: [@artsterritory](https://www.instagram.com/artsterritory)

Facebook: [@Arts Territory](https://www.facebook.com/ArtsTerritory)

#artsterritory

#rhythmsvoicesrituals

