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Rhythms, Voices, Rituals *Projects' descriptions*

Wojtek Blecharz & Ewa-Maria Śmigielska feat. Nathan Julius, *Rhythms of Lament*
(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 Figzał-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

Karolina Grzywnowicz

Bedtime

Listening session featuring Palestinian lullabies

Bedtime is a listening session featuring Palestinian lullabies recorded by Karolina Grzywnowicz. These songs serve as both sources of comfort and expressions of resilience against oppressive forces that seek to erase cultural identity and dreams. They reflect the strength of communities living in refugee camps such as Aida, Dheisheh, and Qalandiya, where tear gas and violence are daily realities.

The recordings intertwine ambient sounds from the camps — conversations and laughter — with the lullabies, grounding them in everyday life. The inherent imperfections in these recordings testify to the ongoing struggle to reclaim lost traditions amidst conflict.

This project highlights the voices of women singing lullabies infused with profound nostalgia for their homeland, as well as the harsh conditions of displacement. The songs weave together personal and collective narratives, creating a rich tapestry of sound that echoes the pain of separation while nurturing aspirations for a brighter future.

Bedtime stands as a political statement against sleep deprivation as a form of torture, illustrating how these lullabies embody collective resilience in the face of oppression. They challenge narratives of silence and reinforce the enduring spirit of resistance.

By amplifying Palestinian voices, the artist invites listeners to engage with their lived experiences, reflecting on the importance of memory, dreams, and dignity. In their pursuit of preserving their identity, singing these lullabies transforms into a powerful act of resistance.

Zorka Wollny

May You Embrace Me

Acoustic performance featuring five vocalists based on ancient Egyptian texts

In *May You Embrace Me*, Zorka Wollny presents five songs based on ancient texts from papyri found on Elephantine Island, Egypt. These texts, recently translated by scholars from the Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection from Neues Museum in Berlin, date back 4000 years, reawakening voices from an era long past.

Zorka's compositions give new life to these ancient writings, weaving them into a contemporary musical framework. Grounded in history, they engage deeply with the emotions that remain timeless. The performance features five vocalists, delivering a profound and singular experience that channels the echoes of daily life from millennia ago. The songs delve into universal themes through collective stories of longing, struggle, belief, and connection, crafting a space where the voices of the past resonate powerfully in the present. Zorka's minimalist yet monumental acoustic approach amplifies the power of the translated words, letting the previously unheard texts and experimental operatic vocals to drive the emotional depth of the performance.

May You Embrace Me creates a unique intersection of history, music, and personal reflection, inviting audiences to connect with the voices of ordinary individuals from ancient Egypt and to consider their own experiences of belonging, vulnerability and acceptance.

Written by: Kasia Sobucka

Philomène Pirecki

Hypnagogia/Oxygenate

Sonic exploration of bodily rhythms, sensory states, and electromagnetic frequencies.

Pirecki's sonic practice has developed over several years through a sonic investigation into the emotive, physiological, sensory, and temporal properties of bodily rhythms and sounds. Her compositions are generated from the artist's heartbeats, breathing, vocalisations, and phonetic drones, captured in various physical and emotional states. Woven within these are electromagnetic frequencies alongside binaural tones based on delta and theta brainwave frequencies, which consider the body as an energetic and electrically charged conduit.

In her 10" release, *Hypnagogia* takes its name from the murky state between sleep and wakefulness, it channels this liminal zone through waves of vocal dissonance and harmony, punctuated by portent-laden laughter, groans, screeches, and patterns of breathing, shifting in and out of an ecstatic dream state or darker night terrors. *Oxygenate* is a track shaped around a pulsating rush of reverberant, guttural drones, breathing, and electromagnetic and brainwave frequencies, interspersed with percussive bursts from asthma inhalers and the distorted sounds of swallowing.

Pirecki's vocals evoke a ritualistic conjuring, underpinned by bass rhythms generated from her heartbeats in varying intensity and bpm. Together with invisible electromagnetic frequencies which she sonically sculpts from the air, her performance channels a visceral transmission of energetic and sensory resonances.