



INTERVIEW WITH 'CANVAS OF RESONANCE' ARTIST KENNY WONG

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Phoenix's latest exhibition 'The Canvas of Resonance' by artist Kenny Wong Chi-Chuen, is a cinematic sound and visual installation that draws its influences from the Foley artists of the live radio age.

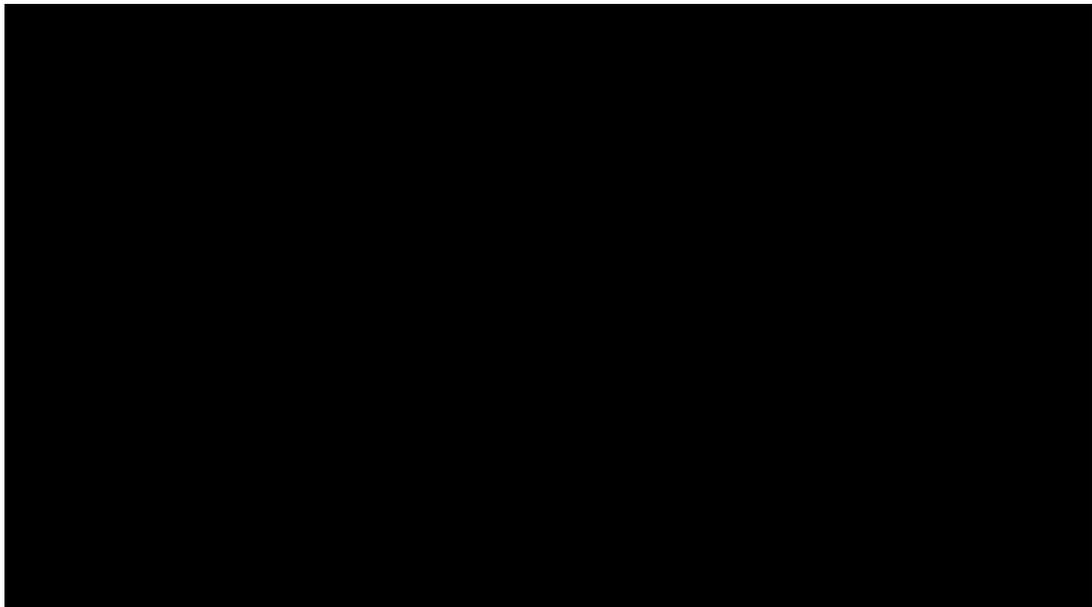
Through the use of various materials these Foley artists would create sound effects for radio, television and film, most notably the sound of thunder, which was produced through the suspension of metal sheets. This creative method used to produce the sound of thunder was used for decades, and has become the sound that many people particularly associate with the work of Foley artists.

In his latest installation piece, Wong has re-appropriated the work of these filmic sound artists, through creating a piece of work which reexamines their aural methods. Through suspending and manipulating a series of metal sheets in the gallery space, the artist has created an atmospheric and immersive environment, which proves to alter the viewer's perception of sound and space, and their bodily relationship to these elements.

Wong's work is a type of multidisciplinary research, which seeks to explore the intersections between our everyday experiences and perceptual stimulations. Through the use of sculpture as a medium and platform for this process, Wong is engaging with the ways in which visual patterns, motions and sound textures interrelate with each other, and can be synthesised through creative expressions.

Celia Wickham spoke to Kenny Wong in regards to his most recent work, the artist's main influences, and the collaborative and integrative approach he takes to his art making practice.

Celia is an artist, curator and freelance writer. Having recently graduated from The Manchester School of Art with a degree in Filmmaking, she will soon be undertaking an MA degree in Visual and Critical Studies.



Celia Wickham: What would you say are the main influences behind the creation of your latest installation piece?

Kenny Wong: The Canvas of Resonance was developed around 4 years ago, but this is the third edition of the work. It is getting more and more complete along with my artistic journey. It began with my curiosity towards filmmaking, how movies create immersive experiences, moods and emotions. I thought about flickering lights and low frequency sounds and being intuitive. Moving image experiences are part of many people's lives, and these experiences are embedded within our minds. At the same time I was amazed by the sound of the "thunder sheet" used by Foley artists, and so I found the connection of materials and ideas. I explored the use and material of metal sheets and they fascinated me. I kept continuing to push and explore until it became something special.

CW: What are the main themes that you are engaging with in 'The Canvas of Resonance'?

KW: In my works I think a lot about the transitions between analog and digital, the replacement of one another, and the uniqueness of both elements. As the technology grows, the analogue technologies may be replaced and there is potential for them to exist in another form. I was also trying to respond to the experimentations by Foley sound artists of my current time.

CW: What drew you towards using sound as a medium within your artistic practice?

KW: Sound is one of my artistic practices, as frequency is one of my major interests. Sound, light, and even electricity, all contains certain sets of frequencies to function. To me they have unlimited amounts of possibilities.

CW: Have you always considered yourself a multidisciplinary artist, and what do you think can be gained from this type of approach to creative work?

KW: Yes, as I have worked both individually and collaboratively. I write software, produce electronics, hack drones, kinetic sculptures and multimedia projects – I aware I am a quick learner in technical aspects, and these expand my capabilities to make. But most important to me is to always remind myself to be critical to changes; to stay aware of changes around the world, through thinking and making. It is important to aware of these changes and to push beyond the limitations, through the arts.

CW: You are currently pursuing an MFA in Sculpture at Concordia University in Montreal. What are you working on at the moment, and how has your degree redefined the ways in which you approach sculpture as a medium?

KW: If sculpture is about form and materials, I consider electronics and digital technologies to be very important materials in contemporary art. I engage with such questions through my studies, while I continue to create digital, electronic and computational arts. I am also interested in incorporating wood and metal, and expanding on the sculptural language of my practice. I believe art is a language that the more you engage with and understand, the more fluently you are able to express yourself and connect with others.

CW: What are your plans for the future, and are there any other fields of artistic practice you hope to explore?

KW: I am continuing to expand and build upon my language and practice, through engaging with 'computational kinetic sculptures'. At the same time, I am also in touch with musicians and composers. Music has always been one of my biggest influences. Sound is difficult to describe but it is always there, to drive our emotions. I am looking forward to, and excited to be working with musicians, as I try to tap into something unknown.