

# PASSEPARTOUT DUO

Nicoletta Favari & Christopher Salvito  
musicians / composers / interdisciplinary artists



# ABOUT PASSEPARTOUT DUO

Drawing from a carefully selected palette of electro-acoustic textures and shapeshifting rhythms, **Passepartout Duo**'s work investigates the way in which we listen to and connect with sound. Reassessing the tools they use to create their music, the group is continually developing a specialized and evolving ecosystem of handmade musical instruments that have ranged from analog electronic circuits and conventional percussion, to room-size textile installations and found objects.

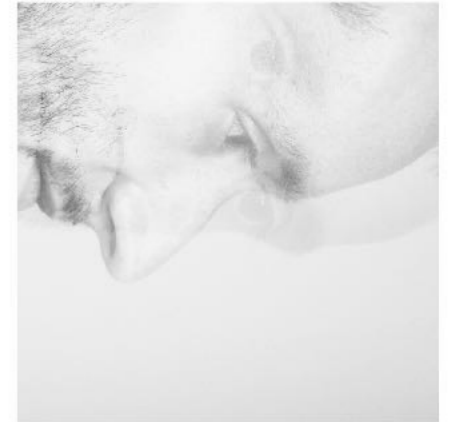
Looking for ways of sustaining an independent musical career and shaping an international network of artists and musicians, the group has been on a *nearly continuous world tour* ever since they began collaborating in 2015, and their experiences traveling have heavily influenced their unconventional creative process.

This from-scratch approach has materialized itself in a series of discographic releases: their most recent *Circo Pobre* (2022) and *Daylighting* (2021) are both LPs exploring different ways of approaching sound synthesis and electronic musical interfaces, respectively realized through electromagnetism and textile fibers. Their 2020 LP, *Vis-à-Vis*, features compositions written for a portable wood and metal instrumentation that accompanied the duo during a month-long train journey across Central Asia. A residency at AIR Niederösterreich (AT) also provided the duo with time to combine writing for acoustic piano and synthesizer through their EP titled *Epigrams*, exploring the Ernst Krenek Institut's Buchla 100 Series.

Passepartout Duo has been the recipient of dozens of artist residency opportunities around the world including The Watermill Center (US), the Swatch Art Peace Hotel (CN), the Rogers Art Loft (US), and the Embassy of Foreign Artists (CH). Their multidisciplinary approach has also led them to exhibit both their own creations and their collaborations with fellow artists at venues such as Casino Luxembourg (LU), the Nakanojo Biennale (JP), Aarhus Artspace (DK), and Fanrong Museum (CN).

The duo was selected for SHAPE+ Platform's roster of artists 2022-2023.

Passepartout Duo is formed by pianist **Nicoletta Favari** (IT) and percussionist **Christopher Salvito** (US/IT).



# VIS-À-VIS

*Music for handmade portable instruments*

**Vis-à-Vis** is a 40 minute musical work in two parts for portable hand made instruments designed and built by **Passepartout Duo**.

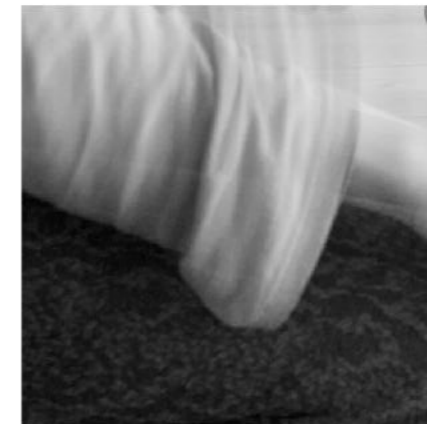
Including a small electric lyre, the amplified tines of a toy-piano, and two amadindas in metal and wood, the instruments used in *Vis-à-Vis* were made by repurposing materials that could be found on the streets of Geneva.

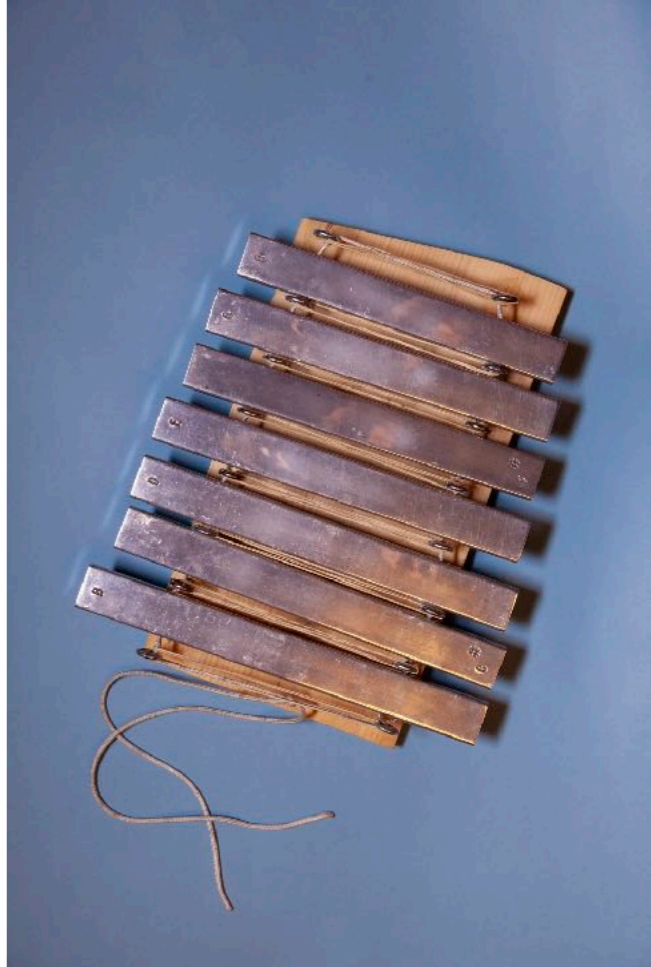
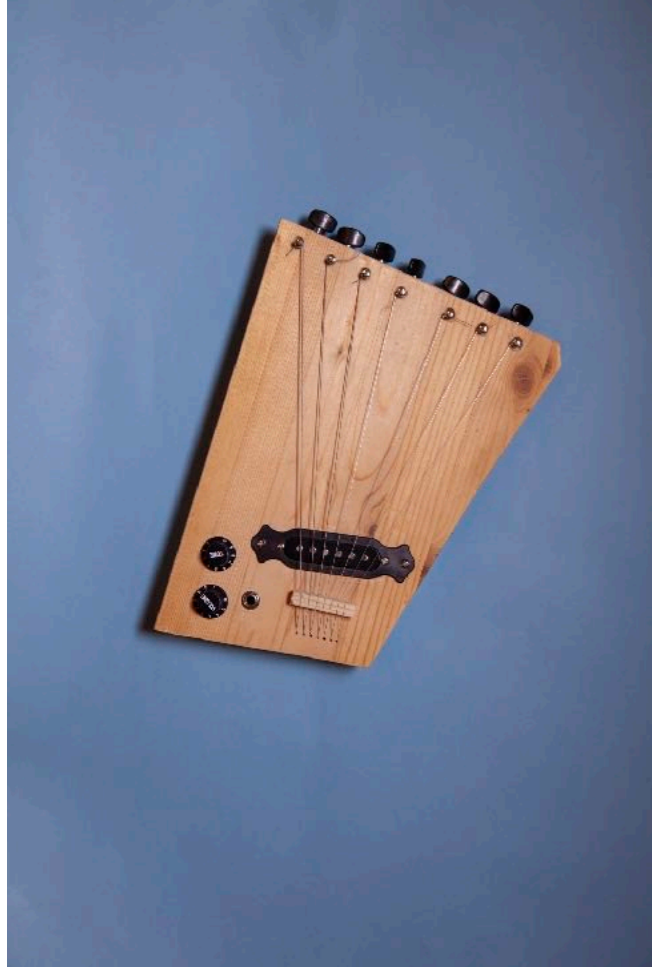
Even with all the idiosyncrasies that came with these DIY creations, a framework for the composition process spun out from the simple constraints of the instruments themselves.

The portable handmade instruments were developed to easily pack into the small bags that *Passepartout Duo* carries around the world. During a month-long train journey from Tbilisi to Shanghai, *Vis-à-Vis* was performed everywhere from family homes and music conservatories to the roof of an old caravanserai.

*Vis-à-Vis* contains two pieces that spring from material of the same origin, evolving, reshuffling and realigning through the extensive use of hocket techniques and metric modulations. Mirroring one another, the two parts are of equal duration, convey a patchwork of prismatic timbres underpinned by a tightly woven rhythmic fabric.

**video sample**





Portable instruments created for Vis-à-Vis (varying dimensions created from wood and metal)



# AURAL RECORD

*Ceramics Artifacts and Sound in a Performance & Installation*

**Aural Record** was born as a joint invitation from Gaudeamus Festival (Utrecht) and the European Ceramic Workcentre (Oisterwijk) to explore and develop a piece around ceramics as a process and material.

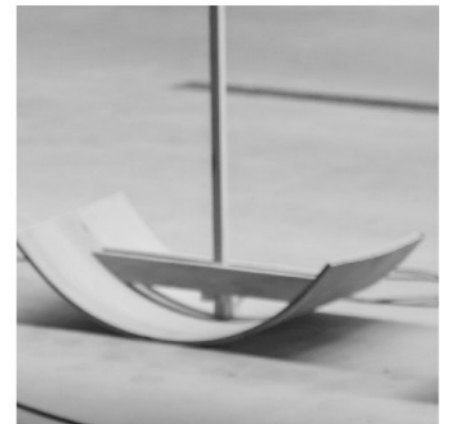
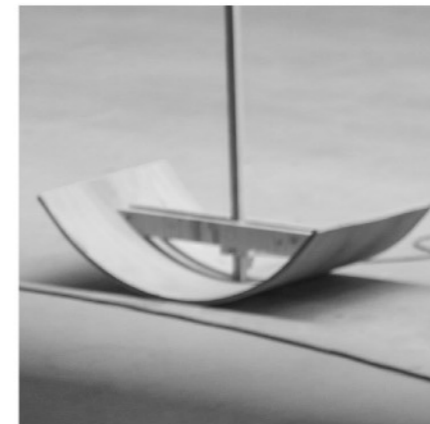
During a two month long residency, with the support of the staff and thanks to the fantastic infrastructure of the centre, we were able to create an installation that could be sonically activated as percussion, through feedback, or through electromagnetism.

The three rocking platforms support ceramic rings that are decorated with gold luster; but far from being just a decoration, the gold is also a path for electricity to flow. Each piece emits a magnetic field that propagates a pre-composed sound source. The composite of three of these rocking platforms is a source for interaction of the performers, and creates different rhythmic and harmonic interactions.

Archaeological sites were an initial inspirational idea for the work: how can we give voices to these silent artifacts of the past? Unlike sound, ceramics' durability has led it to become an archetypical ingredient of our collective image of past worlds. Clay and sound both start out as ephemeral media, but through firing the clay becomes a durable object, frozen in time, and well preserved. The sound of these objects, however, always evaporates. Through the research and performance with these objects, a meeting point is sought between these two different worlds.

Aural Record was exhibited at Movement Exposed Gallery Space in Utrecht (NL) from September 9th to October 1st, 2022.

**video sample**





Aural Record  
Room Sized Musical Instrument (Ceramic, Electronic Components, Wood)

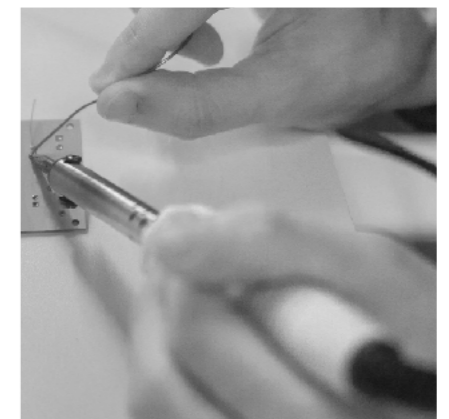
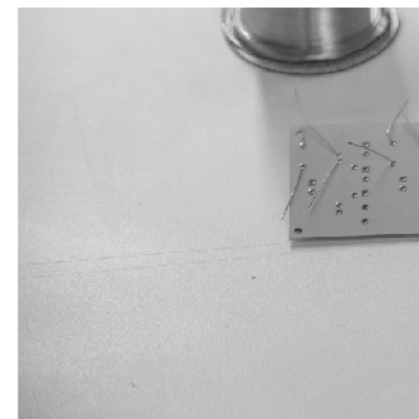
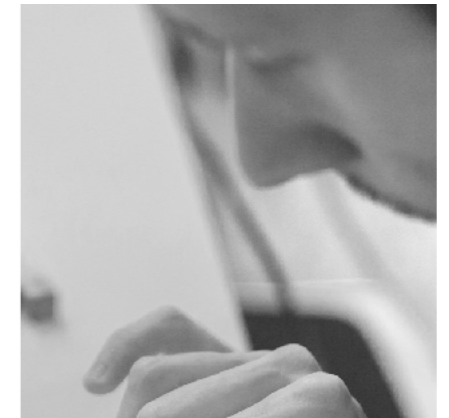
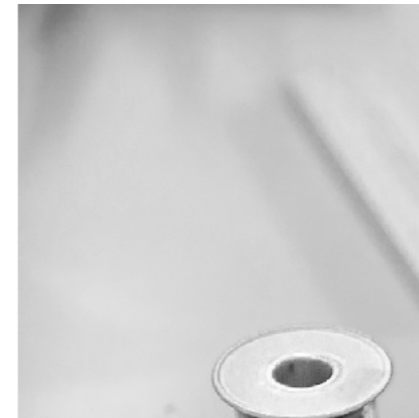
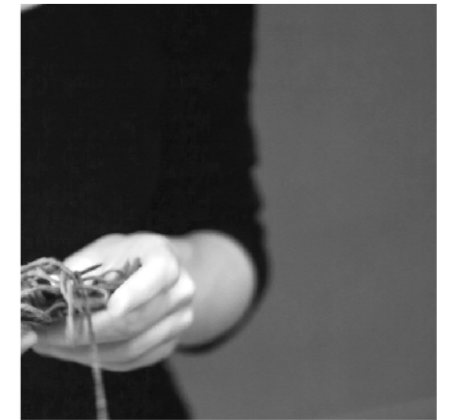
# DAYLIGHTING

*Music for textile instruments and percussion*

In *Daylighting*, we continued to explore our own fascination with building personalized musical instruments. A new suite of electronic devices that **functionally integrate textiles and synthesizer circuits** accompanies our familiar set of small portable percussion. These strange machines aesthetically recall imaginary landscapes connected to a trip to the Meili Snow Mountains in China, and inspired the seven tracks of the album.

Highlighting the potential of the new instruments, the musical process began from the careful shaping of each sound from its visceral fundamentals. The overall structure of the music is built through momentary collisions between layers of sound that exist in parallel dimensions, continuously and independently. These collisions explore timbral, rhythmic, and melodic unison ideas that act as mile markers on listening paths. Symmetrical compositional ideas spiral out from the centerpiece of *Daylighting* that bisects the music of the album with its austere process, expanded and explored in each surrounding piece.

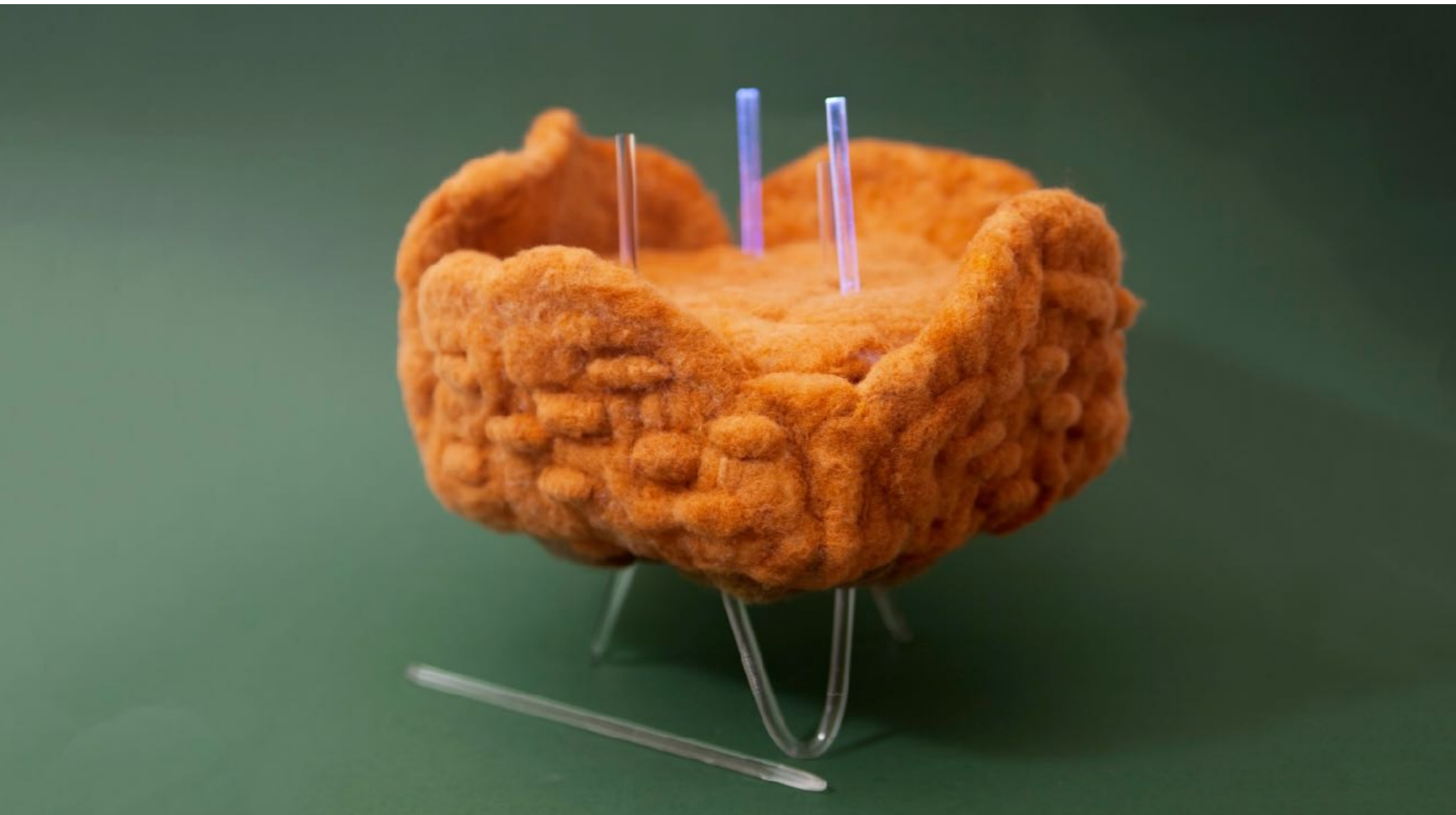
**video sample**







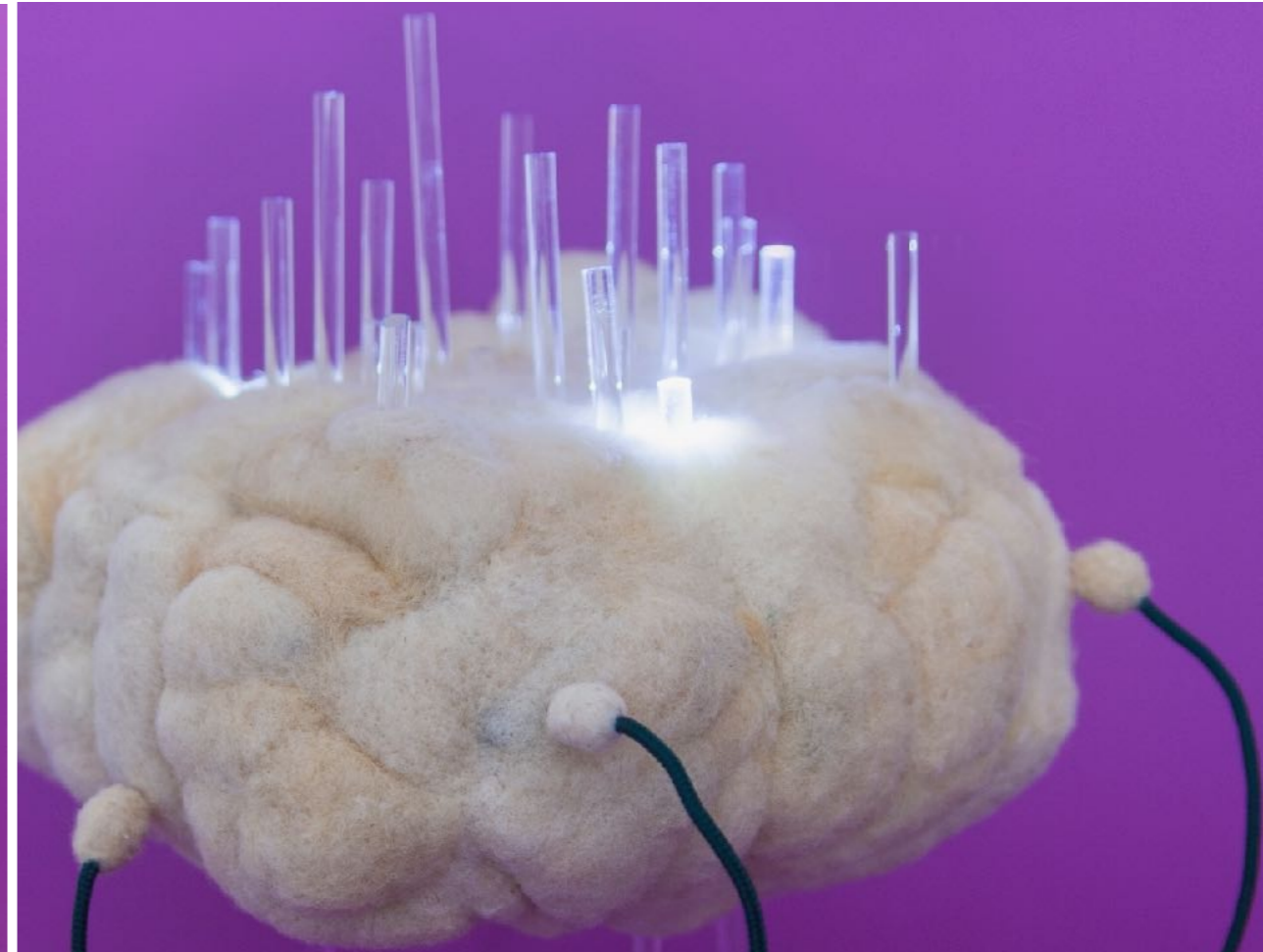
Fuzzy Synth  
Musical Instrument (electronic components, wool, and wood)  
30 x 30 x 11 cm



Oto  
Musical Instrument (electronic components, e-textiles, felted wool, acrylic, and wood)  
20 x 20 x 25 cm



Liminaphone  
Musical Instrument (electronic components, fabric, and wood)  
50 x 30 x 8 cm



Oto  
Musical Instrument (electronic components, e-textiles, felted wool, acrylic, and wood)  
20 x 20 x 40 cm

# CIRCO POBRE

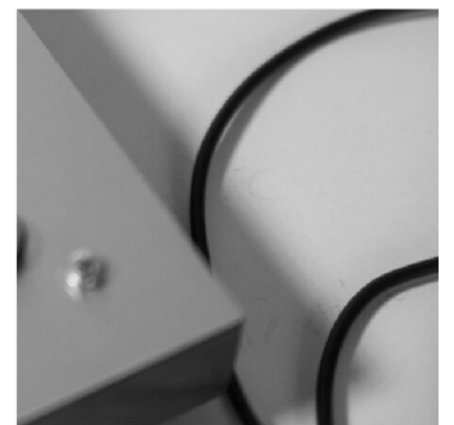
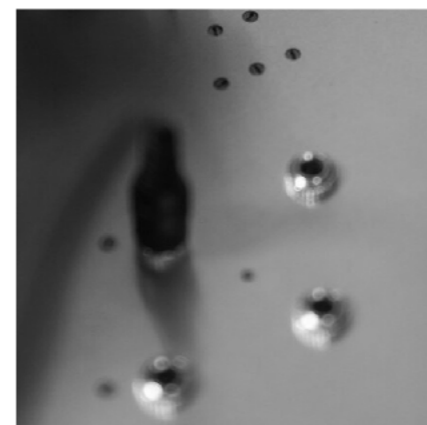
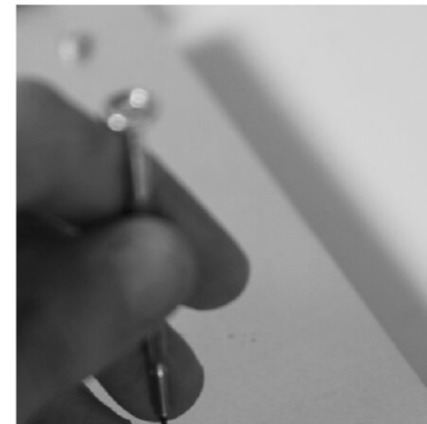
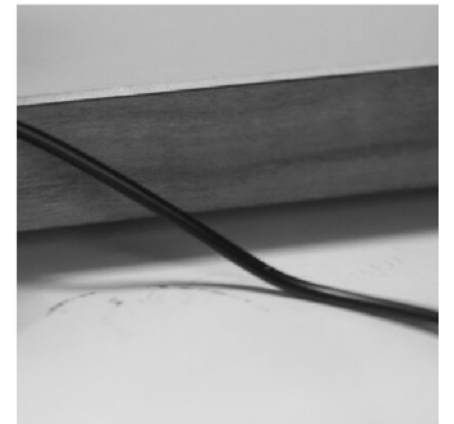
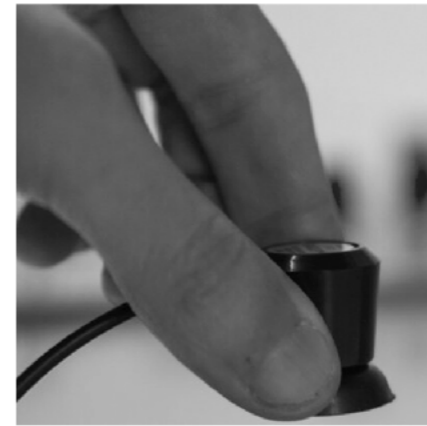
*Music for the Chromaplane*

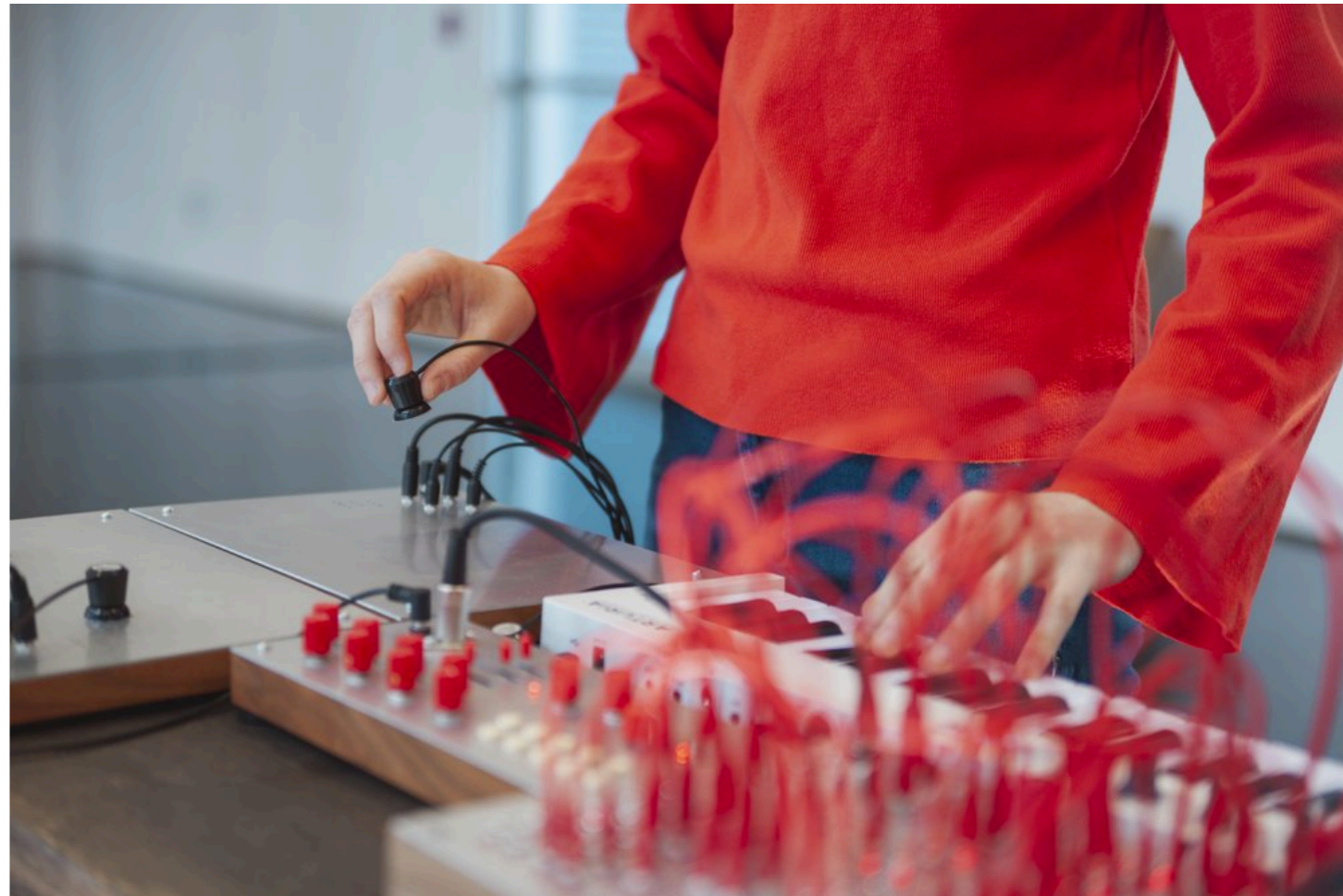
The centerpiece of Circo Pobre is the Chromaplane, a new electronic instrument we've created over the past year. With a pickup coil in each hand, we trace shapes above the instrument's flat surface to unveil its hidden landscape of oscillators buzzing in the electromagnetic field. We first travelled with this new instrument in Tunisia, where we shaped the four long tracks that became this album, defined by taking both a temporal and spatial approach to the music.

Since then, these compositions have been traveling alongside us: filling the corners of Gampa Gallery in Pardubice where we recorded it, bouncing off the walls of The Watermill Center where we filmed it, and overall becoming older with us as we toured throughout a good part of the Americas.

Circo Pobre was written at **Dar Meso** in Tunis (TN), recorded at **Gampa Gallery** in Pardubice (CZ), and filmed at **The Watermill Center** in New York (US).

[video sample](#)





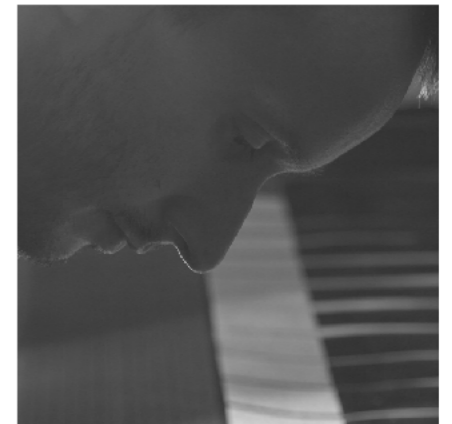
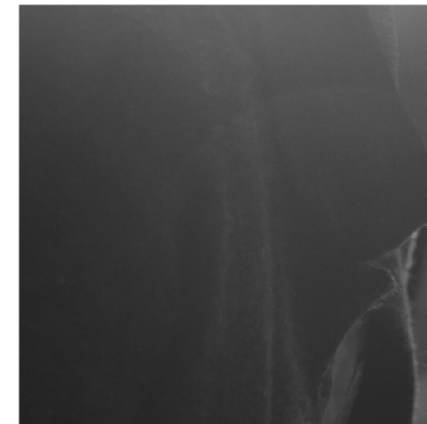
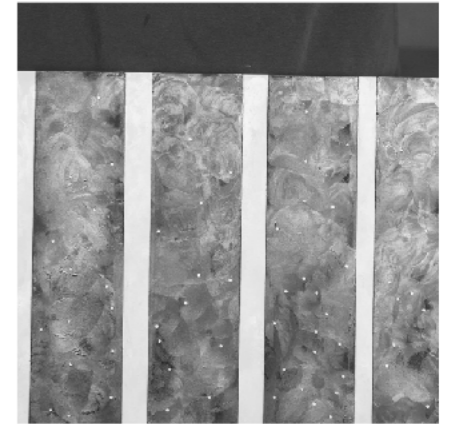
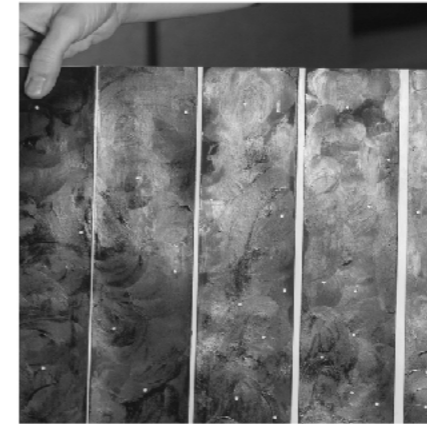
Live Performance of Circo Pobre, at the Watermill Center

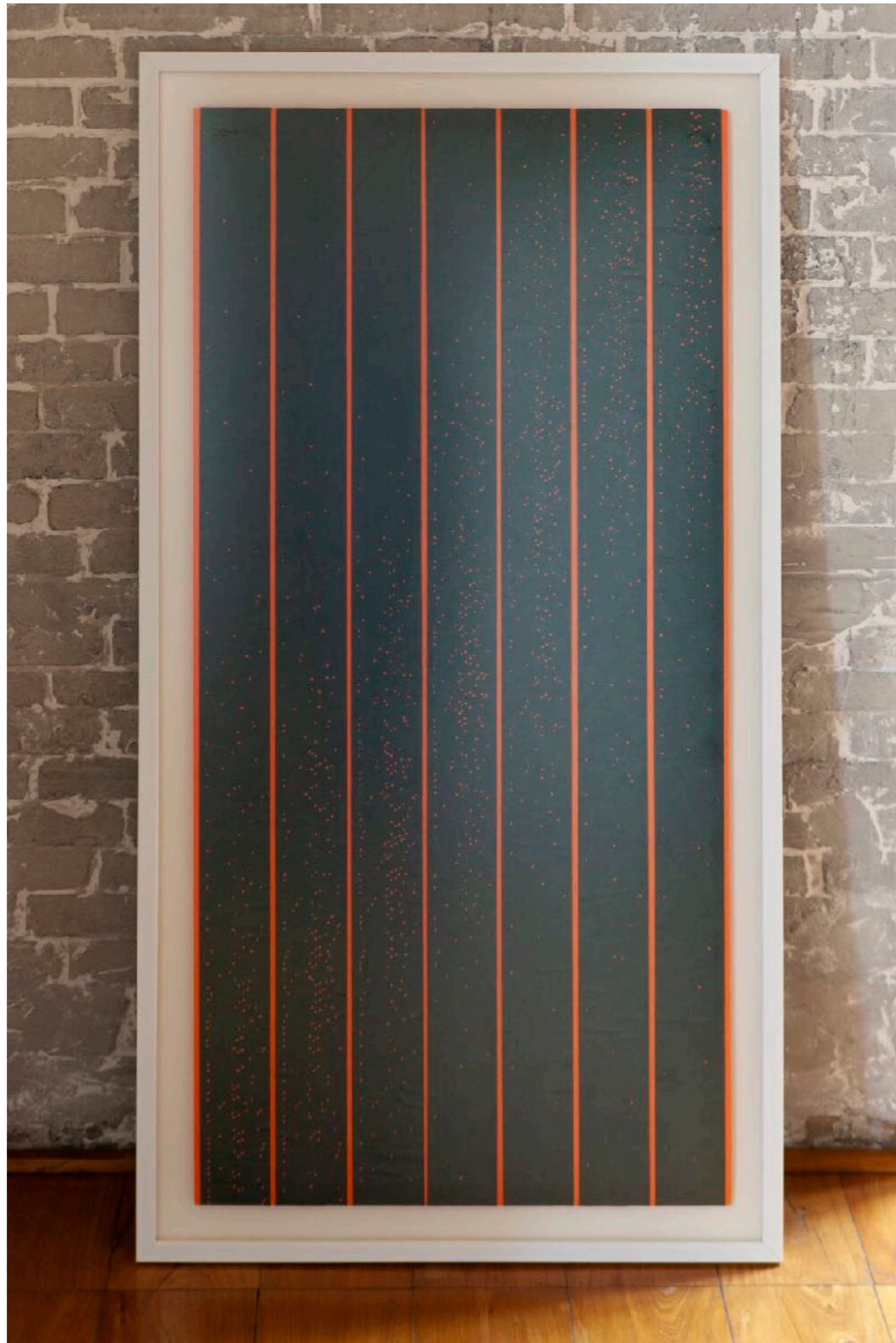
# ONE METER PER MINUTE

*Music box compositions fossilized in visual artworks*

**One Meter Per Minute** is an ongoing series of one minute long compositions each fossilized in visual artworks created through paper-fed music boxes. The titles comes from a simple fascination with the idea of measuring music in meters instead of minutes, and a general interest in the music box, whose paper can be at the same time a score, a recorded medium, and a graphic visualization of the sound.

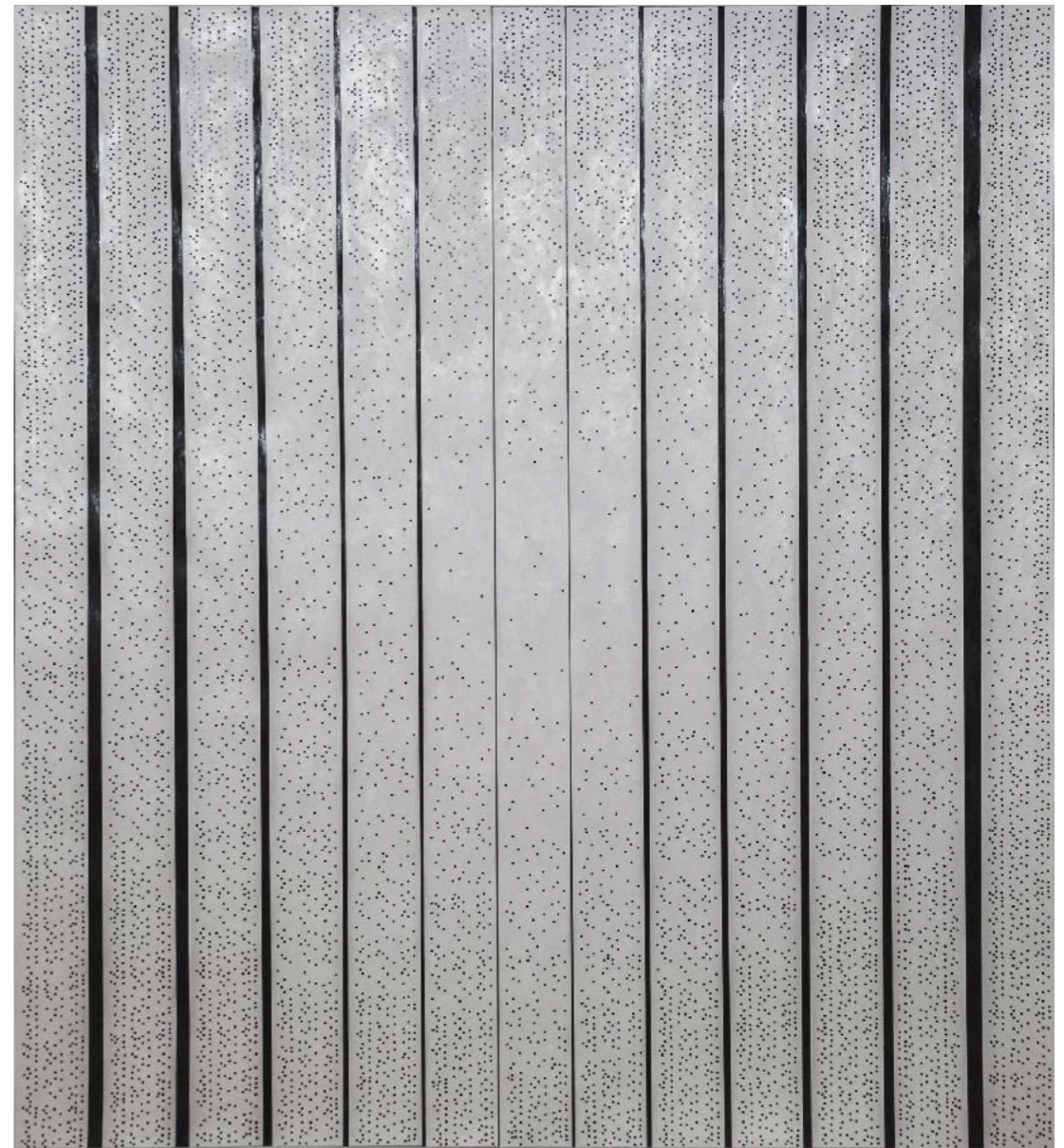
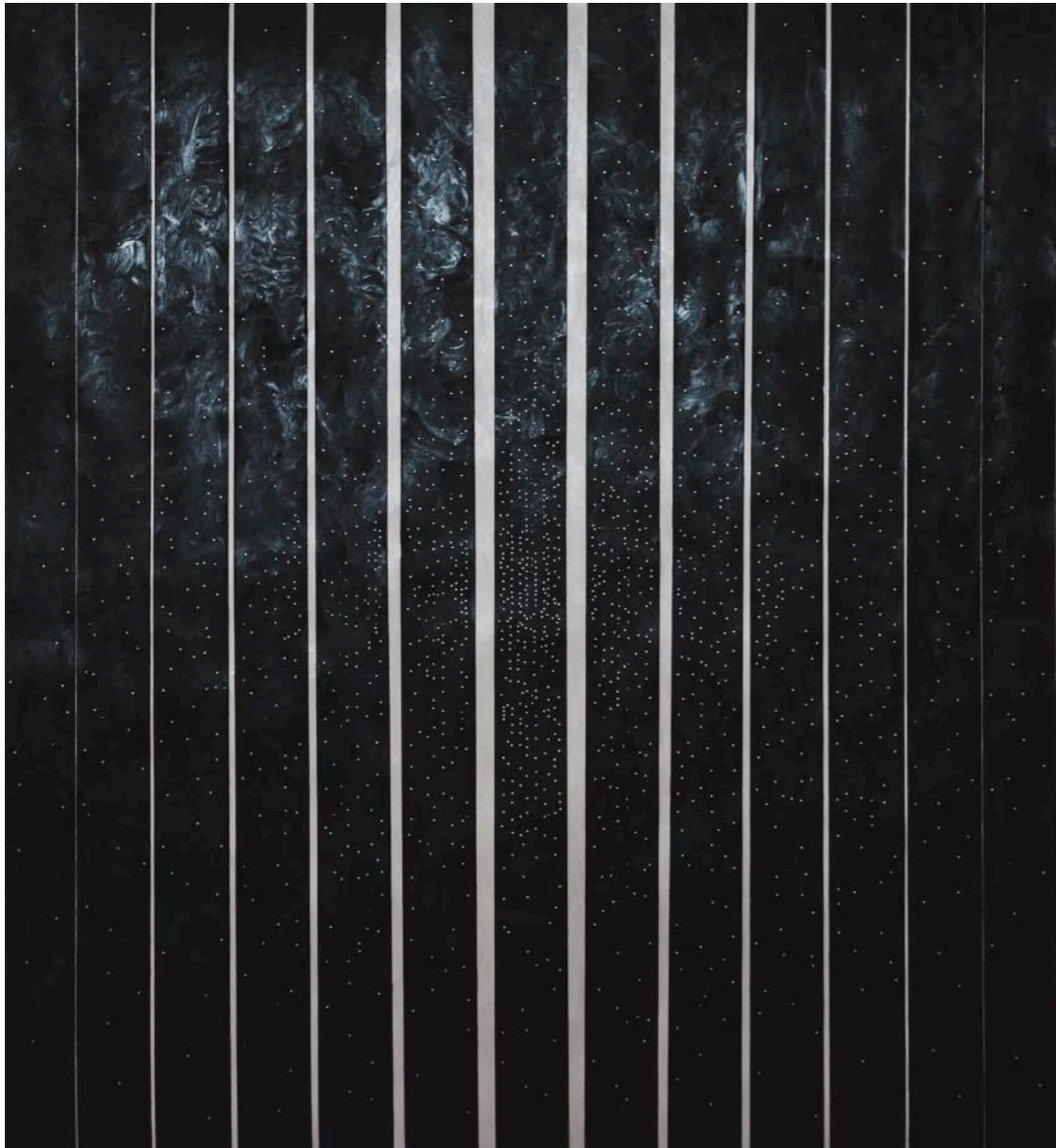
In the series, visual and temporal space play equal roles in the composition process. The compositions may take the shape of sound objects or architectures rather than as composed-out melodies, or in other cases a musical procedure can be clearly visualized in graphic space.





*One Meter Per Minute*  
110 x 52 cm  
composition for 7 music boxes, and paper collage





*One Meter Per Minute  
Diptych, 110 x 100cm each  
2 composition for 13 music boxes, and paper collage*

# EPIGRAMS

*A meeting point between Buchla & piano*

Krems an der Donau, a small town outside of Vienna, found itself to be the unlikely home of one of the oldest fully functional modular synthesizers: two cabinets of oscillators, filters, and envelopes built by Don Buchla in 1967 for the composer Ernst Krenek. Sitting down to work with this instrument, it was impossible to ignore its history. We were first introduced to a piece of Krenek's for two pianos and the very same synthesizer called "Tape and Double", which pushed us toward using the piano and the Buchla together as the instrumentation for this project.

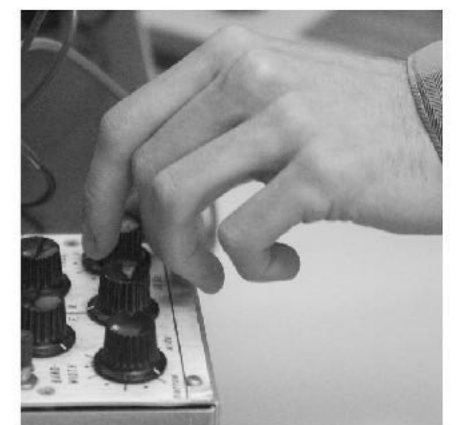
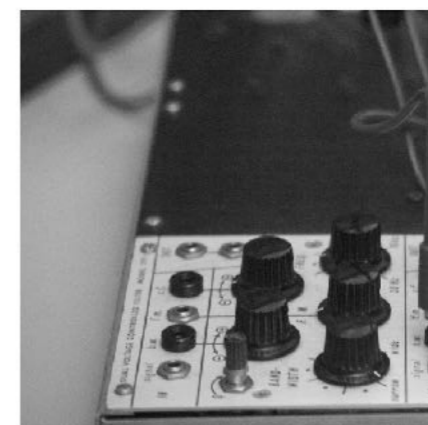
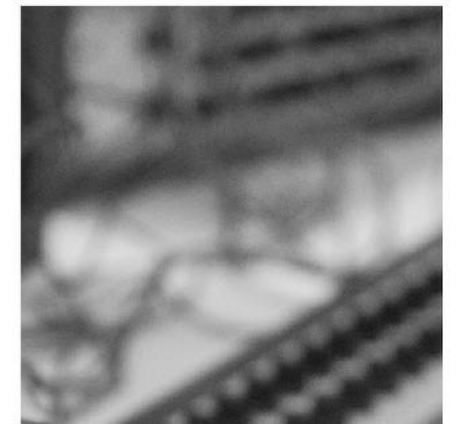
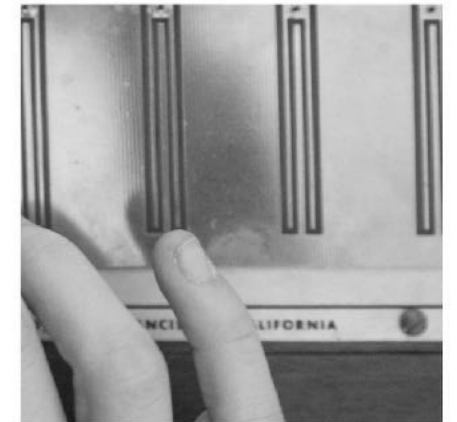
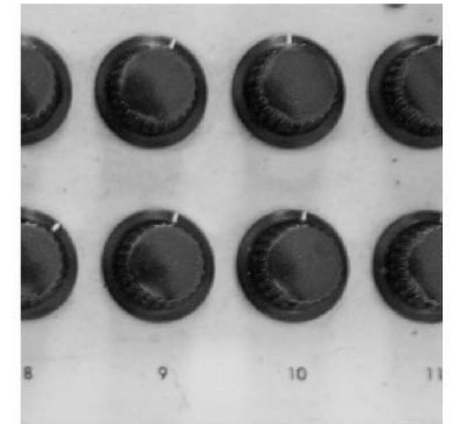
Buchla never refrain from stating how dictatorial the keyboard is: on black and white keys you can only write music that is black and white. We hoped that looking at the piano through the synth, we could write in color.

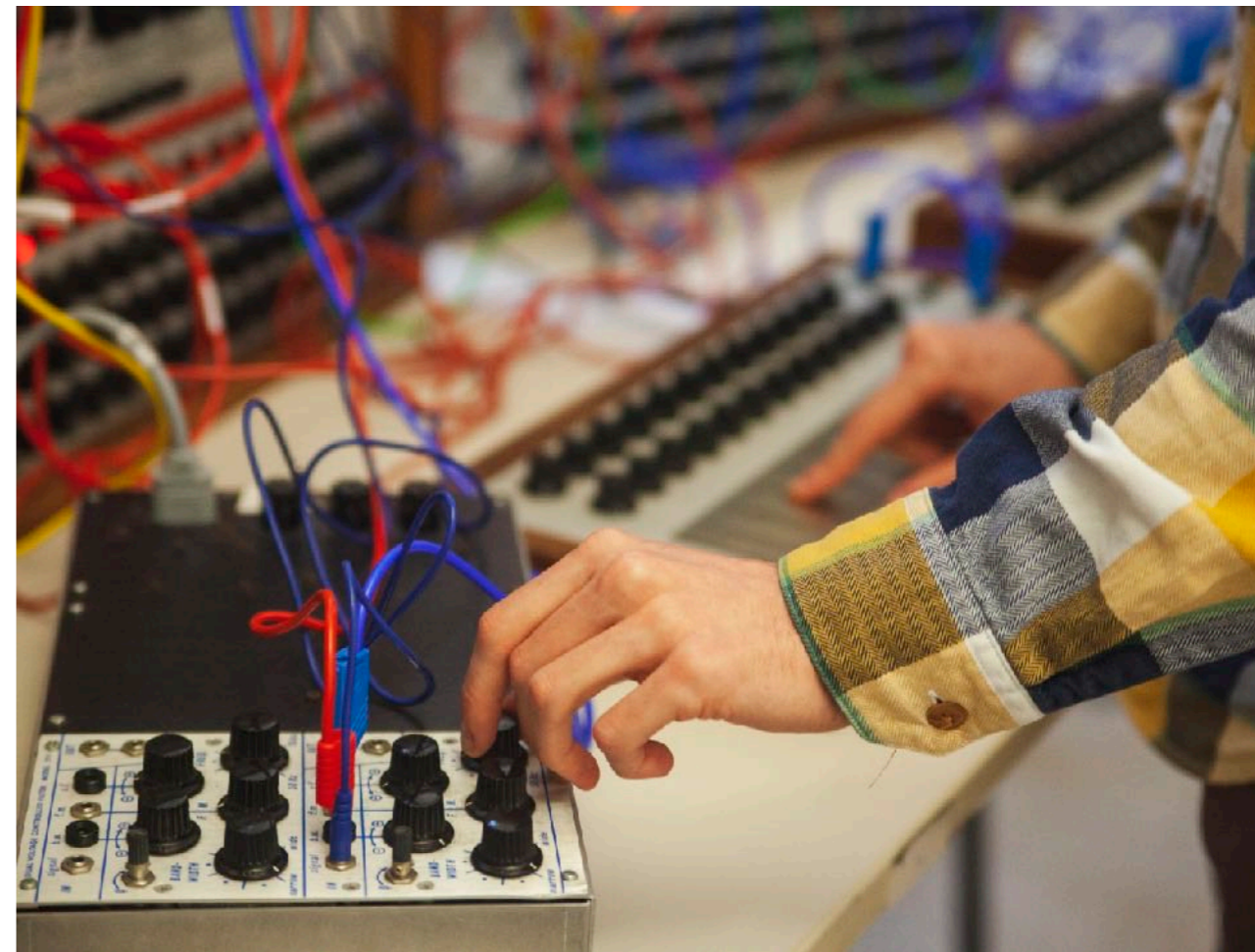
We collected five vignettes showcasing different characters of the machine, each of them aiming to be a small world which is fleetingly entered and then left. These worlds were the basis for a near note-for-note unison part composed out for the piano, which also makes use of extended techniques like preparations, string plucking, and harmonics to play on the border between acoustic and electronic sounds.

With this unison effect, the pieces focus on an hypothetical common secret language shared by the Buchla and the piano, an idioglossia, much like those shared by two twins.

In cooperation with **AIR Niederösterreich** and the **Ernst Krenek Institut**.

[video sample](#)





Working with the Buchla 100 Series synthesizer in Krems, Austria

# SPLINTERED LANDSCAPES

*Hundreds of tape splices come together in unique cassettes*

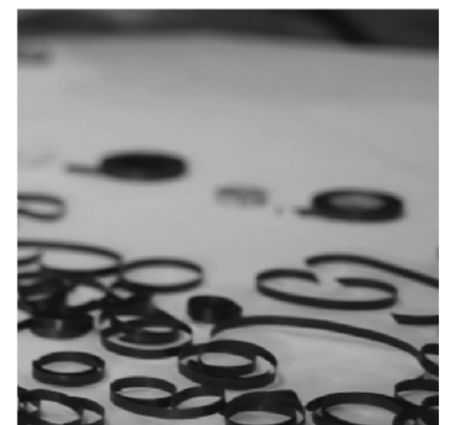
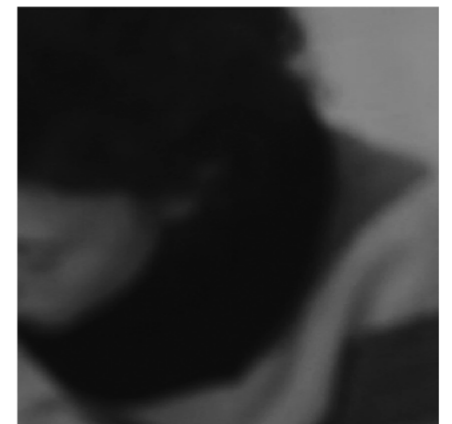
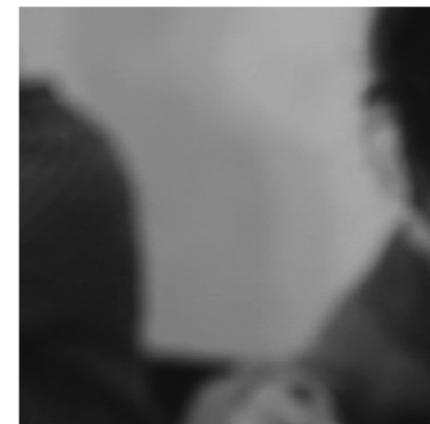
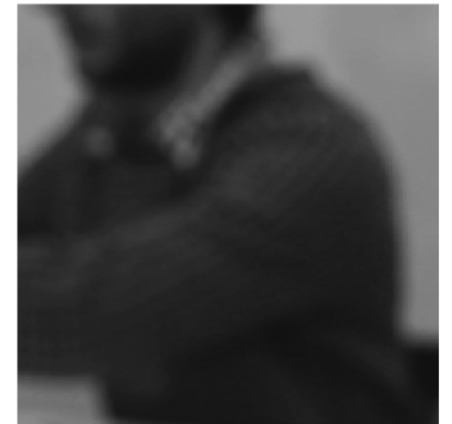
**Splintered Landscapes** is a series of sonic artworks in the form of deconstructed and reassembled cassette tapes. Taking influence from the Japanese ceramic technique and philosophy of Kintsugi, field recordings conducted on site are transferred to magnetic tape, then meticulously cut into myriads of random fragments. These fragments are read by using an expressly built tape reading device that helps to identify each piece and to create a compositional sense between the splices.

The act of listening to the results when put back in the "proper" machine bears hypnotic and unexpected outcomes. The reconstructed recordings are far from their origins, but filled with strange artifacts caused by the process itself.

The original context of the piece was inspired by reflections upon our relation with the environment in the current ecological discourse.

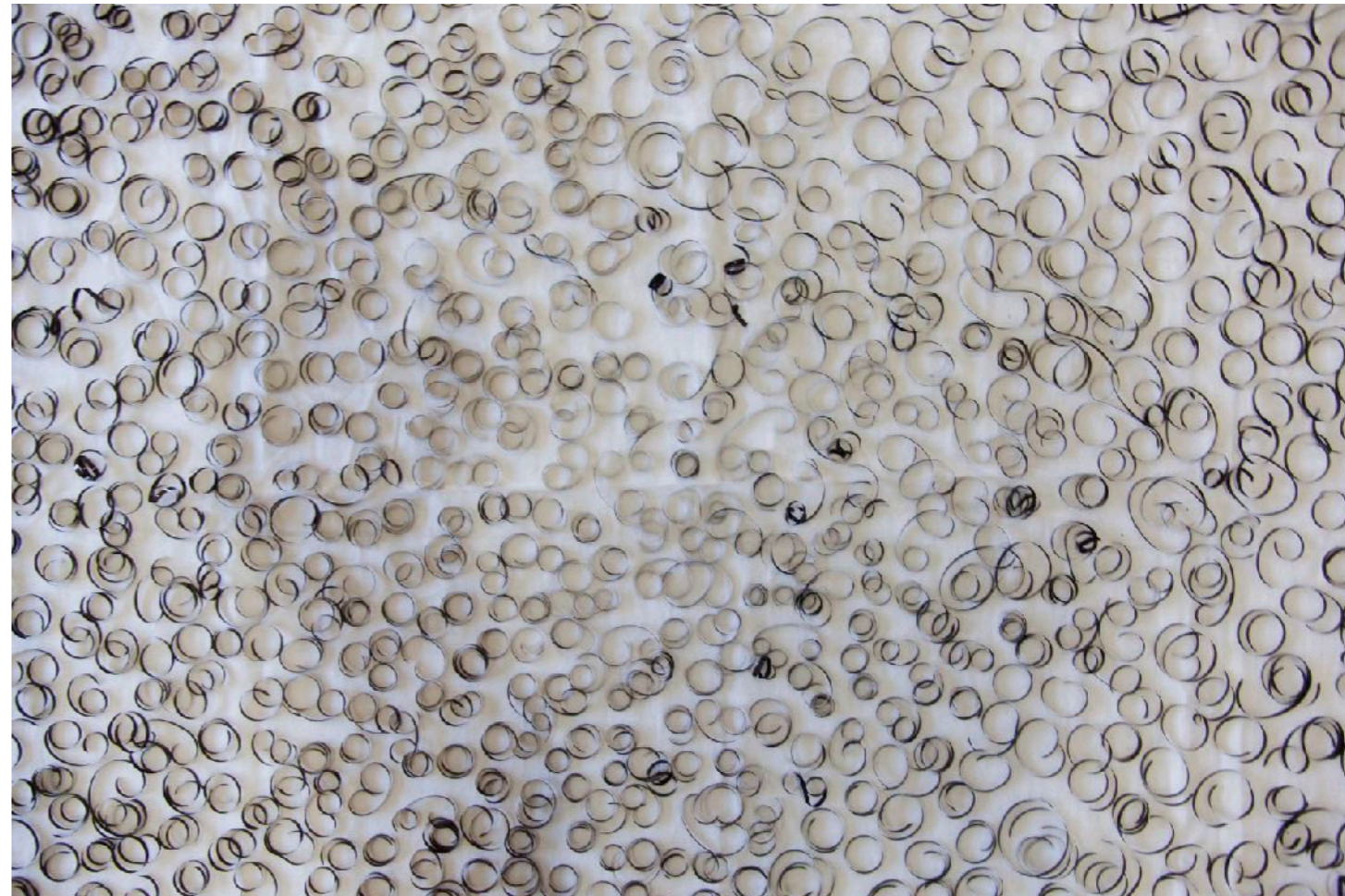
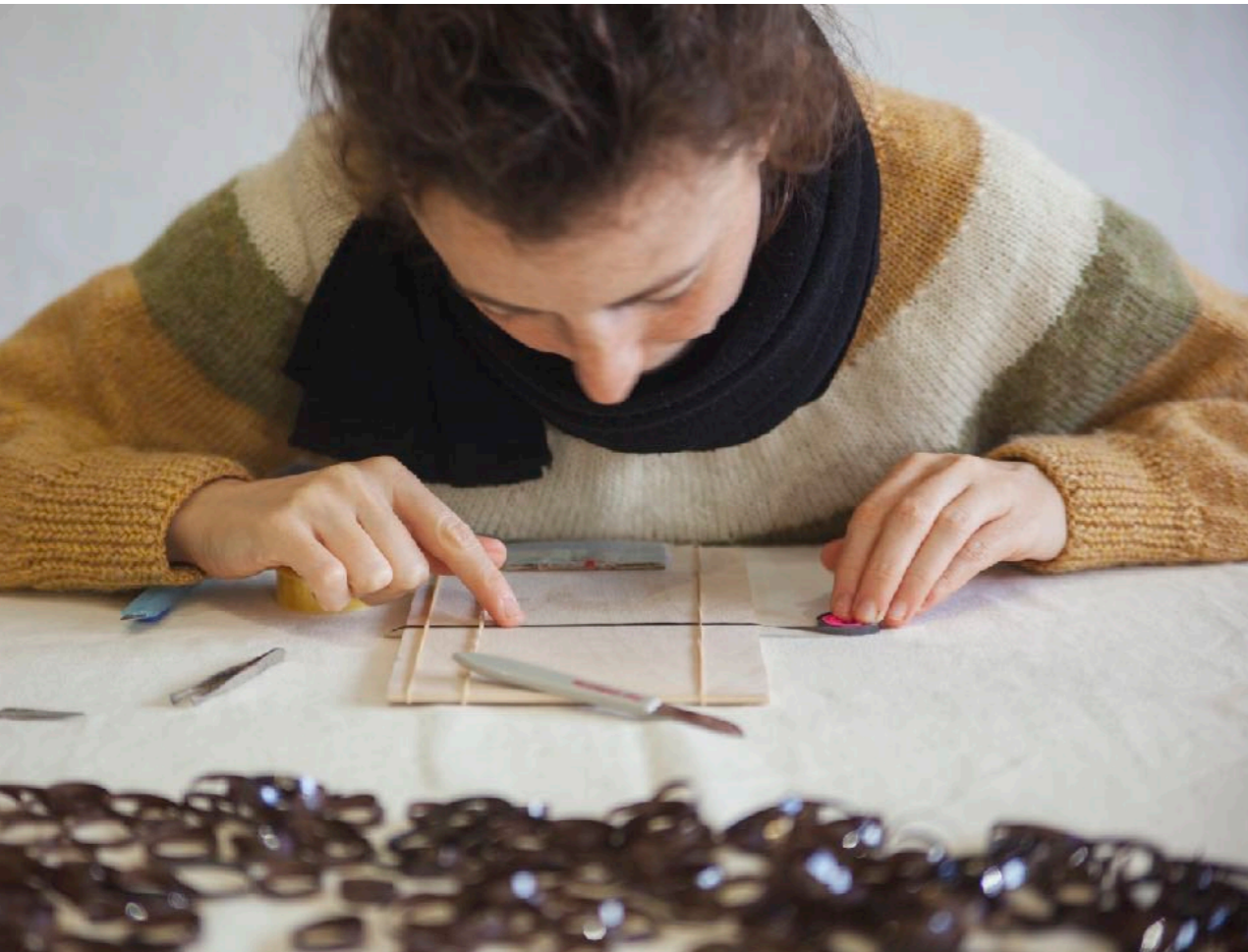
The **first edition** of the work was created at Spazio PierA in **Trento**. It incorporated field recordings collected around Italy, including the echoes of a marble quarry in Pietrasanta and the sounds between *rifugi* in the Dolomites.

[video sample](#)





Left: a cassette player reads one cassette from "Splintered Landscapes" for the first time  
Right: the device, created by Passepartout Duo, used to read individual tape fragments



In "Splintered Landscapes", creating a single cassette involves cutting and splicing hundreds of tape fragments

# MOVING GROUND

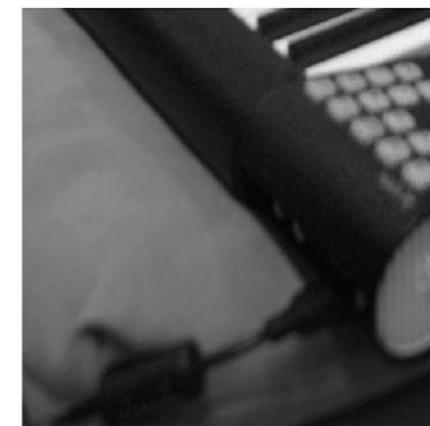
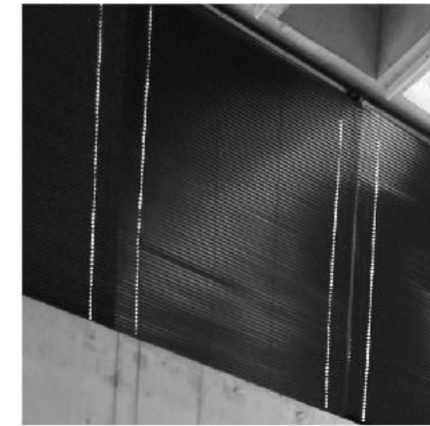
*A series of eight paintings created with sound by Jia Jing & Passepartout Duo*

Focusing on the digital connection between visual art and music, **Moving Ground** takes raw data from images of Jia Jing's paintings and converts it into audio that is manipulated through live electronic improvisations. The resulting sounds create a new painting again when an old amplifier's vibrations move pigments across the artist's paper. In this way, the performance creates both visual and auditory feedback loops. The vibrations and movements created by a speaker are normally quite subtle, so fairly extreme aesthetics needed to be used to create the vibrations necessary. In other words, this piece is loud, messy, and a physical experience for its audience members.

The performance reinterprets the traditional process of painting by focusing on its temporal nature. The painting process becomes a public display that incorporates improvisatory elements normally present in music. Jia Jing is reacting to the environment in real time, whether it be a response to the vibrations of the canvas, or to the music itself.

Resulting from a desire to continually introduce other mediums into their practices, Jia Jing and Passepartout Duo began collaborating after meeting during the duo's residency with **AnyOne** in the **T3 International Art Community** in Beijing, China. **Eight paintings and an accompanying video** were shown for the first time on May 22nd, 2019 at Semi-Underground Space (AnyOne's dedicated gallery space.)

**video sample**





The creation process for Moving Ground was documented through a video





Exhibition display for Moving Ground at Semi-Underground Space (Beijing) featuring the paintings and a video of their creation

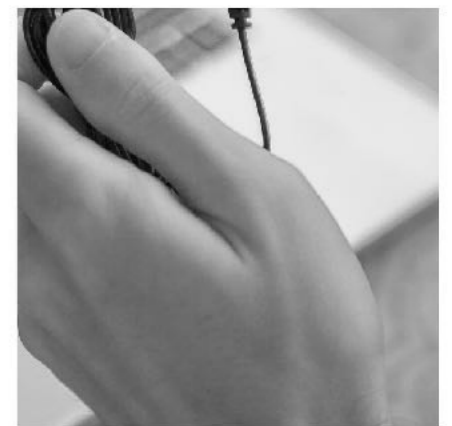
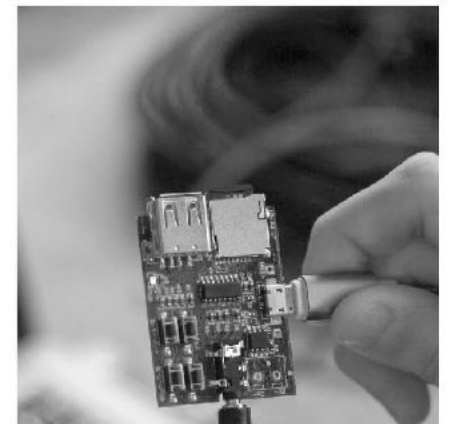
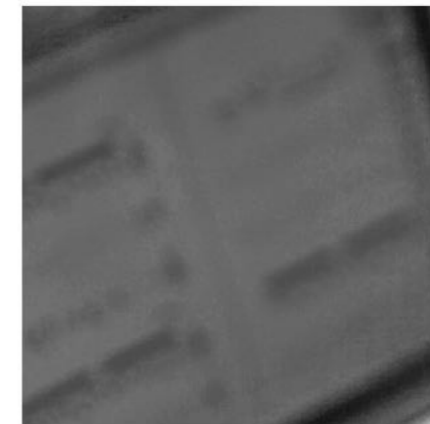
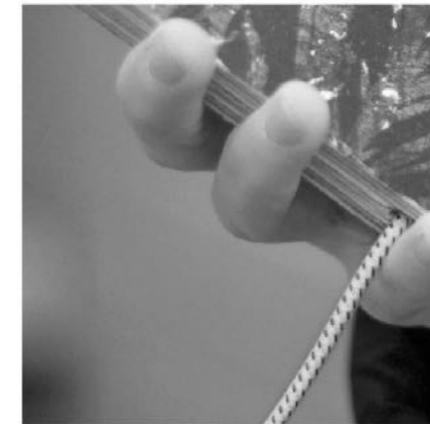
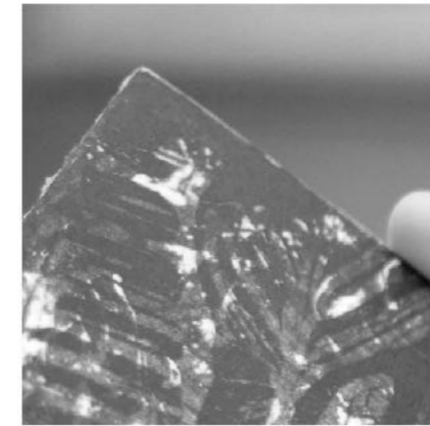
# SOUND ENVELOPES

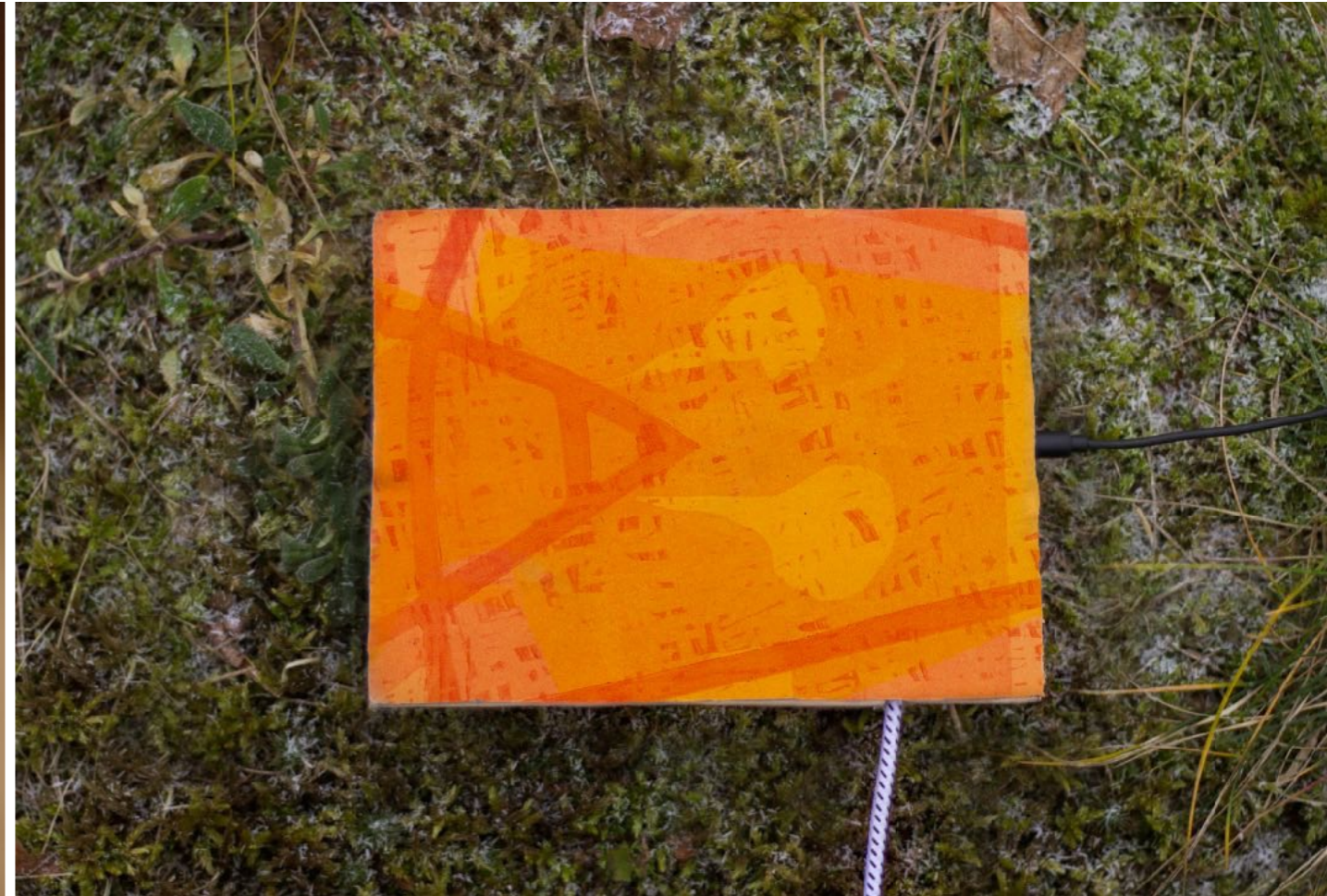
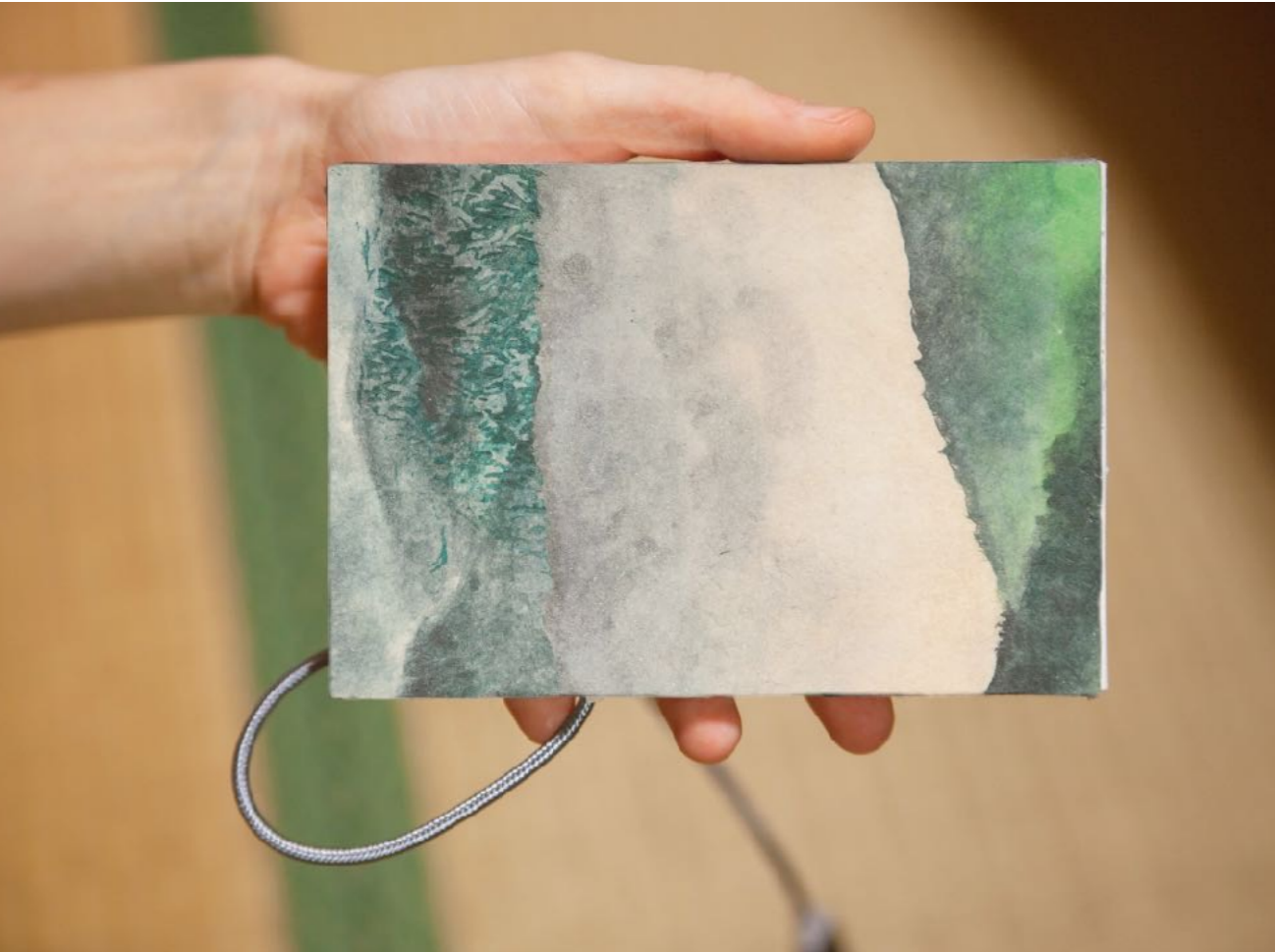
*Electronic musical postcards that connect people and locations through music*

Like any postcard, **Sound Envelopes** capture a moment with the intention of it being shared with others. Each Sound Envelope contains a musical track that can be heard through headphones when the postcard is plugged in via USB, alongside a print created by a local artist from the location in which the postcard was created. Intending to draw connections between people and places, the Sound Envelopes are each gifted to a recipient with directions to pass it along to someone further. The result is a chain of locations connected through music, people, and travel.

The first location in which **Sound Envelopes** were created was **Rauma, Finland**. There, the duo created a set of 5 from local birch wood with prints by the Finnish artist **Mari Aspola**. After organizing small performances in homes around town, the postcards were given as gifts to 5 different recipients on Christmas Day 2018. The postcards then slowly traveled hand in hand from Finland to Nakanojo, Japan, the site of a future exhibition date at the **Nakanojo Biennale 2019**. Two of these five original postcards made the entire journey, and were put on display for audiences in Japan where two additional new postcards were created. The new Sound Envelopes were created with the Japanese artist **Hiromi Hoshino**.

[video sample](#)





Two Sound Envelopes: Nakanojo Japan (left) and Rauma, Finland (right)



Sound installation created with Passepartout Duo's Sound Envelopes at the Nakanojo Biennale