

HAROON MIRZA

The Calling

2013-2014

Installation

The Calling, 2013-2014

Woofers, metal tripod, speakers, video, LED, radios, suspended lighting, lamp, bamboo, monitors and mixed media

The Calling is both a performance and an installation. It was activated on the evening of the exhibition opening by the cellist Okkyung Lee (available on <https://vimeo.com/87086151>).

As is often the case with Haroon Mirza's work, this installation mixes up and brings together a number of objects from different periods, primarily used for producing sound and image: 50s radios, a retro lamp, metallic suspended lighting, loudspeakers, LEDs, and a woofer linked up with the artist's own digital circuitry. Together they make up a landscape of sculptures and hybrid audiovisual devices, organised in the centre of the room to draw out and define a listening space.

Every element is generating its own discontinuous sound – music, alarm, signal, interference, glitch – to compose a single piece that introduces us to another relationship to notions of 'noise' and 'parasites', one that is no longer about suppression but on the contrary about physical experience and exploration. In several works, Haroon Mirza has examined the ambivalent aspects of sound and notably the phenomenon of attraction/ repulsion that can arise; some of these projects invoke the figure of the Siren, whose song is an emblem of this duality. *The Calling* is very much drawn from this research into the dual power of sonic material.

Haroon Mirza is a DJ as well as an artist, and he retains from this practice a certain way of working: borrowings from popular music (in this case the 70s hit "Lola" by The Kinks is shown on one of the screens), sampling, the synchronisation – or not – of beats, and looping are some of the techniques used to compose a large visual and audio mix that works by using a cleverly orchestrated system of resonances and echoes. The crackling and flashing of LEDs, the movements of the bamboo on the woofer and the intermittent light from the lamps give a rhythm and an accompaniment to the more or less melodic lines of the cello and the guitar chords.

This resonance principle also works on several levels. After the performance, and for the duration of the show, a video is being shown of Okkyung Lee in her studio playing the piece that was performed live on the evening of the opening: an improvisation on the song by The Kinks reworked by Haroon Mirza. The principle of interaction at work in *The Calling* is equally clear in these fertile musical exchanges that give 'responses' to the 'call' of the British group's song.











Access Boot
2014
Installation
Production Le Grand Café

Access Boot, 2014

Sideboard, telephone, radio, LED, screen, speakers, woofer, coins, shelf, bonded foam, video clip and mixed media
Production Le Grand Café

“Experiencing one of [Haroon Mirza’s] installations is to somehow move around within a three-dimensional musical score, the visual and physical potential of sound being exploited to paroxysm.”

This aspect of the artist’s work, perceptible in *The Calling*, takes full form in *Access Boot*, a new installation produced for the exhibition.

Haroon Mirza is always attentive to the specificities of a context, and here he has drawn on the history of the art centre itself as a café, with a reception room and a ballroom on the first floor. Struck by this particularity, he decided to reactivate this now largely hidden dimension. The minimalist appearance of the work, the circular arrangement of the speakers that leaves a large empty space, the choice of a track released the same year that the Grand Café became a visual art exhibition space: it allusively evokes this past and brings the ghost of the dance floor back to life.

In *Access Boot*, the architecture of the room itself is integrated into the composition; bonded foam polyhedra guiding the visitor up to the first floor, blue LEDs emphasising certain corners, and the geometric window drawings are the means adopted by the artist to occupy what he thinks of as ‘found architecture’. He builds on the singularities of the site without taking a direct, frontal approach, and seems to simultaneously make it more abstract (further away) and more alive (closer).

More generally, this installation was equally inspired by his discovery of Saint-Nazaire. A town marked by its military past, a town opening onto the ocean: this double reference is contained in the Wolfgang Petersen film, *Das Boot*, shown on the screen, which tells the story of the German submarine U-96 (Kriegsmarine) and its crew during the Second World War. Haroon Mirza, as usual, empties this material of all narrative and only retains scrambled image and sound.









