

PRESS RELEASE

Ingólfur Arnarsson & Sachiko M

13 February - 22 March 2014

i8 is pleased to announce a collaborative installation by Ingólfur Arnarsson and Sachiko M. Featuring intricate drawings and delicate concrete reliefs by Arnarsson and sparse digital sound work by Sachiko M, the exhibition forces the fine-tuning of the act of seeing and listening.

Both Ingólfur Arnarsson's and Sachiko M's work emerges from a nothingness. An initial air of ambivalence and aloofness – a form of urban detachment – gives way aurally and visually to a refinement of crystalline abstraction.

Arnarsson's discrete drawings upon paper appear as punctuated intervals along the expanse of the gallery wall. It is only with closer viewing that one becomes conscious that their tonality is not uniform but the result of a density of rhythmic pencil marks. Their presence in the gallery is oddly architectural. Odd, in as much as they are simultaneously suggestive of contrary forms: of voids punched through the wall, of appendages attached to the surface or of a palimpsest record of something removed. The drawings' colour, or rather lack of it, flirts with the lexicon of utility, which initially obviates their essential handmade nature. They are a counterpoint to the architecture of their setting. His concrete works similarly conspire with the built environment in their materiality and structural mass but the faint ghostly hue of a watercolour stain furthers their ambiguity.

For Sachiko M the organic is eschewed, her compositions intentionally utilize a purity of aural structure that is generated by machine. Those clicks, burrs and sinusoidal forms seek to avoid allusion and reference. As the artist explains in an interview, contrasting her earlier involvement with sampling with her contemporary approaches: "sampling must be composed largely around a meaning ... where as sinusoidal waves are nothing more than sound." The result is the generation of a sparse, objective acoustic space. The distance of these sounds from the organic affords them an almost sculptural presence. They are encountered and at times have to be tolerated due to a severity of form. As challenging as this absence of reference is, it succeeds in focusing attention on the architecture of sound and its ubiquity.

There is something of a collusion of abstraction between Arnarsson and Sachiko M. Their sympathetic approaches share a reductive elegance yet arrive there from the contrary poles of the organic and manmade, the hand and the machine. However, to apply the notion of the reductive is somewhat misleading. As neither of these artists' work seek to distil an affect, but rather they both present for consideration an elemental focus. The work is fundamentally reflexive due to the conspicuous absence of referent in both of their work. Neither makes anything which is necessarily 'about' anything. This absence of reference allows the work to accommodate all impositions of narrative and allusion but retain none of them. When confronted with this type of work, which stoically retains an eloquent muteness, a mental fervour often descends where the viewer tries to make it known and recognizable. Metaphors are deployed, the acoustic is described materially, the visual described with the vocabulary of the aural. And yet the application is always inexact, meaning slips through the fingers and what remains is the experience, a singularity which becomes a fulcrum upon which our reorientation and perception of the space pivots.

Text by Gavin Morrison

Ingólfur Arnarsson lives and works in Reykjavík. He studied at the Icelandic College of Art and Crafts in Reykjavík and at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. Solo exhibitions include a permanent installation at the The Chianti Foundation, Marfa, Texas (1992) and Reykjavík Art Museum, Kjarvalsstaðir (1996). His work has been presented in group exhibitions at: The Drawing Center, New York (2007), The National Gallery of Iceland (2001), and at Kölnischer Kunstverein, Germany (1991). Throughout his career, Arnarsson has also worked as a curator and a teacher. He was Professor of Fine Art at Iceland Academy of the Arts between 2000-2007.

Sachiko M lives and works in Tokyo. She has spent more than 20 years manipulating sounds and maximising the possibilities of her work's core instrument, the sampler. Her first solo material, "Sine Wave Solo" (1999) was a radical album built entirely of sine waves and attracted considerable attention. In 2003 Sachiko M. was awarded the Ars Electronica Golden Nica Prize for digital music. A multifaceted artist, she also works in the field of sound installation and photographic manipulation.

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