

Sounds Modern

presents the premiere of

Unset

by Andrew May

Saturday, August 1, 2015, 8:00 pm

among Donald Judd's *15 untitled works in concrete*

Performers

Oscar Agüero, trumpet+
Toshiro Chun, trumpet*
Anthony DiSimone, keyboard+
Stephen Lucas, recorder*
Jolene Masone, bassoon*
Andrew May, electric violin
Elizabeth McNutt, flute*
Julian Mock, cornet+

Freddy Oullette, bass trombone*
Alyce Santoro, flute+
Jessica Stearns, alto saxophone*
Jeremiah Stones, bass trombone*
Chuck Wilson, tenor trombone+

*member of Nova Ensemble, UNT

+ Big Bend Region community member

Program Notes

Most of us have felt the delight of hearing pitches arise from the resonances within a stone or concrete space, be it a cave, a stairwell, or a passageway between buildings. Donald Judd's *15 untitled works in concrete*, a kilometer-long series of geometric constellations of monolithic concrete rectangular prisms at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, provide an unique opportunity to turn this everyday phenomenon into art. They frame one another and the surrounding landscape, as well as the light and space within them, transforming this stretch of far west Texas high desert into a dramatic journey through shifting perspectives. They don't just transform light and space, though; they manipulate sound through the highly resonant spaces they create. When Sounds Modern founders Elizabeth McNutt and Andrew May first visited the site on a windy day in December 2006, they were struck by the way the sounds of the landscape and of their own footsteps and voices changed as they walked along the site, and by the beauty of the harmonies that arose. During that visit, they sang and clapped into the concrete works, and imagined (fantasized?) their instruments sounding in this environment.

With *Unset*, we invite musicians and visitors to explore together the sonic spaces of Judd's monumental works. May has designed custom portable computer music systems he calls "ESCAPE units" which will activate and illuminate the resonant world of the *works in concrete*, creating a musical experience that draws equally on the concrete structures, the landscape, the moment of performance, and the sonic past (including field recordings from Chinati as well as hints of music by John Dowland, a favorite composer of both Judd and May). Along with musicians from Sounds Modern, the Nova Ensemble of the University of North Texas (which McNutt also directs) and the Marfa area community, visitors to the event will also be invited to participate in creating the sonic experience.

Sounds Modern Staff

Elizabeth McNutt, director
Andrew May, assistant director

Acknowledgements

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