



School: School of Art

Researcher: Keith Harrison

Project Title: Material Soundsystems: Ecstatic Material / Bloom / Mute

UOA: 32

300 Word Statement

Material Soundsystems comprises 3 interactive public works, **Mute** 2015, **Ecstatic Material** 2019 and **Bloom** 2019: each explore the possibilities of forging a symbiotic and transformative connection between the seemingly opposite properties of sound and matter. Setting in motion an unpredictable chain of interactions through live experimentation Harrison asks:

- 1.Can sound animate matter and matter create sound and might this activation have transformative potential?
- 2.How might a long term public participatory installation effect an audience's interactions?
- 3.How does site specificity and audience reaction affect the compositional elements throughout each of these projects?

Commissioned by National Museum Wales, **Mute**, was a site-specific installation consisting of a tiled, clay filled PA system, subjected to bursts of internalised sound, produced by the audience playing vinyl on dual turntables. Over 3 months, the sonic resonance of spontaneous public led interactions shaped the installation, their sense of ownership confounding expectations.

Adopting the same material approach as **Mute**, but using play dough, Harrison collaborated with musician Beatrice Dillon on **Ecstatic Material**, a touring live systems based performance testing dynamic, symbiotic connections between sound, matter and audience. A fluid open ended exploration, **Ecstatic Material** was reconfigured by reactions and outcomes from the previous venue, over 9 consecutive performances.

Taking material cues from **Ecstatic Material** and Pether's 17th century painting *Night Blooming Cereus*, **Bloom** was a site specific installation for *God's House*

Tower, Southampton, inspired by its views and sounds of passing ships. Consisting of repurposed crates, subwoofer speakers, cacti powder and turntable, ***Bloom*** was activated hourly by a vinyl recording of a ship's foghorn, reverberating over 3 months, forming new sonic and material connections between past and present.

Material Soundsystems extends Harrison's research into ceramics as performance, reapplying volatile ceramic processes to other materials, initiating symbiotic convergences that challenge received knowledge - a form of deconstruction to activate renewal.