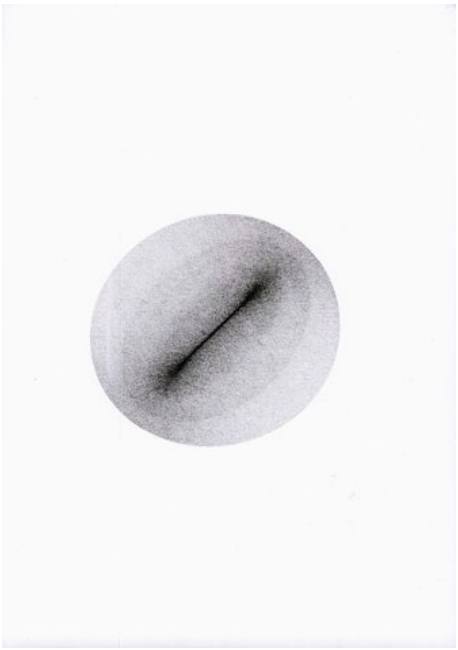
FAYE FLEMING & PARTNER
14 rue de l'Arquebuse CH-1204 GENEVA

ARTISSIMA 16
PRESENT / FUTURE
Cur. Simone Menegoi

NICK LAESSING (b. 1973 UK, lives and works in Berlin)



BIOGRAPHY

Recent important exhibitions include: ***Heaven, 2nd Athens Biennial*, Athens** (2009); ***The Show Will Be Titled After Its End*, FormContent, London** (2008)**; *Manifesto Marathon*, Serpentine Gallery, London** (2008 / performance); ***Tales Of Disbelief*, cur. Simone Menegoi, La Galerie, Noisy-le-Sec, Paris** (2008); ***We All Turn This Way*, Frank Gehry Pavilion, Serpentine Gallery, London** (2008 / performance); ***On Aether: Athanasios Argianas and Nick Laessing*, Cell Project Space, London** (2007). Solo exhibitions include: **Arcade Fine Arts, London** (2009); ***Energizer*, cur. Florence Ostende, Galerie Paul Freches, Paris** (2009); **Faye Fleming & Partner, Geneva** (2007); **Mary Mary, Glasgow** (2005).

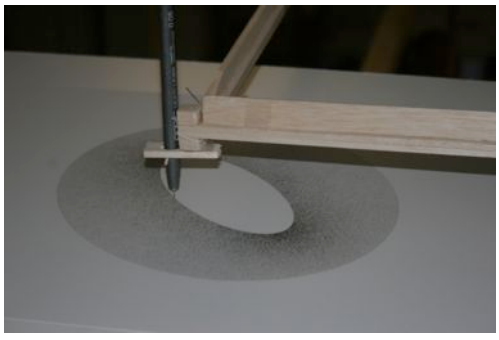
Nick Laessing
Studies in Spatial Harmonics 2009
Graphite on paper
42 x 30 cm

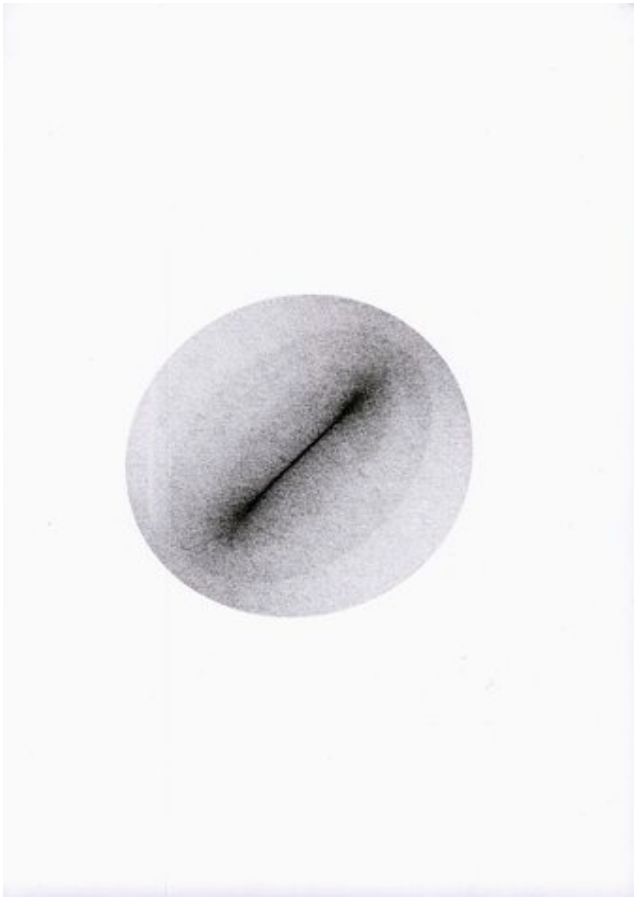
Nick Laessing's drawings entitled *Studies in Spatial Harmonics* are made in conjunction with his ongoing project *Spatial Harmonics*, in which Laessing builds a timber framework according to a given architectural space, from which swing several carefully calibrated pendulums. These pendula interconnect through a drawing board that is able to mechanically produce unique drawings produced by their syncopated movement.

The project is extrapolated from Professor Hugh Blackburn's 1844 invention, the Harmonograph. Drawings produced by swinging pendulums exhibit harmonies analogous to numerical ratios of musical harmonic theory – as established by Pythagoras 2500 years ago – and the broader theory that all nature consists of harmony arising from certain simple numbers.

These finely detailed drawings ultimately return to the aims of early abstraction, in attempting to capture the immutable and intrinsic qualities of space. Their lineage traces back to gestural abstraction, as well as the history of mechanical means of reproduction in contemporary art theory. The artist's 'gestures' are the decisions that place the pendulums according to a certain position in space, and that set the pendulums in motion, selecting particular musical harmonies and their resulting effects. The drawings relate directly to the architectural space in which they are made, in this case the artist's studio, and the time duration of their creation.

"This is a kind of quest towards understanding the origins of ideas, and the paradoxes inherent in the meeting of intuitive knowledge or revelation and scientific rationalism."





14 rue de l'Arquebuse / CH-1204 / Geneva / www.fayefleming.com / info@fayefleming.com / + 41 22 321 46 50 / f: + 41 22 321 46 51

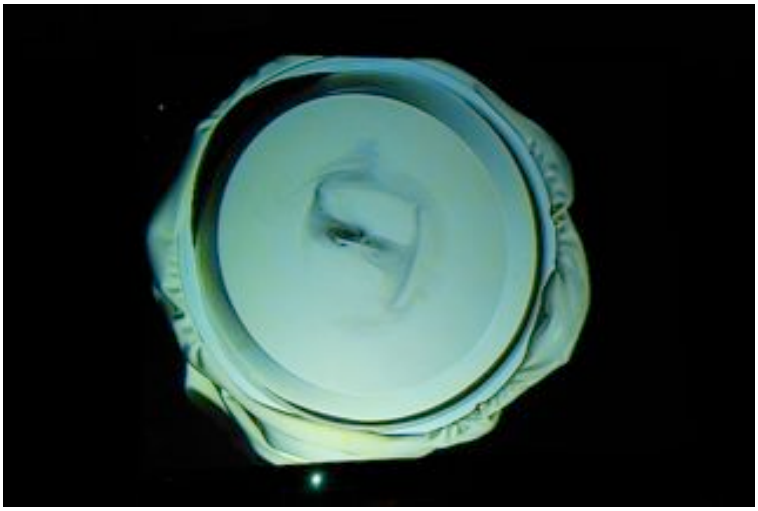
Nick Laessing
Voice Figures 2008
HD transferred to DVD
Edition of 5 + 1 AP
Duration: 5.17 min.

Nick Laessing's video *Voice Figures* 2008, records the transformations in ink and pigment powder that occur through the transmission of the vibrations from a singing human voice onto the latex surface of a recreated Eidophone machine.

Voice Figures arose from Laessing's investigations into an invention by an English singing teacher Margaret Watts Hughes in the 1880s. Hughes invented a device she called the Eidophone that consisted of a tube that she sung into, causing resonations to reach a membrane of stretched rubber a at the other end of the tube. She created images on its surface using her voice to vibrate watercolour paste and fine powder into forms such as flowers; daisies, pansies, and sunflowers, later on extending her repertoire to include quasi-religious imagery such as serpents in landscapes. Hughes work created a minor sensation and attracted the curiosity of the leading scientific institutions of the day, attempting to understand the relationship between the voice, sound and its ability to conjure up such manifestations of nature. Whilst the results of her work attracted attention, it was of such a personal nature that it was found impossible to evaluate in a scientific way, and very little information exists about the exact nature of her Eidophone.

Nick Laessing spent several years devising and building his own Eidophones in collaboration with the classically trained singer Esmeralda Conde Ruiz, as relics to a past performance, past time, and past obsession. *" I am reconstructing the obsessions behind these discoveries in myself, as I work through the original inventor's thinking. I guess you could say this is driven by a nostalgia for a time when scientific innovation was still open to the lay-man and the utopian possibilities of these discoveries seemed tangible."*

Laessing's practice revisits the romantic endeavours and aspirations of scientists and amateur experimenters towards understanding the origins of ideas, and the paradoxes inherent in the meeting of intuitive knowledge or revelation, and scientific rationalism.



Nick Laessing

Elective Affinities 2009

Aluminium, plexiglas, tuning forks, laser diode, electronics
120 x 50 x 50 cm

Laessing's working machine *Elective Affinities* recreates the Lissajous apparatus, a device invented by the French mathematician Jules Antoine Lissajous (1822-1880) but which is now a near-forgotten and outdated scientific achievement.

A laser beam is bounced off a mirror attached to a vibrating tuning fork, and then reflected off a second mirror attached to a second perpendicular tuning fork. Tuning forks are built to resonate at a set pitch with a very pure musical tone. When the two tuning forks are at pitches that together create a musical harmony, the beam of light that is passed between them is transformed into circular forms projected on nearby walls and structures. Reflecting the utopic aspirations of many amateur scientists and mathematicians in the late 19th century, these circular forms illustrate in space the mysterious and remarkable properties of musical harmony.

Laessing has also created an outdoor version of this machine, with 4 metre tall tuning forks, the size of which allows the vibrations of the surrounding atmosphere to play a part in the resulting 'drawings in space'.