

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA TO OPEN THE INAUGURAL PRESENTATION OF STUDIO SOUND, WITH PERFORMANCES BY SUZANNE CIANI AND SARAH DAVACHI

Studio Sound: Suzanne Ciani and Sarah Davachi

September 7–17, 2023

The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Studio

NEW YORK, August 15, 2023— MoMA presents ***Studio Sound: Suzanne Ciani and Sarah Davachi*** in the Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Studio from September 7 through 17, 2023. Studio Sound is an annual performance series that suggests an expanded history of art in which sound plays a central role by championing artists and musicians whose work engages with new possibilities for sound and music. The inaugural presentation of Studio Sound presents performances by Suzanne Ciani and Sarah Davachi—two composers of different generations working with innovative music technologies. The first week of the series will feature three performances of *Improvisation on Four Sequences*, Ciani’s spatial sound experience using a Buchla—an innovative, nontraditional interface that does not rely on a traditional 12-tone keyboard. The second week will feature three different performances by Davachi, including two evening performances of new electroacoustic works that challenge listeners’ experience of sound, and a third, new solo electronic work as a live, daytime installation with video by Dicky Bahto. *Studio Sound: Suzanne Ciani and Sarah Davachi* is organized by Martha Joseph, The Phyllis Ann and Walter Borten Assistant Curator of Media and Performance, with May Makki, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance.

Performance Program

Suzanne Ciani’s *Improvisation on Four Sequences* performance schedule

Thursday, September 7, 8:00 p.m.

Friday, September 8, 8:00 p.m.

Friday, September 8, 11:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 10, 2:00 p.m.

This matinee performance will be followed by a conversation between Suzanne Ciani and curator Martha Joseph.

Often referred to as the “Diva of the Diode,” composer Suzanne Ciani is a pioneer of electronic music, known for her revelatory creations on an instrument called the Buchla. Developed by Don Buchla in 1964, this analog modular synthesizer was innovative for its nontraditional interface, which does not rely on a traditional 12-tone keyboard. In the Kravis Studio, Ciani will perform *Improvisation on Four Sequences* on the Buchla 200e. Presented in quadraphonic sound, the work incorporates a spatial sound experience into her musical composition. Ciani says, “I consider the spatial characteristics—where a sound is placed and the way it moves—to be an integral part of the music, and I plan and ‘play’ the space of each part of the performance.”

Sarah Davachi performance schedule

Thursday, September 14, 8:00 p.m. ***Long Gradus***

Friday, September 15, 8:00 p.m. ***Brass Chant***

Sunday, September 17, 1:00 p.m. ***Music for a Bellowing Room***

This matinee performance will be followed by a conversation between Sarah Davachi and curator Martha Joseph.

Sarah Davachi is a Canadian experimental composer and performer who creates immersive, layered drones using a wide range of acoustic and electronic instrumentation, including organs, strings, brass, and synthesizers, to expand the human perception of sound through subtle variations of considered harmonic structures. At MoMA, Davachi will present *Long Gradus*, a long-form composition for chamber ensemble (string quartet and sine tones). A *gradus* is a handbook meant to aid in learning a difficult practice. Davachi tells us, “In this case, *Long Gradus* is designed to considerably slow the cognitive movements of both listener and player, and to focus their attention on the relationships between moments.” A second performance, *Brass Chant*, for brass trio and electronic drones, explores both harmony and texture, reducing them to fundamental forms that invoke particular spatial interactions. Both works will be performed by Contemporaneous Ensemble. Davachi will also premiere *Music for a Bellowing Room*, a new durational solo electronic work, presented as a live, daytime installation with video by Dicky Bahto.

All works composed by Sarah Davachi

Long Gradus (2020–21)

Sarah Davachi: electronics

Contemporaneous: chamber ensemble

Giancarlo Latta: violin

Finnegan Shanahan: violin

Sarah Haines: viola

Amanda Gookin: cello

Brass Chant (2023)

Sarah Davachi: electronics

Contemporaneous: brass trio

Daniel Linden: trombone

Rebecca Steinberg: trumpet

Patrick Jankowski: French horn

Music for a Bellowing Room (2023)

Sarah Davachi: electronics

Dicky Bahto: *Images for a Bellowing Room*

SPONSORSHIP



The exhibition is presented as part of The Hyundai Card Performance Series.

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