

Specious Dialogue III

Julie Freeman

Specious Dialogue¹ consists of a pair of movable, sculptural concrete forms that house wireless audio playback systems. Mounted on pairs of swivel castors the forms are designed to be played with - pushed, rolled, kicked and shoved around the exhibition space. They are physical audio curiosities with personality.

The mobility of the work means that Specious Dialogue can intervene in other artworks, be silenced by a coat, join into visitor conversations, or be placed together in a conspiratorial corner. However they are encountered, they expect to be touched or moved in some way, at the very least they want to be listened to. By enabling this physical interaction with the objects the listener perhaps becomes an unwitting performer moving the sound, catching it, passing it to someone else, changing the sound dynamic in the space.

The pair spew an emotional dialogue, they bicker, coo fragments of love, they shout, scream and whisper, they are lonely lovers or clinging siblings. They miss each other, but also get angry and need their space. These multi-layered, twisted, specious conversations flip between mundanity, humour, drunkenness, apathy, passion, conspiracy and irritation.

Of interest is how these mumbling forms evoke feeling from the audience. The emotive audio personalities seem to surpass the objects' form which are an inorganic combination of steel, concrete and rubber. The work explores the gap in these faceless conversations, and asks what the audience is prepared to fill in. Are we happy to overhear? Can we empathise with a disconnected voice? Did we unwittingly join in?

¹ *Specious* - plausible but false; Having the ring of truth or plausibility but actually fallacious; Deceptively attractive; Apparently good or right though lacking real merit.



Image credit: © Christian Mosar, Casino Luxembourg

About the artist

Julie Freeman's work explores transforming complex processes into sound compositions, objects and visualisations. Her work spans visual, audio and digital art forms and investigating the relationship between science, nature and how humans interact with it. For the past 12 years her work has focused on using electronic technologies to 'translate nature' - whether through the sound of torrential rain falling on a giant rhubarb leaf, a pair of mobile concrete speakers lurking in galleries haranguing passers by or by providing an interactive platform from which to view the flap, twitch and prick of dogs' ears. Through a sonic installation she has explored empathy in art and Asperger's syndrome in collaboration with psychologist Dr Emma Lawrence, and her pioneering artwork *The Lake* used hydrophones, custom software and advanced technology to track electronically tagged fish and translate their movement into an audio-visual experience.

She is currently Artist in Residence at the Microsystems and Nanotechnology Centre, Cranfield University. Julie holds an MA in Digital Art from the Lansdown Centre for Electronic Arts, Middlesex University, is a NESTA fellow and Wellcome Trust arts awardee. She is steering group chair of FreqOUT! - an award winning, innovative London based community arts programme, enabling young people to work with wireless technologies. Her work has been exhibited across the UK, including at the

Institute of Contemporary Arts and the Science Museum, and internationally in Brazil, Croatia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Russia, and the USA.

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