

**Edited conversation between Sean Dower and Jane Won (Curator at De la Warr Pavilion)
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My initial route into becoming a visual artist was through involvement in music and live-performance, which was connected to the industrial and noise music scene of the early 1980s. This scene was very tied in with the world of ideas, avant-garde spectacle and subculture in general. Even a lot of popular music at that time seemed connected to ideas of existentialism and politics.

I have long been interested in acoustics and space. One of my early sound recordings from 1984, *The Curfew Recordings* (re-released in 2013) was recorded in a disused industrial space; inside a huge, plate-steel, silo structure with incredible acoustics. The music was largely improvised and was equally about working with material. Visual artists or sculptors, people working 'hands-on', often have the idea of truth to material and I think instruments and technology have their own life and inherent qualities. There has been a crossover in my practice of taking analogies from different disciplines and applying them in the visual arts (and visa versa). I have combined working with music and live performance alongside being a visual artist for a number of years. For practical and professional reasons artists often have to commit to a single medium or subject, however I have tried to incorporate this diversity into a single practice.

My interest in sound is that it is a physical medium; sound moves air and makes solid materials vibrate and it has a physical effect on your body. Sound is also a way of describing space because the acoustics of space are affected by its scale, shape and material. If you close your eyes and listen to sounds, you can probably work out the type of space you are in: the form of it and the surface materials. In the same way, the first thing I do when I see a material is hit it and see what sound it makes. The physical and conceptual aspects of sound can affect your state of your mind. *Sound as a way of reading the world.*

The idea of analogue has always interested me: a truck idling in the street might cause a glass of water on a table to have ripples in it. It may be a very low frequency sound and hard to detect. You might only notice the ripples because the sunlight happens to be coming in the window at a certain angle and reflecting off the surface of the water and onto the wall. Sound emanates from all sorts of strange places; it might travel down an air-conditioning duct or be reflected off natural or manmade structures. Objects can manifest sound energy in quite unexpected ways, there is often a chain of energy transference, and we might only hear or see the traces left behind.

Everything has a multitude of uses and we are conditioned by the intended use of objects. While someone will see a filing cabinet and think this is where they can store boxes of accounts, I see a resonant object. In the exhibition, the work *Next Door* (a drinking glass stuck to a wall) refers specifically to an over-sensitivity to sound that I sometimes suffer from. The idea that there is always someone in the room next to you and you can't actually hear what they are saying, but what you do hear is the background tones, the constant mumbling. I am very aware of sound and find it hard to tune-out, I'm often fascinated and annoyed by it at the same time. I have also suffered from hyperacuity, which is an over sensitivity to particular sounds. It's a type of hearing damage (in my case caused by performing with explosives), but rather than losing your hearing you become more sensitive to certain frequencies.

What attracts me to sculpture is the idea that objects might also have a function. You can confuse them with reality and then they can surprise you. I like this ambiguity of purpose and

the fact that you can make a mistake by thinking things are just everyday objects when they might have another aspect or subtext.

The whole installation (the Voyeur) is like a sound system, like one piece of music. It's often through an array of speakers that we spatially perceive a piece of music; in dub sound systems they often move the sound around, not just by using stereo but they might filter the frequency of the sound from low to high pitch, moving the sound across the space directly to a particular speaker.

Everything in this show relates to sound in some way, because it's either emitting it, reflecting it, vibrating or shaking due to it. The works on show are all contributing to a whole sound track.

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