SOUND SCULPTURE

Overview

Sound Sculpture is an interactive musical instrument, a physical sound and light environment that facilitates play and connection, and is a tool for creative expression.

The artwork allows participants to move and play with blocks, creating changeable and dynamic light and sound structures. These portable and location-aware blocks are designed to open a spatial and tangible aspect to musical composition, along with a sonic aspect to sculptural creations. This project is designed for installation at galleries, schools, community centers, science museums, music festivals and more.

Sound Sculpture makes musical composition more physical, and sculptural creation more audible.

Interactive Details

Sound Sculpture is an interactive set of building blocks that produce sound and light. The blocks are made of high- density poly-ethylene and are 17” on each side. Each block has a positioning tag inside, a battery, a small processor with wifi antennae and an LED light array.

Using freestanding “location anchors” and custom software, the blocks are trackable within the activated space and their movements and location are constantly updated. The software tracks across the space and sends a signal to each block in sequential order- activating it with sound and light. In this way “musical time” is viewable as the blocks light and make their corresponding sound depending their physical location.

As participants change the order and orientation of the blocks in the space, the musical composition changes accordingly. The x-axis commonly represents rhythm and the y-axis pitch.

Installation

Through a series of pre-determined “scores,” project creator Ryan Edwards initializes sound and light conditions for the piece. Over the course of the installation period, a number of sound and light pairings will be presented. The exact sound structure and sequence of melody are created by the public, through their positioning of the blocks.

Shipping & Set Up

- The piece ships freight in 4 pallet-based crates, approximately 48”x44”x48”
- It is preferred to off load to a loading dock, if not a lift gated truck will be arranged for an additional fee
- Once the crates are at the presentation site, the piece can be set up in about 2 hours
- Assistance is required to set up the sound system and confirm functionality, but a sound engineer is not required to mix the presentation in real time
- There are small data cables that connect the anchors to the control computer. it is the venue / presenter’s responsibility to provide a solution for this (cable cross, gaff tape, etc)

Technical Specifications

- Cubes are 17” on each side, are made of HDPE plastic, weigh about 7 lbs each and are durable enough to be dropped, stacked and stood on.
- The “Active” area within the anchors is ideally 20-40 feet square.
- Anchors stand about 6’ tall on a simple telescoping tripod stand and are powered via ethernet cables (we provide).
- A single control table is onsite and requires 110v power to run a laptop and small PA system (PA is system venue provided)
- Low ambient light is paramount to immersive quality of the work.

Marketing Langauge

- It is like walking onto the music page, picking up a note, and moving it around.
- Sound Sculpture is a giant MIDI sequencer, a physical beat-mapping device.
- Sound Sculpture is a location-aware musical instrument. It is a kind of MIDI (musical instrument digital interface) tool. Just like an electronic keyboard or drum pad is simply a mean to input musical performance data - so is Sound Sculpture. And just like with that keyboard, the artist chooses what sound might be played. It could be an organ sound, a synth lead, a grand piano, etc. Similarly, sounds are pre-determined to be “played” by the public when interacting with the piece.
- The cubes are “played” sequentially across the active area by the computer. The control computer scans the room, actually like a sweep of time, and as that sweep of time collides with a cube - it lights and makes its respective sound.
- Generally speaking, the y-axis represents pitch, and the x-axis represents time. Moving a cube higher on the y-axis would raise its pitch, while moving a cube to the left on the x-axis would make it sound earlier in the musical loop.
- The color sequences of the cubes are pre-determined. There is a resting state, and a “ping-to” color. These are all coordinated aesthetically with their corresponding sound scores.

About the Artist

Ryan Edwards is a career musician for dancers. From a beginning in big band jazz, to an extensive study in West African music and dance, he has been on the path to make people dance since he began in music. For 10 years he led annual adventure-travel missions to Guinea, West Africa. Currently producing interdisciplinary art and performance work, he continues to explore music, installations and design for dance as well as various site-specific works. Ryan is a New Music America Grant Recipient as well as a Creative City, Live Arts Boston and Now + There Arts Fellow. He graduated Magna Cum Laude with a degree in performance from Berklee College of Music and a minor in Africana Studies. Ryan is most proud to be a father of two beautiful children, Jafiah and Maya.

MASARY Studios is a trans-disciplinary collective reconsidering environments through site-specific installations using sound, light, interactivity, and performance. Based in Boston, the studio's practice includes live percussion performance, electronic music and production, facade projection-mapped video, artistic research, technology and materials fabrication, and the expansive use of dimensional animation. The studio is artist-owned and managed and was founded in 2015.

Social Media

- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/masarystudios
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/masary_studios
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/masary_studios
- Website: http://www.masarystudios.com/

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