

Acknowledgements

A Scuttering Across The Leaves is presented by Virginia Tech's Center for the Arts in partnership with the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT). The project is also supported in part by the University of Virginia's Mountain Lake Biological Station's ArtLab, a program directed by artist and University of Virginia painting professor, Megan Marlatt. Many thanks to Doug Witney, Center for the Arts director of production services and his staff, and Tanner Upthegrove, ICAT's media engineer, for technical assistance. Thanks also to Vitiello's student, Olivia LeClair and the Department of Kinetic Imaging and the Office of the Dean of the School of the Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University for supporting LeClair's travel and lodging during this project. The participation of Fowler-Finn's students Downen Jocson and William Shoenberger was supported by a Summer Research Award in the Humanities from the College of Arts and Sciences at Saint Louis University. And of course, many thanks to Vitiello and Kasey-Fowler Finn for bringing this project to fruition.

About the Artist

Stephen Vitiello (born 1964, New York)

Vitiello is an electronic musician and sound artist, whose installations, performances, photographs, and drawings have been exhibited around the world in museums, galleries, and public spaces. Recent solo exhibitions include those at MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts (2011-2016), and The High Line, New York (2010-2011). Among his extensive list of group exhibitions are *Soundings: A Contemporary Score*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013); *September 11*, PS 1/MoMA, Long Island City, New York (2011-2012); the *15th Biennale of Sydney*, Australia (2006); the Cartier Foundation, Paris (2002); and the *2002 Biennial Exhibition*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2002). Vitiello has performed nationally and internationally at locations such as the Tate Modern, London; the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival; and The Kitchen, New York.

Vitiello's sound works are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon. He lives in Richmond, Virginia, where he is an associate professor in the Kinetic Imaging Department at Virginia Commonwealth University.

About the Scientist

Kasey D. Fowler-Finn, Ph.D.

Kasey D. Fowler-Finn is an evolutionary biologist who uses a combined quantitative genetic, ecological, and behavioral approach to investigate the evolution of complex traits in insects and arachnids. A major goal of her research is to understand how organisms adapt to and are affected by changes in the environment. She approaches this goal by listening to the tiny songs of insects that we cannot hear with our ears because these songs travel as tiny vibrations through plant stems and leaves. Some of her major projects include studying the influence of temperature on song, the genetics of song, and how social interactions among insects influence song and other behaviors.

Fowler-Finn has published widely in her field and is the recipient of numerous National Science Foundation grants. She is currently an assistant professor at Saint Louis University, and worked as a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She received her Ph.D. in 2009 from the University of Nebraska.

About the Center for the Arts

The Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech is a 147,000-square-foot multi-purpose, state-of-the art facility that includes a 1,274-seat theatre, visual arts galleries, a four-story experimental Cube, and research spaces, studios, and classrooms.

The Moss Arts Center, designed by Snøhetta (Oslo/New York), houses the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, the university's professional arts presenting program, which presents renowned artists from around the globe and from close to home, with a special focus on experiences that cross disciplines, expand cultural awareness, and deepen understanding. Beginning with the center's opening in 2013, an ambitious performing arts and exhibition program has presented a wide variety of outstanding regional, national, and international artists. Each year the Moss Arts Center galleries present up to 12 exhibitions that feature both established and emerging artists from artists' studios, galleries, private collections, and museums.

About ICAT

Integral to and partnered with the Center for the Arts is the Institute for Creativity, Art, and Technology (ICAT), a university-level research institute positioned at the nexus of the arts, design, engineering and science. ICAT researchers forge a pathway between transdisciplinary research and artistic output, scientific and commercial discovery, and educational innovation.

About the Cube

The Cube is a first of its kind, full-scale (50'w x 40'l x 32'h), four-story state of the art data exploration facility and experimental black box space for research, immersive environments, performances, and installations. It is an immersive audio/visual/laboratory with two tons of audio electronics, over 150 loudspeakers, and 3D sound capacity. The Cube is equipped for augmented reality (head mounted display) and tablet interaction interfaces; wave field synthesis and holosonic sound display interaction; synchronized data capture including IR motion capture, audio/video, physiological, and interaction signals; and real-time audio/video rendering systems.

About the University of Virginia's Mountain Lake Biological Center

The field Station for University of Virginia's Department of Biology, located on 650 acres at 3,800 feet elevation in rural Pembroke, Virginia—roughly halfway between Blacksburg, Virginia and the West Virginia state line—is home to a community of scientists and students from around the country who conduct research in everything from ecology to evolutionary genetics.

Admission free

Continuing through September 13, 2015
3-8 PM, Tuesday-Friday
10 am-4 PM Saturday-Sunday

Also on view

Stephen Vitiello: *A Scuttering Across the Leaves*, 2015
Sound installation in collaboration with Kasey Fowler-Finn
September 3-13, 2015
Cube

Beyond Real: *Still Life in the 21st Century*
September 3-November 15, 2015
Gerry Bannan, Ori Gersht, David Halliday, Jennifer L. Hand, Laura Letinsky, Tim O'Kane, Agniet Snoep
Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery
Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery

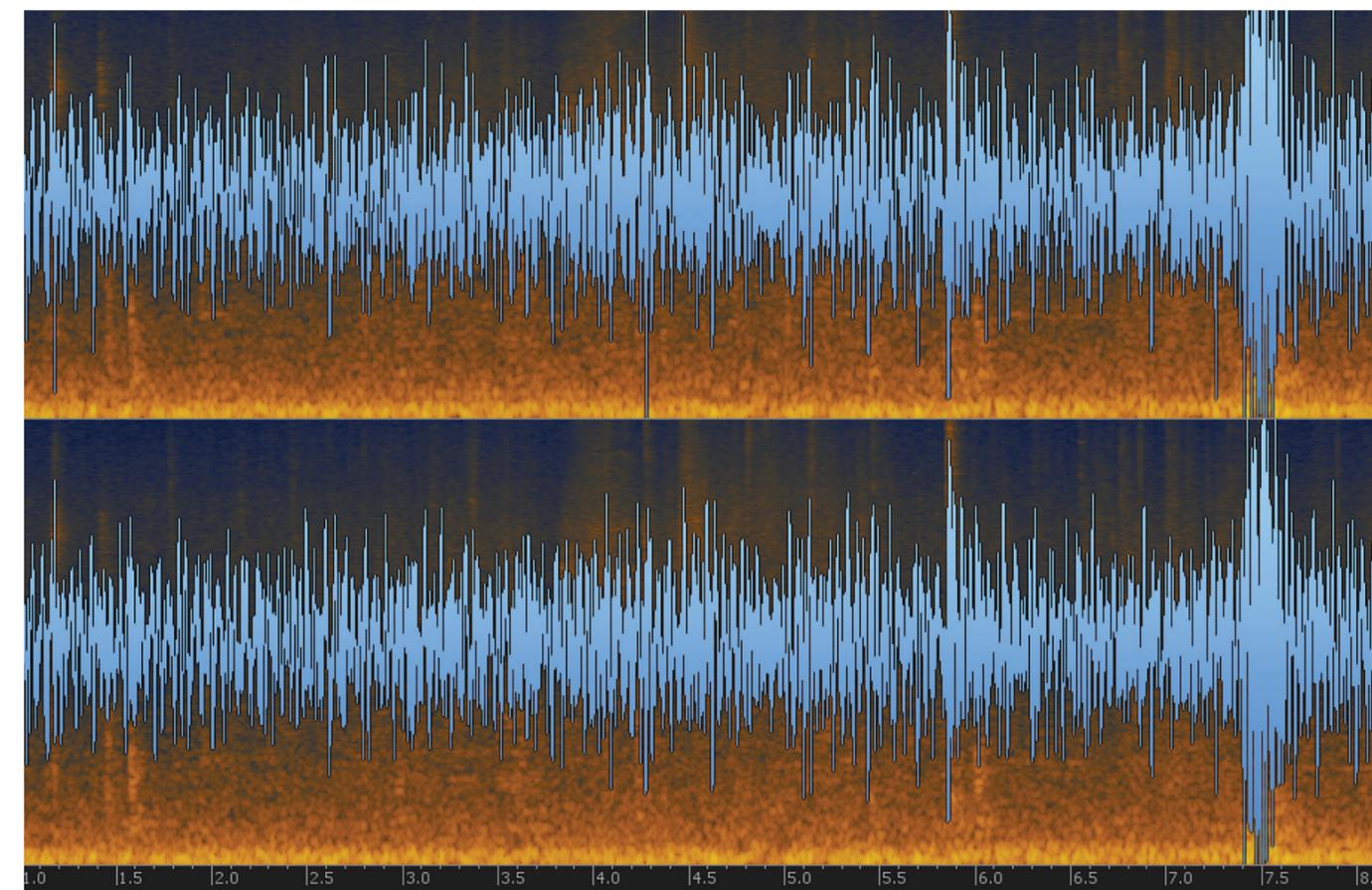
Odili Donald Odita: *Bridge*, 2014
Wall installation
Grand Lobby

Gallery Hours

Tuesday-Friday, 10 AM-6 PM
Saturday and Sunday, 10 AM-4 PM

Stephen Vitiello
A Scuttering Across The Leaves, 2015
Cube
Moss Arts Center
September 3-13, 2015

Presented by the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech
Curated by Margo Ann Crutchfield
Curator at Large



STEPHEN VITIELLO

A Scuttering Across The Leaves, 2015

Sound installation in collaboration with Kasey Fowler-Finn

Cube, Moss Arts Center

September 3-13, 2015

Opening Reception

Thursday, September 3, 2015, 6-8 PM
Grand Lobby, Moss Arts Center
Free, refreshments and cash bar

Artist Talk

Thursday, September 3, 7 PM
Cube, Moss Arts Center
Free



For more information about this and future exhibitions, visit www.artscenter.vt.edu.



A Scuttering Across The Leaves

Drawing from both the worlds of visual art and music, sound art evolved in the 20th century with the experimental work of Italian Futurism (1909–1929), Dada (1915–1923), the Fluxus movement (1960s–1970s), as well as the pioneering accomplishments of the composer and artist John Cage, whose own practice crossed the borders between the aural and visual and served as a transmitter of not only historical ideas but conceptual innovation for both visual and sonic artists. Artists of all types have since built on this groundbreaking heritage to develop entirely new possibilities of experiencing and engaging with art in the cross-pollination and convergence of the visual arts with experimental music, installation art, and performance art. Some of the most important and challenging art being produced today is by sound artists whose work traverses these lines—Laurie Anderson, Christian Marclay, and Janet Cardiff, among many others.



▲ Recording in progress of the sounds of the forest, Mountain Lake Biological Station, Virginia. Image courtesy of the artist.

Stephen Vitiello is internationally recognized as one of the leading artists in this fertile field. Originally a punk guitarist, Vitiello's artistic career has spanned a rich and eclectic terrain—from his initial interests in literature and film, composing electronic music, and scoring experimental film and videos, to his pivotal, long-time position as distributor and archivist at Electronic Arts Intermix and the Kitchen in New York City. Along the way he transitioned from the music world to the art world, establishing himself as a sound artist. In his work, Vitiello transforms sounds recorded from the environment into compositions or soundscapes that often take the form of art installations. Among his many exhibitions, installations, and public art works is a piece recorded during his 1999 artist residency at the World Trade Center, *World Trade Center Recordings: Winds After Hurricane Floyd*, which was created on the 91st floor of the World Trade Center; an installation for the exhibition *Yanomami: Spirit of the Forest* at the Cartier Foundation in Paris (2002), capturing in sound the life and culture of this remote village in the Brazilian Amazon; and, most recently, his outdoor sound installation in New York City's High Line of more than 59 bell recordings titled *A Bell For Every Minute* (2010-2011).

“Natural history—the scientific practice of observing, interpreting, and communicating about the natural world—lies at the heart of my research. Our project provides new perspective to this process, and an outlet to share the excitement of discovery with others.”

—Kasey Fowler-Finn
July 4, 2015

▲ Vitiello captures nature's often imperceptible sounds. Image courtesy of the artist.

Front cover:

Sound wave imagery of *A Scuttering Across the Leaves*, 2015. Courtesy of the artist.



▲ Vitiello at the December 9, 2014, performance of *Light Readings*, an interactive media installation commissioned by the Baryshnikov Arts Center, Studio 6A, New York, December 8–18, 2014. Photo by Anna Lee Campbell. Image courtesy of the artist.

Over the years Vitiello has collaborated with numerous prominent visual artists including Nam June Paik, Tony Oursler, Dara Birnbaum, Joan Jonas, Julie Mehretu, and Steve Roden, as well as musicians Pauline Oliveros, Taylor Deupree, and Ryuichi Sakamoto, among others. He has also worked with anthropologists, novelists, choreographers, filmmakers, and the poet Claudia Rankine.

A Scuttering Across The Leaves, Vitiello's sound installation here in the Cube at Virginia Tech's Moss Arts Center, is the first time that Vitiello has collaborated with a scientist—Kasey Fowler-Finn, an evolutionary biologist and assistant professor at Saint Louis University.

Presented by the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, *A Scuttering Across the Leaves* is based on unique insect recordings and micro-sounds of the forest captured during a 2015 University of Virginia ArtLab residency at the Mountain Lake Biological Station in Pembroke, Virginia. Working together, the pair used Fowler-Finn's variety of recording equipment used by

, including a laser vibrometer, phonograph needles, and contact microphones, as well as Vitiello's specialized audio equipment. They worked at different times of day and night and in all types of weather for a week to capture the sounds of insect movement on the stems and leaves of plants, rain crashing onto leaves, bees thundering by flowers, and insects “singing like tiny whales” on plant stems.¹

Using the Cube's state of the art sound capabilities, Vitiello then composed the work by manipulating the recorded sounds and assigning individual sounds to specific sets of speakers, sculpting a sonic environment in Virginia Tech's Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT) studios. The results are a rich aural experience that reveals a hidden sonic world that would otherwise be inaudible—an extraordinary inner world, largely undetected, and unknown.

The culmination of combined efforts of faculty and resources from four notable universities—Virginia Tech, Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Virginia, and Saint Louis University—this project is an example of the rich opportunities that collaboration and trans-disciplinary exploration can generate. Here art/science, nature/technology, and biology/electronic and digital composition coalesce in a work of art and a unique sonic experience that offers new insights across and within traditional disciplines.

Margo Ann Crutchfield
Curator at Large

Notes

¹ Kasey Fowler-Finn quoted in email correspondence with the author, July 4, 2015.



“As an artist, I am first and foremost engaged with listening. With this project, using scientific technologies, we have the potential to listen to sounds that normally exist below the threshold of normal human hearing. The thrill is the ability to bring that sound world into a space of such extreme scale and quality.”

—Stephen Vitiello,
July 4, 2015