

Yann-Loïc Seznec

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Citizenship: France/USA

Languages: French, English

Education

University of Edinburgh, Scotland

Master of Science in Sound Design, August 2007

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh PA

Major in Anthropology and Music, Minors in Music Technology and French, University Honors May 2004

Selected work

The Book of Knowledge of Impractical Musical Devices

Set of experimental musical instruments with accompanying website: impracticaldevices.com, August 2019

Ritual (Prayer Request)

Sound installation controlled by candles, Galloway Dark Sky Park for Sanctuary Festival, September 2017

Painting w/ Music

Collaboration with South African game designer Cukia Kimani on audio-visual performance, performed at Fakugesi Festival and A Maze Festival, Johannesburg, September 2017

Room to Play

Designed and delivered a course with Tinderbox for young artists about music, play, and technology. Showcased the resulting work at Hidden Door Festival 2016

Playable City Lagos

Selected as a participating member in a weeklong residency in Lagos Nigeria, developing payable approaches to urban design. With Watershed and the British Council, March 2016

Kronoscillator

Built custom musical instrument in collaboration with Martin Green (Lau) for the Kronos Quartet, 2016

Love Music Road Trip

Designed new recording and composition systems and delivered workshops with primary school students in Aberdeenshire, with Stephen Deazley and Love Music, 2016

West Lothian music technology workshops

Delivered workshops about hardware hacking and electronic musical instrument design to primary schools in West Lothian with Lauren Hayes, 2014 and 2015

Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship

Residency with the National Air and Space Museum, Washington DC, exploring the sound of travel, 2015

Floating Cinema Artist in Residence

Developed a sound art installation for a canal boat travelling between London and Bristol, June-July 2015

Creative Places Residency, Timespan

Music and sound residency in the highlands of Scotland, 2014-2015. Resulted in the short album "Helmsdale", made entirely out of sounds recorded in the village.

Currents

Commissioned by Edinburgh Art Festival and PRS New Music Biennial, installation and performance piece, 2014

Create:Eat:Whisky

Original music and sound design built from sound of whisky distilleries, March 2014 and March 2015

Droplets

Interactive water-based mechanical sound installation. Traveling Gallery, March 2012

The Weather Gage

Weather reactive sound installation on Bangor Pier, Wales, for Bangor Sound City and northern bloc, March 2011

Secret Sound of Spores

Audio/visual installation, Inspace Edinburgh, The Arches Glasgow, and Mediamatic Amsterdam 2010-2012

Gelkies

Solo gallery show at Hannah Maclure Centre, Dundee, November 2009-January 2010

Selected performances

A Nude (The Perfect Body)

Performed on the Matthew Herbert concept album and at the performance at The Roundhouse, London, 2016

The Recording, Deutsche Oper

A full album by Matthew Herbert produced and recorded in front of an audience over the course of a week in September 2014. Performed and recorded as part of the band.

Currents, Southbank Centre and Glasgow Concert Halls

Performance companion piece to Edinburgh Art Festival commission. July-August 2014

The Crackle, Royal Opera House

Built custom instruments, performed in all shows. March-April 2014

In C, Barbican and Kölner Philharmonie

Developed and performed with robotic instruments for performance with Stargaze. October 2013

One Room, Melbourne Recital Hall

Performance with Matthew Herbert Band made of sounds from the Recital Hall, April 2013

Faster Than Sound, Aldeburgh Music

Residency and performance with Peter Gregson and Pekka Kuusisto, April 2013

Baroque Remixed

With Matthew Herbert and the BBC Concert Orchestra Roundhouse, London, March 2013

The End of Silence, Matthew Herbert

Built custom instruments and performed on the album and live shows for musical piece created from the sound of a bomb exploding in Libya. 2012-2013

One Pig Live, Matthew Herbert

Created, designed, built, and performed on a custom pigsty-based instrument for Matthew Herbert's world tour.. August 2011-November 2012

Cryptic Nights, Exercise Magic!

Performance and curated evening at CCA Glasgow, March 2010

Employment

Game Designer in Residence, Maryland Institute College of Art

2019-Present

Lecturer, University of Abertay Dundee

2017-2019

Creative Scotland

Freelance peer reviewer, Open Project Fund assessor, and Open Project Fund panel member, 2016-2017

Lucky Frame Limited

Founder and Director of creative studio focusing on interactive music and sound software. Developed into a 3-person team with six figure turnover. February 2008 - October 2014.

Awards

MICA Grant for Faculty Research & Creative Development

Project grant for "Robots for Distant Musicians", 2021

Maryland State Arts Council Regional Independent Artist Award

Recognizing and encouraging the pursuit of promising work, 2021

British Composer Awards, 2015 Winner in Sonic Art

Awarded for "Currents"

Resident Entrepreneur, University of Edinburgh Design Informatics

Developing interactive musical interfaces with the University October 2012-2013

UK Young Music Entrepreneur Award 2009

Finalist for British Council award.

NESTA Starter for 6 Award

Enterprise development award for Art, Science, and Technology startups. Awarded June 2008

Yann Seznec

work examples

For more examples, or for more details on the projects below, please visit www.yannseznec.com, or contact Yann directly at yann@yannseznec.com

Projects listed in this document:

The Book of Knowledge of Impractical Musical Devices

Room to Play

Lucky Frame

Danfone

Currents

Prayer Request

Painting W/ Music

ROFLpillar

One Pig Live with Matthew Herbert

Neither Here Nor There

The Secret Sounds of Spores

Sound Signatures



The Book of Knowledge of Impractical Musical Devices

Loosely based on the 12th century *Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices* by the Islamic engineer Al-Jazari, this project was focused on the design and development of three experimental sonic objects and musical instruments that each took a conceptual limitation to a logical conclusion, thereby raising questions about the place of digital media, sound, and technology in our lives.

Volume 1 is a rhythm generator which changes patterns every day. It uses a sound library that was itself recorded in a single day. The previous day's patterns will never be recreated.

Volume 2 is a GPS-based granular synthesizer. It will sound different depending on where it is in the world, as most of the parameters are set by the GPS data.

Volume 3 is a listening device which slowly, but permanently, destroys the sound that it contains. The only copy of the recording is in this device, so each time it is played it is simultaneously lost forever.

The project is fully open source, conceptually and technically. Each volume is accompanied by an essay detailing the idea behind the design, as well as a full set of technical resources for building your own.

2019, Edinburgh

<http://www.impracticaldevices.com>





Room to Play

Partnership with Tinderbox Orchestra

In 2016 and 2019 I partnered with Tinderbox Orchestra to run a series of workshops with the theme of "Room to Play". We asked for applications from young artists who wanted to learn more about music, technology, games - we wanted to support emerging artists of any creative medium who had an interest in developing new digital/electronic approaches through their work but weren't sure where to begin.

I designed a short course with the aim of teaching a wide range of concepts and skills, from game design to interactive electronics and sound art.

This then led to the creation by the group of a number of musical installations, ranging from delicate nested musical suitcases to percussive trampolines. These were showcased as part of festival in Edinburgh, giving the young artists a chance to test their new ideas with the public in a risk-free way.

<http://www.yannseznec.com/works/room-to-play/>



LUCKY FRAME



Lucky Frame

I founded Lucky Frame in 2008 after receiving significant internet and traditional media attention for a music software hack for Wii remotes called the "Wii Loop Machine". I was able to use this attention to attract some investment and eventually build the studio into a small but well respected indie game company. I acted as director as well as doing all of the sound design and music for the commercial games.

Over five years we released six commercial games, including the BAFTA-winning and IGF-nominated *Bad Hotel*, and the critically acclaimed *Wave Trip* and *Nightmare Cooperative*. We also developed a number of experimental games such as *Roflpillar* and produced and ran indie game events such as *Tacos*, *Bluegrass*, & *Videogames*.

Our work also included some client projects, such as developing the Mac version of *Proteus* and several ad agency projects.

Eventually our experimental work became more interesting and the decision was made to discontinue the commercial projects entirely.

<http://www.luckyframe.co.uk>

2008-2014



Danfone

The result of my participation in “Playable City Lagos”, organised by Watershed and the British Council. In a nutshell, it was a prototype for a new form of communication designed to be embedded into the ubiquitous Danfo buses on the streets of Lagos, Nigeria.

The aim of the 10 day program was to encourage new thinking, relationships, and ideas around the theme of a Playable City. I worked with Desiree Craig, Inua Ellams, and Jeremiah Ikongio to develop a game-like experience that encouraged people to communicate in a playful way across the public transport system of the city. We made a proof-of-concept system with an embedded hack cell phone that we placed in a Danfo bus as it drove around, resulting in some fantastic conversations and raising compelling questions about the nature of transport in the city.

<https://www.playablecity.com/cities/lagos/>

2016



Currents

Awarded by PRS New Music Biennial, commissioned by Edinburgh Art Festival.

Currents is an installation and performance built from hundreds of discarded computer fans. They are programmed to recreate the wind levels of other locations from around the world. It is a meditation on the role that technology has on our lives; how it is used to connect the world, how much importance we place on these connections yet how easily we discard the very objects that connect us. The installation is built from hundreds of salvaged computer fans which recreate current wind patterns from around the world, transporting the viewer to those locations whilst putting them face to face with the gritty reality of technology.

2014, Edinburgh Art Festival, Southbank Centre London, and Glasgow Concert Halls

Currents was awarded the British Composer Award for Sonic Art in 2014.

Project video: <http://vimeo.com/108111170>



Prayer Request

Commissioned by Sanctuary Lab

This installation took place in a small hut by a waterfall, and was comprised of a number of large church candles fitted with sensors. Each time a candle was lit a sound was played – the sounds layered on top of each other as more candles were lit.

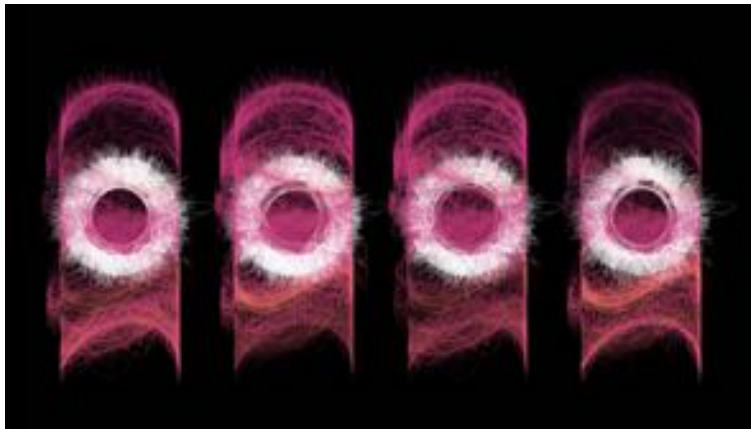
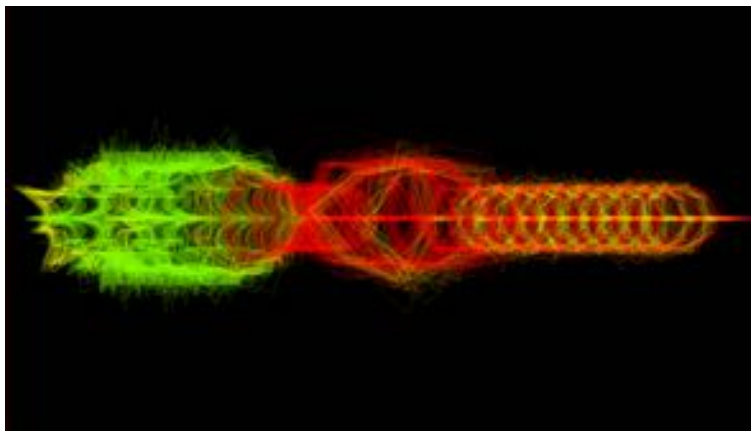
The sounds being played were prayer requests posted on the internet in the week leading up to the festival. These were videos from youtube of people desperate for prayers – some were going in for a health diagnosis, some were worried that a friend had lost their way, some were convinced that an impending disaster had been revealed to them in a dream. All of them were asking for prayers. The videos all had less than 50 views, most had less than 10.

The installation started in the afternoon and ran into the night. Judging from the used matches over a hundred candles were lit during the six hours it was on.

2017, Sanctuary, Galloway Dark Sky Park

<http://www.yannseznec.com/works/ritual-prayer-request/>





Painting W.Music

In 2017 I worked extensively with South Africa based game designer and programmer Cukia “Sugar” Kimani on Painting w/ Music, a project that involved visualising live gestural performance and audio.

Cukia approached me with the idea to develop a system for creating digital “paintings” from music. Our discussions were super interesting, and with the support of the British Council through their Connect ZA programme we were able to work together for several months, turning the project into something very performance-based and a whole lot of fun.

The end result was a customised controller system for performing a set of music which Cukia used to generate digital visualisations in real time. We performed several times in Johannesburg in September 2017, at the Fak’ugesi Bloc Party and at A MAZE Festival.



ROFLpillar

Officially billed as a “two-player caterpillar simulator game”, ROFLpillar began as a critique of the medium of VR. The game involved two players lying on the floor wearing caterpillar costumes with their heads inside a specially constructed house containing a TV screen. The costumes contained customised sensors that tracked the player’s movements - essentially they had to roll on the floor in order to control the virtual caterpillars on the screens.

The core concept of the game was the inherently problematic nature of virtual reality, in terms of interaction, physicality, and social connection. The game was shown at games festivals in Australia, USA, Netherlands, and more. It has been acquired by the V&A and will feature in their upcoming video game exhibit in London, touring worldwide over the next three years.

2013-2014.

<http://luckyframe.co.uk/works/roflpillar/>





One Pig Live with Matthew Herbert

One Pig is an album and performance by celebrated composer and producer Matthew Herbert (Björk, Micachu and the Shapes) which is built entirely out of the sounds of a single pig.

For the live show I built a "Sty Harp" - an abstract representation of a pig sty which acts as a musical instrument onstage. Using hacked and repurposed game controllers, together with a set of custom software, I performed in this pig sty by pulling, twisting, and pushing against the strings to control the music.

The instrument was designed with physical performance in mind - I deliberately made it larger than my armspan, forcing me to move and contort my body in order to create sound, reflecting the themes of the album and the show.

After debuting in the Royal Opera House, London, in 2011, we toured worldwide, playing in Berlin, Leipzig, Brussels, Bolzano, Porto, Tokyo, Paris, Manchester, Glasgow, STRP, and much more.

2011-2014 Worldwide <http://www.yannsezec.com/works/one-pig-live/>



Neither Here Nor There

Commissioned by the UP Projects and Floating Cinema

A surround-sound piece for blindfolded audience on canal boat.

From June to early August 2015 I was the artist in residence on The Floating Cinema, a canal boat fitted with an auditorium for playing movies, on their tour from London to Bristol.

The piece is a 27 minute long meditation on the canals, taking in the people and places that you find along the waterways.

The main theme is the idea of canals as a part of the industrial landscape, which are now paradoxically seen as part of the pastoral imagery of the countryside. These waterways were built entirely to facilitate trade and heavy industry, but are now sleepy countryside retreats.

2015, Bristol, Kennet & Avon Canal

<http://www.yannseznec.com/works/neither-here-nor-there/>





Secret Sounds of Spores

Lasers are used to reveal the spores falling underneath live mushrooms. These spores are analyzed in real time and used to trigger electromechanical musical instruments around the gallery.

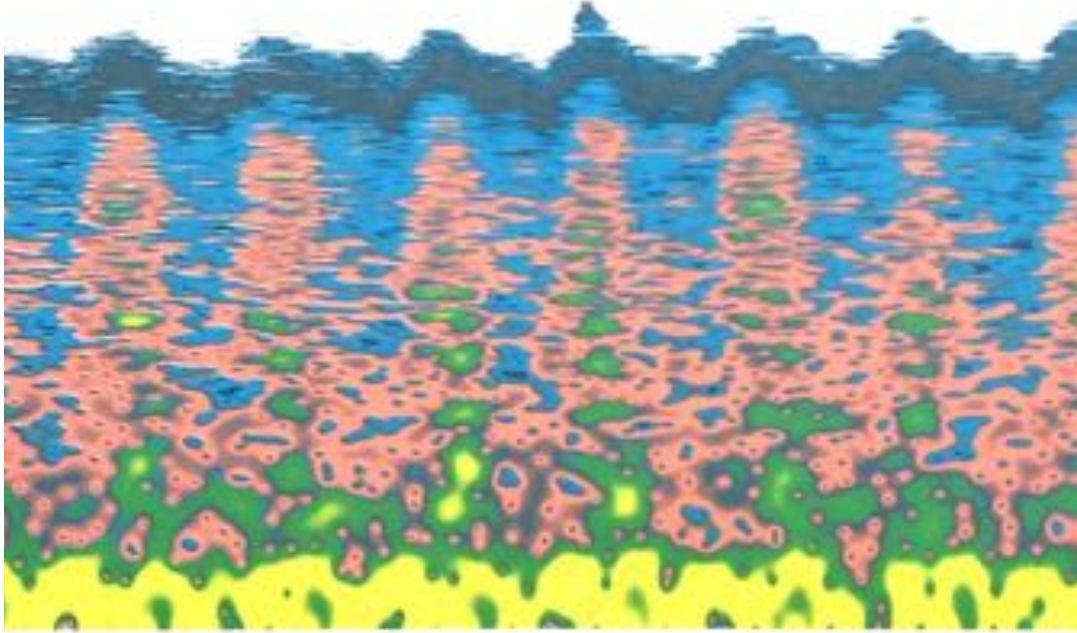
This project is a study on interface and audience interaction, more than an approach to data sonification. How does the audience's perception of sound and music change when it is being matched with a biological process that they didn't ever know was happening?

2011-2015 Edinburgh, Glasgow, Amsterdam, Santa Cruz

Project videos:

<http://vimeo.com/21194672>

<http://vimeo.com/20320189>



Sound Signatures

In 2015 I completed a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship at the National Air & Space Museum in Washington DC. The focus of my residency was the sound of travel, and how this is reflected in memory, history, and cultural identity.

I spent several months recording and editing the sounds of rare aircraft, as well as digitising analog recordings from the archive. I used these recordings to develop a series of screen printed spectrograms which I titled Sound Signatures. Each step of the printing process became symbolic of the way that we remember sound, as a representation of an instantaneous moment that can not really be recreated.

<http://www.yannsezec.com/works/sound-signatures/>
2015