

Mitchell Herrmann
Locus Sonus Creative Research Residency
Portfolio

Nicosia (2017)
Interactive Sound Installation

Link (with sound): www.mitchellherrmann.com/nicosia





This work uses motion tracking to trigger sound files according to where visitors are standing on the outline of the city of Nicosia.

Nicosia, on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, is known as the ‘world’s last divided capital.’ Encapsulated by 16th century Venetian walls, and cut in half by a modern wall of barbed wire and machine guns, Nicosia is riven by centuries of spatial control and exclusion.

For more than four decades, Turkish-Cypriot soldiers have peered out at their Greek-Cypriot counterparts across the strip of abandoned buildings running through the city, inserting the ghostly specter of ever-present war into the heart of an ancient metropolis. Increasingly abandoned by wealthier Cypriots, the old city has come to be inhabited by poor immigrants, enacting an ironic reversal in which the Venetian walls built to keep out foreigners now encircle them.

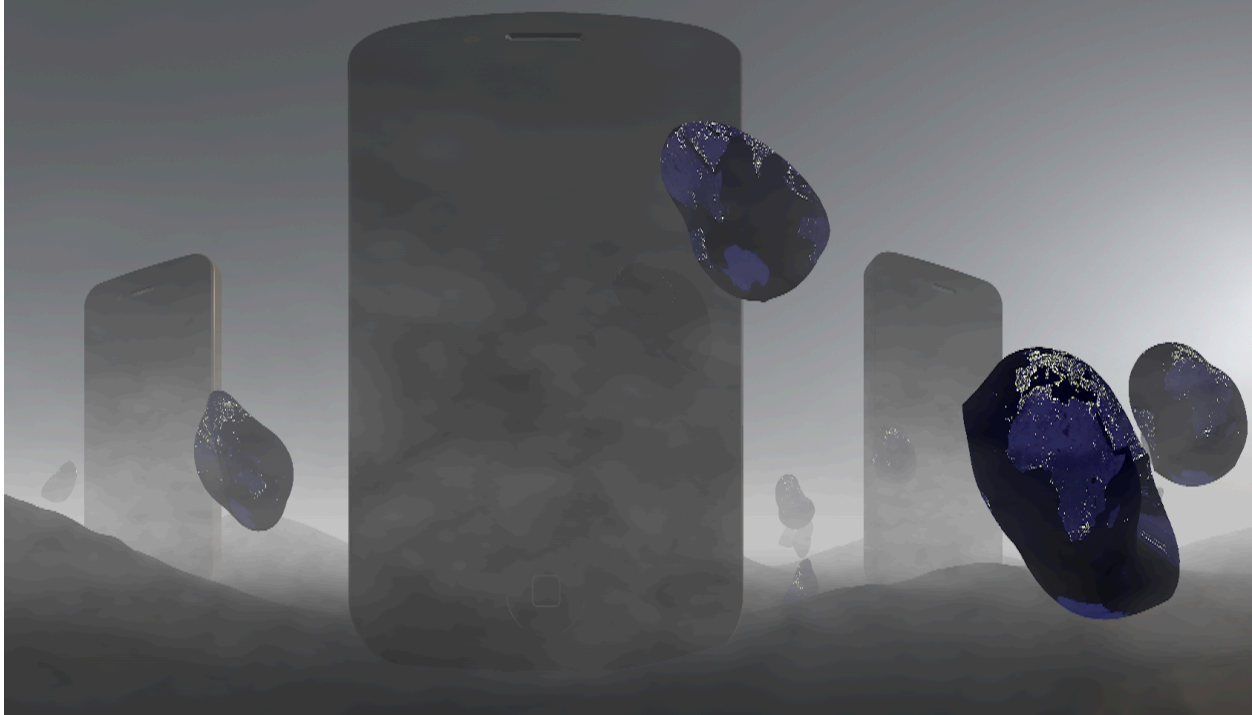
But the city is changing: new forms of globalization co-exist with the scars of hundreds of years of geographic displacement and conflict. Nicosia becomes a palimpsest, each street written and overwritten with the stories of newcomers and natives, each seeking some kind of stability in a shrinking world of fractured places and overlapping spaces.

This work was completed during a residency at the European University Cyprus, with funding from the Interfaces Project. Installation assistance provided by Ezra Campelli.

the world is no longer round (2017)

Virtual reality video and audio

Link: www.mitchellherrmann.com/world



This project is a partly-documentary, partly-fictionalized virtual reality film. Very broadly, it takes immigrant experience in Manchester as its subject. This work is a response to a certain spatial insecurity which has appeared across the Western world. A major influence was the writing of German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, who describes spatial structures as fundamental to the ontology, or the being-in-the-world, of humans. Critically, these structures provide a sense of what is interior and what is exterior. Sloterdijk also describes a major shift in how humans think about and experience space, which might be described as the process of globalization. It is a shift from a particular model, or perhaps a dream or an ideal, of the world as an all-enclosing interior, encompassing everyone. There was a point, sometime during the 20th century, when this dream finally became entirely untenable.

This project places the recent, intense surge of spatial anxiety in relation to this destruction of a certain idealization of globalization. This destruction has played out over the past several decades. In 2001, the public psyche was very forcefully made aware that the dividing line between interior and exterior could be ruptured, violently; and that the teleology of globalization was emphatically not the progressive incorporation of exterior into the shared interiority of the globe as a perfect whole. This event occurred, fittingly, via the consumer passenger airplane, which had previously been the very symbol of the benign forces of globalization. Thus, this project is a reflection on the experience of living in this post-global era: 'post' in the sense of being after the end of a certain vision of unified global space.

Three Bells (2016)

Binaural fixed-media sound piece

Link: www.mitchellherrmann.com/three-bells



Three Bells is a sound-essay about globalization and the history of spatial experience. Each of these bells represents a particular experience of space and place, from the 'microspheric' village worlds of medieval Europe to the radically interconnected, digital spaces of the present day. This work was loosely inspired by philosopher Peter Sloterdijk's writing on spherology.

This work is meant to be installed in a gallery via three separate headphone listening stations (one for each of the sections).

This piece is spatialized using binaural technology; please listen on headphones.

I never fall apart, because I never fall together (2017)

Fixed-media sound piece

Link: www.mitchellherrmann.com/i-never-fall-apart

'Wiederholen is not Reproduzieren,' wrote Lacan: to repeat is not to reproduce. The subject confronts trauma by enacting its repetition, assuaging the lingering psychological wound by replacing painful reality with its representation. But this repetition brings with it a new trauma, as the reality of the event breaks through each attempt at mastery. Andy Warhol's serial images of electric chairs and car crashes dramatize the experience of trauma in spectacle culture, the functioning of postwar America's optical unconscious. But if 20th-century mass media molded the spectator into a mass subject, in the 21st century there is no such coherence to be found. The deluge of traumatic simulacra induces not uniformity but disorienting heterogeneity; a mass subjectivity that, to paraphrase Warhol, never falls apart, because it can never quite fall together.

Commissioned for the Andy Warhol Artist Rooms Exhibit by the Whitworth Gallery (Manchester, UK).