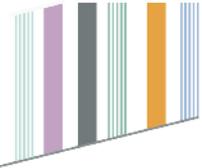


Galerie Mario Mazzoli



## summer of love

solo show by

## Douglas Henderson

24 October - 16 January 2016  
tu-sat 12.00-18.00



Galerie Mario Mazzoli is happy to present its third solo exhibition by Douglas Henderson.

When the American artist Douglas Henderson arrived in Berlin in 2007 from New York, he added a very particular flavour to the already well-defined SoundArt scene. The sculpturality and colourfulness of his work, informed by a witty, content-lead approach, stood out against the predominantly conceptual SoundArt orthodoxies then prevalent in the city.

Henderson had already made his mark as a SoundArt artist, composer and mastering engineer when Galerie Mario Mazzoli invited him to present his first Berlin solo exhibition *Dukatenscheisser* in 2009, where, amongst vertical sound sculptures and sound installations, he showed his first kinetic sound sculpture *Flash Gordon*. In the following years, this rather particular and little-explored SoundArt area became one of Henderson's primary spheres of practice. Especially intrigued by sound's kinetic properties, he began to explore the techniques and mechanisms by which sound could

set objects in motion, honing in the process his sculptural craftsmanship. The first results of this investigation formed the content of his second solo show *Poets and Superheroes*, mounted in this gallery in 2012, and two years later his sound sculpture *Under Way* was awarded the German SoundArt Prize.

The current exhibition showcases one of the techniques Henderson has evolved to harvest the kinetic power of sound – a simple mechanism that transmits, through bristles, the movement of a speaker membrane to the sculptural component attached to it; turning the speaker, de facto, into a motor.

In the main work of this exhibition, *summer of love*, 21 flowers of various sizes, distributed throughout the space of two adjoining rooms, rotate in a curiously orchestrated dance. Passing amongst them, one hears female voices, noises and sometimes music, emanating from the funnel-shaped blossoms, which continually approach or swing away - throwing their sounds in ever-changing directions.

Henderson's way of working is multifariously associative, interweaving inspirations from numerous sources into open textures of fleeting traces. The underlying complexity of his work resists literal interpretation, inviting visitors to bring in their own experiences, feelings and thoughts. *summer of love* relates to a memory of 1967, when Flower Power thrived against the backdrop of the Vietnam War and the immanent threat of nuclear annihilation. Gregory Corso's 1958 poem *Bomb!* sets the tone, providing the material for the vocal parts of the work's 16-channel composition. Treated, layered and mixed with live music and film soundtracks into a multi-streamed sonic current, the sounds projected from the revolving flower heads produce a somewhat solemn, sardonic and inscrutable mood. But "not too dark" as Henderson stresses, since he sees his art as a means "to keep darkness at bay"; an attitude that links his '60s memory poignantly to present times.

Sound can be many things in Henderson's work, from semantically complex, sophisticated and spatially expansive to localised and barely audible. In *summer of love* the sound is both bearer of meaning and motive force, whereas in the two *Hexenkreise* the driver mechanism becomes the main attraction, offering the visitor a both close-up and scaled-up version of this ingenious technique: small bristles become actual brushes, or brooms, that circle and bob to the invisible force of the inaudible low-frequency sine-waves driving the loudspeakers. In the *Kleiner Hexenkreis* the contact noise of brushes against membrane is the only sound we hear, but the *Großer Hexenkreis* - in all its five-subwoofer might - rattles, thumps and scratches. Both sculptures intrigue through their formal construction, yet with a little added light and fantasy these simple arrangements become the ritualistic dances of mystical enchantresses.

Kersten Glandien

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