

John Aslanidis—New York noise

JN: By 2003 you'd established the premise that you apply now, where you effectively paint intervals of sound or noise, right? Your paintings are non-objective in a way that correlates with artists such as Stephen Bram and Michael Graeve and reminds me in some senses too of Karl Wiebke. Though you've not exhibited in a focused way with any of these artists, have you?

John Aslanidis: I use sonic intervals. Bram uses a different methodology with a series of perspective points to orientate the surface. The connections with Wiebke would be in the paint surfaces and the material ways these unfold. By 2003 I felt I'd gone as far as I could in Australia. I'd studied in Sydney before moving to Melbourne, but the 1990s were a pretty lean time. Don't get me wrong, there were a lot of good times, but artists emerging didn't really get to consolidate (professionally and historically) back then. In terms of institutions I just had to go somewhere else.

JN: Your first solo exhibition in New York was in 2003 although you were already being regularly included in group shows.

JA: I'd been making trips as often as I could since 1999. In New York things were different—contemporary art plays out there in a different way. Exhibiting remains very important and of course there are just so many more galleries that the scene has scale and ebbs and flows in a way you notice. In New York too I feel there has always been a basic respect for the potential of studio practice and that hasn't changed.

JN: The early exhibitions in New York and particularly your recent collaborations with Brian May led to new shows in Berlin? In the Berlin work, the wall of noise Brian May composed is played aloud in the space along with your painting. How did the collaboration work exactly?

JA: The sound is generative. Brian works with different software and calibrates the sound to colours and intervals in the painting. He measures the colour frequency in sound. The premise seems very simple but the outcome becomes quite complex where the sound warps against itself and across the painting. The sound recreates, it regenerates in an expanding loop, and the painting resonates in a similar way—visually or conceptually. The paintings have no edges in this

sense or exist as a contingent proposition; every work is a cast of the same proposition.

JN: The system you use persists from painting to painting.

JA: The original idea was to achieve structure and consistency in terms of thickness and density and viscosity etc. Because I was working with these intervals I didn't have to think about the painting as a whole, it composed itself or simply unfolded. Earlier on I didn't correlate it explicitly to sound although it is a parallel that is very close now. I still use the same piece of scrap paper from years ago where I first plotted the system design and compositional intervals.

JN: It's not so easy to account for the cross-over between sound effects and the abstraction of the painting. For me they are different types of thinking or sense that are converging. You were a resident at Location One in New York for a while too in 2011. How did this go?

JA: That year at Location One there were a number of us using sound which culminated in the end-of-the-residency exhibition curated by Claudia Calirman. A little while later I was included in *Sound and vision* at McKenzie Fine Art in Chelsea—that was with Gilbert Hsiao, Daniel Hill and Laura Watt. The great thing about that exhibition was the opportunity to meet with Daniel Hill. He is a musician and we were both interested in the movement between conceptual and perceptual thinking. This is the cross-over you are speaking about I think. The next year Daniel included me in an exhibition he co-curated with Ron Janovich called *Emergence and structure*, dealing with emergence theory. It toured through university museums in southern states.

JN: The Berlin shows were different initiatives?

JA: While I was at Location One there was a lot of interest in the Berlin work, which had gone ahead before I'd arrived there. Gilbert Hsiao had introduced me to Matthias Seidel and we organised to show the sound/painting collaboration with Brian May at Matthias's gallery dr. julius in April 2012. Matthias Seidel later included me in *FutureShock OneTwo: Internationale neue Konkrete* as well.

After dr. julius I went back to New York and was talking to Juan Puentes at White Box. I wasn't even sure I would end up showing there but through the gallery was meeting a lot of nice people. Eventually I had to fly back to Australia but just on

my way out Juan offered that we actually show. So we came back later the same year and set up with just the one painting and Brian's generative sound piece. I'd always wanted to have this show in New York and just put one painting into this big space and I think we did pretty well.

This is an edited version of a conversation in [John Aslanidis](#)'s studio, August 2013.

Sonic network no. 9, White Box, New York, April 2012, and dr. julius, Berlin, October 2011