

# *Cascade Bend Chamber*

## Cara Tolmie

13.5 – 26.8 2023

### OPENING HOURS

Wed–Fri 13–18  
Sat 12–16

*Cascade Bend Chamber* is a major new commission at Mint, led by artist and musician Cara Tolmie. It takes shape through installation, music and performance and is made in dialogue with various collaborators including, amongst others, Julia Giertz, Susanna Jablonksi and live performances with Stine Janvin and Em Silén.

The project at large stems from a vocal method that Cara Tolmie has been developing over the past five years called *Internal Singing*. This is a practice that explores a sensitised voice-body bind by investigating the relationship between sounding on both the inhale and exhale, vocal imaginaries, slight movement, circular vocal sound, and self-administered touch that attunes her body in states of over-sensitivity.

The exhibition hosts a series of listening spaces expanding out from *Internal Singing* – These environments are constructed from textiles, sonic objects, sound and sculpture, inviting the audience into an enigmatic landscape built to hold and guide them through various states of listening and bodily attention. Across each of the three rooms the elements of listening, presence and sound weave together, presenting an experience of vocality in multiplicity, persistently in movement – coaxing, calming, amusing, disorientating and at times discomforting.

Throughout the exhibition there will be a series of performances that bring to the fore the particular qualities of the live singing voice. Using the various listening rooms as stages or sets for these musical gatherings, each performance will use elements of vocal improvisation explore co-produced landscapes of affect, vocal multiplicity and the curious territory of unknowns that exist in between.

Cara Tolmie (b. 1984, Glasgow) spends much of her time oscillating between contexts as an artist, musician, performer, DJ, pedagogue and researcher. Her works have been performed and exhibited widely at art galleries, music festivals, biennials, conferences and in the public space – both as solo presentations and collaborative projects.

Her practice at large centres itself upon the voice, the body, and the complex ties between the two. All at once subjective as well as socially determined, she explores voice and body as two co-dependent entities able to confirm as well as contradict one another. Within this she often explores performative techniques that disorient the listening relationship between the singer and her audience through live uses of the defamiliarised, uncanny and sampled singing voice. Cara Tolmie is currently a PhD candidate in Critical Sonic Practice at Konstfack, Stockholm.

Julia Giertz (b. Stockholm 1984) has a long-standing practice as a sound artist and sound technician, where composition is mixed with the construction of sound sculptures and electroacoustic instruments. Central to her practice are the close collaborations that she shares with choreographers, musicians and artists.

Susanna Jablonski (b. Stockholm 1985) is an artist working in sculpture, video, and sound composition. Often combining highly crafted sculptures and vernacular objects within an immersive installation architecture, Jablonski's work investigates the ontological value of materials and bodies – how they sustain or disintegrate, and how meaning is ascribed to the places and times they inhabit.

## August Gallery

*Internal Singing* is a vocal method that Cara Tolmie has been developing over the past five years: her sensitised voice-body is played as an instrument, through exploration of sounding on both the inhale and exhale, improvisation, vocal imaginaries and self-administered touch. As it builds up slowly through acute attention to breath, inclination, pleasure and circulation, *Internal Singing* attempts to prise open a space to gather, improvise and examine what unknown vocality might emerge when acute sensitivity and tenderness are valued as a resource.

In Mint's August Gallery, a series of textile works are presented that externalise the experience of *Internal Singing*. These notated diagrams attempt to explain what is happening when she sings, visualising internal singing as a multidimensional, unbalanced-balancing act between inhale-exhale, between two points of touch on the body, between two vocal sounds in constant evolution, between the imagination of a voice and the letting go of a voice.

For Cara Tolmie, *Internal Singing* unfolds as follows:

*I concentrate on my breath and quieten myself. I focus my attention on my skin as a tender transmitter between the inside of my body and its touchable outside surface. I sense two points where my body is asking to be touched. I slowly raise my hands, make them loose and heavy, and allow them to be pulled towards these two points on my skin. I concentrate once more on my breath and very slowly allow sound to emerge, both from the inhale and the exhale. I imagine these sounds to be pulled out of, around, and between the two points I hold with my fingertips. I do not imagine these sounds in advance but try to allow them to 'fall out', as if of their own volition. I then play these sounds, manipulating and exploring them through small, repeated movements and increased/decreased pressure around the touch points. In this way, I imagine singing the vocal sounds through my inner organs, out towards the two points that are being pressured by my touch, approaching these with my voice from the inside-out. I also visualise sending the sounds through my fingertips towards the inside of my body, from the outside-in. Within this multidirectional movement, I allow new vocal sounds to come into being by imagining my voice moving between and through the two points of touch, soaking in and out of the material of my flesh, organs, skin, nerves, and blood.*

## TEXTILES

*Internal Singing: An unbalanced balancing of two-nesses*

Velvet, thread, fabric

Cara Tolmie, 2023

*Internal Singing: Imaginary to audible to imaginary voice (ad nauseam)*

Velvet, thread, fabric

Cara Tolmie, 2023

*Internal Singing: Imagined movement of voice between two touch points*

Velvet, thread, fabric

Cara Tolmie, 2023

See separate sheet for full diagrams.

## SOUND FROM SPEAKERS

*Internal Singing*

Various examples of *Internal Singing* sung by Cara Tolmie.

## SONIC OBJECT

*Lsi*

Stainless steel, transducer speakers, cables, sound and dancefloor

Julia Giertz and Cara Tolmie, 2023

*Lsi* is a sonic object made in collaboration with Julia Giertz specifically for this incline space at Mint. The doubled object, curving around itself at the head, sounds various processed versions of Cara Tolmie's voice at intervals into the space. *Lsi* and the clean singing voice coming from the speakers create a kind of call and response duet – bending and forming around one another and experienced in constant dialogue with the graphic notations viewed on the textile works.

# Reading Room

In Mint's Reading Room, various sculptures that imply, hold and direct practices of listening are presented. They echo one another as a collection of openings, portals or passageways – one a series of sounding circles, the other a collection of silent ones. Each work coaxes and directs the visitor but in different ways, choreographing the movement of both the ear and the body through this middle space of the exhibition.

## *Listening Panels (Gate)*

Velvet, metal

Susanna Jablonski and Cara Tolmie, 2021–2023

Listening Panels is a series of textile sculptures that both incorporate and exclude, with each panel hosting a circular void against a blue velvet base. The artwork is designed to be used as malleable architecture and acoustic support for the listening events that Susanna Jablonski and Cara Tolmie host as part of their ongoing research project Gender of Sound. The work exists fluidly between Jablonski's sculptural practice and Tolmie's performative, and much like listening bodies, they both absorb and permit sound.

## SONIC RINGS

### *A Glare of Bends*

Stainless steel, transducer speakers, cables, sound

Julia Giertz and Cara Tolmie, 2023

This flock of sonic rings hang together in the corner of the room, suspended at various heights; they omit small sounds of breath, throat clicks and slight squealing.

# Moa Gallery

The third space of the exhibition finds Moa Gallery transformed into a listening space reminiscent of a theatrical stage set, a long crevice enticing the viewer deep into the room through a play of perspective. Ceramic sculptures by Susanna Jablonski are silent actors quietly holding the space. As near-abstract forms they resemble skeletal structures, unglazed objects surviving time. In contrast to the spacious externalisation of *Internal Singing* in August gallery, this space instead cocoons and abandons itself willfully into an exploration of the uncanny and curious qualities of interiority. Processed, inside out and layered vocals soak the cavernous interior. Through unstable reflections both in the mirrored flooring and in the relationship between inhale/exhale, forward/backwards, up/down within the music, the orientation of both looking and listening are brought into question.

*Quenchless (Lungs in Reverse)*

Sound

Cara Tolmie, 2023

*Cascade Bend Chamber*

Grey velvet in five panels, silver dancefloor

Cara Tolmie, 2023

*Untitled (Shelf II + III + IV + V)*

Ceramic

Susanna Jablonski, 2023

## CONTACT

[info@m-i-n-t.se](mailto:info@m-i-n-t.se)

[www.m-i-n-t.se](http://www.m-i-n-t.se)

Instagram @mint.abf

## TEAM

Emily Fahlén, artistic director

Alice Söderqvist, producer

Thomas Bush, graphic designer

Theodor Ander, exhibition technician

Danae Valenza, exhibition technician

Ines Bartl, light designer

Sona Stepanyan, coordinator of residencies

Felix Eriksson Ahlberg, textile assistant

Arena Textile, fabrication

Thanks to ABF Stockholm, Konstfack, Mathew Gregory, Katja Grillner, Malin Arnell, Nisse Bergman, Alina Rentsch, Olivia Plender, Meriç Algün, Paul Purgas, Zakarias Knigge, all attendees of Voxox.

*Cascade Bend Chamber* is part of Cara Tolmie's ongoing PhD research at Konstfack and will contribute to her final thesis project.

Mint is supported by the City of Stockholm and the Swedish Arts Council.