

Martin Herbert, 'Channa Horwitz', *Art Monthly*, London, April 2016, pp. 20-21



Thanassis Akokkalidis
Don't Look Down
2016 performance

voicing each second as it passes. In *Jargon*, Mastrogiannaki will mark time for 324 hours, the numbers forming a mantra, a mala, a prayer to our fleetingness, taking the quest 'to be present' to a literal extreme. Counting is one of the first skills we acquire and is often the thing we struggle with in a foreign tongue. Mastrogiannaki's vocal metronome echoing around the gallery gives an eerie insistence to the other performances.

For fellow performer Tomas Diafas, the experience of 'As One' comes as a relief. 'I worried that it wasn't political but what you start to see is that it has to do with limits,' he says, 'how do we stop wanting to do something, eat or drink something, stop time, just start wanting to be a human being without anything and that's what I saw today.' The performance that requires the most painful commitment is *Micropolitics of Noise* by Lambros Pigounis. He inhabits an enclosed space on a ramp above massive speakers that are triggered by visitors' footsteps. The roar of low-frequency noise vibrates like a jumbo jet taking off and Pigounis holds his head and curls up in agony. Exploring the potential of sonic weaponry, already used against protesters and 'rowdy' adolescents, his diary of symptoms is chilling: 'Psychology stable. No headache yet but there is definitely something inside that has already started shaking around the spine.' It is bone-rattling. The 'energy dialogue' of this piece shuts me down, shuts me out. I leave quickly, slightly nauseous. Will the mental fear of the noise become greater than its physical effect? Will he be hospitalised after one week? As Abramović herself testifies from experience, 'great artists have to be ready to fail'. It will be fascinating to see whether healing or rage will end these seven weeks of both determined desperation and a chance to rest from it. ■

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Channa Horwitz

Raven Row London 10 March to 1 May

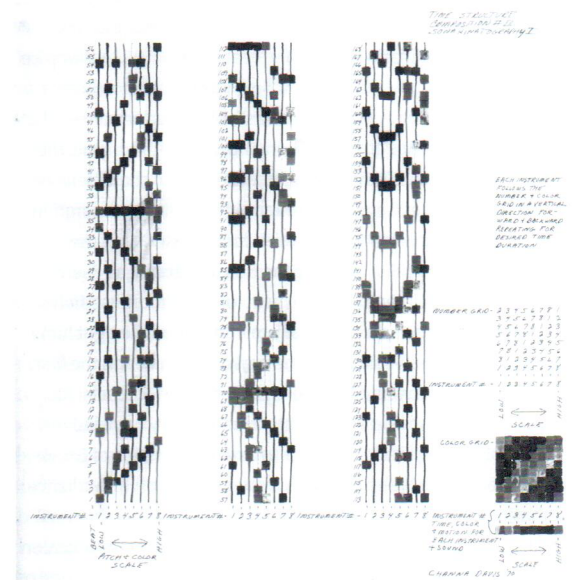
A recent visit to Raven Row found one key component of Channa Horwitz's retrospective off-limits: staff were busy prepping the orange-gridded floor and eight black wooden blocks of *Displacement*, 2011/16 (a collaboration with Hamburg yoga studio Y8), for a yoga session the following day, in which eight yogis at a time would interact with the variously scaled obelisks. Still, any newcomer to the late Los Angeles artist's aesthetic – which, in

Channa Horwitz
Time Structure
Composition III
1970 from the
'Sonakinatography'
series

testimony to the art world's gender inequalities but also her art's rogue status, Horwitz pursued mostly without acknowledgement for a half-century until her death in 2013 – might want to start with this work, defined as it is by her signature synthesis of geometry and real-world event, regulation and open-endedness, and the number eight. Almost everything else in this expansive show is a framed work on paper, but Horwitz's meticulous diagrammatic proposals were typically intended as scores and cues, and are being used periodically during the show's run as outlines for dance and music.

If none of that is transpiring and you are left just looking at what's on the walls, her rhythms and intervals still pass from scanning eye to mind and approximate the centring, priming effect of, say, listening to Bach, albeit filtered through the ambience of a sunlit laboratory. The opening room features the earliest work, picking up Horwitz's story after she had rejected Abstract Expressionism and settled, without much dialogue with other artists, on clean geometric pictograms that gradually forsook canvas for standard-issue, eight-squares-per-inch graph paper. In her 'Language Series', begun in 1964, Horwitz permuted arrangements of circles and squares on orange grids, generally with a key on the lower right that divides the forms into eight primary types; here, with numbers used as shorthand for time and the grid's divisions apostrophising the notion of space, we're offered what the show's curator, Ellen Blumenstein, calls 'structural depictions of reality'. By 2004, when the series ended, Horwitz was making variations that she could have concocted four decades earlier, albeit flooded with cheerful polychromatic colour – the latter, in Horwitz's art, being a way of depicting movement in time, with each number from one to eight assigned a specific colour-code.

The 'Language Series', in any case, might be considered simplicity itself compared with the elaborate convolutions of the 'Sonakinatography' series. Begun in 1968, this is a suite of pictorial composition devices in 23 primary formats, typically involving pulsating columns of multicoloured dots, their neologistic collective title referring to the Greek words for sound, movement and notation. Around the time she inaugurated them, Horwitz experienced a knockback from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where she had proposed a kinetic light work, *Suspension of Vertical Beams Moving in Space*, 1968, involving eight rhythmically moving, variously intense beams. Horwitz's text-covered blueprints are on show here, but the work was the only piece commissioned for a particular programme of



technology-related works to be accepted yet remained unmade. Did this, in turn, lead her towards works that could be actuated in space or serve as self-contained aesthetic workouts for the imagination? The 'Sonakinatography' works are certainly that. Even more so, arguably, are Horwitz's relatively abstract-looking works in bright casein paint from the 1970s and 1980s – including, here, *Four Levels*, 1975, *Flag No 2*, 1984, *Canon*, 1987, and *Rhythm of Lines 1-6*, 1988 – where, frequently, she becomes fascinated by the potential complexity of interweaving rainbow-palette curves spun within her graph paper's fixed 8x8 grid: the results could suggest stained-glass windows designed by a fractals obsessive.

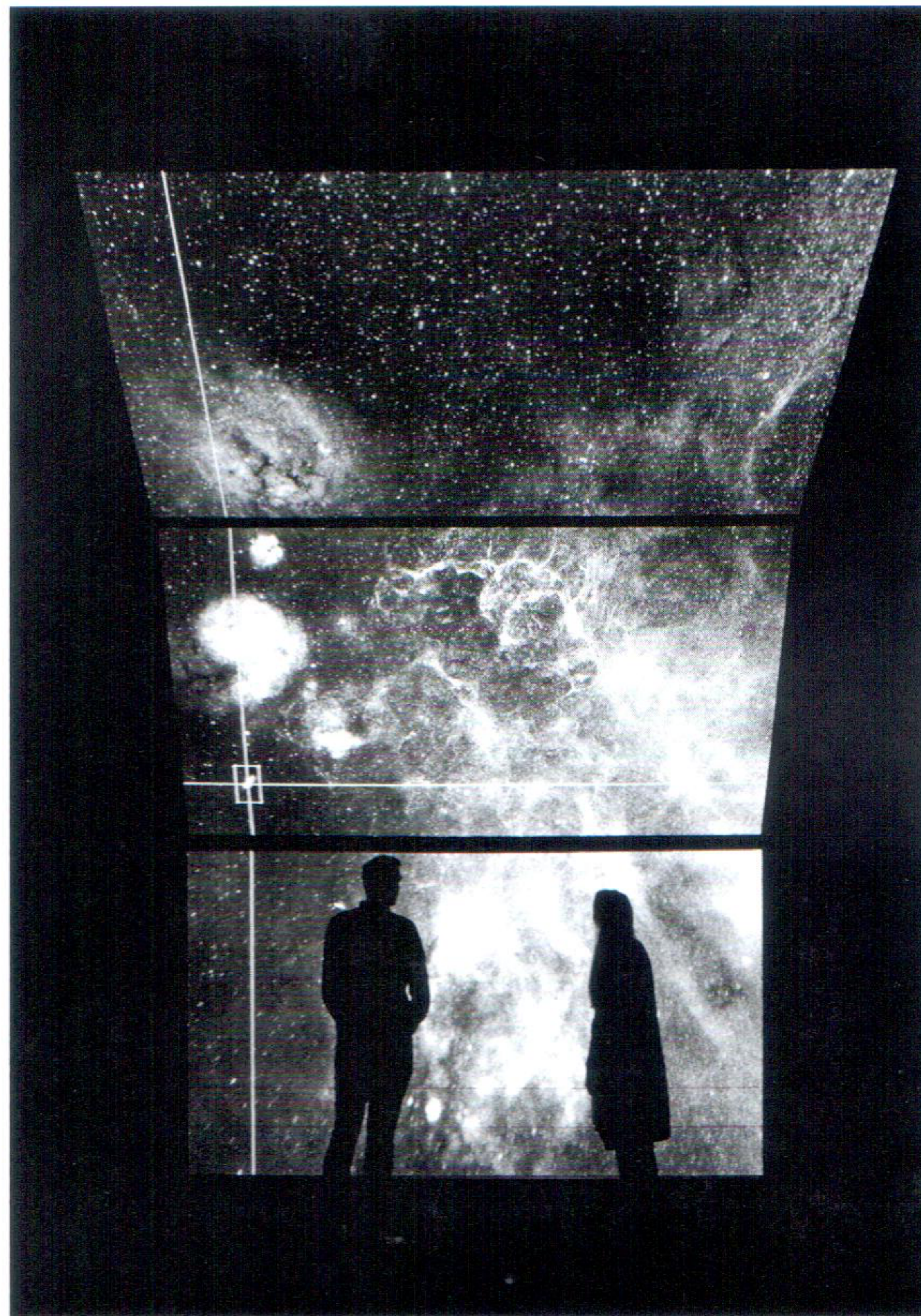
'Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists', Sol LeWitt famously averred at the start of his *Sentences on Conceptual Art*, 1967. What was Horwitz? Somewhere in between, using Euclidean precision in the service of soft-edged self-actualisation, remembering the body as the cybernetic age dawned. If her work has been feted lately – this show, for example, is a variation on the one Blumenstein curated for Berlin's KW Institute in 2015 – no doubt it is partly due to her collapsing together of algorithms, codes and physical experience, and partly because the revival of performance art is surely keyed to audiences' desire to experience something emphatically non-virtual. But, equally, Horwitz's square-peg status serves as a lesson concerning the art-historical canon. For the longest time she didn't fit the art world's categorisations, and being ignored in turn left her free – so she suggested in interviews – to do what she wanted. Work that doesn't match the times ends up, later, not bound to the past, such that when yogis bend themselves into position for *Displacement* they are not rehearsing gestures of yesteryear: appropriately, they are in the moment, right now. ■

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Ryoichi Kurokawa: unfold

Fact Liverpool 11 March to 15 June

For Ryoichi Kurokawa's first UK solo exhibition, FACT has commissioned *unfold*, 2016, a major new installation presented alongside the recent work, *constrained surface*, 2015. For *unfold*, Kurokawa has collaborated with Vincent Minier, an astrophysicist at the Institute of Research into the Fundamental Laws of the Universe, to create a scientifically accurate visual representation of how the solar system was born and how our galaxy might evolve.



Ryoichi Kurokawa
unfold 2016
video installation

This is manifested in the gallery as a towering trio of screens that reach from floor to ceiling and curve forward as they reach upwards, looming intimidatingly over the viewer. Sound plays an equally important role, synchronising with the visuals to produce an experience where listening and watching become a single action. This is further enhanced by the physical properties of the sound; vibrations can be felt coursing through the body. The cumulative effect of all three sensory stimuli results in an uncanny physical experience.

This mixing of the senses is a key element of Kurokawa's work and both pieces in this exhibition aim to create synaesthetic experiences, ie replicating the conditions of synaesthesia, where an individual's senses become merged and mixed up to the extent that, for example, a colour might have a sound, smell or taste. Without experiencing the condition itself, it is not possible to tell just how synaesthetic an experience Kurokawa provides, but with both *unfold* and *constrained surface*, sight and sound in particular become impossible to separate.

In achieving these aims, *constrained surface* is the more successful of the two works. It is a much smaller installation,

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