

## OLIVER BEER

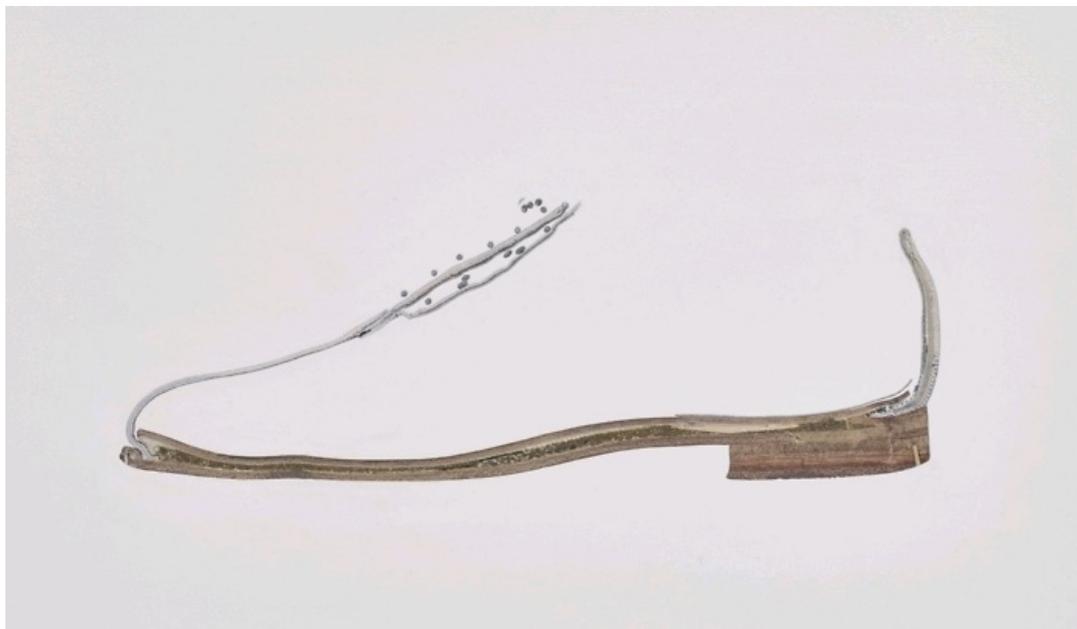
---

### NEW PERFORMANCE AND SCULPTURE

LONDON ELY HOUSE

28 Apr 2017 - 29 Jul 2017

---



Performance daily:

Friday 28 April - Thursday 18 May, 12am - 6pm

Friday 19 May - Saturday 1st July, 1pm - 3.45pm

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac presents Oliver Beer, *New Performance and Sculpture*, as part of its inaugural programme for the new London gallery at Ely House. During the renovations of this historic mansion over the past six months, Oliver Beer has been in residence, developing different manipulations of sound and architectural harmonics within the space.

Oliver Beer trained in musical composition in London before studying Fine Art at the Ruskin, Oxford University and Theory of Cinema at the Sorbonne, Paris. His musical background is reflected in a distinct sensitivity to sound and in an interest in the overlap between sound, space and architecture, which he expresses through performance, film and sculpture. For his ongoing *Resonance Project* (2007-) Oliver Beer has developed a vocal technique through which he stimulates the empty spaces in any building to resound according to their resonant frequencies, creating an extraordinary force of vibration and revealing the 'voice' of the building. Oliver Beer employs this technique with classically trained singers to transform buildings – from the staircases of MoMA PS1 to an Ottoman hammam – into musical instruments, much in the same way that a wine glass can be made to sing with the tip of a finger. Oliver Beer then composes polyphonic music for these newly audible 'architectural instruments', which he weaves into immersive live performances.

Performed live every day throughout the first two months of the exhibition, visitors will be able to experience the culmination of Oliver Beer's site-specific experiments with his new *Resonance Project* performance, *Composition for London*, in which classically-trained singers are placed strategically around the grand staircase and instructed to sing specific notes at precise pitches. Working without the aid of speakers or electronic amplification the singers will stimulate the space's natural frequencies and tease out its intrinsic notes, unchanged since the building's construction in 1776.

In the large gallery space, *Devils*, a major new acoustic installation work based on Oliver Beer's recent research at the Watermill Centre, NY, uses a feedback loop technique developed by the artist to reveal the inherent musical notes of various ancient and modern vessels, both sacred and commonplace. The empty space within each vessel has its own unchanging musical note at which it resonates. Oliver Beer has chosen these objects because their resonant frequencies harmonise with each other in augmented fourths. This musical interval, dubbed *Diabolus in Musica* in the middle ages, is a dissonant combination of notes which was believed by the Catholic Church to be the musical incarnation of the devil; their use by composers was said to be a crime worthy of excommunication. In the midst of these sound works sits an up-turned grand piano, a memento from Oliver Beer's work *Making and Breaking Tristan* – which he also recently performed at Centre Pompidou. To create the performance, Oliver Beer cuts away the strings of a grand piano, note by note in a specific order, to first build and then gradually eliminate Wagner's notorious 'Tristan Chord' – the famously unstable sound that embodies the origins of modernism in music. Once cut, the strings are collected, tied up in felt from the piano and hung like a wreath on the gallery wall.

Nearby, Oliver Beer has infiltrated the architecture of Ely house by transforming a window pane into a lead-crystal ear trumpet that amplifies and filters the sounds from the outside world. On the walls throughout the space hang Oliver Beer's *Two-Dimensional Sculptures*. To make these works

Oliver Beer slices through physical objects such as musical instruments, cameras, shotguns and coloured pencils, often imbued with personal history, with surgical precision. He then immerses them in white gessoed plaques with only the cut surface of the object visible. The objects thus lose all their volume and become two-dimensional images of themselves, granting them a new meaning and dimension as if frozen in time and space. Creating two-dimensional images from three-dimensional forms, the works blur the boundaries between painting, drawing and sculpture. Oliver Beer says: 'Sound penetrates matter indiscriminately, and permeates the structures of our bodies and the objects that surround us. These sculptures are a way of *hearing with our eyes* – or *seeing with our ears* – an attempt to recompose volumes on a single pictorial plane. Oliver Beer was born in 1985 in the United Kingdom. Within and alongside his work with sound, he creates subtle and diverse sculptural, installation and film projects whose provenance sometimes seems biographical; but in which his play with universal – often intimate – concerns draws on shared emotions and perceptions. Oliver Beer has notably been exhibited at MoMA PS1, New York, Centre Pompidou, Paris, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, MAC Lyon, Fondation Hermès, Paris, Tokyo, Seoul, the Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris and the Istanbul Biennale in 2015. He has held residencies with the Fondation Hermès, the Villa Arson and the Watermill Center, New York and is the winner of several awards including the Daiwa Anglo- Japanese Foundation Art Prize (2015). His work is in many private and public collections including the Pompidou Centre, MAC Lyon, FRAC île de France, Kramlich Collection, National Museum of Art, Osaka, and MONA Tasmania. From March to June 2017, Oliver Beer will have a concurrent survey show at Ikon Gallery in Birmingham.

[WATCH THE EXHIBITION VIDEO](#)