

All Posts



## Sonic Variables and Peripheries

**Mari Mattsson**

*Time Teller*

MFA solo exhibition, Galleri Mejan

Kungliga konsthögskolan

February 24 - March 5, 2023



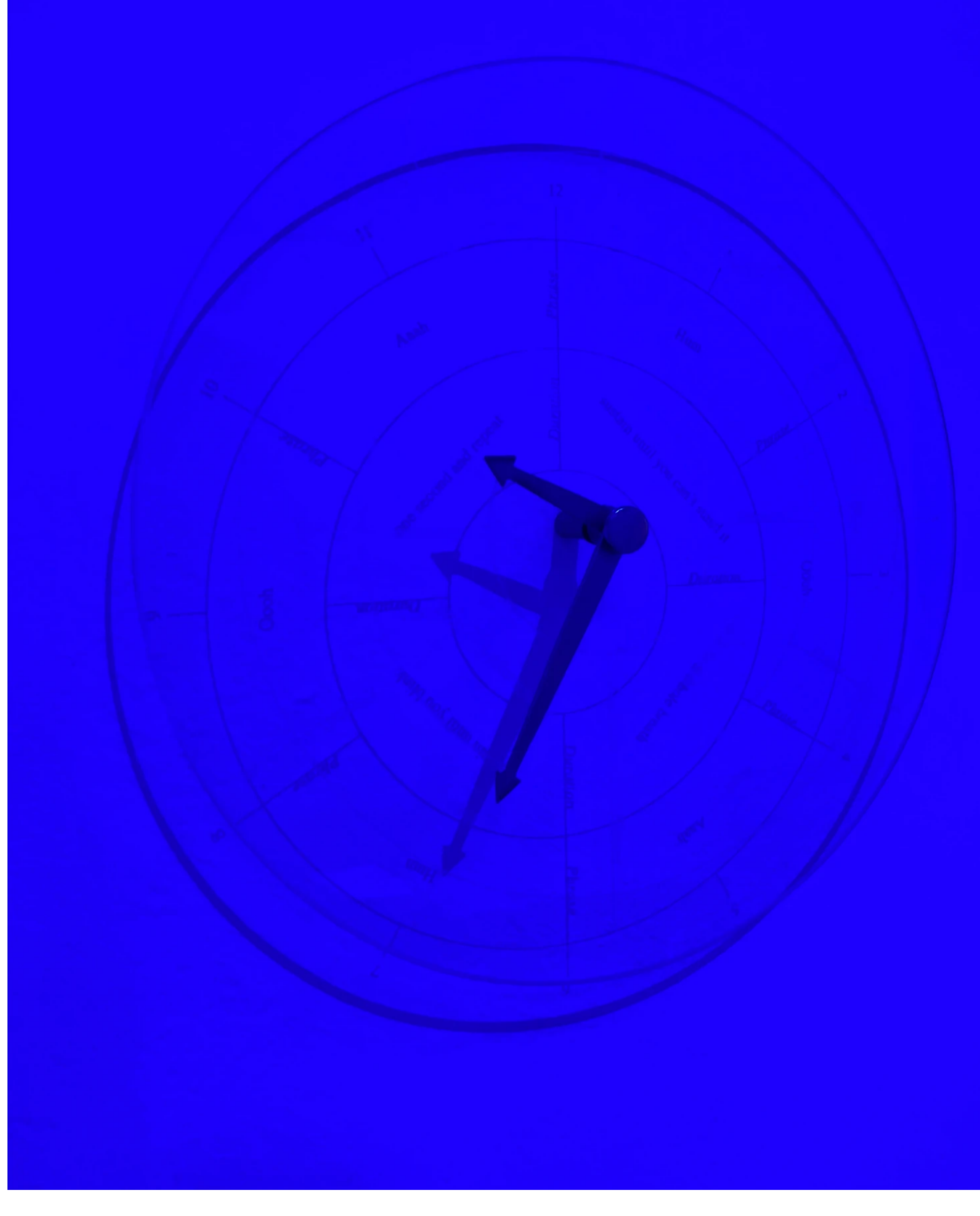
Mari Mattsson, *Time Teller*, installation view, MFA solo exhibition, Galleri Mejan, 2023

There are moments attending a solo grad exhibition when you can't so easily link, what's at hand and showing before your eyes, to any past art experiences. You might along the more shallow lines relate a part of it as akin to the work of someone; a mere visual or spatial element, but as a whole it proves too idiosyncratic and original in whatever sense that the word can have bearing in art, to think of anything else right off the bat. As such Mari Mattsson's sound-based exhibition could visually in terms of spatial staging bring some thought to Christian Andersson's *Ffor Fake* or for me a past solo exhibition of German-born Florian Hecker; *Halluzination, Perspektive, Synthese*, seen a few yearsback at Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna. The latter because then like today is a reminder of the challenges and difficulties of optimizing a setting in a way for an audience to really give into a sound-based experience, while still allowing the artist to stay economical in approach with physical components. Hecker's exhibition, as sparse as it was, just looked and sounded too good for you to even want to move, instead of being balmied into a decelerating and imbibing state. Mari Mattsson too has struck that same balance by an alluring celestial form through blue light design and the aid of not just one room, but two interconnected rooms that naturally create an intriguing of the inherent relationship between the spatial units. Presenting art that bears novel qualities certainly does not need to be an end itself but it also doesn't hurt as an emerging artist who is about to catapult out of the sheltered bubble of art school.

Front and center, although not in direct view, Mari Mattsson's work is a performative and participatory musical framework, mediated both as an actual collective sound performance and sound piece installation in one of the rooms *and* as an invitation to participate, should you choose (and some I hear have at the gallery) there or wherever. The work as the title lets on; *Time Teller*, is subject to time, and space too factors the equation, also as the work has viability outside of the the artists's staunch control and the "confinement" of these gallery walls.

The framework itself is a musical partiture of two harmonies, elegantly placed as a printed booklet handout in the second of two rooms. Instead of musical notation along the staves and bars are instructions to produce sonic sounds vocally that will vary based on how the instructions are interpreted and carried out by the performer. The time "meditation" quality of the work comes to play as the instructions run with certain time periods of the day that are to some extent individual based on the performer's geographic location and their daily habits (e.g. sunrise/sunset, bedtime). Arrows on the bars impact the pitch, and the placement of the two pointers of a graphic clock (that appends the partiture) are decisive of which stock sound to make and in what duration. A glass sculpture of this instructional and instrumental clock is found on the wall amid the blue obscure light of the second room, together inside, along the booklet. It's evident that the artist have wished for this booklet and clock to exist as subtly as possible in the exhibition as to not override the possibly emotional and visceral experience to be had from the sound piece of the first room.

And what you do have in that room is an eight-channel sound loop juxtaposing eight recordings (including one of the artist herself) that came out as the result of performing the partiture (Each performer simply sent her an audiofile). All in varying lengths but expect no dissonant concoction. Agreeable is an understatement of how it sounds and the beauty is how in parts of the loop, the eight voices merge together as a unison chorus as by mere chance. Connecting music to time this way just accentuates the universal, timeless and unifying quality of music and while it might appear in this writing as a crosspollination between a *Kumbaya* and *The Dice Player* moment (Luke Rheinhart's seminal '71 novel), it's an absolutely ingenious and impressive work. Deceptively simple in elevator concept pitch, and yet so overwhelmingly complex at first glance. Experiencing exhibitions like these gives you so much fuel to keep doing what you do. If you had found me in a moment of being jaded, this would have been a great antidote.



Mari Mattsson, *Time Teller*, installation view, MFA solo exhibition, Galleri Mejan, 2023

**Simon Sjöström**

MFA solo exhibition, Galleri Mejan

Kungliga konsthögskolan

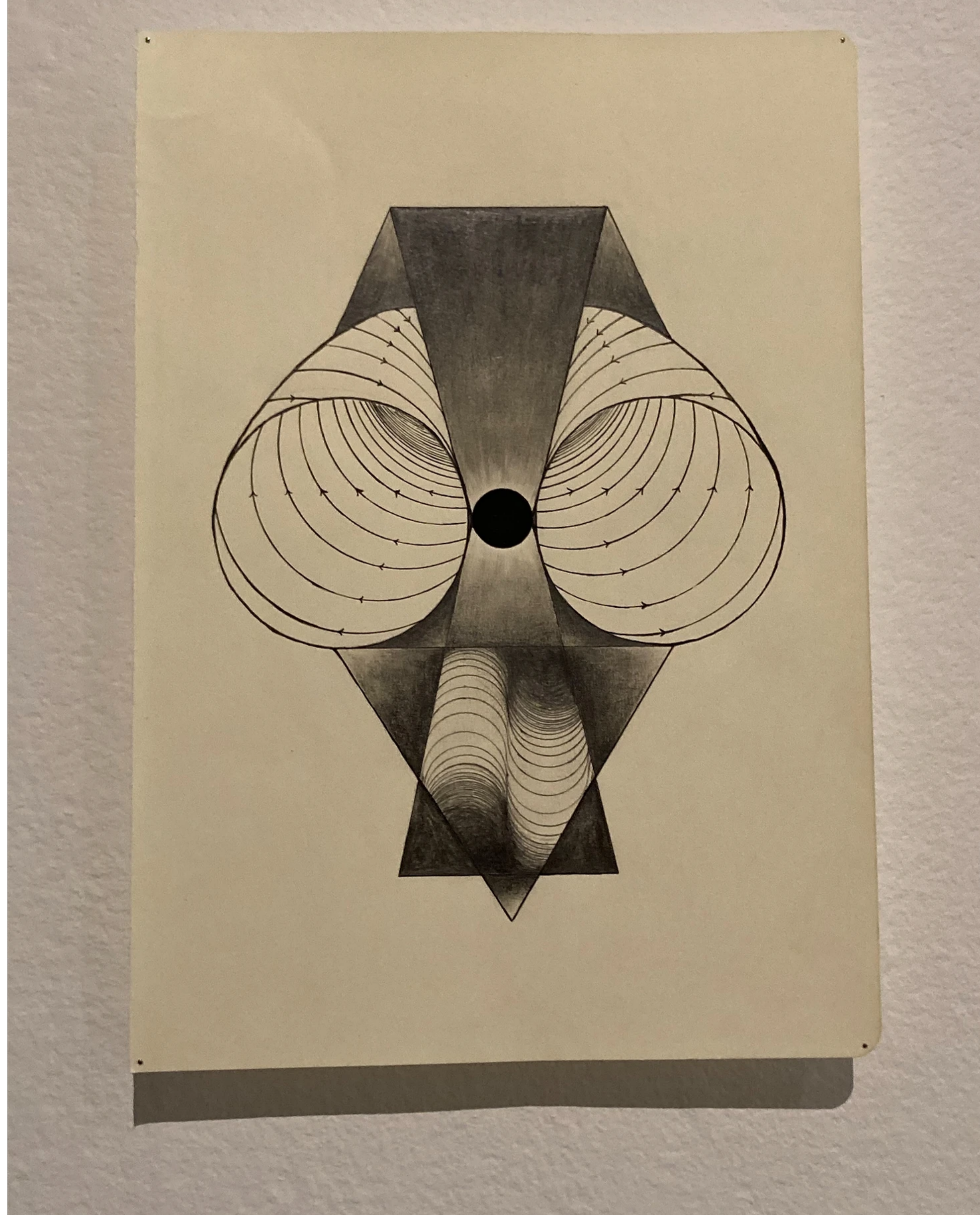
February 10 - 19, 2023



Simon Sjöström, *Conductor for complex systems*, installation view, Galleri Mejan, 2023

"On the 17th of January 2022, the voice of 9 trees was transmitted around the globe and into space" read the intriguing brief of Simon Sjöström's recent MFA solo *Conductor for complex systems* at the Royal Institute of ARTin Stockholm. For an artist, for whom sound (art) appears the axis around which his interdisciplinary practice revolves, the exhibition felt like a like power-press on the play button to stretch a "visuality" angle towards spatial form, far beyond just accessorizing and supporting tokens. A video, apparently connecting the most directly to the backstory, produced a haunting effect when placed before what appeared like a robust wooden church or old community theatre bench, with side walls showing abstract charcoal drawings alluding to a sonical visual realm. The "bandwidth" of the exhibition seemed to stress affinity or prompt some ounce of consideration for more "peripheral possibilities", perhaps in light of the commonplace that are pantheistic beliefs in quotidian society. The thought did cross the mind exhibiting. "Muted" humour also appeared to find space intersecting with clever form, with the placement of the exhibition booklet in different sober colours, like an exhibition bible on display. I had a good kind-hearted laugh about in on the inside. Like his fellow grad candiates of the MFA '23 cohort, Linnéa Ndongoya Palmcrantz and Mari Mattson, another distinctive artist to watch with excitement from here and on.

Interestingly this school in recent years, come time for the grad shows, always present a few artists who've been very visible in the art scene already, experiencing tangible success during school years, and this cohort is no different but these recent weeks of MFA solos have been food for thought in so far keeping consideration that some artist gems will always remain low-key in profile right up until the very end and then just hit you with a *bam*.



Simon Sjöström, *Conductor for complex systems*, installation view, Galleri Mejan, 2023

**Ashik Zaman**