

ARTFORUM

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CRITICS' PICKS: MUNGO THOMSON

by Leslie Moody Castro



Mungo Thomson, *Cricket Solos*, 2014, iPod, mini speaker, handmade cricket cage.

Mungo Thomson's "Crickets for Solo and Ensemble" is a two-part musical movement that is divided by the physical parameters of the exhibition space, becoming an equal two-part show. Acting as a concerto in three spaces, the show explores the banal and commonplace sounds of crickets in nature.

In collaboration with Los Angeles-based composer Michael Webster, the work includes sounds of crickets chirping in habitats all over the world that have been converted into a musical composition involving a seventeen-piece orchestra. The first part of the show, *Cricket Solos*, 2014, is located on the ground level of the gallery. It comprises cricket cages made of mason jars and is fashioned with iPods that play solos imitating the chirp of individual crickets. The chirps play through the storefront window of the space and out onto another—the sidewalk surrounding the building—in a twist of ironic symphony that materializes the sound of nature and projects it back into its environment.

The second component of the exhibition, *Crickets*, 2013, converts the gallery's upstairs room into a theater that houses a life-size video projection of the orchestral ensemble playing the musical composition. Along an adjacent wall is *Crickets (Conductor's score)*, 2013, the sheet music for the entire composition, which has been blind-embossed onto the paper, making the musical notes barely visible in the dim light. The human result is an uncanny and idiosyncratic version of nature's original, which heightens the awareness of such a common sound by turning it into a captivating and intentional formal configuration.