

March 8 2021 - April 21, 2021

OOPS! POW! SURPRISE!

Scott Rubin



DEPS Artist Profile

Glass Curtain Gallery – Columbia College Chicago
1104 S Wabash Ave, 1st Floor, Chicago, IL 60605

Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Capacity of gallery is 10 visitors, and masks are required.

OOPS! POW! SURPRISE!

An exhibition by Cristal Sabbagh

OOPS! POW! SURPRISE! Takes a deep look at Cristal Sabbagh's interdisciplinary practice that includes traditional portraiture, ceramics, and performance. While movement is the spine of her practice and the core that all her other work emanates from, intentional spontaneity, reverence, and bliss are threads woven throughout.

Sabbagh's performance practice, rooted in improvisation and Butoh, walks a line between the everyday, the divine, the personal, and the political. In embodying in her art transformational memories while simultaneously celebrating pop culture and the experimental, she challenges power structures and awakens viewers' senses.

Working both in a solo capacity and with collaborators, Sabbagh is equally attuned to individual perspectives and collective structures. As with Sabbagh's previous projects, *OOPS! POW! SURPRISE!* will also incorporate collaborative work. Her collaborators include **Erin Peisert, Scott Rubin, Keisha Janae, Ramah Malebranche,** and **Sara Zalek.** In various configurations, these collaborators have regularly engaged in improvised performances, opening up new avenues for Sabbagh's material and conceptual exploration.

Although her work is defined in movement, her practice also looks outward to portraits of the world around, taking the forms of traditionally drawn portraits, figurative ceramic sculptures, and nontraditional portraits on ceramic mugs. Sabbagh labors over each piece, that act as homage and memorials and are a resistance to white-supremacy. Her traditional portraits include images of Black Trans lives that have been taken or disrupted. And her nontraditional portraits take the form of Black creatives lovingly emblazoned on ceramic mugs intended to be shared by friends and family. Not only do these works infuse the user's everyday coffee and tea rituals, but their ceramic forms will stand the test of time, potentially outliving the user by thousands of years and leaving traces of how we lived, recorded by Sabbagh's hand.

Scott Rubin

Scott Rubin is an interdisciplinary musician and improvising violist whose work interrogates relationships between sound and movement through analog and digital means. His recent projects have involved interdisciplinary collaborations with musicians and dancers, often incorporating interactive acoustic/electronic improvisation, expanded performance practices, motion-sensors, and live video. In these projects, he engages themes of intimacy, control, and the sublime.

Scott Rubin has worked with musicians and dancers around the world, most notably Ensemble Paramirabo, Quasar Quatuor de saxophones, Tenth Intervention, TAK Ensemble, UC Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, vocalist Julian Otis, cellist Juan Sebastian Delgado, tubist Jack Adler McKean, cellist Polina Streltsova, Thin Edge New Music Collective, Eco Ensemble, Duo d'Entre Deux, Eventuell Saxophone Duo, Splinter Reeds, the Estrella Consort, the McGill University Contemporary Music Ensemble, the University of Illinois New Music Ensemble, and dancers/choreographers Jubilee Tai, Cristal Sabbagh, Yuri Shimaoka, Christine Bonansea, Sarah Xiao, Manu Cyr, Louis Barbier, and Shoshana Green.

scottrubinmusic.com

[bandcamp](#)

[youtube](#)

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Scott Rubin
headshot by Jubilee Tai



Scott Rubin - in tensions - Albert and Streltsova




Watch later



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In Tensions, 2018
Scott Rubin (composer)
performers Marie Albert and Polina Streltsova



Lens V3, 2020
Improvised, performed, and edited by Scott
Rubin



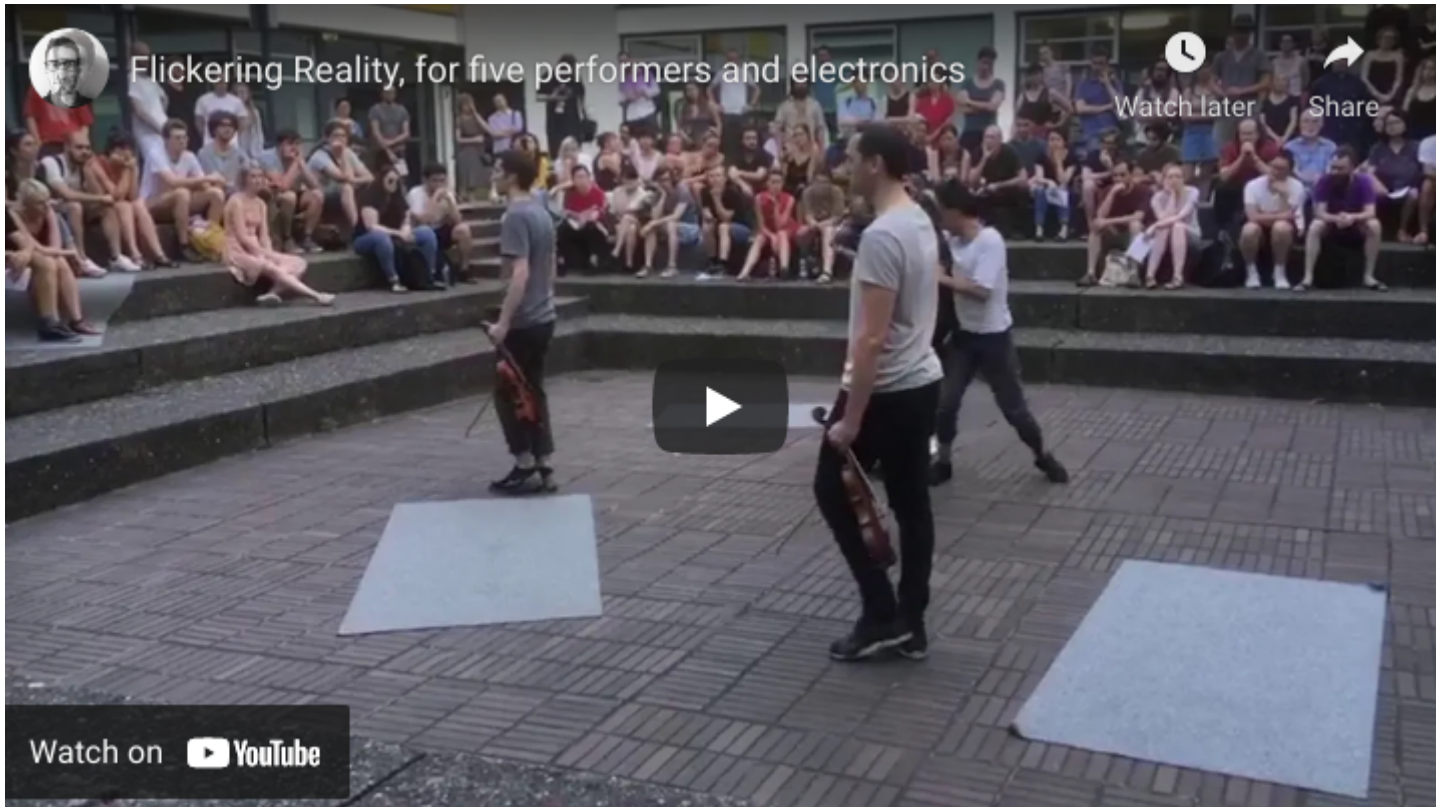
Julian Otis + Scott Rubin at University of Notre Dame, 2020
Performed and improvised by Scott Rubin
performer Julian Otis



bdynse, 2019

Scott Rubin (Performer, composer, technologist)

Performer Jubilee Tai



Flickering Reality, 2019

Scott Rubin (Performer, composer, mover)
Performers Léonard Engel, Isaac Espinoza Hidrobo, Luis
Nomedes López, and Tatiana Timonina

Interview with Scott Rubin

Conducted by Kaylee Fowler

Kaylee Fowler: How did you meet and start working with Cristal Sabbagh?

Scott Rubin: I met Cristal at the first iteration of *Freedom From and Freedom To* (September 2019). I was in the audience, and the totality of the event was absolutely captivating. After the show, I introduced myself to her, and our friendship grew from there.

KF: As an interdisciplinary artist, you work with sound-making as well as movement, dance, improvisation, and beyond. Have you found that the way you approach and form a project is different depending on what medium you are using?

SR: The common denominator for all these media are people. When I work with people, the dynamics in the group usually guides the approach. When I reflect on sound-making and movement-making in the abstract, I think about how each is perceived from the point of view of the performer, the collaborator, and the spectator. The ideas perceived from sound and movement (and their interactions) carry that medium's history and limitations. Time flows differently depending

on if an idea is sound-based or movement-based, and when there's an improvised human relationship on stage, the interactions perceived by the audience serve as a backdrop for the actions of the performers. For each medium, it's important to consider the physical byproduct of it (sound waves or witnessing a moving human), the labor of the artist who makes that byproduct, and the emotion behind that labor. A long note being held by a viola will be perceived differently than if it's done with a saxophone; or transversely, the same could be said about a repeated sequence from a dancer, or a repeated gesture by a painter.

KF: What inspired you to pursue these kinds of performances and where do you find inspiration for your projects?

SR: I grew up doing martial arts, social dancing, and playing viola in orchestras. In each of these, the rhythm and articulation of the body is paramount. Conductors are particularly fascinating in that the orchestra's music seems to radiate from the conductor's gestures. It's the one situation where people can actually influence sound with their gestures (ignoring situations with motion sensors).

Interview with Scott Rubin

Continued

Conductors are usually perceived as the “face” of the orchestra, though they’re also the only ones on stage not producing direct sound. This was so fascinating to me! Usually, what we hear changes how we move, but can we flip the script?

I started improvising with others in 2016 at the Temescal Arts Center in Oakland, California while I was a music composition student. I was fascinated by sound-as-conversation, and I thought of improvisation as a way of learning quickly about musical momentum and development. I’d attend open improvisation jams with other musicians, and sometimes dancers. These were low-stakes events, and folks came to experiment. It was such a welcoming and encouraging place to play and get involved in the community. Nowadays, inspiration is tough. It ebbs and flows and I find myself not being able to control when it hits. When I pick up my viola, my body just processes what happened that day through the instrument. Tightness, darkness, volatility, cold, frustration, isolation, exhaustion, escapism, and mindfulness. While working on my last solo-recording project DANCES AND

MEDITATIONS, released this past December, I found myself inspired to create a track just on sonic textures that I wanted to bathe in.

KF: How do you think your work and the themes you explore might change or be received differently when in the context of a collaboration? Is the work you make on your own different from what you present in a collaboration setting?

SR: With the exception of my recent solo-album, I haven’t made much work “on my own” in the past two years. Though I’m not a trained dancer, my solo work tends to frame viola-performance as movement, and sometimes it regards sound from its origin as a physical gesture. If I’m playing a solo set, I’ll sometimes wear a wireless motion sensor on my right wrist, and I’ll use that data to digitally transform the sound coming from my instrument in real time. Sometimes I perceive the “weight” of a sound to be analogous to how much weight is in my arms while I’m producing it.

think every additional collaborator brings a level of complexity to a theme. Collaborators might agree on concepts or material beforehand, but they’ll probably be understood differently by each member of the group.

Interview with Scott Rubin

Continued

So there are multiple levels of interpretation of the same theme. This could make the performance richer and more vibrant, and maybe more confusing. The underlying potential chaos is simultaneously scary, exciting, and wonderful.

KF: Do you have any thoughts on how the performances you are involved in will evolve in the future, after a time where isolation and physical distance have had such an effect on how we view performances?

SR: Totally. Previously common things like touch, proximity, and the breath all have different connotations now. video chat culture has changed. You could position a bunch of dancers close to a flutist blowing loud long tones, and the audience would get anxious. Entire performances can be created and dictated by the abilities and inabilities of Zoom. I'm not sure how my own personal work will change. For now, I'm taking things one step at a time.

KF: What has been the most fun experience you've had during a performance?

SR: One of my favorite performances was with dancers-vocalists Margaret Morris and Julian Otis at Constellation Chicago in February 2020. The performance concept was Otis's Intersession, an improvisation-based piece that we developed over the months prior. For that performance, I played viola, utilized motion-sensitive live electronics, and engaged physically with the other performers. From our workshops together, we built trust in each other's intuitions and abilities, but the performance, for the most part, was totally improvised. The performance became so intense that members of the audience actually came on stage towards the final moments and ended the show with us. It was incredible to experience that trust, cohesion, risk, and freedom with those performers and, surprisingly, the audience members.

The DEPS Artist Profile Series

The DEPS Artist Profile Series, presented by Columbia College Chicago's Department of Exhibitions, Performance, and Student Spaces (DEPS), is a virtual publication on select artists involved with the DEPS Galleries and the Columbia College Chicago community. Our goal with this series is to connect artist and viewer on a deeper level, and to highlight the amazing works and thoughts of our featured artists through interviews, artist biographies, and catalogs of work. Art has always been a way to connect with others, no matter where one may physically be. We hope by presenting the creativity and insights of the people involved in the DEPS Artist Profile Series that viewers may have one more way to stay in touch with and support the arts community.

The DEPS Artist Profile Series is managed by Fine Arts major and DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Kaylee Fowler. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Learn more at colum.edu/Pow

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