

MUSIC FOR (PREPARED) BICYCLES / in THREE SCORES

(Performance / Film / Sculpture /Photography / Participatory Musical Score)



Score One of “*Music for (prepared) Bicycles*”, Caecilia Tripp 2012, was produced in Bombay by Clark House Initiative Bombay 2012 in co-production with Rattapallax Films NY & Alliance Française de Mumbai & Hors Les Murs, French Institute (C-Print 50 x 65cm)

«*Music for (prepared) Bicycles*» (after John Cage & Marcel Duchamp) is a participatory performance project in process by Caecilia Tripp celebrating the 100th Birthday of John Cage in the streets. To create her score, and film, the artist made a sonic bicycle, like a moving instrument, spiked with electric guitar strings, capturing street sounds, and sounds of strings hitting playing cards, as it is performed trilling through places of affect within the city. This project in process alters Cage’s “prepared piano” into three sonic bicycle processions, a ”music of change” thriving through three global metropolis (Bombay/ New York/ Cape Town) as the bondage of a freed geography, beyond all boundaries.

Score Two was realized with French Institute Alliance Française, NY & Brooklyn College NY & Quancard Contemporary Art NY and shown at Bronx Museum New York.



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Music for (prepared) Bicycles at Clark House Initiative Bombay/

A participatory project by Caecilia Tripp 2012-14

Free people and Free sounds (Cage)

Caecilia Tripp: To initiate the project 'Music for (prepared) Bicycles' in Bombay is quite symbolic. In a time of crisis and protest, where the old world order is put into question, with Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring, Mahatma Gandhi represents a historic figure of civil disobedience encouraging everyone to believe in their power for change.

To create her score, and a film, she made a sonic bicycle, like a moving instrument, capturing street sounds, and sounds of strings hitting playing cards, as it is performed trilling through places of affect within the city -- the last working cotton mill, in the mill area of Parel, the August Kranti maidan, where Gandhi issued his 'Quit India speech', and the pink migrating flamingos at the port of Sewri amidst old rusting ships. Installation, films, photographs, phrases of sound, quotation, memory and performance, come together in a participatory project of anarchist imagination.

Arjun Appadurai: *The image, the imagined, the imaginary - these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: the imagination as a social practice...*

The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order.

'diminished spaces of fabrication and possibility'

The Indian Atlas cycles began to be made in 1951. Its design has not changed since then. It had a way to be put together and modified depending on its use, extra seats, or hooks that hold gas cylinders. It could carry a hundred kilos, and so is the cycle used by all manner of trades. One does not 'buy' as much as fluidly assemble the cycle, to each customer's individual need. Even in Bombay, the possibilities to fabricate, assemble,

alter and individualise, have become fewer and fewer. Entering this project breaks the myth that all is possible to make in Bombay cheaply. Hand embroidered lettering, so common in this Colaba even a year ago, has slowly died away. At least five shops no longer take small orders.

The making of the cycle was possible due to the effort of small businesses who took interest in the art work, and devised ingenious ways of constructing the cycle. We met Mahindra Bhai Chauhan while shopping for hardware in the Dadar Market. His tiny shop, a raised platform at the corner of a street, is in its fourth generation, and makes tablas and sitars (percussion and string instruments). He had said, "for this to work, we will all need to think". His eighteen-year old son devised a way to weld in musical keys to tune and stretch electric guitar strings. In a lane nearby, Amardeep Cycles is run by Sikh refugees from Pakistan who came to Bombay to live in the Sion refugee camp. The shop specialises in making cycles for grocers and other tradesmen. Oriya handlers at the shop spent hours away from their half-an-hour turnaround time, to assemble the prepared wheels to a regular bicycle frame. Mr Panchal at Nana Chowk runs an inherited welding business sharing an old factory floor with garages. He welds ornate protective grills for windows. When requested to make clips to hold the playing cards, he offered his services for free in support, because the project was artistic and somewhat nostalgic. By traversing the streets of Bombay in search of a welder, we came across many individuals in their sixties who remembered their youth as soon as they saw the bicycle, remembering how well bits of x-ray sheets, wedged along the wheels of the cycle, audibly hit the cycles spokes. In India, the gears of sugar cane juice traders are often dressed up with gungroos (heavy bells worn on the ankles of dancers), and bicycles are fitted with brightly coloured plastic anklets, and cellophane paper windmills to create rainbows of vibrant colour and sound.

Caecilia Tripp begins her journey at the August Kranti Maidan, (August Freedom Park), where Mahatma Gandhi called for independence from British rule: to quit India, or to face mass non-violent civil disobedience. The cycle traverses a route through the older areas of Bombay, now circumvented by regular traffic. These geographies subsidise life in the city by serving as centres of economic activity. The cycle moves from Gaiwadi, Girgaum on to Charni Road, a manic train station and the heart of the diamond business in Asia. It got its name from a grazing field bought by a private philanthropist to

avoid British grazing taxes for cows from Girgaum. The cycle moves to Colaba Koliwada village, home to Bombay's indigenous community of fishermen, the Kolis, who have been pushed off their land into tiny spaces along the coast. Many migrant communities, such as the Banjaras (Indian Roma) and economic migrants from Bihar, share their space and find welcome. About four decades ago, these communities in Colaba asked for newly reclaimed land, and re-established villages that now serve as vibrant multicultural oasis's of festivity, community life, and affordable housing. The cycle passes Nagpada, in the old Byculla district, which contains Bombay's oldest museum and botanical gardens, alongside Bombay's first stately apartment buildings, historically home to the Indian Jewish community and Muslim traders from Gujarat. The bicycle rides to the Sewri mudflats, filmed in the backdrop of sand dredges, and flamingos. As night falls, the cycle comes to Laxmi Mills in the Parel district, started as a woolen mill in the late 19th century by a Sassoon family, and is now among the last functioning mills in the area, due to close. The union strikes of 1982 that sought better wages for the mill workers met with factory lockouts ending in the closure of the mills. The mills have now all but given way to residential condominiums and shopping malls, displacing thousands of mill workers, a majority of whom have not been rehabilitated, even today, so many years on.

The artist has related her present project to John Cage's 'Music of Changes', and his entanglements with Indian philosophy via Ananda Coomaraswamy and the musician Gita Sarabhai. The poet Prabodh Parikh has pointed us to the philosophy of play, Leela or Ramaniyata, an aesthetic theory of Indian poetics by the 17th century Pandit Jagannath. It is in engagement with the idea of play that works of art emerge. He emphasises that Cage's is an attempt to achieve ease, without any of the weight of the 17th century aesthetician. He also remembers that it was Cage who first said, dropped in as an aside, that 6% of America is using up 96% of the resources, and in 1962, that America should stop being the police of the world. The technique of the inserted playing cards translates John Cage's 'prepared piano', on which he wrote many compositions, to the bicycle. Cage once said that the future of music was electronic sound. Caecilia Tripp's inspiration comes from Cage's writing, and she makes relation between these and the vernacular culture practiced and invented by teenagers in socially disregarded suburbs around the world.

Zasha Colah mai 2012

Clark House Initiative Bombay

Music for (prepared) Bicycles was listed for the Visible Award / Pistoletto Foundation in 2015.

Score One Bombay was co-produced by Clark House Initiative, Rattapallax Films and the French Institute, shown at RU New York and internationally in museum venues. *Score Two New York* has been co-produced by the French Embassy New York, Rattapallax Films, Quancard Contemporary, CaribBeing, The Schwinn Bike Club and the Brooklyn College Artist Residency, New York. It has been part of the exhibition "Presente! The Young Lords in New York" at the Bronx Museum 2015 with the support Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation and "Viva Brooklyn" at the Brooklyn Museum 2014, New York.



Music for (prepared) Bicycles, Score Two NY, Caecilia Tripp 2013, **HD, color & sound, 15min**
(view CREDAKINO at Contemporary Art Center of Ivry, Le CREDAC, Paris, France 2016)



Score Two of "Music for (prepared) Bicycles", Caecilia Tripp 2013, was produced in New York in collaboration with the Schwinn Bike Club, a Puerto Rican bicycle club. The sonic bicycle procession took place in Brooklyn, Spanish Harlem and to the Bronx, tracing the history of the Young Lords Civil Rights Movement.

(C-Print 50 x 65cm)



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Music for (prepared) Bicycles Score One Bombay, Caecilia Tripp 2012, Atlas Bike Black, stringed with electric guitar strings and tuned with guitar keys, Airbag Bombay 2012 (view at Contemporary Art Center of Ivry, Le CREDAC, Paris, France 2016)

***Bicycle Score Performance Painting* , Brooklyn Museum NY 2014**
At VIVA BROOKLYN Exhibition



Score Painting for (prepared) Bicycles, Caecilia Tripp 2014, Canvas 5 x 7 m, Black Mars Paint, amplified & stringed Schwinn Bicycle with electric guitar strings and tuned guitar keys from *Music for (prepared) Bicycles*, NY, loudspeakers, performance 30 min, Brooklyn Museum New York

Performer: Ethan Scott-Barnett



Score Painting for (prepared) Bicycles, Caecilia Tripp 2014, Canvas 5 x 7 m, Black Mars Paint, Caecilia Tripp 2014, Brooklyn Museum New York