



## Haroon Mirza

### MMMMMMMMMMMM

Haroon Mirza (1977) has described his work as being an exploration of 'visual and acoustic space as one sensorial mode of perception.' This exhibition, the artist's largest to date, features two major installations, a number of new sculptural works and a display of drawings and diagrams.

Mirza's work locates itself on the edge where noise becomes music, his assemblages of found objects, basic electrical components such as switches and LEDs, musical instruments, radios and pieces of other artists' works being combined and structured to form looped compositions that share their DNA with electronic and minimal music. Entering the gallery, one is confronted with a dark passageway leading into *The national apavilion of then and now* (2011), a triangular room containing an anechoic, or echo free chamber, which is virtually sound and light proof. Inside, one of the LEDs in the halo suspended from the ceiling is connected to an amplifier; sound and vision are rendered as absolute equivalents, a principle that runs through several of the works in the exhibition. In this case the electrical current creates a single tone whose pitch and volume rises as the light becomes brighter and more constant. The environment of the pavilion encourages a more focused perception, a shift from hearing to listening, as the complexity of this simple noise unfolds.

*I saw square triangle sine* (2011) is an installation consisting of instruments set up as if musicians were to play. Originally devised for a collaborative performance with the band Django Django, it also features a series of paintings by the artist Angus Fairhurst. Fairhurst installed these works with a drum kit, inviting viewers to play while looking at them. Mirza incorporates this here, and viewers are again welcome to play.

This collaborative ethos is a constant: Mirza plays freely with the work of other artists, often using it as a material or found object with a status equal to any other. In previous work the artist has made use of off-cuts of 16mm film by the structural filmmaker Guy Sherwin, whose influence is acknowledged in a work at the front of the gallery, *Homage to Guy Sherwin* (2012). In the 1970s Sherwin produced a series of films called *Optical Sound* in which sound was integral to the work and derived from the interaction of the film strip and the projector in exactly the same way as the visuals. These works have been important reference points for Mirza.

Rough sketches, diagrams and collages are shown in an adjacent space lined with soundproof foam. Operating functionally, as a way of reducing sound spill between two rooms, it has a strong sculptural presence and a noticeable impact on the viewer's senses as sound waves are deadened. The physicality of sound is made evident through its absence. The drawings show installation plans and the simple analogue circuitry that many of Mirza's works are based on. This opens onto a room containing a new work, *Untitled, featuring untitled works by James Clarkson* (2012). Four of the sculptures were produced by Sheffield based artist James Clarkson and then adjusted by Mirza, pieced together from found furniture and acoustic equipment in a characteristically lo-fi DIY aesthetic. Conceived of as a concept album or composition in six sections, individual works flicker into life in isolation or small groups, creating structure and moments of synchronicity from otherwise disparate parts.

A final work, *Sound Spill*, can be viewed at [www.spikeisland.org.uk](http://www.spikeisland.org.uk) from Monday 23 January.

## Suzanne Mooney

### The Edge of Collapse

Suzanne Mooney (1976) was born in Ireland, graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2005 and became a studio holder at Spike Island in 2008. She has produced a new body of work for her solo show *The Edge of Collapse*, the title drawing attention to the way in which her compositions deliberately unsettle our perception of architectural and pictorial space.

Mooney's full-colour framed giclée prints, the *Equilateral Coercion* and *The Edge of Collapse* series, may appear at first glance to be densely pigmented paintings. They are, however, photographic still life studies, comprised of objects and grounds, composed within the viewfinder of her camera. No digital manipulation is involved in the production of the work; instead the illusion of a continuous horizon line or arc of colour is created through the effects of lighting and arrangement, with the artist then cropping or inverting the image in order to create these enigmatic documents of reality.

The works are intended to evoke the same feeling of desire and covetousness elicited by luxury goods. Crucially, these items are missing; the artist instead uses the display systems, perspex props and wooden platforms that would usually support them. Through careful staging, Mooney enhances the sculptural properties of these marginal items and uses them to create an illusionary sense of preciousness, questioning in turn the value we place on the commodities we aspire to own.

The same techniques at a different scale are used in the framed black and white quartet, *Still life study No. 1-4*. Here, as with selected images from the colour series, elements of pattern and detail from the Project Space are layered within the compositions, subtly creating a dialogue between the work and the space in which it is exhibited.

Disrupting the pristine presentation and seductive nature of the framed works are two newsprints, *Proposition I-II*, and two illustrations taken directly from the book *The Colour Guide to Familiar Minerals and Rocks*. They are appropriated, rather than constructed images, depicting precious stones and gems embedded in rubble, that, when refined, would adorn the support structures depicted in the other works. These works are part of the artist's wider enquiry into the status of the photographed object and the physicality of an image.

A commissioned text *Splayed: Six Verses Dreaming Gaps In Great Shining Things* by artist, writer and academic Dr. Mick Wilson has been written in response to the concerns of Mooney's work and accompanies the exhibition in a free limited edition booklet.