



Project Space: Interview with Haroon Mirza

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Haroon Mirza is an artist based in Sheffield who often uses acoustic and sound elements as an integral structure to his work. He recently had his first solo exhibition at the A Foundation in Liverpool. He has been included in group shows at the Lisson Gallery and 176, London, will be included in Art Sheffield 10 and has a forthcoming solo exhibition at Mother's Tankstation, Dublin. ArtReview's Laura McLean-Ferris talks to him about the new piece he has made for ArtReview's Project Space.

LMF: How did this piece come about?

HM: It's really a result of you inviting me to present something within such a particular space. Existing work wouldn't have quite cut it. I initially wanted to address the space in a technical way; utilise the capabilities of Flash, but the only (web)site specific thing remaining is the frame. The content is quite a random collage of video clips. The keyboard and TV are recent additions to my studio junk, so I'd been messing around with them. Some friends shot the waterfall footage and the fly clip is a couple of years old - the original footage has Richard Hawley playing in the background and I perversely filmed this fly looking as if it was dancing. No flies were deliberately injured in the making of this film.

LMF: Why did you decide on *Funky Town* as the music?

HM: For a bit of fun prior to the project, I'd worked out the melody for *Funky Town* so decided to document a rendition without practicing it. It's a very recognisable and simple riff that's difficult to get wrong. My failures as a musician in the conventional sense probably have a lot to do with the work I make.

LMF: There seems to be an interest here in interference - and a kind of white noise effect that occurs in both nature and man-made items, is this right?

HM: I've been interested in the complexities of white noise for some time but have never really worked with it. Max Neuhaus talked about how from a certain distance, it is impossible to distinguish the difference between the sound of a motorway and the sound of a waterfall. This has always stuck in my mind because so many sounds, natural or man-made, can be perceived as white noise. I guess messing around with that TV made me want to illustrate this somehow. It's quite an explicit gesture as far as narrative goes but I was more involved with how the sound worked as a part within the composition as a whole.

LMF: Could you tell us about your more collaborative works, such as *ssndsp//ll*, and also those in which you 'remix' and curate the works of others?

HM: Well there's a couple of things here; one is an ongoing curatorial concern with sound spillage within group exhibitions and the other is including existing works by other artists within my own installations. *Ssndsp//ll* really comes from the problem of exhibiting my own work in group shows where the interference of sound is always an issue. Thom O'Nions and I both saw this as a curatorial concern and decided to look at ways to address it. So we decided to select some works, all containing an element of sound and put them in a space together and in doing so, form an additional audio composition. It was an experiment but it worked. Richard Sides and I have since curated an online addition to this ongoing project, which is due to go up pretty soon on farimani.info.

Introducing existing work into my own installations comes from a similar concern in that the majority of the materials I use are ready-mades. I don't differentiate between an LED clock, a 60s Danish sideboard or an artwork - all have equal material/functional value. I'm more interested in Duchamp's notion of the 'reverse ready-made', where he uses the example of taking a Rembrandt off the wall and using it as an ironing board. Although I don't do anything that drastic, it questions value structures in art. Like the other material in my work, I deploy a form of functionality into the artwork sometimes with little intervention.

LMF: Where can we see your work now and in the future? What are you working on at the moment?

HM: Right now I'm making new work for a solo exhibition at Mother's Tankstation in Dublin, which opens in a few weeks. Then it's Art Sheffield 10 - Sheffield's Biennial, this time curated by Annie Fletcher and Frederique Bergholtz. I'm also talking with 176 about presenting a couple of works I have in their collection and potentially curating the rest of the space.