

EMMA SMITH

EUPHONIA

FRI 27 APRIL — SUN 24 JUNE 2018

Emma Smith's *Euphonia* transforms the galleries with a ground-breaking new sound installation and series of spaces for experimentation. Working with a team of world experts in psychology, music and the brain, the artist extracts the music of social communication – chit chat and harmonious debate - to form the basis of an interactive sound work that attunes itself to the voices of visitors in the space.

GALLERY 1

In this gallery you are invited to take part in an on-line experiment to explore how music makes us feel. You are welcome to take part in this experiment at any time but if you can – **please visit gallery 1 on arrival and also before leaving the galleries so you can compare your results.**

This experiment leads on from work undertaken by the artist and Professor Robin Dunbar during the research for *Euphonia* where they worked with local choirs including Liverpool's Choir With No Name, Up for Art and MaMa Choir to test the impact of singing on people's sense of connection to one another. Here this research continues by inviting you the visitor to register your own responses to the experience of *Euphonia*.

GALLERY 2

At the centre of the exhibition is *Euphonia* itself – a vocal sound work and installation that transforms the central spaces of the gallery wing into a sonic chamber. This new musical score is based on the music created subconsciously in conversation between friends.

The premise of *Euphonia* is that as humans we are constantly making music together through everyday speech. When we chit chat with one another in friendly interactions we hit notes that harmonise and rhythms that interlock. The friendlier the interaction, the better this music becomes.

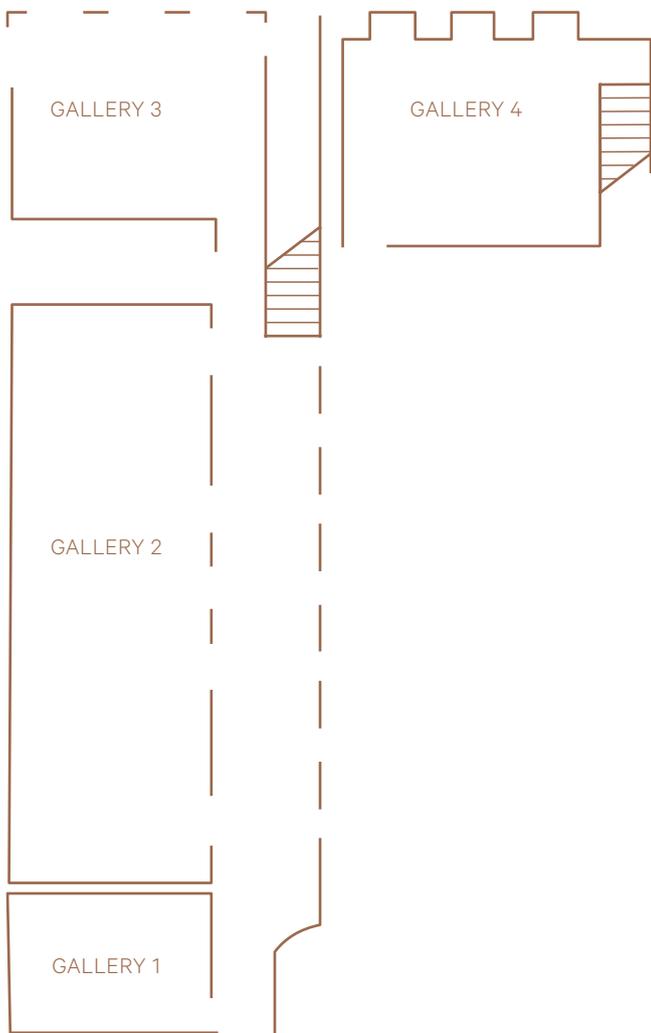
When we are passing the time of day with one another we are making music in the most complex of ways, as a form of bonding.

The score for *Euphonia* is a composite of conversations in many languages, transposed to musical form. They have been collected by the artist over the past year from visitors to Bluecoat, people responding to open call, and community groups including Blue Room and 20 Stories High.

This body of work leads on from Professor Ian Cross' research into affiliative speech and was developed following an online experiment devised by the artist. Collaborating with academics Ian Cross and Robin Dunbar, the artist tested out the human ability to understand the nuances of a positive or negative interaction across language barriers and through the musical nature of speech alone. The score includes dialogue between people of all ages, including parent and baby interactions, collected through work the artist undertook with Professor Lauren Stewart exploring the heightened use of musicality in communicating with babies pre-language.

GALLERY 3

Passing an anechoic foam wall brings you to Gallery 3 - an experiment in musical scoring. Seeking a more accessible form of scoring for the collective voice this room centres around a haptic or physical score that is encoded to perform *Euphonia*.



Accompanied by a series of handling notes and wall paintings that offer a directional and gestural notation taken from the *Euphonia* score, this room is activated through Saturday workshops hosted by guest musicians to explore their potential for improvisation. Please see vinyl for dates.

This work is based on research into early forms of musical notation with the intention of creating a way of scoring that allows people to sing in whatever range they feel comfortable and on whatever notes they choose. Harmony is achieved by determining the musicality of group interaction through listening and responding to one another intuitively, as we do in social conversation.

The robotic mechanism, the *Mephistophone*, synthesizes movement from sound, offering the possibility to read music by touch which the public can interact with during workshops. Adapted and programmed in collaboration with computer scientists Patrick Wollner and Isak Herman, each robotic arm moves up and down incrementally with the notes in the *Euphonia* score, offering a range of interchangeable parts; soprano, alto, tenor and bass.

GALLERY 4

Gallery 4 offers a space for relaxation, reflection and socialising, offering an environment for visitors to produce their own music through natural conversation. This room will host a number of events over the duration of the exhibition including reading groups to unpack some of the research behind the project, vocal workshops for parents and babies, and a series of performances by North West Choirs to share the music that makes them feel connected.

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2018



Supported using public funding by
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