

# Charles Stankievehch Timbral

## Press Release

Parisian Laundry | March 9-24, 2007 | Vernissage Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup> 6 - 9pm

*It is enough when a single note is beautifully played.*  
Arvo Pärt.

«Timbral» materializes a body of research and renderings concerned with 20<sup>th</sup> century music, particularly the life and work of the late Italian composer Giacinto Scelsi. A concise moment in Scelsi's life becomes the source for a series of work based on the composer who, after studying atonalism, suffered from a severe psychological crisis. The reason for Scelsi's illness is unclear, but we know he spent some duration in a psychiatric hospital undergoing chromotherapy. Accounts of this period find many renditions, taking on a somewhat mythological air. However, in all the various anecdotes one event always surfaces: Scelsi sitting at the piano for hours a day striking a solo note, intensely listening to the sound decaying. In this repetitive gesture, the resulting harmonic micro-overtones imploded the single note and timbre became a primary compositional element for the first time in the Western tradition. The effects of this radical paradigm shift resonate more and more as time unfolds in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

During the summer of 2006, Charles Stankievehch was invited by the province of Venice, Italy for a residency to create a site-specific work to be exhibited concurrently with the 10<sup>th</sup> Architectural Biennale. The residency took place on the island of San Servolo, home to Venice's infamous insane asylum from 1725 to 1978. During his research, Stankievehch found a derelict piano once used for music therapy in the asylum and, thus for an 11 hour recording session, reenacted Scelsi's timbral meditations, pounding away at a single note within the closed remains of the island's 13<sup>th</sup> century church.

Exploring the material properties of sound and the structural properties of space, «Timbral» sculpts the solo piano note within the unique architecture of the *Parisian Laundry's* Bunker space. Articulating timbre topologically and topographically, the gravity of the exhibition revolves around a 20ft long industrial felt form designed using beta architectural software. A combination of hand assembly and CNC fabrication, the sculpture hosts an installation composed of 12-channels of sound synched to HD video.

A limited edition of 88 grey vinyl records with handmade covers will be released during the exhibition: A-side includes an excerpt from the Venice Session; B-side an infinite loop of silence.

Closing the show, at 3pm on March 24<sup>th</sup>, Stankievehch will perform in the Bunker a live concert restricted to the source recordings of the solo piano note.

**Charles Stankievehch** works in the constellation of art, architecture and theory. He has formally studied theology, literature, and philosophy and has worked in the camera department for a number of Hollywood studios and an expanded theatre production of R. Murray Schafer. Recently his work was presented at the Planetary Collegium's *Altered States*, England; *Eyebeam*, NYC; Subtle Technologies' *Responsive Architectures*, Toronto; *artLAB* residency, Venice, Italy and MIT Press' *Leonardo Music Journal*. In 2007, he will be attending residencies at the Banff Centre for the Arts and PRIM. His practice shares the dual concern of making things and critical writing. He currently teaches courses entitled *Sound Drawing Architecture* and *Sculptural + Material Practices* at Concordia University in Montréal.

The artist would like to thank: Provincia di Venezia, San Servolo Servizi, ADL, Canada Council for the Arts, Hexagram, Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema, CIAM, Bentley Systems, Canadian Design Research Network, Faculty of Architecture Landscape and Design, University of Toronto + Lamina Design

For more information visit: [www.stankievehch.net](http://www.stankievehch.net) | email: [charles@stankievehch.net](mailto:charles@stankievehch.net) | [parisianlaundry.com](http://parisianlaundry.com)



**PARISIAN LAUNDRY**

3550, rue Saint-Antoine Ouest, Montréal, t 514.989.1056 Tues-Sat. Noon-5pm