

EXHIBITION

HEARING IS BELIEVING

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AROUND SOUND ART
FESTIVAL 2014
Soundpocket



SPEAKERS CORNERS: a 2013 installation by artist Sonihouse.

SOUNDPOCKET IS GOING big for its annual festival this year. For the first time since its inception in 2009, the local sound art outfit will be taking part of its Around Sound Art Festival to Amino, a small town outside Kyoto, Japan. Twenty enthusiasts will attend a weekend retreat at the end of August that promises to enhance their understanding and appreciation of sound art.

Enthusiasts who don't have the budget to travel can still appreciate the festival at the end of September, when six international artists will showcase their works at Kwun Tong ferry pier.

The site of this year's retreat camp, titled "Being There", is no random choice. Amino is home to Akio Suzuki, the Japanese sound art pioneer whose works have been presented at previous festivals.

"Suzuki is a very laid back and relaxed person, which is reflected in his works," says Soundpocket's manager of curatorial affairs, Alice Wong Ka-ki. "Those who have come across his work are interested in where he is from, as sound art often involves interactions with the surroundings."

She says that Amino is a seaside village where entertainment does not play much of a part. "Residents go to

onsens [hot springs] and go fishing. When we visited last year, we ate rice planted by Suzuki's friends and his neighbour shared his fish with us. There's a strong sense of community and love for traditional art and crafts. We're excited about how the artists will be inspired by this place."

Six local artists, and four Japanese artists, have been stationed there since August 19 to prepare the retreat, creating a series of site-specific works based on their observation of Amino's unique sound and space.

Suzuki and dancer-choreographer Xing Liang will devise an interactive performance, while Edwin Lo will set

up a sound installation out of recordings collected from the shore.

Wong Fuk-kuen is exploring the variety of sounds produced by creating a pipe-based work on the beach. Fiona Lee's electromagnetic work will mimic the sounds of nature in the surrounding environment.

"With a mix of veteran and young artists, we expect the impact to be twofold," says Wong. "While the veterans may step back and contemplate the core elements that constitute an art piece, the younger artists will be exposed to new stimuli, which can arouse creativity and thus more multilayered works."



SONIC BLOOM: installations (clockwise from left) by Akio Suzuki, Michael Graeve and Matt Cook.



Soundpocket gets its name from the versatility and ubiquitous nature of sound, says Wong. The name of the annual festival, the retreat camp and the week-long programme running from September 26 in Kwun Tong are all extensions of this.

Curated by Italian Carlo Fossati, "Voices/landscapes (for the eye and ear)" focuses on the relation and interaction between sound and image. Australian Michael Graeve and Tetsuya Umeda from Japan will fly in for the event to create installations that will be positioned next to works by Paolo Piscitelli and Phill Niblock at the Kwun Tong Ferry Pier.

Graeve will perform one of his singular pieces on the "instrument" he put together, which uses old sound-transmission systems and monochromatic panels that he painted.

Umeda will put on a show using his installation. There will also be a screening of video works by Piscitelli, Niblock, Carlos Casas, and Alessandro Quaranta at Fortress Hill's Connecting Space.

"All the videos have been shot with a similar approach: the artists look at or listen to the landscape, and leave out nothing that happens in front of the camera," says Fossati.

"They record casual events which straddle the border between what is visible and what isn't."

There's no way to tell exactly what the closing performance will be like until the artists have combined their magic with some inspiration from the setting. But this sense of unknowing, of anticipation, is what makes sound art interesting.

Voices/landscapes (for the eye and ear), September 26-October 2, Kwun Tong Ferry Pier, Hoi Yuen Road, Kwun Tong and Connecting Space, Fort Street 18-20, Wah Kin Mansion, North Point. Free. Inquiries: 2356 2226; soundpocket.org.hk