

INTERVIEW WITH crys cole by Joe Kalturnyk (Director of RAW Gallery of Architecture & Design) for the solo exhibition TRACINGS – 2012 Winnipeg, Canada

JK : What is it about the sound of banality, of the everyday, that attracts you?

cc: It's something I've thought a lot about over the years and I've always been kind of a little bit befuddled by why it is that I've always been drawn to things that are mundane and banal in various forms of art, in photography and performance art for example. I love simple gestures and actions and using things that are not fictionalized or made to be something fantastic or out of the ordinary, and I think it's because I feel that there is already so much around us that is quite interesting and inspiring that we take for granted and ignore. Initially I started working with basic electronics in my practice and then I began using objects like a table or a glass of water in my performances, and that came from discovering that the sound potential for these very simple daily objects was actually huge. When you put a contact microphone on a table and do a simple gesture like running your hand over it, all of a sudden there is a whole palette of sound created - and this isn't sound that you would hear normally just with your own ear – but through the amplification the textures become rich and much more complex.

JK: The other thing I noticed is that you use your body quite often in your performances, you do have artifacts, some that could be recognized as instruments and some that are found objects, but often you use your body as the instrument. Is it an important part of the work connecting the "banal you" to the banal of the table?

cc: Its kind of funny, because even though it is banal and simple, it becomes important through the process of making it a performance or a piece of art. It has a lot to do with intention. For me connecting physically to the sound I am creating so directly is very centering. Using my own body means that I'm not disconnected from the gesture, this also connects to why I love using simple objects, I don't like feeling disconnected from the sounds I'm making. With a lot of electronics you turn a knob or push a button and sounds will happen and can sustain, but in my case I approach the creation of the sounds like painting and sculpture, I'm making it directly with every gesture of my hand, every move or hesitation is directly impacting the sound piece I'm creating and I like that cause and effect. I like the physicality of it and the imperfection of it also. How ever I'm using my body, whether it's my breath or my hands or my whole body in some cases, it directly links everything that I'm doing to the sound that's being created so there's a direct correlation, that chain has not been broken, it's so direct.

JK : So it's without filter, or, a minimal filter

cc: I don't use a lot of effects, I don't do a lot of editing, I don't often collage sounds. It's very raw – in that sense it's very much about the act of creating something in a moment and capturing it or presenting it to an audience, depending on the

circumstances. I enjoy the process because it is SO direct. I find it very centering for me and it brings me to a very focused almost meditative state of creative flow. I find it has an interesting impact on listeners as well because of that direct correlation. In performance the audience can see the gestures and how they link to the sounds and in the case of TRACINGS they're removed from the 'performance' but they can hear the gestures, see objects that have been used and see the remnants of what's been left behind, there's room to place that physicality. For instance on the rock wall, you can understand the textures that will come from that speaker will sound a certain way because of all of the imperfections of the wall.

JK: is there something about this particular space and how it's configured and how it sounds that interests you? Is there something that you're finding unique?

cc: this space has always excited me because of the materials it's made up of. When I play a show in a venue I walk into the space and I have to find something to set up my gear on, I will see what they have and touch the surfaces and tap on them and notice little things about them and that's how I decide what surface I'm going to use to play with or play on. With RAW it's like suddenly being given a palette of a hundred colours to paint with because it's not just a white box gallery where you just have drywall and hardwood floors. Here you've got wood that's been weathered and seen a lot in it's day and you've got all these different contrasts of metal piping and raw exposed rock and then the drywall and each one of those surfaces has a completely different world of sound. It has a totally diverse texture visually and sonically and so it creates a whole new range of possibilities for sound. That's why I thought this space would be so perfect.

JK: I find with your work, like the "Sweeper" piece, where you use this super simple gesture and this very common place cleaning utensil yet you open up these... amazing sonic universes with the simple act of sweeping. So I'm quiet excited to hear what you drag out of this space.

cc: yes, usually in my work I use contact microphones, especially in performance, it's easier to use a contact microphone than a condenser mic and it brings out very quiet sounds so I can gently tap or rub something and suddenly it can fill a whole room with complex sound. This is one of the first times that I'm only using condenser mics and not using contact mics at all. It's exciting because not only am I picking up the gestures that I'm making but you will also hear my breath, my footsteps, and all these sounds that are already present here in the gallery and in the building. When I perform I feel a direct relationship with the audience and the space I am playing in, each of those elements becomes an active participant in the work. I respond to the sounds that arise, at times I compete with them and other times I play so quietly in order to illuminate the other sounds that are present in a space. With TRACINGS the microphones will be capturing the sounds of the space beyond my sounds and they become part of the work. This is something I find interesting, and during the run of the show all of the activity upstairs in the building, buzzing of lights and sound of plumbing and such will interact with the work and blur the lines behind what

happened and what is happening in the moment. I like the idea of opening people's ears up to listen to intricacies of these omnipresent sounds