

INDIANAPOLIS
MUSEUM
OF ART
IMA

William Lamson at the IMA

Department: Contemporary Art | By [Amanda York](#) | [No Comments »](#)

MAR 17 2011

Brooklyn-based conceptual artist [William Lamson](#) is creating the newest installation for the IMA's Efrogmson Family Entrance Pavilion. This expansive sculptural and sound installation is composed of used communication towers and a series of audio components. The hybrid structure, which has been reconstructed so that the tower appears to fold in on itself, acts as an antenna to pick up a weather radio signal from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The radio signal triggers vibrations within the tower, and rather than transmitting the broadcaster's voice throughout the surrounding space, instead the sound of the vibrating tower as it is amplified through speakers mounted within the hollow legs of the structure proliferates.

Lamson first began experimenting with resonant sound during his recent Binaural / Nodar Artist Residency in Portugal. The artist attached rocks to a metal railing on a bridge that spanned a river. The rocks were then attached to bottles that floated in the river via long strings. When the bottles bobbed in the river, the rocks struck the railing, creating a low-frequency, ringing sound captured through microphones Lamson affixed to the metal.



Railing, rocks, string, and bottles in Nodar, Portugal.



The river.

Similarly, the artist often develops devices that harness the power inherent within the natural environment in his practice. In 2009 Lamson created a series of automatic drawing apparatuses that harness the power of wind or water. Lamson attached a drawing utensil to his inventions, which then created fine, detailed works determined by the surrounding weather conditions. His project for the IMA will similarly make apparent the unseen forces that surround us, as a radio signal (also linked with the weather) is made audible and tactile through the vibrations in the tower.



Lamson's automatic drawing titled "Jan 28, 09 1130AM-230PM, Colonia Valdense, Uruguay"

Since January, Lamson has been working in [Pierogi Gallery](#)'s Boiler space in Brooklyn, where high ceilings have allowed for the construction of the resulting adapted 35-foot tower. After completion of the structure, Lamson has conducted extensive experiments with it to investigate all of the possibilities for sound that the object is capable of producing.



Lamson standing inside the structure at the Pierogi Boiler.

I was recently able to see the project in development and meet with Lamson on location in Brooklyn, where he was continuing to discover new ways to engage the installation. Alternating audio feeds create a varied soundtrack surrounding the installation. Sometimes the NOAA broadcast can be barely discerned; at other times, the radio signal activates a bass shaker (a vibrating mechanism attached to the tower), the effects of which can be heard and felt when touching the object. Lamson also employs other devices through unconventional means to find ways of capturing different aspects of the sound the tower produces. For example, when the artist touches an electric guitar pickup to the tower at different locations, a range of sounds emerge from the structure as it creates an escalating feedback loop.



Lamson in Brooklyn using a magnetic guitar pickup to make vibrations through the tower audible.

Join us for the opening of Lamson's installation for the Efrogmson Family Entrance Pavilion, including an artist lecture and sound-based performance on the installation by Lamson during an evening of contemporary art at the IMA starting at 5:30 on Thursday, April 7th.