



PRESS RELEASE

Media Contact:  
Peter Cavagnaro  
pcavagnaro@berkeley.edu  
(510) 642-0365

University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive presents

## Tarek Atoui / MATRIX 258

March 2–November 7, 2015

*LEBANESE COMPOSER AND ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSICIAN TAREK ATOUI'S MATRIX RESIDENCY PRODUCES NEW MUSICAL INSTRUMENTATION FOR THE HEARING AND NONHEARING; PROJECT CULMINATES IN A SERIES OF OFFSITE CONCERTS PERFORMED BY RENOWNED BAY AREA MUSICIANS IN EARLY NOVEMBER*



Tarek Atoui

Berkeley, CA, October 8, 2015—The UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) presents **MATRIX 258**, featuring the work of artist and electroacoustic composer **Tarek Atoui** (b. 1980). Born in Lebanon and based in Paris, Atoui initiates and curates multidisciplinary interventions, concerts, performances, and workshops. His work often radiates around large-scale, collaborative performances that develop

from extensive research into the history of music and instrumentation, while also exploring new methods for production. Using custom-built electronic instruments and computers, Atoui articulates social realities and histories in his work, while presenting music as a powerful mode of expression and identity. His MATRIX exhibition is the final installment in BAMPFA's series of nomadic projects before it opens to its new building in downtown Berkeley on January 31, 2016.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY ART MUSEUM · PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE  
2120 OXFORD STREET #2250 · BERKELEY CA 94720 · 510 642 0808 · bampfa.org

Organized in conjunction with the Experimental Media and Performing Art Center (EMPAC) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, New York, Atoui's MATRIX project is a continuation of his recent exploration into how sound is perceived by both the hearing and nonhearing. His MATRIX project began in March 2015, when Atoui spent three weeks at UC Berkeley coteaching an instrument-making seminar with art professor Greg Niemeyer, with the ultimate goal of realizing some of these new instrument designs. As part of this first phase, Atoui gave a lecture at the David Brower Center introducing new research and engagement with deaf communities and performed a concert at Meyer Sound's acoustically sophisticated Pearson Theater. The second and final phase of **MATRIX 258** comprises a series of concerts on November 5 and 7, at the Mills College Student Union and UC Berkeley's Hearst Memorial Mining Building, respectively, that will premiere the new instruments. Performers include Bay Area new music luminaries such as James Fei, William Winant, as well as Mills College and UC Berkeley students and others.

Over the past several years, Atoui has researched the relationships among sound, vibrations, instruments, and the body. This inquiry led to *WITHIN*, Atoui's contribution to the 2013 Sharjah Biennial 11, which grew out of a 2008 residency at the Sharjah Art Foundation. As part of the project, Atoui conducted workshops at the Al Amal School for the Deaf. His research there revealed that the deaf students' favorite musical instrument was the drum, due to the vibrations it produces and its physical potential. For *WITHIN*, Atoui invited an international assembly of experimental drummers, including Brian Chippendale, Susie Ibarra, Yoshimi, and others, to perform in strategically located public squares and rooftops throughout the city that possessed optimal sonic qualities for deaf people. For another part of *WITHIN*, Atoui worked with the students to compose and perform a work based on infrasonic frequencies, or those below 160 hertz (Hz), that are primarily perceived through touch.

Continuing along this theme, Atoui has developed new instruments for his MATRIX project, *WITHIN 2*. The first of these instruments, *Zero Point Nine*, was made in collaboration with

Greg Niemeyer, Perrin Meyer of Meyer Sound, Jeff Lubow from Berkeley's Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT), and UC Berkeley sophomore Mitchell Karchemsky. It is in essence a monumental bass synthesizer that produces ultra-low-frequency electronic sounds that are physically felt, perhaps even before they are heard. For the November concerts performers will activate several connected subwoofer speakers to create a subsonic experience variously perceptible to deaf and hearing members of the audience.

The *SuperPac*, the second instrument Atoui developed for MATRIX, is a percussive instrument played by one or more musicians in front of a small audience. Soft, SubPac speakers press against the audience members' backs as they are seated and generate a physical experience rooted in felt vibrations. These speakers connect electronically to a computer station and to a set of tables that have unique surfaces that can be played like a drum with objects such as mallets or sticks. A conductor stands at the computer station to control the sensorial connections between the performers and the audience.

In January 2016, *WITHIN 2* continues at EMPAC in Troy, New York, where he will work with the pioneering musician and music professor Pauline Oliveros to engage RPI students in designing and building additional instruments and interfaces for performance. The entire project will culminate at the Bergen Assembly 2016, a citywide series of performances, workshops, events, and lectures Atoui will organize in Norway, working with local institutions, musicians, artists, and audiences centered on his expanded exploration of sound with deaf communities.

## **Public Programs**

### ***WITHIN 2***

Concerts premiering instruments for hearing and nonhearing audiences alike created by artist Tarek Atoui in collaboration with UC Berkeley faculty, students, and Meyer Sound. With local musicians William Winant, James Fei, and others.

### **Thursday, November 5, 2015**

Concert #1; 6 p.m.

Mills College Student Union

\$10 general admission; Cash only, first-come, first-served.

Free for UC Berkeley and Mills College students (current valid ID required)  
Limited seating available

### **Saturday, November 7th**

Concert #2; 4 p.m.

Hearst Memorial Mining Building, UC Berkeley

Panel discussion; 5 p.m.

Hearst Memorial Mining Building, UC Berkeley

Featuring Tarek Atoui, Perrin Meyer, Greg Niemeyer and Jeff Lubow, moderated by Apsara DiQuinzio

Concert #3; 6 p.m.

Hearst Memorial Mining Building, UC Berkeley

\$10 general admission; Cash only, first-come, first-served.

Free for UC Berkeley and Mills College students (current valid ID required)

Limited seating available

### **Artist Bio**

Tarek Atoui was born in Lebanon in 1980 and moved to France in 1998 where he studied sound art and electroacoustic music. In 2006 he released his first solo album as part of the *Mort aux Vaches* series for Staalplaat Records, and in 2008 he served as artistic director of the STEIM Studios in Amsterdam, a center for the research and development of new electronic musical instruments. Atoui has presented his work internationally at the Sharjah Biennial in the United Arab Emirates (2009 and 2013); the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York (2010); Mediacity Biennial in Seoul (2010); the Haus Der Kunst in Munich (2010); *Performa 11* in New York (2011); dOCUMENTA 13 in Kassel, Germany (2012); the Serpentine Gallery in London (2012); and the *8th Berlin Biennial* (2014). He was recently appointed one of the artistic directors of the 2016 Bergen Assembly, a triennial for contemporary art in Norway.

### **Support**

**Tarek Atoui / MATRIX 258** is organized by Apsara DiQuinzio, curator of modern and contemporary art and Phyllis C. Wattis MATRIX Curator. It is copresented with the Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC). The MATRIX Program is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Wattis and the support of the BAMPFA Trustees. Major support is provided by Meyer Sound. Additional support is provided the Berkeley Center for New Media (BCNM).

### **About MATRIX**

The MATRIX Program for Contemporary Art introduces the Bay Area community to exceptional work being made internationally, nationally, and locally, creating a rich connection to the current dialogues on contemporary art and demonstrating that the art of this moment is vital, dynamic, and often challenging. Confronting traditional practices of

display and encouraging new, open modes of analysis, MATRIX provides an experimental framework for an active interchange between the artist, the museum, and the viewer. Since the program's inception in 1978, MATRIX has featured artists such as John Baldessari, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Louise Bourgeois, Sophie Calle, Nan Goldin, Eva Hesse, Sol LeWitt, Shirin Neshat, Nancy Spero, and Andy Warhol, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Peter Doig, Omer Fast, Tobias Rehberger, Ernesto Neto, Rosalind Nashashibi, Tomás Saraceno, Mario Garcia Torres, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul, representing countries as diverse as Finland, Germany, Iran, Ivory Coast, Papua New Guinea, Mexico, Thailand, and Brazil.

### **About BAMPFA**

Internationally recognized for its art and film programming, the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) is a platform for cultural experiences that transform individuals, engage communities, and advance the local, national, and global discourse on art, film, and ideas. Founded in 1963, BAMPFA is UC Berkeley's primary visual arts venue with its screenings of some four hundred films and presentations of up to twenty exhibitions annually. BAMPFA's mission is to inspire the imagination and ignite critical dialogue through art and film. The institution's collection of over nineteen thousand works of art dates from 3000 BCE to the present day and includes important holdings of Neolithic Chinese ceramics, Ming and Qing Dynasty Chinese painting, Old Master works on paper, Italian Baroque painting, early American painting, Abstract Expressionist painting, contemporary photography, and Conceptual art. BAMPFA's collection also includes over 17,500 films and videos, including the largest collection of Japanese cinema outside of Japan, impressive holdings of Soviet cinema, West Coast avant-garde film, seminal video art, as well as hundreds of thousands of articles, reviews, posters, and other ephemera related to the history of film—many of which are digitally scanned and accessible online.

