

## **Resounding Desire Lines, Center for New Music, San Francisco, 2017**

“Terry Berlier makes conceptual art of unusual intelligence, humor and sensitivity to the impact of materials.”—Kenneth Baker, SF Chronicle

Terry Berlier is an interdisciplinary artist who investigates the evolution of human interaction with the natural world, queerness, and ecologies. This results in sculptures that are kinetic and sound based, and multi-media installations. She emphasizes the essential roles played by history, cultural memories, and environmental conditions in the creation of our identities. Using humor, she provides tools for recovering and reanimating our faltering connections with self, queerness, nature, and society. Interweaving movement, sound, and interaction as a metaphor for both harmonious and dissonant interactions, Berlier acts as an archaeologist excavating material objects to challenge our understanding of progress and reveal how history is constructed within a cultural landscape.

Italian composer Luciano Chessa, Swiss composer and percussionist Christophe Fellay, Ellen Fullman, composer DJ Sparr, Great Noise Ensemble, Chris Froh and Andy Meyerson are among those who have made music with her sculptures.

“Sculpture for Terry Berlier serves the unambiguous, if intangible function of exercising the imagination much in the same way a bicycle stretches out the legs. Her work constitutes a truce between sculpture, installation and craft, reframed, reconditioned, and perpetually recurring. Her work has used trash or obsolete detritus of consumer consumption as points of departure, alluding to its topical content with various degrees of abstraction and metaphor. Rather than predetermined allegorical narratives, the work presents a constellation of seemingly incongruous sculptural and installation elements in which the viewer is caught up, setting in motion dialogues concerning well-being, and human relationships, consumption and survival. Subject to the alchemies of representation, recognizable fragments taken from everyday life re-emerge, occupying an abstracted or ambiguous landscape that seems to vibrate with potential.”

- Annabeth Rosen

“[M]usic and a critique of social mores combine to form the subtext for *Two Pan Tops Can Meet*. In this early work, Berlier reverses a homophobic phrase she encountered during her sojourn in Jamaica. Here thrift store pan tops form speaker housings for a sound piece. She later reworked this idea to create a *Pan Lid Gamelan* that visitors could play.

With such works, Berlier pulls together multiple strains of contemporary art practice. Her projects share an interest in repurposed found objects also explored by artists like Jessica Stockholder, Jason Rhoads and Cornelia Parker. She is adept at the repurposing of obsolete technologies, an interest that also inspires artists like Tim Hawkinson. Many of her works break the boundary between art and music— a tendency that stretches back to the provocations of dada and fluxus, and underlies the creations of experimental musicians like Harry Partch, John Cage and Nam Jun Paik. Berlier

deftly weaves these tendencies together, making sculptures, installations and environments that speak to the contemporary hunger for connection, physical interaction and community with a language that is uniquely her own.”

--Eleanor Heartney

In this exhibition, *Resounding Desire Lines* refers to Berlier’s work in the Peace Corps in Jamaica where she encountered the homophobic saying "two pan tops can't meet." This local proverb was translated to her as meaning "two vaginas can not come together." Years later, she noticed that abandoned pan lids accumulate in thrift stores. She created homes for these lost lids.

Queer theorist Sarah Ahmed defined desire lines as a term landscape architects use “to describe unofficial paths, those marks left on the ground that show everyday comings and goings, where people deviate from the paths they are supposed to follow.” Veering from predetermined paths can be disorienting. “Deviation leaves its own marks on the ground, which ... generate alternative lines, which cross the ground in unexpected ways.” Through improvisation, we queer expressions of who and how we become when we veer from the normative course. Desire lines open up possibilities to queer both our lives and the very terrain on which we become.

Berlier’s Pan Lid Gamelan sculptures allow queerness to be heard. With this piece, she invites viewers to challenge heteronormativity by resonating queer sounds at the Center for New Music.

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