

Constellations

Intrumentos antiguos, música contemporánea

Constellations by Stephan Mathieu and Carolina Mikalef

sónar®
2010



June 17, 18 and 19 at the CosmoCaixa planetarium

Produced especially for the CosmoCaixa planetarium, *Constellations* is an audiovisual project by Stephan Mathieu and Carolina Mikalef. The duo's creation takes its inspiration from the music of the composer Antonio de Cabezón, known as the "Spanish Bach". De Cabezón, whose fifth centenary is commemorated this year, applied ideas about astronomy to his musical composition.

Forming part of the Sónar 2010 festival programme (June 17, 18 and 19), the three performances of *Constellations* will take place within the framework of a trans-stylistic and trans-historical dialogue between 16th-century compositions for harpsichord and pieces created through intervention on the same instrument using electromagnets.

Repeating last year's partnership between Sónar and CosmoCaixa, the planetarium will be transformed for the three performances of *Constellations* into an unusual audiovisual observatory devoted to real-time experimentation in sound, combined with a multi-sensory experience.

Constellations is a real-time audiovisual production by Stephan Mathieu and Carolina Mikalef in which the artists eschew traditional models to propose a unique, new audiovisual experience.

The origins of the project are to be found in the series *Virginals*, works in which Stephan Mathieu uses modern technology to compose music for ancient instruments. For 'Constellations', Mathieu and Mikalef will utilize electromagnets to set the strings of a harpsichord into continuous vibration. By expanding the natural sound of the instrument using magnetic fields, the resonating strings generate harmonically rich sonorities that gradually fill the planetarium space with overtone patterns.

To frame the piece with a prelude and coda, a harpsichordist Carles Budó will

perform special interpretations of original music by Antonio de Cabezón (who composed by applying theories of astronomy) on a second instrument, to create a surprising dialogue between the work of the Renaissance composer and Stephan Mathieu and Carolina Mikalef's take on sound. For the first time, these two musical forms will be brought together in a single performance, creating a trans-stylistic and transhistorical musical *continuum*. In unison, then, we will witness the past and present of music in these performances.

The visual side of the project is based on the peculiar “omnivisual” format of the planetarium and brings a visual and kinetic element to complete this immersive, synaesthetic experience. Using spotlights and a purpose built mobile, constructed with optical lenses, mirrors (given by Carl Zeiss Jena), acrylic and metal discs, a series of subtle “light forms” will be projected onto the planetarium dome. Spectral light, reflections and shadows will constantly reconfigure, alluding to the constellations that give this multisensory experience its name.

Curated by Arnau Horta

In cooperation with the Goethe Institut