# IKON 50

Ikon Gallery
1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 / www.ikon-gallery.org
Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon, registered charity no. 528892

# Caroline Devine
# *Poetics of (Outer) Space*
## 18 – 22 March 2015
## Off-site installation: Perrott's Folly

Ikon returns to Birmingham's historic landmark Perrott's Folly, transforming this eighteenth century tower with a multi-channel sound installation by artist and composer Caroline Devine.

*Poetics of (Outer) Space* (2015) explores the natural acoustic resonances of stars and the orbits of newly discovered exoplanets – here sonified data from the NASA Kepler mission is presented as an evolving composition. In this way starlight is translated to sound – described by Devine as "reimagining the Music of the Spheres in the age of the exoplanet". *Poetics of (Outer) Space* is presented as a 'vertical' composition which rises up through the folly, with stars positioned according to their age, frequency range and the number of exoplanets they host. Frequencies relating to the natural acoustic resonances of the youngest star can be heard on the first floor of the folly with the top floor housing sounds relating to the recently discovered (but ancient) Kepler-444 star system and the orbits of its five exoplanets.

The work was developed throughout 2014 during Devine's Leverhulme Artist Residency with the Solar and Stellar Physics Group in the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Birmingham. Devine has collaborated with Professor Bill Chaplin and the group since 2012 and has incorporated solar data into a number of sound works including *Space Ham* for BBC Radio 3 (2013), *Oscillate* for SOUNDWORKS, ICA (2012) and *5 Minute Oscillations of the Sun* (2012) - shortlisted for a BASCA British Composer Award in 2013.

"My practice investigates the boundaries between sound and music, encompassing electroacoustic composition, sound installation and radio. I have a particular interest in the use of space as a compositional parameter and in the ways that sound articulates space and spaces influence sound. My work focuses on the exploration of voices and sounds that are obscured, silenced or are in some way absent - making imperceptible or ignored signals audible through amplification or transformation to acoustic form." Caroline Devine

*Poetics of (Outer) Space* is open 12–5pm, with free entry and the folly is located 20 minutes walk from Ikon and 5 minutes from Hagley Road. Full address: Perrott's Folly, Waterworks Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 9AL. Please note the Folly is not accessible to wheelchair users or pushchairs due to the steep spiral staircase. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

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## Notes to Editors:

1. *Poetics of (Outer) Space* is presented as part of the University of Birmingham's Arts and Science Festival (16–22 March).
   www.birmingham.ac.uk/artsandsciencefestival

2. Associated event
   Artist's Talk – Caroline Devine
   Thursday 19 March, 5–7.30pm – FREE
   Join Caroline Devine as she discusses her long term residency and collaboration with the Solar and Stellar Physics Group at the University of Birmingham. Chaired by Professor Bill Chaplin, School of Physics and Astronomy, this talk is part of the University of Birmingham's Arts and Science Festival. The event begins from 5pm at Perrott's Folly, with chance to experience Devine's installation, *Poetics of (Outer) Space*, followed by the talk 6.30-7.30pm. Places are free but should be booked. Please visit www.ikon-gallery.org to book online or call Ikon on 0121 248 0708. www.carolinedevine.co.uk

3. *Poetics of (Outer) Space* is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, University of Birmingham and the Leverhulme Trust.

4. Perrott's Folly was built by eccentric landowner John Perrott in 1758. Though the reason for its construction is unknown, historical accounts suggest that in keeping with the fashion of the day, it was built as an elaborate hunting lodge for the entertainment of Perrott's wealthy friends. In 1884 it was acquired by the Birmingham and Midland Institute who turned it into a cutting-edge weather observatory run by the eminent meteorologist Abraham Follet Osler. It was subsequently managed by the University of Birmingham until 1979 when operations were transferred to the main campus. Standing at nearly one hundred feet tall, Perrott's Folly found renewed fame in recent years, together with the nearby tower at Edgbaston Waterworks, as a possible inspiration for JRR Tolkien's The Two Towers in The Lord of the Rings. Trident – The Social Investment Group, in partnership with Trident Reach the People Charity, took on Perrott's Folly in 2008 to use as a community resource.

5. Perrott's Folly was closed to the public for over twenty years until it was reopened in 2008 as part of a major exhibition of work by German artist Jürgen Partenheimer, organised by Ikon. In 2009 Ikon presented two more exhibitions at the Folly, by Sofia Hultén, *Drawn Onward*, and Yukio Fujimoto, *The Tower of Time*.

6. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 6pm. Admission is free.

7. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council.  Registered charity no. 528892

8. For more information and high-res images please contact Rebecca Small or Emily Luxford at Ikon on 0121 248 0708 or email r.small@ikon-gallery.org or e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org
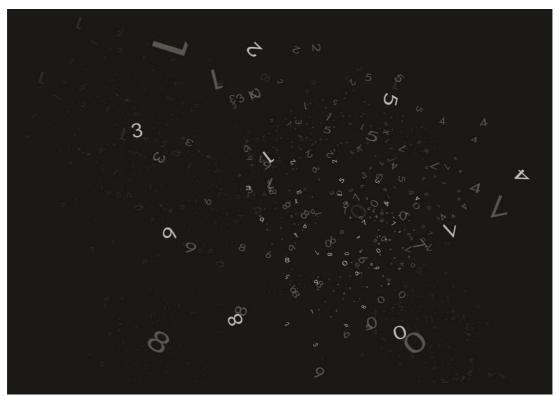
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Example images:



Caroline Devine, *Poetics of (Outer) Space* (2015). Promotional poster for sound installation (detail). Courtesy the artist.



Perrott's Folly. Photographer: Stuart Whipps