

## PRESS RELEASE

“THE WORLD IS SOUND” EXHIBITION INVITES VISITORS TO LISTEN  
WITH THE WHOLE BODY

***Contemporary sound art meets Tibetan Buddhist philosophy in a  
multilayered exhibition coming to the Rubin Museum in June 2017***

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The @RubinMuseum will become an instrument of transformation this June.  
#TheWorldIsSound



Listen with your whole body @RubinMuseum exhibition on sound and  
Buddhism. #TheWorldIsSound

**New York, NY (March 21, 2017)** – Listen deeply. The Rubin Museum of Art will become an instrument of transformation when “The World Is Sound” exhibition opens on June 16, inviting visitors to experience how sound and our sense of hearing shape our daily lives, our traditions, our history, and all of existence. Organized in a life cycle – from creation to death to rebirth – the exhibition explores different dimensions of sound and listening. Featuring work by more than 20 artists, “The World Is Sound” juxtaposes new site-specific commissions, works by prominent contemporary sound artists, and historical objects from the museum’s collection of Tibetan Buddhist art.

The exhibition will extend to newly activated spaces in the Museum, and will encourage deep listening, so visitors can “hear” traditional paintings and sculptures, challenge entrenched ways of thinking, and experience sound in new ways. “The World Is Sound” will also extend beyond the exhibition itself, with large-scale events, in-depth interviews, programs, and live performances designed to take the experience further.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is *Le Corps Sonore* (Sound Body), an immersive, site-specific installation composed for the Rubin Museum’s iconic spiral staircase by the pioneering electronic sound artists **Éliane Radigue**, **Laetitia Sonami**, and **Bob Bielecki**. Ambient drone sounds inspired by Buddhist philosophy are “tuned” to the building, and will ascend and descend as visitors wind their way up the staircase. The subtlety and ephemerality of the sounds prepare the listener for understanding a core tenet of Buddhist philosophy, where music is a metaphor for change and impermanence. As with the entire exhibition, *Le Corps Sonore* invites people to slow down and consider their bodily engagement with sound, space, and their individual perceptions.

“Sound is not limited to what we hear with our ears. It is composed of vibrations that resonate in our body and flow through a resonant world. Both within Tibetan Buddhism, and in the work of certain contemporary artists, listening is a practice that liberates us from our ingrained ways of being and helps us to understand our interrelated existence. Considered together, the historical and contemporary works in the exhibition provide visitors an opportunity to listen deeply -- and perhaps even to re-imagine one’s own relationship to the world,” said Risha Lee, exhibition curator.

Visitors will learn how to approach listening and sound through active participation as they make their way through sections, arranged cyclically. In one section, visitors trigger motion activated technology in order to “sound” Tibetan Buddhist ritual objects and instruments, featuring newly commissioned recordings from several monasteries. Another section offers an experiential auditory visit through the *bardos*, transitory states between death and rebirth described in Tibetan Buddhism. Other sections include an immersive visitor-generated chant of OM recorded in the preceding months during the Rubin Museum’s interactive “OM Lab” installation; sounds of creation, as imagined by artists including **C. Spencer Yeh, Samita Sinha, MSHR, Robert Aiki Aubrey Lowe, Jules Gimbrone, Nate Wooley** and students from the Columbia Sound Arts MFA program; a video produced in collaboration with the American Museum of Natural History; a gallery devoted to Deep Listening that pays tribute to the work of the late composer **Pauline Oliveros**; and soundscapes from locales in Asia by **Bob Bielecki, Ernst Karel, and Hildegard Westerkamp**. The exhibition also features state-of-the-art audio equipment generously provided by HARMAN.

The final section of the exhibition focuses on the possibilities and power of one’s own voice, with works by inter-generational artists **Christine Sun Kim** and **John Giorno**. Their works consider the ways that the voice can shape or disrupt our identities, inviting personal reflection on community activism, interdependence, and exerting influence through sound.

The interdisciplinary, multilayered approach of “The World Is Sound” forges cross-cultural connections between historical and contemporary understandings of sound and the relationship to human existence. An audio tour, print and online magazine, and series of public programs will complement the exhibition.

The World Is Sound exhibition is made possible through the generosity of HARMAN. Additional support provided by contributors to the 2017 Exhibitions Fund. The exhibition is curated by Risha Lee, and the design and installation are overseen by John Monaco, both of the Rubin Museum.

#### **Related Programs:**

##### ***The World Is Sound* Exhibition Tours**

Wednesdays in June, 6:00 PM

Free with admission

##### **Tibetan Book of the Dead Book Club**

Wednesdays evenings in June and July, 7:00 PM

Dr. Ramon Prats, a leading bardo scholar, leads on-stage conversations exploring the Tibetan Book of the Dead and related topics, including addiction, palliative care, dementia, and near-death experiences.

### **Sounds of the Street: Rubin Museum Annual Summer Block Party**

Sunday, July 16

1:00–4:00 PM

Free

The Rubin Museum celebrates community by making some noise with thousands of visitors along with free performances, outdoor art-making, and family tours.

### **Cabaret Cinema: Soundtrack**

Fridays in July, 9:30 PM

\$10, Free for members

Watch – and hear – a series of classic films, each chosen based on sound and introduced by interesting New Yorkers.

### **Summer Sound Workshops**

Join sound baths, shaman-led sound healings, and other experiential sound experiences.

### **Family Sundays: Instruments of Our Own**

Sundays in July, 1:00-4:00 PM

Free

Families can make their own musical instruments, join an exhibition tour, and enjoy a gallery scavenger hunt.

### **About Risha Lee**

Risha Lee is a curator at the Rubin Museum of Art, where most recently she organized “OM Lab.” Previously, she was the Assistant Curator of South and Southeast Asian art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, where she curated exhibitions on cross-cultural topics within and around South and Southeast Asia, frequently juxtaposing historical and contemporary art, and worked on projects to enhance audience engagement with the art and ideas in the collection. She has taught a wide variety of courses at Columbia University and the American University of Beirut. She graduated from Harvard College and received her Ph.D. in art history from Columbia University.

### **About the Rubin Museum of Art**

The Rubin Museum of Art is an arts and cultural hub in New York City’s vibrant Chelsea neighborhood that inspires visitors to make connections between contemporary life and the art and ideas of the Himalayas and neighboring regions. With a diverse array of thought-provoking exhibitions and programs—including films, concerts, and on-stage conversations—the Rubin provides immersive experiences that encourage personal discoveries and spark new ways of seeing the world. Emphasizing cross-cultural connections, the Rubin is a space to contemplate ideas that extend across history and span human cultures.

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