

Dawn Kasper
Cluster
January 19 – February 28, 2016

David Lewis
88 Eldridge Street, Fifth Floor
New York, NY 10002

David Lewis is pleased to present Dawn Kasper's *Cluster*, the artist's second exhibition with the gallery.

The exhibition continues Dawn Kasper's investigation into the nature of performance and participatory practice.

The installation consists of sixty-three cymbals installed throughout the gallery in clusters alluding to astronomical configurations. The cymbals have been wired with motion detectors and motors in order to activate musically as the viewer navigates the gallery, which can be conceived as a large astronomical map, or diagram, as well as an interactive improvised orchestration.

Cluster marks a shift from Kasper's earlier work, in which her own body, presented through a series of artistic personas, was the site of practice. Her studio and personal possessions were frequently presented as exhibition materials. These performances and presentations, which culminated in the 2012 Whitney Biennial piece *This Could be Something if I Let It*, in which the artist lived in the museum for the course of the exhibition, sought to break down, to an absolute degree, the space between art and life, and emphasized improvisation, hoarding, and physical intensity, sometimes approaching violence and abjection.

In *Cluster*, however, the artist-as-performer is conspicuously absent. Instead, the viewer becomes the performer, activating the cymbals as he or she navigates the forest-like installation (forest of cymbals/ forest of symbols)—orchestrating, that is, these musical machines as if playing a score, whose text is provided by his or her own unscripted ambulations. This suggests a new direction in Kasper's practice, in which the material symbolic properties of sculpture are explored, rather than the artist's own body and biography. This is further emphasized by Kasper's deployment of two single, exhibition-wide metaphors: The installation as a map of the constellations; the installation as metallic dream-forest, whose roots reach out towards the four walls as if into the earth. Moreover, the aggression and abjection that characterized Kasper's earlier work has been sublimated: Cymbals are traditionally utilized to suggest frenzy, fury, and bacchanalia (cf. Wagner's *Tannhäuser*), but the tones of this participatory score are delicate, building to an ambient, even celestial droning.

In line with this development, Kasper continues to draw upon and modify precedents from the post-war avant-garde, in this case looking towards the dynamic constructions of Jean Tinguely as well as Joe Jones and George Maciunas's *Mechanical Flux Orchestra* (c. 1964–1972).

Dawn Kasper (b.1977, Fairfax, Virginia) received her MFA from UCLA in 2003. Recent solo exhibitions include Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Portland, OR (2015); Issue Project Room, New York (2015); ADN Collection, Bolzano, Italy (2015); and David Lewis, New York (2014). Group exhibitions include The Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art (2012); Public Art Fund, Art Basel Miami Beach, FL (2014); CCS Bard College (2012); Tramway, Glasgow, Scotland (2012); Pacific Standard Time Public and Performance Art, Los Angeles, CA (2012); The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2010); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA (2008); The Migros Museum für Genenwartskunst, Zurich (2005), among others. Kasper lives and works in New York.