

seth ayyaz | composer, performer, sound artist, theorist

biography | long

Seth Ayyaz (London, UK) is a composer, sound artist, performer and theorist of British-Mauritian Muslim heritage. His works span spatial electroacoustic & algorithmic composition, installation, noise, live electronics, machine-listening & self-organising systems, improvisation and diasporic Islamic instrumental traditions.

His doctoral thesis What can a sonic assemblage do? A biopsychosocial approach to post-acousmatic composition was supervised by Denis Smalley, Laurie Radford and Newton Armstrong (City University London, 2017). This draws together strands driving his sounding and thinking over the past decade as a transdisciplinary practitioner and theorist with post-graduate backgrounds in psychiatry, neurosciences, psychology, contemporary psychoanalysis and philosophy of mind as well as sound-based composition.

His work speculatively intervenes into, reshapes and diverts sound as an emergent property of intermodulating biological, psychological and social systems. His focus is on the anonymous forces that shape the conditions of listening and on contesting dominant aesthetic regimens by investigating the effects that sonic art-objects might exert in their vicinity. He offers counter-narratives to the dominant authoritative discourses on sound, and the current metaphors of music cultural exchange and hybridity, instead foregrounding areas of friction and displacement.

At present his primary interest is improvising with other listening machines, human or otherwise.

His work has been presented internationally, including Cafe Oto and Institute of Contemporary Art (London); Maerz Music Berlin and Frankfurt Opera House (Germany); Kunsthalle Luzern and Haus Für Elektronische Künste, Basel (Switzerland); Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, Alte Schmiede Vienna and Irtijal Festival, Beirut.

He curated the MazaJ Festival of experimental Middle-Eastern music, and Volatile Frequencies Symposium in London (2010).

His writings include publications for The Wire, Organised Sound, Afterall and various independent presses.

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