

remy siu  
蕭逸南

selected works  
last updated 03.22.2017

## Artist Statement

I am interested in the creation of performance apparatuses. Many of these apparatuses are made for a performing arts context, and they are made different for each piece: a combination of hardware and software embedded with rules and behaviours, often with human performers.

With each apparatus, I want to create variable and generative structures that reduce the cognitive load on human performers, freeing them to be present and actively making decisions. I want each performance to be meaningfully different every time. I want the audience to understand things are unfolding as they see it.

Recently, the creation of these apparatuses have been driven by game mechanics. What hardware and software is required to drive a mechanic? How does the player / performer interact with it and how can the audience come to understand it over time?

My original training is in acoustic and electroacoustic music composition, but I have worked in many different performing arts contexts. These apparatuses are an attempt to engage with challenges found in the musical score, devised theatre, and task-based movement creation. In my own practice, I am trying to pivot from working with pitch, rhythm, and timbre to the creation of mechanics that can eventually be "functional."

These interests are coupled with a renewed interest in speculative fiction.

In this framework, I want to examine the role of human labour, skills, and decision making as the world shifts to automation, and is governed by algorithmic processes of our own creation.

[ 22.03.17 ]



new eyes - for [single] player. 2017  
audio-visual performance

## new eyes - for [single] player. 2017

audio-visual performance

new eyes - for [single] player is an audio-visual performance designed for two projectors and one performer.

Through-out the work, a generative light sculpture is manipulated through a series of limited performer interventions. The piece seeks to subvert the standard relationship between player and instrument by creating consequence and complication for every action. These parameters are displayed for the audience as the performer attempts to shape the light and sound, while confronting a shifting interface and increasing instability. Two final outcomes are possible:

1. the number of allowed actions are performed
2. the system eats itself





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## foxconn frequency (no.2) - for one visibly Chinese performer. 2015

for Vicky Chow, commissioned by the Western Front  
audio-visual performance

**Foxconn Frequency (no.2)** — for one visibly Chinese performer investigates the consequences of disconnecting action and labour from sound. Using the poetry of Xu Lizhi (许立志)—a former Foxconn worker—as a structural blueprint to move through a series of dictations and testings, the piece seeks to create a space for failure and stakes. The most obvious and clear negation is the purposeful disconnection between the musician and her instrument. The use of technology here is meant to disrupt, instead of enable. To create a space of new possibilities through subtraction.

For the core of the piece, a system was devised to "test" the performer's competency with multiple exercises. This system calls these exercises (or "gestures") differently every performance, keeping the performer present and engaged through-out the piece. The performer must execute these gestures successfully under shifting parameters that determine overall difficulty before progressing forward. This creates a scenario for the player to fail. While traditional scores have attempted difficulty, a software-driven system allows for new permutations. The generative and responsive nature of the system subverts any attempt for the performer to prepare. The struggle becomes real and perceptible, a part of the piece as it unfolds.

There are many reasons for the restriction of "one visibly Chinese performer." In music composition, we often specify instruments (e.g for solo violin), but almost never the body itself. By making this distinction, it is my intention to draw focus to the performer's identity, to engage the eyes as well as the ears, and to bring attention to the "extra-musical," shifting the mode of audience perception to multiple modalities.

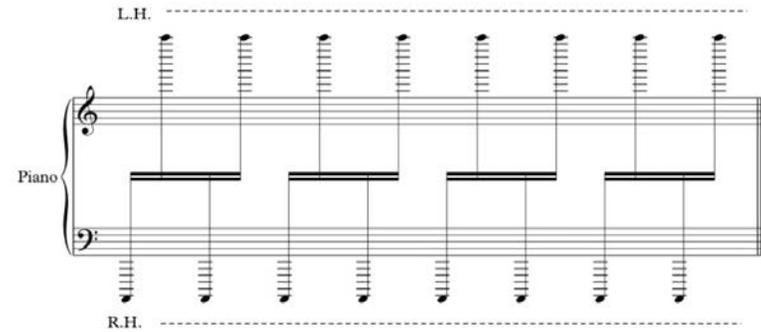
It felt necessary to specify race when confronting the narratives of Foxconn and Xu Lizhi's poetry, as it is the Chinese body at work. The piano, an iconic Western object, is an equal presence to the body, acting as the main resonator and origin of most sounds. They are separated by physical distance, allowing us to see these two entities as separate, and not together (as in most concert music), and to explore this reconfigured space.

video link (excerpts) : <https://vimeo.com/205820633>

video link (full performance): <https://vimeo.com/145946784>



foxconn frequency (no.2) - for one visibly Chinese performer. 2017  
audio-visual performance



movement-based (and not sound based) gestures  
from the testing system





**Retainers of Anarchy. 2017**

Algorithmic animation sequence, 5-channel video projection, 6-channel audio  
Vancouver Art Gallery

## Retainers of Anarchy. 2017

Algorithmic animation sequence, 5-channel video projection, 6-channel audio  
Vancouver Art Gallery

Project Lead / Creator: Howie Tsui

Image/Sound Programming and Sound/Music: Remy Siu

Animation: Sitji Chou, Roxanne Zagar, Kodai Yanagawa, Kerel Alaas, Amelia Earhart

Retainers of Anarchy is a solo exhibition featuring new work from Howie Tsui that considers wuxia as a narrative tool for dissidence and resistance. Wuxia, a traditional form of martial arts literature that expanded into 20th century popular film and television, was created out of narratives and characters often from lower social classes that uphold chivalric ideals against oppressive forces during unstable times. The people's republic of china placed wuxia under heavy censorship for fear of arousing anti-government sentiment. However practitioners advanced the form in Hong Kong making it one of the most popular genres of Chinese fiction. The title work, Retainers of Anarchy, is a 28-metre scroll-like video installation that references life during the song dynasty (960–1279 CE), but undermines its idealized portraiture of social cohesion by setting the narrative in Kowloon's notorious walled city—an ungoverned tenement of disenfranchised refugees in Hong Kong which was demolished in 1994.

video link: <https://vimeo.com/206771324>

### Notes:

Everything seen was originally drawn by Howie Tsui (the project lead and creator) and eventually animated. The animations were delivered to me, and together with Howie, we assembled paths for the figures and positioned virtual cameras. The final result is a work that does not "loop," but contains a "living camera" that is constantly choosing what to look at. I also built a custom sound spatialization solution that allows sound to emanate from their source along a 28-meter wall. As figures travel across space, and as the camera pans, the sound travels with them.

The whole work runs in real time, at 50 frames-per-second, creating a sense of presence and constant unfolding.

-Remy Siu



## Room 2048 (2048號房). 2017

multi-media dance theatre

Room 2048 (2048號房) — a dream machine for the Cantonese diaspora. In digital light and smoke, we pursue a history that is not ours. A living past, a dying future, and a stillborn present. We will lie. We will cheat. We will spend a thousand years here.

Room 2048 is a multi-media dance theatre work for three performers with live-generated electronic sound and projection.

Performers: Michelle Lui, Milton Lim, Alex Tam

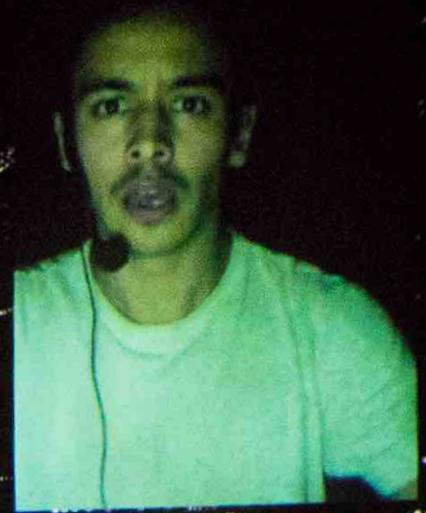
Choreographer: Natalie Tin Yin Gan

Sound Composition and Media Design: Remy Siu

Mentor: Lee Su-Feh

video link (excerpts): <https://vimeo.com/182966073>





# VISITORS FROM FAR AWAY TO THE STATE MACHINE. 2016

multi-media theatre

VISITORS FROM FAR AWAY TO THE STATE MACHINE is a multi-media space opera. Two aliens travel thousands of light years to Earth for their honeymoon. On their journey, they tease one another with sexy and profane stories from the past, present, and future.

performed by:

Felicia Lau & Conor Wylie

Project Lead:

Remy Siu

Created and Written by:

Remy Siu, Milton Lim, Natalie Tin Yin Gan  
with Felicia Lau & Conor Wylie  
also featuring Ashley Aron & Derek Chan

Running time: 90 minutes

video link (trailer) : <https://vimeo.com/166088203>

video link (trailer 2): <https://vimeo.com/194311517>

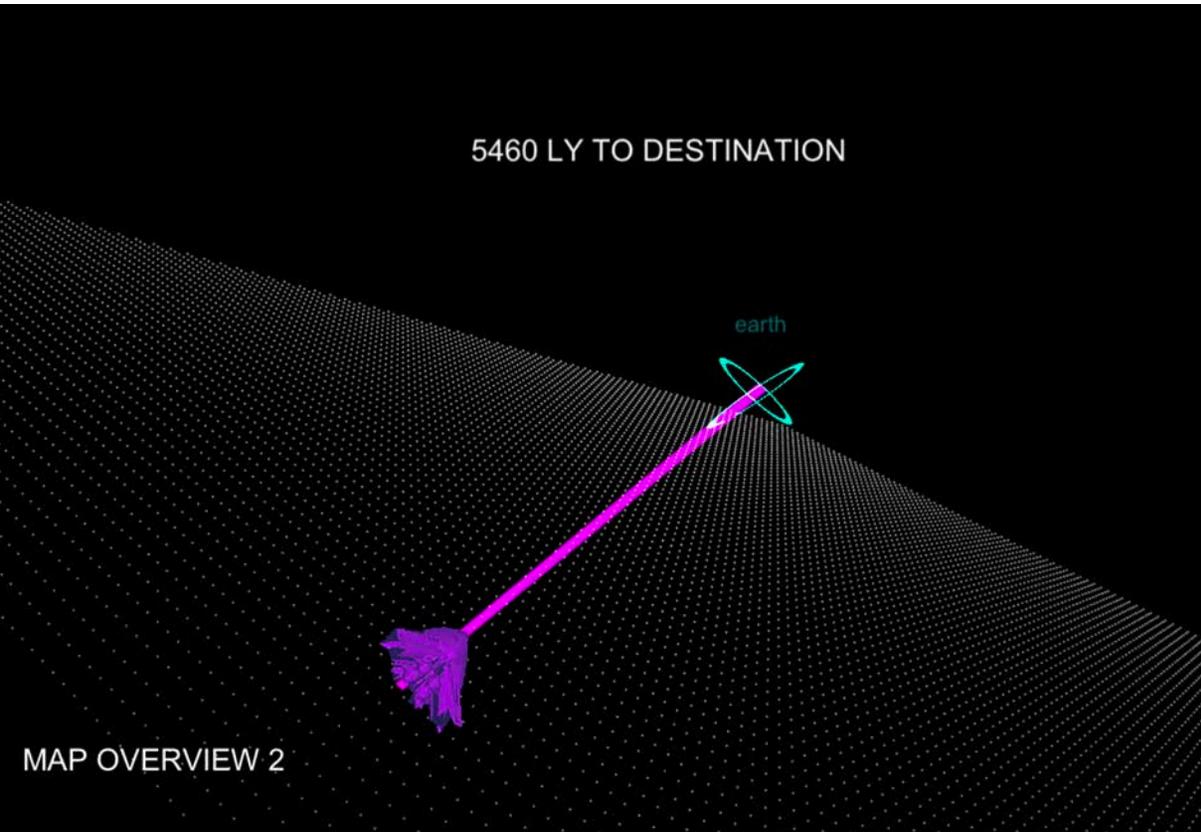
Notes:

The apparatus for *Visitors* was created so that it could be performed by non-specialized performers. None of the performers are required to memorize lines, for example.

This work for me renewed my interest in the power of speculative fiction. I look to follow this trajectory into future projects where fiction and lying will play a central role to how I approach creating apparatuses for a performing arts context.

-Remy Siu

VISITORS FROM FAR AWAY TO THE STATE MACHINE. 2016  
multi-media theatre





越界/粵界 (transgression/cantosphere). 2015  
Exhibition, Centre A Gallery

## 越界/粵界 (transgression/cantosphere). 2015

Exhibition, Centre A Gallery

Hong Kong Exile (Natalie Gan, Milton Lim, Remy Siu)  
in collaboration with Zoe Lam and Howie Tsui

In 越界/粵界 (transgression/cantosphere), interdisciplinary art company Hong Kong Exile (Natalie Tin Yin Gan, Milton Lim, Remy Siu), in collaboration with linguist Zoe Lam and artist Howie Tsui, grapple with local and international pressures on their mother culture. The exhibit strikes back with a potent celebratory engagement with Cantonese language coupled with a reflection on the relationship between urban planning and the multiculturalisation of "Historic Chinatown." A hopeful assertion of the value of diversity, 越界/粵界 (transgression/cantosphere) challenges forces of homogenization and invites the public to consider what actions and invocations are called for in the quest for diverse cultural vitality in Vancouver's urban core and around the world.

video link: <https://vimeo.com/124776858>



越界/粵界 (transgression/cantosphere). 2015  
Exhibition, Centre A Gallery





foxconn frequency (no.1) - for three visibly Chinese performers. 2013  
for three visibly Chinese performers, three samplers, and one grand piano

# foxconn frequency (no.1) - for three visibly Chinese performers. 2013

for three visibly Chinese performers, three samplers, and one grand piano

Foxconn Frequency (no.1) - for three visibly Chinese performers looks to disrupt the concert music tradition by exploring the musical and thematic consequence of presenting and examining performing bodies and instruments in new ways. The piece specifically calls for Chinese performers to operate three samplers that trigger cheap piano samples to sound in the structure of a (more expensive) grand piano. The actions to trigger these sounds are simple, but the resulting sounds scale in complexity, density, and length. In this way, the work effort and labour is de-coupled from the sound (and, eventually, re-coupled).

video link: <https://vimeo.com/91561961>

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'foxconn frequency (no.1)'. The score is divided into three systems, each representing a different instrument or role. The first system is labeled 'Sampler' and shows a sequence of notes on a staff. The second system is labeled 'Pno.' and features a dense, textured pattern of notes that gradually tapers off towards the end of the system. The third system is also labeled 'Pno.' and shows a series of notes on a staff, with a 'ff' (fortissimo) dynamic marking. The score is written in a standard musical notation style, with treble and bass clefs and various note values.



L I L A C. 2015

for one performer, two projectors, and sound

## L I L A C. 2015

for one performer, two projectors, and sound

The lilacs  
are beginning.  
Begin again.  
The story you tell  
yourself.  
Repeat it until it  
is only story  
as if told by someone else.  
Your scent is only a memory.

L I L A C is an exploration of the experience of a  
single sensory memory over time.

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choreography: Mahaila Patterson-O'Brien  
text: Jasmine O'Brien  
music: Alex Mah + Remy Siu  
projection: Remy Siu

video link: <https://vimeo.com/125868163>



## Biography

Remy Siu 蕭逸南 (b.1990) is a composer and new media artist based in Vancouver, BC. Recently, his work has involved the construction of automated and variable performance apparatuses that employ light, sound, software, and the body. He is interested in creating friction and stakes between the performer, the interface, and the system through the use of game mechanics and failure. His output spans chamber music, dance, theatre, installations, and audio-visual work.

He actively creates with Hong Kong Exile (interdisciplinary arts company) and Mahaila Patterson-O'Brien (choreographer), and has worked with Vicky Chow, Turning Point Ensemble, Quatuor Bozzini, Centre A Gallery, Pi Theatre, Theatre Replacement, the Western Front, and others.

His work has been presented internationally at the PuSh International Performing Arts Festival (Vancouver), Sonic Anchor (Hong Kong), CanAsian Dance (Toronto), UNO Fest (Victoria), Sonic Boom Festival (Vancouver), Dancing on the Edge (Vancouver), Centre for New Music (San Francisco), Constellation (Chicago), Seattle International Dance Festival, Vancouver Art Gallery, The International Symposium On Electronic Art (2015 Vancouver, 2016 Hong Kong), and more.

He has received a SOCAN Foundation Young Composers Award and an honourable mention in the Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music (2016).

Remy holds a BFA (Hons.) in composition from Simon Fraser University Contemporary Arts (Vancouver, BC) where he studied with David MacIntyre, Owen Underhill, and Barry Truax. He has also studied with Rodney Sharman and received lessons from Ken Ueno, Claus-Steffan Mahnkopf, Suzanne Farrin, and Detlef Heusinger.

He is currently the Artist-in-Residence for the Push International Performing Arts Festival, the Co-Artistic Director of Hong Kong Exile, and the Co-Director and Manager at the Gold Saucer Studio.

# Remy Siu

new media / composer

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[remysiu.com](http://remysiu.com) [remysiu@gmail.com](mailto:remysiu@gmail.com)

## education

2013 - Present Music Composition (Private) - Studying with Rodney Sharman.

2008 - 2013 Simon Fraser University, School of Contemporary Arts. BFA (Hons) Music Composition.

- studied with David MacIntyre, Owen Underhill, Barry Truax, Arne Eigenfeldt, Steven Hill, and Henry Daniel

other Atlantic Music Festival, Salt Music Festival, Composers Kitchen (Quatuor Bozzini), Montreal Contemporary Music Lab, Convergence Conference (Banff), ISEA 2015, ISEA 2016

## position

2016 - Present Artist-in-Residence, PuSh International Performing Arts Festival.

2015 - Present Co-Director + Production Manager, Gold Saucer Studio.

2014 - Present Emerging Composer-in-Residence, Turning Point Ensemble.

2013 - Present Co-Artistic Director + Technology Director, Hong Kong Exile.

## selected works

- **Foxconn Frequency (no.3) - for one visibly Chinese performer.** (2018) \*upcoming\*
  - Push International Performing Arts Festival (January - February 2018)
- **new eyes - for (single) player.** (2016-17) \*upcoming\*
  - "Many Visions of Many Cosmos" @ Hong Kong (June 16-17, 2017)
  - FUSE / MASH-UP @ Vancouver Art Gallery (April 2016)
  - In Progress Showing @ the Western Front (February 27, 2016)
- **Retainers of Anarchy.** collaboration with Howie Tsui for Vancouver Art Gallery (2017)
  - Vancouver Art Gallery - March - May 2017
- **Visitors from Far Away to the State Machine.** commissioned by Music on Main (2016)
  - PuSh Festival 2017 (Vancouver) - Feb 3, 2017
  - Music on Main @ the Fox Cabaret (Vancouver) - May 26, 2016

- **for the time being.** collaboration with choreographer Mahaila Patterson O'Brien (2016)
  - New Works @ the Roundhouse (Vancouver) - January 17, 2016
- **Foxconn Frequency (no.2) - for one visibly Chinese performer.** commissioned by Vicky Chow and the Western Front. (2015)
  - ISEA 2016 Hong Kong @ Centre for Creative Media (Hong Kong) - May 20, 2016
  - PERMUTATIONS030816: VICKY CHOW @ Centre for New Music (San Fran) - March 8, 2016
  - Vicky Chow @ Constellation (Chicago) - January 30, 2016
  - Sonic Anchor #26 @ Hong Kong Arts Centre (Hong Kong) - January 26, 2016
  - 88 Tuned Bongos @ the Western Front (Vancouver) - November 6, 2015
  - ISEA 2015 Vancouver, In-Progress Showing @ the Western Front - August 17, 2015
- **saudade.** collaboration with choreographer Rob Kitsos (2015)
  - Saudade @ SFU Woodward's (Vancouver) - December 17-19, 2015
- **L I L A C.** collaboration with choreographer Mahaila Patterson-O'Brien. (2015)
  - x2 @ SFU Woodward's (Vancouver) - April 18, 2015
- **eatingthegame.** collaboration with Hong Kong Exile (2015)
  - UNO Fest (Victoria) - May 15, 2015
  - PuSh Festival (Vancouver) - February 8, 2015
- **越界/粵界 transgression/cantosphere.** commissioned by Centre A Gallery. (2015)
  - Centre A Gallery (Vancouver) - January 22 – March 28, 2015
- **Qanimts - for 4 channel sound.** commissioned by Russell Wallace and Western Front. (2014)
  - Neo-Nativism @ the Western Front (Vancouver) - November 15, 2014
- **Lang(lang)uage.** (2014)
  - PuSh Festival @ Performance Works (Vancouver) - February 5, 2015
  - FUSE @ the Vancouver Art Gallery - PuSh 2015
  - Your Kontinent Festival (Vancouver) - July 17-26, 2014
- **NINEEIGHT.** with Hong Kong Exile, commissioned by CanAsian Dance (2014)
  - International CanAsian Festival 2015 (Toronto)
  - Seattle International Dance Festival 2015
  - Dancing on the Edge 2015 (Vancouver)
  - KickStart CanAsian Dance Festival 2014 (Toronto)
- **same same but different.** in collaboration with Mahaila Patterson O'Brien. (2013)
  - ROMP International Dance Festival 2015 (Victoria)

- Launch! Festival 2014 (Vancouver)
- ASCENSION 2014 (Vancouver)
- **Foxconn Frequency (no.1) - for three visibly Chinese performers.** (2013)
  - Sound of Dragon Music Festival @ the Roundhouse (Vancouver) - May 10-11, 2014
  - Sonic Boom Music Festival @ Pyatt Hall (Vancouver) - March 29, 2014

### **selection of awards / grants**

- Canada Council for the Arts, Grants to Inter-Arts Organizations (2017)
- Honourable Mention - Jules Léger Prize 2016
- British Columbia Arts Council - Early Career Development Grant (2016-2017)
- Canada Council for the Arts, Grants to New Media and Audio Artists - Production Grants (2016)
- Jessie Richardson Awards - Honourable Mention for “Significant Artistic Achievement” (2016)
- Canada Council for the Arts, Inter-Arts - Travel Grant (2016)
- SOCAN Foundation - Outreach Residency Grant (2015)
- Jessie Richardson Awards - Honourable Mention for “Original Sound Design” (2015)
- British Columbia Arts Council - Innovations Grant (2014) w/ Canadian Music Centre
- British Columbia Arts Council - Professional Project Assistance Grant (2014)
- British Columbia Arts Council - Early Career Development Grant (2014-2015)
- SOCAN Foundation Awards for Young Composer - 2nd Place - Pierre Mercure Award (2014)
- SFU VPR Research Award (2013)