

MEGA-ORGAN by Sky Macklay

MEGA-ORGAN is a site-specific installation of inflatable harmonica-playing sculptures that was installed at Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village in New York City during March and April of 2017. I built the sculptures from plastic, fabric, and deconstructed harmonicas and the sculptures are triggered by motion sensors. Air from powerful fans animates the sculptures and is channeled through the harmonica tines. Over 100 harmonicas, grouped by key, create complex drones that change depending on which sculptures are activated and where the listener is located. MEGA-ORGAN is meant to be interactive and visitors are invited to sit on, lay on, and squish the sculptures to create different rhythms and attacks. MEGA-ORGAN was inspired by the fact that Judson's organ no longer makes sound. With their organ-like timbres, the harmonicas serve to re-sonify the organ.

MEGA-ORGAN is both a piece of installation art and an environment for improvisation. Visitors sculpt their own listening experiences by taking different paths through the installation and by collaborating with others in the space to change the sonic fabric. I also curated a concert in which I invited improvisers Peter Evans (trumpet), Amirtha Kidambi (voice), Travis Laplante (saxophone), and Ingrid Laubrock (saxophone) to engage musically with the installation.

