

New York

Samson Young

TEAM GALLERY | WOOSTER STREET

47 Wooster Street

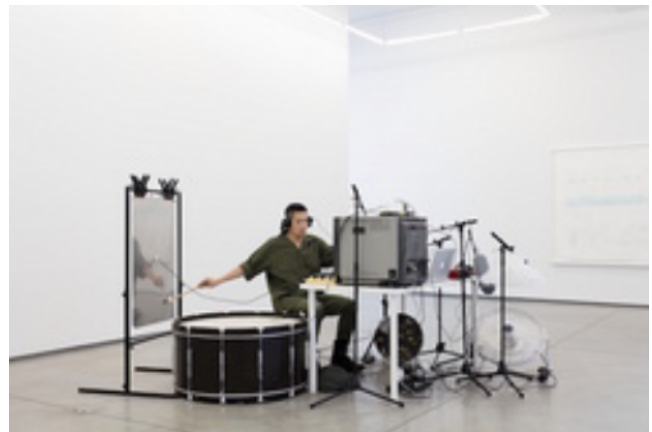
November 5–December 20

In the center of the gallery sits artist-composer Samson Young, wearing olive drab and combat boots. On the monitor before him, mostly in night-vision, lights hover over distant skylines and abruptly flare up. This six-hour video compilation shows nighttime bombardments, mostly by US military, of Middle Eastern locations. Young's mission in this work, titled *Nocturne* (all works 2015), is to produce a live sound track, over and over, during most of the gallery's open hours.

Young is a sort of military trainee here, practicing a variation on the deception warfare produced during World War II by the American "ghost army" division in which artists made decoy tanks and phony radio broadcasts to fool enemies. Through the portable radios on offer, one can listen over a pirated frequency to the amplified outcomes of Young's own Foley techniques: A fingernail swirled on a bass drum broadcasts as an ominous aerial whine; small taps become resonant booms.

In *Pastoral Music II*, a three-minute sound collage (playing on a different FM frequency) and corresponding graphical score, Young has meticulously transcribed each sound in the work—rifle fusillades, grenades, and cries of pain, the latter disconcertedly transcribed via a tiny rubber stamp reading "AA" (the longer the screams the more A's appear), as if to make a later re-performance possible. Smaller scores on the facing wall—including battle plans for fanciful defense maneuvers in Young's native Hong Kong—abstract musical notation into almost pure visual form (*SDIHK*).

The exhibition's title, "Pastoral Music," gestures toward a conceptual conceit that Young's sound is somehow more placid or beautiful than the scenes of violence it accompanies. Of course, the opposite is true: The muted bombing footage plays out as an abstract ballet of light, but Young's work forces us, pressing transistor radios to our ears, into an intimate encounter with the sound of violence.



Samson Young, *Nocturne*, 2015, thunder tube, electrical sound toys, glass bottle, wind chime, corn flakes, Tupperware, soil, tea leaves, rice, cooking paper, bass drum, thunder sheet, electric shavers, airsoft pistol, ocean drum, shotgun microphone, contact microphone, mixer, audio interface, laptop, FM transmitter, compressed air, Shinco radios, dimensions variable.

— Sara Marcus