



**University of
Sunderland**

Collier, Mike (2019) Dawn Chorus: Mimesis And Birdsong.
Platform A, 31 Jan-7 Mar 2019, Middlesbrough, UK.

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Platform A gallery is dedicated to innovative developments in contemporary art through a diverse programme of exhibitions and performances. Located in the railway station of central Middlesbrough, it is a catalyst and advocate for the cultural life of the North East region of the UK and beyond, and represents the work of emerging and established artists. Our objectives include nurturing and developing the work of talented artists, curators and writers and providing a springboard for their careers internationally through introduction to established artists and relevant opportunities.

A DAWN CHORUS

Singing the World: Mimesis and Birdsong

Mike Collier

with music by **Bennett Hogg**

PLATFORM-A

Platform-A Gallery

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Telephone: 01642 252 061

Open: Tuesday - Friday 10am - 4pm

www.platformagallery.net



University of
Sunderland



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ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

31st January – 7th March 2019

A Dawn Chorus

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Imitating with the mouth the fluid voices of birds
came long before
men were able to sing together in melody and please the ear.

Lucretius (94-55BC): De Rerum Natura

This exhibition of pictures by Mike Collier and music by Bennett Hogg was initially inspired by listening to a dawn chorus in a Northumberland woodland – a choir of sixteen birds heard early one morning in mid May. Together their songs, represented variously as digitally manipulated sonograms and musical transcriptions, form the basis of this show of screen prints, music and digital prints.

Collier approached the experience of the dawn chorus in a number of different ways, collaborating with printmaker Alex Charrington (Charrington Editions), composer and musician Bennett Hogg and natural history sound recordist Geoff Sample.

Working from Sample's sonograms of individual bird recordings, Collier drew a series of notations that bore a superficial resemblance to handwritten "neumes", a medieval form of musical notation. Together with Charrington, he subsequently developed a patterned palimpsest of sound (*Dawn Chorus; 2017* and *A Transitional Narrative: 2018*).

The circular images in *The Dawn Chorus (05.00am); 2017*, were, again, loosely adapted from Sample's sonograms as Collier stretched and pulled, squeezed and pinched these visual scientific notations, searching for rhythm, tone, pattern, pitch, colour and melody.

Finally, *Singing the World: A Dawn Chorus: 03.30am – 05.00am* re-presents the individual songs of the sixteen birds in this particular dawn chorus using an onomatopoeic circular form.

Just as Collier started with electronic transcriptions that resembled medieval music notation, Hogg took this "found" music and transcribed it into modern notation, and then freely composed a series of pieces in which different birds appear in roughly the same sequence they do in the dawn chorus. Hogg didn't transcribe the sound of the birds, and so although the music is based on birdsong, it doesn't try to mimic birdsong, and in this it closely parallels Collier's approach.

Although to a visitor it may not be apparent which piece is being heard, or indeed which birds are 'present', the combination of the music and the images is intended to 'stage', for want of a better word, an 'experience', inside of which we can, of course, make our own connections.

Prof Mike Collier is a lecturer, writer, curator and artist based at the University of Sunderland where he runs WALK (Walking, Art, Landscape and Knowledge), a research centre exploring the way we creatively engage with the world as we walk through it.

Dr Bennett Hogg (Newcastle University) is a composer, improviser and cultural theorist.

Alex Charrington runs Charrington Editions, a professional, collaborative printmaking studio.

Geoff Sample specialises in recording birds and natural soundscapes as fine art and documentary.



Images (Top to Bottom):

Redstart: 3.30am. Digital print on 320gsm handmade paper, 2018. Produced in collaboration with Charrington Editions.

Progressions with Turdines and Sibilants: 4.25am. Digital print on 320gsm handmade paper, 2018. Produced in collaboration with Charrington Editions.