

STUDIO10

The Chairs

Studio10 is pleased to host a two-night reunion event for **The Chairs on Saturday, Dec. 13th at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 14th at 4:00 p.m.** This performance is in coordination with the exhibition *Caroline Cox: Porous*. Exhibition Dates: November 14– December 21, 2014. Sound sample: The Chairs cover of *Isolation* by John Lennon, 1980. [LINK](#)

History of The Chairs - The Chairs were born in the early summer of 1980 in Brooklyn when five young artists--some longtime pals, some lovers, and some fresh acquaintances--gathered in pursuit of hot jazz, cool collage, warm lofts, and anything Captain Beefheart. John Sherman and Tim Spelios, childhood friends from Normal, Illinois, were crossing the US from San Francisco in a truck filled with their life belongings including a set of drums and a Hammond M3. Laurie Szujewska and David Weinstein, college sweethearts from the University of Illinois, were building out a loft at 33 Flatbush Avenue and living off matzoh ball soup at Junior's. Caroline Cox flew in next, fleeing her native California, and insuring the lifelong bond with Spelios that had sparked in San Francisco. The convergence was set. Weinstein and Szujewska, who had serendipitously connected with Spelios and Sherman at a wedding (mid-trip!) at a Frank Lloyd Wright estate outside Chicago, offered crashpad space for the trio's acclimation to New York. Welcome.

The truck was unpacked. Boxes of belongings were stacked up to make pseudo walls and private nooks in the sprawling open space of the loft. Spelios, uncontainable in his rhythmic impulses, set up his drums. Sherman quietly plugged in the organ. Weinstein had a little sound system setup, some keyboards, and a box of toys and hand percussion gear. Cox and Szujewska were not shy about trying out all of this. Noise would be heard. (The building was not without music. Lee Ranaldo--later of Sonic Youth, David Linton--soon to join Glenn Branca, and Anthony Coleman--often with John Zorn, lived there too.)

Improvisation. Exploration. Unedited impulse and embrace. Outside of New York, which was rapidly exploding the barrier between high and low arts, declaring simultaneous affection for both *The Goldberg Variations* and *Karen Carpenter* was shunned in 1980. The group of five was quickly discovering the "downtown" milieu. Try anything. Shuffle. Try again. And do it in public. Part mashup (anticipating the genre by decades), part stoned romp (damn the torpedoes!), and part thoughtful yet terrified ambition (New York just like I pictured it), the thing started to gel. Weinstein settled into a dirtied up Fender Rhodes electric piano with too many footpedals, Sherman, already a master manipulator of the Hammond, pulled out his hybrid banjo-keyboard (which seemed to have been bitten by the same creature that atomically altered Spiderman), Spelios started his love affair with shakers and African bells, Szujewska bonded with a flea market bugle, and Cox, oh Cox, revealed her tap dancing skills repeat with saccharine smile and irrepressible giggle. And everybody played tinwhistle.

The first gig was set for July 5, 1980 as part of the first ever Roulette music series in the Tribeca music loft (now a 500-seat new music mecca in Brooklyn). All in all, the group did a half dozen gigs maybe, was twice a featured pick in the *Village Voice*, and within two years it went away. Each member pursuing life, liberty, and the pursuit of rent. Amazingly, many of the rehearsals and concerts got recorded. Maybe a SoundCloud channel is warranted? Happily, each member of The Chairs has continued a productive career in the arts and music. And after marriages, babies, travels, real estate, exhibitions, concerts, adventures and challenges unimaginable, the five have continued to amuse and inspire each other for three decades. Cool.

Bonus Addendum: The Chairs were originally named *The Spinning Chairs*. The members' living lofts (Spelios, Cox, and Sherman wound up in a space on 36th Street in Manhattan) were furnished by found furniture of every shape and size left on the street. The group, in an inexplicable display of distraction, used to challenge each other to spin odd chairs on one leg using only one finger. Whatever. The 1952 play by Eugene Ionesco, though a fond association, was not the source. Erik Satie's concept of *Furniture Music* may have been a factor. - David Weinstein

Caroline Cox

Artist, Caroline Cox, makes sculptures and emersive installations from diaphamous, everyday materials. Cox moved from SF to NYC and started playing in the improv band the Chairs. In her studio practice she continued to experiment with the interaction of light and everyday, translucent materials. Caroline has exhibited in venues that include: Studio10; Yale School of Art, Pierogi Gallery, Smack Mellon, Sculpture Center, 5Myles Gallery, Sarah Bowen Gallery, BigSmall/Casual Gallery. She has participated in residencies at Edward Albee's The Barn, and the Clocktower Gallery. Caroline, with Tim Spelios, founded and ran Flipside Gallery from 1997-2001 in Williamsburg. Her work has been reviewed in *Hyperallergic*, *Art in America* online, *Sculpture Magazine*; her installation, *Satin Loop*, is reproduced in *Alternative Histories*, New York Art Spaces, 1960-2010 as part of Smack Mellon Gallery's Red Square exhibition. Cox has received grants from the Pollock-Krasner and Tree of Life foundation.

John Sherman

John Sherman currently plays accordion and sings with the Montclair NJ band Big Mamou. Previous New York bands he has fronted include *Jole Blonde*, the *Bedesmen* and *The Zephyrs*. He has toured with Richard Thompson and performed with Leon Redbone, Vernon Reid, and Ronald Shannon Jackson. Sherman has played in experimental bands including Mr. Klopp and the Chairs. He is also owner and president of ZZZ Carpentry Inc., a New York based building contractor.

Tim Spelios

Tim Spelios joined his first band, *The Aardvarks* when he was ten years old. Other bands have included; *Chili Supper Music*, the *Unforgiven*, *Jericho*, *Welsh Rarebit*, Mr. Klopp, *Jolie Blonde*, the *Bedesmen*, *No Safety*, *Chunk*, *Impossible Music*, the *Slide* and *Film Club Band*, the *Cartoon Cover Band*, and the Chairs. Spelios also cuts up books and wood resulting in photo collages and sculpture installations that have been exhibited at such venues as *The Drawing Center*, *Smack Mellon*, *Five Myles*, *Long Island University*, *Sculpture Center*, *Exit Art*, the *Islip Museum*, *Big and Small Casual*, *Parkers Box*, *Pierogi*, and *Studio 10*. Spelios' work has been reviewed in *Harvard magazine*, *Art in America*, the *New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, and *L Magazine*. Spelios teaches at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.

Laurie Szujewska

Laurie Szujewska (shoe yév skä) is a printmaker, typographer, and graphic designer. She currently is making prints on a letterpress concerning shapes and color. She once worked in the printing trades and lived and played in NYC with the band members of The Chairs while creating graphics for the performing arts venue *Roulette* during its early years. After completing her MFA in graphic design from the Yale School of Art she moved west to California and worked as a designer and art director at Adobe Systems where she created many awarding-winning graphics and the typeface *Giddyup*. Abandoning computers she now lives in a geodesic dome in northern California where she prints using obsolete technology and sometimes teaches at Reed College and UC Davis. Her prints

and graphic work have been exhibited in various venues in Europe and America and are included in many Artist Book Collections at Universities and Libraries.

David Weinstein

David Weinstein is a composer, producer, and arts administrator currently Program Director of Clocktower Productions and its art radio station at clocktower.org (formerly Clocktower Gallery, the longtime satellite space for MoMA PS1). Previously, he was Director of Public Programs for MoMA PS1, Managing Director of its radio station, and curatorial director of the Warm Up summer music series. As a keyboardist he has recorded and/or performed in major projects with Shelley Hirsch, Elliott Sharp, John Zorn, and many others from Arto Lindsay to Zeena Parkins. Born in Chicago in 1954, he studied music composition at the University of Illinois with Ben Johnston and Salvatore Martirano. He co-founded the New York new music series Roulette and has taught music, sound and multimedia at The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Yale, and the City University of New York. He has worked as a consultant, panelist, curator and organizer for arts organizations and companies from Morgan Stanley to MTV.

STUDIO10 is located at 56 Bogart Street
(Morgan Avenue stop on the L train) in Bushwick.
Gallery hours: Thursday through Sunday 1 - 6 pm or by appointment
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