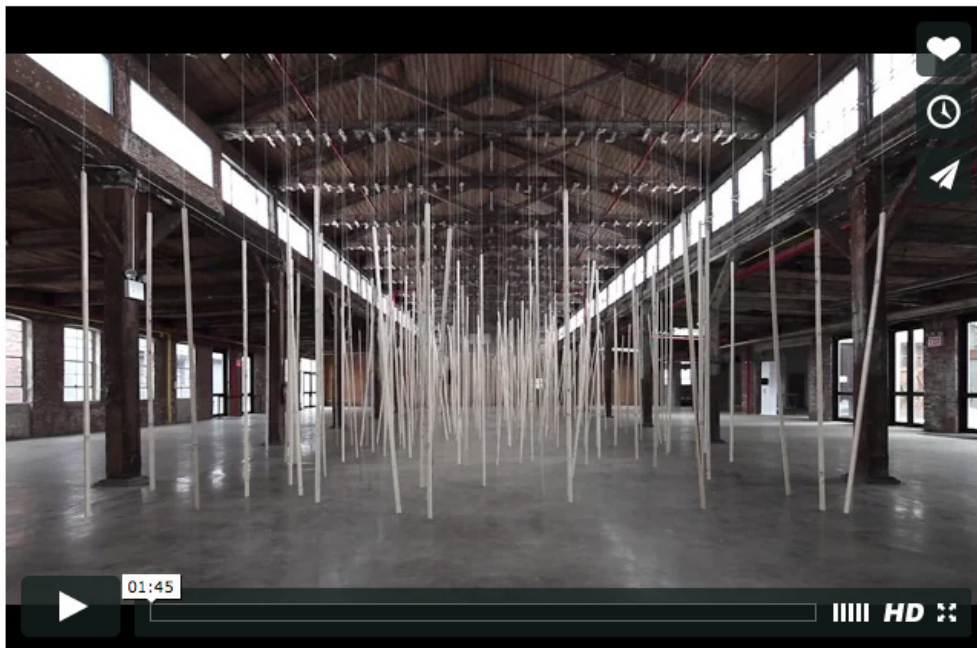


BLOG

I Disappeared in the Music and Motors of Zimoun's Low-Tech Labyrinth

By Sami Emory — Feb 12 2015



Zimoun : 250 prepared ac-motors, 325 kg roof laths, 1.8 km rope, 2015 from ZIMOUN on Vimeo.

From a [cardboard box mosh pit](#) to projects made using [oil heaters](#), [cotton balls](#), and [ac-motors](#), Swiss artist [Zimoun](#) turns mundane materials into mind-bending installations which question our sensory perceptions. For the artist's latest project [\[KE\]³](#), a triad of works, we decided to take to the field (also known as Queens) to experience the energy of his largest site-specific installation in the US to date.

On opening night, I walked into [Knockdown Center's](#) windowed warehouse, a 10,000 square foot atrium space with 40-foot-high ceilings, empty save for several dozen motionless rods of unfinished wood suspended from white wires. From my preliminary sweep of the room, I identified each element of the installation's characteristically pragmatic title: *250 prepared ac-motors, 325 kg roof laths, 1.8km rope*.

I had just begun to admire the web of stringy engineering above my head, when the ac-motors whirred to life. Pulsating with mechanical puppetry, Zimoun's stationary sculpture animated with disembodied, fantastic energy. In a matter of seconds, the lifeless wood had been replaced with a low-tech labyrinth of impulsive, unpredictable movement. Everyone in the lobby stood still, watching respectfully.



The first to break the spell was a little girl—a fitting metaphor for the childlike curiosity present in much of Zimoun's work—who ran full tilt and shrieking into the slithering sculpture. After a few anxious glances, and a few even more anxious first steps, the arty attendees followed suit. Everyone was soon giggling over the vibrations running up through the souls of their feet, lying on the ground to admire the clocklike circuitry, or else stepping gingerly through the plywood pathways.

At one minute before 6 PM, the motors shut off. Everyone, frozen in various stages of discovery, looked around, a little sheepish and disoriented. It was time for the second "act" for tonight's show: a 20-minute performance by the artist. In an adjoining room, I settled myself on one of the black folding chairs, sprawled around a DJ desk where Zimoun sat, quietly observing.

Once the group had settled and the ominously scraping warehouse door had been steadfastly shut, the room went pitch-black. A jittery static leaked from the raised speakers. The static steadily intensified and I squinted, trying fruitlessly to see my hand in the darkness. Was I hearing my own pulse or was that the pulse of the room? I must be blindfolded, I thought, and surrounded by hundreds of untuned transistor radios. My teeth began to chatter although the room was not cold. Time was jumbled; the room's pulse quickened.

Then, the static faded into a hum, then a whisper, then silence. "And now, all that is left is the heating system," Zimoun said.



Zimoun's *250 prepared ac-motors, 325 kg roof laths, 1.8 km rope* at Knockdown Center is part of *[KE]³*, a trio of solo exhibitions present by [bitforms gallery](#). 12 of the artist's newest pieces are also showcased at bitforms' gallery until March 15th, and a collection of his sculptures and videos are exhibited at the Simons Center for Geometry and Physics at Stony Brook University until April 9th.

Find out more about Zimoun's 3-part showcase on bitforms' [website](#) and explore Zimoun's previous work [here](#).