

WEARING

INSEN

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A project by Gianni Misto, Curated by Alice Rendon

“[...] Sound makes the invisible visible; sound become visible; sound is exhibited.” ¹

Tracklist	1. “Aurora”	8:52
	2. “Morning”	5:27
	3. “Logic Moon”	6:50
	4. “Moon”	6:07
	5. “Berlin”	6:17
	6. “Iano”	6:53
	7. “Avaol”	2:52

Insen (2005) is the second of five albums released by the record label Raster-Noton, the fruit of a collaboration between the Berlin-based visual artist, musician and producer Carsten Nicolai, known as Alva Noto (Karl-Marx-Stadt, 1965), and the Japanese multi-instrumentalist and composer Ryūichi Sakamoto (Tokyo, 1952–2023).²

The musical work, which in its original version comprises seven tracks, is the subject of an artistic reinterpretation by seven Italian and Japanese jewelry designers and goldsmiths – Myriam Bottazzi, Arata Fuchi, Haruko Ito, Stefania Lucchetta, Gianni Misto, Francesca Mo and Cristian Visentin – who set out to translate its aural stimuli into a wearable work. The collective project, born of an

intuition of Misto's, presents pieces of contemporary jewelry as paraphrases arising from listening to the individual tracks, or to the album as a whole.

If we focus on the synesthetic practice that guides the whole of Carsten Nicolai's output, one could argue that the exercise asked of these artists is not so very different: synesthesia, or "simultaneous perception"³, occurs when the stimulation of one sensory pathway triggers a perceptual experience distinct from the one solicited. It is a matter of a shift, a transposition of one sensory register into another. If Nicolai's work has come to play a decisive role on the international Sound Art scene of the 1990s, it is because, against the backdrop of the technological transformations then under way, he approached the experience of sound from a different perspective: questioning the possible visualization of the sonic phenomenon, the artist has sought to give shape and color to the invisible physicality of vibration as it spreads through the air.⁴

Caterina Tomeo explains that the new frontiers opened up by the so-called digital revolution have, since the last decade of the twentieth century, unveiled unimagined possibilities for manipulating 'sonic matter', revolutionizing the way artists could 'approach' the phenomenon of sound.⁵ Increasingly accessible digital audio software has not only made it possible to read the sound wave's spatial unfolding on the computer screen, but also to act upon it in real time.

We know that, from a scientific standpoint, sound is vibration in propagation, and that its graphic translation within the digital realm is nothing other than a sequence of numerical values that mathematically describe the pressure wave. This numerical representation allows sonic information to be stored, controlled and manipulated, information that becomes a 'real' phenomenon again only once it is played back. In essence, sound first becomes graphic sign, and then physical wave once more, in order to be caught by the human ear.

To distinguish noises otherwise imperceptible, Noto initially turned to rudimentary oscilloscopes and graphic analyzers, discovering in the process the artistic

potential of sound design. The challenge is to allow sound itself to “draw images”⁶, and to do so in real time: in the live versions of the *Uni* trilogy ⁷, the artist relies on cutting-edge generative software⁸, capable of transmuting audio signals into hypnotic strobe discharges, cascades of light and chromatic smears.⁹

What happens, then, if instead of translating sound into a two-dimensional image, one tries to give it form in the third dimension? Or, in other words, how can the ‘incorporeal’ reality of sound be translated into the ‘tactile’ reality of the art object? This is, of course, a matter of metaphor, of play – which is, after all, the etymological root of the word ‘jewel’¹⁰: a playful object born with the purpose of procuring pleasure and delight. These seven authors welcomed their own sensations and intuitions, recorded and reworked them, in order to give them material, wearable substance.

Far from the frenzy of Nicolai’s pervasive, multisensory environments, the album *Insen*, born of the collaboration with Sakamoto, instead invites the contemplative slowness of listening.

In this collaborative experiment, the emotional, melodic, poignant dimension of the Japanese maestro’s crepuscular notes is digitally processed through Noto’s clinical, reductionist, cerebral timbral filter – made up of glitches, tremors, beats, pulsations, low frequencies and brilliant micro-sounds that test our perceptual capacity. What emerges is a suspended atmosphere, outside time and space, inducing a state of recollection: that introspective, meditative condition one might define as necessary to the creative exercise.

This editing process recalls Nicolai’s aforementioned solo work. Here Alva Noto synthesizes the physical gesture of Sakamoto’s fingers pressing the piano keys into a system of digital data that entirely redraws the original track. The result is a new multimedia hybrid, born of the condensation of divergent semiotic codes: that of the instrument and that of the machine.

Inevoking the polyphonic nature of the encounter between the harmonic musicality of the Japanese composer and the electronic explorations of the German artist,

“wearing” *Insen* thus becomes a pretext for putting into communication spheres of artistic expression that have traditionally been kept apart: the realm of music and that of research applied to the adornment of the body. Rooting the project in a felicitous blending of seemingly incompatible musical languages is also a way of calling attention to the importance of intersectionality and permeability in creative inquiry: an admonition to overcome the historical prejudice that relegates jewelry to the microcosm of applied art, and to expand its horizons.

Alice Rendon

MYRIAM BOTTAZZI

In Alva Noto's vision, within a musical composition silence and sound take on equal value and meaning, closely interconnected and mutually necessary. In music theory, silence is as much a constitutive part of a score's syntax as the notes themselves. Silence is therefore a perceptual condition of sound, because music always requires contrast: without a quiet backdrop, we could not isolate and recognize a sonic event as such. Hence – as the German composer suggests – silence can be considered even more determinant than the sonic events themselves, since it is the pauses that structure the phrasing, giving rhythm, breath, and intensity to the music.¹¹

The jewelry built by the Milanese designer responds to a similar compositional logic, in which the album's sonorities and non-sonorities are rendered visually and tactily through the contrast of colors and materials. The palette is reset to the notes of black and white, to which the value of noise or silence can be metaphorically associated. Black, the absence of light, or, through addition and blending, the sum and saturation of all pigments; white, the representation of light, or, in painting, through subtraction, the total deprivation of color.

The designer subjects the album *Insen* to a deconstructive process, attributing complementary valences to the materials and making them dialogue according to oppositional principles: the rigid coldness of the silvered bronze plate is counterbalanced by the soft black lace yarn worked in bobbin lace. With cotton, Bottazzi pierces the luminous opacity of cellulose acetate, embroidering onto it angular beats resembling those detected on the screen of an analyzer. The parts are dense and milky in the sandblasted glass of Track Clouds and in the acetate sheet of *Romantic Twilight Code*, or transparent and reflective in the rhinestones crowning the construction of *Sound Fractions*. The materialization of sound that Bottazzi enacts starting from her listening of the record thus appears only transitory: a momentary passage through the solid state of matter – suggested by the rhodium-plated titanium bars and the aluminum wire twisted upon itself – before this sublimates into the translucency of glass, the evanescence of the acetate clouds, the glow of the rhinestones, in a process of visual dematerialization.

Alice Rendon



Myriam Bottazzi, *Romantic Twilight Code*, 2026, necklace, cellulose acetate cloud, bobbin lace, rhodium-plated titanium, cotton yarn, cutting, bobbin lace, machine embroidery, knotting, 120 x 15 x 100 mm

ARTIST'S OWN WORDS

A musical composition that takes on material form, where silence and sound intertwine like threads of black aluminum supporting clouds of satin glass. The *Track Clouds* necklace translates the ethereal, minimal essence of *Insen* into a wearable object: each translucent glass element is a suspended note, a sonic breath floating in space. The dark threads create the rhythmic structure, while the organic, polished glass shapes catch the light like electronic frequencies. It is a jewel-sculpture that materializes the immateriality of sound, turning a musical track into tangible clouds, visual poetry that evokes the same contemplative atmosphere, suspended in time.

Inspired by the minimalist, melancholic atmospheres of Ryuichi Sakamoto, the *Romantic Twilight Code* necklace translates the beauty of imperfection and silence into material form. The pendant, like a cloud of memories, unites black lace and printed veiling, crossed by visible stitching that seals an invisible secret. The structure of black threads unwinds like a suspended score, evoking the raw delicacy of Sakamoto's compositions: a jewel that wears the twilight elegance of music made object.

As in *Insen*, where Sakamoto explores impermanent beauty and the nuances of silence, the *Sound Fractions* brooch translates the fractions of an invisible score into tactile form. A cloud of black lace and translucent veiling takes shape, crossed by visible stitching that marks suspended time. The threads that unwind evoke notes falling into the void, while at its center a raw stone holds the essence of sound: imperfect, ephemeral, eternal. A jewel that wears the deconstructed poetry of the Japanese master.

Myriam Bottazzi



Myriam Bottazzi (Milan, 1963) is a contemporary artist and jewelry designer.

A graduate of the Istituto d'Arte in Milan, she has combined, from the very beginning, a solid visual background with material-driven research, experimenting with heterogeneous materials — metals, semi-precious stones, fabrics, yarns — through hybrid techniques that challenge the conventions of traditional goldsmithing. Since 1987 she has designed and produced jewelry under the brand MyriamB, collaborating in the 1990s with fashion houses such as Valentino, Maurizio Galante, Les Copains and Martine Sitbon. Over the past twenty years, her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions, fairs and international selections, including the ADI Design Festival (Spoleto), Artisanal Intelligence (Rome), Artistar Jewels (Milan), the MAD Museum (New York), Joya (Barcelona), Homo Faber, and Rome Jewelry Week. Her pieces have been shown in galleries and art spaces such as Vitruvia Gallery A/dornament, Creativity Oggetti (Turin), Galleria Rossini (Milan), Eleni Marnieri (Athens) and Incinque Open Art Monti (Rome). In 2013 she founded Atelier Aspecifico within the historic Pastificio Cerere, the heart of Rome's contemporary art scene.