

Time Out

New York

Art | Reviews

June 3-10, 2004

O + A, *Blue Moon*

Plaza at the World Financial Center,
through Aug 20 (see Elsewhere).

Shirazeh Houshiary and Pip Horne, *Breath*

The Ritz-Carlton, Battery Park
through Jan 2005 (see Elsewhere).



**Pip Horne and Shirazeh Houshiary,
Breath, 2004.**

Two sound installations in lower Manhattan, both sponsored by Creative Time, atune visitors to the city's aural landscape, revealing cadences concealed within urban white noise. In *Breath* (2004), by Shirazeh Houshiary and Pip Horne, located in the plaza of the Ritz-Carlton hotel, sacred Buddhist, Jewish, Islamic and Christian chants play from dawn to dusk. To hear them clearly, one must press an ear to the surface of a double helix of glazed bricks, which spirals up 20 feet into the air. (The sounds emanate from the structure's hollow core).

The experience of *Blue Moon* (2004), conceived by so-called "sonic alchemists" O + A (Bruce Odland and Sam Auinger), is a similarly solitary affair. When Rodgers and Hart wrote their song "Blue Moon," they could not have imagined their lonely crooner sitting outside the World Financial Center listening to the amplified sounds of the harbor, but this is the effect conveyed by the installation. Five blue cubes that double as speakers are arranged in a lazy semicircle (or half moon) around the plaza. Three tubes, tucked away amid the myriad sailboats in the harbor, capture and process the sounds—birds, waves, air traffic—that emanate from the cubes. The soundtrack is discernible only to visitors who take a seat on a cube. When a helicopter flies overhead—as they do these days with alarming frequency—the cube vibrates below one's rump; sound bellows up the gastrointestinal tract and then erupts in the loins with a cacophonous symphony. The experience may leave a visitor feeling like a cartoon animal that has inadvertently ingested an entire bushel of chili peppers.

—Noah Chasin