

# TEMPLON



IVAN NAVARRO

*ARTS ILLUSTRATED*, avril - mai 2017



## *Iván Navarro: Fanfare*

MARCH 11 TO MAY 13, 2017, PARIS

In 2002, an iconic piece of art/lounge chair, intriguingly titled *You Sit, You Die* was constructed using white fluorescent tubes and neon light. On the paper seat, the artist had written the names of every individual executed by the Florida justice system, critiquing the state's record-breaking number of capital punishments. 'This is my version of the electric chair,' explained its maker Iván Navarro – a Chilean artist who was just a year old when, in 1973, General Augusto Pinochet orchestrated a coup and seized control from the Chilean government. Young as Navarro was, his formative years were shaped by the dictatorship – a profound impact overwhelmingly evident in the artist's works, both in his choice of medium – he works primarily with lights, mirrors, neon and sound – and in the sub-text of his sculptures and pieces of faux-furniture. Navarro recalls how Pinochet's regime frequently used electricity shut downs to keep citizens at home and isolated. 'All the pieces that I've made, make reference to a controlling activity, and electricity was a way to control people', he elaborates.

Navarro's experiences under the regime and the turbulent life in America – his adopted home – continue to fuel his examination of electric energy and sounds as symbols and tools of both power and rebellion. His most recent show *Fanfare*, presented as part of Galerie Daniel Templon's 50-year celebration, is an immersive journey through previously unseen works exploring light, sound and language. Confronting his viewers with issues of representation of power and sensorial perception, Navarro plunges the audience into utter darkness, surrounded only by neon and mirror sculptures that also appear as percussion instruments. At the centre of the soundless electronic percussion band, a double-sided bass drum uses light and mirrors to spell out an infinitely reflected onomatopoeic word, with a closely related onomatopoeia appearing on the reverse face of the drum like a distorted echo. Blow becomes Bomb in a dual ambivalence, evoking celebration as well as guerrilla warfare, aggression as well as resistance.

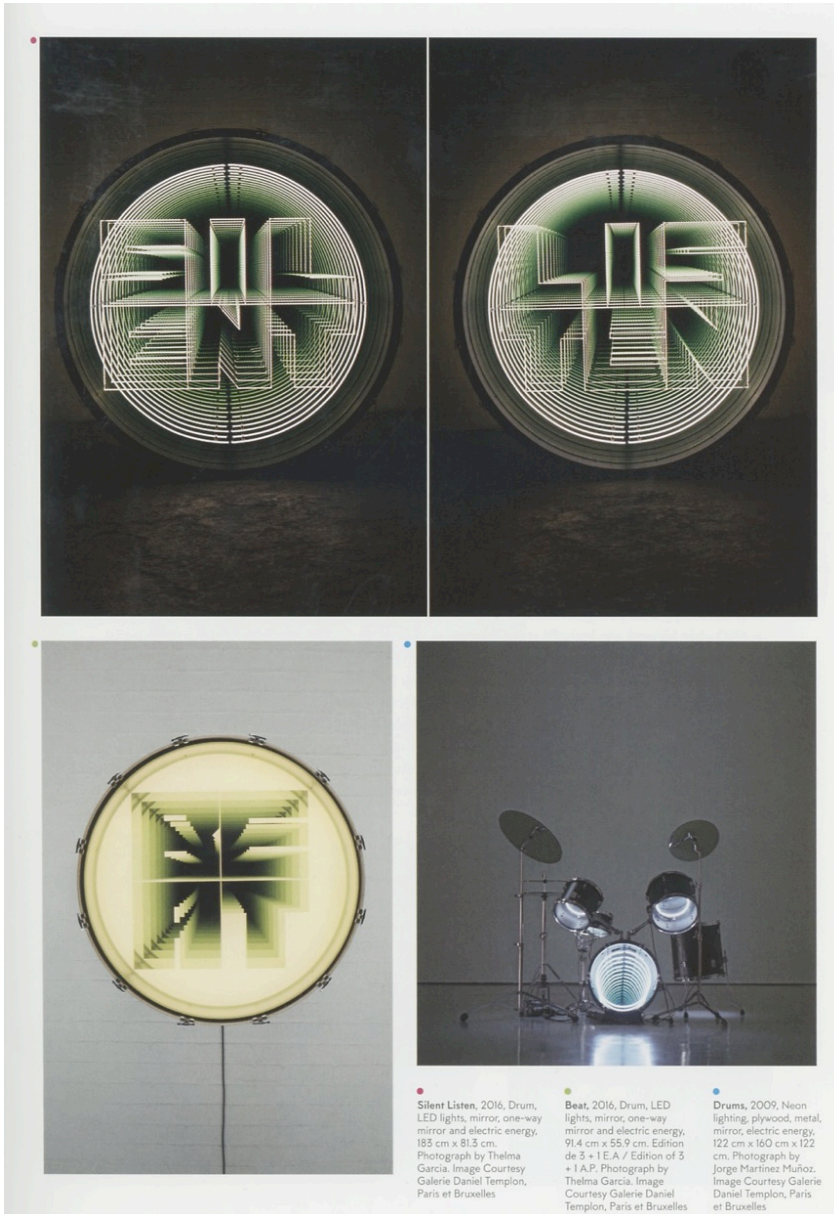
Also part of the exhibition is the installation titled *Music Room IV* – an ongoing series of constructed environments created specifically for active listening, in collaboration with artist Courtney Smith. For the project, the artists have created a wooden fort-like sculpture whose latticed exterior is panelled with album covers from all over the world, each one a representation of revolution. The other side of the sculpture reveals a dark, padded cave for visitors to nestle and experience 'listening'. Speakers pipe music deep into the sculpture, creating a concentrated listening environment within, yet separate from the visual cacophony of the musical light sculptures around it. The music played is the music seen: a continuous loop of songs of universal protest and celebration, which together form a unified voice of human resistance in the face of authoritarian oppression.

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## II

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● **Silent Listen**, 2016, Drum, LED lights, mirror, one-way mirror and electric energy. 185 cm x 81.3 cm. Photograph by Thelma Garcia. Image Courtesy Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris et Bruxelles

● **Beat**, 2016, Drum, LED lights, mirror, one-way mirror and electric energy. 91.4 cm x 55.9 cm. Edition de 3 + 1 E.A. / Edition of 3 + 1 A.P. Photograph by Thelma Garcia. Image Courtesy Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris et Bruxelles

● **Drums**, 2009, Neon lighting, plywood, metal, mirror, electric energy. 122 cm x 160 cm x 122 cm. Photograph by Jorge Martínez Muñoz. Image Courtesy Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris et Bruxelles