

BLONDEAU & CIE

Rhona Bitner

LISTEN

Imaging American Music
New Work

With notes on the venues

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Exhibition:
THU-FRI 2-6.30 pm
SAT 11 am-5 pm

Offices:
MON-FRI 9 am-12.30 pm / 2-6.30 pm



Auditorium, Hibbing High School, Hibbing, MN

Hibbing High School is a public high school built in 1923, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The school features a lavishly decorated 1800-seat auditorium patterned after the (demolished) Capitol Theatre in New York City.

Bob Dylan was a former student of Hibbing High School, as a student he participated in talent shows and performed in front of classmates on the auditorium stage.

In 1956, Bob played at a school talent show. The response was mixed. He was singing a Little Richard tune - the principal pulled the curtain on him." "I remember the time he played on the stage and the kids kind of laughed at him," says Sharon Kepler. "People play that up a lot. But you have to remember that we were teenage kids and at that time were not used to that screaming and pounding on the piano type of music. People claim that's what made him bitter, but I don't think it was. He was never treated differently than any other classmate."

"[...] Hibbing's got the biggest open pit ore mine in the world...
Hibbing's got souped-up cars runnin' full blast
on a Friday night
Hibbing's got corner bars with polka bands
You can stand at one end of Hibbing's main drag
an' see clear past the city limits on the other end
Hibbing's a good ol' town [...]"

My Life In A Stolen Moment, Bob Dylan, 1963

The High School is still in operation.

1 Auditorium, Hibbing High School, Hibbing, MN July 10, 2006

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium
100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.
Edition 1/6 + 2 AP
Produced in 2017



9:30 Club, Washington D.C.

Since its origins in 1980, the 9:30 Club, which allowed fans as young as sixteen to enter, was known as a progressive venue noted for its talent in discovering up-and-coming acts. While various strains of punk music regularly echoed from the 9:30 stage, it also hosted the locally grown sounds of go-go.

Some of the bands that took to the original club's stage early in their careers are **R.E.M.**, **Nirvana**, **Red Hot Chili Peppers**, **The Smashing Pumpkins** and **Jane's Addiction**.

On **January 5, 1996**, the new **9:30 Club location** - opened in the former WUST Radio Music Hall with the Smashing Pumpkins. The club has welcomed emerging artists from all over the world, as well as established acts. **Bob Dylan**, **Radiohead**, **Red Hot Chili Peppers** and **Foo Fighters** have performed surprise shows at this second incarnation of the 9:30 Club.

Still in operation. (The original location is a J. Crew boutique)

2 9:30 Club, Washington D.C.

April 2, 2008

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium

100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



FAME Recording Studios, Muscle Shoals, AL

FAME was established in 1959 in Florence, Alabama, and moved to Muscle Shoals in 1961, where it remains today.

Distant from the main recording locations of the American music industry, FAME (Florence Alabama Music Enterprises) Studios has produced a disproportionate number of hit records and was instrumental in what came to be known as the Muscle Shoals sound.

The renowned FAME has produced numerous legendary albums :

-**Etta James'** successful album 'Tell Mama' (1968) has been praised as one of the greatest albums of the rock and roll era.

-The producer Jerry Wexler brought his newly signed artist **Aretha Franklin** to FAME Studios. Her first cut here was the million selling double sided 'I Never Loved A Man' and 'Do Right Woman' (1967).

-Some of the greatest pop tracks of the late '60s and early '70s were recorded here: **Wilson Pickett's** 'Land of 1,000 Dances', **The Staple Singers'** 'I'll Take You There', and **Percy Siedge's** 'When a Man Loves a Woman'.

The session musicians who worked at the studio become known as **The Swampers**. In 1969, the four primary **Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section** members left FAME to establish the Muscle Shoals Sound Studio.

Still in operation under different management.

3 FAME Recording Studios, Muscle Shoals, AL May 8, 2008

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium
100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, Muscle Shoals, AL

The **Swampers** opened this studio in 1969. They were mentioned in Lynyrd Skynyrd's classic 'Sweet Home Alabama' (1974). The unmistakable sound they brought with them to the new studio attracted **The Rolling Stones**, **Paul Simon**, **The Staple Singers**, **Lynyrd Skynyrd**, **Joe Cocker**, **Levon Helm**, **Bob Dylan**, **Cat Stevens** and even **Cher**, who featured the studio's exterior on her '3614 Jackson Highway' album cover.

Open for tours.



4 *Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, Muscle Shoals, AL* *May 8, 2008*

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium
100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP
Produced in 2017

Williamsburg Bridge, New York, NY

Between 1953 and 1959, the jazz saxophonist **Sonny Rollins** released 21 albums. At 29, he decided on a temporary retirement in 1959 in order to recharge his. In 1962, he returned to the scene, releasing the classic 'The Bridge'. During his three year break, Rollins spent long night hours, alone on the Bridge, playing and rehearsing on his sax. 'The Bridge' reflects the saxophonist standing on that bridge, day after day for months on end, pouring out his soul and preparing the birth of a masterpiece.

Still standing.

5 *Williamsburg Bridge, New York, NY* *May 23, 2009*

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium

100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



Carousel Lounge, Austin, TX

Opened in 1963.

Local dive bar and dance club the Carousel Lounge has hosted everything from small musical acts to belly dancers. The house band in the 60s was the local **Jerry Clark** and **The Velvetones**. **Stella Boes** was a regular until she died in 2007.

Still in operation.



6 *Carousel Lounge, Austin, TX*

June 2, 2009

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium

100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017

Ginny's Little Longhorn, Austin, TX

A classic Austin dive bar, featuring live honky-tonk country music. The tiny place holds less than 100 people, which makes the shows particularly intimate. The atmosphere and local crowd that spills into the parking lot that make the space special.

Still in operation.



7 *Ginny's Little Longhorn, Austin, TX*

June 3, 2009

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium

100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017

Silver Slipper, Houston, TX

Opened by Alfred Cormier in **1962** as Alfred's Place, this club took advantage of a new music style known as zydeco. Developed in southeastern Texas by African-American Creoles emigrating from Louisiana in the 1920s, Zydeco (originally called la-lait) is a fast-tempo music style that mixes blues, Creole, and Cajun influences and is punctuated by musicians playing accordions and washboards. Alfred's Place hosted many of the premier zydeco and blues musicians including **Clifton Chenier**, **Lightnin' Hopkins**, **Clarence Green**, **Floyd London**, **I. J. Gosey**, and **Joe 'Guitar' Hughes**. Cormier's daughter took over management after the business expanded and renamed it the Silver Slipper.

Still in operation.

8 *Silver Slipper, Houston, TX*

January 18, 2013

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium

100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



Max's Kansas City, New York, NY

"Max's Kansas City was the exact spot where Pop Art and Pop life came together in the sixties." - Andy Warhol

Max's Kansas City was a social club and restaurant at 213 Park Avenue South, which became the seminal gathering spot for musicians, poets, artists and politicians in the 1960s and 1970s. **It was opened** by Mickey Ruskin **on December 6, 1965**. One of New York's most important cultural landmarks, Max's played host to and launched the careers of many notable names in art, music, and fashion. Considered the birthplace of punk, glam-rock and pop art, the space was also where some of rock's most raw and iconic moments took place.

Max's upstairs - pictured here - was a stage for the iconoclastic New York music scene, with performances by Max's house bands **The Velvet Underground**, **The New York Dolls**, and then-undiscovered musicians like **Bruce Springsteen**, **Bob Marley** and **Billy Joel**. Max's waitress Debbie Harry returned here years later to perform as the front woman for **Blondie**. The notorious Max's stage also witnessed unforgettable performances by **The Ramones**, **Sid Vicious**, **Iggy Pop**, **Madonna**, **B52s**, **Devo**, **Squeeze**... It was the site of **Aerosmith's** first New York City gig. **Bob Marley & The Wailers** opened for Bruce Springsteen at Max's, commencing Marley's career on the international circuit.

Painters, sculptors and poets initially took over Max's downstairs front room (now a fast-food deli): John Chamberlain, Willem de Kooning, Robert Rauschenberg, Carl Andre, Larry Rivers. And others. The back room was where Andy Warhol presided at his famous round. The regular celebrities included Mick Jagger, John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Bob Dylan, Twiggy, Jane Fonda, Dennis Hopper, Warren Beatty. Patti Smith and Robert Mapplethorpe visited Max's almost nightly from 1969 through the early 1970s.

Max's closed in November 1981. The building survives.

9 *Max's Kansas City, New York, NY* *September 14, 2013*

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium
100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.
Edition 1/6 + 2 AP
Produced in 2017



Surf Ballroom, Clear Lake, IO

Opened July 1, 1948.

The original owners wanted to create a ballroom that resembled an ocean beach club. The Surf Ballroom was one of the first ballrooms in the state to feature rock and roll, and it became a 'must-play' venue on the performance circuit. The building is little changed since the 1950s. **The Everly Brothers, Roy Orbison, Ricky Nelson, Little Richard, Jan and Dean and Conway Twitty** performed here.

The Surf is mostly known for 'The Day the Music Died' :

Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and J. P. 'The Big Bopper' Richardson gave their last performances on its stage on February 2, 1959 as part of the 'Winter Dance Party Tour'. Holly had chartered a small plane to take them to the next stop (Valens won a coin toss with Tommy Allsup for the third seat on the flight). Shortly after takeoff, the plane crashed, killing everyone onboard. Buddy Holly was 22 years old.

Still in operation.

10 *Surf Ballroom, Clear Lake, IO*

November 14, 2013

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium

100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



Alice's Restaurant, Great Barrington, MA

This place inspired the hit song 'Alice's Restaurant Massacre' by singer-songwriter **Arlo Guthrie** from his album *Alice's Restaurant* (1967). The 18.5 minutes long song is a satirical protest against the Vietnam War draft. In November 1965, Guthrie was arrested for littering in Great Barrington, where he was spending the Thanksgiving holiday the home of his friends Alice and Ray Brock (in a deconsecrated church). Alice always hosted a large Thanksgiving dinner. The U.S. Army refused to draft him because of his conviction for that crime. **Guthrie bought the facility in 1991** and converted it to **The Guthrie Center**, an interfaith meeting and folk music venue.

Still in operation.

11 *Alice's Restaurant, Great Barrington, MA* *April 8, 2014*

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium
100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.
Edition 1/6 + 2 AP
Produced in 2017



Intramural Sports Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

The Intramural Sports Building was built in 1928 as the first collegiate recreation building in the country. **In the 1960's**, the University hosted concerts by musicians including **The Righteous Brothers, The Four Tops, The Beach Boys, and Dionne Warwick**. On Friday night October 20 1967 **The Doors** were scheduled. Attended by a surprisingly small audience, the concert would turn out to be a memorable disaster.

The band first took the stage without singer **Jim Morrison**, then withdrew and returned later, this time accompanied by Morrison, who was drunk, could barely stand up, couldn't sing and eventually started berating the audience and throwing things into the crowd. At some point the singer was persuaded to leave the stage. Legend has it that after almost everyone had left, the Doors returned to the stage, with a sober Jim Morrison, and gave a flawless concert.

A young Jim Osterberg was there that night and found inspiration in Morrison's stage persona. He adopted the name **Iggy Pop**, and with his band **The Stooges** went on to influence rock and roll history with his own outrageous onstage presence.

Closed for renovation.

12 Intramural Sports Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI April 22, 2015

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium

100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



Conway Recorders, Los Angeles, CA

Conway Recording Studios is a recording facility in Hollywood. Opened in 1972.

Conway has hosted artists such as **Carlos Santana, Foo Fighters, Green Day, Guns N' Roses, Marilyn Manson, Metallica, Michael Jackson, Phil Collins, Prince, Ray Charles, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Stevie Wonder.**

Still in operation.

13 *Conway Recorders, Los Angeles, CA*

July 30, 2015

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium

100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



Village Recording Studios, Los Angeles, CA

Founded in 1968 by Geordie Hormel.

Santana, Johnny Cash, Ray Charles, Eric Clapton, Frank Sinatra, The Doors, Aretha Franklin, Peter Gabriel, John Lennon, Madonna, Pink Floyd, Neil Young, The Rolling Stones, B.B. King, Bob Dylan and Lady Gaga among others have recorded here.

On December 8, 1970, for his birthday, **Jim Morrison** rented several hours of studio time here to record his poetry. Portions of this session were used in the 1979 release *An American Prayer*.

Still in operation.

14 Village Recording Studios, Los Angeles, CA

August 1, 2015

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium
100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



Folsom State Prison, Repressa, CA

Originally opened in the 1880's as one of the first maximum security institutions in the United States.

'Folsom Prison Blues' (1955) : **Johnny Cash** was inspired to write this song after seeing the movie 'Inside the Walls of Folsom Prison' (1951) while serving in the United States Air Force. The song gives voice to the frustrations of a lonely, cold-hearted prisoner.

Cash recorded his live concert for the inmates on January 13, 1968, which was eventually released on the 'At Folsom Prison Album' (1968), and became a #1 hit on the country music charts in 1968 and hit gold 6 months after it was released.

Still in operation.

15 Folsom State Prison, Repressa, CA

August 25, 2015

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium
100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



Make Out Room, San Francisco, CA

Mission district live music/dance club in the center of San Francisco. The location has housed many differently named clubs over the years.



16 *Make Out Room, San Francisco, CA*

August 27, 2015

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium
100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017

Magic Shop, New York, NY

The Magic Shop was founded by Steve Rosenthal on Crosby Street in SoHo. MS was a seminal recording studio in the city.

Four artists helped make the studio's name: **Lou Reed** (Magic and Loss), **Suzanne Vega** (99.9F), **The Ramones** (Mondo Bizarro) and **Sonic Youth** (Dirty). In 1992 **Nirvana** began a run of six to seven years of recording at The Magic Shop.

David Bowie secretly recorded his last two albums, 'The Next Day' and 'Blackstar' in this room.

The set-up pictured here is **Blondie's**.

Closed on March 16, 2016.

17 *Magic Shop, New York, NY*

February 24, 2016

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium

100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



Club Desire, New Orleans, LA

One of Mississippi 's seminal rhythm & blues nightclubs from the late 1940s through the early 1960s. **Founded** by Charlie Armstead **on February 10, 1948**, for six years, until Armstead's death in 1954, Club Desire hosted **Ray Charles**, **Billy Eckstine** and **Count Basie**, as well as New Orleans legends including **Dave Bartholomew** and **Antoine 'Fats' Domino**.

After his death, Armstead's wife managed the club on a shoestring until the 70's. It continued to host musicians including **B. B. King**, **Bobby Blue Band**, **Little Junior Parker**, **James Brown**, **Big Joe Turner**, **Hank Ballard & The Midnighters**, and **The Platters**. In the 1960s, the club also served as an important meeting place for civil rights workers.

The club also earned a place in blues recording history in January 1952 when Modern Records of California rented it to set up a portable tape machine to record several songs by legendary Canton singer-guitarist **Elmore James**.

Demolished within weeks of Bitner's visit.

18 *Club Desire, New Orleans, LA*

March 15, 2016

Color coupler photograph mounted on aluminium

100 x 100 cm. 39.5 x 39.5 in.

Edition 1/6 + 2 AP

Produced in 2017



Statement

385 venues. 85 cities. 27 states. 10 years.

The LISTEN project is a visual catalogue of American Rock n' Roll history. It began in 2006 with a desire to image CBGB's, the iconic temple of Punk on Manhattan's Bowery before it closed its doors for good. That click of the shutter, days before Patti Smith played the last concert, spun into so many more. That moment stretched itself into a decade, composing a comprehensive visual mapping of American music's inner architecture. It took me across the United States in search of the recording studios, clubs, concert halls, arenas, ballrooms, churches, living rooms, prisons and fields where our most vital music was created, played, witnessed and engraved.

Experiencing music, listening, is an act both collective and personal. For this reason I stood in the spaces alone. Room is cleared for memory, which in turn accepts time. And time is the heart of music, as the pulse and rhythm of call and response.

LISTEN is my response. This tour has come to an end.

“The photographs she makes are lush, imbued with color, inviting, as if you're on the guest list.” Lenny Kaye

“Our lives can be encoded in music. Songs trigger memories. Memories trigger sensations. Sensations remind us that life is experienced through the body. I know where I was when I first heard Nirvana, for example. Maybe you do too, wherever you were. Rhona Bitner makes photographs – loud and large – that go through the eyes to fill the ears.” Rob Colvin, *Hyperallergic*

I am thankful to all who helped me get this far; the musicians, historians, and professionals whose knowledge and time made this project possible, to my ever-patient assistants who supported me on the road and to everyone who opened their doors and allowed me inside.

Rhona Bitner

385 lieux. 85 villes. 27 états. 10 ans.

LISTEN est un catalogue visuel de l'histoire du Rock 'n' Roll aux Etats-Unis. Ce projet a commencé avec le désir de graver une image de CBGB, le temple iconique du Punk sur le Bowery à Manhattan avant qu'il ne ferme pour de bon. Le clic de l'objectif quelques jours avant que Patti Smith ne donne le dernier concert, fut suivi de bien d'autres. Cet instant s'est étiré en une décennie, composant une cartographie visuelle exhaustive de l'architecture intime de la musique américaine. Il m'a conduite à travers les Etats-Unis à la recherche des studios d'enregistrement, des clubs, des salles de concerts, de spectacle et de bal, des églises, des salons, des prisons et des champs où notre musique la plus vitale fut créée, jouée, révélée et gravée.

L'expérience de la musique, l'écoute, est un acte à la fois collectif et personnel. C'est la raison pour laquelle je me suis tenue seule en ces lieux. L'espace est libéré pour la mémoire, qui à son tour accueille le temps. Et le temps est le cœur de la musique, comme la pulsation et le rythme de l'appel et de la réponse.

LISTEN est ma réponse. La tournée est finie.

«Ses photographies sont riches de couleur, attirantes, comme si vous étiez sur la liste des invités.» Lenny Kaye

«Nos vies peuvent être encodées dans la musique. Les chansons déclenchent des souvenirs. Les souvenirs déclenchent des sensations. Les sensations nous rappellent que la vie s'expérimente par le corps. Je sais où j'étais quand j'ai entendu Nirvana pour la première fois, par exemple. Peut-être que vous aussi, où que vous étiez. Rhona Bitner fait des photographies – sonores et imposantes – qui traversent les yeux pour remplir les oreilles.» Rob Colvin, Hyperallergic

Je suis reconnaissante à tous ceux qui m'ont permis d'arriver jusqu'ici; aux musiciens, aux historiens et aux professionnels dont le savoir et le temps ont rendu ce projet possible, à mes assistants infiniment patients qui m'ont encouragée sur la route et à tous ceux qui m'ont ouvert leur porte et m'ont accueillie.