EMPAC STAFF

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Eric Brucker / Lead Video Engineer
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Kathleen Forde / Curator, Time-Based Arts
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I've had a Google alert for the words “actual reality” for several years now, and every day I receive an email digest of newly discovered instances of the phrase in context. It is a candid and democratic view of the Internet. The term is used by diarists, pundits, analysts, self-help gurus, and angry blog-commenters alike as a let's-get-serious reference to the common background against which imaginary things come together momentarily. Everyone should be able to recognize actual reality, or to compare things against it, to measure when we've moved too far from it.

“Little by little it comes into view like a condensing cloud; from the virtual state it passes into the actual; and as its outlines become more distinct and its surface takes on color, it tends to imitate perception. But it remains attached to the past by its deepest roots, and if, when once realized, it did not retain something of its original virtuality, if, being a present state, it were not something which stands out distinct from the present, we should never know it for a memory.”

—Henri Bergson, “Matter and Memory”

We experience sound moving from live utterance to processed signal, amplified and diffused into the room. We enact a translation, listening and responding to the processed signal, attaching new layers to it, and simultaneously forging and following a wave of sound that condenses into patterns and disperses into clouds. Simple video images form an anchor in time, progressing slowly, with action that is hard to perceive until gradual changes are made apparent. A flute, a lily, a newspaper, a triangle, a mirror, a discharge of smoke—these visual elements provide a medium through which to perceive a specific speed, a dilated scale of time passing.
Lucky Dragons is: Sarah Rara (video), Luke Fischbeck (audio), Margaret Lancaster (flute), Sato Moughalian (flute), Erin Lesser (flute), Deanna Schwarz (flute), Dana Jessen (bassoon), David Aron (percussion).

An ongoing collaboration between Los Angeles-based artists Sarah Rara and Luke Fischbeck, Lucky Dragons has been active as a band since 2000. They are known primarily for their participatory approach to making music, their radically inclusive live shows, and their playfully humanistic use of digital tools.

Rara and Fischbeck have presented collaborative work in a wide variety of contexts, including the Whitney Museum of American Art (as part of the 2008 Whitney Biennial), the Centre Pompidou, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, London’s Institute for Contemporary Arts, The Kitchen and PS1 in New York, REDCAT and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, MOCA Los Angeles, the 54th Venice Biennale, and the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, among others. The name “lucky dragons” is borrowed from a fishing vessel that was caught in the fallout from hydrogen bomb tests in the mid-1950s, which sparked international outcry and gave birth to the worldwide anti-nuclear movement.

Lucky Dragons’ sister projects include “sumi ink club”—a platform for collaborative artwork, “glaciers of nice”—a small press and internet community, “the elysian park museum of art,” and KCHUNG, a low-power AM radio station in Los Angeles.