

PRESS RELEASE – for immediate release

Usurp Art Gallery & Studios presents

Oorwonde (Earwound) by Laura Maes



Usurp Art Gallery & Studios
<http://www.usurp.org.uk>

Usurp Art Gallery & Studios

140 Vaughan Road, London HA1 4EB

24 February – 22 April 2012

Launch 24 February 6.30 – 10.30pm All welcome

Gallery open Thursday to Sunday 2 - 7pm Free admission

Oorwonde (Earwound)

Usurp Art Gallery celebrates its second birthday and presents Oorwonde (Earwound) by Belgium based artist, Laura Maes. Oorwonde is an interactive aural installation in which the visitor becomes a willing 'patient' to hear, feel, influence and manipulate the soundtrack of a fictitious operation. Speakers, electro-magnets, vibrator motors and piezoelectric disks entwine with the human body, creating a unique composition and performance. Based on Bernhard Leitner's philosophy that "listening is understood to extend to all parts of the body and sound to touch a deep nerve", Oorwonde explores the concept of bodily hearing as multiple elements target different body parts. Hearing is no longer restricted to the ears.

Oorwonde is as much a tactile experience as an auditory one as the sound waves emitted are designed to be experienced as sensations. Constructed in stainless steel with an operating lamp that beams a clear-cut bundle of white light, Oorwonde reflects its surgical allusions. At first sight, the sound work might induce feelings of fear. The actual experience is a rather pleasant one and unlike a surgical operation, the 'patient' is in full control.

In England today, the Health and Social Care Bill, proposed by the Conservative-led coalition government, calls for "reforms designed and implemented so badly that another major NHS reform program is guaranteed within five years," the leaders of the British Medical Journal, the Health Service Journal and Nursing Times wrote in an editorial simultaneously published in all three publications. Could Oorwonde be a metaphor for the idea that some of us in the future may only have access to fictitious operations?

Laura Maes is a researcher at the Faculty of Music, University College Ghent and is completing her PhD in sound art. She holds a Masters in Music from the Royal Conservatory in Ghent and a Masters in Marketing Management from Vlerick Leuven Ghent Management school. Thanks to the Flemish Ministry of Culture, The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Royal Conservatory and University College Ghent for supporting the artist's travel and transportation costs.

Notes to Editor: For more information and images for this exhibition or any other aspect of Usurp Art Gallery's programme contact Poulomi Desai: poulomi@usurp.org.uk

Usurp is a not for profit art collective set up in 2003 to develop opportunities for communities to work with artists and activists from diverse backgrounds. Open to experimental ideas in all media, we support artists to collaborate in research and action, and actively encourage audiences to participate in the creation of artworks that challenge conformity, prejudice and discrimination. In 2010, Usurp launched the only artist-led contemporary art gallery and studios in Harrow.