

Isle of Bute
Lee Mingwei

MOUNT STUART

May 9–September 30, 2010

ARTFORUM

New York–based artist Lee Mingwei made several trips to the Mount Stuart estate, on the Scottish island of Bute, to develop the concept for his new installation there, *Trilogy of Sounds*, 2010. On each visit, he found the Victorian gothic manor and its expansive grounds quite still, unlike the rest of his journey, which was steeped in



Lee Mingwei, *Trilogy of Sounds*, 2010, mixed media, dimensions variable. Installation view.

the sounds of the sea. Ultimately, the artist decided to create a work—his first major sound project—that would span two of the manor’s interior spaces and the natural landscape outside.

A large wind chime sculpture, made of bronze and wood, hangs in the garden. Its composition evokes two Taiwanese symbols: the circle, for enlightenment and the ideal, and the square, which represents the earth. The tubular chimes, created in Taiwan to the artist’s specifications, are suspended from a circle installed between four trees. Above, a woven net that holds them in place simulates a spiderweb; slate stones, sourced from local Scottish quarries, are arranged in a square beneath the chimes. The resulting sounds blend naturally with those of the sea, trees, and changing winds.

As a sonic companion, the sounds of music lessons can be heard throughout the manor. From the conservatory, the melodies of three live songbirds at times echo throughout the hallways. In encountering these scenarios—designed by the artist to explore the process of change, its potential, and our reactions—visitors catch a glimpse of something unexpected and indeterminate.

— *Lauren Dyer Amazeen*