

## Score Synopsis for *The Leaning and the Blind*

The score for *The Leaning and the Blind* highlights the differences between truth and appearances, hearing and seeing, as well as the elements of surprise, chance encounters, fleeting moments, and a small tribute to documentary film. It takes cue from the cross-cultural, multi-lingual, yet ubiquitously similar arguments and frustrations unexpectedly discovered in the video's original source audio, which starkly contrasts the peaceful serenity of blue skies and human stillness seen by the viewer. Samples of birds chirping emphasize hidden realities lying beneath the surface, while the accompanying instrumentation invokes a sense of the sacred. This is then broken by samples of camera shutters applied at the moment of perfect capture.

Inspired by the impact of tourists who flock to and take over cultural sites, the score uses bird song, mostly taken from sparrows. Much like their human counterparts, sparrows aggressively invade and restructure the ecosystems they occupy, yet can appear innocently sweet and without suspicion. The various species chosen represent locations that pertain to the artists and resulting work: Sri Lanka, where artist Sara Pathirane and composer Ariana van Gelder first met, Helsinki and New York City, where the artist and composer respectively lived at the time of production, Pisa, the video location, and Turku, Finland, where the video was originally screened.

Accentuating the meditative nature of the video, the score is composed of 70 unique and individually recorded notes created by drawing long, sustained strokes of a cello bow along glockenspiel keys and processing the resulting sounds through various effects pedals to enhance resonance and deepen pitch. The notes were then arranged one-by-one using computer software to form a sequence of 21 chord inversions and permutations, measured and matched to each distinct moment of stillness held by a particular video subject in order of length. The longer the pose, the deeper the pitch of the chord.

In a nod to the art of documentary filmmaking, the score's various camera shutter sounds include a hidden sample from David Attenborough's *Life of Birds* series, which features the lyre bird displaying its ability to trick the listener by perfectly mimicking the sound of a camera shutter. This sample was chosen not only as a humorous wink, but as a way of integrating the themes of imitation, repetition, parody, illusion, the interaction of humans and animals with the spaces they occupy, and documentation through photography and video.

— Ariana van Gelder —