

Galleries 5 & 6

27 August 2019 – 5 January 2020

Commission:

Eileen Simpson and Ben White

(Open Music Archive):

Once Heard Before



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Working at the intersection of art, music and digital technologies under the name Open Music Archive, **Eileen Simpson and Ben White** (both b. 1977, UK) collect out-of-copyright sound recordings to enable free exchanges and collaborations. This exhibition brings together two of their films – *Everything I Have Is Yours* (2019) and *Auditory Learning* (2016) – with a new commission, *Once Heard Before* (2019). Simpson and White consider authorship, ownership and distribution in art. The three works on display are connected by the artists' explorations of sound archives and their performative potential. Informed by sample culture, the projects reuse hit records from previous generations. Copyright-expired elements of the original records are extracted through an algorithmic process, to allow for collective use and sharing.

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Once Heard Before has been developed with a group of young beat-makers and MCs from east London, who mutate fragments of sounds and lyrics ripped from top ten records from the 1950s and 1960s. The resulting sound work features on a series of lathe-cut records, presented alongside a video of their performances. Filmed inside an anechoic chamber and composed of sounds gleaned from 1962 chart hit records, *Auditory Learning* focuses on the materiality of voice. A group of teenagers take up the microphone to experiment with beats and percussive sounds. *Everything I Have Is Yours* gathers musicians connected to the Manchester music scene, now in their 70s and 80s, inviting them to respond to samples that have been extracted from UK chart hits of their teenage years.

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In these works the source material morphs into new creative outputs: artists and performers imagine a new music vocabulary, across generations and technologies, towards an archive of future sounds.