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## Naama Tsabar's Broken Guitars & Sound Holes Transform Miami Art Museum Into a Playable Instrument

Naama Tsabar Presents Pieces of Musical Experimentation In Miami

Myrto Katsikopoulou | December 21, 2021

Sound, space, and movement engage in mysterious play in Naama Tsabar's latest 'Perimeters' exhibition, on display at the bass through April 16, as part of the [Art Basel Miami week 2021](#). Offering the potential for activation and performance throughout, the show focuses on the artist's most recent series, 'inversions', presenting new iterations of four bodies of work that Tsabar has been exploring since 2006.

In exhibition, the Israeli born, New York-based creative showcases a collection of site-specific works, in which she fuses elements from sculpture, music, performance, and architecture to transform the museum itself into a playable instrument. Fragmented [musical instruments](#), soundholes, and microphones are embedded in the walls, inviting visitors to activate them and participate in creative experimentation.



*Melodies of Certain Damage* performance (2021). Composed and performed by Ale Campos, Fielded, Gabriela Burdsall, Gabrielle Sheerer, Lee Muze, Naama Tsabar, Robbi Robsta, and Sarah Strauss.

Image by [Michael del Riego](#), courtesy of [The Bass](#)

## Readdressing Gendered Narratives Through Sound and Space

Naama Tsabar's interactive works reveal hidden spaces and systems, while readdressing normative gendered narratives, and shifting the viewing experience from passive observation to active participation. Using sound holes, instrument parts, and microphones, the [artist](#) points to the muted and unseen, cultivating sound through space and sculptural form. In addition, by collaborating with local communities of female-identifying and gender non-conforming performers, Tsabar contributes to feminist and queer discourses through movement, sound, and space.

The exhibition begins with artwork born through destruction. Referencing iconic moments in rock performance history, as well as auto-destructive art, Tsabar crafts her works by smashing guitars in her studio, documenting where the pieces fall, and creating new string arrangements for the fragmented instruments. Transforming the destroyed object into a newly playable instrument, the New York-based creative adopts an action that demonstrates the male-dominated legacy of rock and roll: the breaking of a guitar which was first popularized by the who's lead guitarist Pete Townshend. However, by disconnecting the violence of the destructive act and only presenting the scattered fragments, Tsabar emphasizes reconstruction and repair after trauma.



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## Sound-Making Pieces Embedded into the Wall

The 'inversions' series uses the intermediate spaces within and between walls and architecture to reference sound holes and the craftsmanship of instrument building. Acoustic studies have proven that the sonic power of an instrument resonates strongest at the perimeters of its opening, known as a sound hole. This sonic phenomenon is what led to the exhibition's name, as well as Tsabar's continued experimentation with sound-making structures. Embedded into the walls of the bass, each work opens a space behind the wall that can be activated by both museum-goers and performers.

Depending on the piece, activation is achieved by strumming hidden strings, singing, or through penetration and movement behind the walls to produce a sonic outcome. Tsabar's most recent 'inversions' installations are activated by motion, rather than touch. The sonic vocabulary emerging from the structures is derived from female vocalists, declaring the power and beauty of the female voice within the **exhibition space**.



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### **Intimate Works Breaking Through Barriers**

The works by Naama Tsabar require a certain intimacy, where visitors and performers must reach into the wall, or crouch on the floor to interact with the sculptural and sonic forms, at once creating a personal experience. At the same time, guests are also becoming part of a collective and symphonic experience as additional viewers activate the other works in the installation.

Tsabar's works probe the power structures inherent to museums, symbolically breaking through institutional barriers for participation by both artists and visitors by inviting women and gender non-conforming performers and visitors to permeate and penetrate the museum's architectural structures. Together, these gestures subvert and breakdown historical efforts to control behaviors and prioritize certain populations while excluding others, all of which have been tenets of museums since their inception.



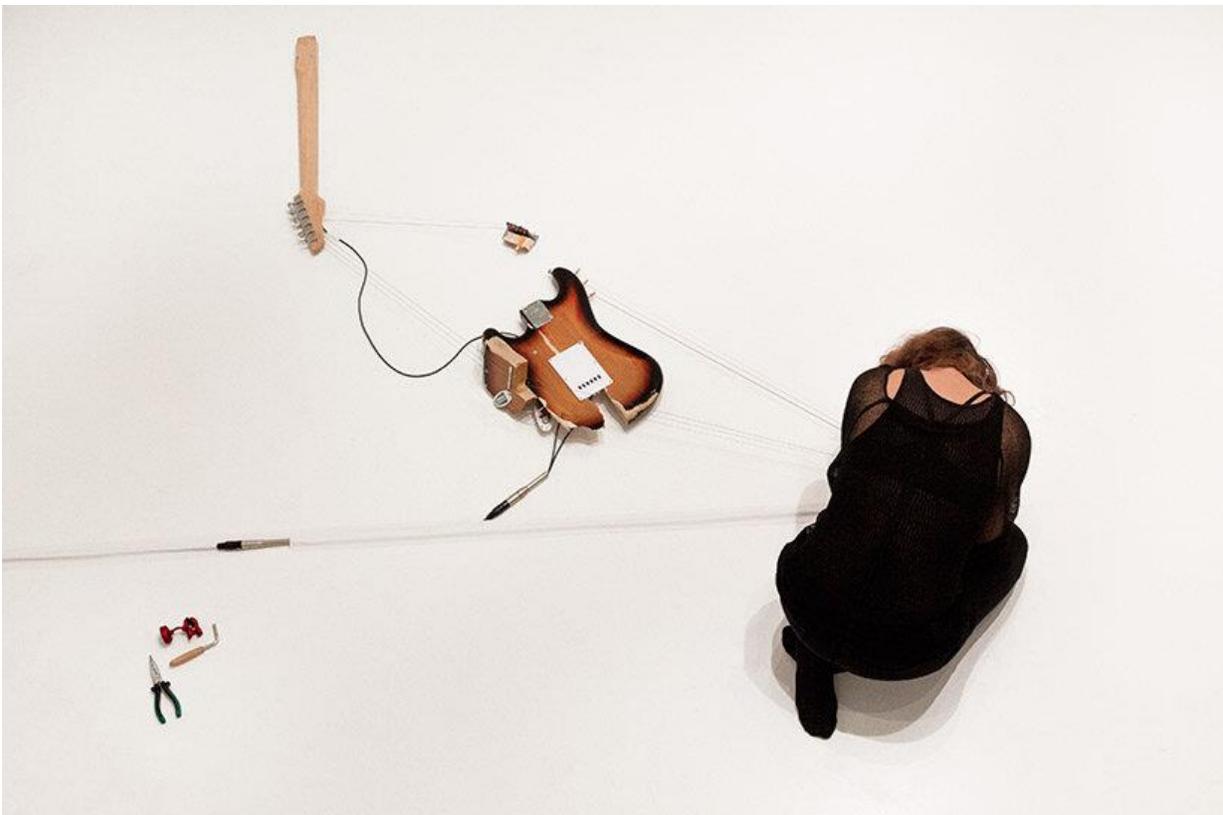
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*Melodies of Certain Damage (Opus 3)*, performance view, composed and performed by Rotem Frimer, Nina Loeterman, Maya Perry, Moran Victoria Sabbag, Sarah Strauss and Naama Tsabar. CCA Tel Aviv, 2018.  
Image by Eyal Agivayevm, courtesy of CCA Tel Aviv