



Concert Baroque
 a solo show by Adela Goldbard
 @LITHIUM Gallery
 Chicago, IL
 August-September 2018

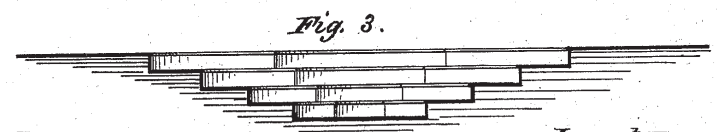
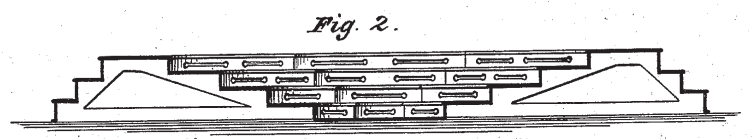
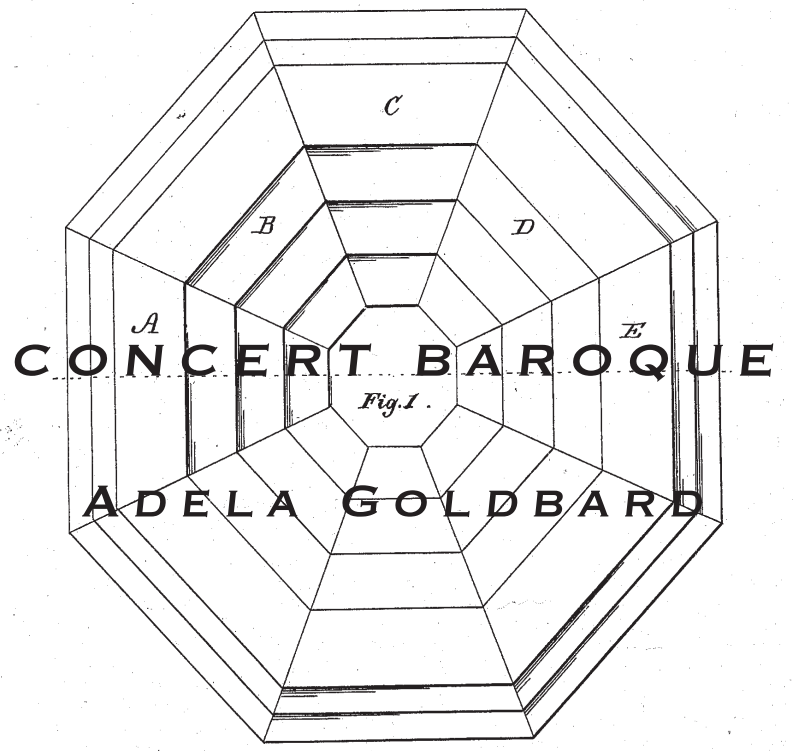
Curation- LITHIUM
 Sound Design- Diego Espinosa
 Trumpet- Joe Suihkonen
 Production Assistants- Roberto Romo/Paul J. Hughes/LITHIUM

Thornton Quarry
 from Google Earth

R. S. JENNINGS.
Trading-Pit

No. 203,837.

Patented May 21, 1878.



Witnesses:
 E. A. ...
 C. A. ...

Inventor:
 Reuben S. Jennings

BLASTING SONATA

The gravel pit, like other mining holes, is the reverse image of the cityscape it creates --extraction in aid of erection. [...] Like archeology, which is time read backwards, gravel mines are metaphorically cities turned upside down, though urban culture is unaware of its origins and rural birthplaces. [...] Like graves, these pits --whether they are dwellings, or burial grounds, or archeological digs or the remnants of industries that claim to keep us alive-- are eventually abandoned, their meanings forgotten, leaving stubborn scars on the land.

-- *Undermining*, Lucy R. Lippard

Limestone, a sedimentary rock that forms from skeletal fragments of marine organisms, was used in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to shape most of Chicago's iconic buildings, greystone dwellings and roads, and is still used as a building material, as an essential component of concrete, and as aggregate for the base of roads (asphalt). Extracted in vast quantities from south central Indiana (The Pentagon, the Empire State Building, and the Lincoln Memorial were constructed with Indiana limestone), limestone has also been quarried in Illinois since the early 20th century. Millions of tons of limestone extracted from local sites have been used to create Chicago's built environment, mostly as construction aggregate. By 1900, quarries in Cook and Will Counties produced about \$2 million worth of limestone and dolomite a year, which accounted for over 6 percent of total U.S. (www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org).

Thornton Quarry, just south of Chicago, is one of the largest aggregate quarries in the world. The first time I saw the colossal pit while driving on I-294 I was struck by its magnitude: gigantic gray ramparts that resemble an inverted fortification enclose dozens of minuscule mechanical beasts driven by mostly male workers. Blasting and quarry-

ing creates a dystopian landscape of classified and washed crushed rocks waiting to be taken away by construction trucks.

The quarry is 1.5 miles long, 0.5 miles wide, 450 feet deep at its deepest point, and it now also serves as reservoir to reduce the backflow of storm water and sewage from the Chicago-area rivers into Lake Michigan, an ironic restoration of its ancient aquatic stage. Fossils of animals that once lived in a shallow tropical reef when an ocean covered Illinois and Indiana 340 million years ago, are still recognizable in Illinois and Indiana limestone (and buildings). Quarries are negated archeological trenches, neglected ancient graves that allow upright cities to exist.

I still remember that eerie hollow mark on the mountain close to home. My mother explained several times that sand mines caused the cavity. I wasn't sure what she meant, but I couldn't take the always-changing shape of the scar away from my mind. It took me several years to understand that blasting the foothills and extracting sand, gravel, and crushed stone made those wounds appear on the hills. The mountain from my childhood has vanished. In its place now stands a 8-story concrete building with a nocturnal mesmerizing purple LED glow.

OPEN OUTCRY FUGUE

Of silver the slender knives, the delicate forks; of silver the salvers with silver trees chased in the silver of the hollows for collecting the gravy of roasts; of silver the triple-tiered fruit trays of three round dishes crowned by silver pomegranates; of silver the wine flagons hammered by craftsmen in silver; of silver the fish platters, a porgy of silver lying plumply on a seaweed lattice; of silver the saltcellars, of silver the nutcrackers, of silver the goblets, of silver the teaspoons engraved with initials...

-- *Concert Baroque*, Alejo Carpentier

The current Chicago Board of Trade Building (CBOT) at 141 W. Jackson Boulevard --for 35 years the tallest building in Chicago-- was clad in limestone in 1930. As other iconic Art Deco skyscrapers, it blends expensive materials and exquisite craftsmanship to celebrate technological and social progress. Modernity meets luxury in a facility designed to speculate about the future of agriculture, farming, mining, and oil extraction.

The largest and most diverse derivatives market in the world, the CBOT gave the trading pit its iconic character. The importance of pit trading is still emphasized by the use of a stylized pit as its logo. Similar in shape to mining open pits --especially gold, silver and copper--but radically dissimilar in scale, the trading pits were raised octagonal structures where open outcry trading occurred. Steps up the outside of each octagon provided an amphitheater effect, and enabled a large number of mostly male traders to see each other and communicate during trading hours. Coal, oil, copper, gold, soybeans, wheat and corn, even pork bellies are traded in what is known as a futures market. The shape of the trading pit, unwillingly, traces a connection amongst extraction and speculative trading.

In 2004 electronic trading replaced the trading floor and CBOT's historic pits were filled with concrete, meta-

phorically burying the futures market with the skeletons of ancient marine creatures.

Concert Baroque, an anti-colonial novel by Cuban writer and musicologist Alejo Carpentier, narrates the coming to consciousness of an upper class Mexican in the 18th century. A critical revision of Vivaldi's opera Montezuma, the novel challenges colonialist ideology and the hegemony of Western history through myth and music alluding Severo Sarduy's --Carpentier's fellow writer-- theory about Latin American neobaroque as a form of resistance.

Since 1994 the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) permits the exploitation of Mexico's territory and resources by Canadian and American mining companies. Nowadays 210 out of 290 mining companies in the country are Canadian. Between 2001 and 2017 foreign mining companies extracted from Mexico twice as much gold and half of the silver that Spain took in 300 years of colonization (Lemus, 2018). Extraction displaces and kills thousands of indigenous peoples around the world every year in the name of civilization and progress. Abundance becomes a curse instead of a blessing, bringing violence, loot and death to the poorest. Monetary speculation and the conversion of resources into capital need a neobaroque revision.