

# estlin usher

ARTIST BIO, STATEMENT

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## ARTIST BIO : SHORT VERSION

**estlin usher** (b. 1990) is a sound artist and composer based out of Chicago, IL, USA, working with field recording, abstract synthesis, electro-acoustic techniques, and complex sample manipulation to create immersive and evocative listening environments. estlin's work explores the sound of objects in the world, found sound, extant media, and how they relate to history, politics, and concepts beyond the traditional notion of music, sound, and noise.

estlin works in close collaboration with [X. A. Li](#) as [Post Consumer Material](#), an artificial industrial/experimental media and performance project. He currently serves as Co-Founder, Curator, and Director of Programming and Operations at [Leisure](#), an arts space in Humboldt Park, Chicago.

## ARTIST BIO : LONG VERSION

**estlin usher** (b. 1990) is a sound artist and composer based out of Chicago, IL, USA, working with field recording, abstract synthesis, electro-acoustic techniques, and complex sample manipulation to create immersive and evocative listening environments. estlin's work explores the sound of objects in the world, found sound, extant media, and how they relate to history, politics, and concepts beyond the traditional notion of music, sound, and noise.

estlin works in close collaboration with [X. A. Li](#) as [Post Consumer Material](#), an artificial industrial/experimental media and performance project; with Rush Falknor as IG Metall, a proletarian techno group; with Andy Klingensmith as Field Dept., a sound-art project exploring objects, site-specific recordings, and process-based compositional strategies; and with Ryan Dunn as re:, which combines Dunn's (mis)use of obsolete and broken electronics with granular synthesis and signal processing to interrogate the self-referential sound of the machine. He has written music for string quartet, heard on Circuit des Yeux's albums *Overdue* (2013) and *Reaching for Indigo* (2017), and has composed for film, including the 2024 work *Personally I Find it Rude to be Boring* which debuted at the 31st Chicago Underground Film Festival.

estlin has performed and/or exhibited at various venues across the United States, including on the 16-channel CLEAT system at Elastic Arts (Chicago, IL); at the Empty Bottle (Chicago, IL), the Logan Center for the Arts at the University of Chicago (Chicago, IL); Tritriangle (Chicago, IL); Tack Room (Chicago, IL); Mana Contemporary (Chicago, IL); CURRENTS New Media Festival (Santa Fe, NM); and more. He has released work on labels including Modern Concern, Public Utility, Structures Without Purpose, and Amateur Electronics. He currently serves as Co-Founder, Curator, and Director of Programming and Operations at [Leisure](#), an arts space in Humboldt Park, Chicago.

He holds a B.A. from the University of Chicago in Music Composition and Philosophy, where he studied under Füsün Köksal, Marta Ptasińska, and Augusta Read Thomas (Music Composition), and with Arnold Davidson, Ted Cohen, Robert Pippin, and Gabriel Richardson Lear (Philosophy).

## ARTIST STATEMENT : LONG VERSION

My practice explores the sonic residue of technological systems and the politics of mediated perception. Working across sculptural installation, performance, hybrid activation, and sound, I stage interventions that expose the latent operations of image, speech, labor, and obsolescence. Drawing on a background in classical music, I work with broken hardware, disarticulated language, and ambient field recordings to reconfigure sound not as a compositional object, but as a spatial and material force.

Many of my works begin with devices and systems in breakdown: obsolete iPhones, deconstructed monitors, delivery bags, found sound, and audio detritus. Rather than restore functionality, I treat technological decay as a site of aesthetic and political attention. These detrital forms are reactivated and recirculated through acoustic means—via subsonic vibration, spectral decomposition, feedback, or performative presence. Each work aims to decenter the norms of visual and auditory reception: a mode of “critical listening” that asks audiences to hear infrastructural, technological, and ecological ruptures embedded in the everyday.

Projects like *Eden* reflect this approach most fully: shattered phone displays become metaphorical and sonic vessels for original sin, fractured perception, and techno-mythology. Other works, such as *Rare Earth*, trace the extractive logics that underwrite digital mechanics, rendering the raw material of our technology into poetic gesture and physical presence. *Belltower*, an austere sculptural tower employing Shepard tones, and *Tactics*, my work with laser sights, surveillance cameras, and speaker arrays, interrogate how sonic architectures shape social control. In other pieces, multi-channel text erasures and NMF-based speech decomposition explore what happens when language becomes alienated and untethered from its communicative function, where comprehensibility extends into noise.

While some projects are durational or installed, others exist in the blur between performance and environment. I am especially interested in the immediacy and presence of enacting sound in space—not as spectacle, but as the activation of latent forces—sensation, vibration, feedback, risk, and contingency. Across formats, my work often resists the frame of concert or screen, preferring instead the unstable margins and in-betweens where bodies, machines, architecture, and ambient signals co-produce experience.

As a whole, my work is about revealing underlying structures often forgotten, camouflaged, or obscured. My aim is to create openings—for perception, for critique, for alienation, or subtle disorientation. Each piece is an attempt to sonify what remains unheard: labor, decay, violence, extraction, silence.