

1. Name of Project:

Twin Moons

2. Three words that describe our proposal:

Extraterrestrial

Collaborative

Conceptual

3. One sentence description of the work:

We want to create a work which combines the signal of the LES-1 satellite (which launched in 1965, ceased transmission in 1967, and started unexpectedly transmitting again in 2013) with a new ‘answering’ signal, ideally transmitted from another orbital satellite, and to output the result as both audio – ideally a sound installation/sculpture – and code/API.

4. Full description of the proposed project (500 word maximum):

The LES-1 satellite was designed and built by Lincoln Laboratory at MIT, and was launched by NASA in 1965. It ceased transmission in 1967. It then unexpectedly started transmitting again in 2013 – apparently due to the short-circuiting of onboard electronics. The satellite is currently ‘tumbling’ in orbit, causing its radio signal to only transmit in a short burst, once every four seconds, during daylight hours.

We were struck by the poetic nature of the idea of an obsolete satellite attempting to continue to function, like a faithful servant, despite slowly spinning on its axis, and despite the slow degradation of its half-century-old equipment.

We propose to give the ‘call’ of LES-1 an ‘answer’, which would ideally be transmitted from another orbital satellite, so that the two satellites can call out to each other in a duet, separated not only by fifty years of technological development, but also by hundreds of thousands of miles of space.

This duet would ideally be presented publicly via two arrays of speakers, installed to face each other, on opposite sides of a public space, either indoor or outdoor. The new ‘answering’ signal would attempt to fill the ‘gap’ caused by the tumbling of LES-1, responding to the implicit silences of the LES-1 signal with a matching sound or signal, thus combining the two into a unified whole.

The kind of idea that we are proposing can only make sense in the context of a collaborative relationship with an institution involved in space flight and orbital satellite production. There are only two of these in the United States – NASA and SpaceX. As SpaceX are one of the supporting institutions of the Art + Technology Lab, we would anticipate collaboration – ideally a process of deep and sustained shared research – with SpaceX, in order to bring the project to life.

The most ambitious version of our proposal would of course require an entire satellite dedicated purely to transmitting ‘responses’ to the LES-1 ‘call’. This would be – to put it mildly – very, very expensive. However, we hope that a more straightforward variation could be for our proposed responding call to be integrated as part of the software of an already-planned SpaceX satellite. As SpaceX have recently ramped up their efforts in this area, this could be an ideal moment for such a project to be initiated. Indeed, if it could happen in 2017, then the project could even be initiated in time for the fiftieth anniversary of the original signal-loss of LES-1.

5. CV of Kovács/O'Doherty, principal artists responsible for the project:

Kovács/O'Doherty – Curriculum Vitae

www.kovacsodoherty.com | mail@kovacsodoherty.com

Kata Kovács and Tom O'Doherty live and work in Berlin, and have worked as a collaborative duo since 2011. Their work combines elements of durational and time-based art, minimalist sound and composition, video, and movement. Their work has been presented by, among others, Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art (Porto), Sophiensaele (Berlin), Grimmuseum (Berlin), Kunstkraftwerk (Leipzig), and Bakelit (Budapest). They are recipients of the Tanzstipendium grant for 2013, and an international travel grant in 2015, both from the Berliner Senat. Their curatorial series, *Scissor*, has presented durational and time-based art from international and Berlin-based artists at various venues in Berlin.

Kata Kovács

Education: Diploma, Contemporary/Modern Dance, Budapest Contemporary Dance School (2002-2007)
Spanish Language and Literature, Eötvös Loránd University (2000-2002)

Born: 1981, Kecskemét, Hungary

Tom O'Doherty

Education: M.Sc., Multimedia, Dublin City University (2000-2001)
B.A., English, Greek and Roman Civilization, University College Dublin (1997-2000)

Born: 1978, Dublin, Ireland

Details of artistic and curatorial practice:

2011–present: Collaborative artistic work and practice, as Kovács/O'Doherty | Minimalist audio, movement and durational installation work

2014–present: Curators and organisers, *Scissor* | Event series presenting contemporary durational and time-based art across all media

Grants, awards and residencies:

- 2015: Grant recipient, International travel grant | Berliner Senat
2013: Grant recipient, Tanzstipendium | Berliner Senat
2013: Artist residency, L1 Association, Budapest, Hungary, September 2013 | www.l1.hu
2011, '12, '14: Artist residency | Ponderosa, Stolzenhagen, Germany | www.ponderosa-dance.de
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Exhibitions and presentations of work:

- 02./03.4.2016 *Increments* | Durational installation | Group exhibition with David Augusto, Rios Alomia and Takahiro Ueda Kunstkraftwerk, Leipzig | April, 2016
19./20.9.2015 *Increments* | Durational installation | As part of the exhibition *The Museum as Performance* Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto, Portugal
10.06.2015 *Echoes* | Video showing | As part of the exhibition *Das Blaue vom Himmel Versprechen* Das Spreehöfe Projekt, Berlin
04.05.2015 *Accompanied Walk* | Performative installation | As part of the inaugural *Montag Modus* performance night | Collegium Hungaricum, Berlin
28.11.2014 *Accompanied Walk* | Performative installation | As part of the group exhibition, *Slowness/Langsamkeit* | Projektraum Group Global 3000
06/07.11.2014 *Increments* | Durational installation | As part of *Place Rhythm. Pulse* series, curated by Gretchen Blegen | Ausland, Berlin
04.06.2014 *Screen prints* | Scissor #2, Nachbarschaftsgalerie, Berlin
26.02.2014 *Echoes* (video documentation showing) | Scissor #1, Team Titanic Gallery, Berlin
11.05.2013 *Echoes* | Performative installation | Inner Courtyard, Aqua-Carré, Berlin
05.05.2013 *Echoes* | Performative installation | As part of the group exhibition, *Neither Here Nor There: Contemporary Irish*, curated by Jane Hughes and Enda O'Donoghue | Grimmuseum Berlin
23.11.2012 *Accompanied Walk* | Performative installation | Dual exhibition with Ciarán Walsh ESDIP Berlin
12.05.2012 *Interrupted Speech* | Performance | T-Werk, Potsdam
26.02.2012 *Retreating Sounds* | Performative installation | Tempelhofer Feld, Berlin
12.01.2012 *Feet* | Performance | Tanztage Festival, Sophiensæle, Berlin
28.11.2011 *Retreating Sounds* | Performative installation | Tempelhofer Feld, Berlin
31.07.2011 *Retreating Sounds* | Performative installation | Ponderosa Festival, Brandenburg
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Lectures and talks:

- 2014.09.28 'Sound, Movement, and Silence' | NAH DRAN: Tanzstipendiaten | ada Studio Berlin
23.04.2013 Artist's talk | *Beyond The Ring* | Artists' talk series | Berlin
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Research:

- 05.-.08.09.13 *Drone Pattern* | Research process | Rummelsberger Bucht, Berlin
01.10.2013 *Increments* (work-in-progress showing) | Bakelit Multi Art Center, Budapest
2011-present *Ice* | Research process | Berlin
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Selected previous individual work – Tom O'Doherty:

- 2008, Feb: Group exhibition | Spark Festival, University of Minnesota | Presenting sound installation work *Filling Vessels* in collaboration with Paula Matthusen | Minneapolis, Minnesota
2008, Feb: Group exhibition | Presenting *Filling Vessels* | Diapason Gallery | New York City, New York
2008, Feb: Grant recipient | Culture Ireland travel grant | For presentation of the sound installation piece *Filling Vessels*, with composer Paula Matthusen, at Spark Festival | With additional funding provided by Fulbright Kommission Berlin and Universität der Künste, Berlin
2008, Jan: Solo exhibition | *Plattenbauten Nachts* | Fenster 61, Berlin | www.fenster61.de
2007, Jun: Group exhibition | Presenting *Filling Vessels* | ZKM | Karlsruhe, Baden-Württemberg
2006, Jul: Group exhibition | *Filling Vessels* | Universität der Künste | Berlin

Selected previous individual work – Kata Kovács:

- 2013: Artist residency, L1 Association, Budapest, Hungary, September 2013 | www.l1.hu
2011 – 2012: Grant recipient, Grundtvig Scholarship, for nine-month organisational and curatorial program at Fabrik Potsdam | www.fabrikpotsdam.de
2010: Grant recipient, EU-funded Leonardo Scholarship Program | For participation in summer artist programme Ponderosa, Stolzenhagen, Germany
2010: Grant recipient, EU-funded DNA programme | For collaborative work with Bojan Jablanovec in Ljubljana and Budapest | www.dna-project.eu
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Further details, including extended individual curricula vitae, available upon request.

6. Artistic or creative merit of the proposed project (250 word maximum):

Twin Moons combines three strands of contemporary art practice.

Firstly, it develops from the forms of post-1960s minimalism, conceptualism, and post-conceptualism – particularly the approach of overlaying or intervening in an existing context or situation.

Secondly, it references the art-historical and cultural heritage of duets and pairs, both real and implied – from medieval and renaissance images of the Pietà, to the diptych as an enduring form of representation, to portrayals of dancing pairs, lovers, and companions, to Beckett's Krapp arguing with a tape of his younger self.

Thirdly, it acknowledges previous works of art that are either about space, or are actually extraterrestrial – such as the Voyager Golden Records, the Fallen Astronaut sculpture, and the 'blue marble' photograph of the earth from Apollo 17.

In overlaying these three strands, *Twin Moons* situates itself as an artistically meritorious work occurring within an historical context.

7. Considerations of this project as a meaningful exploration of emerging technology. (250 word maximum):

The project is concerned with the artistic potential of a new and emerging era of routine space-flight – something which seemed, a half-century ago, to be both utopian and imminent, and which seems to now be finally on the cusp of possibility. However, it is also an exploration of the ways in which these capabilities can be combined with other strands of available technology – making data available, analysing audio, and publishing elements online.

At the same time, it seeks to emphasise the ways in which these emerging technologies connect to their mid-20th-century forebears, and explore the ways in which emerging technology acknowledges its existing heritage.

8. Considerations of this project as inspiration for dialogue about the issues at hand, including the relationship between technology and culture (250 word maximum):

Twin Moons combines emergent technology with its shadow: obsolete remnants. In doing so, it foregrounds an ambiguity about the relationship between technology and culture, not least because a central aim of the project will be a partial resurrection of a discarded object.

As contemporary technology always urges onwards – demanding harder, better, faster, and stronger – it has to simultaneously build on and ignore what came before. We hope to make use of advanced technology as a way to emphasise this ambiguous shadow, and to inspire dialogue about this cultural and technological paradox.

9. Proposed plan for public engagement, sharing prototypes, demonstrations and process with the public. (100 word maximum):

Both during the time that we would spend in Los Angeles, and during our anticipated preparatory work in Berlin, we would be eager to facilitate public engagement. We propose to open our process to the public in various forms. We would be eager to work on conventional approaches to public engagement – artist talks, workshops, leaflets, discussions, and other similar methods. Additionally, we would be eager to give ongoing online and social-media updates. However, as we anticipate working on a combination of software and hardware, we would also be eager to open-source our work as it develops – either via GitHub or similar tools, or else in interactive prototypes of audio and code.

10. Produced data that may be of interest to other artists, technologists, or arts organizations (250 word maximum):

We anticipate that the two signals that we would be working with would not only be presented as audio, but also would be made available as a series of APIs or data streams. This could include location data (of both satellites, their distances from observers and each other), audio data (pitch, tone, volume, etc), and more. Despite the deliberate minimalism of the anticipated result, the two sources would still generate significant bodies of information that could be open-sourced.

11. Other sources of funding for this project:

We have no other current funding or support for this project. (Indeed, due to the nature of the project, and the nature of the institutional support given by both SpaceX and the Art + Technology Lab, then the project would be unlikely to happen at all without happening in the context of support offered by the Art + Technology Lab.) If accepted, we would intend to apply for further production support from the Berliner Senat, as well as for travel support.

12. Total amount requested: [REDACTED]

13. Detailed project budget – *Twin Moons* – May 2016 – February 2017

	Quantity	Unit	Unit cost	Total cost
1. Fees and Expenses 1st Phase (Berlin)				
1.1. Personell costs				
1.1.1 Artist fee	2	persons	█	█
1.1.2 Software development fee	1	persons	█	█
1.1.3 Hardware development fee			█	█
1.2 Material costs				
1.2.1 Speakers, amp, cables			█	█
1.2.2 Hardware material costs			█	█
1.3 In-kind support				
1.3.1 Technical support and mentoring from SpaceX				
Subtotal:				█
2. Fees and Expenses 2nd Phase (Los Angeles)				
2.1. Administration costs for Visa				
2.1.1 Legal consultations			█	█
2.1.2 Visa application fees	3	persons	█	█
2.2.Travel costs Berlin-LA-Berlin	3	persons	█	█
2.3. Accommodation	3	persons		
	19	nights	█	█
2.4. Production costs				
2.4.1 Personell costs				
2.4.1.1 Artist fee	3	persons	█	█
2.4.1.2 Per diem	3	persons		
	20	days	█	█
2.4.2 Material costs for installation				
2.4.2.1 Speakers with stands, amp, cables			█	█
2.4.2.2 Mixer			█	█
2.4.3 In-kind support				
2.4.3.1 Satellite software programming				
Subtotal:				█
Contingency:				█
TOTAL:				█

Notes:

1.1.1/2 Artist and Software development fee	5 hrs a week for 9 months, █ an hour
2.3 Accommodation	Federal per diem rates in California for 2016
2.4.1.1 Artist fee	Flat rate
2.4.1.2 Per diem	Federal per diem rates in California for 2016

14. Images

Image 1.

LES-1 and LES-1 Responder

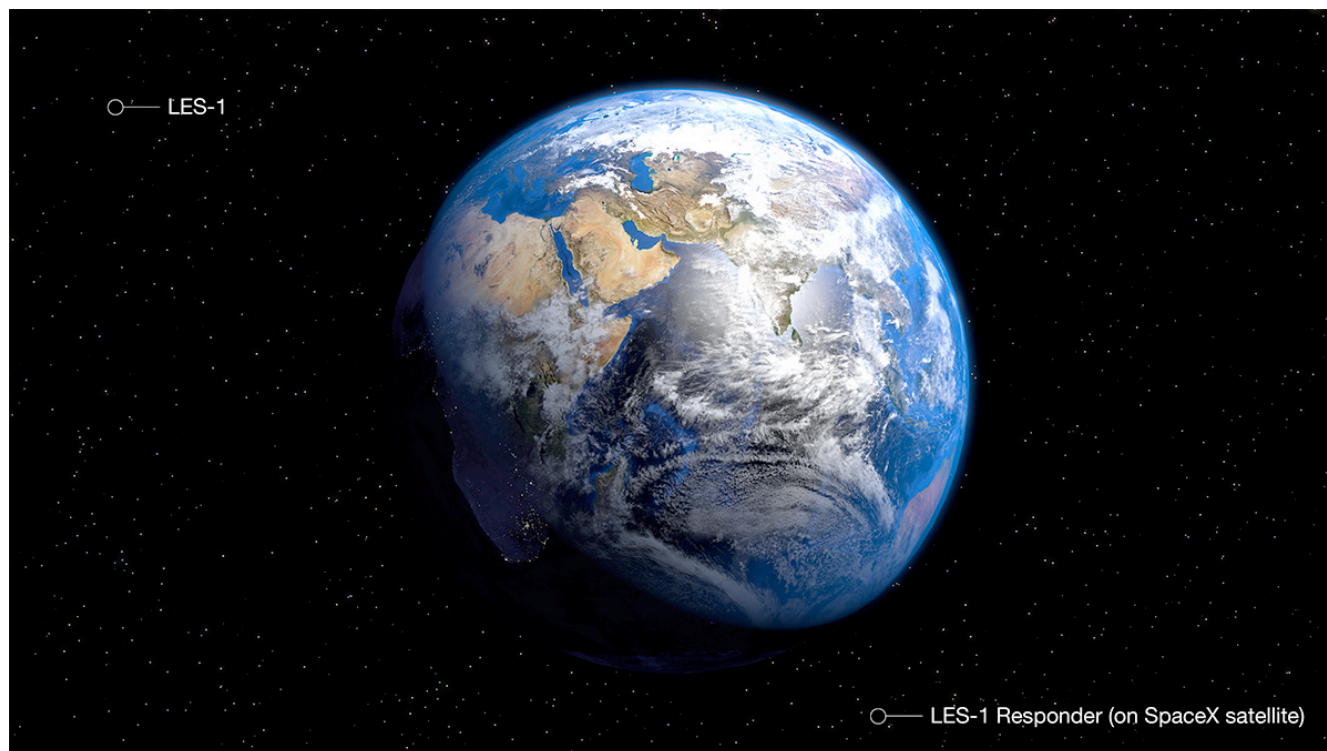


Image 2.

Possible outdoor speaker array locations

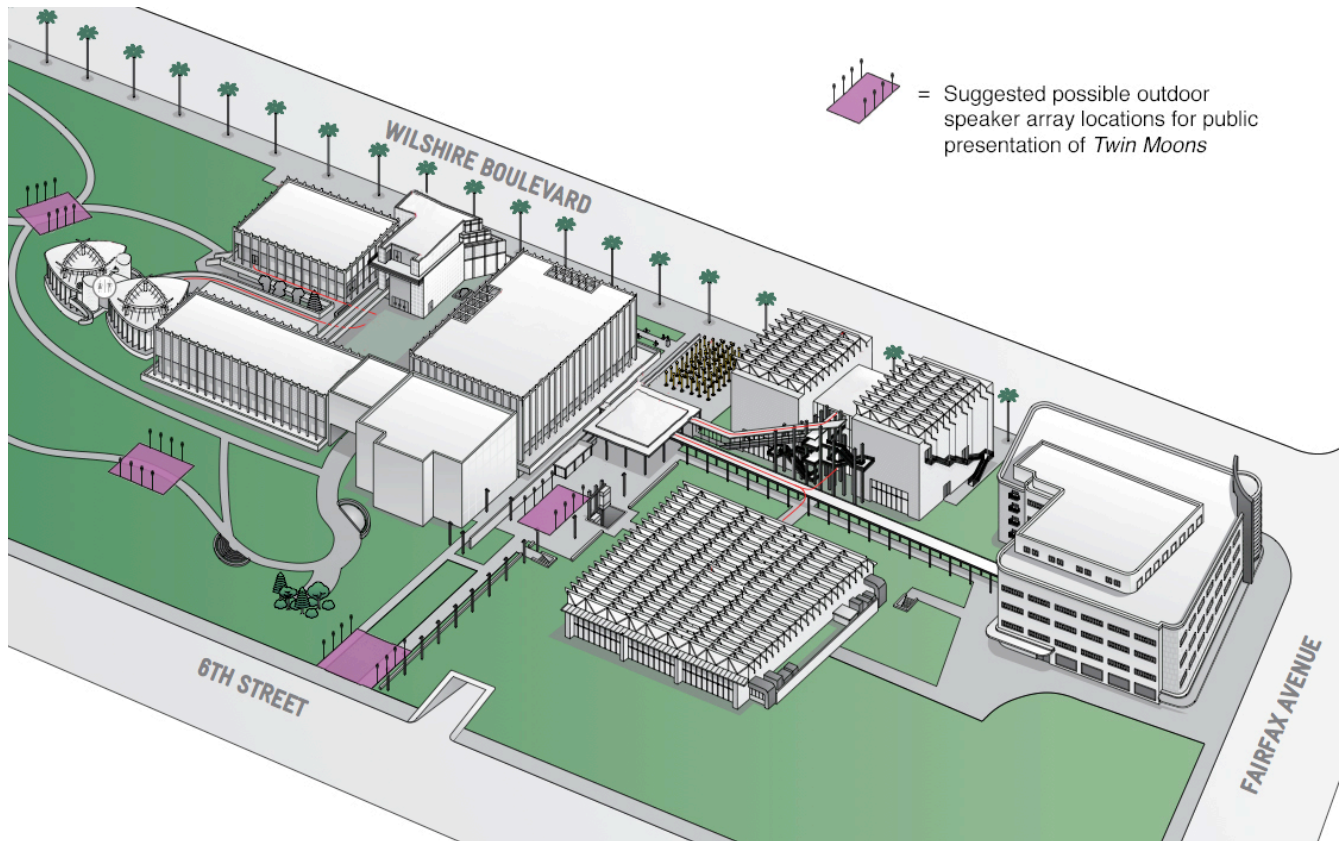


Image 3.

Mockup of possible outdoor speaker array arrangement



Image 4.

Mockup of possible indoor speaker array arrangement



15. Implementation plan

KEY MILESTONES	TIME PERIOD	FUNDS NEEDED
Phase 1 (Berlin)		
Part A:	Part A: May – Sept 2016	
– Definition of details and specifics with LACMA		
– Collaborative work with SpaceX – find contact person		
– Consultation about plans and technical needs between SpaceX, artists and software developer		
Part B:	Part B: Sept 2016 – Jan 2017	
– Initiate software development with Berlin based software developer		
– Develop conceptual and technical details		
– Hardware development		
Phase 2 (Los Angeles)	February 2017	
Part A:	Part A: 14 days	
– Collaboration with LACMA and SpaceX		
– Specifying location for installation		
– Final setup steps		
Part B:	Part B: 6 days	
– Setting up installation and presenting work		
– Artist talks, workshops		