

# Bernard's work visual, but evokes sound

By Kristen Peterson

LAS VEGAS SUN

Cindy Bernard has a sound reputation.

The founder of the Society for the Activation of Social Space through Art and Sound (SAS-SAS) coordinates experimental music programs in "unconventional locations."

Her annual "sound." series brings together an unlikely mix of instruments and somewhat-obscure musicians at the Schindler House in Los Angeles.

Her "sound.photos" capture the social atmosphere that transpires at music events.

Additionally, her digital collaborations with Joseph Hammer will be part of the Visual Music exhibition at the

Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, where their work is already part of the collection in the museum's Digital Gallery.

But her recent work, a series of photographs on public band shells opening today at the Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery, is much more quiet. The

band shells, found mostly throughout the Midwest, stare at the camera, their mouths agape and bodies empty. You imagine the sound. You imagine the events.

They were photographed with Bernard standing in nearly the same location for each shot: center and in the back row. They're shot straight on, ignoring basic rules of photography and abstract intrigue. Some were taken in the off-season and are buried in snow.

"I originally thought about shooting them populated," Ber-



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Damon Shair and Damien Gilley unpack photographs by Cindy Bernard inside the Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery at UNLV on Tuesday. The exhibit features photographs of public bandshells from around the United States.

nard said. "By leaving them empty, they constitute all concerts past and future."

The structures, she explained, are signs of a "kind of civic responsibility, an architecture of public commons and a kind of philanthropy."

The band shells were shot while Bernard was a visiting artist at Northwestern University, and she focused on structures where concerts are free to the public.

"I was reading 'Noise: A Political Economy of Music,' how ticket prices mediate the experience of music, what constitutes productive exchange between performer and musician and what money does to that exchange," she said.

The exhibit arrives in the wake of Bernard's role as visiting artist at UNLV during the spring, where she spent five weeks working with graduate students.

She came to UNLV recommended by Pasha Rafat, associate professor of art and coordinator for the graduate program, who helps select visiting artists.

"I've known about her work through John Baldesarri, a famous artist who was here as artist in residence," Rafat said. "I admire her work, especially

● **What:** Solid Eye, Petra Haden and Mitchell Brown.  
● **When:** 8 p.m. Saturday.  
● **Where:** UNLV's Black Box Theatre.  
● **Tickets:** \$10; \$5 for faculty, staff and students.  
● **Information:** 895-2787.

images that make cross references to movies, music and landscape."

In Bernard's "Ask the Dust" series, the artist explores the relationship between photography, memory cinema and landscape, by photographing movie locations from films released between 1954 and 1974. The photos capture landscapes seen in such movies as "Vertigo," "North by Northwest" and "Bonnie and Clyde." The

sites are captured as they are without actors or props.

In conjunction with the public band shells exhibit, there will be a performance Saturday featuring Solid Eye, Petra Haden and Mitchell Brown, interspersed by readings from "The Inquisitive Musician," a 17th-century German satire that explores class and music by pitting beer fiddlers against the kunst pfeifer (the official city players).

Currently, Bernard has her public band shells photographs on display in a solo exhibit at the Margo Leavin Gallery in Los Angeles.

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