

Raised level for sound art at Frieze

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The march of contemporary art across our culture seems unstoppable. The term “visual art” already feels far out of date. The rise of contemporary art, both in the marketplace and in the public consciousness, has led to a strange inflation: a demand for ever larger and more ambitious projects, and a competitive quest for an ever greater imaginative stretch.

The palette has expanded to include not only plastic materials of all conceivable kinds but also elemental ones: earth (for which the sculptor and land artist Richard Long is notable); air (Ryan Gander’s work for Documenta 13 in 2012, which consisted of a breeze blowing through the gallery, for example); water (Random International’s wonderful “Rain Room”, from 2012); and fire (Chinese artist Cai Guo-Qiang’s spectacles, which are not so much firework displays as they are “explosion events”).

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