

series of musical performances.

The idea, hatched by the New York art collective Trouble, is to unsettle the routine of the standard performance space, according to Sam Hillmer, who created the maze with collaborators Laura Paris and Lawrence Mesich. The free-standing structure can hold up to 300 people, who can navigate a path toward the music or get lost in the moment. They may stumble on other performances, like a dancer moving very slowly through the maze.

“We wanted to shake up the art scene, and try to rediscover wonder and inquiry,” said Ms. Paris, who is married to Mr. Hillmer.

On a recent morning, the pair surveyed the 50,000-square-foot expanse of the Knockdown Center, a former glass factory, where they worked with a small team to set up the maze in one of its rooms. Some 55,000 feet of industrial twine, in shades of hot pink and bright orange, would be strung between a growing framework of lavender-painted 2-by-4-foot posts that would eventually form a complete maze pattern.



New York art collective Trouble Sam Hillmer, Lawrence Mesich and Laura Paris created ‘You Are Here,’ a maze and series of musical performances. PHOTO: ANDREW LAMBERSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

“The design allows for performers to be visible from anywhere in the maze, through this kind of op-art latticework,” said Mr. Hillmer, a member of the avant-garde rock band Zs, and the co-founder and programming director of Trans-Pecos, a nonprofit performance space in Ridgewood, Queens.

This isn’t Mr. Hillmer’s first maze, but it is his biggest.

The concept and its execution have evolved since 2007, with three different iterations being staged in alternative spaces in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Versions also toured to Chicago and Berlin. Knockdown’s will be the largest one yet.

The nature of the maze invites an unusual array of performers, said Mr. Hillmer, who looked for acts that don't always comfortably fit into fixed genres or blend into insular scenes.

"The maze is something that everyone finds familiar yet at the same time is disorienting," he said. "There's a lot of leeway to present things that surprise people."



Chris Fox threads brightly colored twine through parts of the maze. *PHOTO: ANDREW LAMBERSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

Mr. Hillmer will join his group Friday night on a diverse bill that includes guitarists Arto Lindsay and Loren Connors, DJ and producer Prefuse 73 and outsider electronic artist Eulogy.

John Fell Ryan, founder of the band Excepter, also will DJ. He has played in every variation of the maze. "In 2009, part of the maze blocked off the stage so even the band members couldn't see each other," he said. "It's different every time."

Mr. Ryan recalled once playing in a corner of the maze as listeners walked past him. "It brings back memories of elementary-school haunted houses, couch forts and making tents out of card tables."

Those memories might be more recent for at least one performer. Kazi Hoque, an aspiring rapper who is 14 years old, will open Friday's shows with his anti-fast-food tune, "Staying Fit is Lit." He is part of the art-and-literacy program of the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services, which serves youth in Brooklyn and Queens. Ms. Paris and Mr. Hillmer both have ties to the Coalition, she as associate executive director, and he as a former employee.

"This is huge news for me," said Kazi, who lives in Woodside, Queens. "All these people

are going to be there. I'm kind of nervous, too, but I know I'm going to have a blast."



Resin body parts for 'You Are Here' PHOTO: ANDREW LAMBERSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

In addition, through another Trans-Peco nonprofit partnership, the event will include performers with developmental disabilities.

While such community engagement underscores a certain egalitarian spirit behind the maze, the title "You Are Here" also evokes the philosophical.

"We're all rushing about trying to get somewhere and not being in the present," Ms. Paris said. As a reminder, she added, "We're putting annoying cheerful aphorisms at each dead end."

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