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## INTERVIEW: Wilco's Nels Cline Discusses New Composition for the Ken Price '9 Eggs' Exhibition

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Wilco guitarist Nels Cline proved the degree to which he could stand apart from his exalted band with last year's excellent solo album *Lovers*. But this Thursday at New York's [Franklin Parrasch Gallery](#), he will unveil something much more unusually conceptual: the performance of his composition written specifically to accompany the exhibition of *9 Eggs* by the late artist [Ken Price](#).

The ceramic sculptures were created by Price between 1961 and 1970, and later described by fellow artist Ed Ruscha as "psycho-erotic." We caught up with Cline to discuss his inspiration, and what we might expect of the intriguing evening.

### How did the Franklin Parrasch Gallery collaboration come about?

Franklin is good friends with my good friend David Breskin, who is a music producer, published author, book designer, and an avid/knowledgable art collector; he actually produced several of my recordings, including *Lovers*. David wrote text for the large Price monograph that appeared a few years ago, and he is also the man who exposed me to Price's work. Somehow or another this idea of having some type of musical performance relating to these "egg" pieces was hatched – sorry! – between Franklin and David. David wrote to me asking whether or not I was interested. I replied YES!

### Have you always had an interest in the intersection of music and the visual arts?

Actually, yes. My twin brother Alex and I were exposed to art early in life by our parents and we always somehow connected these worlds naturally, even if it was/is simply that such inspiration drawn from the visual art world informs our musical work. In my case, I find that often the art world is instrumental in expanding my perception and bolstering or emboldening any singularities I may possess as an artist – making me less hesitant or sheepish about things that I may have doubt about as I look askance at their possible abstruse or oblique aspects. Sometimes this is a "felt experience" – to invoke a Robert Motherwell term – and sometimes it is a thought-based or purely conceptual leap. These potent examples challenge me and can be exhilarating. They feed my creativity, often freeing me in some sense.

### Does visual art directly influence your songwriting in any way?

It's pretty hard to say with any real specificity, but the realm of creative endeavor is generally where I have always felt the most at home on this planet. I do strive at times to get close sonically to sensations I receive from various visually-oriented art; but to pin this down is kind of difficult. It's a subtle exchange or confluence.

**How did you approach composing the *9 Eggs* piece?**

The artwork is very intriguing and, at times, beguiling. It seems to reside in a realm that is equal parts Earth/flesh and some cosmic, far away mystery world. My intention was to come up with slightly differing strategies/parameters for each egg in lieu of totally worked out compositions and improvise briefly around these ideas to create my sonic picture, if you will, of these magical objects. There will not be much notated music, if any.

**What can we expect from the performance at Franklin Parrasch?**

Besides what I described in my earlier answer above, I plan to bring my array of electronic effects processors and whatnot, as well as utilize different guitars and/or guitar tunings to make some fairly abstract and sometimes miniature pieces that will, I hope, possess some of the magical qualities I sense in these pieces of Mr. Price's.

**And finally, your solo album *Lovers* was released last fall. Are you still out promoting it, playing the songs live?**

Yes indeed. Performances are very rare and special events owing to the sheer size of the group that performs these pieces: 17 to 18 individuals. Our next will be August 5th in Prospect Park for [Celebrate Brooklyn](#), and there are four dates in Europe in the fall.