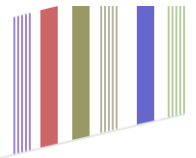


Galerie Mario Mazzoli



„ANLAGE“

Collective exhibition: Agostino Di Scipio, Michael J. Schumacher
boris d hegenbart-matsui and Douglas Henderson

Galerie Mario Mazzoli
Zimmerstraße 13
10969 Berlin

Collective exhibition
ANLAGE

Vernissage
Friday, March 27th, 2009
at 6pm

In its first collective exhibition, “Anlage”, Galerie Mario Mazzoli will present sound installations by four established electronic musicians:

Agostino Di Scipio, Michael J. Schumacher, boris d hegenbart-matsui and Douglas Henderson.

Opening: March 27th, 2009 at 6pm

tel. +49 (0)30 / 754 595 60
info@galeriemazzoli.com
www.galeriemazzoli.com

Anlage

Towards a Musical Protorealism

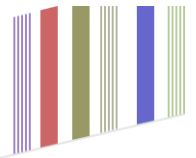
When we think of a “realist” artwork, we usually think of a representation of something that we can find in real life: something that is not the product of abstraction or imagination, and that exists or has existed in the same state in which the artist has decided to portray it in. With regards to music, one could see how certain compositional strategies were recently brought about with the effect of introducing a certain dose of realism in an art that had lost any direct relation with the way we experience reality. There is of course nothing realistic about a classical symphony, a motet, or even the music of an “opera verista”. There is, on the other hand, a certain amount of realism in Olivier Messiaen’s *Le Réveil des Oiseaux* in which the author utilizes transcriptions of bird calls as structural elements; there is a great deal of realism in a John Cage piece utilizing sounds from kitchen tools, or in an excerpt of *musique concrète* from Pierre Schaeffer. Indeed, all these authors have contributed in making us meditate on the artistic potential of real-life sounds.

MEDIA CONSULTANTS
Philip Krippendorff
Marienburger Str. 16
10405 Berlin
tel. +49 (0)30 / 440 10 685
fax +49 (0)30 / 440 10 684
mail@artefakt-berlin.de

Press information
www.artefakt-berlin.de

The presence of real-life sounds, however, is not sufficient to deem a musical work “realist.” In order for a piece to be intended as realist, it has to be grasped, as a whole, as a direct representation of reality. In these sense, the works of Anlage cannot be seen as examples of musical realism. These works are not sonic landscapes. They are not direct representations of real objects. They are not simply providing us with a fragment of something that we have or could have seen or heard. They do, however, exist in close connection with real life. Indeed, they enact some of the processes that contribute to our very understanding of what surrounds us. They are intended to make us question our ability to apprehend reality as a collection of clearly defined, fixed phenomena. They portray the reality of the unconscious, of the instinct, of man’s ability to receive multiple simultaneous inputs and evolve accordingly, as opposed to his ability to morbidly focus on the most obvious of these inputs. Like real “reality,” what is portrayed here is a dynamic reality; a prototype of our everyday experience intended as a nexus of continuous interactions; not a static one, a snapshot that can only be an incomplete representation of real life. Indeed, these “protorealism” works do not represent life, they create life, and then give it to us very directly, each dragging us into a sonic environment that forces us to reinterpret our own perception of reality. A closer look at each work of Anlage will show us how each artist achieves this goal in a very personal manner.

ARTEFAKT
KULTURKONZEPTE



„ANLAGE“

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„Stanze Private“

Agostino Di Scipio's „Stanze Private“ seeks to build an ecosystem: a self-sustaining system of life, upon which all agents, including ourselves, exert a fundamental albeit unpredictable influence. With „Stanze Private“ Di Scipio invites us to become part of his sonic ecosystem and to contemplate its evolution, while witnessing the unpredictability of nature, along with our inability to exercise full control over external phenomena, to seclude ourselves from unwanted influences, to establish our "privacy." As the composer himself explains, „Stanze Private“ operates as a self-organizing, self-regulating feedback system, a multi-levelled entity that copes somehow with what happens (sonically) in the surrounding. It has its own behaviour, but that is constantly being shaped by the surrounding. However, the surrounding is not something separate from the system entity itself. The acoustic energy it leans on, and lives on, is mainly the background noise in the room as it naturally resonates (and is filtered by) a number of much smaller rooms (glass vessels). That creates a unique, very localized sound world, in a blend of pure sounds and harsh, distorted events. Visitors are never in the presence of the work "as such", their mere physical presence alters the work dynamics. The small rooms are transparent to the eye and to the ear, but the relationship of seen to heard, of vessel to room, of sound to environment, is not obvious. Visitors are assigned a voyeuristic role, and a statement is suggested that all observation and enjoying of art includes this voyeuristic element. Only, this time the observer is not separate from the observed, the mere physical presence hearer affects what is to be heard."

„Enemies“

Michael J. Schumacher's „Enemies“ is about awareness. Schumacher asks the audience to reflect on the sonic world that surrounds them, luring them into a confrontation with the sounds that surround their every-day reality. Here too the subject is not a real object, but a real process, that of evolution of experience. Schumacher presents a plethora of sound samples – consisting mostly of field recordings and instrumental sounds – that are constantly rearranged around the twelve sound sources in the room. Such treatment does not allow one to recognize a clear pattern, melodic or rhythmic, leaving it to the audience to discover or create a relation between them, and between the sounds and the audience themselves. This approach reveals a particular attention towards the physicality of sound, which Schumacher intends as “a presence outside one's body that affects his/her relationship to the space he/she is in.” It is an awareness of the separateness of sounds from one's body, of the way they create their own space, and just like our awareness of reality this is subject to change, depending on one's position in the room and on one's entrances into the ever-changing sound space. This ephemerality of awareness and experience is a very important part of „Enemies“. Indeed, Schumacher is interested in the idea of an optimal experience that results from many factors coming together at a specific point in time. To him, “any profound experience is ephemeral, and „Enemies“ points directly to this temporary nature of experience, which is true of all art, but which is something that has become somewhat obscured as the focus has turned to the art object.”

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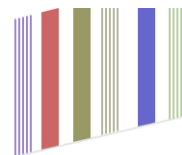
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„Feldern“

boris d hegenbart-matsui's „Feldern“ is realized entirely with recordings of human voices. His perspective is in a way close to Schumacher's: hegenbart too is tickling our “sonic awareness.” Hegenbart deprives a conversation of its real-life meaning to make us focus on the voices' timbre. He wants us to witness the complexity, and perhaps irony, of our memory, whereby when overhearing a conversation we are able to unconsciously store meaningful bits of information – during the so-called perceptual present – yet over a long stretch of time we can only remember a cloud of vocal fragments, a intertwinement of timbres and topics (as in a sonic identikit), rather than meaningful word-strings. One may just think of how often we describe a person by making remarks such as “he had a deep, secure tone, and he was talking about politics,” yet we do not remember exactly what he/she was saying. In „Feldern“ hegenbart decides to show us the beauty of this process, of our constant attempts to delve into the remote corners of our memory, digging out more details – at times fabricated or distorted – as our effort progresses. By walking into the „Feldern“, one does not listen to a conversation, but to the process of remembering one. It is a process of discovery, and just as in Schumacher's case, hegenbart wants different perspectives to evoke different details. His setup employs fewer sound sources: two electrostatic flat speakers, and one bass speaker. “As one enters the room,” hegenbart explains, “he can hear a distant sound. If he enters the field of the bass speaker he will feel low pulsing sounds. By entering the field of the electrostatic speakers he can stand in a light sound-cloud, and change the appearance of this cloud by moving around. The two electrostatic loudspeakers present two autonomous objects: sometimes they work together sometimes they interfere with each other.”

„See, we rise“

Douglas Henderson's „See, we rise“ is a metaphor for progress. The piece literally “grows up” starting from one sound. More and more sonic events are then added to it and moved vertically on the spiral-shaped sculpture, illustrating how a simple action can initiate a chain of events that leads to a higher stage. By including excerpts from previous works of his, Henderson asks us to see progress as an inevitable process, a process of self-advancement that builds up from memories of the past and combines them with every-day stimuli. In the artist's words: “See, we rise“ contemplates the nature of mankind's advancement, ever forward upon the steps (or the ashes) of the past. Progress, endlessly desirable, somewhat pornographic in its appeal, and in practice often destructive, is the subject. The title is taken from a late Paul Celan poem, “Leb die Leben”, an unusually optimistic work, and here Henderson struggles with the Hegelian dream of the future. The episodic sound composition is built from 92 recordings of footsteps ascending three different staircases. They march ever upward around the spiraling speakers, and using convolution (a sonic “morphing” technique), they are combined with fragments from previous electroacoustic works, the oldest on the lower steps, and rising chronologically; accumulating a personal history. The rising sound extends the physical sculpture outward in loops and spirals, in pulsating colors that recast the surroundings and the armature itself in changing hues and forms.”

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