

## Sorry I'm Late. XOXO Echo

21.2. – 21.3.2015

UOM (Nicolas Buzzi & Li Tavor)

Algorithmic sound installation

Echo is communication, potential of sound, language, temporality and a figure. Effects of echo in music builds one of the driving forces of SORRY I'M LATE. XOXO ECHO, an algorithmic composition based on natural sounds, modulated with computer-generated effects. The recording of a triangle and a chime builds the raw material: the instruments play simple one-note-sequences repeated in two varying intervals, which together form a new sequence. This pattern is recorded in one take of around 60 minutes. The notes of each instrument start with the same beat, their rhythms are drifting apart during the time of recording as their repeating interval is of different lengths forming a certain proportion. The recording of the instruments has taken place in the very room of the installation and demanded a musical performance as precise as possible while persistence is crucial. The core of the composition is the sequence processed through an algorithm, forming an arrangement of approximately 15 minutes, which then is repeated in varying harmonies, rhythms and melodies. It is based on layering of the raw material, which is additionally pitched and modified using computer-generated sound effects referring to phenomenon such as they exist in nature as for example the Doppler shift but are programmed in a simplified or exaggerated way. The variety of effects triggered through the algorithmic composition assembles a seemingly endless piece of polyrhythmic music. During the length of the exhibition the piece will never be repeated.

The artists Nicolas Dauwalder and Li Tavor follow traditions of electronic composition in contemporary music – but they are not only interested in the potential of achieving a polyrhythmic piece with using minimal and natural raw material in only two tones. On one hand the possibilities of (not to be experienced) liveness and on the other hand also of the spatial conditions of an electronic composition making use of the existing architecture becomes equally important to the arrangement: the replay of the composition is structured through speakers placed invisibly on different spots under the floor in the otherwise empty room, while the raw sequences are played simultaneously on two visible speakers. The composition is determined by the symbiosis of two contradictory poles: algorithmic precision used for generating electronic music and (human) imprecision in producing analogue sound. The slightest difference in timing between the tone of the instrument and the algorithm creates new sounds and rhythms. Furthermore the thus created music becomes “wide” and diversified because of the straightforwardness and at the same time complexity of the used instruments: the triangle and chime are idiophones. The overtonespectrum of the chime is simple and sounds therefore clear, while the tone of the triangle generates a very broad spectrum of frequencies.

The spatial arrangement of the speakers creates sort of an echoic communication becoming part of the composition. The melting of the analogue and human and the digital perfection of programming not only reflects the “accessible” potential of music (as art), but also points out the power of an “algorithmic regime” as it is today predominant in almost every sphere of life. SORRY I'M LATE. XOXO ECHO – the title takes up a set phrase emphasizing human imperfection and an abbreviation exemplary for mobile and digital forms of communication –furthermore refers, by its signing, to a figure from classical mythology outlined in manifold literary and artistic production: The etymology of the term originates in stories in Greek mythology on the nymph Echo. Echo's ability to speak is limited to repeat the last words being said to her. She is fleeing into the woods after Narcissus rejects her love because of her inability to communicate. Stories describe the figure Echo as a disembodied, voice, a shadow or fragmented figure. Giving voice (and body) to echo not only refers to mythology, but speaks against antithetic concepts of embodiment and disembodiment or materialization and dematerialization. The “alterity” of sound and the model of the “composer” as Diedrich Diederichsen calls it, is a resource to escape the dilemma of this obsolete terms crucial in certain postmodern discourse on art. Composition here is the search of material for a “language” between the algorithmical and physical, a quest, which could be seen as an exemplary problem of post-internet communication, information or entertainment.

– Judith Welter