

part in a high Minimal narrative pitched to perfection. This intense experience of spatialized sound amplifies awareness of one's physical perceptions in a reciprocal relation to the building's architecture and the works therein.

While a hi-fi fetishist might understandably have fawned over the Sennheiser Audio Beams — machines that project sound onto any surface, turning the very walls of the Kunsthalle's second room into loudspeakers — it seemed that, were this exhibition to be restaged in a near or distant future, it could probably be done with more advanced sound equipment. Likewise, even the aesthetics of the specific sounds and appropriated music loops seemed secondary to the interactive blueprint that generated the experience of the exhibition.

Well, I'm exaggerating a bit. Of course, what you see is never quite what you see, or in this case, what you hear. The post-hippy sentiments induced by a musical performance where participants play ethnic percussion instruments made with dried beans, wood, and stretched animal skin (“PASSAGE(S)”) ¹ are quite different from those evoked by a similar event using acoustic instruments and forty iMacs (“Regionales Konzert”). ¹¹

^I Théâtre de l'Usine, Geneva, 2011

^{II} Kunsthalle Basel, 2010

Although Weinberger is knowingly playing with the cultural resonance attached to these various ‘instruments,’ one never gets the sense of being presented with a referenced image, laden with irony or otherwise burdened, so much as a live, streamlined resurgence of idealistic communal aspirations.

For some reasons, I keep thinking of Hannah Weinberger's work in relation to Swiss artist Stéphane Dafflon, who started working in the late 90s in a neo-Neo-Geo mode, i.e. with an acute awareness that the hard-edged abstract vocabulary he was using vacillated between the rarefied field of the avant-garde and the industrial realm of advertising and commodity culture. Despite this condition, Dafflon never gave up on the idea that his paintings could continue to investigate perceptual phenomena and force viewers to consider the interaction between their pictorial space and the architecture surrounding them. This is a late Modernist concern that the artist deployed, much in the way one might fortuitously gain an extra round at the end of a pinball game. Taking his cues from industrial design of the 60s and 70s as much as from the history of radical abstraction, his hard-edged paintings exude an incredible

Working with Hannah Weinberger is, first of all, a transformative and even liberating experience that makes you feel like a part of the creative process even if you do not feel you are its author. Perhaps paradoxically, this is most evident once you have recognized how much of Weinberger's self is traceable in her own work, and how carefully she gives the final trim to each single detail as well as to the overall composition of pieces in space. There is not much difference between the commitment she brings to the realization of a performance or to a single work or a solo show. This dedication is also directed to all the people working with her: professionals, technicians, and friends. Beyond matters of form and content, it is this humane attitude that makes her work so unique and refreshing. To date, Weinberger has focused mainly on sound, creating dense and well-elaborated works that are almost always designed for specific exhibition spaces. Her way of working corresponds to a passion she has for music and sound which is limited neither by specific genre nor period in the history of music. Art takes its common experience that one can have while creating sound or simply listening with others. In Weinberger's installations,

That Strange Sound Of Sharing

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sense of optimism. This is still what the future looks like. Or, in Hannah Weinberger's art, in the hum of our collaborative and communal creations, how the future sounds.

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PM Which artistic models and/or models within popular culture are a precedent for your work?

HW Maybe it's quite simply related to get-togethers. Friends spend time together, they talk, they drink, they have dinners. Isn't this one of the most popular models? Instead of these single activities, I decided to bring them together and produce sound. In artistic terms it's probably called collaborative practice, but I would say there isn't a deeper collective approach.

PM Your work has been referred to with such keywords as ‘collaboration,’ and ‘participation.’ These modes of production relate, in part, to artists such as Philippe Parreno or Rirkrit Tiravanija — artists who are emblematic of ‘relational aesthetics.’ Do you see a similarity in your work and the conceits of artists affiliated with relational aesthetics?

HW I don't want to go into that. Although I know most things have a 90s connotation.

GJ What kind of music do you listen to in private?

HW I'm actually not bound to a specific genre... Blaze, U-Roy, Madonna and everything else.

GJ The second dominant element in your work is the modulation of space. How would you describe the relationship between sound and space in your work?

HW That is a difficult question. When it works as a performance piece, the space is filled with sound and it is only temporary. So in that case the space isn't a dominant part of the work. For my show in Basel the space was more something like time. There were five galleries of different shapes and sizes, one next to the other. Because different tracks were distributed in each gallery, you, as visitor, decided how to walk through it. I mean you influenced the sound piece by skipping to the next track by deciding how fast you walk. I think it's a choice to stop worrying about the gallery...

PM How do you conceive of each performance in relationship to site? How much does location-specificity appear in both the conception and the final product of your work?

HW I have to deal with my childhood and the promise that I made never to work with music or sound. You should know that my father is a professional musician. I'm trying to work through and expand the field of sound and to traverse a range of registers. I feel biased and non-binding. GJ I would also not consider you as a sound artist as you do not draw from any traditions in the field. Is it an advantage for you not to be aware of the history and current protagonists of sound art? my works at this stage are based on sound — music and sound composed with others as a performative act, or sound that I composed and distributed through different channels by using an installation, a system of site-specific speakers. Actually, I'm working out the draft for a film work. So it isn't only sound so far. GJ Why have you decided to limit yourself to the medium of sound? And do you consider it as a limitation at all?

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Conversation

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**Published in conjunction with
the exhibition
"Le Moi Du Toi"
Hannah Weinberger
Swiss Institute Contemporary Art, New York
June 27 – August 5, 2012**