

Stefan Winter

Opposite, You, Me

1-channel film and 8-channel sound installation

*Two lovers are separated from each other,
their isolation is to prevent the spread of their love.*

*They seem so close to each other and yet
they are inconceivably far away from each other.
As bodies and sounds they move like meteors, light up,
fade away and disappear in the distance.*

»Opposite, You, Me« tells of the space that lies between two people and within ourselves.

Opposite, You, Me

1-channel film and 8-channel sound installation

Written and directed by Stefan Winter

Paintings: Miwa Ogasawara

Music: Christian Mason

Recording Musicians: Ensemble Recherche

Producer: Mariko Takahashi for Neue Klangkunst gGmbH

The experience of distance and isolation has preoccupied me not only since Covid 19, in the end we are alone and yet we long for a counterpart. I think about images, sounds, and noises and about questions that have stuck with me for quite some time. Do we consist only of metabolism? Have we lost touch with art? Does our society still hunger and thirst for art? Do we need art and culture today? Is contemporary art a mirror of our culture? How far have we distanced ourselves from art? Has contemporary art moved away from ourselves? How far have we drifted away from each other? Are we already unreachably separated from each other? Are we still consciously a part of nature? How far have we moved away from ourselves?



Miwa Ogasawara's paintings come to my mind: »Lichtmeer«, »Natur«, »Weltbild«. Rooms awaken, opening new spaces. Sounds and noises resound from the pictures, as if someone had opened a window.

Christian Mason's composition »Zwischen den Sternen« wafts through the rooms. Bodies appear, at first quite rigid like sculptures, but they come to life, breathe, move, touch, unite, take distance, dive into infinity, disappear into solitude....

In a telephone conversation Miwa Ogasawara and I talk about isolation, aloneness, alienation, distance, about time and space, infinity. When I reveal to her my thought of creating a spade-spanning work with her paintings, Christian Mason's music, and the movement of bodies, she is immediately open to this artistic experiment.

I am interested in creating a new combination of three different, completely independent works [*painting, sound and movement*].

This work is about the fusion of visible and invisible art, about the opening of spaces that lie between two people and spaces that lie within ourselves.

Christian Mason also deals with distance and opposite. He is inspired by Rainer Maria Rilke's poem »*Zwischen den Sternen*« [Between the Stars]. Through Klaus Steffes-Holländer, pianist of Ensemble Recherche, I learn about Mason's composition »*Zwischen den Sternen*« and decide together with Mariko Takahashi to create a recording work of his composition.

Mason's music score is made in close exchange with the musicians of Ensemble Recherche, a special New Music ensemble. He leaves the well-tempered sound to let floating states arise and disappear. At the tonal center is the piano with a rapturous mood that appears like a flicker over the sounds of the ensemble. In the finale at the end of the piece, one body of sound [*the cello*] is left all alone, absorbed in an ecstatic improvisation, while the other sounds drift wistfully into the distance.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Sonnets to Orpheus / XX [Second Part]

*Between the stars, how far; and yet, by how much further,
what one learns here.
One, for instance, a child . . . and beside them another, a second —,
o how incomprehensibly distant.*

*Fate, maybe it measures us with the span of being,
that it seems strange to us;
think how many spans alone from girl to man,
when she avoids him and has him in mind.*

*Everything is far —, and nowhere does the circle close.
Look into the dish on a cheerfully set table,
how strange the faces of fishes.*

*Fish are mute ..., one once thought. Who knows?
But is there not in the end a place, where what would be the fishes'
language, speaks without them?*

In my inner imagination, »*Opposite, You, Me*« is created. This sound art work tells in the interaction of different art forms, for which the traditional vocabulary of music, opera, theater and visual arts is no longer sufficient, without wanting to replace them, about closeness, separation, escape, search, injury, union, love, touch, distance, fear, loss, loneliness ...

In a 1-channel-film- and 8-channel-sound-installation a new room is established.

It is about the creation of sound art with vivid images, about the art of music of our time and about movement, grace, power and vulnerability of bodies and soul.

Intermedial art forms work together as equal elements.

— Stefan Winter, Munich, July 2021



Postscript:

Tanabata

The bridge for the lovers over the great heavenly river Milky Way

On July 7, Japan celebrates Tanabata [*seventh night or night of the seventh*]. Tanabata, also known as the Star Festival, or Milky Way Festival, has its origins in the Chinese Qixi Festival.

It celebrates the meeting of the lovers Orihime and Hikoboshi [*symbolized by the stars Vega from the constellation Lyre and Altair from the constellation Eagle*].

According to the legend, the river of the Milky Way separates these lovers, and they can meet only once a year, on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month of the lunar calendar [*July 7*].

Background:

Princess Orihime, daughter of Tentei [*Sky King, or the universe itself*], woven beautiful dresses on the banks of the Amanogawa [*Milky Way, literally »Heavenly River«*]. Her father loved the cloth she woven, so she worked very hard every day to weave it. Orihime was sad, however, because she could never meet anyone because of her hard work and thus could not fall in love. Out of concern for his daughter, Tentei arranged for her to meet with Hikoboshi [*Shepherd, Star of the Shepherds, literally »Boy Star«*] who lived and worked on the other side of the great heavenly river Milky Way.

When the two met, they immediately fell in love and got married. However, after the marriage Orihime did not want to continue weaving fabrics for her father Tentei and so he did not get any new clothes. Hikoboshi also neglected his work, he let his cows roam unattended through the whole sky and the cows became sick. Angry and upset, Tentei separated the two lovers. Hikoboshi was banished to the other side of the »Heavenly River«, the Milky Way. Tentei forbade them to meet.

Orihime despaired of the loss of her husband and begged her father to let them get back together. Tentei was moved by his daughter's tears and allowed them to meet on the 7th day of the 7th month when she worked hard and finished weaving.

However, when they wanted to meet for the first time, they realized that they could not cross the Milky Way River because there was no bridge. Orihime cried so much that a swarm of magpies came and promised to build a bridge with their wings so that they could cross the river of the Milky Way.

However, when it rained on Tanabata, the magpies could not come to build the bridge because of the rise of the river, and the two lovers had to wait another year before they could come together. The rain that day is still called »*The Tears of Orihime and Hikoboshi*«.

In Japan, on the evening before July 7th, bamboo branches are set up on which pieces of paper with wishes are hung in the hope that they will be fulfilled.

Opposite, You, Me

Installations

State Museum of Egyptian Art, Munich, Germany, July 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 2021
Portal wall installation in public space

Tom Reichstein Contemporary, Hamburg, Germany, August 6th, 7th, 8th, 2021
Room installation



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pro domo

It is incredibly difficult and inappropriate for us to put things about Sound Art into words. We are neither authors nor philosophers, nor art scholars or musicologists or teachers. Actually, we want to let sound art speak.

Certain things can only be expressed through art, otherwise there is no need to create these works. This is our mission. With Neue Klangkunst we want to make space in which sounds merge with other arts and media to create a work of art.

Sound Art is one of the most important new art forms. Leading museums around the world, the Venice Biennale, the Whitney Biennale, the Documenta in Kassel, and numerous exhibition spaces and galleries are opening up to Sound Art to an ever-increasing extent. It is impossible to imagine today's art scene without this art form. Sound Art needs its own spaces to open up new spaces.

We are convinced that there is no objectivity in writing about art, or in judging it. Anyone who comments on and evaluates works of art is — consciously or unconsciously — dependent on their own psyche and thus subjective perception.

Seen in this light, the only thing that ultimately remains is to trust in the own conviction and experience. This trust is based partly on intuition and partly on perceptions and knowledge accumulated over the years.

— Mariko Takahashi and Stefan Winter

Since the early nineties, Mariko Takahashi and Stefan Winter have been working together to create recorded works, performances, sound-, film- and room-installations.

In 1989 Mariko Takahashi started working for Polydor K.K., a major label of the music industry in Tokyo. In the distribution network of Polydor K.K. she discovered JMT (Jazz Music Today), a music label founded by Stefan Winter in 1985, dedicated to recording works of the emerging New York M-Base and downtown scene.

Stefan Winter produced debut albums on JMT by Uri Caine, Steve Coleman, Greg Osby, Herb Robertson, Hank Roberts, Gary Thomas, Cassandra Wilson, among others, but also concept albums by Paul Motian and recorded works by Tim Berne in distinctive artworks by Steve Byram with photographs by Robert Lewis, but also works by Thom Argauer, an artist and close friend of Stefan Winter. The special nature of JMT, to discover and document currents of the music avant-garde beyond the mainstream and to work with contemporary visual artists, prompted Mariko Takahashi to initiate a multidisciplinary festival to present the artistic environment of JMT in Japan. Her boss Hiroyuki Takei and his team agreed to her proposal to initiate a special art show with live performance.

In the fall of 1989, Mariko Takahashi and Stefan Winter met for the first time in Tokyo to prepare for this event. From the first moment on, an intensive collaboration developed. With team colleagues from Polydor K.K., Mariko Takahashi and Stefan Winter discussed music and art and created the concept for this special exhibition and concert series including artist talks. The first joint work with the title "Taboo-Lu" ("Breaking Taboos") were thus created. In the spring of 1991 "Taboo-Lu" took place in the Ginza Sony Building in the middle of Tokyo.

After this event Mariko Takahashi and Stefan Winter were geographically separated again. Mariko Takahashi worked at Polydor in Tokyo as product manager of Motown and A&M with Boyz II Men, Sheryl Crow, Steve Wonder... Stefan Winter led JMT, commuted between Munich and New York and produced music of the contemporary jazz scene.

In 1995, the New York City based Knitting Factory hosted a festival entitled "Almost Normal" for the tenth anniversary of JMT. Steve Byram created room-filling frescoes in cooperation with the artists Mark Kinsley, Robert Lewis, Warren Linn, Jonathon Rosen and Karen Greenberg. Herb Robertson presented Stefan Winter's "The Little Trumpet", groups directed by Django Bates, Tim Berne, Robin Eubanks, Mark Ledford and Gary Thomas performed, Marc Ducret presented a solo program, Susanna Schönberg installed video art and Uri Caine presented "The Gustav Mahler Document" for the first time with the video installation „Detaching from the World“, which Stefan Winter produced for Polydor K.K. in Japan. Journalists from all over Europe, Japan and the USA attended this event. It was a very exciting and emotional festival, because on the second day of the

program Polygram USA announced that they stop distributing JMT, because there was no more room for this niche program. On the same day, on the stage of the Knitting Factory, Stefan Winter announced in one breath the end of JMT and the start of the Music Edition Winter & Winter.

Mariko Takahashi and Stefan Winter had an intense long-distance relationship, exchanging music, books on art, exhibition announcements and museum catalogs almost daily. For productions and meetings they met in Venice, New York City, Buenos Aires, Briosco near Milano, Vienna, Munich and again and again in Tokyo. They visited galleries, museums, art and music festivals, concerts, cinemas, clubs, opera, performance, dance and ballet performances, installations, artists' ateliers and recording studios. The shared experiences and adventures flowed into their artistic work. Mariko Takahashi and Stefan Winter established the Music Edition Winter & Winter, a label that accepts no categorization in classical, jazz, new music and folklore, but creates new worlds of sound from the most diverse musical styles.

In 1998 Mariko Takahashi and Stefan Winter decided to live and work together in Munich. They developed, realized and staged recorded works with such diverse artists as Teodoro Anzellotti, Hans Abrahamsen, Noël Akchoté, Uri Caine, Mauricio Kagel, Paul Motian, Barbara Sukowa, Fumio Yasuda and Aarón Zapico with Forma Antiqva. For the visual design of their publications they enlisted artists such as Nobuyoshi Araki, Georg Baselitz, Marcel von Eeden, Mark Lammert, Yoshitomo Nara, Jerry Zeniuk and the graphic artist and illustrator Günter Mattei.

Günter Mattei accompanies Mariko Takahashi and Stefan Winter on trips around the world. Takahashi and Winter captured noises, tones and sounds with the microphone and created musical travel diaries, audio films ("Cinema for closed eyes", as the weekly magazine "Der Spiegel" titled) from the found objects.

In addition to the recorded works for Winter & Winter, Takahashi and Winter created stagings, room installations, sound sculptures, film and sound art works.

The examination of sound art is increasingly moved to the center of their work.

In 2019 Mariko Takahashi and Stefan Winter founded Neue Klangkunst.

Manifesto of Neue Klangkunst

to present works of this art form to the public,

to attract exhibition spaces and museums to sound art,

to realize and present recording works, room installations and interactive artworks,

to create sound in a variety of artistic styles for which the traditional vocabulary of music, recording, opera, theater and visual arts is no longer sufficient,

to create sound art for all age groups, including children,

to initiate works that are not bound by rules, because when terms such as music or visual art are used, this implies a certain tradition and doctrine and the consequent acceptance of this tradition and doctrine, the artist is shown limits that prevent him from making art that goes beyond these limits,

to abolish the academic separation of forms of expression,

to allow sound art that does not follow any tradition, but respects tradition and draws from tradition,

to create contexts of meaning between invisible and visible art,

in order to link noise, sound, tones and their echoes with other arts and media to create a work of art,

to give space to the narrative power of sounds, to open up new spaces,

to create living sound pictures of noise, tone, space, time, movement and form,

to liberate and emancipate noise, tones and sound,

to seduce the ears to see and to create works that even people with little or no visual perception can experience,

to develop analog and digital sound art works,

to awaken the desire for sound,

to initiate a sound art museum.