

P R O D U Z E N T E N G A L E R I E H A M B U R G

Annika Kahrs

Portfolio

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Annika Kahrs (born 1984) lives and works in Hamburg and Berlin. Annika Kahrs deals with the notion of music from different perspectives. In sound, video and multimedia installations she investigates how acoustics and vision relate to each other and how the two senses are mutually dependent. In doing so, she follows the question of how noise and music differ, when random sounds are perceived as a structured sonic structure and how 'hearing', i.e. the perception of the environment, changes accordingly. Her works test the conditions under which a sound affects people, i.e. a noise is charged with meaning.

Kahrs has exhibited both nationally and internationally, including Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, Germany; 5th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, Greece; Kunsthalle Bremerhaven, Germany; Savvy Contemporary, Berlin, Germany; On the Road exhibition project in Santiago de Compostela, Spain; the Bienal Internacional de Curitiba, Brazil; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany; Hybrid Art Festival in Moskau, Russia; KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, Germany; Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Germany; Gropius Bau, Berlin; Kunstverein in Hamburg, Germany; Flat Time House London, England, the Velada de Santa Lucia Festival in Maracaibo, Venezuela and MONA Foma, Tasmania, Australia; 16th Lyon Biennale of contemporary art, France. She has been awarded a number of prizes and scholarships including Villa Aurora, L.A., VILA SUL, Brazil, Max-Pechstein-Förderpreis, Stiftung Kunstfonds or the George-Maciunas-Förderpreis, donated by René Block.

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Annika Kahrs
the billion year spree (detail)
2021
C-print on paper
84 × 2.800 cm

[00:00:05.810]
Hello.

[00:00:07.910]
Hi.....

[00:00:08.330]

It's Anika thank you again for doing this. Such an amazing opportunity for me. As I told you, Louis is a composer. I work as an artist, working like, very conceptual and also working a lot with sound and music and also using. My interest is also in new scientific discoveries, for example, this one and I have also, a few questions, if you don't mind. No, that's fine.

[00:00:47.370]

I'm all set. Well, I get prepared for this because we're an open facility. We also have a science education center. And so we have literally two to three field trips of kids a day.

[00:01:03.490]

Oh, wow.

[00:01:04.870]

Through the control room. And occasionally I'm there. Of course, they know I have a weak spot for explaining things to people. So I do this all the time. So I'm very familiar with this.

[00:01:14.890]

Okay, great.

[00:01:15.850]

I'm a coral performer. So I'm used to performing and doing. Okay. Great.

[00:01:21.550]

So there might be some questions that are similar, but don't worry. So it's also meant to be, because obviously Louis and I have similar interests. So my first question would be very general if you could explain me, what are gravitational waves? Okay.

[00:01:45.970]

[00:08:13.290]

They slightly distort. And that's what we pick up is that distortion because the speed of light, it changes when the light rays get to us. And that's what we're picking. That's the signal we pick up as a gravitational. But, yes, it's crazy. You can't possibly make this work no.

[00:08:42.950]

Harder than sending us to wrap your head around it because it's like so much.

[00:08:46.550]

Well, what's interesting is everybody says they don't use general relativity. But you do you have a GPS? I assume, right?

[00:08:54.170]

Yeah.

[00:08:54.830]

Use GPS. The curvature of space around the Earth is enough from those GPS satellites that the length the distance time of distance is lengthened by that curvature. If we did not correct for general relativity, your GPS would be off by miles. You daily use general Relativity, even though you don't know.

[00:09:19.910]

Okay. That's interesting. I also got another question because as far as I know, they're always detected.

[00:09:29.810]

That's right. We have to be active, and we are just about to start a twelve month long exposure for observation.

[00:09:40.430]

Okay.

[00:09:41.630]

And we're also improving the sensitivity of our instruments and the one in Pisa, Italy. So we hope to have many more than eleven. We hope to have several, two or three, eight a month.

[00:09:51.350]

Le Chant des Maisons

2022

4K, colour with sound

24:30 min

Commission for the 16th edition of the Biennale de Lyon

In her videos, Annika Kahrs explores perceptions of music and disrupts the parameters of how it is presented, interpreted and received, to foster spontaneity rather than virtuosity. For *Le Chant des Maisons*, the artist extended an invitation to amateur and professional singers, and to carpenters. Their voices and the sounds of their tools respectively, converse in the abandoned Saint-Bernard church constructed on the Croix-Rousse hill at the request of the canuts (silk workers in Lyon).

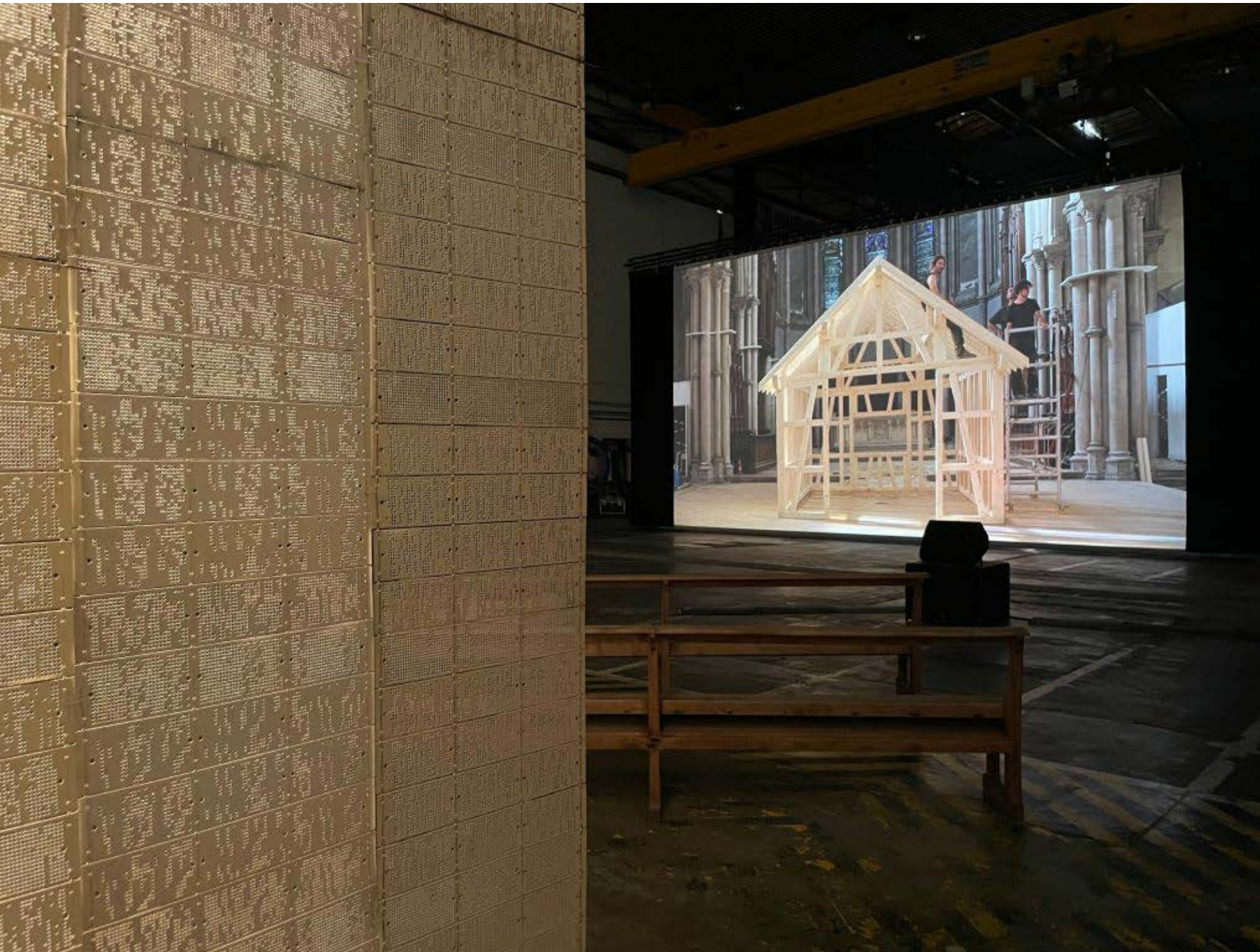
During the performance, the carpenters build a wooden structure resembling a house inside the church, while the musicians react to and with them. A visual and sonic mixture of tense and loose moments, choreographed and coincidental encounters, as well as melodies, drone sounds from organ pipes, voices, hammers and screwdrivers within the majestic reverb of this space materializes on screen.



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/748284314>
Password: Produzentengalerie



Annika Kahrs
Le Chant des Maisons
2022
4K, colour with sound
24:30 min



Exhibition view Annika Kahrs
Le Chant des Maisons,
Manifesto of Fragility, 2022,
Biennale de Lyon

our Solo

2021

Video and 5 channel sound installation

24:25 min

With Derya Yıldırım, Joseph Houston, Phuong-Dan, Freja Sandkamm

Commissioned by BNKR – current reflections on art and architecture, Munich on occasion of the exhibition

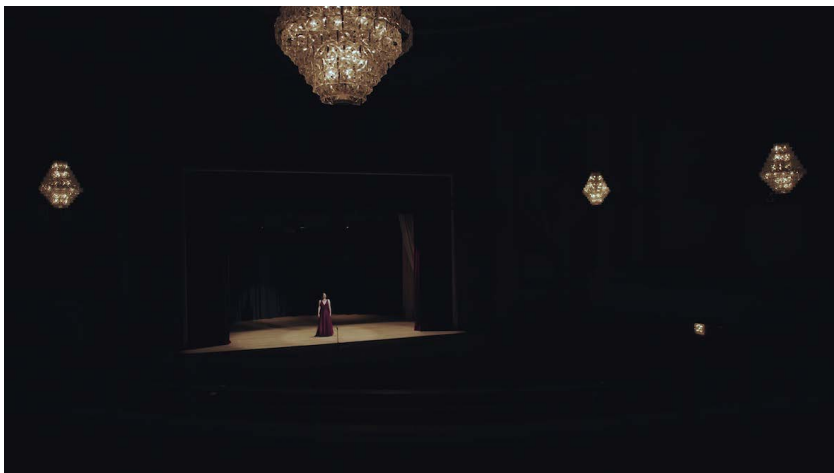
The Architecture of Confinement curated by Till Fellrath and Sam Bardaouil

The video and sound installation *our Solo* experiments with mixing the perception of music in a classical concert hall and of music played in a private setting. Four professional musicians are seen, who seemingly enter into a dialogue across physical distances. Three of these musicians play alone in their private homes, to practice pieces of music and melodies, and improvise individual fragments of sound.

Their music seems to transcend through the walls of an empty concert hall, and onto the stage of an opera singer. Different melodies emerge and invite her directly to interact with these domestic performances and intimate moments. The presentation of the work in the basement of BNKR blurs the boundaries between listening and performing, indoor and outdoor space, and between private and public music.



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/563149684>
Password: Produzentengalerie



Annika Kahrs
our Solo
2021
Video and 5 channel sound installation
24:25 min



Exhibition view *The Architecture of Confinement*,
BNKR, München, 2021

how to live in the echo of other places

2022

Two-part multimedia installation

In collaboration with Ferdinand Försch, Bakz Camara, Douniah, Louis d'Heudières, TINTIN PATRONE, Tam Thi Pham, Jesseline Preach, Carlos Andrés Rico, Freja Sandkamm, Nika Son und Derya Yıldırım

The sound and video installation *how to live in the echo of other places* is a new production by Annika Kahrs, staged in the last un-renovated warehouse building in the former Free Port of Hamburg, the present-day HafenCity. The artist's most extensive exhibition project to date is dedicated to the peculiarities of acoustic and visual recollections and explores how they relate to particular places. Throughout the summer, the two-part work alternately makes use of the interior space and the façade of Schuppen 29 [Shed 29] to make other people's fleeting – and personal – experiences palpably accessible to visitors. These two complementary components soak up the location's special atmosphere. During the day, listeners have the opportunity to individually retrace an audio itinerary inside Shed 29. At sunset, a 14 m wide video projection is then activated on the front elevation of the building, making the site visible from afar throughout the night hours; it then ends at sunrise. Over a period of thirteen weeks, personal stories from different times and different places will be interwoven here as they interact with the premises of this former cocoa warehouse. For this spatial installation, eleven Hamburg musicians have composed their own works in dialogue with Annika Kahrs. To this end, each musician chatted with someone to whom they felt a particular attachment about places with personal memories. Short pieces were created on this basis, which Kahrs then translated into a spatial arrangement with the assistance of composer Louis d'Heudières. During the 80-minute 'concert within the space', eleven loudspeaker boxes scattered around the premises will bring together, among other things, Hamburg's urban space between the port and St. Michael's Church, migration experiences and the sound waves of earthquakes. The themes will be as diverse as the musical styles and compositional strategies. The video installation is based on short texts about memories of a particular place during a sunset, which musicians, friends and colleagues sent in to Kahrs for the purposes of this work. The artist, for her part, looks at the question of whether and how intense visual impressions can be bound to specific locations in our memories. Sunsets are in principle always the same and yet, ever since the age of Romanticism, Western cultures have perceived them as special moments that stand out from long forgotten everyday experiences. Indeed, they symbolise the finite-infinite duality of time: with each sunset, another day has passed in a person's life and, at the same time, the sun reliably sets anew every day, for all eternity (almost), everywhere in the world. The anonymised material is projected word for word onto a digitally created sunset in a non-specific location. In the course of the loop lasting approximately two-and-a-half-hours, the scenes – some of them special, others all too quotidian – are gradually assembled in the minds of the viewers.

Text: Imagine the City, 2022



Exhibition views Annika Kahrs
how to live in the echo of other places, Imagine the City, Hamburg, 2022



Infra Voice
2018
3-channel video and sound installation
2K, colour
10:30 min

A mature giraffe can grow up to 4.5 meters tall, a bull even 6 meters. The octobass, an extremely rare string instrument that was built for the first time in 1850, measures 3.85 meters. In Annika Kahrs's three-channel sound and video installation *Infra Voice*, analogies between animal and instrument are established not only on a formal level. Besides the height, the respective long necks, and the brown tones of the fur and the wood, there are also significant acoustic concordances. The extensive acoustic body of the giraffe and the octobass allow for the production of particularly deep, sonorous sounds. With the octobass, it is even possible to produce sounds in the frequency range of infra sound, that is below 16 Hz and that cannot, therefore, be perceived by the human ear.

For a long time, scientists assumed that giraffes, just like elephants or blue whales, communicate through infra sound. However, in the most recent research, this assumption has been challenged, as the cognitive biologist Angela Stöger-Horwath explains in her article *Nocturnal 'humming' vocalizations* (2015). Guro Skumsnes Moe, a contemporary composer and musician, was invited by Annika Kahrs to compose and perform a piece for octobass that resembles the chant of the giraffe. In a studio in Norway, an audio visual recording of Moe's piece was made. In a next step, it was played – via a life-size projection – to the giraffes in Hamburg.

The scenery of the virtually transmitted concert in the enclosure of the giraffes was filmed in turn. Now, in a third place, the Kasseler Kunstverein (institution for contemporary art in Kassel, Germany) occurs the premiere of the spatial and temporal intertwining evoked by *Infra Voice*. On three synchronised projections, which take up the upright screen format 9:16, in accordance with the anatomy of animal and instrument, the visitor is presented with sequences from the studio in Norway, in conjunction with recordings of the concert in Hamburg. A cascade of stimulus-response schemata emerges, in which the different participants – Guro Skumsnes Moe, the octobass, the giraffe, and the viewer – interact with each other. ...

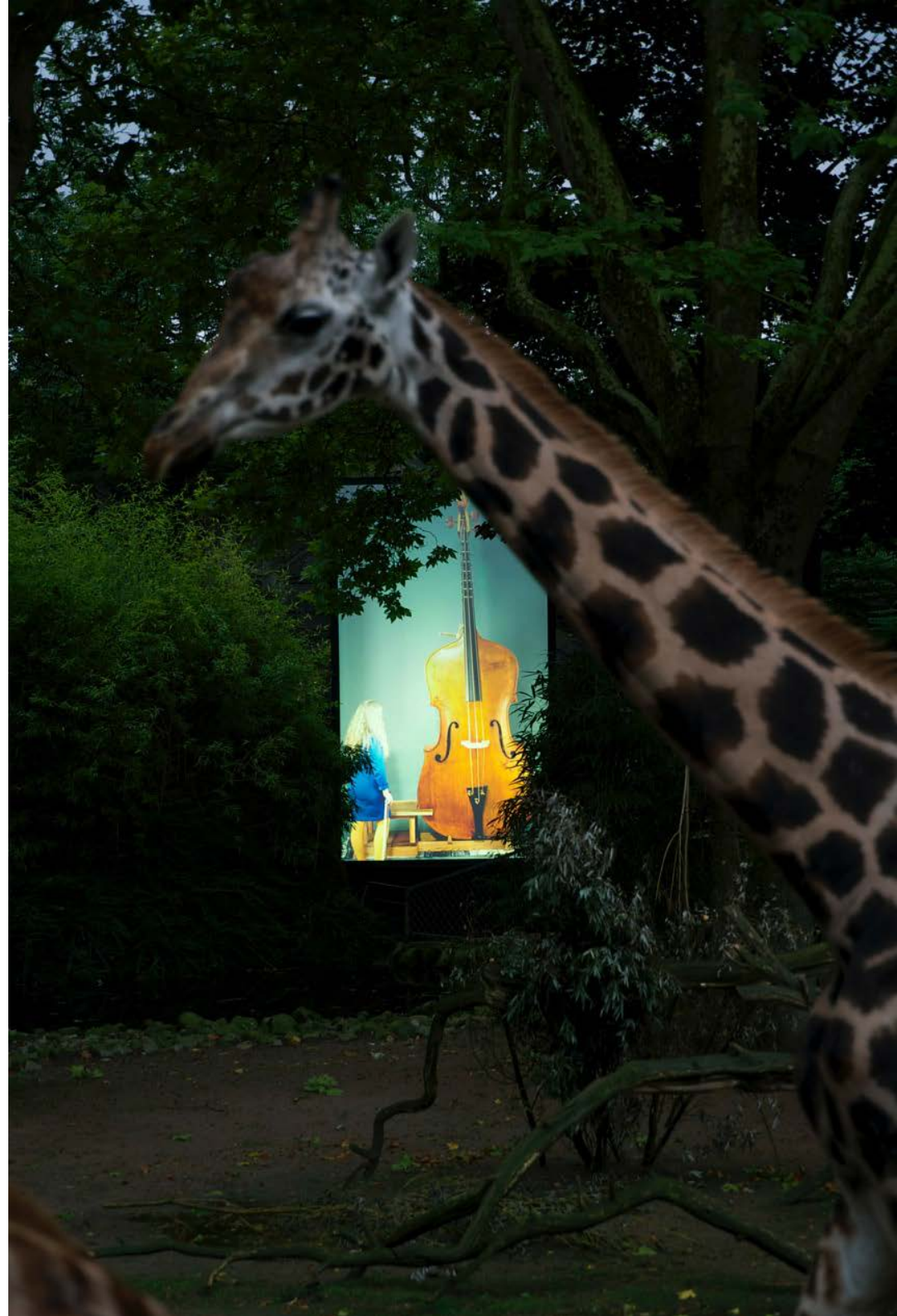
Text excerpt: Judith Waldmann, catalogue text *Perception and Interpretation - on the poetry of translation* in Annika Kahrs *Infra Voice*, 2018



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/394469901>
Password: Produzentengalerie

Annika Kahrs
Infra Voice
2018
3-Channel video & sound installation
2K, colour with sound
10:30 min

Next page →
Exhibition view *AMBITUS. Kunst und Musik heute*,
Kunstmuseum Magdeburg Kloster Unser Lieben
Frauen, 2018





sesin melodim, seslerin yankım benim deine stimme ist mein klang ist dein geräusch ist mein echo
2020
7-channel sound installation
35:21 min

In collaboration with Derya Yıldırım

sesin melodim, seslerin yankım benim your voice is my sound is your noise is my echo is a collaboration between the artist Annika Kahrs and the musician Derya Yıldırım. The 7-channel sound installation is based on interviews conducted by Kahrs and Yıldırım with Yıldırım's family members - her parents, siblings and cousins - in Hamburg. During these conversations Kahrs and Yıldırım asked especially for memories and personal stories connected to sounds forming an acoustic character of the respective interviewee.

In the recording studio those were then translated into a complex sound installation. Music is hereby understood as a directing carrier of memory and as a cross-generational link: Which songs played a significant role within the family and which ones are passed on to the next generations and are reinterpreted anew? Which sounds do the parents remember from their childhood in Sivas (Turkey) and which sounds do her siblings remember from a childhood in Hamburg (Germany)? How do such sounds transfer, connect and overlap within a family structure? And how could a family portrait look based on this information? *sesin melodim, seslerin yankım benim your voice is my sound is your noise is my echo* is an invitation to approach these thoughts while listening to the family portrait in a chronologically linear and spatially vertical way: Each floor represents one family member; beginning with the foyer, sound leads the way gradually up floor by floor through the Bieberhaus (public building in Hamburg). Ultimately the sound installation *sesin melodim, sesin melodim, seslerin yankım benim your voice is my sound is your noise is my echo* is not only the acoustic portrait of a family history but even more so the complex narrative of a transcultural music history. Yıldırım's cousin and writer Duygu Ağal has composed poetic short texts corresponding to each family member. These texts are not meant to be written interpretations of the sound installation but rather independent extensions. Ağal describes her personal perspective on the family and reveals particularly the poetic and phonetic potential of the Turkish and German language. In an additional text she writes about the Bieberhaus' history which is directly interwoven with the Yıldırım's history: from 1970 to 1998 the Bieberhaus housed the foreigners' registration office. It is for that reason that the parents are rather familiar with the building albeit it is associated with strong negative memories and feelings. This direct relation was only revealed during the interviews for this project. Therefore it is all the more significant that Derya representing the third generation can now reclaim this place with the stories of her family and artistically make it her own.



Sound-Link: <https://vimeo.com/485985220>
Password: Produzentengalerie



2.Obergeschoss.



Exhibition view Annika Kahrs
sesin melodim, seslerin yankim benim deine stimme ist mein klang ist dein geräusch ist mein echo,
Mind×Gap, Bieberhaus, Hamburg 2020

the lord loves changes, it's one of his greatest delusions

2018

HD-video, colour, sound

15:48 min

The work is commissioned by SAVVY Contemporary, co-produced by MaerzMusik - Festival for Time Issues.

Musical arrangement: Louis d'Heudieres

Kahrs' explicit interest in the mutation of music and its meaning in a specific time or context is also at play in the work *the lord loves changes, it's one of his greatest delusions* 2018, which was presented both as a live performance and video installation in the context of MaerzMusik and the exhibition *WE HAVE DELIVERED OURSELVES FROM THE TONAL - Of, With, Towards, On Julius Eastman*. The work takes its cue from two iconic pieces by Julius Eastman – “The Holy Presence of Joan d’Arc” and “Gay Guerrilla” – as well as the observation that the latter of these pieces is based on Martin Luther’s chorale “Ein Fester Burg Ist Unser Gott”, the ultimate protest song of the Reformation movement. This chorale was used, parodied and reinterpreted as a hymn in the most diverse of contexts in the 19th and 20th centuries – from national-militarist circles during the German-French war, to the the social-democratic worker’s movement, the R.A.F., the anti-nuclear movement, and, circa 1980, to Eastman’s “Gay Guerilla”. In Kahrs’ adaptation, while an organist plays the piece on a church organ, a whistling choir is forming that partly accompanies the swelling organ tone and partly goes against it. As in Eastman’s open composition, it thus deconstructs the melody in order to reinterpret it again in a new way. In the rising and falling staccato the fragile, manmade whistling confronts the mechanistic lungs of the organ pipe. Through the spirituality of the piece sounds the uproar of the protest. As in almost all of Annika Kahrs’ works, what is at issue here is pushing the elasticity of music and science to the utmost limit – in the factual as well as in the figurative sense. The single voice asserts itself within an orchestration in which one must interpret and endure all nuances between harmonious interplay and provoked dissonance. What is also at issue here is the unlearning of rehearsed habits and apparent certainties – in order to negotiate daily situations anew.

Text excerpt: Eva Scharrer, Katalogtext *shifting sounds* 2019



Video-Link: : <https://vimeo.com/394471932>
Password: Produzentengalerie

Next pages –
Annika Kahrs
*the lord loves changes,
it's one of his greatest delusions* (film still)
2018
HD-video, color, sound
15:48 min







Annika Kahrs
the lord loves changes, it's one of his greatest delusions, Performance at SAVVY Contemporary, 24 Mar 2018

silence is the sound of a missed opportunity

2021

Four channel sound installation

49:41 min

The project is the first part of the series entitled *MUSIC WITHOUT MUSIC*, which is produced and presented by *Yellow Solo* in 2021 and 2022 with the participation of the following artists: Annika Kahrs, Dani Gal, Arnold Dreyblatt, Anri Sala, Hassan Khan, Song-Ming Ang and Ari Benjamin Meyers.

Composition by Louis d'Heudieres, performed by Rocío Bolaños (clarinet), Angharad Davies (violin), Kaja Farszky (percussion), Alice Purton (cello), Laura Schuller (on-hold voice)

silence is the sound of a missed opportunity is a new work by Annika Kahrs, and it is also a claim made by marketing companies advertising for on hold music to fill seemingly empty waiting time on the phone. The company in question is Mood Media who has acquired Muzak, the original provider and producer of so-called on-hold music, elevator music and all sorts of smooth jazz, in 2009. Muzak went bankrupt after people were fed up with the ever-present repetitive music jingling in the background of whatever they were doing. In Annika Kahrs' "silence is the sound of a missed opportunity" this missed opportunity is to be understood in a more active way: The musicians on hold are not only waiting but simultaneously creating and recording their own on hold music.

The score for this live production of on hold music is written by composer Louis d'Heudieres and is loosely based on the classic lightweight structure of on hold music. The musicians are waiting for roughly an hour on the phone for an unknown connection that may never get resolved. Meanwhile, they are playing for and with each other, actively waiting. The waiting experience is a friendly one, it is tailored to the actual humans, in this case musicians, their human needs, and their existential questions about the why and where that creep up on you while in the limbo of a waiting line. Leaving the line for a bathroom break or a glass of water is not a risk to miss the long awaited connection, but rather inherently part of the waiting experience. In "silence is the sound of a missed opportunity" there is no need for a space filler or a time killer, the passive sphere of waiting turns into an active commitment. The musicians usually responsible for other people's entertainment are left with the task of playing for themselves and waiting with each other, without knowing the grand total, the overall work collecting the individual waiting experiences into one listening experience that is only later accessible for the spectator.

Text excerpt: Nina Kuttler



Sound-Link: <https://soundcloud.com/user-648571845/silence-is-the-sound-of-a-missed-opportunity/s-cbe9gvjazB2>



Annika Kahrs
silence is the sound of a missed opportunity
2021
Four channel sound installation, 49:41 min
at YELLOW SOLO 2021

Next page –
Production photo
silence is the sound of a missed opportunity
2021
Four channel sound installation, 49:41 min
at YELLOW SOLO 2021



NO LONGER

NOT YET

2019

Video- and sound installation 2K, colour, sound

17:23 min

6-channel video with 8-channel sound and 8-tablet screens with one monochromatic film each, installed on wall.

In her latest video and audio work *NO LONGER NOT YET*, Kahrs considers the occurrence of a condition that is both in the past and on the verge of being manifested – a liminal state, a threshold situation, in which a no-longer prevalent order is juxtaposed against a yet-to-be established system.

Projected directly on to the exhibition wall, Annika Kahrs' new work resembles a frieze, over 12 metres long. The video loop consists of eight scenes, running in parallel and simultaneously intersecting, each bathed in a different coloured spotlight, and showing the actions of 14 youthful protagonists. The composition is defined by pairs of scenes directly combined or played simultaneously so that they crossfade in the middle. With gestural brushstrokes, the actors write words in black paint on a wall, only to subsequently paint over them with white paint, and then repeat the process in each resulting context. During this process of construction and deconstruction, text becomes form and language becomes image. By means of constant renewal, a new text-image and hence a potentially new language is formulated. Accompanying the pictorial scenes, repeated approximately every 4 minutes, sound is played. It echoes the rhythm of the pictorial repetition and travels across the space during the projection's running time of 17 minutes and 23 seconds via four pairs of speakers. The sound and text are taken from the 1965 song *My Generation* by the British rock band The Who, which is not, however, played in its original form. A musical icon of the 1960s' youth rebellion, the song deals with the adolescent search for a place in society. To young people today, it might seem outdated. The young people in the video use fragments of the lyrics as a basis for formulating their own song-text (visualized in their painting).

The acoustic level of the work presents the song in a processed version that is simultaneously slowed down and speeded up in the crossfaded scenes. Some of the youngsters personally intervene in the song's structure by means of a DJ CDJ player and later using treble- and bass controls. The resulting sound in each case was recorded and used as a basis for successive scenes going by the same procedure. In parallel to the progressive pictorial disintegration manifested in the text fragments, the sound becomes distinctly distorted as the song is decelerated and accelerated. In the end, a besmeared wall can be seen, and a vaguely meandering sound heard.

By this aesthetic strategy of repetition and transformation, and by means of a formal arc of suspense created by 15 coloured segments resembling fluid, transitory phases, Annika Kahrs diametrically contrasts the legacy of past generations with today's young generation.



Video-Link: Projection: <https://vimeo.com/412683446>
Password: Produzentengalerie



Video-Link: Screens: <https://vimeo.com/412680055>
Password: Produzentengalerie





Annika Kahrs
NO LONGER
NOT YET
2019
Video- and sound installation
2K, colour, sound
17:23 min

My Favorite Music

2020

Sound installation in two parts

18:31 min

Commissioned by Kunstverein in Hamburg; in collaboration with *Hinz&Kunzt*

With My Favorite Music Annika Kahrs' deals with music reinforcement and the acoustic appropriation of public space at the Hamburger Hauptbahnhof (central station Hamburg). In 2001, ambient classical music started to be played at the Hauptbahnhof to deter people from loitering and sleeping. This follows a strategy used by authorities worldwide in maintaining control over these public spaces. This use of music poses some questions: whose privat playlist do we hear at the station? How is the soundtrack perceived by people? What extent do travelers and those who stay there contribute to the overall soundscape? And lastly, what sounds challenge or overlap with this soundtrack?

Following this idea, Kahrs has developed a work that uses the ambient classical music of the Hauptbahnhof in conjunction with environmental sounds from the station and personal interviews with people that utilize this space – people working for *Hinz&Kunzt* (street-newspaper sellers), buskers, passersby. The acoustic displacement of this soundscape to the exhibition space offers the opportunity for us to linger again.



Sound-Link: <https://soundcloud.com/user-648571845/sets/my-favorite-music/s-LgQDITIEH1x>

Production photo
My Favorite Music
2020
Soundinstallation in two parts
18:31 min



THIS IS A LOVE SONG

2018

Performance

Approximatly 30:00 min

Performer: Mette Nadja Hansen & Pierre Chastel

The performance *THIS IS A LOVE SONG* negotiates the field of tension between the musical idea of romantic love and the real-life experience of communication between partners. Hence, it extends Annika Kahrs' ongoing inquiry into the cultural, communicative and social function of music. ... The performance is given by two singers who are a real-life couple, each equipped with a record player. It starts with an intro played from a record, while the two performers do nothing more than exchange glances. This is followed by four more run-throughs in which two records are played, each accompanied by one of the performers singing. At first, then, each performer sings his or her song alone for the other. In the second round, two records are played at once; around half-way through the tracks are swapped via the crossfader on the mixing desk – the songs change voice. Subsequently, the tracks and singing parts are quartered so that they alternate every 30 seconds. In the next run-through, the performers try and sing their own song as well as they can over the other's, heard via the loudspeaker. Now, the tracks seem to change whenever one of the singers needs his or her own backing track because the other one is distracting them, which sometimes occurs after a very short time. In the finale, two songs of about the same length can both be heard aloud at the same time; the performers try and discern their song and sing along with it.

With every round, the two singers move closer together until eventually they are sharing a microphone. The only other stage direction Kahrs gave the performers was to feel free to voice any problems or difficulties with the technology or acoustics they have and share them with one another. With each round, then, the proportion of time spent on communication increases: to coordinate the simultaneous activation of the record players, to time the changeover from one song to another, to ask for quiet, to address problems singing their own song while another is playing, or just to joke about their own helplessness. The final round, especially, poses an almost insurmountable challenge even to these professional singers. The attempt to perform two songs in parallel fails; reality and ideal seem irreconcilable, yet the performance does not end in separation but in greater closeness. The performers' movement gradually closer, as directed by Kahrs, also occurs on another level. Increasingly, what are ostensibly vocal performances evolve into a commentary on the relations between the performers. What started as a performance by two soloists becomes more and more like a dysfunctional duet, in a process of constant negotiation and assessment. Although the performance's failure is inevitable, the two people on the stage still achieve contact, not least through their shared experience and verbal exchange. The audience perceives greater intimacy between the two performers in the end, when they both fall helplessly silent, than in the first round, when they are serenading each other. ... With *THIS IS A LOVE SONG*, through the artist's scant but precise directions for creating changing constellations, Kahrs has defined a framework in which real moments of communication, intimacy and partnership can emerge and be juxtaposed against a soundtrack of simple, ideal images of love.

Text excerpt: Tobias Peper; catalogue: Annika Kahrs - *shifting sounds*, 2019



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/290591086>

Password: Produzentengalerie



Annika Kahrs
THIS IS A LOVE SONG, 2018
Performance (approx. 30:00 min.)



Alone Together

2016

Performance

Approximatly 23 min

Performers: Phillip Eick, Pierre Chastel, Mette Nadja Hansen, Johannes Müller

Musical arrangement: Louis d'Heudieres

Musical consultation: Felix Kubin

(Developed within the framework of *Immersion: Schule der Distanz No. 1*, as part of the Berliener Festspiele at Gropius-Bau, Berlin, 2016)

On co-existence: *Alone Together*, a jazz standard written by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz in 1932, is a song about the power of companionship. We can overcome anything, deal with any of life's hardships, as long as we stay side-by-side: *For we're together and what is there / To fear together*. A song also about the magic of togetherness, which allows us to forget the world around us for a while: *Our love is as deep as the sea / Our love is as great as a love can be / And we can weather the great unknown / If we're alone together*. A love song, then, also released as a beautiful duet by Betty Carter and Ray Charles. The song is about a couple, but the 'we' leaves room for interpretation. It could also refer to a collective, a society, or a nation. In Annika Kahrs' work, it is four singers performing a moody a cappella version – a group, an ensemble. They perform the song three times, each time at half the speed of the previous rendition, altering their state of togetherness to the point of near disintegration. At first, the singers are standing close together; their harmonies, amplified by four loudspeakers rendering one voice each, fill the hall. But then they start to pull apart and reposition themselves in such a way that they almost become visually disconnected. They are still in the same room, but can no longer be seen at once. As they start to sing again, their voices begin to drift apart; apparently there is nothing giving the beat. The effect is even clearer the third time; the singers now perform in complete isolation. The public is left alone in the hall, the singing comes only from the loudspeakers. The voices run parallel, each following a different concept of the right tempo. What kind of togetherness is this now, in its technologically generated, bodiless presence? Couldn't the arrangement of singers, microphones and loudspeakers be a symbol of the structures of digital communication? Would the increasingly disjointed sounds then be a reference to the fragmentation of the social sphere in the age of social media? If so, how would this relate to the other presence in the space, the public? In the absence of the performers, the focus is shifted on to the audience itself, as individuals and as a group, together and yet alone. Within a short space of time, *Alone Together* plays through various modes and states of the social: from the togetherness of partner relationships to a collective of equals and their harmoniously interacting individual voices to the crowd which – led by a short-term common interest and affectively united in the atmosphere of the event – is formed only to disperse again the next moment. Above it all, the question „together or alone?“ hovers. While the voices continue singing a song of solidarity, their singing increasingly falls apart. Isolation spreads, not least among the public, because the disappearance of the singers robs them of their common focus. Is there anything that connects them beyond the present moment? What kind of co-existence is possible on this basis, *Alone Together*?

Text: Jörn Schaff



Video-Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWlbSgtzAOc>

Annika Kahrs
Alone Together
2016
Performance
Approx. 23 min





Annika Kahrs
Alone Together
2016
Performance
Approx. 23 min

For Two To Play On One
2012
Performance

Conceived for the exhibition *ONE ON ONE* at Kunst-Werke Berlin

The exhibition *ONE ON ONE* gives the artists the chance to directly confront the singular viewer. Individual closed-off rooms, built solely for the specially created works, occupy the whole exhibition space of the KW and visitors can only enter these spaces alone.

When one enters Annika Kahrs's separate space, one first arrives in a white anteroom from which two closed, gray double doors from an old building, which contrast with the neutral surrounding space, provide an exit at the back of the left side. Through these doors, one hears the sound of a classical piano piece being played with four hands. When one opens the doors, the music falls silent. The two pianists pause passively before the piano and look frankly into the eyes of the visitor. The chamber music performance is abruptly concluded with the entrance of the visitor imaging him or herself alone, and the piano room with the Bordeaux-red carpet also suddenly becomes his or her stage: the visitor involuntarily becomes the performer without stage directions. Whether the visitor plays the repentant troublemaker who immediately leaves the room again apologetically in order to give the pianists the opportunity to become engrossed in their intimate, concentrated duo, in their 'For two to play on one' once again, or assumes the role of the puzzled recipient who searches the room for traces and clues regarding instructions and explanations or talks with the musicians is up to the individual visitor – the musicians simply will not play as long as a visitor lingers in the piano room. And it can be conjectured that, at first, most visitors wish that other visitors might come by and offer orientation for how to behave appropriately.

Text excerpt: Nina Tabassomi, catalogue text *For Two To Play On One*, 2013



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/113601285>
Password: Produzentengalerie



Annika Kahrs
For Two To Play On One
Performance at Kunst-Werke Berlin 2012



Annika Kahrs
For Two To Play On One
Performance at Kunst-Werke Berlin 2012

your presence

2017

Performance

Approximatly 60 min

Developed within the framework of the 250th anniversary of the academy of fine arts Hamburg

In the performance *your presence*, Annika Kahrs takes up the commercial concept of the mail order florist, which grew from humble beginnings in early 20th century Berlin to become a global business under the name Fleurop. Secondly, she draws on the social convention of giving the protagonists at public occasions, whether musicians, dancers or politicians, bouquets of flowers as a gesture of thanks at the end of their performances or speeches. Kahrs, however, decisively alters both ways of "saying it with flowers." As part of the celebrations to mark the 250th anniversary of the Hamburg University of Fine Arts (HFBK), a senate reception was held on 13th July 2017 in the ceremonial room of Hamburg city hall. The occasion was well attended; every seat in the hall was taken. As well as the usual official words of greeting, the program included two ceremonial addresses. The speakers were the artist Franz Erhard Walther, a former lecturer at the university, and Jonathan Meese, a former student. But the art was ultimately created between the rows of seats for the guests. And, moreover, unexpectedly and almost incidentally, causing distinct confusion but without essentially disturbing the occasion itself. A cue was given and a bicycle courier in strikingly colourful workwear (bearing the logo *Wir bewegen was - Getting things moving*), complete with a helmet and backpack, walked briskly up the central aisle from the back entrance of the rather unimaginatively decorated hall and, without a word, handed an unusually opulent bunch of flowers to a guest in the one of the front rows. "A nice idea", the floor seemed to say, and the recipient was visibly taken aback, being unprepared for such a formal-friendly gift, especially in the context of an official ceremony. Guests in the neighbouring seats looked on amiably, amused, confused or even enviously at the goings-on nearby. But that was not all. Every two or three minutes now, another courier appeared on the scene to deliver his floral consignment to someone else in a different row of seats. Gradually, 35 bunches of flowers were distributed among the floor, mostly at random but partly by a process of purposeful selection. The concept was to leave the hall dotted as evenly as possible, across both the left and right halves of the floor, with bunches of flowers. Not to create a sea of flowers, but a signal that was clearly visible; the bouquets held in their recipients' arms – the floor was now so crammed there was not enough space to put them down – could not be overlooked as they towered over the assembly's heads. ...The end of the event was marked not by guests getting on the podium but by members of the audience leaving happily and proudly with their monumental bouquets, tagged with labels of handmade card bearing only the words *your presence - Congratulations - HFBK*.

Text excerpt: Prof. Dr. Michael Diers; catalogue text *shifting sounds*, 2019



Annika Kahrs
your presence
2017
Performance
Approx. 60 min



the announcement
2015
Performance
Approximatly 30 min

Conceived for the exhibition *Home Work* at Open Forum Berlin

Creaking stairs leading to a double-door opening on to an old apartment. Inside, whispering people gathered in a private space to attend an event. Chairs are moved, throats cleared, jackets rustled and folded away. In the dark space everyone's attention turns expectantly to one point: a still empty picture plane. A light is switched on, illuminating the surface. A large, blurred shadow moves toward the guests, becoming clearer and smaller with every loud step: "Welcome!" the magician greets the audience. Over the next 30 minutes he will make us gasp and laugh – even though we can't really see what he is doing, as befits the nature of magic. And the artist has brought in a second level of perception, a stretched surface, concealing the magician behind. His shadow and, even more so, his voice are evidence that he is present. The voice as the signifier of presence fixes our attention on what is happening in the moment of performance without allowing our eye to focus on or be reassured by anything familiar. Our vision is restricted by the cloth, denying us visual comprehension. As magic does: a flirt with the capacities of vision, a trace of blurring quickness, a glimmer of confusing trickery. But this magic is doubly impenetrable, as it eludes reason and defies the eye's efforts to seek the truth. Magic is defined by its performative character: It shows something, and simultaneously conceals. the announcement plays with the impenetrability of the outwardly presented performance by placing the focus on the opaque actions of the magician, carried out, more over, behind a transparent screen. Then, two more shadows appear. They are the witnesses to the magic. Their reactions in the opaque space are our evidence that magic is being performed; their delighted laughter and cries of disbelief testify to the magician's artistry. Far more than extras in this shadow play, they are the immediately charmed ones who make us believe in the enchantment. We believe that the magician really swallows the long balloon; that he divines the heart and the diamond from the pack of cards. the announcement plays with two sets of visitors: We experience the illusion in front of the screen; the two shadows experience the magic behind the screen. Yet at no point do we feel excluded. Before the visual arts discovered performance as a format, it had long been used by magicians like the Davenport brothers in the late 19 th century, known for a performance they gave in private apartments in which they were tied up inside a cupboard and made musical instruments play from behind closed doors. Here, too, the audience's eye was prevented from finding the supposed truth. Although we can't see it, we believe it because we hear it. And because we want to be enchanted.

Text: Clara Meister, Catalogue: shifting sounds, 2019



Text-Link: <http://openforum.info/home-work-text/>



Annika Kahrs
the announcement,
2015
Performance
Approx. 30 min

Playing to the Birds
2013
HD-Video colour with sound
14 min

Annika Kahrs' Film *Playing to the Birds* shows a performance of Franz Liszt's piano piece *Legende Nr. 1. St. Francis of Assisi* preaching to the birds, which is played by a pianist in a solemn hall, according to the high tradition of the musical salon. The audience is, however, not comprised of people, but rather of domesticated birds. Their cages are carefully arranged within the space as soft toys might be arranged by a child so that it might give them a speech. Liszt, the 19th Century Austro-Hungarian pianist and composer, took the literary legend of the Saint as the model for his virtuosic piano piece. This story, which is often illustrated in the arts and has become a form of religious folklore, tells of the following episode: Francis of Assisi, the beggar-friar and founder of the Franciscan Order, gave a sermon before a flock of birds that he came across in a field. As he came closer, the birds didn't fly away, but rather remained in situ, reacting to his words. What is of significance in this story is that Francis thereby believed that not only did humans have souls, but also the entire animal and plant worlds. The consequence being, that each creature had a conscience and was blessed with the ability to understand. Liszt translated this narrative into the language of music, which serves as a model for universal understanding. In this translation process, the mimicry of the sounds and noises also plays a role, so that the high notes of the pianist are suggestive of the trills of the birds. Kahrs sets this dual translation – first in words and subsequently in tones – against a form of feedback with reality. The birds, protagonists in the original narrative, appear here as those 'actually' addressed in the concert hall, which for the viewer of the film, in turn, forms a part of Kahrs' narrative fiction. This strange mixing of real and fictional layers, while providing for surprise and confusion, is counteracted by the film's formal conception: With long camera shots, the clear rhythmic editing and a neutral observational stance, the film is reminiscent of a scientifically motivated wildlife documentary. The setting of the bird cages in relation to the grand-piano, at which the pianist impassively and with high concentration gives his all in the demonstration of his abilities, is tightly arranged. The result is that the bird concert comes across as a form of experiment. The outcome of the experiment is something that the viewer must decide for themselves, since any significant shift or conclusion remains evasive. After the last notes have faded away, the musician stands up, takes a bow, and leaves the room.

Text excerpt: Sabine Weingartner, aus: *Annika Kahrs, Ausstellungskatalog Kunstraum München*, 2013



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/97593166>
Password: Produzentengalerie



Playing to the Birds
2013
HD-Video colour with sound
14 min



Annika Kahrs
Playing to the Birds
2014
C-print
60 x 60 cm
Edition of 3

Strings
2010
HD-video, colour with sound
8:20 min

A string quartet plays the first bars of Ludwig van Beethovens *Opus 18 No. 4 in C Minor* from 1800. Dramatic and penetrating, as the score demands, the violins, viola and cello combine rising Fortissimo and quiet Staccati to a harmonic whole. The balanced homogeneity comes to an end as the music stops after the first melody and the musicians exchange places with the player to their right. Now, with each other's instruments, things become very different. The game becomes a balancing act between fragility and catastrophe: an unexpected note here, seconds of silence between light and sharp dissonances there. Noticably unsure the participants fight their way through the score. This exchanging places to the right happens a total of four times until every player has sat in every chair. At the end, the musicians laugh nervously into the camera – the *before the game* has become an afterwards and the participants seem relieved to realise this.

Text excerpt: Katrin Diederichs, catalogue text *Strings*, 2010



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/77778736>
Password: Produzentengalerie



Annika Kahrs
Strings
2010
HD-video, colour with sound
8:20 min

Annika Kahrs

Strings

2010

Performance

At Hebbel am Ufer HAU Theater, Berlin, 2013

on the occasion of the exhibition *Iskele 2*, TANAS, n.b.k., Performance-Programme *Schwanengesang*

& at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, 2016

& at the Goldsmiths, University of London, UK, 2011



solid surface, with hills, valleys, craters and other topographic features, primarily made of ice

2014

HD-video, colour with sound

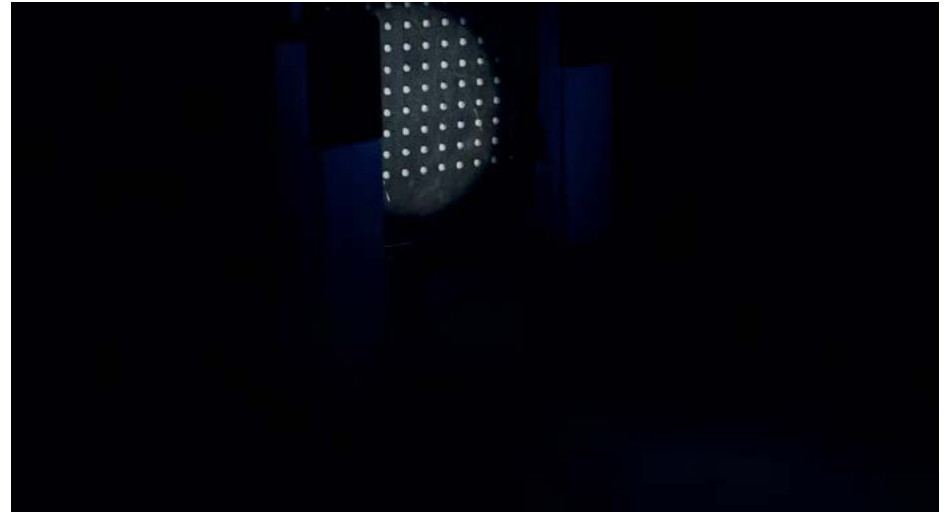
11:44 min

Annika Kahrs began to collect images, graphics, texts and books, that visually and verbally describe the celestial body of Pluto. Her recent cinematic work broaches the issue of the - till today - unexplained, ambivalent scientific evidence relating to appearance and texture of the 1930 discovered heavenly body Pluto. Pluto, that formerly belong to our solar system, is the 'planet' with the widest distance to earth. Due to this fact, there is no precise visual documentation of it, which would prove its appearance and material quality to date. But in 2015, after a journey of nine and a half years, the spacecraft *New Horizons* will reach its destination and for the first time Pluto will be made visible. 'solid surface, with hills, valleys, craters and other topographic features, primarily made of ice' (2014) is set in a planetarium with a projected starry sky, in the center of which is situated a round light spot, that -constantly visible by the viewer- explores the space. As soon as the camera, together with the light cone, tangents the sky on the cupola screen, the spotlight detects this nocturnal illusion and reveals the white projection screen. The cinematic work deals with the moment, shortly before the actual visualization of pluto's surface properties, whereas the entire cupola hall of the planetarium serves as a metaphorical projection surface of Pluto. The round light spot formally points to the shape of the celestial object and functions as placeholder for its soon arising image. The title of both the exhibition and the video work 'solid surface, with hills, valleys, craters and other topographic features, primarily made of ice' refers to a description of Pluto through the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Through the exchange with members of the NASA-Science Team, which is responsible for the mission called 'New Horizons', the artist had the possibility to include concrete, scientific ideas about the surface of Pluto into her movie.

Text excerpt: press release, exhibition at Produzentengalerie Hamburg, 2014



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/113395804>
Password: Produzentengalerie



Annika Kahrs
solid surface, with hills, valleys, craters and other topographic features, primarily made of ice
2014
HD-video, colour with sound
11:44 min

lines

2015

lines (Dragan's home), 5m × 5m

lines (Maung's home), 5m × 5,40m

lines (Paolo's home), 5m × 3,60m

lines (Dimi's home), 5m × 6,30m

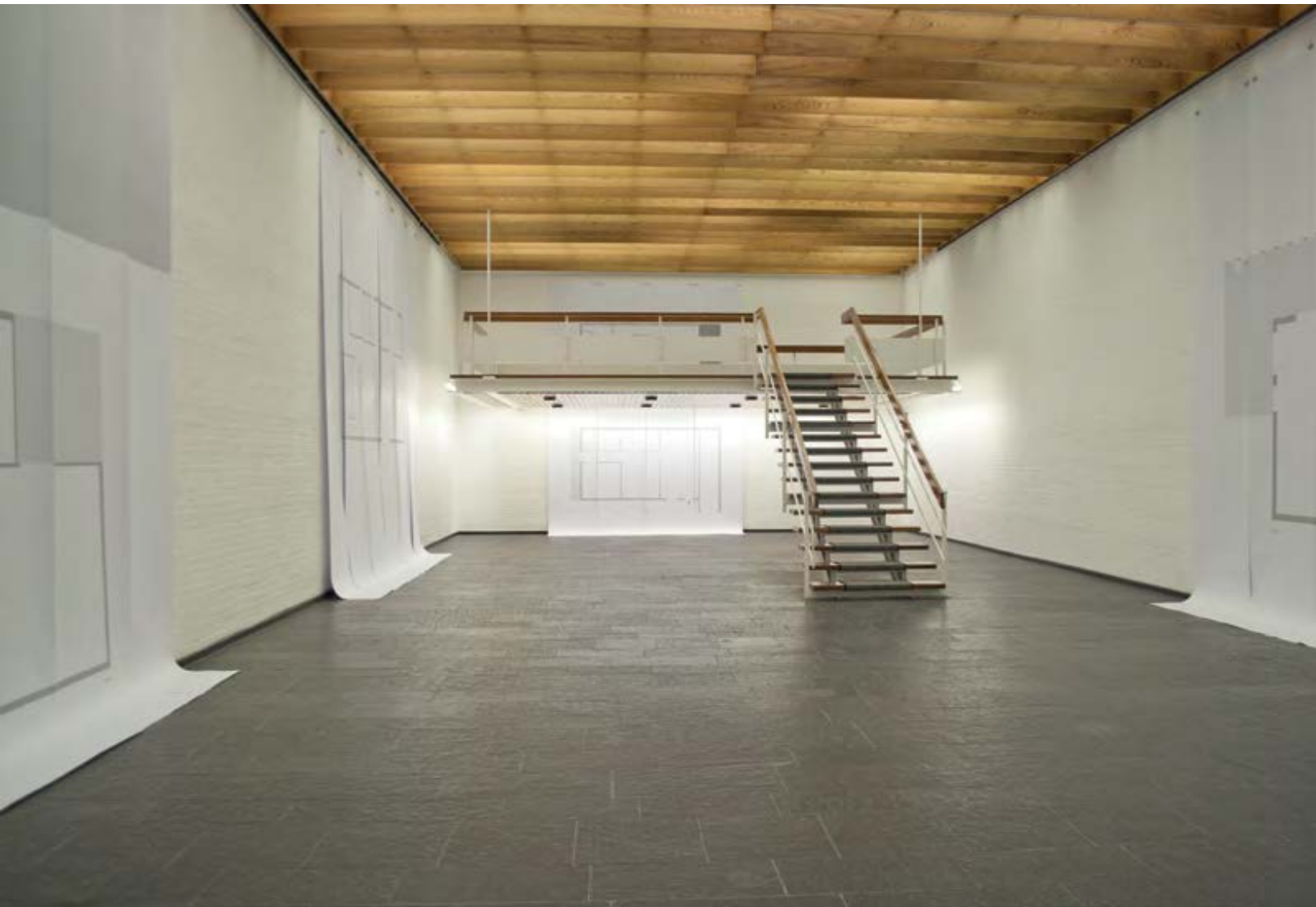
lines (Arnel's home), 4,50m × 4,30m

Digital print on paper

Created for the exhibition *lines* at Kunsthalle Bremerhaven

Perhaps there exists no tale more dynamic than that of a journey. Over time the setting changes, landscapes pass by, new guises appear and disappear. In the end, even the protagonists are completely changed by their experiences. The one constant that remains is generally the homeland, whether in memory during the journey or after the return home – homeland always remains the same. Its position as a true and authentic haven generally remains untouched. What is less common is the presence of fiction in the memory of homeland in the mind of the traveller. The artist Annika Kahrs gives strength to precisely these moments in her work *lines*. It gives the effect of being on the bridge of a ship in the towering gallery space. This feature belongs to definitive museum architecture. The view from above in the otherwise empty hall is almost reminiscent of a view of the sea. Where there is nothing, there is space for the imagination. White strips of paper hang down from the high walls, and are reminiscent of flags or sails. At first glance they also appear empty. Closer inspection leads one to make out the lines and text of what are actually large format architectural drawings. These are the floor plans to apartments. Later one learns that these are apartments in Myanmar, Vietnam and the Philippines. They are the plans of ats belonging to world travellers who, for the moment, are stranded in Bremerhaven. Annika Kahrs based these architectural drawings on the tales and sketches of sailors from around the world. She had them describe and draw their apartments, hundreds of nautical miles from the German North Sea port. The scratchy ballpoint-pen sketches were then transcribed by the artist as clean, technical plans. Kahrs met the seafarers in a sailors' club in Bremerhaven. The club used to be in the city center. Now though, the stays of the sailors have become so short that it no longer makes sense for them to leave the port at all. The form of the architectural drawing awakens the impression that we are dealing with a sober and objective transcription of the sailors' far away apartments: as if the results were laborious and exact survey works. In reality they are the results of a multiplied mediation and as such, certainly full of deliberate and accidental mistakes of memory and transcription. These then become apparent as such on the flags. The homeland is not the authentic and constant point that it is held up to be. During a trip our perception of it changes. The picture of home on the white flags however, is that of a transformed home. The architectural drawings are ultimately the results of what sailors told a stranger over a cup of coffee - interspersed with fantasy and failures of memory and a few eccentric accentuations: On the plans these apartments seem almost empty. From *Dimi's Home* one nevertheless learns, that outside in a hut resides a *Dog Max*, and *Paolo's Home* has a prayer room in which stands a Buddhist statue. In actual fact, some of the apartments of these container ship workers seem more fitting for a wealthy landowner. *Paolo's Home* also has a *master bedroom* - *Maungs's Home* actually has two of these. Women and children reside in separate bedrooms. While looking at these plans, the viewer is unsure: How can it be that these 'lords of the manor' have signed on for work on a container ship? Have they exaggerated their representation? Or does what they earn on the ship correspond to relative wealth in their home countries? Exactly which country we're dealing with remains unclear. Nevertheless, *Arnel's Home* borders a vast tobacco plantation, while *Dragan's Home* is on the Atlantic coast. Triangles and waves are used as symbols, as on an actual map. Memory and fiction could hardly be transcribed in a more objective form.

Text excerpt: Radek Krolczyk, taz newspaper, *Heimat aus Seemannsgarn*, 2015



Installation view Annika Kahrs
lines, Kunsthalle Bremerhaven, 2014

Sea Pool
2016
HD-video, colour with sound
7 min

A pool table is positioned in front of a steel wall. The balls are set up in the classic starting position for a pool game. The camera view is fixed centrally on the table. After a short time, the balls begin to move unaided on the table - initially almost timidly, then moving quicker across the entire baize surface. At the end of the sequence, the viewer is able to divine that the table must be on a ship, and the balls that seemingly move of their own accord are actually set in motion by the movement of the waves and the wind on the surface of the sea.



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/155135277>
Password: Produzentengalerie



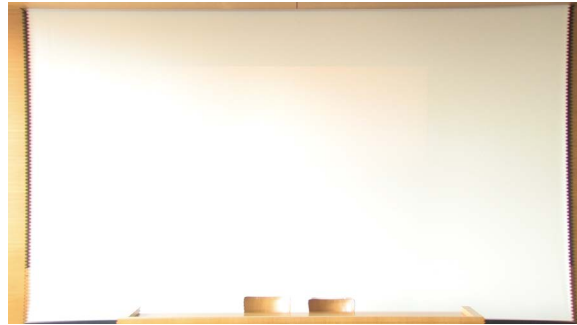
Annika Kahrs
Sea Pool
2016
HD-video, colour with sound
7 min

Sunset - Sunrise
2011
HD-video, colour
2 min

First one sees the image of a sunset. But instead of a slowly sinking sun, the image fades. As the image becomes increasingly overexposed we see that this image of a sunset is being projected onto a screen in a darkened lecture theatre. The overlighting is caused by the opening of a blind and the influx of daylight this causes. As the image of the sunset disappears, we can increasingly make out the stage of the lecture theatre with a projection screen, lectern and desk.



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/77714191>
Password: Produzentengalerie



Annika Kahrs
Sunset - Sunrise
2011
HD-video, colour
2 min

études cliniques ou artistiques
2007
Digital video, black and white
3 min

A performance of twisted limbs, cramps and apparent disorientation. Invisible forces seem to be working on the woman's body. But the bizarre physical jerks do not seem to obey any laws, rather they appear to be due to the capriciousness of a unseen puppeteer. But this impression is deceptive. What at first seems to be a grotesque gymnastic exercise, is the exact representation of what the famous French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot called the great hysterical attack. In her artistic work Annika Kahrs brings the medium of film and the Londe images into relationship with one another. The protagonist who simulates the various stages of the great hysterical attack has obvious problems adopting the proscribed body positions and also holding them. This makes the movements seem unpleasant and convulsive. As the film has not been given a soundtrack, the viewer can only sense the directions of a third person. As soon as the woman has reached a certain position, she pauses in this posture - following the Londe images. Thus the viewer sees the photographs in the film and is at the same time totally aware of their origin. The film installation puts the eledged snap shots in an ongoing process. In this way the fluent course of the single stages of Great hysterical attack is sensitively disturbed [...].

Text excerpt: Katrin Diederichs for DARE-Magazin, 2007



Video-Link: <https://vimeo.com/94754919>
Password: Produzentengalerie



Annika Kahrs
études cliniques ou artistiques
2007
Digital video, black and white
13 min

A broken humming, singing, stroking, whistling – on the works of Annika Kahrs

(Eva Scharrer, catalogue text: Annika Kahrs - *shifting sounds*, 2019)

1 / 3

A broken humming, singing, stroking, whistling – on the works of Annika Kahrs. Sound as a means of communication – vocal or instrumental, between human and animal, between actors on a stage or with their audience – forms a central motif in Annika Kahrs' work. Her performances, films, photo series and installations are often based upon musical enactments, which are arranged as playful experiments. They set the framework in which the acting individuals are bound to renegotiate their positions constantly, a process in which unlimited and unpredictable variations are possible. Without prior rehearsals, the actors meet and are confronted with the task of continuing a familiar score under new, changing and complicating conditions. Usual ways of communication, listening habits and behavioural patterns are disrupted and have to be established anew. In the resulting shifts, breaks and misunderstandings the interactions between expectation and fulfilment, routine and failure are analyzed within the changing social, cultural and political structures of coexistence. Music as a language figures here both as outlet and metaphor.

One could experience this most recently in the performance *THIS IS A LOVE SONG* in the Hamburger Kunstverein. Two singers – a man and a woman – attempted a love duet. Both vocally accompanied a vinyl record on which love songs from different decades – each of which was also sung either by a man or a woman – were already marked by scratches and leaps. Harmony was somehow maintained as long as both let their records play through and performed to one another as soloists (or rather as a duet with Sarah Vaughan or Jean Ferrat). Once the attempt was made, however, to perform the duet as a dialogue with different musical pieces – without the help of scores or texts –, the performance, which was conceived as a romance, threatened to slowly fall apart. In several iterations – in which the performers looped their records in and out at ever smaller intervals with a cross fader – the two approach each other in order to be able to communicate directly. Yet, at the same time, the musical performance is evidently compounded. This results, at first, in a subtle, then increasingly emotional to and fro between the two voices: voices that would indeed like to acknowledge each other, but which are singing entirely different texts and melodies – John Lennon's *Julia* and Nat King Cole's *L.O.V.E.*, for instance – and are thus ultimately unable to find one another.

Already in earlier works of Annika Kahrs' these strategies of promise, shift, fracture and isolation as well as the interest in the relation between performers acting under unfamiliar and increasingly difficult conditions – and also the consequently irritated audience – are evident: In the video *Strings* (2010) a classical string quartet plays Ludwig van Beethoven's work *C minor opus 18, No. 4*. The two violins, the viola and the violoncello play in perfect harmony through the fortissimo of the first movement. But little by little the harmony of the highly specialized ensemble falls apart, as, with every reiteration, the musicians change seats and hence instruments with their neighbour to the right. Four times in total, until the quartet rises in evident embarrassment. A similar moment of uncertainty occurs in the performative installation *For Two To Play On One* (produced in 2012 for the exhibition *ONE ON ONE* in KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin). A single visitor first enters into a transitional space where, behind another door, the sounds of a piano played by two hands can already be heard. Upon entering the room, the music falls silent and the pianists fix their gazes at the intruder – who thus involuntarily becomes a performer himself or herself. Only upon leaving the room the piece is continued.

It is particularly in the dissonances – the moment of frustration resulting from the deprivation of the fullness of experience – that a poetic potential resides for Kahrs. Mechanisms of hierarchy and accessibility, intention and reception are fractured; mutual understanding is put to the test. In an exemplary fashion, this comes to a head in *Playing to the Birds* (2013). Like *Strings*, this work took place both as a live performance (A Concert for the Birds) and exists as a video of a pianist in a baroque hall who interprets Franz Liszt's "St. Francis of Assisi's sermon to the birds" in front of an audience of domesticated singing birds – a bird concert in the inverted sense. The idea upon which the legend is based – that every being has a soul – is thereby transformed in a twofold manner: whereas Liszt, through his virtuoso staccato, attempted to imitate the "language" of the birds, they now become the listeners of a humanistic interpretation.

A comparatively surrealist moment of misunderstanding between different species is evoked in the work *Infra Voice* (2018), as the strange and for human standards actually oversized octobass meets a living giraffe. Through its extremely vertical format, the video installation visually corresponds to this. Yet, the interesting part happens on the acoustic level – even if it largely escapes human hearing. The field of research dedicated to the acoustic communication of giraffes is relatively young; the deep sounds they produce, which are called "nocturnal humming," are barely audible for humans. In this low frequency realm, the animal might meet tonally with the octobass, whose deepest tone is, in fact, located in the infra realm, which is inaudible for humans. But does the giraffe hear it? The Norwegian musician Guro Skumsnes Moe was filmed in different takes, playing a composition inspired by the frequency-modulated, harmonious "nocturnal humming" of the giraffe on an octobass – a human interpretation of "animal language" quite like Franz Liszt's "sermon to the birds." The resulting movie was subsequently shown on a six meter high projection screen in the outdoor enclosure of the giraffes in the Hamburger Tierpark. The final material for the film was produced from the giraffe's reactions to the musical presentation performed for them. As with the birds in *Playing to the Birds*, it is difficult to fathom whether the animal is receptive to the attempted communication or not, even when it seems to move its head slightly to the sound of the instrument or when its nose appears to approach the hand with the bow in the cut.

The deconstruction of a composition through the abduction of the spatial-acoustic proximity of the single members of an ensemble happens in front of the eyes and ears of the audience during the performance *Alone Together* (which was created in 2016 within the context of *Immersion: School of Distance No. 1* of the Berliner Festspiele in Gropius Bau, Berlin). In a spacious hall – in this case, a stairwell – four singers perform a musical piece of the same name by Arthur Schwartz from 1932, where every single voice is transmitted through a separate microphone. After a first harmonious performance of the three minute long piece, the singers move away from each other with their microphones. As a consequence, communication between them is only possible to a limited extent, while the repetition simultaneously reduces the speed by half. In a third run, the singers are located apart from one another and isolated from the audience, dispersed in the building singing their part without the help of the tactand with the speed reduced by a fourth. Through the speakers, the piece is transmitted in a strangely fragmented and slow-downed fashion to the audience – the result being similar to the

effect produced by playing a lagging vinyl record while slowly reducing the speed. Besides the spatiotemporal decomposition, Kahrs is equally interested in the content-related nuances that a piece acquires with each performance. As a Jazz classic, Schwartz's composition was interpreted in countless versions with different titles, by musicians such as Miles Davis (*Blue Moods* 1955), Judy Garland (*That's Entertainment!* 1960) or Rufus Wainwright (*Rufus Does Judy at Carnegie Hall* 2007) and thus became part of the history of music.

Kahrs' explicit interest in the mutation of music and its meaning in a specific time or context is also at play in the work *the lord loves changes*, it's one of his *greatest delusions* (2018), which was presented both as a live performance and video installation in the context of Maerz Musik and the exhibition *WE HAVE DELIVERED OURSELVES FROM THE TONAL - Of, With, Towards, On Julius Eastman*. The work takes its cue from two iconic pieces by Julius Eastman – *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc* and *Gay Guerrilla* – as well as the observation that the latter of these pieces is based on Martin Luther's chorale *Ein Fester Burg Ist Unser Gott*, the ultimate protest song of the Reformation movement. This chorale was used, parodied and reinterpreted as a hymn in the most diverse of contexts in the 19th and 20th centuries – from national-militarist circles during the German-French war, to the the social-democratic worker's movement, the R.A.F., the anti-nuclear movement, and ,circa 1980, to Eastman's *Gay Guerilla*. In Kahrs' adaptation, while an organist plays the piece on a church organ, a whistling choir is forming that partly accompanies the swelling organ tone and partly goes against it. As in Eastman's open composition, it thus deconstructs the melody in order to reinterpret it again in a new way. In the rising and falling staccato the fragile, manmade whistling confronts the mechanistic lungs of the organ pipe. Through the spirituality of the piece sounds the uproar of the protest.

As in almost all of Annika Kahrs' works, what is at issue here is pushing the elasticity of music and science to the utmost limit – in the factual as well as in the figurative sense. The single voice asserts itself within an orchestration in which one must interpret and endure all nuances between harmonious interplay and provoked dissonance. What is also at issue here is the unlearning of rehearsed habits and apparent certainties – in order to negotiate daily situations anew.

Eva Scharrer (Eva Scharrer; catalogue text: Annika Kahrs - *shifting sounds*, 2019)

Annika Kahrs

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lives and works in Hamburg and Berlin, DE

Exhibitions

2023 Schering Stiftung, Berlin, DE (solo)
Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden, DE (solo)
Dortmunder U, Dortmund, DE

2022 Heitland Foundation, Celle, DE
16e Biennale d'art contemporain de Lyon, FR
Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art, RIBOCA, Riga, LV (postponed)
how to live in the echo of other places; in cooperation with *IMAGINE THE CITY*, Hamburg, DE (solo)
something new, something old, something desired, Hamburger Kunsthalle, DE

2021 *all the lonely people*, LAXART, Los Angeles, US
THE POETRY OF TRANSLATION, Kunst Meran, IT
Videokunstnächte, Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, Recklinghausen, DE
all the lonely people, LAXART, Los Angeles, US
all the lonely people, Villa Aurora & Silent Green, Berlin, DE
Für Dieter Roth – Internationales Sommerfestival 2021, Kampnagel, Hamburg, DE
silence is the sound of a missed opportunity, Yellow Solo, Berlin, DE (solo)
Le juste prix, Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris, FR
Sound and Silence – Der Klang der Stille in der Kunst der Gegenwart, Kunstmuseum Bonn, DE
Listen Deeply (Infra Voice), Mona Foma Festival, Launceston, AU
Architecture of Confinement, BNKR, Munich, DE
So Close / So Far, Hyper Cultural Passengers, Hamburg, DE
Denken wie ein Oktopus, oder: Tentakuläres Begreifen, Rudolf-Scharpf-Galerie, Wilhelm-Hack Museum, Ludwigshafen, DE

2020 *sesin melodim, seslerin yankim benim deine stimme ist mein klang ist dein geräusch ist mein echo*, mit Derya Yildirim, *MIND THE GAP #2*, Bieberhaus, Hamburg, DE (solo)
Being laid up was no excuse for not making art – Corona Sound System, Kunstverein in Hamburg, DE
The Eye, Los Angeles, US1+1+1+1+1+1+1 ART. 8 GG Versammlungsfreiheit, Villa Schöningen, Potsdam, DE
Group Show, Produzentengalerie Hamburg, DE
Think about the size of the universe, then brush your teeth and go to bed, Galerie Joan Prats, Barcelona, ES
One's Company, Two's A Crowd, Six Is A Party. Annika Kahrs & Nguyen Phoung-Dan, Fleetstreet, Hamburg, DE
Double Feature, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, DE (solo)

2019 *26 thousand light years*, Galeria Joan Prats, Barcelona, ES
Max-Pechstein-Förderpreis, Kunstsammlungen Zwickau, Max-Pechstein-Museum, Zwickau, DE
21ème édition Festival des Cinémas Différents et Expérimentaux de Paris, FR
concerto para pássaros, Salvador Bahia, BR
65. Internationale Kurzfilmtage Festival Oberhausen, DE
Fuzzy Dark Spot, Sammlung Falckenberg – Deichtorhallen Hamburg, DE
Scheitern, Blech.Raum für Kunst Halle e.V., DE
act, Q18, Quartier am Hafen, Cologne, DE
the billion year spree, Flat Time House, London, UK (solo)
MOVES#200 – 202, a Calendar, a Performance, a Concert, and Films by – a three days celebration at italic, Berlin, DE
NO LONGER NOT YET, Produzentengalerie Hamburg, DE (solo)
StoryWorks: Kunstwerke erzählen Geschichte(n), Kunstmuseum Kloster unser Lieben Frauen Magdeburg, DE
the lord loves changes, it's one of his greatest delusions, Jahn und Jahn, München, DE (solo)

2018 AMBITUS Kunst und Musik heute, Kunstmuseum Kloster unser Lieben Frau

en Magdeburg, DE
Love Podium, Performance, Klosterfeld Edition, Berlin, DE (solo)
Gastspiel, Städtische Galerie Nordhorn, DE
Anders, Kunstmuseum Bremerhaven, DE
/me followed by an action, Berlin, DE
Vita Umbrarum, Open Store, Basel, CH
La Nuit de l'Instant, Les Ateliers de l'Image, Centre Photographique Marseille, FR
Staging realities I, Kunstverein in Hamburg, DE
We Have Delivered Ourselves from the Tonal. Of, with, towards, on Julius Eastman, Savvy Contemporary, Berlin, DE

2017 Infra Voice, Kunstverein Kassel, DE (solo)
Zur See. Werke aus der Sammlung der Kunsthalle Bremerhaven, Städtische Galerie Delmenhorst, DE
wieder und wider, Hamburger Kunsthalle, DE
Cinéma, Kunsthalle Lingen, DE
VG Stipendium 2017, Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover, DE
Was wir sehen wollen!, Kunstverein Grafschaft Bentheim, Neuenhaus, DE

2016 Annika Kahrs. Alone Together, Performance, Immersion: Schule der Distanz No.1 der Berliner Festspiele, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, DE
Ein Knacks im Leben. Wir scheitern... und wie weiter?, Vögele Kultur Zentrum, Pfäffikon, CH
Paula Modersohn-Becker Kunstpreis 2016, Große Kunstschau, Worpswede, DE
Fragile Streight, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, FR
Besser scheitern, Internationale Tage Ingelheim, Ingelheim am Rhein, DE
the announcement, Performance (7.5.16), Hamburger Kunsthalle, DE
Annika Kahrs - Playing to the Birds, Franz Marc Museum, Kochel am See, DE

2015 Per4m, Artissima, Torino, IT
Lexus Hybrid Art 2015, Moscow, RU
5th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, GR
Raumstationen, Kunstverein Hannover, DE
Annika Kahrs, Galeria Joan Prats, Barcelona, ES (solo)
Vom Verbergen, Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt, DE
Kunsthall 44 Møen, DK (solo)
Home Work, Open Forum, Berlin, DE
Und weg mit den Minuten, Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, DE
Höhenrausch 2015 - das Geheimnis der Vögel, OÖ Kulturquartier Linz, AT
Dazwischentreten, Künstlerhaus Bremen, Bremen, DE
Playing to the Birds, Weserburg-Museum für Moderne Kunst, Bremen, DE
Sound in Motion, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, DE
Mao Se Dun Kai (Sudden Change of Idea). An Exhibition on Comperative Study between Chinese and German Conceptual Art, United Art Museum, Wuhan, CN
lines, Kunsthalle Bremerhaven, DE (solo)

2014 Solid surface, with hills, valleys, craters and other topographic features, primarily made of ice, Produzentengalerie Hamburg, DE (solo)
Art Weekender, Situations, Bristol, UK (solo)
On The Road / En el camino, Santiago de Compostela, ES
Im Frühling, Darling, Kunstverein in Hamburg, DE
Artdate, The Blank: Bergamo Modern and Contemporary Art, IT
Felix & Foam, Foam, Amsterdam, NL
Art Cologne, New Positions, Cologne, DE
Stipendiatenausstellung des Arbeitsstipendiums für Bildende Kunst der Stadt Hamburg, Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, DE
Playing to the Birds from Sunrise to Sunset, Peter Amby Gallery, Copenhagen, DK (solo)
One Night Stand #1, NOTE ON Krampfographien/ Crampographies at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE
Shift, Basurto, Mexico City, MX
Neue Kunst in Hamburg, Galerie Katharina Bittel, Hamburg, DE (solo)

2013 Katja Aufleger, Annika Kahrs, ph-projects, Berlin, DE
Solo presentation with Produzentengalerie Hamburg, Art Berlin Contemporary, Berlin, DE
Schwanengesang, Performance, Hebbel am Ufer HAU Theater, Berlin, DE
The Unanswered Question, TANAS / Neuer Berliner Kunstverein NBK, Berlin, DE
Bienal International de Curitiba 2013, BR
Playing to the Birds, Kunstraum München, DE (solo)
Besser scheitern, Hamburger Kunsthalle, DE

2012 George Maciunas Förderpreis, TANAS, Berlin, DE
 one on one, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE
 Annika Kahrs – Strings, ph-projects, Berlin, DE (solo)
 +6|2012 – shortlist Columbus-Förderpreis für aktuelle Kunst, Kunsthalle Ravensburg, DE

2011 Dialectical Routine, Galerie Sassa Trülsch, Berlin, DE
 20. Bundeswettbewerb Kunststudentinnen und Kunststudenten stellen aus, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, DE
 Boundary Line, Folgendes Galerie, Hamburg, DE (solo)
 In den Falten des Vorhangs, District Stiftung, Berlin, DE
 Goldsmiths, Department of Art, University of London, UK
 16. Karlsruher Kurzfilmnacht, DE
 Art School Alliance Studios, Hamburg, DE
 Kunst & Blumen, Golden Pudel Club, Hamburg, DE (solo)
 Index Kunstpreis 2010, Kunsthau Hamburg, DE

2010 Opening Ceremony # 1, Galerie der Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg, DE
 La Velada de Santa Lucia – International encounter of contemporary art, Maracaibo, VE

2009 Loop Videoart, International Festival & Fair for Videoart, Barcelona, ES
 Kunstfrühling 2009 – spring!, Bremen, DE
 richtiger als falsch* – DARE Magazin, Galerie Conradi, Hamburg, DE
 Dreams that Money can't buy, Westwerk, Hamburg, DE

2008 Index 08, Kunsthau Hamburg, DE
 11. Karlsruher Kurzfilmnacht, DE
 Schönheit ist unser Metier, Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg, DE
 Denkmäler werden von Siegern erbaut, Hinterconti, Hamburg, DE

2007 Aktzeichnen mit Freunden – die Klasse Immendorff stellt aus, Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg, DE
 „...“, Galerie der Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg, DE

2006 Alles im Fluss, Altonaer Museum in Hamburg, DE
 Plattform # 3, Kunstverein Hannover, DE

2005 Family Affairs – Von der produktiven Unordnung der Generationen, Dominikanerkloster, Frankfurt, DE

Collections (selected)

Dornbracht Culture Projects, DE
 Hamburger Kunsthalle, DE
 Kunsthalle Bremerhaven / Kunstverein Bremerhaven, DE
 Kunsthalle Ravensburg, DE
 Kunstmuseum Kloster unser lieben Frauen Magdeburg, DE
 NBK – Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, DE
 Vehbi Koc Foundation, Istanbul, TR

Awards & Grants

2023 Residency / Casa Baldi, Olevano Romano, IT
 2022/23 Residency / Villa Aurora, Los Angeles, US
 2021 scholarship / INITIAL Sonderstipendium, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, DE
 2020/21 Scholarship / Stiftung Kunstfonds, DE
 2020 Residency grant / Fleetstreet Residency, Hamburg, DE
 Award / Heitland Foundation, DE

2019 Residency grant / Vila Sul, Salvador de Bahia, BR
 Award / Max-Pechstein-Förderkreis Stipendium, DE
 Award / International Competition, 21e édition Festival des Cinémas Différents et Expérimentaux de Paris
 Scholarship / Kunststipendien der Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucierius, DE

2018 Scholarship / Stiftung Kunstfonds, DE
 2017 Award / VG Award, Vordemberge-Gildewart-Stiftung, DE
 2015/16 Residency grant / Cité des Arts, Paris, FR
 2014 Scholarship / Bremerhaven-Stipendium, DE
 2013 Scholarship / Arbeitsstipendium für bildende Kunst, Hamburg, DE
 2012/13 Travel grant / Reisestipendium – Neue Kunst in Hamburg e.V., DE
 2012 Award / George Maciunas Förderpreis, DE
 2012/14 Studio grant / Atelierstipendium GSM, Hamburg, DE
 2011 Award / Hauptpreis beim 20. Bundeskunstwettbewerb des Bundesministeriums für
 Bil dung und Forschung »Kunststudentinnen und Kunststudenten stellen aus« in Bonn, DE
 Scholarship / Jahresstipendium 2011 des Freundeskreises der HFBK e.V., Hamburg, DE

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