

FREUNDE GUTER MUSIK BERLIN e.V.

Erkelenzdamm 11 – 13 B IV • 10999 Berlin • Telefon ++49-(0)30-215 6120
info@freunde-guter-musik-berlin.de • www.freunde-guter-musik-berlin.de

Works of Music by Visual Artists

SUSAN PHILIPSZ ***Part File Score***

24-channel sound installation
Twelve ways to describe Hanns Eisler

February 1 – May 4, 2014

Opening: Friday, January 31, 2014, 8 pm

Hamburger Bahnhof
Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin / Historic Hall
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Invalidenstr. 50-51, 10557 Berlin
Tue, Wed, Fri 10–6, Thu 10–8, Sat, Sun 11–6

The sound works by the internationally acclaimed Berlin-based Scottish artist Susan Philipsz are often created for particular locations and refer to their history and spatial features. For the historic hall of the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin, Philipsz has designed a sound installation that relates both to the building's former function as a railway station and to the architectonic structure of the hall with its 12 archways. The artist connects the former railway station – a place of departure and arrival, of parting and return – with the eventful life of the composer Hanns Eisler (1898–1962), who lived in Berlin in the 1920s and 1950s. Eisler, who like his mentor Arnold Schönberg had immigrated to the USA in the 1930s, was deported from the country in 1948 due to his pro-communist political convictions. Although Eisler did compose in the twelve-tone technique of his mentor, his conception of socially committed art led him to turn also to 'popular' genres such as music for stage and screen. He was a prolific composer of songs, including many for workers' choruses and international labor movement rallies. In 1949, while living in the eastern sector of Berlin, Eisler composed the national anthem of the GDR.

For her sound installation *Part File Score*, Susan Philipsz has created three pieces, which play consecutively in the hall. Each piece is based on one of Eisler's musical works for film. Eisler wrote *Prelude in the Form of a Passacaglia* (1926) for one of Walther Ruttmann's first abstract films, *Lichtspiel: Opus III* (1924). The score was Hanns Eisler's first composition for film. Its melancholic tenor also pervades *Fourteen Ways to Describe Rain* (1941), which Eisler composed for the film *Regen* (1929) by Joris Ivens. The *Regen* score was commissioned in conjunction with the publication *Composing for the Films* (1947), which Eisler published together with Theodor W. Adorno. That same year, Eisler wrote the *Septet No.2* (1947) for the film *The Circus* (1928) by Charlie Chaplin. Work on this composition was interrupted by Eisler's deportation from the USA, and the music was never used in the film.

In keeping with an artistic principle that Philipsz already applied in *Study for Strings*, presented at dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel in 2012, as well as in *The Missing String*, her recently realized sound installation in Düsseldorf, the artist separately recorded each tone of the above-mentioned Eisler compositions in the studio. The recorded sounds, played by a violin, a cello, a trumpet, and a piano, are in turn separated and heard from 24 loudspeakers installed along the length of the historic grand industrial hall – 12 on the right and 12 on the left. Each loudspeaker is assigned a tone on the chromatic scale, so that each of the instrumental voices becomes spatialized and wanders through the entire hall.

With this audio work and twelve accompanying large-format prints, in which pages of Eisler's scores are superimposed with pages from his FBI files, Philipsz seeks an approach to Eisler's aesthetic of the *displaced form* so as to evoke themes suggesting the journey of life as well as the experience of separation, surveillance and expulsion. The title of the sound installation refers to the four extant parts of the FBI's files on Eisler.

Susan Philipsz (*1965 in Glasgow), winner of the prestigious Turner Prize in 2010, works primarily with the medium of sound in her investigation of musical and literary sources and specific historical constellations. She frequently makes use of familiar tunes and pop songs, performed in her own voice and recorded, in order to create an acoustic environment that relates to the particular location in an exhibition space or an urban setting. Lately she has made increasing use of instrumental compositions and acoustic material such as field recordings and radio signals, which she adapts for staging in particular settings.

The exhibition by Susan Philipsz is the current project in the series *Works of Music by Visual Artists*, which Freunde Guter Musik Berlin has presented in collaboration with the Nationalgalerie since 1999 and, since 2002, with MaerzMusik, the contemporary music festival of the Berliner Festspiele. It is the artist's first institutional solo exhibition in Berlin, where she has lived since 2001.

A project by Freunde Guter Musik Berlin e.V. and Nationalgalerie im
Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.
In collaboration with Berliner Festspiele / MaerzMusik 2014.
Made possible by funding from Hauptstadtkulturfonds and Ernst Schering Foundation.

Curators:

Ingrid Buschmann / Freunde Guter Musik Berlin e.V.
Gabriele Knapstein / Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin

Press Contact:

Achim Klapp, Tel. ++49-(0)30-2579 7016, presse@freunde-guter-musik-berlin.de

Further Information:

www.musikwerke-bildender-kuenstler.de, www.freunde-guter-musik-berlin.de
www.smb.museum/hbf, www.facebook.com/hamburgerbahnhof