

that memory enacts on both things and individuals—itsself a continuous source of inspiration for the artist.

—Pier Paolo Pancotto

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

VENICE

“Art or Sound”

CA' CORNER DELLA REGINA

Exhibitions examining the relationship between art and sound have been plentiful in recent years, among them the Museum of Modern Art in New York's 2013 “Soundings: A Contemporary Score.” This trend reflects sound's importance in contemporary practice. Artists such as Carsten Nicolai, Haroon Mirza, Susan Philipsz, Florian Hecker, and Janet Cardiff have made music or sound the focus of their work and have addressed the problem of sound's visualization in a museum context, often with success. Yet, despite all this focused attention, the presentation of sound in an environment essentially designed for seeing objects remains a conundrum.

“Art or Sound,” curated by Germano Celant, thoroughly reconsiders the relationship between object and sound and the question of how to present the latter in a gallery space. Celant stages a historical inquiry covering nearly five hundred years, from 1520 to today. The presentation includes more than 180 objects, from musical machines to sculptural instruments, clocks, and automatons. What sets “Art or Sound” apart from most other shows on the subject is not only its historical scope but also the force of its visual stimulation. Rather than following a Minimalist visual aesthetic to create an environment that forces us to focus on the act of listening (or borrowing the look of a recording studio, as some sound shows have done), the presentation recalls a classic cabinet of curiosities, or *Wunderkammer*. It exuberantly commingles visual and sonorous experiences, with countless objects in every corner, niche, and nook of the Renaissance palazzo in which it has been staged, the Venice outpost of the Fondazione Prada. As with most of the foundation's exhibitions, much attention has been given to the show's design; in particular, the lighting accentuates the architecture of the rooms and creates a historical atmosphere without overshadowing the works on view. The entire floor of the exhibition is covered with pieces of shock-absorbent black rubber, and the pedestals and vitrines are covered with layers of gray felt to silence any sound that visitors could potentially make when walking around the galleries.

The exhibition design has produced a refreshing continual back-and-forth between historical artifacts and contemporary artworks. The selection of the former includes Pierre Jaquet-Droz's ornate late-eighteenth-century birdcage clocks, replete with motorized “singing” birds; an astonishing variety of organs, including one made of glass, one that was part of a carriage, and one of the legendary fairground organs of the Wellershaus brothers from the early-twentieth century; snake-shaped horns; and a large selection of music boxes. There are classics of the sound-art genre, including remakes of Luigi Russolo's Futurist *Intonarumori*; music scores by John Cage; Nam June Paik's sculpture *Urmusik*, 1961, a wooden box with strings that forms a primitive bass; Arman's *NBC Rage*, 1961, a broken bass violin; Ken Butler's *K-Board*, 1983; and Michelangelo Pistoletto's monumental *Trombe del Giudizio* (Trumpets of Judgment), 1968, three large instruments that were originally used in a performance by the artist.

Other notable works include Tom Sachs's *Toyan's Jr.*, 2001, a large speaker installation modeled on the sound systems the artist encountered in Jamaica, and Ruth Ewan's *A Jukebox of People Trying to Change the World*, 2003–, a CD jukebox filled with more than 2,200



View of “Art or Sound” 2014. From left: Tom Sachs, *Toyan's Jr.*, 2001; Gebrüder Wellershaus fairground organ, early twentieth century.

songs addressing social or political issues, organized into categories such as the antiwar movement, feminism, and civil rights. Anri Sala's *A Solo in the Doldrums* (Based on an unseen dance by Siobhan Davies), 2009, is a snare drum activated by low-frequency sound vibrations based on a dance performed with no audience; Guido van der Werve's *Chess Piano*, 2009, is a hybrid piano-chessboard that makes a sound whenever one of the chess pieces is moved.

In some ways, the dichotomy implied in the title of the exhibition is misleading. The aim is not to distinguish between art and sound but to allow visitors to experience both together. Sound becomes another aspect—joining with form, color, concept, and materiality—that artists can use to communicate with their audience. Connecting eye and ear, the visible and the audible, the exhibition encourages us to think of sound not as interference but as a productive agent, creating associations, connections, and relationships.

—Jens Hoffmann

VERSAILLES

Lee Ufan

CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

This summer, for the annual exhibition of contemporary art in Louis XIV's gilded Château de Versailles and the surrounding formal gardens of André Le Nôtre, South Korean artist Lee Ufan installed a group of ten new sculptures from his “Relatum” series, which began in the late '1960s, complementing the marriage of regal symmetry and natural beauty that defines the work of the seventeenth-century landscape architect. *Relatum—The Arch of Versailles* (all works 2014), a chromatically neutral rainbow fashioned from a band of stainless steel some fifty feet long, marks the passage from the mirrored interiors of the palace to the lush expanses of the surrounding park. Punctuating the framed vantage point, two anthropomorphic stones, rough, unfinished, and just about the size of portly seventeenth-century courtiers, sparkle with nuances of color and luster. A carpet of steel, equal in length and width to the arch, runs through its center, down the gravel path, subtly directing visitors' vision and movement. “I used big stones and big sheets of steel,” Lee has explained, “but they do not impose their presence on the site. On the contrary, the stones and steel open up the site, the space, the sky, the forest, and the environment shows itself, and tells its story.”

The wind rustling through the grass inspired *Relatum—Wavelength Space*, forty undulating sheets of stainless steel that run down the Great Lawn. Citing the sway of the green blades, the artist arranged two processions of twenty sheets of steel, one laid down and rippling over