

P A N O P T E S

collection



Bernhard Leitner, SoundSpaceSculpture **On the 6th and 7th of May in Ixelles**

Panoptès is glad to announce Bernhard Leitner's first solo exhibition in Brussels.

Internationally recognized as a pioneer of sound and space art, Bernhard Leitner (b. 1938 in Feldkirch, Austria) is one of the most regarded artists in this new area of time-based plastic arts. Since the late 1960s, Leitner has been working in the realm between architecture, sculpture and sound, conceiving installations which he refers to as "sound-space objects".

Believing that sound is a building material, Bernhard Leitner created his first *Sound Space* in 1969 in New York. Made of 64 loudspeakers mounted on a cubic monumental structure, this minimalist sonorous architecture aroused the interest of the international artistic community opening the way to internationally acclaimed exhibitions at PSI, documenta, Venice Biennial, musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris or Hamburger Bahnhof, to name a few.

The *Bernhard Leitner, SoundSpaceSculpture* exhibition includes seven works retracing the artist's journey from 1969 to 2020. On the 6th (in presence of the artist) and 7th of May, Emilie De Pauw and Anne-Hélène Decaux will hold private tours of 45 minutes, in compliance with the social distancing measures. To request a tour, please contact us at contact@panoptes.art.

BERNHARD LEITNER



Bernhard Leitner at Museum Haus Lange Krefeld in 1979 © Atelier Leitner. Photo: Korn

« I completed studies in architecture. It sharpens the eye. A certain experience with sound was surely decisive as well. As a young student, I attended many classical music concerts. But during my student days starting in the late 1950s, I became more and more interested in the New Music being performed in Vienna. This was the new thinking in music that was opening itself up to space: Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luigi Nono, Mauricio Kagel. Vienna, along with Paris, was the place one could best experience this new departure. That fascinated me. There was also an interest in dance, for the motion of bodies in space. I've always tended to get involved in different fields.

At the moment we were talking about, but also due certainly to other currents in body and mind, it came to a spark-like confluence of thought, to an idea whose content was a kind of manifesto: Yes, why not use sound as building material?

If you read books from the 17th and 18th centuries that have to do with acoustics and architecture, it's astonishing to see how much knowledge there was in this regard and, too, how much was intentionally put to use. Quite a lot of it has been lost. In 1628, for the consecration of the newly rebuilt Salzburg cathedral, musicians were distributed throughout the entire structure: trumpets and trombones at the entrance and up front, kettledrums left and right at the rear of the nave, choirs on both sides of the nave and in the crossing, and in between on both sides two string orchestras — that is, the whole space was used! We know about Giovanni Gabrieli and the polyphony or polychorality of his music in St. Mark's in Venice, for instance. But to find out how quite specific acoustic spaces were created by the spatial distribution of instruments in the cathedral space, you have to read the old documents. The cathedrals were built with this knowledge and this desire.

So I wanted to work with the medium of sound architectonically and sculpturally, to design space. I went through various steps. At first, I formulated theoretical texts, which I also published. This was clarifying through writing. Then I rented a large loft in New York as a laboratory, to be able to start with full-scale acoustic investigations of space. Through these investigations I came to the fundamental questions of hearing. And to characteristics that, it seems to me, have gotten lost in our visually dominated culture. One of the findings was that hearing shouldn't be equated with the sense organ « ear », since our entire body is exposed to sound waves.

I have created sound spaces — for conscious listening. Subconsciously, however, we are always acoustically immersed in spaces — and not only through our ears, but with our entire bodies. I sense with my entire body, with my skin, whether or not I can easily speak in a room. That's an acoustic subconscious that everyone has.

That's why I think that sound can reach dimensions in the depths where hidden or sunken treasures lie. And raising some of these treasures again is part of my work. ».

Excerpt from Bernhard Leitner, *SOUND AS BUILDING MATERIAL*, a publication for the exhibition *TONRAUMSKULPTUR (SOUNDSPACESCULPTURE)*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2008.

Biography

- 1938 Born in Feldkirch, Austria
- 1956-1963 Studies architecture at the Technical University of Vienna
- 1963-1966 Lives in Paris
- 1968 Moves to New York
- 1969 Realizes his first *SoundCube*
- 1969-1971 Works as an urban designer for the New York City Urban Planning Office
- 1971 Realizes his first *SoundGate*
- 1972-1981 Becomes co-Director of Urban Design Studies Humanistic Perspectives at New York University
- 1973 Realizes his first *SoundArch*
- 1975 Realizes his first *SoundChair*
- 1978 First Solo Exhibition at Galerie Zwirner, Cologne
- 1979 Exhibitions at Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld and at P.S.1
- 1980 Exhibitions at Kunsthalle Bremen, at the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, and at Akademie der Künste, Berlin
- 1981 Exhibition at MUuseum MOderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien
- 1982 Moves to Berlin. Exhibitions at Kunstraum München, at Ars Electronica, and at documenta 7
- 1983 Second exhibition at the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris
- 1984 Completes *Ton-Raum TU Berlin*, an award-winning permanent installation in the main building of Berlin's Technical University
- 1985 Exhibition at Straatsgalerie Stuttgart
- 1986 Biennale di Venezia
- 1987 Initiation of the *Headscape* project. Completes *Le Cylindre Sonore*, a permanent installation in the heart of Parc de la Villette in Paris
- 1987-2005 Teaches media design at Vienna's University of Applied Arts
- 1990 Completes *SoundGate*, a permanent installation at TU Wien
- 1993 Completes *SoundSwing*, a permanent installation at Berlin's Nationalgalerie
- 1996 Realizes his first *Jumper*. Completes *Sonambiente*, a permanent installation at Akademie der Künste, Berlin
- 1998 Exhibition at Kunsthalle Wien
- 1999 City of Vienna Prize for the Visual Arts. Exhibition at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin
- 2000 Exhibition at Museo Municipal, Malaga
- 2001 Exhibition at Kunsthalle Bremen
- 2002 Award for media art, Land of Lower Austria. Prize of honour of the Deutscher Klangkunst. Exhibition at Vienna Künstlerhaus
- 2005 Participates in the Radio France *ateliers de création radiophonique*
- 2007 Friedlieb Ferdinand Runge Award, Berlin
- 2008 Exhibition at Hamburger Bahnhof ,Berlin

- 2010 Exhibition at Kolumba Museum, Cologne
- 2012 Exhibition at ZKM Karlsruhe
- 2015 Austrian Artprice – Video- and Mediaart
- 2016 Member of the Akademie der Künste Berlin
- 2017 Exhibition at Akademie der Künste, Berlin
- 2018 Exhibition at Hofgarten Pavillon, Innsbruck and at Kollegienkirche,
Salzburg
- 2020 Exhibitions at Innsbruck Klangraum, Krems and Panoptès collection,
Brussels

List of works included in the exhibition

Notation Sculpture (2009) – *Soundcube* (1970)/4 *Sound Architectures* (1970)

Ed.7+2 A.P.

6 panels (87 x 87cm each), silkscreen on plexiglass, wooden base (87 x 193 x 69cm)

Sound Arch (1996)

Ed.3 + 1 A.P.

Metal, 195 x 138cm.

Wooden seat (2018), 40 x 106 x 52cm

6 speakers, 6 channels player amplifier

Jumpers (1996)

Unique

Metal, 250 x 106 x 25cm

2 speakers, player/amplifier

Sound Beam (2012)

Ed.2 + 1 A.P.

Two 22 mm alu. tubes, alu. parabolic dish

Manually variable

Visaton tweeter, player/amplifier

Headscapes (2013)

Edition

Variable dimensions

Springwaves (2003)

Unique

Steel base, brass vessel, steel spring, h.176cm

S:S:E (SoundSpaceInstallation) (2020)

8 panels/spruce/with transducers, dark blue color, 300cm x 45cm x 18mm each, 1 JBL

Control 1 speaker, 9 channel compositions, player, amplifier

PANOPTES COLLECTION

Founded in 2015 and based in Brussels, Panoptès is a not-for-profit initiative dedicated to perceptual and experiential artistic practices. Originating from Claire De Pauw's (1925-2015) modern and contemporary art collection, it was then passed on to Emilie De Pauw who has kept building it up ever since. Coming from a philosophy and neuroethics background, Emilie chose to focus on the ways artists emphasize and question what it means for human beings to physically inhabit the material world. With a special interest in the phenomenological dimension of art, Panoptès explores the fields of sculpture as well as immersive environments and the different uses of science and technology in creating multisensory experiences. The art collection includes works from movements such as Geometric Abstraction, Minimalism, GRAV, Optical Art or Light and Space. The aim is to study the influence of ground-breaking ideas developed by artists at the beginning of the XXth century on the radical practices that later emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as to identify their enduring legacy on contemporary artistic processes.

As a platform, Panoptès seeks to select and support artists who share interests in line with its mission statement and develop knowledge-sharing initiatives bringing together artists, curators, historians and experts. Recently joined by art historian Anne-Hélène Decaux, Panoptès will also offer workshops for children, creating a bridge between philosophy and art.

