

KÜNSTLERHAUS STUTT GART

Ei Arakawa and Sergei Tcherepnin: Quasar ↔ Lanterns

Künstlerhaus Stuttgart

Exhibition: September 19 – November 29, 2009

Opening: September 18, 2009, 7pm

Performance: Ei Arakawa and Sergei Tcherepnin: Lanterns ↔ Quasar

September 20, 2009, 5pm

Location: WHITE HEAT, Hospitalstr. 27/29, Stuttgart

The exhibition "Quasar ↔ Lanterns", a collaboration of Ei Arakawa (* 1977, Japan) and Sergei Tcherepnin (* 1981, USA) developed for the Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, is comprised of an installation, three videos, a series of sound pieces and a performance. The installation inhabits the center of the exhibition space and incorporates symbolically charged objects like carpets and lanterns that are used as sound diffusing elements. Every day at a different time, the installation will be activated by one of three sound pieces, lasting about 30 minutes. The sound pieces are transmitted by a multi-channel system of speakers, developing an enormous spatial effect. The music combines analog synthesizer recordings and other instrumental sources with field recordings, recorded during both artists' travels to Turkey and Georgia.

In their collaborative exhibition, Ei Arakawa and Sergei Tcherepnin examine the interplay of music and visual art, which has a tradition in the modern avant-garde, but also in several postwar movements, like the Arts & Technology program in the USA or Jikken Kobo in Japan. A shared interest is in exploring possibilities to create artistic environments that involve visitors and shift and re-shape their roles and definitions. The installation is conceived as an experience depending on subjective movement, giving the space a performative quality. Another level is formed by historical and biographical references, which Ei Arakawa and Sergei Tcherepnin associatively introduce. In one of the videos for example, the soundtrack of a postwar Japanese film (composed by a former member of Jikken Kobo) is combined with footage of street protests and a televised wedding in Turkey. Other videos show performances by the artists and others in various sites in Georgia, where Tcherepnin's composer grandfather spent his youth participating in the pre-Soviet avant-garde. The installation does not offer an historical reconstruction or a set narrative, rather it connects different meanings and levels, to allow questions about the relationship of sound, spatial experience, and representation, and to facilitate moments of instability and open exchange between different cultural systems.

Ei Arakawa is best known for his performances, which he develops through close collaboration with other artists and friends. In seemingly improvisational works, aided by simple building materials, video, choreographed sequences and printed banners or posters, an open game develops in which borders between participants and viewers, objects and processes become diffused. Recent projects include solo exhibitions at the New Museum, New York (2008), the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis (2008) as well as contributions to the Yokohama Triennale 2008 and the Performa 07 in New York and various performances as part of the group "Grand Openings". Ei Arakawa will have an exhibition at the Kunsthalle Zurich in November 2009.

Sergei Tcherepnin is composer and performer. His work has been featured internationally in festivals and recent performances, for example at Casey Kaplan Gallery, New York and Dia, Beacon, and have been performed by the Da Capo Chamber Players, the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, the American Symphony Orchestra and the American Wind Symphony Orchestra.

As part of the exhibition at Künstlerhaus and providing a parallel version of the show, a performance developed by Ei Arakawa and Sergei Tcherepnin will take place at the temporary project space WHITE HEAT on September 20, 2009 at 5pm.

Curated by Axel John Wieder (Künstlerhaus Stuttgart)

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press:

Marlene Laube

ml@kuenstlerhaus.de

Tel: +49 (711) 617652