

Mathilde Arnoux and Anne Zeitz

## “Écouter par les yeux” (Listening with the Eyes)

### Reflecting on exhibitions, sound works and archival documents with René Block and Christina Kubisch

The seminar “*Écouter par les yeux*” (*Listening with the Eyes*), *Reflecting on exhibitions, sound works and archival documents with René Block and Christina Kubisch* took place on 15 October 2019 at the German Center for Art History in Paris. The text stems from the leaflet of the seminar and was written by Mathilde Arnoux and Anne Zeitz.

#### General Information

The seminar was organized by Mathilde Arnoux (German Center for Art History in Paris) and Anne Zeitz (Université Rennes 2) in collaboration with the Archives de la critique d’art; Institut national d’histoire de l’art (INHA); Gaîté Lyrique; Goethe-Institut Paris; Musée des beaux-arts de Rennes; Université Rennes 2; Université Paris 8; Sorbonne Université; Kunsttexte.de/Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. With the participation of René Block and Christina Kubisch as well as Jean-Philippe Antoine, Clélia Barbut (unable to attend) Bertrand Clavez, Elitza Dulguerova, Franz Kaiser, Marie-Noël Rio (unable to attend), Matthieu Saladin and students from Université Paris 8, Université Rennes 2 and Sorbonne Université.

The topic of this seminar emerged from the involvement in the research programme *1959-1985, Au Prisme de la Biennale de Paris* directed by Elitza Dulguerova at the INHA.

The seminar included the presentation of archival documents from the collection of the INHA – Archives de la critique d’art (Rennes).

#### “Écouter par les yeux” (*Listening with the Eyes*)

The curator, editor and gallerist René Block conceived several large-scale exhibitions concentrating on artistic approaches related to sound. The best known of these is *Für Augen und Ohren* at the Akademie der Künste Berlin in 1980, shown in a reduced form later that year

with the title *Écouter par les yeux* at the Musée d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris. Beginning in the 1970s, he crossed paths with Christina Kubisch whose sound installations, works and walks question our environment and its transformations by proposing aural experiences and, more specifically, the perception of the inaudible.

Both accepted the invitation by Anne Zeitz, associate professor at Université Rennes 2 and initiator of the research project *Sound Unheard* to discuss their projects at the German Center for Art History in Paris with students from Université Paris 8, Université Rennes 2 and Sorbonne Université. This participation was linked to the courses *Pratiques sonores, site-specific art et espace public* (Sonic approaches, site specific art and public space), given by Matthieu Saladin at Université Paris 8 (Master Arts plastiques), *Écouter l’archive* (Listening to the archive), given by Séverine Cauchy, Yann Sérandour and Anne Zeitz at Université Rennes 2 (Master Arts plastiques) and *Histoire des expositions depuis l’après-guerre* (History of exhibitions since the post-war period) given by Valérie Mavridorakis at Sorbonne Université (Master professionnel L’art contemporain et son exposition). The seminar is situated at the intersection of the questions raised by these three courses and inside the triangulation of sonic approaches, exhibitions and archives.

René Block and Christina Kubisch spoke about their experience and the development of their work punctuated by the presentation of documents from the Archives de la critique d’art or brought with them by the participants – photographs, recordings, radiophonic sessions, letters, schedules, notations – in dialogue with the students, Franz Kaiser, Elitza Dulguerova, Jean-Philippe Antoine, Bertrand Clavez, Elitza Dulguerova and Matthieu Saladin. The seminar focused on the 1980s and the works and exhibitions they realised at that time.

During the seminar, methodological questions related to the description and analysis of sonic practices were discussed, based on the attention directed to archives, the statements of the two guest speakers and the dialogue with them. We questioned the way archival documents can shed light on past sonic practices as well as provide a means to study works and exhibitions that depend on listening and that have not been experienced.

The seminar was organized in relation to this publication project *Sound Unheard* (Université Rennes 2

and *Kunsttexte.de/Auditive Perspektiven*), the Christina Kubisch exhibition *Échos magnétiques* (Musée des beaux-arts de Rennes, 2019, curated by Damien Simon and Anne Zeitz in collaboration with Clélia Barbut), the exhibition *Sound Unheard* (Goethe-Institut Paris, 2019, curated by Daniele Balit, Katharina Scriba and Anne Zeitz), as well as the lecture and performance programme *Inaudible Matters* (Gaîté Lyrique, Paris, 2019, organized by Marie Lechner and Anne Zeitz).

Fig. 01: Schema conceived by René Block for the exhibition catalogue *Für Augen und Ohren*, Akademie der Künste Berlin, 1980, p. 06, © René Block Archives, Courtesy of René Block.

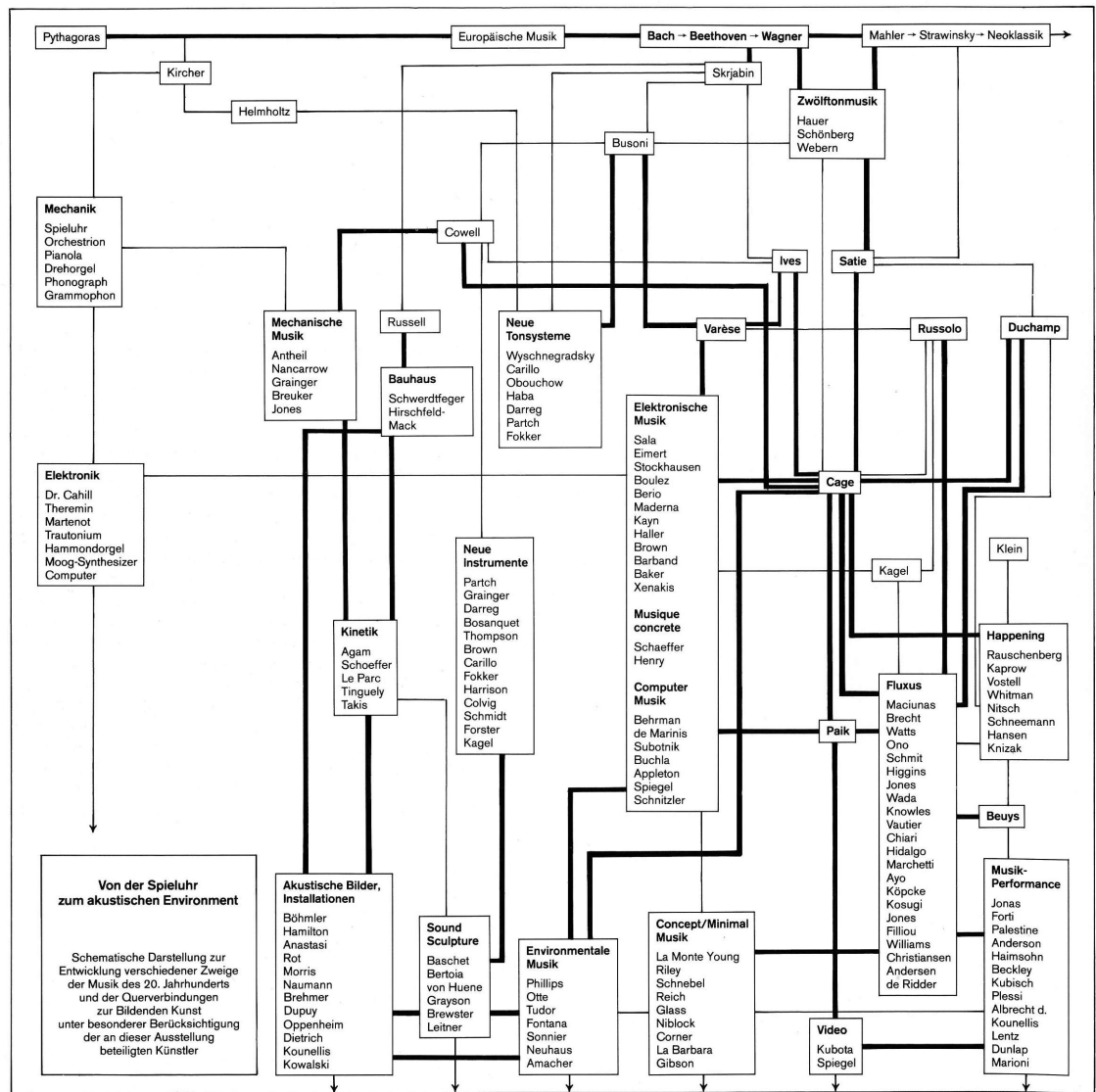




Fig. 02: View of the introduction of the seminar by Mathilde Arnoux and Anne Zeitz showing (from left to right) Elitza Dulguerova, Mathilde Arnoux, Franz Kaiser, Christina Kubisch, René Block and Jean-Philippe Antoine, photo credit DFK Paris/kkolb.

### Abstract

The seminar "*Écouter par les yeux*" (*Listening with the Eyes*), *Reflecting on exhibitions, sound works and archival documents with René Block and Christina Kubisch* took place on 15 October 2019 at the German Center for Art History in Paris. The text stems from the leaflet of the seminar and was written by Mathilde Arnoux and Anne Zeitz.

### Authors

Mathilde Arnoux is research director at the Centre allemand d'histoire de l'art (German Center for Art History) in Paris and member of the research unit Histoire des Arts et des Représentations at the University Paris-Nanterre. From 2011 to 2016 she has been conducting the team project "OwnReality. To Each His Own Reality. The notion of the real in the fine arts of

France, West Germany, East Germany and Poland between 1960 and 1989", funded by an ERC Starting Grant. Based on this project, she has published a book *La réalité en partage. Pour une histoire des relations artistiques entre l'Est et l'Ouest en Europe pendant la guerre froide* (Paris, FMSH, 2018). She is now focusing on artistic relations in cold war Europe.

Anne Zeitz is associate professor (maître de conférences) at University Rennes 2, a member of the Pratiques et théories de l'art contemporain (PTAC) research lab at Université Rennes 2 and an associate member of TEAMeD/Université Paris 8. Her recent research focuses on auditory attention and distraction in contemporary art and on practices and writings tackling the notions of the inaudible and the unheard. She

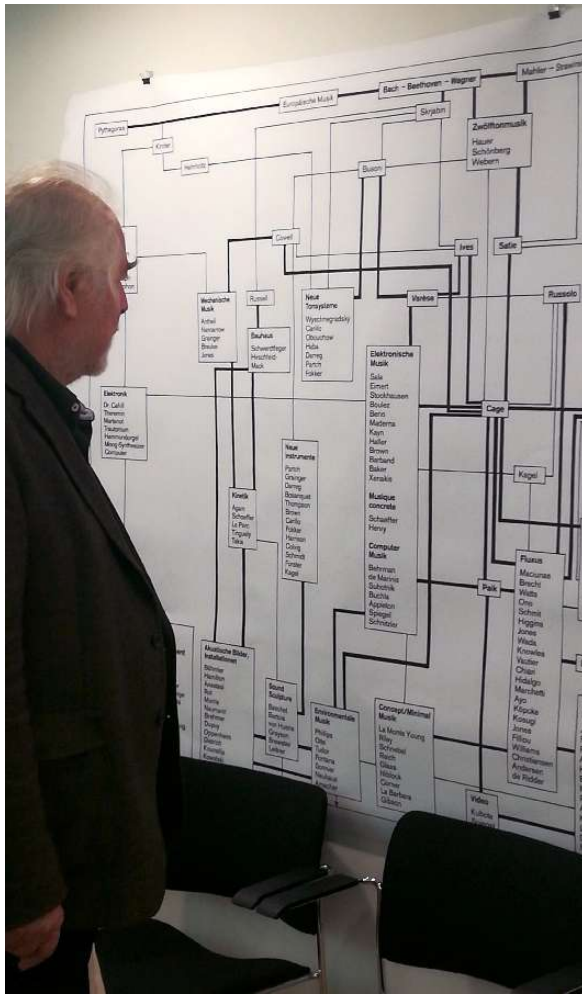


Fig. 04: View of the seminar showing René Block in front of a reproduction of the schema conceived for the exhibition *Für Augen und Ohren* (exhibition catalogue *Für Augen und Ohren*, Akademie der Künste Berlin, 1980, p. 06), photo: Séverine Cauchy.

received a research grant from the INHA and Institut Français in 2016 and is directing the research project *Sound Unheard* (including the co-organization of exhibitions at the Goethe-Institut Paris, the Musée des beaux-arts de Rennes and a performance programme at the Gaîté Lyrique in 2019).



Fig. 05: View of the seminar showing (from left to right) Anne Zeitz, Franz Kaiser, Christina Kubisch and Jean-Philippe Antoine, photo: Séverine Cauchy.

### Title

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