

Kunsthalle Wien

Florian Hecker. Hallucination, Perspective, Synthesis 17/11 2017 – 14/1 2018

Press conference: Wednesday November 15, 2017, 10 am

Opening: Thursday November 16, 2017, 7 pm

Florian Hecker is an artist who creates acoustic works using synthetic sounds and the visitor's auditory processes as material. His computer-generated, spatial, compositions dramatize questions of psychoacoustics, objective-physical stimuli, and their individual, psychological, and physical effects. A sculptural presence emerges from the complex multi-channel installations, disrupting the notion of a coherent, continuous world of identifiable coordinates and reference points.

For *Hallucination, Perspective, Synthesis*, Kunsthalle Wien's exhibition space will transform into a resonating space, and a stage for sound events that exceed linguistic description and categorization. Positioned in the centre of the exhibition space, *Resynthese FAVN* is an extensive elaboration of *FAVN*, which was presented at Alte Oper in Frankfurt in 2016.

FAVN is an abstract work that evokes issues surrounding late-19th-century psychophysics as well as Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, which itself is a musical adaption of Stéphane Mallarmé's *L'après-midi d'un faune*. Taking these coordinates as its starting point, *Resynthese FAVN* is the product of a minute, computer-controlled analysis that transforms and resynthesizes Hecker's original work. Mallarmé's poetry already traces the blurry boundaries between reality and imagination, sensory perception and hallucinated event, and so does Debussy's composition. *Resynthese FAVN* propels these ambivalences, forcing listeners to explore their own perception of fluctuating acoustic realities through algorithm-

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driven processes of sound generation. During the exhibition, eight different versions of this piece can be heard in the course of a day – and with each version, the work becomes gradually more crystallized, acquiring a sharper and more defined outline with each iteration. What's significant is the conceptual intensification of late 19th century trends as they are embodied in Debussy's work: the quantification of the senses and an explicit exposition of timbre. Produced against the background of a stage stripped down to its essentials, these complex sounds are presented as something that cannot be traced back to any known source. Ultimately, our auditory perception decodes these sounds as sensory objects originating from different locations. Resynthese FAVN thereby also problematizes the notion of singular or self-contained perception.

The same is true in two other works presented in smaller rooms. With its rising arpeggios, distorted glissandos, entirely static tones, and eruptions of noise, *Affordance* (2013) defies any expectations that may have emerged from what was previously heard. Totally synthetic, the piece is literally based on sounds that are "unheard" of, thus creating a musical ontology that no listening process can fully fathom. Based on a highly formalized tuning system, the second work created for *Hallucination, Perspective, Synthesis* likewise focuses on the question of what sort of intensities are triggered in the recipient's brain-ear by what type of auditory stimuli.

With their rigorously formal staging, Hecker's works intensify a sensory space – one that disrupts the structural cohesion of experience and opens itself up to what Mallarmé called a "hallucinatory" experience of something that cannot be pinned down by way of a clear verbal description.

Florian Hecker creates scenarios that require an audience whose reception alone will first cause them to impart their entire tonal and psychoacoustic spectrum. The works produce a form of an Immaterial that is perceived and materialized through the very subjective process of the encounter with the same. The examination of compositional post-war Modernity and audiology encounters considerations of Conceptual Art and Minimalism on viewer involvement and subjectivization of the objective given: on perspective and situation.

Curator: Vanessa Joan Müller

Florian Hecker (*1975 in Augsburg) lives and works in Funchal, Madeira and in Edinburgh, Scotland. He studied art at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, as well as Computational Linguistics and Psycholinguistics at Munich University. Hecker is currently Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Edinburgh.

Selected exhibitions and performances: *Florian Hecker – Synopsis*, Tramway, Glasgow (2017); *Florian Hecker – Formulations*, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (2016); *Florian Hecker – Formulations*, Culturgest, Porto; Künstlerhaus Graz; Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (2015); Sadie Coles HQ, London; Galerie Neu, Berlin; Articulação, Lumiar Cité, Lisbon; documenta 13, Kassel; Nouveau Festival, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2012).

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Selected discography: *A Script for Machine Synthesis* (Editions Mego, Vienna, 2017); *Articulação Sintetico* (Editions Mego, Vienna, 2017); *Hecker Leckey Sound Voice Chimera* (Pan, Berlin, 2015); *Articulação* (Editions Mego, Vienna, 2014); *Chimerization* (Editions Mego, Vienna, 2012); *Speculative Solution* (Editions Mego, Vienna, 2011); *Acid in the Style of David Tudor* (Editions Mego, Vienna, 2009).

Florian Hecker's work *FAVN* was presented at the Alte Oper Frankfurt, in cooperation with the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (both in 2016). His collaboration with Reza Negarestani, *A Script for Machine Synthesis*, was presented at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and at Maison de la Radio, Paris (both in 2015); *Formulation (FLV Project)* at the opening exhibition of Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2014).

Saturday November 18, 2017, 10 pm

FLORIAN HECKER LIVE

A coproduction of Kunsthalle Wien in conjunction with Wien Modern Museumsquartier, Hall G

Kunsthalle Wien and Wien Modern present the Austrian premier of Florian Hecker's text-sound pieces *Chimerization* (2011/2012) and *Synthetic Hinge* (2014–2016).

Florian Hecker: *Chimerization*
(2011–2012) – 32 min 30 sec

Libretto by Reza Negarestani. Featuring the voices of Javier Anguera, Joan Jonas, Anna Kohler, Stephen Prina. Voices recorded by Florian Hecker at the Sensory Communication Group, Research Laboratory of Electronics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, as well as at the Bose Corporation, Framingham.

Iannis Xenakis: *S.709*
(1994) – 7 min 03 sec

Florian Hecker: *Synthetic Hinge*
(2014–2016) – 28 min 00 sec

Libretto by Reza Negarestani. Synthetic voice developed by Rob Clark, Centre for Speech Technology Research, University of Edinburgh / original voice: Joan La Barbara, recorded by Florian Hecker at the Hearing Science Laboratory, City University of New York.

Exhibition within the framework of the Vienna Art Week

Press release

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#Hecker

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