



MUSIC

Kunstlicht turned its focus to music before, namely in 1985. The reason then, among others, was the 300-year anniversary of the birth of Johann Sebastian Bach and Georg Friedrich Händel. Now, 27 years later, we once again explore this theme. Come 2012, music seems to have colonized a number of museums; museums that before were closed bastions of the visual arts. In the exhibition *Dreams of nature. Symbolism from Van Gogh to Kandinsky*, the Van Gogh Museum uses music in order to introduce its visitors to a number of interdisciplinary works from the Symbolist period. In *Temporary Stedelijk 3* the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam invited musicians to reflect on the question: How does a building sound? Making use of the acoustics of a renovated printing factory-turned-club, TrouwAmsterdam served as a podium, set, and resonating chamber for artists to experiment in and on. These exhibitions do not only show that the relationship between music and visual art or architecture remains a topical subject, but reveal that their interconnectedness is increasingly considered a given.

From the writings in this issue we conclude that the disciplines of music, visual art, and architecture are hard to define. In the contemporary multimedial times, the boundaries between each are more diffuse than ever. This issue reflects the disciplines' historical fights for emancipation as well as the fruits of their collective labor.

We begin this issue at the peak of multidisciplinary interaction. Art historian Michel Didier describes the formation of the *gesamtkunstwerk* in the nineteenth century, when, based on a romantic ideal, music and the visual arts merged. Didier sets out to decipher the motives of a number of leading figures in the complex development of the *gesamtkunstwerk*.

The subsequent two articles reveal that the arts are not always considered equal. Nora Alter argues that in the reception of artist films the focus

tends to be on the visual. This negligence toward music and sound, according to her, perpetually leads to misinterpretations. Whereas Alter describes how music is sometimes considered subservient to the image, Marit van Rijn's article deals with a situation in which the image is seen as nothing but illustration to a piece of music. She describes how Oskar Fischinger and others from the 1920s onward fought to free film from being merely illustrative, and elevate it to autonomous visual art, a practice that resulted in a cinematographic avant-garde commonly referred to as Visual Music.

Jazz's development from lowbrow entertainment to high art is considered by former Kunstlicht editor Stefan de Graaf. As De Graaf points out, this development entailed the loss of some of jazz's most defining characteristics. As mainly Caucasian critics pushed for jazz to be accepted as high art, they downplayed jazz's African roots, and instead promoted a new, white jazz rooted in a Western tradition.

Two case studies are offered by Kunstlicht editors Evelyn Austin and Maarten van 't Klooster. Austin spoke to composer Scott Wheeler about his 1988 opera 'The Construction of Boston', an adaptation of a performance by Kenneth Koch, Robert Rauschenberg, Niki de Saint Phalle, and Jean Tinguely from 1962. Austin describes how Wheeler dealt with the performance's complex legacy. As Wheeler walks us through the opera, the motivations behind his decisions are disclosed.

In his article Van 't Klooster reveals how music lead close friends Henri Fantin-Latour and James McNeill Whistler in completely different artistic directions. Inspired by the Late Romantic, contemporary music of for instance Schumann and Wagner, Fantin-Latour created fairylike lithographs. Whistler, on the other hand, used music as a marketing strategy. The opposite ways in which music effected their visual work had substantial consequences for the position they have come to take in in art history.

A more theoretical approach to the relationship between music and architecture is offered by Ralph Brodrück, who uses the philosopher Hermann Schmitz's writings to reveal that if one considers perception to be corporeal, similarities in the experience of music and architecture can be found. The swelling of baroque forms, for instance, corresponds to the physical experience of the chest expanding when taking a deep breath. Brodrück's

colleague at the TU, Jacob Voorthuis, is suspicious of those who draw parallels between music and architecture. Architecture is architecture, and music is music, so he claims. More interesting to him is the way in which music and architecture affect the body, and how they make use of each other. Buildings can become instruments, just as musical scores can change into spatial events. In a course he taught at the beginning of this academic year, he invited his students to reflect on the relationship between music and architecture, and create a corresponding design. The work of four students is represented in this issue of *Kunstlicht*.

Three artist contributions explore the various roles music can play in the visual arts. Amsterdam-based British artist Taf Hassam's textual contribution is at once an attempt to free a number of influential figures in the history of Northern Irish punk from the margins, as well as a reflection on notions such as reuse and copyright. The second artist contribution comes courtesy of American artist and researcher Jeremiah Day. In a personal note Day considers the influence of the philosopher Hannah Arendt and the post-hardcore band Fugazi on his life and work. Through Arendt and Fugazi, Day contemplates the correlation between ethics and aesthetics, and 'politics from the inside out'. This text also serves as an introduction to Day's PhD research, which he is conducting at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the Utrecht School of the Arts (HKU). Finally, the third artist contribution is by the Young British Artist Sam Taylor-Wood, and can be found on the cover of the issue that lies before you. Editor Maeike Kimsma gives a brief introduction to his 2008 work *Sigh*.

In addition to the artist contributions, three composers contributed to this issue of *Kunstlicht*. Marko Kassenaar's piano solo, *Silenzio*, based on silence, is in sharp contrast to the electronic music of Olaf Kerckhaert, which builds on algorithms. Two of Kerckhaert's pieces, *Dopamine* and *Dialektik*, are introduced by editor Ragna Manz. A third composer contribution comes courtesy of sound artist Joe Snape. The compositions by Kerckhaert, Kassenaar, and Snape can be heard online at www.tijdschriftkunstlicht.nl.

Specially for this issue *Kunstlicht* formed a one-off alliance with the music magazine *Gonzo (circus)*. *Gonzo (circus)* came to the fore in 1991 in the midst of the Northern Limburg punk- and guitar rock scene. Inspired by the bountiful, some-

times hedonistic journalistic style of the eccentric American cult writer Hunter S. Thompson (1939 – 2005), the Dutch language magazine serves up information about domestic and international non-commercial- and avant-garde music. The collaboration with *Gonzo* resulted in a reprint of Robert Muis's article on composer, performer, sound researcher, and installation builder Stelios Manousakis. In his work Manousakis makes use of cybernetics, algorithms and artificial life models. Muis poses the, to *Kunstlicht* pertinent, question: Why should music not be able to have a scientific base?

In the issue that lies before you we have attempted to lay bare the complex and extensive relationships between music, visual art, and architecture. In a time in which the viewer finds himself overwhelmed by multimedial- and interdisciplinary utterances, the merging of the arts seems logical. However, the contributing writers reveal that, although the relationship might be a natural one, it is never clear-cut.

On behalf of the editorial board,
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