

Unveiling the Theatrum Sonorum

Mario Verandi for TONSPUR

*“My kingdom for a more embodied body”*

-Bruno Latour

Mario Verandi investigates poetic metaphors through the simultaneous expression of sonic autobiographies and compositions which place a listener in a timeless environment. The notion of metaphor has long been considered a hindrance to realism. In light of this assumption, it is important to unpack the ways in which metaphor can be used to bring one closer to the imminent factuality behind forms. The use of field recording in Verandi's work is a testament to the potential for sound not only to draw one into the detail of nature and apparent identity but also the potential for capturing distinct moments in time. Field recording is a metaphor, in this sense for memory itself, which functions as a sequence of snapshots, which often decontextualise and recompose themselves durationally.

Verandi's Theatrum Sonorum brings an automatism into the body à la Ligetti's comment “I know already the music I will write. But the words? I have not yet decided.” One feels while experiencing this composition that Verandi found for the first time his relationship to certain sounds, there is in its design implemented a certain curiosity, newness, and through the placement of silences a way of structuring “chapters” which gives one the feeling of reading sound as opposed to hearing sound; this proves resonant and paradoxical as the artist selected certain objects and spaces to record which specifically link him to his childhood spent (and raised) in the Teatro Municipal de San Nicolás. This doubles the meaning, as childhood is a period when language itself is acquired, and there are feelings that cannot be articulated, specific fears, specific ambiances, specific energies which the child must learn to describe. In the absence of that ability to express, the child (and the vulnerable one) is left with sensation. Verandi's Theatrum Sonorum reproduces the pre-articulated sensation based state of being; it is in this sense a composition which speaks directly to the nervous system.

The theatre as an entity. The theatre as a witness. The theatre as a companion. The theatre as a breathing organism, a semiotic body, a fluid pattern of identities, a matrix of potentialities. How to display this body? How to frame this body? The photographic part of Verandi's work evokes the grandeur, the intimidating pressure of the theatre to overwhelm an individual; a power casting them into an opulent abyss, leaving them unguarded, prone to change and vulnerable even to the simple act of the curtain rising. However, the series of photographs shows the mechanics which ‘undress’ the theatre, demystifying it, rendering it naked.

Ultimately, when we combine the composition and the imagery birthed by Verandi, we notice the unfolding of a private story as it is tenderly exposed to the world. -Josseline Black