

Introduction at the opening of *Tonspur – D* by Boris Hegenbart

Boris Hegenbart, geboren 1969 in Berlin, lebt und arbeitet in Berlin. Is the 86. TONSPUR-Artist-in-Residence im MuseumsQuartier Wien.

When I asked Boris Hegenbart to create an installation for the Tonspur passage, I could really imagine the challenging and pleasurable strangeness of his particular vision and praxis and an interaction with that place.

As BH says, “I am fascinated by the opportunity of creating performances in which each participant—whether dancers, singers, musicians, or others— acts within their own distinct space. As a live remixer and producer, I navigate between these individual spaces with microphones and cameras. This synthesis results in a cohesive whole, where the uniqueness of each performer is preserved. This affords me a spectral access, enabling the independent processing and highlighting of individual tracks within the ensemble. I find it interesting to limit or even stop communication between the performers. So there is no spontaneous reaction to each other. The commonality arises solely from the selection of the artist, setup of the room and my compositional specifications.”

And when I asked him for a brief description of the new piece (just so that I’d have something relevant to say about it), he sent me this:

“The composer/artist describes this situation as an infrastructure that operates autonomously, comprised of sounds that move back and forth like industrial components in an assembly hall, accelerating and slowing down, sometimes coming to a standstill and allowing other objects to pass. Hegenbart proposes that sound and movement have a function in a context that is unknown to those hearing them; the artist communicates significance without revealing the meaning. So, the installation is not directed at a recipient per se. It exists in exactly the same way as the architectural situation it occupies does, as an ongoing presence that does not require the viewer.

And that is what I love so much about his work: surprises and challenges. Each one leading to another one, until a radically new architecture finds its sonic balancing point.

Whenever I’ve had the pleasure of working with Boris, I always found myself doing something I’ve never done, and singing/speaking things I’ve never imagined. What a treat for a performer! Whether he’s making an installation, collaborating on a major piece, working in the sound-studio or putting together a different view of our shared reality, he always includes, and asks, *us* to be part of it, to join in its momentum, structure and construction, to co-shape the moments to come.

Therefore, it seemed fitting, that Boris Hegenbart be invited to do this new work, in a place that has so many new and startling pieces over the last 20 years (yes! It’s the 20th anniversary of TOnspur – an amazing 2 decades of work and inspiration by director, Georg Weckwerth, and his whole team: congratulations to them). I wanted to see and hear what Boris Hegenbart would do inside this passage, and how he changes time and space in a way that no one else would.

And now, it’s all yours — the passersby, the audience, the walkers, and listeners — to put together in your way as you walk these 23 steps through *Rotaphonie* in the Tonspur passage.

--David Moss, 26. February 2024, MQ, Wien