

ANCB The Aedes Metropolitan Laboratory
Berlin, 16th & 17th June 2018

in cooperation with
Architecture Exhibitions Weekend Berlin
MakeCity Festival Berlin

funded by Musikfonds

Das Arbeitende Konzert/ The Working Concert (Revision IV-V)

Performative Installation

Christopher Dell: Vibraphone, Moderation, Composition, Conduction (D)

feat.

Jonas Westergaard: Bass (DK)

Robert Landfermann: Bass (D)

Elisabeth Coudoux: Cello (D)

Christian Lillinger: Drums (D)

Pierre Borel: Saxophon (F)

**The Concert as Exhibition:
Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert
(Revision IV-V)**

Report 16th and 17th June 2018
ANCB The Aedes Metropolitan Laboratory

On 16th and 17th June 2018 ANCB The Aedes Metropolitan Laboratory, Berlin presented Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert (Revision IV-V) on invitation by and collaboration with Kristin Feireiss (founder of Aedes Architecture Forum and former member of the Pritzker-Prize Jury) and Hans-Jürgen Commerell (director ANCB – The Aedes Metropolitan Laboratory). The event was part of the MakeCity Festival Berlin and the Architecture Exhibitions Weekend Berlin. It was funded by Musikfonds and the Senate of Berlin.



Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert is a discursive and performative format by the artist, composer and theoretician Christopher Dell. Composed for a variable ensemble, the composition consists of flexible form modules and time frames. Against this background, Dell conceptualises and realises the composition as situative, socio-material assemblage. The assemblage operates as a frame in which he and invited musicians explore the structural processes of a composition as concert, its presentation as performative installation and representation as score.

Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert suggests a course of working through, that aims at thematising the social, material and organisational preconditions of work, and which can in turn be applied to urban society in a larger perspective. The title hints at a specific perspective on the complex relations of contemporary



Lillinger (Germany, drums), Jonas Westergaard (Denmark, bass) and Robert Landfermann (Germany, bass). The project's manifestation was a setting of musical actors, actions, discourses and things such as scores, instruments, located in the spatial configuration of the gallery. This setting informed a number of dialogues among the musicians about compositional relationships that seek to convey contemporary urbanity and its working conditions through the musician's lens. Although it used composition as a method, the performative installation was never meant to have a singular or total reading attributed to its modular parts or the work as a whole. The modular forms thereby functioned as a means for opening up interpretation from different layers. Through a non-linear layering, collaging, ordering and reordering of compositional information, scores and actions, the installation interwove historical facts of composition with its myths, deconstructing predetermined histories, classifications and hierarchies to shift their content in ideology and make new readings possible. While the entry being free of charge, the installation invited the



production. Conceptualized as an accumulation of related musical events, the same title Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert is and has been used for several versions of the installation since its first realisation at Kunsthau Bethanien, Berlin in 2014. The added subtitle revision thereby indicates that each new installation is a new research undertaking. The way the title begins with "The Working" indicates the same research attitude towards the notion of work itself.

At ANCB the Revision IV-V of Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert took place as a two-day format, the daily time frame being fixed to 3 hours. The format presented Dell as moderator, vibraphonist and conductor in cooperative work with the internationally acclaimed musicians Elisabeth Coudoux (Germany, cello), Pierre Borel (France, saxophone), Christian





visitors to come freely during the announced hours, to move about the space or to sit down, to listen to or observe the performance. As meaning in *Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert* is polyvalent and open, the reading is dependent on the players, the viewers and the site. Such triangulation of playing, visiting and site at ANCB strikingly evoked a changing interpretative field within which Dell's installation functioned.

In working with ANCB Dell brought together the musical process, as it occurs within the concert room as space of performative practise, with the space as site of curatorial and architectural thinking and the discourse as location for reflection and writing. What came to the fore in the performances of the work was the constellation and superimposition of different forms of practise. For the audience it was new and exciting to get a look at and an insight in the technical aspects of musical performance and its representations – the scores – in relation to the discussions and attitudes





an explicit interpretational framework. Thereby Aedes and its hub ANCB alike served as a dispositive, meaning a material and discursive setting that inscribes and establishes power structures and develops and stabilizes institutional and aesthetic regimes. The history of Aedes Architecture Forum, founded in 1980 as the first and inevitably one of the most important private exhibition spaces for architecture and urbanism in Europe, as well its exhibitions and spatial arrangements along with the gallery's catalogues and website, all worked together to strategically reorientate Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert as a

that the musicians held towards them. Thereby the performers introduced a series of intriguing proposals concerning the treatment of a specific modular form, on transference between the performers and the score, on handling musical parameters such as dynamics, rhythm, timing, harmony, density, the importance of improvisation, the idea of working through, and the necessity of indeterminacy and its structuring, all of which are crucial to the process of Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert.



concert format. By performing the work at a historically informed gallery space such as Aedes, certain themes emerged such as the spatial configuration of interaction, the location of the audience and the conceptual framing of the work as a concert and a discourse.

The subtitle Revision IV-V indicates the thinking through a curatorial juxtaposition that aligned the concert's temporality of improvisational processing –



Transposing the concert from the traditional concert hall to a gallery space, shed light on the relevance of the site of musical practise. Located in the particular set-up at Aedes, more precisely, in the space of the gallery's research hub ANCB, the performers concentrated not only on examining but also on demonstrating the working through and its relevance as a mode of understanding how one encounters, curates, interprets and works with indeterminacy. This particular way of investigating, discussing and showing was influenced by the locational context itself. Once the music was housed within a gallery space, it acquired





which is the re-emergence and revision of an earlier experience in the present – with the musician’s working practise. But the process also reversed in its making: as a performative installation, *Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert* drew attention to the fact that every exhibition as dispositive needs time and action to be inaugurated. Once inside the gallery space of *Aedes*, the performance of the composition as installation and exhibition formed a temporary, critical interjection that responded to and cast a new light onto the site. *Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert* reminded of the fact, that in order to activate and transform an exhibition space and enliven its setting, one must enter it. Only in moving through and acting at a site, in participating and encountering its actors and objects, the site becomes animated. Therefore, not only was the concert reframed and expanded by its recontextualisation. The latter also allowed for the temporary reconsideration of the gallery site, its display, narratives and meanings.

As indicated above, the exhibition as concert, or, the concert as installation includes both objects and actions, thereby necessarily acquiring a temporal

dimension. Its performative contents unfold not only in space but also in time. In approaching the spatial setting, Dell found an ideal ally in gallery assistant Christine Meierhofer, who brought spatial sensibility to the time aspect of the exhibition. Together with Dell she articulated the spatio-temporal fabric that is entwined with an experience, that combines viewing and hearing in a precise way. Dell and Meierhofer placed the performers in the center of the space, illuminated by the daylight through the double wing doors to the garden. Around the centerstage, indicated by music stands and an empty circle, they orchestrated white gallery chairs. These chairs served as displayed and space-structuring objects as well as seats accommodating the audience, constituting a tacit itinerary throughout the concert as exhibition. In its inversion of the traditional concert setting, the orchestration of chairs initiated an unsettling of the gallery’s architecture. At the rear end of the long rectangle space, the gallery’s book collection and the stage located in front of it (with black office chairs installed as displayed objects) shifted from foreground to background. The space oscillated between stage, installation and exhibition design; the individual



objects such as chairs or music stands that integrated the *mis-en-scène*, while functional, also were carefully conceived in dialogue with the installative juxtaposition and blurring of disciplinary categories. Consequently negating the white neutrality of modernity's exhibition walls, the arrangement let architecture gallery, knowledge institution and concert hall conflate. More than a mere detail, the determination to comprehensively remodel the entire space was crucial to question the conventional concert as well as exhibition setting.

Reflecting critically on the role of the concert as artistic format, *Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert* (Revision IV-V) for two days invited the audience to experience the process of music-making and its conditions of production in real time. As performative and discursive installation, the work addressed and contextualised fundamental questions of cooperation in the fields of contemporary art, music and the theory of the urban. How to rethink the concert as work today? Put and kept in motion as research on the making of space and performative installation, *Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert* (Revision IV-V)

investigated the provisions of notating, assembling, arranging, making and displaying music as spatial action and organisation.

Dell's involvement in *Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working* is entirely bound up with his thinking about how musical works are affected by institutions, frameworks and distribution and how they find their way into publicness, and, eventually, discourse. In this respect, the realisation of Revision IV-V of *Das Arbeitende Konzert/The Working Concert* at The Aedes Metropolitan vividly achieved a crucial step in Dell's long lasting consideration of the concert format through its display, context, reception and dissemination. Recontextualisation, juxtaposition and improvisation are three of the central tropes that in the case of these two days meticulously enacted the temporary discursive relationship between architecture, curating and musical practise.









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AN THE AEDES
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LABORATORY

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