



Kunsthaus Bregenz

Lothar Baumgarten

Seven Sounds / Seven Circles

April 25 to June 21, 2009

Press conference: Thursday, April 23, 2009, 11 a.m.

Opening: Friday, April 24, 2009, 8 p.m.

Along with other major artists of his time like Joseph Beuys, Walter de Maria, or Robert Smithson, Lothar Baumgarten significantly extended the bounds of the art of the 1960s, particularly through his exploration with and in his reflections on the source of “nature.” However, unlike his American colleagues who oriented themselves on the power of reality, Lothar Baumgarten challenged the Eurocentric view and, alternating between research and documentation, openly confronted the unknown site-specific “other” of a given location. Again and again he tracked down the phantom of “nature” within culture through his ephemeral, three-dimensionally materialized comments, drawings, photographs, slide projections, films, and documentary sound recordings. In long-term projects he developed presentation spaces that primarily explored different cultural systems and their specific conceptions of space and time.

For Bregenz the artist is developing a work that is radically new even to himself. Departing from sound recordings made during a four-year period on Denning’s Point, a peninsula that juts out into the Hudson River north of New York, Lothar Baumgarten will create an audio work in seven “phonic sculptures” for three floors of the KUB. They will be acoustic pieces of urban phonetic structures marked by changing weather conditions, animal cries, and sounds made by plants and the movements of man and machine. A document of found conditions that renders audible a phonic reality exposed to the changing seasons (ice floes, diesel locomotives, bullfrogs, wind and rain ...). On each floor the visitor will encounter a different, roughly one-hour-long acoustic picture amidst empty architecture. These sound pieces draw their physicality and sculptural character from the complexity of their intonation. They have a symphonic dimension.

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Kunsthhaus Bregenz

Special surround sound technology virtually transports the listener to the location where the events took place and lets him or her experience the drama and powerful enactment of nature transformed into culture.

Excerpted from the text by Kaira Cabañas. A summary of the text can be found in the enclosed booklet on the exhibition:

“For his current exhibition *Seven Sounds / Seven Circles* at the Kunsthhaus Bregenz, Baumgarten’s point of departure is Denning’s Point, a heavily wooded and overgrown peninsula on the east bank of the Hudson River. Part one of the exhibition includes three slide projections with images of this wasteland, former site of the Denning’s Point Brick Works Company. In the course of viewing the 404 slides, the visitor will discern the dynamics of growth and change made visible through the vegetation’s abstract compositions and also notice the subtle traces of industry still scattered throughout the area. The exhibition’s second part includes seven sound pieces, each one hour in length, and similarly recorded on the peninsula. Presented in discrete spaces and under varied lighting conditions, these “phonic sculptures” provide an expansive sense of site through their atmospheric presence and unexpected merging of sound patterns, both natural and cultural. Indeed, what Baumgarten describes as a “dramatic dialogue between culture and nature” speaks to the ongoing coexistence of the two in this region, while the work’s instantiation pushes the limits of our expectations of what we think we can hear.” (Kaira Cabañas)

Quote Lothar Baumgarten

“This work consists of seven phonic paintings, which each last 60 minutes. The material for them was gathered from 2004 on during several recording sessions using 24 bit 96 KHz surround sound technology.

These audio pieces have a symphonic character. The movements, which divide the content, occur in cyclic arrangement and are based on acoustic laws that produce their moods through melody and tonality. Through their symphonic dimension and tonal language they recreate the site of original phonic reality. They inherently possess that overwhelming power of imagination that releases visitors after an hour of listening, yet without having completely revealed the conditions of the actual setting. Listeners remain uncertain about the what, where, and how of the stimuli they have just heard. The structures of this suggested world of sounds evoke their own inner images along this path. Layers of overlapping rhythm and intervals create a multidimensional, sustained chromatic unison, a steadily swelling crescendo of “voices” that set the scene for the events.”

(Lothar Baumgarten, 2009)



Kunsthhaus Bregenz

KUB-Billboards

Lothar Baumgarten

“wer leben will darf nicht sterben”

April 14 to June 21, 2009

Seestraße Bregenz

A laconic remark on the reflection of the quotidian and the course of things.

Lothar Baumgarten's six black-and-white photographs for the KUB Billboards were shot during his many-year project “Seven Sounds / Seven Circles” on Denning's Point, a peninsula jutting out into the Hudson River south of Beacon in the State of New York. The photographs are part of a series; during the exhibition other works of the series will be presented in a double slide projection at the Kunsthhaus Bregenz. Each of the six landscape pictures selected by the artist for the KUB Billboards has one word printed on it; strung together these words form the sentence “wer leben will darf nicht sterben“.



Kunsthhaus Bregenz

KUB-Publications

Catalogue book

Lothar Baumgarten

Seven Sounds / Seven Circles

CD set

Lothar Baumgarten

Seven Sounds / Seven Circles

Mohicanituk I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII

Two publications are being presented in conjunction with the exhibition "Lothar Baumgarten: Seven Sounds / Seven Circles." One is a CD set featuring seven audio pieces, phonic compositions with a sculptural character. Accompanying these acoustic works are photographic images and a text by the artist. The second publication is a catalogue book containing four essays which, in compendium form, reflect Lothar Baumgarten's work and way of thinking and represent the complexity of his artistic standpoint. This publication is rounded off with a monographic survey and a recent interview with the artist by Christian Rattemeyer. The catalogue also includes an informative introduction by co-publisher Kaira Cabañas. As with previous books by the artist, the form and typography of both publications were conceived by Walter Nikkels for and with Lothar Baumgarten.

Catalogue book

German and English editions

Ed. by Kunsthhaus Bregenz and Kaira Cabañas

With contributions by T. Bartscherer, C. Buckley, J. Curley, C. Rattemeyer, and A. Rosenblum Martín

Typography: Walter Nikkels

144 pages, 22.5 x 30.5 cm, 48 illustrations, softcover

Price: € 48

CD Set

7 audio CDs

Supplementary booklet: 16 pages, 14.5 x 13 cm, 8 illustrations

Price: € 48

Special edition with signed print: € 240

Due to be presented at the exhibition opening on April 25, 2009



Kunsthaus Bregenz

KUB-Editions

Lothar Baumgarten Question / Answer, 2008

Two square digital prints show the negative and positive images of a “question” and “answer” taken from the interview which Christian Rattemeyer did with Lothar Baumgarten for the book accompanying the exhibition in November 2008, and transformed into a system of mathematic symbols. Through the translation of words into an abstract form, the phonetic structure of the conversation takes on the character of a musical score.

Lothar Baumgarten

Question / Answer | 2008

2 digital carbon prints, 68 × 68 cm each

Limited edition of 30 pieces, numbered and signed

Special price during the exhibition at the KUB: € 1,200, price after the exhibition: € 1,500, incl. 10% VAT, plus forwarding expenses

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Kunsthau Bregenz

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The Kunsthau Bregenz would like to thank its partners for their generous financial support and the cultural commitment that goes along with it.

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Kunsthaus Bregenz

Kunsthaus Bregenz

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Opening hours:
Tuesday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Thursday 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

National Holiday 01.05.09
10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Ascension Day 21.05.09
10 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Whit Monday 01.06.09
10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Corpus Christi 11.06.09
10 a.m. – 9 p.m.