



## BILDER VON KLÄNGEN.

Zur Ausstellung „rot – oder wie laut ist schwarz?“  
von Rolf Julius

„Wie klingt ein schwarzes Rechteck und wie ein fast rundes Rot.“ Die Frage stellt Rolf Julius in einem Text, den er in seine Installation *Why pink, why green, why red* auf der zweiten Galerie der Rotunde des Fridericianum integriert hat. Perspektivisch verzerrt, und so als Reproduktion von Geschriebenem kenntlich gemacht, liegt er auf dem schiefgrig grauen Steinfußboden unter einer rechteckigen Glasplatte. In unmittelbarer Nachbarschaft finden sich auf dem Boden verstreut ein transportabler CD-Player mit Netzteil, ein kleiner Auto-Verstärker, schließlich ein Gewirr von Zuleitungskabeln und bunt ummantelten Litzen. Nicht weit, an der Wölbung der Wand ausgerichtet, was der Text weiter beschreibt: „Beide, das Schwarz wie das Rot, liegen, schweben eher, über dem Boden, unter sich kleine runde Lautsprecher, die permanent leise Klangfolgen von sich geben und hin und wieder lautere Melodiefragmente erklingen lassen, von denen ich meine, sie klingen je nachdem rot oder schwarz. Was aber nicht stimmen kann, weil es für schwarz wie für rot dieselben Klänge sind.“

Üblicherweise sind Farben keine Dinge an sich, sie werden in der Philosophie vielmehr als Paradebeispiel eines Akzidents, einer zu einem Ding zufällig und dieses nicht wesentlich charakterisierenden Eigenschaft verhandelt. Julius hingegen überführt die Farbe zur Essentia, indem er sie in ihrer konzentriertesten Form, dem Pigmentpulver, auf geometrisch geformte Glasplatten siebt. Das transparente Trägermaterial, das für sich allein optisch zu verschwinden neigt, wird von einer gleichmäßigen Pigment-Schicht



## PICTURES OF SOUNDS.

On the exhibition “red – or how loud is black?”  
by Rolf Julius

“How does a black rectangle sound and how an almost round red.” This is the question Rolf Julius puts up in a text as part of his installation *Why pink, why green, why red* at the second gallery of the rotunda in the Fridericianum. In distorted perspective and as such a reproduction of something that is identifiable as writing it is laid upon a slate-grey stone ground underneath a rectangular plate of glass. Nearby objects are scattered: a portable CD-player with an adapter, a small amplifier from a car and a tangle of cables and coloured cord. Not far, aligned to the vault of the wall, what further is described by the text: “Both, the black as well as the red rather hover above the surface, underneath themselves small loudspeakers that constantly utter quiet successions of sound and by and by perform a few louder fragments of melodies of which I think they sound either red or black. Which can’t be true as there are the same sounds for black as for red.”

Usually colours are not Dinge an sich. In philosophy they are rather taken exemplary as an accidental quality, i.e. a quality that does not characterise the object in an essential way. Julius however transmits colour to an essential, by the way he chooses it in its most concentrated form as pigment powder which he sieves on to plates of glass in geometrical forms. The transparent material that carries seems to be vanishing optically on its own and is covered here by a complete layer of pigment. In this way form, that necessarily describes each plane, joins colour accidentally. Without colour the visuality would



vollständig bedeckt. So tritt hier einmal die Form, die jede Fläche notwendig beschreibt, akzidentell zur Farbe. Ohne diese mangelte jener visuelle Präsenz und klare Unterscheidbarkeit vom Steinboden, über dem die Farbe zu schweben scheint. Dass die rechteckige, schwarz besiebte und runde, rot besiebte Glasplatte auf kleinen Lautsprechern – Hochtönern ohne Gehäuse – ruht, lassen neben dem zitierten Text die dünnen Kabel vermuten, die zu den Audio-Geräten führen. Die von ihnen erzeugte akustische Energie ist viel zu gering, als dass die Glas-scheiben in Schwingung und damit die Pigmente in Bewegung gerieten.

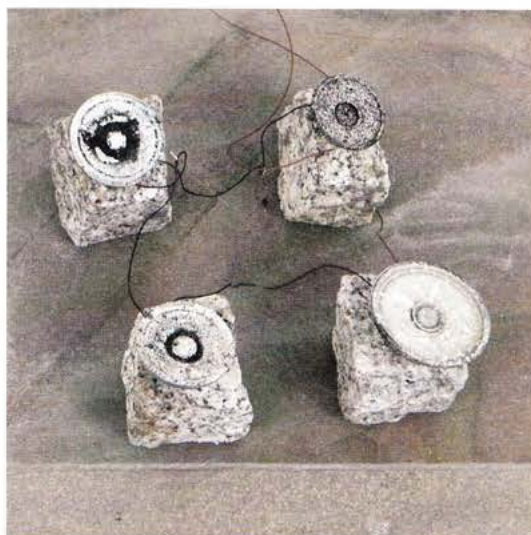
Links neben dem aufrecht ausgerichteten schwarzen Rechteck stehen zwei japanische Schalen hintereinander auf dem Boden, die mit Papier ausgekleidet sind und ebenfalls kleine Hochtöner bergen. Ihre Form greift das Rund des Rot auf, aber auch das Rund der Lautsprecher-Membrane. Wüsste man nicht um ihre Geschichte als skulpturales Element in Klang-Objekten und -Installationen von Julius, man würde vielleicht sogar eine Annäherung an den runden Grundriss des Ausstellungsraumes vermuten. Die Herkunft der Schalen verweist auf eine traditionell fern-östliche Ästhetik der Einfachheit und Klarheit, die für Julius' künstlerische Arbeit bestimmend ist. Eine reiche Ausstellungstätigkeit in Japan legt von dieser geistigen Nähe Zeugnis ab. Die Assoziation von Suppen- und Servier-Schalen zu zeremoniellen Klang-Schalen führt schließlich ins Akustische.

„Wie klingt ein schwarzes Rechteck und wie ein fast rundes Rot“ zu fragen, scheint auf synästhetische Erfahrungen abzielen. Reize eines Sinnesbereiches würden dann als Qualitäten eines anderen wahrgenommen werden. Und die Titel von Julius' Klang-Installationen und -Aktion der 1980er und 90er Jahre würden eine solche Interpretation nahe legen. Immer wieder werden hier Musiken und Räumen bestimmte visuelle (zumeist farbliche) oder haptische Qualitäten zugesprochen. Doch betrachtet man die jüngste Entwicklung des Künstlers, scheinen Aspekte der intermodalen Wahrnehmung an Bedeutung zu gewinnen. Die bereits von Aristoteles (*Über die Seele*, besonders 418, 425f.) beschriebene Rezeptions-Theorie zielt auf die Integration mehrerer mit verschiedenen Sinnen wahrgenommener Einzel-Informationen zu einer Wahrnehmung auf höherem Niveau. Dabei werden Reize unterschiedlicher sensorischer Kanäle nicht in einander übersetzt, sondern zu einer Gesamtheit verknüpft. Erfahrungswissen erlaubt es dann umgekehrt, von einer intermodalen Wahrnehmung ausgehend die Reize einzelner Sinne zu antizipieren.

miss its presence and its clear discrimination from the stone ground over which the colour seems to hover. The rectangle black powdered and the round red powdered plates of glass that rest on small loudspeakers – high-pitched and without a case – makes one assume thin cables leading to the audio equipment beside the quoted text. The acoustical energy produced by them is far too little to make the plates of glass vibrate and the pigments move.

On the left hand side of the upright aligned rectangle there are two Japanese cups placed side by side on the ground that have been lined with paper and that carry more of the high pitched small loudspeakers hidden in them. Their form takes up the roundness of the red but also the roundness of the loudspeaker's membrane. Not knowing their history as a sculptural element in Julius' sound-objects and -installations one might even suspect an approach to the roundness of the exhibition hall. The origin of the cups is a reference to the far-eastern aesthetics of simplicity and clearness which is crucial for Julius' artistic work. His rich exhibition catalogue in Japan proves this spiritual closeness. The association of soup- and serving-cups to ceremonious sound-cups eventually leads to acoustics.

To ask "How does a black rectangle sound and how an almost round red" seems to goal at synaesthetic experiences. Stimulation from one sense region would then be realised by another. And the titles of Julius' sound-installations and -actions of the 1980ies and 90ies would make such an interpretation very much







Vor solchem rezeptionstheoretischem Hintergrund wird nachvollziehbar, dass Julius von wiederholten Melodiefragmenten sagt, „sie klingen je nachdem rot oder schwarz“. Die Anmutung des Hörers ist nicht zu trennen von der Erfahrung des Betrachters der intensiven Farben. Dabei wird das akustische Material jedoch keineswegs „gefärbt“ wie man eine Wand färben mag. Die Verbindung von Akustischem und Visuellem geschieht auf intermodaler Ebene jenseits der Relation von Essenz und Akzidens. Die besonderen akustischen Eigenschaften der Rotunde des Fridericianum lassen den Eindruck entstehen, als drängen die aus den beiden Schalen neben Schwarz und Rot abgespielten, nur hin und wieder auftretenden Pendel-Noten eines durch die Tonwiedergabe verfremdeten Klavierklanges aus der Tiefe des Raumes, als kämen sie von der ersten Galerie oder von der Erdgeschoss-Ebene, auf der in der Installation *Piano concerto* ein schwarzer Flügel steht. Was im Visuellen in dieser Eindringlichkeit kaum je zu gelingen vermag (Ausnahmen stellen vielleicht die Ränder von Licht-Installationen dar) – der auditiven Wahrnehmung sind die Kunstwerke nicht völlig voneinander abgeschlossen, sie durchdringen einander und entfalten so neue Bezüge. Die pendelnden Klavierklänge sind umgekehrt auch im Erdgeschoss zu hören und locken den neugierig ge-

likely. Time and again musics and spaces are granted a mostly coloured visual or haptic quality. As regards to the most recent development of this artist, aspects of intermodal perception are gaining importance. Already Aristotle (*On the Soul*, esp. 418, 425f.) described a theory of reception that goals at an integration of a single information by many different senses to one single perception on a higher level. Stimulation of different sensory channels are not translated into one another but are combined to an entity. Knowledge of experience on the other hand allows to anticipate the stimulation of single senses starting from an intermodal perception. It becomes clear from this background in theory of reception that Julius talks about certain repeated melodic fragments as “sounding either red or black.” The listener that is struck by the sounds can’t be discriminated from the viewer’s experience of the intensive colours. However, the acoustic material has by no means been coloured in the way one would paint a wall. The connection of the acoustical and the visual takes place on an intermodal level beyond the relationship between the essential and the accidental.

The special acoustical qualities of the rotunda of Fridericianum make an impression of sounds coming from the depth of the space. These sounds – from





wordenen Besucher auf die beiden höher gelegenen Galerien. Der Hör-Sinn gibt stärker noch als das Auge Auskunft über die Ferne.

Im ersten Stock hat Julius für die Installation *Fast leer* (5x schwarz) je einen Lautsprecher in den fünf Fensteröffnungen der Rotunde angeordnet. Auf Kniehöhe hängen die schwarzen Lautsprecher an den genau parallel verlaufenden, dünnen schwarzen Zuleitungsdrähten. Die Membrane sind senkrecht nach oben gerichtet und mit etwas schwarzem Pigment bestäubt. Dieses ordnet sich in Abhängigkeit von abgestrahltem Klang und akustischen Eigenschaften des jeweiligen Lautsprechers in flachen, tendenziell ovalen, an den Rändern mitunter ausgefranzten Formen auf den Membranen an. Der ungeraden Zahl der Lautsprecher stehen zwei deutlich geschiedene Klangbänder gegenüber – eine hohe, metallisch irisierende Fläche und ein tiefer, in größeren zeitlichen Intervallen ausgesprochen präsenter Bass.

Die strenge, in ihren Mitteln sehr reduzierte Arbeit lässt in der Tat den Raum „fast leer“. Die Reihung und Parallelität der von den Lautsprechern gestifteten visuellen Großform steht im Spannungsverhältnis zu den in der Zeit sich ändernden Details: der aus der Akustik erwachsenen Anordnung der Pigmente und der wechselnden Klanggestalt. In letzterer etabliert das hohe Klangband trotz seiner unregelmä-

the cups next to black and red occur from a constantly repeated distorted sound of a piano – pendular notes that seem to stem from the first gallery or the installation *Piano concerto* on the ground floor where a black grand piano is situated. Visually this penetrating impression is hardly possible, perhaps the only exception might be the edges of light-installations; in an auditive perception works of art are not completely separated from one another, they penetrate into one another and unfold new references. The swinging piano sounds on the other hand are also audible on ground floor level and attract the visitors that have become curious to see the higher galleries. More than the eye it is the sense of hearing that informs us about distance.

On the first floor Julius placed one loudspeaker in each of the five window recesses of the rotunda for the installation *Almost empty* (5x black). The black loudspeakers are hanging knee-high along the black thin supplier-cables parallel to each other. The membranes are aligned vertically upwards and powdered with a little black pigment. Due to the acoustical quality and sound of each loudspeaker the pigment is put into flat forms with an oval tendency and at times frayed at the edges. The odd numbered loudspeakers are distinguished by two very different sound tapes – one is a very high metallic and irides-



ßigen internen Struktur den Eindruck von Statik, da es sich der räumlichen Ortung entzieht und so das Halbrund der Galerie gleichmäßig färbt. Die Bässe hingegen lassen sich an der Bewegung der Pigmente auf den Lautsprecher-Membranen beobachten und so auch rein visuell orten. Doch werden sie durch die Akustik des Raumes von Schattenklängen begleitet, die in produktiver ästhetischer Irritation den Hörsinn ins Bewusstsein des Besuchers bringen. Ähnliche akustische Phänomene treten auch in der zweiten Galerie auf, auf deren Boden eine Vielzahl von kleingliedrigen Objekten und Installationen das Interesse des Besuchers den gekrümmten Weg entlang führt. Zu den metallischen Reibegeräuschen

cent expanse and the other a very present deep bass with long-time intervals. This severe work of very reduced means actually leaves the room "almost empty". Succession and parallelisms of loudspeakers cause a formal entity that stands in a relation of tension towards the detailed structure that is ever changing in time: the order of the pigments that grew out of the acoustics and the changing shape of sound. In the latter a high-pitched sound tape is established despite its irregular inner structure which reveals a static impression because it withdraws itself from location and by this is evenly colouring the crescent of the gallery. The basses however can be watched by the movement of the pigments on the membranes of the loudspeakers i. e. they can be located visually. As a matter of fact these are being accompanied by shadow sounds due to the specific acoustics of the room which by means of aesthetic irritation the visitor becomes aware of his ears.

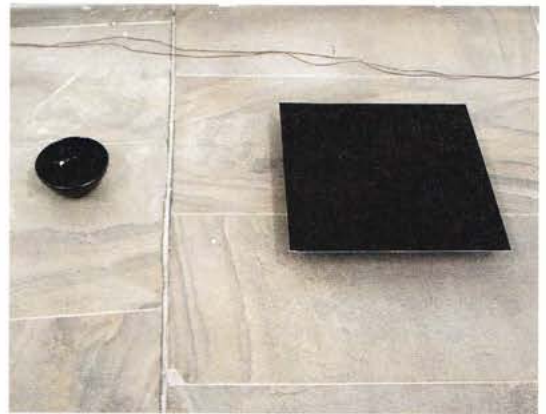
Similar acoustic phenomena also occur in the second gallery in which on the ground a multitude of objects made of small parts and installations are scattered that awake the visitor's interest on his bent path. Beside the metallic sounds of friction of the installation mentioned above to which the scarce sounds of a piano are "arched" the sounds of a site in nature are added: recorded noises from the fields, the whirling of wind and the chirping of insects. This material is reflected by three works on the ground: a field of 25 rusty brown gravel stones with two small loudspeakers, four pavement stones of grey granite, on each of which a loudspeaker in upright position is installed with a mock-old surface and last but not





der ersten, oben beschriebenen Anordnung, über die sich nur selten die Klavierklänge wölben, treten die Feldaufnahmen einer Natur-Situation mit Windrauschen und Insekten-Zirpen. Dieses Material wird über drei Boden-Arbeiten abgestrahlt: ein Feld von 25 rostig braunen Schottersteinen mit zwei kleinen Lautsprechern, vier im Quadrat angeordnete Pflastersteine aus grauem Granit, auf denen jeweils ein senkrecht nach oben gerichteter Lautsprecher mit künstlich gealterter Oberfläche montiert ist und schließlich ein unter Glas präsentiertes Foto von zwei Pflastersteinen mit Lautsprechern, auf dem ein realer Lautsprecher ähnlicher Größe liegt. Wiederum ist die Wahrnehmung der akustischen Collage abhängig vom visuellen Contrapart.

Erst seit wenigen Jahren unternimmt es Rolf Julius, durch Digitalfotos den Verweis auf frühere Installationen in neuere Arbeiten hineinzutragen. Er macht damit für den Betrachter offensichtlich, was der Hörer schon früher erfuhr, selten aber nur erkannte, dass nämlich Klänge aus anderen Werken erneut zitiert wurden und so ein materiales Beziehungsgeflecht entstand, das virtuell ohnehin stets gegeben ist: die Verbindung der Einzelwerke zum Œuvre. Etwas weiter den Galerie-Gang entlang findet sich auf dem Boden eine leere weiße Porzellan-Schale. Rechts daneben ein Foto von einer weißen, mit einer pinkfarbenen Flüssigkeit gefüllten Schale, die auf einem Foto von einer ebenfalls weißen, jedoch mit gelber Flüssigkeit gefüllten Schale steht. Rechts davon ein anderes Foto von einer weißen, mit grüner Flüssigkeit gefüllten Schale. Beide Fotos liegen unter einer rechteckigen Glasscheibe. Ein ganzes Stück



least a photograph that is presented under a glass cover of two pavement stones with loudspeakers, on which a real loudspeaker is laid upon in equal size. Again here it is the perception of the acoustic collage which is dependant on its visual counterpart.

Only in recent years did Rolf Julius refer to his own earlier installations by means of digital photography. He does this to make it obvious for the observer what the listener already has experienced earlier, but only seldom could recognise that sounds in fact are being quoted once more from previous works. By this he achieves a network of relations that is virtually already present: the connection of the separate works



weiter rechts, neben zwei Schalen mit perkussiv erscheinenden Wassergeräuschen, schließlich eine reale Schale mit grüner Flüssigkeit.

Bilder von Bildern einer Ausstellung in einer Ausstellung. Pink, gelb, grün – Zitat der Arbeit *Why pink, why yellow*, installiert in der Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh. Das Rot von *Why pink, why green, why red* ist keine Flüssigkeit, es ist rost-rotes Pigment in einer ebenso gefärbten Schale. In ihrem Umfeld erklingt eine an Blasinstrumente gemahnende Obertonreihe, eine Musik, die Julius mit behutsamen elektronischen Eingriffen aus der Aufnahme einer japanischen Prozession gewann. Diese Klänge scheinen wiederum ohne festen Ort durch den Raum zu vagabundieren, strukturiert und immer wieder in ihrem Fluss gebrochen durch einen lauten, hellen Impuls, wie von einem Holzstab. Spiegelung der etliche Meter entfernten Klavier-Klänge als klarer Naturlaut.

So scheint der zeichenhafte Verweis auf Abwesendes im Kontext intermodaler Erfahrung die aktuelle Arbeit von Rolf Julius zu bestimmen. Fotos aus früheren Installationen und Klänge, die ihre Herkunft zumindest erahnen lassen, legen mehr und mehr offen, was der Betrachter und Hörer früherer Arbeiten wohl erahnen, kaum jedoch wissen konnte. Wie Julius mit der Musik den Zeitfluss in seine Kunst einführte, so öffnet er sich mit Bildern von Ausstellungen in Ausstellungen der räumlich-geografischen Entfernung wie der Zeit der Werk-Genese. Und schließlich der Erfahrung des Abwesenden: wer diese Fotos sieht, weiß, dass sie eigentlich zu hören wären.

Volker Straebel

(Alle Abbildungen in diesem Text:  
Details aus der Arbeit *Why pink, why green, why red*, 1999-2001)

to the entire oeuvre. Further on along the passage through the gallery there is an empty porcelain cup on the ground. To the right another photo is to be seen of a white cup filled with a pink-coloured liquid which is put upon yet another photo of another white cup – this time filled with a yellow liquid. To the right a white cup filled with a green-coloured liquid. Both photos are laid underneath a plate of glass. Much further to the right next to two cups with percussive water-sounds last but not least a real cup filled with green liquid.

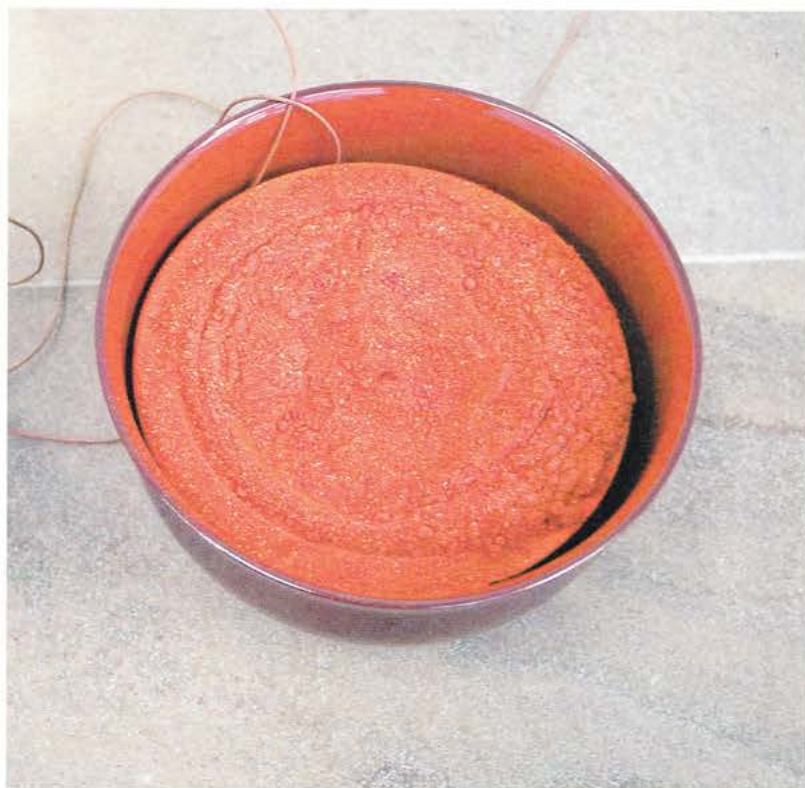
Pictures of pictures of an exhibition at an exhibition. Pink, yellow, green – quotation of the work *Why pink, why yellow* installed at the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh. The red of *Why pink, why green, why red* is no liquid but rusty red pigment in a cup of the same colour. In its vicinity a wind instruments-like overtone spectra is audible – a music which Julius gained from a recording of a Japanese procession with slight electronic modulation. These sounds seem to float through space without any perceptible position and are only structured and interfered by a loud and high impulse as from a wooden stick. Reflection of the piano sounds many yards away as a clear sound from nature.

The current work of Rolf Julius seems to reflect absence as a token in the context of intermodal experience. Photos from previous installations and sounds of presumable origin reveal more and more what the observer of previous works might have assumed but hardly could have known. The way Julius integrated the flow of time into his art by music resembles the way he opens himself to pictures of exhibitions at an exhibition as distance in a geographical sense or rather in space as much as in the time of the work's genesis. And last but not least to the experience of the absence: the one who sees these photos knows they were actually meant to be heard.

Volker Straebel

(Translation George Goodman, Berlin.  
All images in this text:  
details from the work *Why pink, why green, why red*, 1999-2001)









*Am 1. April 2001 fand in der Kunsthalle Fridericianum ein öffentliches Gespräch zwischen Rolf Julius, Aki Takahashi und dem Berliner Musikwissenschaftler Volker Straebel zur Arbeit Piano concerto und deren Aufführung statt. Das Gespräch wurde in englischer Sprache geführt.*

Straebel: I would like to ask Julius about the background of the visual piece that works as a kind of score for the performance we just attended. What led to the walls of dots we see in the show?

Julius: The first piece in this manner I did in Pittsburgh at the museum Mattress Factory in summer 1998. It was titled *piano piece No. 1* and dedicated to Aki Takahashi. I was a little embarrassed when I told my friends after the opening that the most difficult part was still to come. Now I had to put into words that it's not only a piece of visual art but also a score, it could be a score. Because I had the feeling, when I looked at the red and the black dots, it is related to music. In a way I had written music. That's what I wrote in a letter to Aki – and I hope you understood?

Takahashi: Oh, yes!

Julius: And then it started. There was a process which took ...

Takahashi: ... two years.

Straebel: Aki, when you had been invited by Julius to perform those dots, how did you start to develop the relationship between the visual images and your piano performance?

Takahashi: Well, I had a set of his work, black and red dots on Japanese paper, which were sent by Julius. So I started to have some image of it, and actually I played something on the piano. But I did not try to develop my own imagination or anything until yesterday, when I met him here and also saw the new work here, because it must be different I thought. A new work should be different. I was emailing to Julius to ask, if he had some suggestion for this occasion, about the performance, but instead of answering me anything he just sent some other black and red dots by email.

[Lachen]

So yesterday, you know, there was the real starting point. And you were with us, so you saw the process.

[Lachen]

Straebel: There are two aspects. First the question of structure in time and second the question of the structure of sound.

The main score, those two blocks of 66 prints mounted on

the wall, you were free to choose the order, which spots you were playing, right? So, Julius didn't give any directions like, you know, play those lines or certain rows or something.

Takahashi: Well, strangely enough, I was thinking last night to start from the left top, like in western reading and writing. So I started this. Then the second, the third and then I had a strong feeling from the dots, that I should change the direction to make a group of three by three or something. So I followed – you know, it's a kind of spontaneity, if I may say that, it is quite unpredictable.

Straebel: Julius, when you decided how to order those prints on the wall, did you establish certain rules? For example that you thought the person who perceives the prints might be guided in a certain way, how to order them when perceiving them?

Julius: Well, there were two concepts. First, I understood these dots as a kind of score and I tried to create a composition. I started over there and then somewhere else again. But it did not work this way, because I am a visual artist. I mean, it doesn't matter if I am an artist or not, but the whole piece, the visual piece, was not an art piece. It was just something, just something written down, which did not really make sense, only to ensure a kind of importance or something like that. So I abandoned this concept and concentrated on the piece as a work of art, because art has its own rules. Even if you say, okay, I do it by chance anyhow. But it has its own rules, and if I make a piece which has its own rules and if this piece is in some way independent – I am, you know, independent – then I think it is fine. The musical part can also be independent, it is invited to somehow get into a dialogue. My feeling is, that it only works if there is a strong one on one side and also a strong one on the other side. Then you can have some freedom inside this structure. Do you understand?

Straebel: I hope so.

[Lachen]

Julius: This is difficult!

Straebel: I see the problem, that the all over of the artwork ...



Julius: ... a problem ...

Straebel: Well, there are just two different concepts of time in art and music. You have this all-over, you know, where everything is at the same time, everything is in presence, only in a way reduced by the viewer, who can't see everything at a time together.

Julius: This piece you saw, could you feel the time in this piece? Was it a different time than your time? I am sorry to ask you, but I think, it's not true what you are saying. But also the piece has the time in itself, I think. I can feel the time in this piece on the wall and it is a similar time if you translate this time into music. Aki was also using just, you know, many things in between one sound and the other one, so this means that the perception of time is almost the same as if you look to this piece.

Straebel: But for the viewer everything is at the same time, you know. I am completely free to look at one spot and then at another one. And a listener ..., I mean it's also a different thing, if somebody listens to your performance, who has to follow your interpretation of the visual piece and your perception of the visual piece, because you are guiding the listener again, you are developing a realisation of the piece, so we have three time structures.

Julius: No, it is nice to have three times.

Straebel: Aki, when you were performing the piece, have you ever had the feeling not really to know where to go next?

Takahashi: As I told you before, when I started, I felt like three by three as one group, then there was some pause, I mean, to find where to go next and then I found a new direction. And then I started to have an imagination while playing – to consider the biggest collection of dots on the front wall as an orchestra part or something like that. Then I took other smaller collections on the smaller walls as a piano solo part to have more spontaneous play than orchestra part. This way, I tried to make some layers or dimensions in my performance.

Straebel: This means, that your way of finding your way through the score was also guided by the idea of the title, of a concerto.

Takahashi: Yes, for today's performance, I was guided in a way.

Straebel: Julius, can you say something about the title?

Julius: Yes, I like the title. You know I am not a musician. I am a kind of ..., not blind, but a kind of, how can I say ... it is nice sometimes to not know. I really did not know what it is ... I know there is a difference between piano *concert* and piano *concerto*, this I knew. But I really didn't care so much, I just liked the word. It is soft, concerto is very soft, it is like *piano*, *piano* is also a soft word. I liked that a lot. Maybe this also helped Aki to be free. Because she said, oh it's a piano concerto and then she said something like that. No?

Takahashi: Yes. [Lachen]

Straebel: I'd like to clarify this. The term *concerto* is the word for the musical form three sections and the word *concert* is the word for the performance situation. In German there is no

distinction between both. Man sagt, man geht in ein *Konzert*, und man sagt, man hört ein *Klavierkonzert*, aber es gibt das *Konzert* als Ereignis und das *Konzert* als musikalische Gattung. *Concerto* refers to the form. And piano means not only the instrument, but also the softness of a sound. Then we have a red *presto*.

Julius: You ask me why again? If it would be just a music score, then this *presto* might be very important as a message. But it is part of an art piece. So, I like letters very much, and in this case I liked to write *presto* in red. Because *presto* and red – it is an image itself. And what I also like is that this *presto* itself doesn't tell more than only that there is a sheet of paper saying *presto*. So, in this moment you look to *presto* and you see the word *presto*. But Aki-san doesn't need to play fast, of course she could do it.

Straebel: Well, I checked Julius' list of works and I found a very early piece *Music for a yellow room – presto*.

Julius: This is different. Because that piece was conceived as a music piece. Das Wort gelb und die Musik in diesem Zusammenhang war *presto*, hier ist es nur ein Wort, like, you know, you have this black form, you have this red form. This is just a black form and this is just a red form and also *presto* is just a *presto* form, visually.

Straebel: And this is also true for the images with *listen* and *stumm* and *silence*?

Julius: Maybe, I don't know, it depends. With *listen* I was surprised, because by chance I put *listen* on top of one of the smaller pieces that are placed across the large wall. I added solely red forms and then I found out, when you look at *listen*, all the sudden the reds become very active. The red itself listened, what it wouldn't have done without the word listen.

Straebel: But, in this case the word *listen* becomes an idea and it works in a different way than the *presto*.

Julius: Ah, I don't know. Maybe. It is always changing, I think. Sometimes it is like this, maybe the red is more active, but then you can forget it. As a score it's different again, because Aki ..., oh no, I cannot answer the question.

Straebel: Perhaps we should move to the distinction between black and red.

Julius: Can you ask her?

Takahashi: Me? [Lachen] Well, each colour shows different character. For black, we feel dark, dense, it is a kind of heavy stuff, so I choose lower register. But also all black dots have different sizes and shapes with different contours, soft or more sharp, so I tried to make each sound different like that way. And the red was very sharp and high, so I took a higher register. Then, for the square or rectangular form – because the shape is strong and dense – I played mostly clusters. So this was my realisation.

Straebel: In some of the prints presented in the gallery on the third floor you have written those sentences about the relationship of black and red in your thinking. Can you tell a little bit about these relationships?



Julius: Yes, what shall I say? I don't know how to start. It has to do with art, of course. You know, when you make a painting you normally use many colours. But in some civilisations – or it's also philosophically – I mean you can read about that. But in my own experience, if you think about it – instead of using many colours and using many other possibilities, you can just concentrate on one thing – on black for instance. Black is ..., I just like black very much. [He points to his black suite]. But perhaps I need one more colour – this little sun colour, I don't know, look to red. Red is very similar to me, it has this philosophical aspect too. It is more concentrated, it is concentrated in a different way than black. So, what I think is, that black and red, when you use both – you feel that these are just forms without meaning, they are just by themselves, it's abstract. So, okay, this is not new, everybody knows it from Malevich, but it is still important, I mean it's still contemporary. So you have these black and red abstract things. For collaboration with the piano, to make a music piece ... I thought a piano sound is also abstract for me. When you play a sound on the piano, you hear an abstract sound, and that's different with a flute, i.e. A flute has many colours, it is telling stories. But a piano sound and a black dot – that's perfect. It is abstract on the musical side and abstract on the visual side. That's the connecting link between music and visual art, you only have to combine the two, and you are free.

Straebel: So this means that musical realisation doesn't necessarily translate the visual part into music, but establishes the same kind of experience?

Takahashi: He is asking you.

Julius: Yes, but I don't know.

Straebel: That's what I thought from his explanations saying that those shapes develop an abstract experience and the music also develops an abstract experience.

Julius: But then it is open. Then it is ... black, the colour and the music. Okay, one and one is two, but it is not two, it is something else, maybe three or so. Then it's a new building, then again it is something new. What I did and maybe you also did ... Now it is new land for me, it is a kind of new experience and here you have other rules – but that was the problem also, we have to find out about the rules. Not we, the rules are there by themselves. I think my problem was to understand the rules and I had many problems to explain my rules to you, because I did not know in the beginning. Now, I think, I know more. Yes, thank you Aki.

Straebel: I would like to talk more about the actual sounds Aki has been playing during the performance. I had the pleasure to be there when the two met yesterday and Julius tried to explain his feelings or his descriptions of the sounds that were related to certain visual images. And perhaps we can try to reconstruct this process. How have you been able to develop the sounds that were present in the visual prints?

Takahashi: Yesterday I felt it was very difficult, because it was the first time I saw everything and he tried to explain his image

and it was hard to understand everything in a short time then. Anyway, I needed some time by myself. I needed some time yesterday after our discussion, to be only by myself thinking, you know, to make my thoughts deeper and then... Yes, yesterday in the beginning I remember Julius suggested me maybe to take this shape and others, one group or something. Yesterday I could not understand, but now I can feel the same way. I see some groupings and so this way I started to understand what he meant and it really makes sense to me.

Straebel: But that's again more a structural question, you know, how to develop an order, but I am more interested in how you actually translated a certain shape into sound. How do you deal with the fact that some are more in the middle of the paper, some are, you know, higher within the space of a frame?

Takahashi: If a dot is placed upper left in a frame, for example, I feel some movement towards right, flowing, so I tried to make the sound like this. And if a dot is in the centre like ground, heavy and maybe more wide, then I played wider register. If the contour is soft and spongy, I tried to make the finger movement fast and irregular like the shape, not to play all notes at the same time, but like this.

Straebel: But this means that the single spot or the single print actually occurs in time again. I mean it's not just one attack or one accord you are playing, but you are developing a way into the sound and also a way to leave the sound, especially when you have been using the pedal and the sustain.

Takahashi: Actually, I seldom used the pedal. I just tried to select short attacks with quick finger motions, then sometimes made some of the fingers sustained. Because the resonance of the room is so long and each dot is complete, you know, by itself. So, I could not hold an attack long to the next spot, but tried to make each attack like a spot as they are, each framed. That was my idea.

Straebel: What about the tempo of the progression between those spots?

Takahashi: Between the spots, at the beginning, it took me a certain time to concentrate on each one. Then gradually I felt some smoother movement in myself, and also towards the end I started to play two rows together, which I didn't expect. And then I discovered so many varieties in reading the dots and playing them.

Straebel: And Julius, how do you feel about this kind of polyphonic reception of the piece?

Julius: I was not surprised, I was a kind of expecting it.

Takahashi: Oh, I see, but we didn't discuss it yesterday.

Julius: No, because it was ... I couldn't explain it to you. How could I? The thing was, when you looked to the two pieces at the wall – the piece to the left you started with and the one on the right side. The left piece is lighter, the other one is much darker. So I really cared about that. I wanted to make this right part dark. Dark means visually dark, but dark means also the way you played it: dark. I think it was a very good translation.



I was very happy. And as you said: It is easy with these black dots, it's not a melody, but it turned into a large musical form. So, there is music, and you can actually see it, visually.

Takahashi: This is, you know, maybe the same way we experience the exhibition as a visitor, first we may look at each dot closely and carefully, then try to see some section from a distance like one group or change the speed to see them, or try to catch the whole at once, you know. There are various ways to experience the exhibition. So that was exactly the same what I experienced while I was playing. It's a kind of a process, I think.

Straebel: And do you expect to have your upcoming performances changed?

Takahashi: It should change. I can't predict anything. I can't predict, but maybe I change the direction of the piano. So then everything will change to me and I will be able to see the backside wall which I did not play today.

Straebel: But this means that the situation that you play something you have not experienced yet and you take your time and go carefully from spot to spot and then develop a certain liberty and go to a faster tempo might occur in the other performances to.

Takahashi: Maybe. Or maybe in the next performance I start to play the three rows together at the beginning. I don't know. I can't predict anything.

Straebel: I would like to ask Julius about the rests. When Aki is playing you have a certain way of looking at the art and when there are rests in the music you have a different way of perceiving the visual images.

Julius: Actually, this time I could not really see the visual part. I could not see the front, I was not sitting in the front, but I sat behind the piano. I just concentrated on the music, but I think, I liked the pauses very much again. When you look to the different dots, some are bigger, some are smaller, some dots are kind of waiting. I don't know, they are waiting and waiting, and one dot is very much like this, you cannot wait, you just play it. So I think that was my feeling.

Straebel: In earlier installation pieces, Julius developed a concept of having an installation with very strong visual forms and having a sound part. And at some point, a couple of years ago, he added silences to the sound part. Sometimes of quite a long time like 20 seconds or so, and those silences changed the way one perceives the visual part of the installation. And I would like to hear a little bit about this situation.

Julius: These silences were silences without a musical background. I have used a strong visual image, i.e. a sieved rectangular black and a sieved round red, a loudspeaker underneath each shape, playing single sounds with pauses that follow no structure. These pauses are musically only in that sense, that they give opportunity to the visitor and listener to concentrate on the visual part. Art steps in, when the music ceases. Red and black as visual shapes alternate with the musical form, and this way the colours become part of the music. Now we

are in a different situation, Aki makes musical pauses. They are different. I mean, this pause you really can see. Remember how she waited, it was perfect, you know. I like this, this pause was beautiful music. The pause in the installation is different, because there is colour, you watch different than you hear.

Straebel: Don't you think that some of the musical pauses today also had this quality that you suddenly look at the prints in different ways?

Julius: Of course, everything is a mixture. Nothing is just 100%, it is overlapping.

Straebel: And what happens when Aki is not performing in this room?

Julius: That's a pity. No, I think, then the work itself changes again. There is no audience, there are no chairs, the space is empty, you can better concentrate on the visual part. And you see the piano which reminds you, that there has been something happening, so you remember there was an event. And I mean her music is a kind of ... Maybe Aki's music is now fastened to the wall, who knows. I have a strong feeling about this. I think for me it was so nice to have this experience now – and later to have had the experience: After that I am free again, I can just look, maybe look and remember. Perhaps I can better look now because I know more, that is my feeling. I mean, everybody else of course too.

Straebel: So you have a kind of musically experience without an acoustic presence?

Julius: To talk about this is very difficult. Because again ... You know your brain, I mean, it is such a nice tool. I was trained and this was John Cage for instance who taught me – I mean not him personally – but he taught me to just look and listen to what I see, without interpretation. I see something red, I see something so and so. Now I cannot say, when I look to the red dots, I do remember what Aki had played. Talking about the cluster: While seeing the black form I do not think about her making a cluster, I mean, I cannot hear the cluster she played. But visually I am very sure, I am very safe, I see the square and I say it is not only a square but also a cluster – but you can't hear it, it is just a kind of ... again it is abstract. It is not music, what you hear, I don't know what it is ... if I speak more about it, it turns into a loop.

Straebel: This sounds almost like a good moment to stop the conversation. I am wondering if the public has any questions to the artists.

Well, since there are no questions, I would like to thank both of you for your patience, your talking and I would like to thank all of you for coming.



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