

Susan Philipsz

Sleep Close and Fast

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, Los Angeles

Dates to be confirmed

Due to the evolving circumstances surrounding COVID-19, the opening of *Susan Philipsz: Sleep Close and Fast* has been postponed until further notice. Please continue to check our website or contact mail@tanyabonakdargallery.com for updated information.

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to announce *Sleep Close and Fast*, Susan Philipsz's first solo exhibition at the gallery's Los Angeles location. This will be the artist's debut one-person exhibition on the West Coast, following the US premiere of her twelve-channel installation *Prelude in the Form of a Passacaglia* (2019) at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles in February 2020.

Over the past two decades, Susan Philipsz's work has explored the emotional resonance of sound and its corporeal effects. In this new exhibition of sound-based sculptural installations and photographic works, Philipsz continues her poetic meditations on memory, loss, longing and hope.

In the gallery's main space, a new 8-channel sound installation entitled *Sleep Close and Fast* is comprised of a set of steel barrels installed in a darkened room. Emanating sound recordings of lullabies sung by the artist, the barrels contain and amplify the human voice, creating physical and metaphoric resonances. The metal hulls, like futuristic vessels, fill the space with sound, creating vibrations and reverberations that envelope the viewer and penetrate the body.

In this subtle and immersive work, Philipsz' soft singing triggers and opens uncharted emotional territories, expanding her inquiry into the psychological potential of sound. Culled from a variety of sources including cult horror films, opera and literature, the selection of lullabies revolve around themes of darkness, death and what lies beneath. In juxtaposing the symbolism of the oral tradition of lullaby singing with its somber connotations, *Sleep Close and Fast* unifies its disparate origins through the invisible thread of human voice.

Two recent sculptural sound installations entitled *Together IV* and *Together V* are installed in the adjacent galleries. In these new works, the sound of Philipsz's breath emanates from disassembled organ pipes arranged on crisp white pedestals. The pipes, remnants of disused historical organs, emit recordings of the artist's breath as she blows through the same pipes themselves. The physical arrangement of the pipes—across and on top of one another—corresponds to the sonic arrangement of the work, suggesting an aural interchange in the form of call and response. The formation of the pipes, as they lay over one another evoke deep sleep, while the rhythm of the combined breaths suggests life and mortality. In this poetic dialogue of interdependence, content and form overlap, activating new kinds of introspection.

Photographic works from artist's *Vernebelt* series are also presented throughout the gallery. The title of the series takes inspiration from Alain Resnais' 1955 documentary film *Night and Fog*, which reconstructs the atrocities of Nazi concentration camps. The title of Resnais' film is in itself a reference to the 1941 "Nacht und Nebel" decree, issued by Adolf Hitler, under which alleged political activists disappeared suddenly and without trace. "Vernebelt" became an expression to describe the obscured fate of those who vanished.

In this series of emotive photographs, Philipsz captures the residue of her breath against a sheet of glass. The obscure imprint on the glass surface—a faceless self-portrait, an abstracted expression of the absent body—contemplates impermanence, loss, and evocation.

In *Sleep Close and Fast*, Philipsz utilizes her own voice and breath as the connective thread that weaves the exhibition together. From the ghostly echo of the lullabies, to the sound of the organ pipes, through to its imprint on glass, Philipsz's breath—a bodyless body—is a metaphor of the poetics of life and death, of memory, loss and longing.

Since the mid-1990s, Philipsz's sound installations have been exhibited at many prestigious institutions and public venues around the world. She has presented solo exhibitions at Pulitzer Arts Foundation in St. Louis (2019), Castello di Rivoli in Italy (2019), Tate Modern (2018) and Tate Britain (2015) in London, Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm (2017), Kunsthaus Bregenz in Austria (2016), Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin (2014), the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh (2013), K21 Standehaus Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Dusseldorf (2013), Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago (2011), Aspen Art Museum in Colorado (2010-11), Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State in Columbus (2009-10), Museum Ludwig in Cologne (2009), Institute of Contemporary Art in London (2008), among others. Installations by Philipsz were included in Skulptur Projekte Muenster in 2007, the 55th Carnegie International in 2008, and dOCUMENTA 13 in 2012.

The artist's major commissions include *Lowlands*, her Turner Prize-winning work for Glasgow International in 2010, *SURROUND ME: A Song Cycle for the City of London*, a public project organized by Artangel in London (2010-11), *Day is Done*, a permanent installation organized by the Trust for Governors Island in New York (2014), and *New Canaan*, a project for the Grace Farms Foundation (2015).