

ROOM GUIDE

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Resonating Spaces

FONDATION **BEYELER**

RESONATING SPACES

6 October 2019 – 26 January 2020

Leonor Antunes

Silvia Bächli

Toba Khedoori

Susan Philipsz

Rachel Whiteread

INTRODUCTION

Resonating Spaces is the title of the exhibition in which the main protagonists are five artists: Leonor Antunes, Silvia Bächli, Toba Khedoori, Susan Philipsz and Rachel Whiteread.

Their works develop distinctive forms of spatiality by very different means – acoustic, sculptural or drawn. What they have in common is that at first they appear to function more as spaces than as individual objects. In their appearance and presence, they seem restrained and unobtrusive, yet their effect is strong and powerful. These works evoke spaces between the recognisable and the elusive; they create sites and respites in which the ability to remember is elicited, and in which images and memories come to life.

The exhibition was curated by

Theodora Vischer, Senior Curator at the Fondation Beyeler.

Cover: Toba Khedoori

Untitled (grid), 2015 (detail)

Oil on linen, 94 x 94 cm

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard A. Greenberg

© Toba Khedoori, Photo: Fredrik Nilsen

ROOMS 1–2

Toba Khedoori

Since the mid-1990s Toba Khedoori (b. 1964 in Sydney, lives in Los Angeles) has created large-format drawings. Most depict architectural and spatial fragments that she renders with meticulous detail. She primes the surface of the individual paper webs with a thin layer of synthetic wax. To work, Khedoori staples the sheets to the studio wall and then creates the drawings using graphite and oil paint. In her large works, the contrast between the detailed renderings and the surface, which is defined by the production process, is particularly striking and a key element in the work's effect. Motifs such as windows, seats, or fences are surrounded by an empty expanse and located in an indeterminate spatial situation—a state of suspension that defies precise categorisation.

In recent years, Khedoori has also taken up small formats on linen and increasingly used colour. Moreover, the artist has shifted her focus: instead of capturing the pictorial subject from afar, she renders them at close range. The selected details now fill the entire picture carrier. The close-ups of branches, mountain ranges or a tiled floor are thus increased to such an extent that the image virtually becomes abstract. An indefinable and undefined space emerges already encountered in a different form in Khedoori's early large-format drawings. Her works neither display reality, nor represent an abstract world. Instead, they evoke a space of their own that allows for different associations and emotions.

ROOM 3

Leonor Antunes

In her expansive room installations, Leonor Antunes (b. 1972 in Lisbon, lives in Berlin) explores the formal language of modern art and the versatility of sculpture in relation to space. Based on comprehensive research, she produces works following personalities from design, architecture, and art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such as Franca Helg (1920–1989) or Franco Albini (1905–1977). Besides her strong interest in the social and historical backgrounds, she is particularly concerned with the works' material properties and the composition of sculpture in its interaction with architecture. In her creative process, Antunes transposes individual elements from existing pieces of furniture, architectural conditions, and textiles into new forms using a wide range of materials. References to a specific technique or style play a special role here. The works' partly hanging, partly standing linear, geometric, and organic structures appear permeable.

In the installation conceived specially for the exhibition, Antunes interprets a graphic work by the artist Anni Albers (1899–1994) in a new floor piece made of linoleum. Reducing the print to its graphic aspects, she enlarged it and gave it a new colourfulness. Both standing on top of and hanging above it, sculptures are arranged made of pipes, knots, poles, panels, and nets. They consist of different materials including leather, wood, polycarbonate, and metals such as copper. Walking through the installation, visitors receive an overall impression of overlapping soft and rigid objects in the room.

ROOMS 4–5

Silvia Bächli

When Silvia Bächli (b. 1956 in Baden, lives in Basel) is invited to exhibit her work, she first examines the spatial conditions on site. What are they like? What size, shape, and light conditions do they have? Based on her observations, she embarks on an intensive process of selection. The artist plays with her different drawings, rearranging them until, as she puts it, she strikes a chord between the works in the space that feels right to her. In a model and on the walls of her studio she composes *Ensembles*: constellations of drawings consciously set in relation to one another and the surrounding space. Since the outset of her artistic career, Bächli has dedicated herself to the medium of drawing.

In her works, lines play the leading role. Applied with liquid paints, they extend across the paper with varying intensity – loosely distributed or set closely next to each other, floating in space or layered over one another. At times painted with a thick brush that dominates the picture surface, they consolidate into shapes, bundles, and grids. The artist thus captures the inexpressible in lines. Originating from everyday encounters, precise observations and fleeting memories, her open structures emerge, resonating with the viewer's individual associations. Similar to a musical composition, the intermediate tones and pauses are just as important as that which becomes visible. The empty spaces expand, allowing the interwoven lines to continue growing, seemingly infinite, beyond the edge of the sheet into the room.

ROOM 6

Susan Philipsz

Susan Philipsz (b. 1965 in Glasgow, lives in Berlin) shifts the interaction between sound and architecture to the centre of her artistic work. Two sound sculptures were selected for the exhibition. *Filter*, one of her earliest works, was first shown at a bus station in Belfast in 1998. *The Wind Rose* has been newly created. In conceiving this piece, Philipsz draws inspiration from representations of wind in literature, visual art, and architecture. An important reference point in her work in Basel is Sebastian Münster's world map *Typus universalis*, which was published in Basel in 1550. The map shows the continents and oceans known at the time, surrounded by twelve winds depicted as blowing heads. To each of these winds the artist assigns a tone corresponding to the chromatic scale. Conches from different regions of the world serve as instruments, with unusual sounds generated by blowing into their shells. These sounds are reminiscent

of a distant calling or continually moaning wind. Each of the twelve tones, at times accompanied by the breath of the horn players, is assigned to one speaker. Visitors walk through the space between the individual tones, their gaze wandering to the trees in the Fondation Beyeler park at the same time.

FOYER

***Filter*, 1998**

For her sound installation *Filter*, Philipsz recorded four pop songs using neither accompanying instruments nor technical editing but only her voice as if singing all by herself. She thus creates something quite personal and intimate. The sound of this private, 'bodyless' voice in a public realm, in a completely different context, is surprising in its effect.

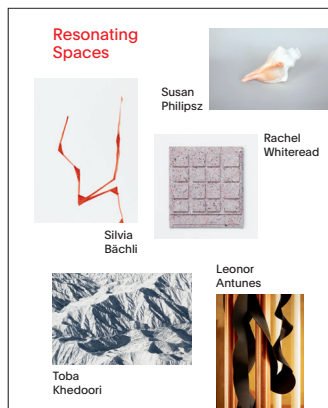
ROOM 7

Rachel Whiteread

The installation of Rachel Whiteread (b. 1963 in Ilford, lives in London) seems like an abandoned stage set: a sculpture and six reliefs made of papier-mâché are positioned in front of the painting *Passage du Commerce-Saint-André* (1952–54) by Balthus (1908–2001). The mysterious painting, on permanent loan to the Fondation Beyeler, provided the British artist with the starting point for the works and her installation in the room. Since the outset of her artistic career in the early 1990s, Whiteread has harked back to traditional casting techniques and materials. Rather than engaging them to create reproductions, she instead uses them to form the spaces inside, around and between familiar objects.

She gives shape to the empty spaces of everyday objects – sometimes even of entire living spaces – and realises sculptures in different materials such as plaster, synthetic resin, concrete or papier-mâché. The black plaster sculpture references an early piece by the artist (*Closet*, 1988) which she still considers a ‘key sculpture’ in her oeuvre to the present day. The six reliefs refer to the windows on the rear facade of *Passage du Commerce-Saint-André* and are inspired by their colour. The reduced form and materiality give Whiteread’s works an unfamiliar presence – an impression that is reflected in Balthus’s painting, too.

CATALOGUE



Resonating Spaces

**Leonor Antunes, Silvia Bächli, Toba Khedoori,
Susan Philipsz, Rachel Whiteread**

Edited by Theodora Vischer

for Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel

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at the museum shop: shop.fondationbeyeler.ch

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Upcoming exhibition

EDWARD HOPPER

26 January – 17 May 2020

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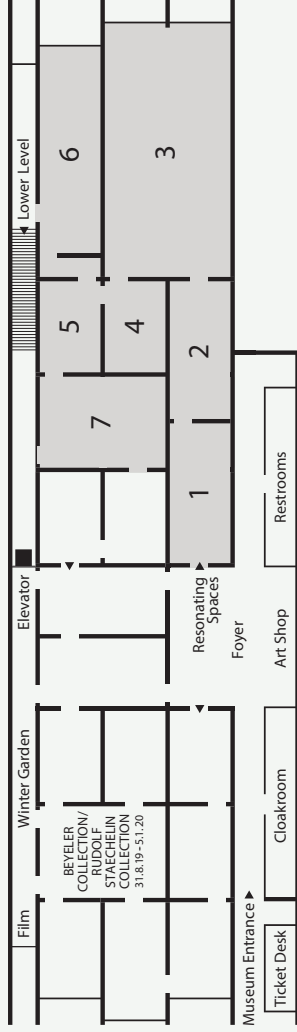
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Caution: please do not touch the works of art!