

Max Neuhaus – Sound Drawings  
May 5 - June 6, 2022

*Our perception of space depends as much on what we hear as on what we see. MN*

suns.works is pleased to present Sound Drawings, an exhibition of works on paper by Max Neuhaus curated in collaboration with the Max Neuhaus estate. In the 1950s, Neuhaus left his career as a musician to become an artist, where he was the first to extend sound as a primary medium into the field of contemporary art. While he is known for his sonic, immaterial works, he prolifically produced drawings throughout his artistic career. This exhibition presents a selection of elegant and precise drawings spanning a period between 1968 and 1999, examining their at once technical and deeply psychological nature.

Born in 1939 in Beaumont, Texas, Max Neuhaus studied percussion under Paul Price at the Manhattan School of Music. By his mid-twenties, he had already achieved considerable success, touring and recording extensively as a solo musician and percussionist, playing for composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, Xenakis, and John Cage. By the late 1960s, after years of rigorous experimentation in music, Neuhaus had grown frustrated with the medium and, in particular, the figure of the musician. He turned to contemporary art, where he would employ electro-acoustic sound as autonomous, site-specific artworks, which he called 'sound works' - paving the way for what is now commonly known as 'sound art.' These works, many of them realized in acclaimed contexts such as the Dia Art Foundation, New York, Castello di Rivoli, Turin, or the Documenta 6 in Kassel, were produced in response to specific sites, and the qualities and features of each location are considered in their design.

While Neuhaus is most known for this immaterial work, drawing was an essential facet of his practice which enabled him to map the character and configuration of acoustic space and reflect on its psychological qualities. Neuhaus drew with disciplined lines in coloured pencil, using almost entirely primary colours to annotate sonic difference. At once technical and deeply subjective, his drawings provide a visual window into an artistic practice that is both razor sharp and unseen (or heard) before its time. Text: Reece Cox

Biography: Max Neuhaus (1939 – 2009) was an American musician, composer and artist who was a noted interpreter of contemporary music in the 1960s. He went on to create numerous permanent and short-term sound installations in the four decades that followed.

Selected exhibitions include „Max Neuhaus: Sound Installation“, Kunsthalle Basel, 1983; „Evocare l'udibile“ Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, 1995; „Max Neuhaus: Drawings“, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, 2000; „Treble“, The Sculpture Center, New York, 2004; and „Sound Works“, Konrad Fischer Galerie, Berlin, 2014. Large projects include New York Metro („Walkthrough“, 1973) and „Times Square“ (1977), as well as many projects for museums throughout the world (MoMA, New York, 1978; MoCA Chicago, 1979; Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1983 and Whitney Biennial, 1983, among others). Permanently installed works in Switzerland are „Suspended Sound Line“, collection: Kunst im öffentlichen Raum, Bern (since 1999). „Promenade du Pin, collection: Fonds Cantonal d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (since 2002).

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