

long time lung time continuum!!! (a conver-something)

24.02.-20.05.2024

Following *Images against Darkness* in 2012 and *Watch Out* in 2018, the upcoming project, *long time lung time continuum!!! (a conver-something)* is the third collaboration between IMAI – Inter Media Art Institute and KIT – Kunst im Tunnel in Düsseldorf. The project commenced with the invitation of artist Simnikiwe Buhlungu to research about the history and legacy of the IMAI archive with its roots in early experimental video works from the 1970s and 1980s but also post punk and new wave music from the Rhineland area and beyond. Buhlungu gradually extended her invitation to artist Valie Export, the ventilation system of KIT, a Juno 6 synthesiser and musician Pamela Z by introducing the format of a *conver-something*¹ that is already established within the artist’s practice. Taking an unusual formal turn, each guest has been approached to convene together in the underground tunnel space of KIT while exchanging possibilities of spatial lungwork and chronological interruptions². What can the assembly of these *in-and-exhalations* – as attempts of textual, sonic and infrastructural sustenance (for before; for after) – utter?

Departing from IMAI’s own video archive, the Austrian video maker and performance artist Valie Export sets the tone with her *Breath Text: Love Poem, 1970-73* from a series of multi-sensory video poems that invites the attendees to synchronise their breath with the artist, while simultaneously leaving traces of *text-which-is-yet-to-happen* on a sheet of glass. With a special sensitivity for polyphonic synthesis as remnants of a *khuaya*³ Buhlungu further shares a new sound work that is co-produced in collaboration with a Juno 6 synthesiser that explores a multivalent approach to breath within tools/instruments used for the production of auditory bookmarks (intros, outros, interludes, prefaces, samples, watermarks etc). Gathering in KIT’s underground space is contingent upon infrastructure that introduces, circulates and expels air; read: ventilation. Following its mechanised birth in 2006, the fully integrated cooling, heating and ventilation system above ground at KIT is the hidden element upon which gathering underground sustainably is contingent. Regrettably – yet understandably – since the ventilation system has to continue *working*, it will be conjured underground through a quartet of metal piping, which will huff and puff as a progeny of the space’s ventilation system. Anchoring this is the video documentation of Pamela Z’s 2014 *Breathing (Carbon Song Cycle)* that will be accompanied by a live performance, within the duration of the *conver-something*, where the artist samples “acoustic instruments with electronic ones, mechanical with digital devices and machines with flesh and blood”⁴.

¹ A *conver-something* [noun and verb; context dependent] is a site for the production, questioning and dissemination of knowledges, usually sonically facilitated by the presence of contributors and listeners. The first *conver-something* debuted in 2017.

² 1970←2006→2024←2014

³ A *khuaya* [verb] (descendant of ‘choir’; pronounced ‘khu-ah-yah’) is a gathering of people and relative mundanity (gossip, sharing secrets, asking for advice, Phuza Thursdays/chillaz, hanging out on supermarket rooftops, needing and giving comfort etc), whereby sound, song and singing are a welcome outcome.

⁴ Pamela Z., *A Tool is A Tool*, In: *Women, Art and Technology*, MIT Press, 2003, ed. by Judy Malloy, p. 365.

Simnikiwe Buhlungu is an artist from Johannesburg, South Africa and currently living in Amsterdam, NL.

Interested in knowledge production(s) — how it is produced, by whom and how it is disseminated — Buhlungu locates socio-historical and everyday phenomena by navigating these questions and their inexhaustible potential answers via research-based methodologies. Through this, she maps points of cognisance which situate various layers of awareness as reverberated ecologies.

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