

Hannah Weinberger
PRESS



Review: Le Moi Du Toi, Swiss Institute, 2012
By Michael Wilson

Artforum
October 2012

Hannah Weinberger

SWISS INSTITUTE

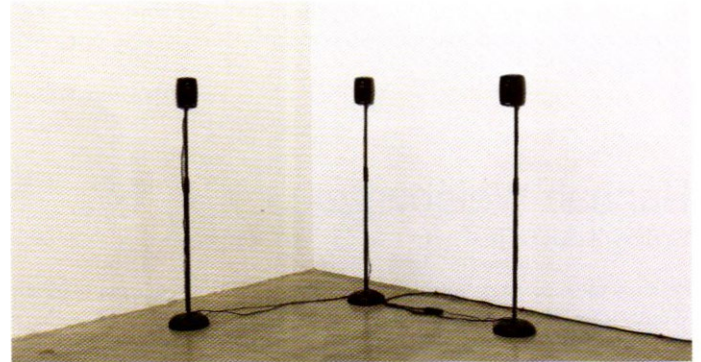
Perhaps the most startling aspect of young Basel-based artist Hannah Weinberger's sound installation *Le Moi Du Toi*, 2012, is its sheer accessibility. While not technically easy listening—it might be classified, perhaps, as a loungey and sometimes Latinate variant on Chicago house—the relaxed 4/4 instrumental dance music with which Weinberger permeated the Swiss Institute is free of the outré or confrontational aspects shared by so many works in the medium. While wandering through the space, which was veiled here and there with long white curtains and dotted with high-tech speakers, one could easily imagine oneself browsing the racks of one of the many fashion boutiques that are the gallery's SoHo neighbors, or flagging down a server in a sleek hotel bar.

Sending her lulling rhythms ricocheting unpredictably from lobby to main room to basement, sometimes splitting the sound into separate parts that played simultaneously in different spaces, Weinberger created the impression of a multiplicity of events that, while gathered in close proximity, could not be apprehended simultaneously. Yet even if there were no prospect of reaching a final destination, the kinetic restlessness of the sound suggested that we should keep moving (walking, if not dancing) anyway. The music's seeming slightness also contributed to a certain haunted feel, prompting—especially in this building, once home to Deitch Projects—memories of all yesterday's parties. Drifting around the wide white space with its pods of sentinel-like all-black speakers and amps, one had no choice but to fill in the blanks with personal impressions of past or future.

Weinberger often orchestrates live performances—some of which result in stand-alone sound tracks—as a way to explore the mechanics and meanings of collective work and shared space. In *Le Moi Du Toi*, the music served only as the trace of such activity, meaning that the viewer/listener's participatory role was more distanced. The work's French title—it translates as “The Me of You”—seems to acknowledge that “collaborative” practice is generally structured around a single originator, even when other people are key to its actualization. In conversation with the gallery's Gianni Jetzer and Piper Marshall, Weinberger describes her role as essentially directorial, her creative process rooted in the making of numerous small decisions: “I work with a professional sound engineer on the concept. I explain to him what I want to do and how I want to distribute sound within the space. He makes it possible.”

For *Le Moi Du Toi*, Weinberger's expert staff made possible an environment that felt at once familiar and destabilizing, that conjured the experience of playing a favorite album only to find that the tracks have been shuffled into a new order, or discovering that one's bedroom and bathroom have inexplicably switched places. Evocative of dub, in which any of a track's component parts may drop temporarily out of the mix, the endless jam that filled the Swiss Institute shifted without warning, producing sudden silences that left one with the sensation of running on air, like Wile E. Coyote in that frozen moment after he overshoots a cliff edge. Ascending to the mezzanine only to hear a tune burst into muffled life downstairs even sparked a pang of something like loss.

Curator Fabrice Stroun argues in the exhibition's catalogue that Weinberger's work is distinguished by an avoidance of allegory and



reference, reaching instead toward “a live, streamlined resurgence of idealistic communal aspirations.” Yet while undoubtedly driven by the artist's fascination with processes, groupings, and situations in their own right, her work is—happily—not quite as pure or self-contained as this summation implies.

—Michael Wilson

Hannah Weinberger.
Le Moi Du Toi, 2012.
speakers, amplifiers,
with sound, dimen-
sions variable.