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PRESS RELEASE

**Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin**

Invalidenstraße 50/51, 10557 Berlin

Opening Hours: Tue, Wed, Fri 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Thu 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.,
Sat, Sun 11 a.m. – 6 p.m., Mo closed

Admission Temporary Exhibition: 8 € / concession 4 €

Admission Collections + Temporary Exhibitions: 14 € / concession 7 €

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Works of Music by Visual Artists:

SUSAN PHILIPSZ. Part File Score

24-channel sound installation

Twelve ways to describe Hanns Eisler

The sound works by the internationally acclaimed Berlin-based Scottish artist Susan Philipsz are often created for particular locations and refer to their history and spatial features. For the historic hall of the Hamburger Bahnhof, Philipsz has designed a sound installation that relates both to the building's former function as a railway station and to the architectonic structure of the hall with its 12 archways. The artist connects the former railway station – a place of departure and arrival, of parting and return – with the eventful life of the composer Hanns Eisler (1898–1962), who lived in Berlin in the 1920s and 1950s. The sound installation *Part File Score* is based on three musical compositions for film by Eisler, which Philipsz has arranged. Each tone of the compositions was recorded separately in the studio. In the installation, the tones are distributed among the 24 loudspeakers installed along the entire length of the historic grand industrial hall. By doing so, the artist spatializes the music.

The sound installation by Philipsz is based on three musical compositions for film by Hanns Eisler that play one after the other: *Prelude in the Form of a Passacaglia* (1926, for Walter Ruttmann's film *Opus III*, 1924), *Fourteen Ways to Describe Rain* (1941, for the film *Regen*, 1929, by Joris Ivens), and *Septet No.2* (1947, written for Charlie Chaplin's film *The Circus*, 1928). For the artist those works coincide with decisive moments in Eisler's biography. The composer, who like his mentor Arnold Schönberg had immigrated to the USA in the 1930s, was deported from the country in 1948 due to his pro-communist political convictions. Although Eisler did compose in the twelve-tone technique of his mentor, his conception of socially committed art led him to turn also to 'popular' genres such as music for stage and screen. He was a prolific composer of songs, including many for workers' choruses and international labor movement rallies. In 1949, while living in the eastern sector of Berlin, Eisler composed the national anthem of the GDR.

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In keeping with an artistic principle that Philipsz already applied in *Study for Strings*, presented at dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel in 2012, as well as in *The Missing String*, her recently realized sound installation in Düsseldorf, the artist separately recorded each tone of the above-mentioned Eisler compositions in the studio. The recorded sounds, played by a violin, a cello, a trumpet, and a piano, are in turn separated and heard from 24 loudspeakers installed along the length of the historic grand industrial hall – 12 on the right and 12 on the left. Each loudspeaker is assigned a tone on the chromatic scale, so that each of the instrumental voices becomes spatialized and wanders through the entire hall. With this sound work and its accompanying twelve prints, in which pages of Eisler's scores are superimposed with pages from his FBI files, Philipsz seeks an approach to Eisler's aesthetic of the *displaced form* so as to evoke themes such as life's journey and the experience of separation and displacement.

Susan Philipsz (*1965 in Glasgow), who won the prestigious Turner Prize in 2010, works primarily with the medium of sound in her investigation of musical and literary sources and specific historical constellations. She frequently makes use of familiar tunes and pop songs, performed in her own voice and recorded, in order to create an acoustic environment that relates to the particular location in an exhibition space or an urban setting. Lately she has made increasing use of instrumental compositions and acoustic material such as field recordings and radio signals, which she adapts for staging in particular settings.

The exhibition by Susan Philipsz is the current project in the series *Works of Music by Visual Artists*, which Freunde Guter Musik Berlin has presented in collaboration with the Nationalgalerie since 1999 and, since 2002, with MaerzMusik, the contemporary music festival of the Berliner Festspiele. It is the artist's first institutional solo exhibition in Berlin, where she has lived since 2001.

Curators: Ingrid Buschmann, Gabriele Knapstein

A project by Freunde Guter Musik Berlin e.V. and Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, in collaboration with Berliner Festspiele / MaerzMusik 2014.
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The exhibition will be accompanied by a booklet with an editorial by the curators and a text by Jennifer Allen which is available in the museum for 5 €.

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