

LUTZ BECKER



***AFTER THE WALL* (1999/2014), Sound Sculpture on loop, 37 min 18 sec, composed of 5 parts:**

- **Potsdamer Platz: Strong atmosphere. It is the basis of the installation. Hammering and distant voices.**
- **Invalidenstrasse: Dramatic close-up percussion of hammers.**
- **Checkpoint Charlie: Heavy percussion. Massive rhythmical sound bundles.**
- **Brandanburger Tor: Relaxed, regular beats quite close.**
- **Night: End piece with dominant echos.**

The Berlin Wall was first breached on 9th November 1989, as the result of popular mass meetings and demonstrations within the GDR. It was not demolished at a single stroke, but over days and weeks was slowly chipped away as people from East and West joined together to obliterate a hated symbol of oppression. This was the first in a chain of events that led to the end of the Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain. Europe was freer than it had ever been before! And the ramifications spread the world-over! In 1989 the whole of Berlin rang and rocked to the liberating sound of hammers and pickaxes as the Wall was demolished. It was intended to build a better world without any walls.

Artist and film-maker Lutz Becker made a montage of these percussive sounds as the opening work in *After the Wall*, a large exhibition of art from the post-communist countries of Europe, that opened in 1999 on the 10th anniversary of this world-changing event. Now for Points of Resistance, at Berlin's iconic point of resistance in the Zionskirch, we encourage you to scan the barcode and listen on your phones to this Sound

Sculpture, resonating through time into the present and future; a reminder today that it was the power of the people that brought down the Wall in 1989 and that ideals of freedom have still to be protected!

Lutz Becker's sound sculpture, *After the Wall*, re-visits a sound installation commissioned for the exhibition *After the Wall* held at the Moderna Museet Stockholm in 1999, curated by David Elliott. Its five constituent sound montages are based on original recordings made at the fall of the Berlin Wall. After its installation in Stockholm it travelled subsequently to the Ludwig Museum, Budapest, and Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin. MOMENTUM originally presented the sound sculpture *After the Wall* in the exhibition *Fragments of Empires* in the context of the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 2014. The soundscapes captured in *After the Wall* – a discordant cacophony of hammering and banging – are derived from the recorded sounds of thousands of people across Berlin wielding hammers and chisels to break down the Wall.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, symbolised the end of the separation of the City of Berlin, as well as that of Germany into an Eastern and a Western state. It marked, for everybody to see, the final collapse of Communism. It was a moment in history that promised to the people of Germany and other Europeans a new beginning. The significance of the Berlin Wall extended far beyond the city, beyond the borders of Germany. It epitomised the Cold War confrontation between the Warsaw Pact and the NATO alliance. The Wall separated the spheres of interest between Communism and Capitalism. On 13. August 1961 the government of East Germany, the GDR, began to seal off East Berlin from West Berlin by means of barbed wire and anti-tank obstacles. The underground and railway services of Greater Berlin were severed and West Berlin was turned into an island within GDR territory. A solid wall gradually replaced the provisional fence. It was made up of concrete segments of a height of 12 feet and was 165 miles long. A trench ran parallel to it to prevent vehicles from breaking through. There was a patrol corridor behind it, watch towers, bunkers and electric fences.

It appeared to the population of Germany that the split of their country and of Berlin would last forever. In 1989, as a reaction to Gorbachov's reforms in the Soviet Union and massive unrest in their country, the government of the GDR decreed the opening of the Wall on 9. November 1989. In the following days and months demolition workers began with tearing it down. On 1. July 1990 the GDR gave up her statehood and merged with West Germany. For the Germans the demolition of the wall was an act of liberation. It gave hope for a future in which unhindered communication and freedom of movement would be everybody's natural right. Within days of the 'opening' of the wall its terrifying symbolism lost its power. Millions of people came to Berlin to look at the now defunct wall and to take a piece of it with them to remember this moment of history. Hundreds of people attacked the graffiti covered surfaces of the Wall, eroding it bit by bit. The so called 'Mauerspechte', wall-peckers as opposed to woodpeckers, worked on the Wall day and night; their hammering, knocking and breaking sounds travelled along the many miles of Wall. The high-density concrete

of the structure worked like a gigantic resonating body; its acoustic properties created eerie echoes driven by the random percussion of the hammering.

— Lutz Becker

BIO

Lutz Becker is a filmmaker, artist and curator from Berlin who lives and works in London. He is of a generation still affected by the aftermath of the WW2, the rebuilding of Germany and the student's revolt of the late 60s. His films, videos and curatorial projects have been shown internationally. His paintings are in institutional and private collections. As a student in London he embraced the forward looking spirit of abstraction and artistic internationalism. This led him towards the painterly procedures of informel. He got interested in the synthetic sound structures of electronic music which lead him towards the making of experimental abstract films at the BBC. His preoccupation with movement and time influenced much of his film and video work. Becker is a director/producer of political and art documentaries such as *Double Headed Eagle*, *Lion of Judah* and *Vita Futurista* to name a few as well as TV productions, such as *Nuremberg in History*. He participated as a guest artist at the First Kiev Biennale in 2012 with the video installation, *The Scream* and is currently preparing the reconstruction of Sergei Eisenstein's film *Que viva Mexico!*. Besides the work as artist and film maker he is an expert on Russian Constructivism and Italian Futurism. He curated for Tate Modern the Moscow section of *Century City 2001* and for the State Museum of Modern Art, Thessaloniki, *Construction: Tatlin and After 2002*, for the Estorick Collection, London, a survey of European photomontage *Cut & Paste 2008*, for Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, a show of 20th Century drawings *Modern Times: Responding to Chaos 2010*. Most recently he co-curated *Solomon Nikritin – George Grosz, Political Terror and Social Decadence in Europe between the Wars* at the State Museum of Modern Art, Thessaloniki.

CV

Films

- 2014 Reconstruction of Sergei Eisenstein's 'Que Viva Mexico!'
Work in progress, MPP
- 2012 Constructing Tatlin's Tower, Royal Academy
- 2009 Vita Futurista, Arts Council
- 2006 Nuremberg in History, WL
- 1995 George Blake – Double-agent, ZDF
- 1991 The Silence behind Words, La Sept/Arte
- 1984 D-Day, Entscheidung am Atlantikwall, ZDF
- 1981 Lion of Judah (Polytel)
- 1972 Double Headed Eagle, Swastika, VPS 1971 Malevich: Suprematism, Arts Council

1971 Art in Revolution, Arts Council

Selected Video Installations

- 2012-13 The Scream
First Biennale Kiev,
Skyscreen Berlin and Istanbul,
CAC Shanghai
- 2012 Horizon
Screen Practice, England & Co, London
- 2010 Les Promesses du Passe
Centre Pompidou, Paris
- 2009 Where Everything is Going to Happen
Banja Luca
Lecture - Performance
Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne
- 1999 After the Wall
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Budapest, Berlin
- 1995 William Borroughs calls Flash Gordon
ICA, London, Kunsthalle Wien
- 1971 Revolution
Hayward Gallery, London

Selected Exhibitions

2018. 1968 Kestner Museum
Hanover
1968. 1969 Young Contemporaries
London
- 1990 Volo-Azari
Museo di Genio, Rome
- 1995 Montage
Villa Caproni, Rome
- 1998 The Directors Eye
Museum of Modern Art Oxford, Tokyo, Osaka
- 1997 Drawings
Sandra Gering Gallery, New York
2000. 2000 Die Farbe rot hat mich

Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum, Hagen

2000. 2001 Colour - A Life of its Own
Mücsarnok, Budapest

2003. 2003 Seeing Red
Hunter College, New York

2003. 2004 Farbe als Farbe
Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund

Curator, selected

2014 Salomon Nikritin - George Grosz:
Political terror and social decadence in Europe between the Wars
SMCA, Thessaloniki 2012-14 George Grosz-The Big No
Hayward Touring

2010 Modern Times - Responding to Chaos
Kettle's Yard, Cambridge and De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill

2008 Cut & Paste: European Photomontage 1920-1945 Estorick Collection, London 2004-05
Avant-Garde Graphics 1918-1934
Hayward Touring

2002 Construction: Tatlin and After SMCA, Thessaloniki

2001 Century City: Moscow
Tate Modern, London

2000 Protoporia: Masterpieces of the Costakis Collection
SMCA, Thessaloniki

1995 Art and Power
Hayward Gallery, London, Barcelona, Berlin

1975 Carl Andre: Concept and Perception
Belgrade

1972 Erwin Piscator
Hayward Gallery, London

1971 Art in Revolution
Hayward Gallery, London, Frankfurt, New York, Bologna