

PRESS RELEASE

16th of April 2014, 6–10 pm
Kunstquartier Bethanien, Mariannenplatz 2, 10997 Berlin
Free entrance

BOOK RELEASE: ‘Shadow of Smoke Rings on the Wall’ (Artist monograph)

WORLD PREMIERE ‘From the End to the Beginning – Wagner reversed’ by Amir Fattal

Performed by the **Zafraan Ensemble** (Berlin), soprano **Dénise Beck** (Berlin), and conductor: **Holly Mathieson** (London/Berlin); duration approx. 12 min; will be performed twice: once at 7 pm and once at 8 pm.

‘Shadow of Smoke Rings on the Wall’ (124 pages) is the first book published by Berlin based DICKERSBACH KUNSTVERLAG and presents a survey of Amir Fattal’s artistic work with over 62 high quality images and essays by Dr. Heinz Stahlhut, Ludwig Seyfarth and Nimrod Reitman.

The launch at Kunstquartier Bethanien will be accompanied by the premiere of **‘From the End to the Beginning’**, a new music performance by Amir Fattal based on ‘Liebestod’ from Richard Wagner’s opera ‘Tristan und Isolde’. The piece will be performed by the Zafraan Ensemble with soprano Dénise Beck and conducted by Holly Mathieson.

In the past years Amir Fattal has realised many projects that thematically circled around the relation of art history and political history, with an emphasis on the cultural perception of aesthetics and morality. His work combines profound research in different archives and foundations such as the Humboldtforum Stiftung - Berliner Schloss, Erich Mendelsohn Stiftung and U.S Air Force Archive to name but a few, from which Fattal incorporates original materials to create his installations. Since Richard Wagner was not only a door opener for the music avantgarde but also for many visual modernists in the 20th century, it was only a question of time that his highly ambivalent work would be a target of Fattal’s explorations.

The starting point for Amir Fattal’s music performance ‘From the End to the Beginning’ was to play Richard Wagner’s ‘Liebestod’ sequence in reverse order. By copying the last note as the first note and proceeding in this way, a new ‘mirrored’ musical piece was formed as an arrangement for nine instruments. ‘Liebestod’ is the final and dramatic aria from Wagner’s opera ‘Tristan und Isolde’, sung by Isolde after Tristan’s death. Performing this specific piece backwards is thus an attempt in resurrection. It reflects on the power of music to transcend a situation or the possibility of changing what cannot be changed – death itself.

The idea of this work was partly inspired by Thomas Mann’s novel ‘Dr. Faustus’, mainly by the concept of creating a duality through music, where on the one hand, there is a strict mathematical structure and on the other an undercurrent of dark mystical emotions. This duality is also formally reflected in the creation of the new piece, which serves as a mirror image of the original. The strategy of retrograded notes has fascinated composers since the beginning of written music and is a basic element of Bach’s mathematical approach to music and the twelve-tone technique of Arnold Schoenberg, with their ingenious combination of rationalism and expression.

In the larger context of the perception of Wagner’s work, the piece furthermore reflects on cultural taboos and historical memory in view of the fact that Wagner’s works are banned from public performance in Israel and have become a symbol for the catastrophic ramifications that anti-Semitism can cause. The work will also be performed in Israel this September as part of an exhibition at the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art.

Amir Fattal (b.1978, Israel) participated in numerous international group exhibitions. Acclaimed solo exhibitions to date include *Parallel Lines*, Teapot Gallery, Cologne, Germany (2013), *Goral Ehad*, St-art, Tel Aviv, Israel (2012), *Shadow of Smoke Rings on the Wall*, Artitude Kunstverein, Berlin, Germany (2011) and *Tomorrow Gets Me Higher*, Wilde Gallery, Berlin, Germany (2010). Fattal’s works were featured at the III Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, Moscow, Russia (2012). Fattal is curator of Tape Modern Berlin, a series of group exhibitions featuring emerging and established artists. He was the recipient of the Berliner Senat Katalogförderung in 2013, the Berliner Senat Arbeitsstipendium Bildende Kunst in 2010 and the GASAG Förderpreis in 2008. Fattal graduated from Universität der Künste, Berlin, in 2009.
www.amir-fattal.com

The Berlin based **Zafraan Ensemble** is a young and multi-faceted group for contemporary music that has made a name for itself through innovative concert productions and its high musical quality. The ensemble – made up of ten musicians of diverse nationalities – was formed predominantly from graduates of the HfM Hanns Eisler Berlin, and has won numerous prestigious international awards. Recent projects include the scenic world premiere of Hèctor Parra’s opera ‘Hypermusic Prologue’, the concert production ‘Der Einzelklang und die Musik’ choreographed by Louise Wagner and the programme ‘Umbrüche ins Offene’ at Konzerthaus Berlin. www.zafraan-ensemble.com

Danish-German lyric soprano **Dénise Beck** has a Master's Degree in Lied and Oratorio from the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, as well as a Post-Grad in the Soloist Programme of the Royal Danish Academy Copenhagen. Dénise had her debut in 2008 at the Wiener Volksoper. Since then she has performed on numerous stages around the world, such as the Bregenzer Festspiele, Konzerthaus Wien, Musikverein Wien, Salzburger Landestheater, Royal Opera Copenhagen, Teatro Nacional de Brasil, Opera City Tokyo and many others. Her repertoire ranges from Baroque, through Classic and Romantic to Contemporary music and from warm lyric to shining coloratura. www.denisebeck.dk

New Zealand born **Holly Mathieson** is the Artistic Director of the Berlin Horizont Musik-Kollektiv and Co-Director of the London Reuleaux Ensemble. Recent projects include assisting Marin Alsop at the 2013 BBC Last Night of the Proms and Christoph Dohnányi at the Philharmonia Orchestra London. Mathieson gave her debut with the St Matthew's Chamber Orchestra (Auckland, NZ) and the Vanbrugh Ensemble (London) in 2013. www.hollymathieson.com

Berlin based **DICKERSBACH KUNSTVERLAG** is a newly established publishing house specialising in high quality books, monographs and artist catalogues by artists from countries that are not in the focus of the Western art and culture discourse. Founded by Tanzanian-born art expert **Safia Dickersbach**, this new publishing platform focuses on contemporary art and pursues a central theme of overcoming the Eurocentric and Western dominance in defining the criteria of which contemporary art is considered relevant. The publisher's goal is to present an "international art scene" which rightfully deserves the attribute "international" and which is characterised by a truly global scope. In this current publication DICKERSBACH KUNSTVERLAG set great value on including the Hebrew mother tongue of the artist Amir Fattal and on commissioning a graphic designer from the artist's home country, **GILA KAPLAN**, a senior lecturer at the Bezalel Academy of Art & Design in Jerusalem and the Shenkar School of Engineering and Design in Tel-Aviv, to take responsibility of this book's design and production.

Amir Fattal's monograph 'Shadow of Smoke Rings on the Wall' was published with the kind support of the Department of Culture of the State of Berlin.

SHADOW OF SMOKE RINGS ON THE WALL

Artist: Amir Fattal
Authors: Dr. Heinz Stahlhut, Ludwig Seyfarth, Nimrod Reitman
Publisher: DICKERSBACH KUNSTVERLAG
Languages: English, German, Hebrew
Images: Approx. 62 colour and b/w images, hardcover
Pages: 124
Format: 20.5 x 26 cm
Release Date: December 2013
Price: 25.00 EUR

ISBN No.: 978-3-9816206-0-3

Dr. Heinz Stahlhut is a curator for Fine Arts at the Museum of Fine Art in Lucerne. Until 2013, Stahlhut was the curator for Fine Arts at Berlinische Galerie, previously he served as a curator for the Museum Tinguely Basel and taught at the School of Applied Arts in Basel. Stahlhut has issued various publications on post-war and contemporary art and artists including Francesco Clemente, Jeppe Hein, Yves Klein, Günther Uecker and Franz West.

Ludwig Seyfarth is an art critic, curator and previous guest professor at the HBK Braunschweig, HfbK Hamburg and Kunstakademie Münster. Since 2010 Seyfarth has been the curator for KAI 10/Arthena Foundation in Dusseldorf. In 2007 he was awarded the ADKV-ART COLOGNE Preis für Kunstkritik. Seyfarth lives in Berlin.

Nimrod Reitman is a literary scholar, an art curator and a classically trained pianist. His research explores the junctures between poetry, music and psychoanalysis. He curated exhibitions in Israel and Germany and contributed scholarly essays to various art catalogues. He currently resides in New York.

For more information about DICKERSBACH KUNSTVERLAG and review copies of 'Shadow of Smoke Rings on the Wall' as well as images in high resolution, please contact Safia Dickersbach at DICKERSBACH KUNSTVERLAG, Clara-Wieck-Straße 3, 10785 Berlin, Germany. www.dickersbach.net Email: verlag@dickersbach.net