

ECHO LA ROCCA – THE SOUND AS THE TRACE OF HER VOICE

Saturday, January 16th, 2016

16:00 – 22:00

Talks, books, performances and a concert within the exhibition by

Caterina Barbieri, Gea Brown, DJ Fred Hystère, Anna Frei, Franziska Koch, Johann Merrich, Olive Michel and Sally Schonfeldt

A selection of books and vinyl by **Die Schachtel**, Milano and **OOR Records**, Zurich, **Libreria delle donne di Milano, Tuba, Libreria Bazar delle Donne di Roma** is available for purchase

Free admission

The program takes place within the exhibition *THE KETTY LA ROCCA RESEARCH CENTRE* by SALLY SCHONFELDT

13 November 2015 – 23 January 2016

Opening hours:

Monday - Friday 11-18; Saturday 14-18

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On January 16th, *The Ketty La Rocca Research Centre*, an installation by Sally Schonfeldt at Istituto Svizzero di Roma, hosts a special evening of programming entitled *Echo La Rocca – The Sound as the Trace of Her Voice*. The evening is composed of performances and concerts specially commissioned and curated for this occasion by artist **Anna Frei**, and performed by musicians and artists **Caterina Barbieri, Gea Brown, DJ Fred Hystère, Franziska Koch, Johann Merrich, Olive Michel**, and **Sally Schonfeldt** herself. These new productions initially emerged out of investigations that followed

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traces of Ketty La Rocca's supposed involvement in early Italian electronic music, as mentioned in various books about her artistic oeuvre.

Instigated by Sally Schonfeldt's research, the installation questions Ketty La Rocca's historical positioning in art history. It offers an accessible space in the form of a "research centre". The materials collected within the exhibition expose the traces and hints found in La Rocca's biography that need to be examined. One of these traces, namely La Rocca's supposed participation on the first-ever electronic music course offered in Italy in 1965, generated the context which allowed for Anna Frei's ongoing investigation into *ladies in early electronic music*.

This investigation led to a critical revisit of La Rocca's position from a contemporary present and raised the necessity of viewing her work through the perspective of a generation of artists and musicians active today. It exposes the problems of historical constructions and contemporary examinations of feminist histories, as well as La Rocca's subversive exploration of languages as viewed through contemporary positions. By introducing other spaces, formats and modes coming from different kinds of understanding, which stand in contrast to the exhibition format itself, these questions become manifest in the presentations produced for January 16th. In doing so, the space of the "research centre" is transformed into another space that questions, problematizes and emancipates itself from historical narratives.

The program begins with a book presentation by Johann Merrich on *Women in Early Electronics*, followed by a live mix performance combining sounds of early Italian electronics and audio recordings of Sally Schonfeldt's *The Ketty La Rocca Research Diary* (Rome, 2015) by Gea Brown. The evening continues with a performance by Olive Michel exploring language and feminist discourses followed by a research-based, fictional performative audio-play by Franziska Koch and Anna Frei. The program concludes with a concert by Caterina Barbieri.

Parallel to the performance program the exhibition hosts a variety of books and records on sale selected especially for the evening regarding *ladies in the early electronics*, Italian early electronics, Carla Lonzi, Ketty La Rocca and many more.

Echo La Rocca – The Sound as the Trace of Her Voice **PROGRAM**

16:00

The Women of Electronics – A Short History

A book presentation on skype by Johann Merrich

The Women of Electronics – A Short History (*Le Pioniere della musica elettronica*, Auditorium Edizioni, 2012) gives a broad panoramic view of the leading female figures in the history of electronic music and music radio production studios. The publication consists of separate chapters on major figures in music, largely unknown to the broader public, such as Lady Ada Lovelace, Lucie Bigelow Rosen, Clara Rockmore (the most

illustrious performer of the theremin in the American school) and many more. The book includes previously unpublished interviews with several of these artists. The English version of the book will be published in 2016.

Johann Merrich is a musician based in Venice. She is co-founder of the noise duo *Hm?*, the netlabel *electronicgirls.org* dedicated to the effort of women in electronic music, and participates in the electronic ensemble *The Expanding Universe of Al-Joberal Chirolechi*, dedicated to Stockhausen's Intuitive Music. Her solo albums include *USSR vs Paradise (in six movements)*, *Fricadelique! How to be a flower-power nihilist* and *7 Tone-floats for a Self Destruction*. Author of *Le Pioniere della musica elettronica* (Auditorium Edizioni, 2012) she works for theatre and contemporary dance companies as well as writing graphical and verbal scores.

18:00

Diary Listening, Part 2

Live audio-DJ-mix by Gea Brown

For *Diary Listening, Part 2*, DJ Gea Brown was invited to produce a live mix that combines audio extracts from Sally Schonfeldt's *The Ketty La Rocca Research Diary* (Rome, 2015) with sounds from early Italian electronic music, which Ketty La Rocca purportedly was involved in. The "Rome Diary" reflects both on Schonfeldt's work in Italy during the preparations for *The Ketty La Rocca Research Centre*, as well as a sonic research trip to Florence she took with Anna Frei in November, 2015, after the exhibition's opening. The diaries offer a subjective glimpse into the process of artistic research, and embody the reflective nature of such an endeavour. *Diary Listening, Part 1* was mixed and performed by DJ Fred Hystère at the opening of the exhibition in November, 2015 reacting to material from Sally Schonfeldt's original *The Ketty La Rocca Research Diary*, from 2011-2012.

Gea Brown lives and works in Prato and Milano. With a background in art history, Gea Brown approaches DJing by researching different musical currents in a constant intersection of history and present. In her sets, pioneering electronic music and American minimalism of the 1960s come into dialogue with sounds of recent electronic and electroacoustic music. She reveals an eclectic approach by also picking up on ethnographic sounds, noise and tribalism, with a strong interest for the vocal elements coming from spoken word and sound poetry. She has edited performance soundtracks by artists, dancers and designers, and she regularly collaborates with Sync, a platform for audio and visual artists.

19:00

C'est elle qui souligne / E lei che sottolinea (on invisibility)

A reading performance on visual literacy, feedback circuits and interruptions, desired pasts and canon transformation by Olive Michel

Concrete poetry is visual. Visual poetry is visual. Visual literacy is personal. The personal is political. You You. My work. I say I. I run into Ketty La Rocca. A hot summer night. Conversation not as expression, but. Poésie sonore, the sound of that. Techno voice. Leaving the main figures out. Leave them out of reproduction. Names are ephemeral.

Olive Michel is an artist and writer based in Zurich. She develops her performances, texts and audio works with, and by, recorded voices as site-specific writings. She is interested in social spaces and feminist knowledge production, shared practices of unlearning. She collaborated with Anna Frei/Fred Hystère for "Touching Tones with Tender Buttons" at "French Kisses: On Tips of Tongues and Feeling as Taste", District Berlin, 2015.

20:30

The You, You as Me, Me, Now, Now – The Sound is the Trace of her Voice

Research-based fictional performative audio-play by Anna Frei and Franziska Koch (OOR Records, Zürich)

The starting point for this fictional, performative audio-play was a research trip to Florence conducted by Anna Frei and Sally Schonfeldt in November 2015. Their research followed the trace of Ketty La Rocca, referring to her studies of electronic music at the Conservatorio di Musica Luigi Cherubini in Florence under Pietro Grossi in 1965. Based on, and inspired by, conversations with art historians, musicians and contemporaries of Ketty La Rocca – Albert Mayr, Marcella Chelotti Grossi, Roberto Neri, Maurizio Nannucci, Lucilla Saccà, Luisa Santacesaria, Fabio Carboni, Laura Zattra – as well as texts on Teresa Rampazzi/Gruppo NPS and Pietro Grossi, Anna Frei and Franziska Koch developed a fictional, live audio-play. Within this performance they deal with questions of biographical and historical constructions, the complicity of artistic research, fragile memories and oral her*stories, authorships and feminisms, women in early electronic music in Italy, fantasies of non-hegemonic and fluid temporalities in soundwaves, echoes of inaudible voices and spaces of desire within the undiscoverable.

Anna Frei is an artist, sonic researcher, graphic designer and DJ based in Zurich. Her activities are embedded in research surrounding emancipatory, artistic and musical practices. In 2014 she co-founded the multi-sided space OOR Records in Zurich, which is both a record store and an art bookstore as well as a space that hosts live performances, readings, DJ sets and sound/art mini acts. OOR Records also archives and makes accessible online live-recordings, mixes and audio-pieces, and produces audio editions.

Franziska Koch works on installations, experimental performances, film/music renditions and extended collaborations at the boundaries between art and sound. Her approach is based upon investigating prevailing role models and courses of action within various types of systems and spaces, whose temporal and material structures, as well as societal implications, are then to be deferred and expanded. Based in Zurich, she is a lecturer in Fine Arts at the Zurich University of the Arts and a bass player at the experimental melodic noise band P.F.T. Koch is co-founder of the record store, sound space and art bookstore OOR Records in Zurich.

21:30

Technologies of the Self

Live performance by Caterina Barbieri

Caterina Barbieri presents a new, electronic music composition, specially composed for this occasion, that is dedicated to the absence and alienation of female perspectives in the history of early Italian electronic music. Far from being a nostalgic claim of the missing, *Technologies of the Self* looks at the “hidden from history” perspective to radically rework gendered patterns in present electronic music-making. Combining instrumental practice on synthesizers with live processing of vocal recordings resulting from research on a variety of texts about sound, technology and gender, Barbieri draws inspiration from the tradition of “analog ladies”, such as Eliane Radigue, Suzanne Ciani and Laurie Spiegel, as well as from the silent voices of the marginalized. Aiming to stimulate in the listener a proactive role in rethinking constructions of gender, this sonic experiment seeks to free the emancipatory potential of technology and the power of sound as an agent of change, overcoming binary notions of gender deeply embedded in our culture in search of higher fluidity. Alienation of female perspectives then turns into a trigger to imagine new paradigms of sound and re-engineer the male-designed music world we all were born into, exploring self-defined positions able to cross and swap dichotomous archetypes of gender.

Caterina Barbieri is a composer and performer of electroacoustic music based in Bologna and Stockholm. Recursive sound patterns as a medium of perceptual insight and mental training are one of the main inspirations of her current sonic

research. Using synthesis, psychoacoustics and repetition as key concepts, she stylizes the dancing of wave cycles in severe geometries of time and space on the boundary between minimalism, drone and techno in multichannel listening environments.

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