

The Muziekgebouw as an instrument

Grote Zaal rechts

In Fis

Muziekgebouw

In Fis

The Muziekgebouw as an instrument

As soon as you realize it, you can't help but pause for a moment. A whistling bridge, a revolving door that sets off a tone, a handrail that hums as your hand passes over it. Visitors discover *In Fis* as they move through the building.

The Muziekgebouw invited artist Paulien Barbas to create an artwork for its public areas. That resulted in five separate interventions in and around the building. During the process, Barbas collaborated with musicians, as well as woodworkers and metalworkers to produce a surprising environment which includes both sonic and architectural elements. By altering and emphasizing small aspects of the environment, she made sounds become perceptible, making us more aware of our surroundings. This all in musical scale F-sharp, for that is the common denominator of the various interventions.

Together the interventions tell their own story, the story of sounds that have always been there. Intensifying them allows us to hear ourselves in open space. We become part of the space. It all functions as a prelude to that which awaits us when the doors of the Concert Hall open.

Would you listen



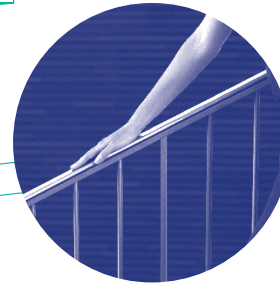
as you play the strings

F#
D#
E#

when pushing the revolving door



E#



as your hand slides along the railing



with your elbows on the railing and the palms of your hands on your ears



while you go down the stairs

A#
B
G#

B
D#
G#

A#

D#

D#



Bridge

Rest your elbows on the bridge railing, block your ears with the palms of your hands, and listen to the bridge as it is set in motion by the footsteps of visitors. Those footsteps cause the bridge to vibrate, like a string, in three dominant frequencies. These are so low that they are inaudible. Each of these frequencies expresses a 'voice' of its own, a higher tone whose amplitude is modelled with the existing low frequency. You hear the composite of frequencies through the hollow railing, your arms and your ears.

Railing

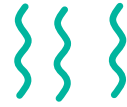
You can hold onto the wooden railing for support as you descend the main stairs. Somewhere along the way the wood is replaced by a piece of railing rendered in hollow stainless steel. The steel is roughly polished and starts to whiz softly as soon as your hand passes from the wood to the metal.

Revolving door

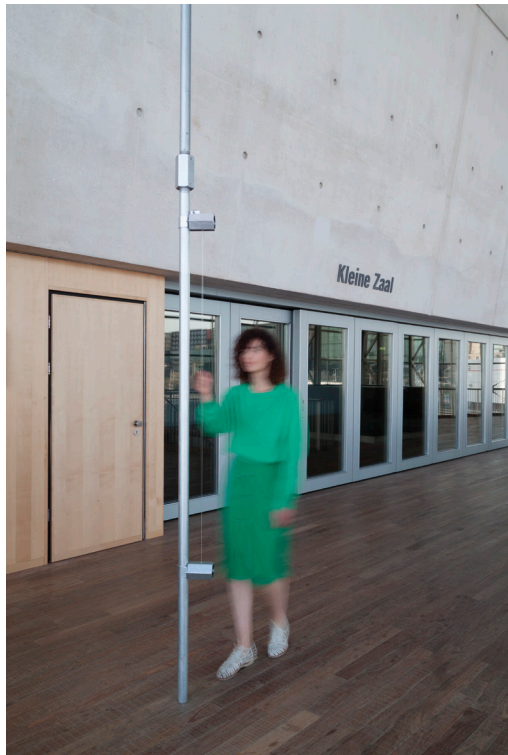


As soon as you enter the building you hear a tone. Placed on top of the revolving door is a singing glass bowl that is connected to the shaft of the door. The bowl rotates as soon as the door starts to rotate. The object is struck by a bow that slowly but surely amplifies the vessel's sound with each consecutive rotation.

Strings



On the top deck you come across boxes attached to tie rods, two per rod. These sound boxes are made from hollowed out coupling nuts, just like those that connect the tie rods together. A string spans between the sound boxes and passes across two combs. If you strum them the strings will vibrate.



Stairs



As you go up or come down the stairs, you hear the sound of your footsteps increase in a few places. Sound-emitting wooden planks are placed on five different steps of the main stairs and on the stairs to the Concert Hall. Each of the planks rests on two nodes. Beneath them is a hollow pipe that runs through the concrete stairs. When your foot touches one of the steps, the plank vibrates. The tuned hollow pipe enhances the vibration.

Ambient noise can swamp you, but sound from a direct source, for example a footstep, can actually be illuminating and intimate. Sometimes I let the palm of my hand slide across a concrete wall or along the bannisters flanking a stairs. That produces a fleeting sensation of texture, temperature and sound. At such moments I am no longer at the mercy of the space, but involved in it. I move, and the space gives something in return.

The public space at the Muziekgebouw is finished in rough materials. The sound of passing trains, the patter of rain and footsteps on the stairs all tend to blend into one humming noise. The artwork *In Fis* creates another perception of this space. A perception of rhythm and sound. Sounds disentangle themselves, bringing the space to life, with and by you.

— Paulien Barbás



***In Fis*, Paulien Barbás**

Design in collaboration with:

Emma van Helden

Metal construction: Paul van Gerwen,
Van Gerwen Metaaltechniek

Engineering Zouthavenbrug: Mark IJzerman

Alterations to steps: Wilbert de Jooede en
Koen Molenaar, WiKo MoJo vof

Engineering steps: Loden Rietveld

Engineering revolving door: Jaromir Mulders

Finish: Kevin Aerts

Printwerk

Design: Nina Støttrup Larsen

Photography: Paulien Barbás

Introduction: Roos Menkhorst

In Fis was made possible by

Mondriaan Fund

AFK (Amsterdam Fund for the Arts)

Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds

Special thanks to

EKWC, Make Eindhoven, Nationaal Glasmuseum
and STEIM

Paulien Barbás (1981) is a visual artist.

Her work is held in various collections, including Les Abattoirs, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in

Toulouse (FR) and the Korea Ceramic

Foundation (KR). In 2017 she won the

silver prize at the Korean International Ceramic Biennale with a sound-work.

Paulien exhibits internationally and has

received art commissions from various

cultural institutions, including the Bauhaus

Foundation Dessau. She studied at the

Rietveld Academie, is an alumna of the

Rijksakademie and lives in Amsterdam.

