

MOTIVE GALLERY  
EXTRA MUROS  
Art Rotterdam  
3-7 February 2010  
Arco Madrid  
17-21 February 2010

Gratis pont vanaf  
Centraal Station naar  
NDSM-Werf  
Moet gechecked + ver-  
taald worden!!  
Waterplein West (achter  
A'dam C.S.)  
Alle dagen, elk 1/2 uur,  
v.a. 07.00 uur, kwart  
over heel & kwart voor  
heel. Laatste rit ter-  
ug naar C.S. 20 t/m Do:  
24.00 uur, Vr + Za: 1.00  
uur.

Image Side

*Proche, Très Proche*  
(Close, Very Close)  
Transcription  
(Voice) - Excerpts

Translation

voice  
there are a lot of  
things / that are / that  
can't just be defined /  
like you had invisible  
bonds

3— Christophe Gallois, "Silence Was Pleased. Entretien avec Dominique Petitgand," in *Neutre intense*, Maison populaire, Paris, 2008, p. 59.

4— Yvonne Chapuis, interview with Dominique Petitgand, in *Textes*, sons, gb agency, Paris, 2001, unpaginated.

indistinct. They circulate in the space, passing from one loud speaker to another according to a logic and a frequency that one cannot grasp. It's in fact these sounds that the visitor first discovers before approaching the central space where the voice is broadcast. Presented in the form of subtitles on a screen situated at the juncture between the two spaces, the translation (in English) functions like an interface between the two sound sources, between the sounds and the voice. Like many of Dominique Petitgand's installations, *Proche, très proche* plays upon an essential characteristic of sound: its permeability. Depending on where you stand, the different sound sources are layered with more or less insistence. A play on synchronicity thus takes hold between the voice and the other sound elements: the latter are traced on the former according to a mimetic process that makes their rhythm, intonation and timing correspond voice's. One surprises oneself by passing from one sound to another, progressing through the space, playing with one's own listening experience.

It's here, on the level of listening, that the silences between the fragments acquire all their presence. They create a zone of permeability, generating "invisible bonds" between the work and its exterior: the listener, the progression of his or her train of thought, the architectural and sound environment, the other spectators.

"In my installations, silence makes it possible for the site, for the setting, for everything that is outside the work to exist... Every silence is the negative framework of what is heard around it, a way of making the work co-exist with what is not part of it."<sup>3</sup>

The silences also function like spaces for montage, "left to the listener," between the fragments. Dominique Petitgand's works are organizations of sound elements that tend toward connecting themselves, straining against themselves, one with the other, one against the other. They place listening at the center of the process out of which meaning emerges.

"It's on the level of perception, on the level of what happens in the listeners' minds, where the study of a form is located for me. My work has more to do with the phenomenon than with the object."<sup>4</sup>

Open  
Wednesday - Saturday  
11 am - 6 pm  
from 23 January through  
13 March 2010  
Opening  
Saturday 23 January 5 pm

Lecture  
Christophe Gallois  
A Different Sound in  
Each Ear: Stories of  
temporalities in the  
work of Dominique  
Petitgand

12 February at 5 pm  
Maison Descartes  
Vijzelgracht 2A  
Amsterdam

Reservation is required:  
enter@motivegallery.nl

If Dominique Petitgand's  
If Dominique Petit-  
gand's sound pieces  
are characterised by  
a specific relation  
to time: fragments,  
repetitions, silences,  
the superimposition of  
different narratives and  
different temporalities,  
the spatialisation of  
time are various figures  
around which his works  
unfold. In order to  
explore these  
aspects of Dominique  
Petitgand's practice,  
this presentation will  
attempt to put it in  
dialogue with several  
works by American com-  
poser Steve Reich, in-  
cluding his early pieces  
*It's Gonna Rain* (1965),  
*Come Out* (1966) and  
*Pendulum Music* (1968).

Christophe Gallois is  
a curator and a writer  
based in Paris and  
Luxembourg. He works  
as curator/Head of  
exhibitions at Mudam  
Luxembourg, where he  
co-curated Dominique  
Petitgand's exhibition  
*La porte ne s'est pas  
ouverte* (*The door didn't  
open*) and organised  
the group exhibition  
*The Space of Words*. He  
contributed to the art  
magazine *Metropolis M*,  
*Frieze* and *Artpress* and  
is currently preparing a  
book on Steve Reich and  
his relations to visual  
arts at the beginning of  
his career.

1— Dominique Petitgand,  
*Installations (documents)*, Éditions  
MF, abbaye de Maubuisson, Frac  
Lorraine, Frac haute-Normandie,  
Confort Moderne, gb agency,  
2009.

2— Dominique Petitgand,  
*Notes, voix, entretiens/Notes*,  
voices, interviews, Les Labora-  
toires d'Aubervilliers, Aubervil-  
liers, École Nationale Supérieure  
des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 2002,  
p. 62.

Dominique Petitgand  
*Proche, très proche* (Close, very close), 2002/2009

Words are the primary medium of Dominique Petitgand's works: sequences of words, excerpts of recordings — often the same ones — that he produces with different people. These voice fragments are cut up, isolated, repeated, associated with other sound or musical fragments. His sound works are then unfolded in space in the form of installations using one or several loud speakers, substituting in the place of usual linear listening — for instance, that of a concert or a CD — a *spatialized* listening: "We move from a temporal approach to a spatial one, from a horizontal composition (in which sounds appear in sequence) to a vertical one (in which sounds co-exist in contiguous spaces). Listeners themselves create the sequence of events through their movements and various positions, by visiting the different spaces."<sup>1</sup>

It's this kind of progression through space that the installation *Proche, très proche* (Close, very close) invites us to perform. The work features a female voice presented inside a central space, confronted with other sounds diffused through four loud speakers distributed in the exhibition space. Appearing in the form of snippets, the voice describes (in French) a certain confusion. It evokes the presence of "invisible bonds" between people or things.

Above it all, the various narrative starts alternate with fragments of speech concerning the difficulty the woman has in finding the words for what she is trying to express. These words are thus punctuated by expressions similar to those we might say, almost unconsciously, automatically when, indeed, words fail us:

"I don't know," "ah, yes," or even, "it's strange."

Like the sounds emitted on the margins of the voice — coughing, exhaling, breathing, humming, chuckling —, these expressions constitute a large part of the vocabulary in Dominique Petitgand's sound works:

"For me," he explains, "breathing, coughing and isolated words are like entire sentences."<sup>2</sup>

The snippets of voice function there like "vocal gestures," triggers bound to prompt perceptual states, reflections, memories, and other narrative snippets in the spectator's mind.

The sounds broadcast by the four loud speakers share with the voice the same ambiguity: they *sound* familiar, evoke sounds produced when manipulating everyday materials, but remain

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Text  
Christophe Gallois

Translation  
Joanna Fiduccia

Translation subtitles  
Miles Hankin

Graphic Design  
Thomas Buxó, Amsterdam

il y a plein de trucs,  
qui sont,  
qu'on peut pas définir  
comme ça,  
comme si t'avais  
des liens invisibles

Dominique  
Petitgand

proche, très proche  
sound installation  
with 5 speakers  
and subtitles