

new release

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I have been here before

To listen I need a filter, I need to feel wrapped in a creasing veil of memory. I cannot just be there: I must feel that I have been there some other time: elsewhere, then. I need to know that I was caught listening while intent on something else, something that lured me into unexpected interferences: a ripple on a background of history with no apparent motive, a sequence of rhythms stripped off an emotional tapestry, a perceptual gasp.

I do not like to explain these sounds, or understand them: in the same manner as Mika never told me what he wants to do with them and through them. Through them I can think, and with them I can be—and write, absorbed in his honed repertoire of movements into sounds, fixed on chasing his profound prey.

I have forgotten names or words for the sounds I hear. Or maybe I never even learned them. I do not know their source, their references, and I do not want to. This is another way into listening. The references might come from another medium. From these pictures, these titles: disturbances that infect my hearing.

Words and sounds and images arrange themselves against any notion of centre. There is no centre here that dictates form and symmetry: this is about the core, something more dense and subtle, connected to beginning and indeed connected to care. And this core is shaped as a constellation: the concentrated act of making sound opens up to the dissipation of making sound happen, in listening, yet all its elements are held together. No prescribing narrative or anecdotes: a repertoire of aural gestures prompts my hearing and allows it to err in and out of its permeable boundaries into words.

I no longer know which genre this music belongs to

We had *Kilo* a few months ago, *Magnetite* earlier on. The former revelled in rhythm, the latter in texture. But this is Sähkö, home to Mika's earlier visionary outputs, home of Ø and of openings, of crossing off borders between techno and secret private spaces, between rhythm and mental haloes of rhythm. *Konstellaatio* is not just rhythm, not just texture, it has no canonical function or meaning, it makes new meaning as I hear its sounds take form. There is tension, because *Konstellaatio* hints at forms that are extremely codified and yet are never quite there. And on the flipside of these highly codified forms there is an exhausted and abandoned physicality.

These sounds are so present that they resist the assault of interpretation.

The sparse rhythms at the beginning trick you inside an intro. They breathe in wheezes of unrest. After a few minutes you may expect a voice, an event or narrative to break through: a ghost story perhaps, so uncanny was the unsteady pace that swept clear the space of your hearing. Instead you find yourself alone: not a voice accompanies you, not a sense of recognition reassures you. You can only surrender and become shell. Clear-cut beats reach far out, envisaging the possibility of elsewhere. These sounds frame this sense of openness; the clarity of these sounds secures the uncertainty of the place.

Gradually these sounds become less enclosed, humming and gurgling from a distance as ominous entities whose origin you cannot imagine, name, or know. You get absorbed in this metallic buzzing, wooden chiming, crystal-clear swarming. Is night creeping on, closing in?

And then it strikes: a heart-rending lament, alone and repetitive, rich with presence as if to mark the un-eventfulness around. A drone that has lost any claim for solemnity and can only sound a forlorn presence. From memory it's not linear, it happens as it is. Nine and some more minutes, nine and some more long and plaintive minutes charged with unresolved expectation.

Metallic swishes against cavernous reverbs are prolonged in a world where stillness is not calm.

When all is over, the sounds around emerge more rounded. You seem to be holding a key into secret aural phenomena, normally barely audible. It seems as if you realised for the first time what a drone sounds like. You might even believe you heard a place. Or is this another type of aural presence, to be grasped in a different manner and time, elsewhere?

And I say elsewhere and I no longer know where

Sometimes listening to *Konstellaatio* is like witnessing to splinters and drops off a much larger flow, sumptuous relics of a vision that is never fully manifested.

Not having anything to share with notions of conclusion and finitude, these sounds reach out to perceptual layers hidden in the tangled profundity of senses. To listen is an endless game of hiding and revealing: what we choose to do, to step into and out of, starts of wonder into disjointed recognition—until I no longer know what reaches out into my hearing and what reaches out from my hearing, and I become a generator of disturbances myself rather than just a listener, at once sounding and echoing the tremor of something present that arrived from afar. As I ask myself which word of set of words might best respond to this convergence of outer and inner sounds, I can only resort to fragments, eavesdrop on my memory, elicit from it half-formed testimonies of older versions of myself and of these sounds.

I have been here before. Before though, I no longer know when it is

For some time now I've been listening to *Konstellaatio*. Listening and inevitably also recalling and reading and looking and sensing and imagining. Alongside the audio tracks on a CD, I was sent a photocopy of the cover artwork, and I was told that Mika chose it to be like this. So I look at this picture of a young boy who looks at me out of the core of the picture, covering almost entirely a female figure standing in the back: I can only see the upper part of her face, her eyes darkened, her right arm bent in a triangle on the left. Maybe the young boy is a mirror as he stands and stares, in-between the past of the other presence in the background, and the projected present of whoever will look at him and into him. On the opposite side of the CD cover I see a galaxy, and I listen to these sounds: such a combination of elements does not exude totality but the distilled quivering uneven pace of a life, and the peculiar nervous flick that drives us when we create memories. This artwork tells the legend of an instant in its precariousness, not reducible to anything else yet embroiled in its story, as it steps out of itself and expires into life; it oozes out of a vast reservoir of memory signals, into which I can just swim, and be.

In similar fashion I read the titles on the cover, written in a language unfamiliar to me, and begin to imagine. *Otava*, warm bass and pulses, maybe I hear a voice in it, a void? Is it an octave or shall I think instead of the sound in this word, *otava*, as it rhymes with *lava*, a dense slow constant flow of inner burning? *Metsan sydan* takes shape along the time of a ritualistic wait, the coiling and recoiling of the hissing sound of *s* eaten by the *m* and *n* makes me think of the coils on a shell and there I am again, listening or pretending to be listening or rehearsing listening through reading a word and its letters. It is a curved name and so it lifts and rebounds, I even trace a faint aural presence in *tsan*, *tsoun*, *tsound*, *sydan*.

Life is rife with forgetting and sound is ripe with today's

Mika interviewed by *The Quietus*, 23 January 2013: 'For me music is always connected to emotions and that's what matters to me. When I listen to music what is important is what is evoked in me, what I feel.' And in response to a question about music software: 'First of all you have to work with the screen, then the music, and the work is visualised that way. I don't like this idea that the work is visualised through the symbols on the screen... you are forced to deal with a certain visualisation which you don't necessarily even like at all. That would be difficult for me, because I have totally something else in my mind than that image.' That's it, and this refusal of flatness toward a different way of seeing and sensing sound entails a necessity for auras, a patina of time over sounds that masks and unmask memories partially guessed, partially unheard. *This music seems to be constantly on the edge of its genesis or its destruction*. Consider the picture of youth and the picture of a galaxy, the making of form in these sounds when they are just about to emerge out of—or to be eaten up again by—the noisy continuum of matter. Every sound in front of the past and in front of the infinite is arranged according to various degrees of remoteness—a constellation of fragments is brought to the surface of every today: it feels closer the more I sense its otherness.

All these meanderings in and around *Konstellaatio* are a way of reflecting on the forming and reforming of identity. The old picture of a young boy on the cover—Mika's brother Atte, I learn later on—the strangely familiar echoes of forms. Is identity made by an awareness of a number of moments of 'having been there'? *Konstellaatio* seems to point at the echoes of absence resounding from the past, tolling on today's sense of identity. In 16th-century English, the word identity was spelled as 'idemptitie': any assumed identity, defined through its assumed past, contains an 'empty'—an emptiness which is also a reverberating space for the echoes of other frequencies and for silences. I hear the silences around Mika's sounds, the silences in these pictures of a child, before sound began for him and yet it did resound, and of a galaxy, beyond his sounds and yet with them, parasitical formations proliferating in my listening space and slowly eroding it—these pictures and silences reveal themselves to be, somehow, a series of 'hush-hush's' happening between my hearing and me, obliterating sounds, smothering them under a weight of otherness that allows me to really hear them, in otherness and in memory, from memory—because too often sounds, when they confine me within bounds where I can *only* hear, far from reinforcing each other and representing any openings on life, become membranes separating me from it. To which I can only add: no use for deciphering these sounds, no use for explanation or analogy: *Konstellaatio* is testimony to the forming of identity in and around visions, memories, silences, erasures, life and yes, also, with, sounds.

Daniela Cascella
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