



Zorka Wollny: Environment. A Future Retrospective

Curator: Joanna Warsza

20 February – 31 May 2020, TRAF0 Center for Contemporary Art

Commissioned by TRAF0 Center for Contemporary Art in Szczecin in collaboration with CTM Festival 2020 Berlin, the Chicago Architecture Biennial, and the Steirischer Herbst Festival, with support from Senat Berlin, the Szczecin Shipyard and Habia Cable.

Photos and virtual tour; Andrzej Golc

The works presented at the exhibition were created in collaboration with the following artists: Sebastian Buczek, Christine Schörkhuber, Kalle Enkellman, Jasmine Guffond, Psychedelic Choir, Polin Choir, Małgorzata Mazur, Anna Sz wajgier, N.U Unruh (Einstürzende Neubauten), the employees of the Szczecin Shipyard.

VIDEO DOCUMENTATION

<https://vimeo.com/436395068>

This retrospective looks not to the past but to the future, and asks how exhibitions can be carried out with a modest carbon footprint. The environment is typically a system of interpenetrating animate and inanimate elements. Zorka Wollny's environment is acoustic, anthropogenic, artistic, degraded and animated. It comprises artworks, performances, and interactive installations, such as acoustic birds' nests, sensory cushions made from buoys, and carpets of broken glass. The exhibition is mostly constructed from objects removed from their daily functions in Szczecin and surroundings, for example in a shipyard, paper mill, or cable factory.

For the past 15 years Wollny has been interested in the traffic between choreography, music, and visual culture, contributing to the performative revival in art. She has often composed scores performed with the participation of the audience, and problematizing everyday behaviour. Many of these works are presented here in the form of video documentation. Wollny's Environment as created at TRAF0 also sums up her different experiments with physicality, acoustics, and the rituals of everyday life, proposing caring exhibition practices and a reflection on how to practise art in the face of climate catastrophe, both within the four walls of the gallery and beyond.

Take the virtual tour:

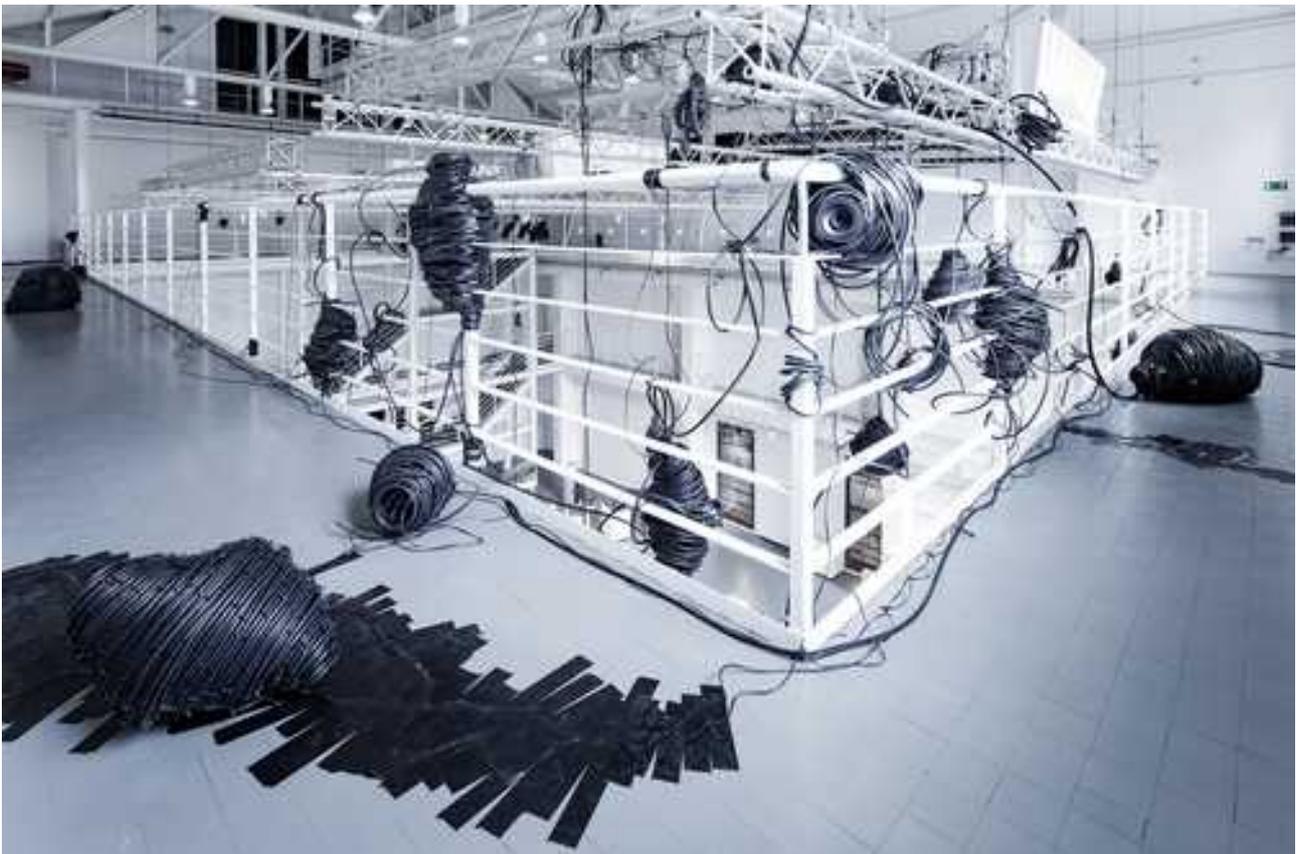
<https://trafo.art/en/wirtualny-spacerzorka-wollnysrodowisko-retrospektywa-na-przyszlosc/>

Review in Art in Berlin by Urszula Usakowska-Wolff:

<https://www.art-in-berlin.de/incbmeld.php?id=5293>

Review in Taz by Julia Gwendolyn Schneider

<https://taz.de/!5666532/>



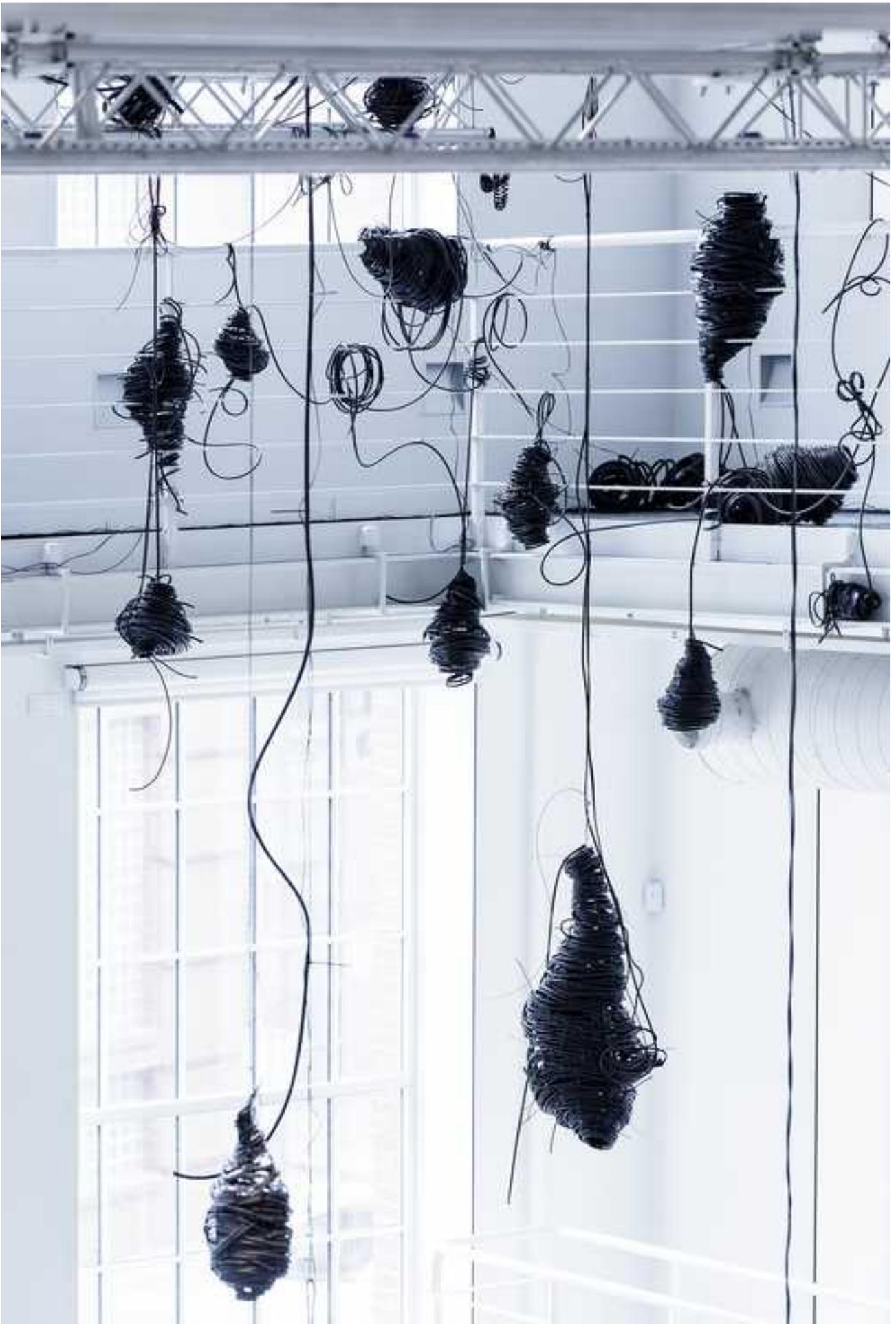
Overtone Hive 2019

in collaboration with Jasmine Guffond sculpting collaboration: Jan Baszak

<https://soundcloud.com/zorka-wollny/overtone-hive>

Large wasp-nests emerge from tangled cables and micro-speakers. They emit and vibrate with school buzz, footsteps of children running, talking or shouting. Zorka's works often relate to physical and collective memories of architectural sites. The classroom noise recalls a school controversially closed in Chicago in 2013, but also refers to the function of the building that stood here in the past, a centre for wayward girls. The cables come from the Habia cable factory.







The Birds 2015–2019

in collaboration with Jasmine Guffond

<https://soundcloud.com/zorka-wollny/thebirds-13minexcerpt>

A reflector, two reflectors, more and more reflectors. A bird, many birds, a swarm of birds, an attack of birds. Light reflectors gather and scream like a flock of animals. Their aural composition is inspired by Hitchcock's thriller, where the effect of horror was created not by natural squawks, but by synthetic sounds telling a story of birds' rebellion against people and their actions. The reflectors are borrowed from the Szczecin Opera and found in the deep cellars of TRAF0.

One, two, one, two, 2020

in collaboration with Adrian Jankowski

According to scientific studies, the female voice has become lower and lower in the emancipation process, since power is often associated with the male voice. This open mic and a mixer invite you to test various timbres, tones and colours of speech in the scale of the evolution of the female voice.





Lullabies to Wake Up, 2018

in collaboration with Christine Schörkhuber, Zbigniew Lewczuk / Stocznia Szczecińska

<https://soundcloud.com/zorka-wollny/lullabies-to-wake-up>

When falling asleep, sometimes a series of anxious questions pop up: Am I OK? Am I scared of something? Am I in trouble? Are we in trouble? Are they in trouble? The voices don't fade, but accumulate into a kind of choir one can perhaps join. These stirring lullabies are to be heard in metal cradles produced from reused metal from the Szczecin Shipyard and make you wake up in a better mood





Series of sensory works for the audience to play:

Butterfly Effect, 2020

in collaboration with Adrian Jankowski

In chaos theory, the butterfly effect is when a small change can lead to huge effects, just as the flapping of the wings of a butterfly in Mexico provokes a tornado in the Philippines. Here the process of deep listening to pieces of grain poured from one sack to another creates an unexpected sound deluge

Seismometer, 2020

in collaboration with Adrian Jankowski

What if we listened not to sounds, but also to buildings, sand or gravel? This chessboard filled with thick glass, grit and other materials is a portable installation making earth and stones speak. It amplifies a moment of mutual encounter and invites the spectator to turn into a seismographic being.

Rolling Stones, 2020

This work is a quote from the piece Composition for Factory. Rolling stones are inanimate, more-than-human matter that amplifies and resonates the building.





Psychedelic Choir / Things of No Significance / 2019

featuring: Leah Buckareff, Lyllie Rouvière, Karoline Stry, Pauline Payen, Ana Kavalis, Irina Gheorghe and Gosia Gajdemska

<https://soundcloud.com/zorka-wollny/savannah-short>

Psychedelic Choir is a music band of seven women, who intonate haunted ambient sounds with witchcraft rituals and improvisation, sometimes accompanied by drones and processed sounds. Things of No Significance result from observing various idiomatic landscapes such as 'sunrise over Savannah' or 'six witches circling over a dump'. The choir was initiated by Zorka Wollny in 2019 in Berlin.



Overhearing Point, 2020

The spot from where one could hear everything happening at the exhibition in the real time.

It is human instinct to find pleasure or shame in overhearing others. This installation makes it easy: from the cellar you can eavesdrop on the main hall above. How do you feel?





Voicers: An Oratorio for Speakers and a Listening Crowd, 2019

<https://soundcloud.com/zorka-wollny/voicersrehearsal>

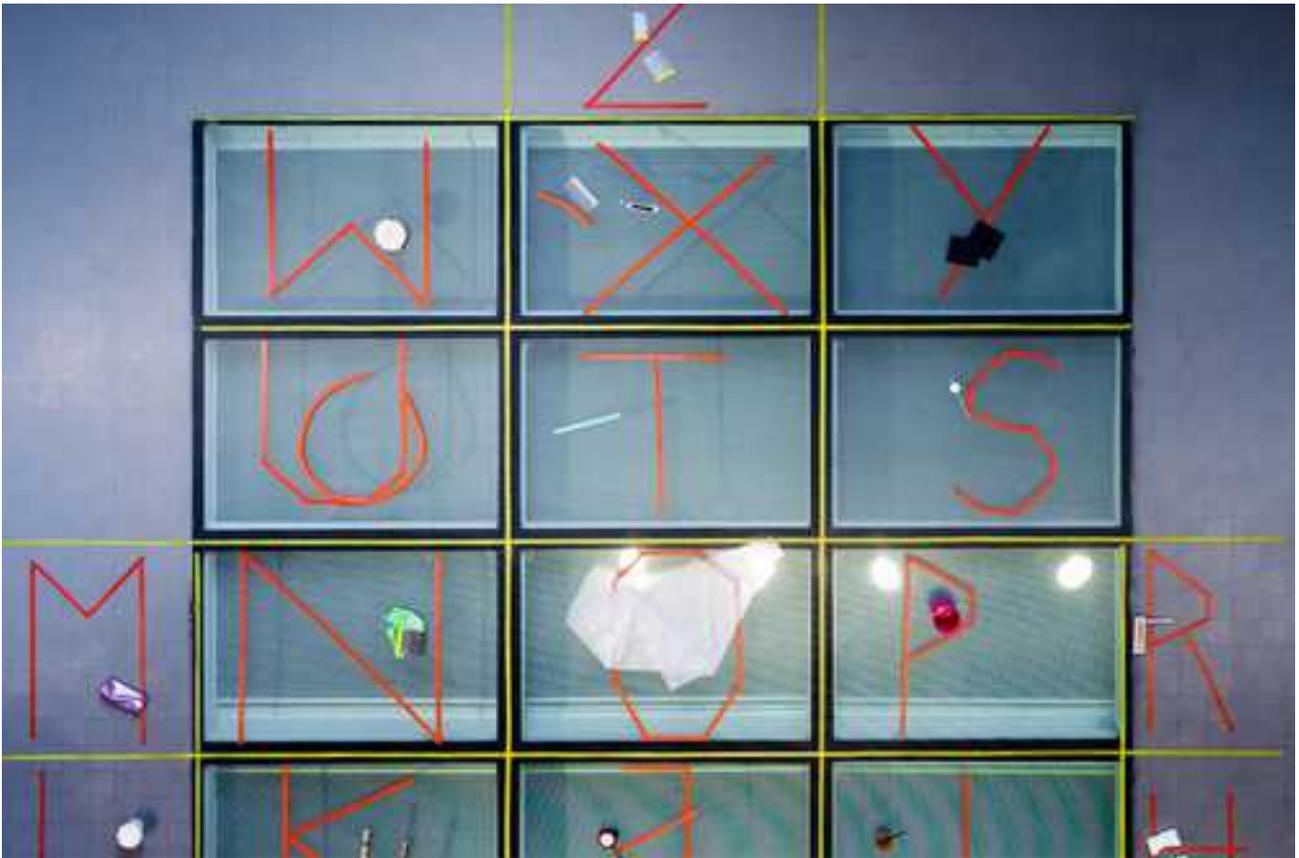
“As long as we have a voice, we must use it”, said one of the slogans of the Black Protest. Her words, along with passages from various political speeches, can be performed by the audience from the balconies in an oratorio-karaoke employing public address as a score. This rhetorical piece is an invitation to preach, to twist the political jargon, and to reflect on how one can performatively make reality with words.





Sound Tags, 2016

An alphabet for kids with objects assigned to each letter. Instead of calling the objects by name, you can check how they sound.





Drum Loom, 2019

in collaboration with N.U. Unruh, percussionist from Einstürzende Neubauten

In 1980, the famous German band Einstürzende Neubauten created its first, inaudible record, questioning mainstream ways of listening. They played on a highway where the noise of the traffic disabled any hearing. Their instruments consisted of found and self-made objects such as drills and hammers, creating non-conformist music. N.U. Unruh has been the drummer of the band since its start, specializing in building percussions from non-musical instruments. For Environment, he constructed a drum kit from bits and pieces from the Szczecin Shipyard, and from his own collection, to be played together.





Vanishing Vinyls, 2015

In collaboration with Sebastian Buczek

<https://soundcloud.com/zorka-wollny/composition-for-factory-on-wax-record>

Before technologies allowing humans to record sound, music and voice were ephemeral beings. This piece tries to bring that feeling back. Two vinyl records are made from fragile, vanishing materials, one from synthetic materials, the other from wax. You can play the first one, but with every move it gets more and more eroded. The second wax vinyl could be listened to only once; its musical activation would destroy it.



VIDEO ROOM 1:

“I am not a fan of linear narrative.” On Voice and Politics.

“Let’s collaborate, let’s explore our femininity, diversity, heritage, social background, let’s use all the spectrum of senses, let them grow in power, take over, and embrace our dying mother Earth with a protective cloud of sound. Let’s never exclude. We have powerful tools. Let’s offer our audience a beautiful way to channel their anger, frustration, sense of powerlessness, let their empowerment shine”. This is a series of vocal performances in public spaces addressing social anger, activism, and the sense of powerlessness, created as a response to various political events, conflicts, moments of protest and public happiness. They take the form of decolonial listening, a communion of voices, a musical demonstration, or a polyphonic manifesto full of discontinuous melodies, lapses and distortions. Their sounds are largely abstract, including murmurs, whispers, whistling or loud breathing, and come in the form of single syllables, interrupted words, incomplete slogans, fragments of postulates or prayers, and expand the voice into choreographic pieces.

Polyphonic Manifesto, Warsaw (2019)
Song of Resistance, Istanbul (2015)

VIDEO ROOM 2:

“I wish I were able to write sheet music differently than in the form of a floor plan with a timeline marking specific activities.” On Sites and Contexts.

This room sums up Zorka Wollny’s different experiments with the physicality and sonority of buildings. Zorka studied oil painting and only later converted to movement and sound, which still has a pictorial and physical dimension for her: everywhere and everything is also music. She also claims that sensuality should not be separated from intellect. Her site- and context-specific installations make architecture into a score and become a sonic, choreographic, sculptural, and discursive site of experiences, often animated by the audience.

Composition for 12 actors and the Lido building / Łódź (2015)
Order, Świecie (2015)
Kaddu Ndar, Saint Louis, Senegal (2016)
Composition for Factory, Malzfabrik, Berlin (2014)

VIDEO ROOM 3:

“Why do museums request you to be quiet, not to move too fast, not to talk too loud, to perform a silent choreography?” On Choreographed Museum.

Today it's hard to imagine a larger exhibition without choreography, music or movement. The traffic between the performing arts and visual arts has intensified, and viewers' expectations of being part of the experience have grown. The space of the museum as theatre, as concert, as performance, as a behavioural expression of the audience, has been a core interest of artists in the last fifteen years, which can also be described as the moment of a performative turn in the arts. Zorka privileges the temporality of the experience, which only exists in the present moment and cannot be repeated. You simply have to be there, and any documentation, including this one, is just a poorer trace of it.

Tartu Art Minuet (2017)

The Kantor Concert, Kraków (2016)

Ophelias. Iconography of Madness (2012)

The Museum Theater, Mönchengladbach, (2012)

Museum, Kraków (2006)



BASEMENT in the dark:

Quiet Rush, 2019

<https://soundcloud.com/zorka-wollny/quiet-rush-concert-in-the-gold-mine-banska-stiavnica-2019>

A concert for the gold mine in collaboration with female inhabitants of Banská Štiavnica Please switch on your mobile device light.



