

Susan Philipsz
The Lower World

10.05 – 18.10.2025
Aqua Tunnel, Luxembourg

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The installation

Scottish artist Susan Philipsz (1965, Glasgow) explores the sculptural and emotional dimensions of sound through her immersive installations. For LUGA, and in collaboration with Mudam, she has been invited to create a site-specific work for the Aquatunnel – a 900-metre-long underground passageway running beneath the Ville Haute, connecting the Pétrusse valley with the Pfaffenthal district. Originally built to collect wastewater, the tunnel was also designed for civil defence purposes, a dual function that plays an important role in Philipsz’s sound installation *The Lower World*.

The motif of the underworld occupies a central place in Greek mythology. Initially conceived as a space physically beneath the surface of the accessible world, it later evolved into a para-mortal realm inhabited by supernatural beings and spirits of the dead. *The Lower World* draws upon these mythological narratives, associating modern sirens of a city’s defence system – designed to alert its inhabitants to imminent danger – with the ancient Greek sirens who lured sailors to doom with their song.

The work fuses the urban architecture of the Aquatunnel to with the legend of Melusina, a female freshwater spirit from European folklore and a prominent legend in Luxembourg founding myth. As the story goes, Count Siegfried, while hunting in the narrow valley of the Alzette, was drawn by a haunting melody to Melusina, who appeared to him as a beautiful maiden perched on the Bock, a rocky promontory now considered the historical city centre of Luxembourg. Siegfried proposed marriage and Melusina accepted on the condition that he grant her absolute privacy one day a week. Overcome by curiosity, Siegfried eventually broke his promise and spied on Melusina as she was bathing on the Bock and discovered her true form: that of a mermaid. At that moment, Melusina and her bath were swallowed by the earth, never to be seen by Siegfried again. Legend holds that every seven years, Melusina returns to the Bock in human form calling for her release and that she circles the rock, wailing, when danger looms over the city of Luxembourg.

The Lower World, a sound installation composed and recorded by the artist, is transmitted through loudspeakers positioned at intervals throughout the Aquatunnel. The layered voices, alternately melodic, melancholic, dissonant and haunting, create a sonic stream that ebbs and flows like waves, filling the subterranean space. ‘With this work, I want to fill the Aquatunnel with sound, work with the peculiarities of the space and encourage visitors to reflect on their surroundings through a variety of associations,’ says Philipsz.

The artist

Susan Philipsz (1965, Glasgow) has recently had solo exhibitions at fjk3 – Contemporary Art Space, Vienna (2024); Kunstmuseum Brandts, Odense (2023); SFMOMA, San Francisco (2022); Kunstmuseum, Bonn (2021); Auckland Art Gallery (2020); Castello di Rivoli (2019); and Tate Modern, London (2018). Her work has been shown in group exhibitions at the West Bund Museum x Centre Pompidou, Shanghai; ZKM, Karlsruhe (2024); Castello di Rivoli; the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon (2023); Kunstneres Hus, Oslo; Santa Barbara Museum of Art (2022); and the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2020). Philipsz’s work is held in the collections of institutions such as the Baltimore Museum of Art; Beyeler Foundation, Basel; Hamburger Kunsthalle; Castello di Rivoli; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; SFMOMA, San Francisco; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Susan Philipsz lives and works in Berlin.

Curator
Bettina Steinbrügge

Production
Jordan Gerber, Matthias Heitbrink, Pedro Serrano, Tawfik Matine, Irfann Montanavelli, David Celli

Susan Philipsz: The Lower World is presented in collaboration with LUGA – Luxembourg Urban Garden.

Credit
View of the exhibition *Susan Philipsz: The Lower World*, 10.05 – 18.08.2025, Aquatunnel, Luxembourg
Photo: Mudam Luxembourg



- 1 **Susan Philipsz: The Lower World**
Aquatunnel, Luxembourg
- 2 **Agnes Denes: The Living Pyramid**
Park Dräi Eechelen, Luxembourg
- 3 **Mudam Luxembourg**
Musée d’Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean

MUDAM
The Contemporary Art Museum of Luxembourg

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Public programme

Participatory Storytelling workshop
Trout, Salamander, Woodpeckers and Bats. Play as an Ecological World-Making
24.05.2025
11:00 – 16:00
by Daniela Medina Poch

Workshop
Listening to pools of glimmer
25.05.2025
14:00 – 16:00
by Caitlin Berrigan and Samuel Hertz

Performance
Turbulent Rot
25.05.2025
16:30 – 17:30
by Caitlin Berrigan and Samuel Hertz

Dance workshop
Moving with *The Living Pyramid*. The body as nature
21 + 22.06.2025
14:00 – 16:30
by Elisabeth Schilling

Sound installation and performance
Luonnollisesti
28 + 29.06.2025
11:00 – 16:00 & 19:00
with Marja-Leena Junker, by Stéphane Ghislain Roussel

Workshop
Listening as World-Making. Foraging, Sound and Shared Sensing
20.09.2025
11:00 – 16:00
by pantea, in collaboration with Associació So

Workshop
Inhaling Matter, Exhaling Stories
21.09.2025
11:00 – 16:00
by Alanna Lynch

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