

Paul Devens

Portfolio

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www.pauldevens.com

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Devens

vimeo.com/pauldevens

<https://soundcloud.com/user-305186577>

Notes to my work

Paul Devens

The possible manifestations of physical space and social context define the site-specific qualities of my work. To make a unique work in a given space makes it compulsory to engage a custom strategy to fit that specific situation in order to issue- and to unfold the distinctive qualities of that space.

"Acousmatic listening": Field-recordings of common sounds are being lifted out of its original context and implemented in a new one, by example of an installation. These are architectonic constructions, especially made for the physical experience of sound. Each installation features a soundtrack or composition of previously recorded sounds. The presence of an audience is integrated as part of the work.

Phenomena are being part of the idiom of which my work communicates with, other than being the content of my work.

An initial engagement of my work is being determined by the perception. The 'being' of particular spatial, visual or acoustical interventions, or a combination of those, discloses the deeper complexity of the work.

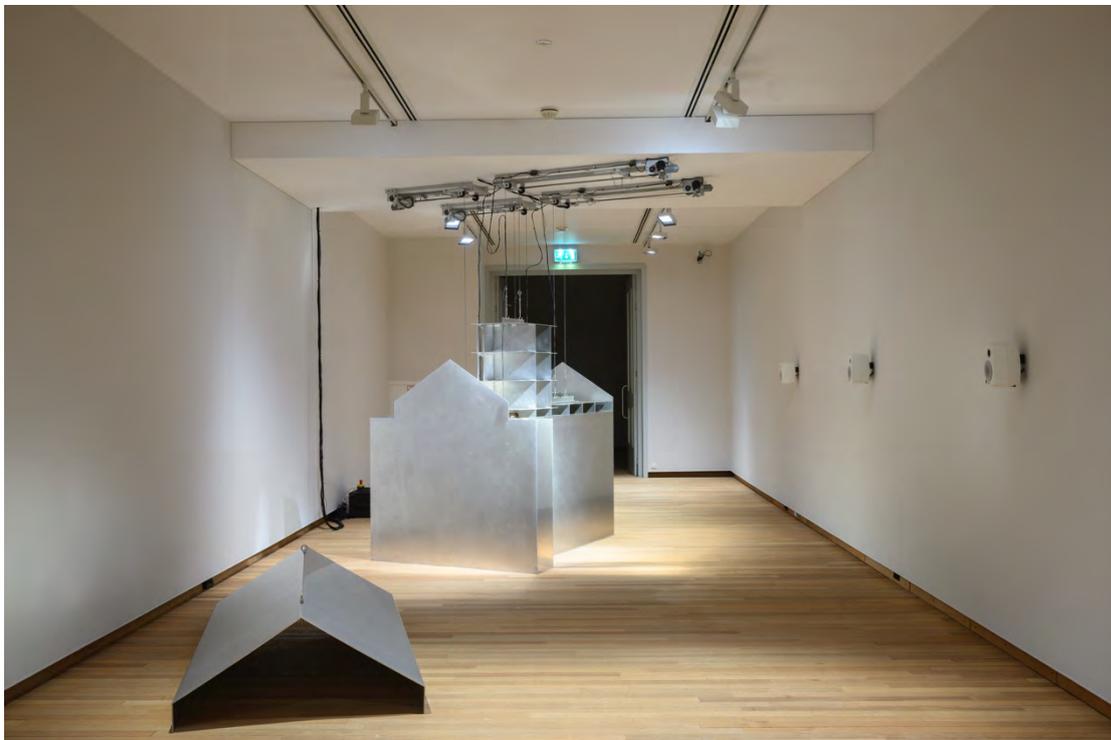
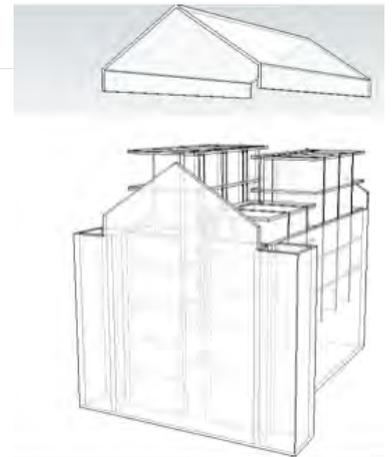
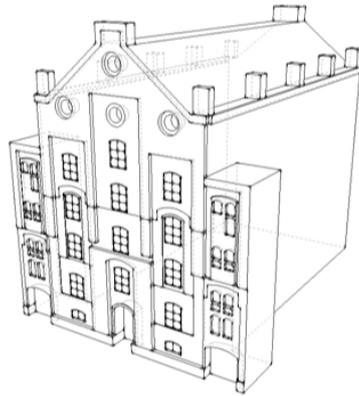
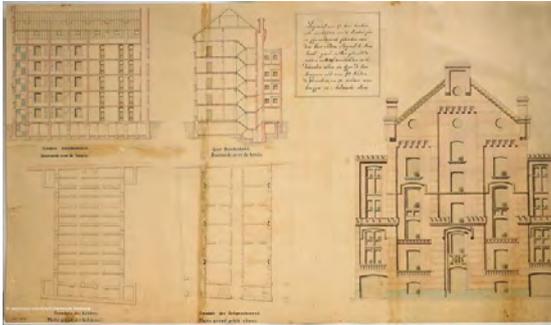
The dialogue in between the condition (place, circumstances, biases, etc) and me is the motive of the artistic research.

I issue what 'place' is, which kind of reality it represents in the understanding of the residents, audiences or users. Often this is in conjunction with matters from economy and history. I look for the appropriate terms to make a possible artistic intervention relevant.

My work is interdisciplinary in the fields of composed sound, architecture, video and performance. I exhibit installations in museums, art-spaces and galleries, make interventions, sometimes commissioned, in public space, perform concerts in clubs, art-spaces and festivals, release CD- and vinyl-albums, sometimes cooperate with choreographers and other artists, and occasionally curate exhibitions and releases with other artists and thinkers.

"One has to register the investigative imagination of Paul Devens as the active paradigm of investigation associated with the field named sound art. Devens is sailing from sound art, yet his works exhibit a wide range of interests that go beyond mere sonic qualities of sound objects. In his works he intervenes in the urban realm, with an interest in both the physical and social aspects. He employs techniques of architectural production carefully selected from the inventory of shaping physical environment, as well as historical and political re-discoveries. Custom-made objects and creations lie at the core of some of other interventions as well as video projections. Some of these works try to capture or re-capture a social reality, and try to achieve a synthesis of sorts: sometimes one of facilitated and augmented, and sometimes one of a derived nature." - Emre Erkal, in Waving Platforms (Onomatopee #91).

Folly / The Derailment of the Usual for the Bonnefanten Museum Maastricht. 2022
Symposium in coop Jan van Eyck Academy and Bureau Europa



Folly / The Derailment of the Usual

The work of Paul Devens revolves around the interaction between sound and architecture, and the influence of this interaction on the social environment. Architecture and social context determine how we interact with others and how we move and feel. For instance, a café is more conducive to making noise than a library, and a cathedral is designed for sound in a fundamentally different way than an auditorium. Devens researches these sound behaviours, both on location and in texts and articles. In his new sound production *Folly / The Derailment of the Usual*, he delves into local history, in order to find out more about the manufacturing industry in Maastricht.

The city of Maastricht likes to show off its ceramic's heritage, which was progressive at the time, while often disregarding the negative aspects. The degrading conditions in which factory workers and their families had to live have received little attention. *Folly*

/ The Derailment of the Usual presents a sonic reproduction of the first industrial tenement block in Maastricht.

The ceramics factory 'Petrus Regout en Co' (later 'NV De Sphinx') was one of the first successful businesses of the industrial revolution in the Netherlands. In 1863- 64, in order to streamline production logistics, Regout had a tenement block built to house his factory workers, calling it 'Cité Ouvrière'. The living conditions there were wretched. Whole families lived in a single room and there was even a 'mortuary room' on each floor. Of course, this did more harm than good to the fight against epidemics. The building was nicknamed the "Menschenpakhuis" (people warehouse). Regout's need to have total control of his workers through this tenement block has a contemporary counterpart. This is expressed in the many digital technologies for controlling the behaviour of citizens, consumers and employees, such as the CCTV on the streets or the cookies that track our purchasing and surfing behaviour.

The scaled-down tenement Cité Ouvrière is shown here. Devens deconstructed the separate parts of the building and filled them partly with water. The floors and inner walls of the scale model are pulled slowly up and down in this by a small electric hoist. It is all connected up to microphones that record the sound of the aluminium floors of the model, turning the miniature into a reverberation room. The echo of the material changes due to the muffling of the water, like a pan can sound different when submerged in water. Microphones are spread out over the museum, both inside and outside. The sound they record is then 'projected' through a loudspeaker onto the vibrating metal of the model. The echoing sound becomes a soundscape that links past to present.

...

In the exhibition The Derailment of the Usual, Devens appears as an artist, but also as a curator, teacher and performer. His own work is shown in the long side rooms, and includes a new production developed especially for this exhibition. For the other rooms, he and co-curator Eline Kersten (1994, Maastricht) invited two artists with whom Devens feels an affinity and whose work has much in common with his own.

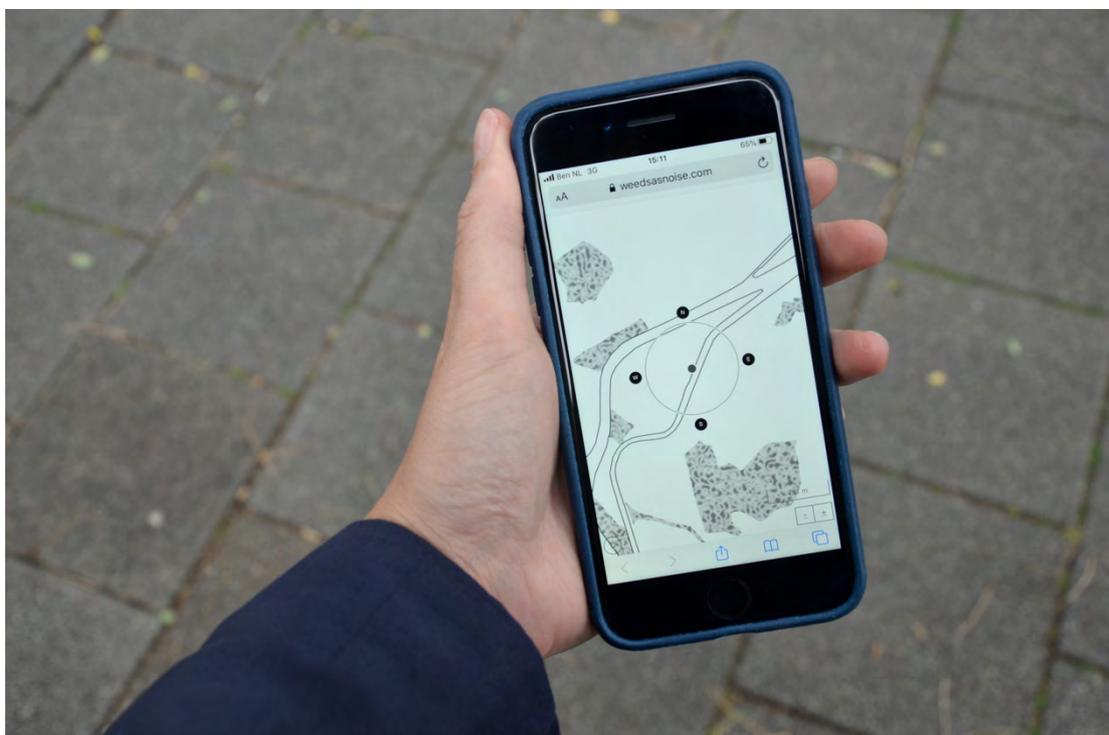
Lis Rhodes (1942, United Kingdom) is an artist and activist who has engaged with politics throughout her working life, using cinema and sound in doing so.

The Egyptian artist Heba Y. Amin (1980) creates political and activist work concerning historical events. Together, they represent several generations of artists from different parts of the world who work with sound. The artworks exhibited here enter into a dialogue based on the view that sound is anchored in a social, activist and political reality.

...

After the exhibition at the Bonnefanten, Paul Devens curated and produced a symposium, workshops, concerts and a publication ('The Derailment of the Usual', Hématômes Éditions), with Jacob Kirkegaard, Brandon Labelle, Caroline Claus, Linnea Semmerling, Melle Kromhout, Raviv Ganchrow, Peter Kiefer, Niamh McDonnell, Kacper Ziemianin, Glice, Fine Art department of MIA and the Conservatory of Maastricht. In coop with Eline Kersten.

Weeds as Noise Liège, Festival Souffle Vert, 2020
Smartphone app By Paul Devens and Eline Kersten



Considering literature as a discipline within the realm of contemporary art, 'Weeds as Noise' is a cartographical sound walk through the city of Liège. The project is constituted by the map of the city, then categorized by a grid placed on top of the map, consequently dividing the city into several parts. Every part in the grid is allocated a piece of existing literature that speaks about weeds, and that serves as a starting point for a soundscape or audio piece on this location.

The research for 'Weeds as Noise' is organized around the idea of weeds as noise, and considers the many points of perspective that are inherent in this thematic. From looking at weeds to draw attention to the overlooked and forgotten, to weeds as a metaphor for resistance or guerrilla. Manifesting itself in public space, weeds break through the intimacy of the garden. Weeds concern everyone and thus enforce an active positioning towards it.

'Noise'¹ is the collective name of all the sounds that are unwanted or undesired, it is something that hinders (noise on the line). Paradoxically, noise is the effect and the facilitator of an economy, a society. Traffic, communication, industry, agriculture, entertainment, information technology, advertising and propaganda cause noise and they do not exist without noise. The analogy with weeds is remarkable here; though considered to be unwanted, weeds provide biodiversity and a healthy ecosystem. The growth of these, take over the regulated public space, as our project 'claims' the public space by adding a 'layer' of stories and sounds over existing sites. Especially because of this narrative layer, a meticulous bond with the given spots will be pursued.

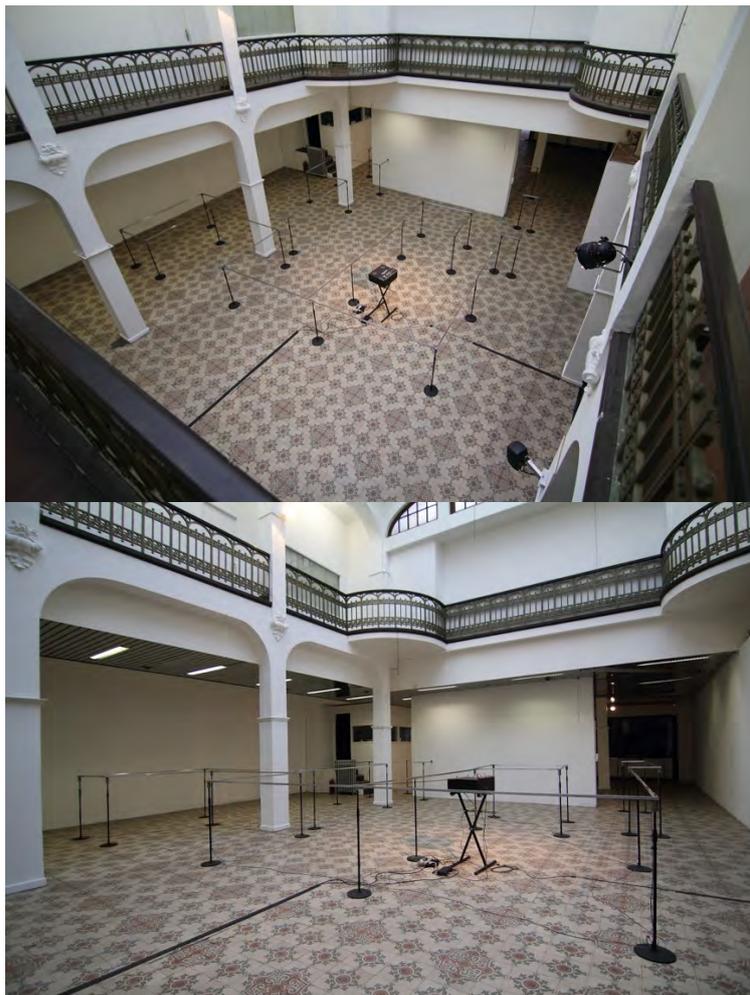
Concretely, the visitors/listeners will be able to download an app that features a map of the city and showcases the grid placed on top of it. With this app they will be able to walk a route through the city. When crossing the border of a part in the grid,

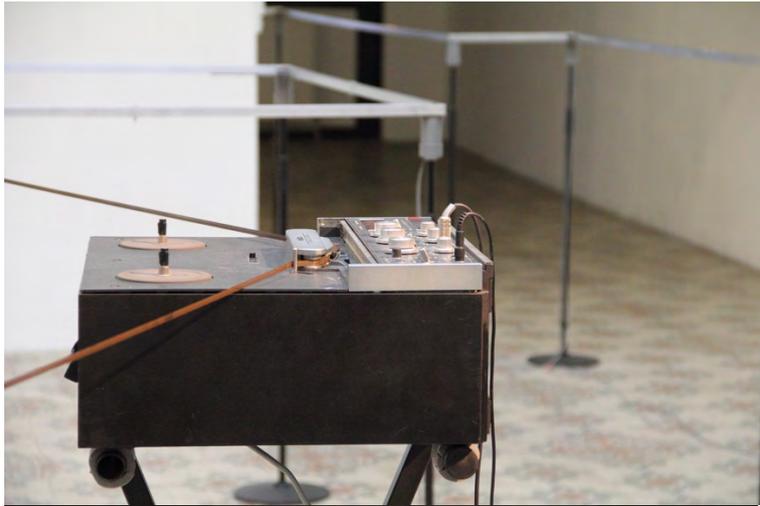
entering a new one, the app will automatically play the sound piece connected to that new part. In this way the listener is able to individually navigate the order of the audio, thus creating their own composition. The project doesn't limit itself to one location within the city, it rather considers the entire city to be a playground. Professionals on alien or invasive plants and botanic experts as well as interviews with residents will feature in the soundtracks, next to the primary focus of the project: mapping the cityscape through snippets from literature.

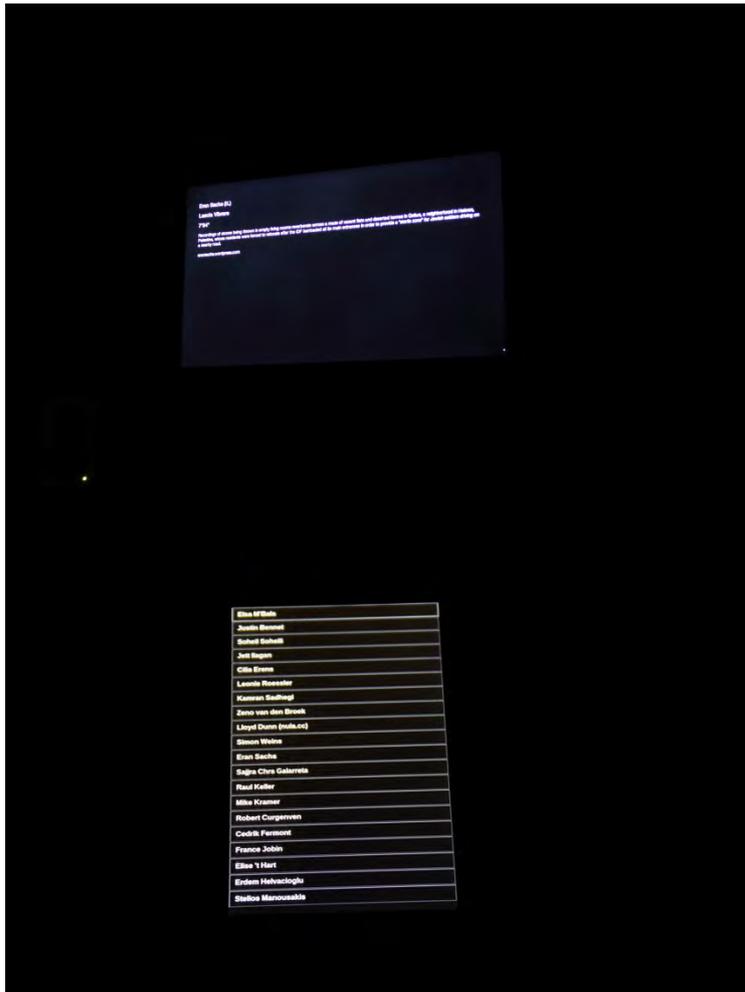
www.weedsasnoise.com (In French. Only works in the city of Liège, on a smartphone with GPS switched on. A preview / test version here, works with the arrow keys: www.weedsasnoise.com/?test) Design: NN-studios / Pierre Geurts, App development: Hansi Raber, Translations: Isabelle Vigier, herborist: Anne van der Linde, voices: Fanny Bille and Jordan Lehane, commissioned by Souffle Vert, Guy and Louise Massart.

¹ as defined by Melle Kromhout, 'Noise Resonance'. https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/8905032/M.J._Kromhout_Noise_Resonance_Full_Digital_Manuscript_Library.pdf

Dock / Ancien palais de justice for Les Brasseurs, art contemporain, Liège. 2019







'Dock / Ancien Palais de Justice'
sound installation and listening space

Just before the independency of Senegal in 1960, the colonial power of France yielded, at Cap manuel in Dakar, a new courthouse. It is a typical kind of a modernistic, Corbusian approach of that time, where progressive ideas of enlightenment and uplift ruled. French architects Daniel Babani (1914 - 2006) and Pierre Roux-Dorlut (1919 - 1995) were the designers of this concrete palace; a complex of courtrooms, office rooms, utility spaces and mezzanines. After the independency the building remains in its original function but also changes into a monument, one of a past, coloured by western influence and power. Recently, long after the courthouse lost its original function, the building serves as a stage for African contemporary art at the Dak'Art biennial.

At first, the western-colonial initiative to build the courthouse according to imposed western standards and the issues of post-colonial identity consequential to that, which questions the significance (more). Following to that the withdrawal from public life and decay and finally, the promotion to one of the major stages of contemporary art in Africa, mostly shaped by African artists from the Diaspora, mainly to western countries. This transformation throughout these years of existence, became manifest in the building itself, its direct environment, the African context and beyond.

The work 'Dock / Ancien Palais de Justice' raises questions within the debate of the western and the non-western art discourse by the appropriation of archetypes, symbols and signs and the inclusion of a multiplicity of perspectives.

The installation 'Dock / Ancien Palais de Justice' invites the visitor to walk around in a construction, based upon the original floor plan of the old courthouse. This is indicated by microphone stands and running audiotape, which links the resonance of a past to recorded sounds of today.

The ideas on habitat and identity, colored in a personal human environment, and how it changes when the situation is transitional, opened up ways to invite a number of sound artists to compose a dedicated soundscape for this project. A listening space is equipped with a surround installation to serve a spatial experience of these contributions, curated by Cedrik Fermont and Paul Devens.

With contributions of:

Anne Wellmer (DE/NL)
Cedrik Fermont (CG/BE/DE)
Christian Galarreta (PE/FR)
Cilia Erens (NL)
Elise 't Hart (NL)
Elsa M'Bala (CM/DE)
Eran Sachs (IL)
Erdem Helvacioğlu (TR/US)
France Jobin (CA)
Jett Ilagan (PH)
Justin Bennett (GB/NL)
Kamran Sadhegi (IR/US)
Leonie Roessler (DE/NL/US)
Lloyd Dunn (CZ/UK)
Mike Kramer (NL)
Raul Keller (EE)
Robert Curgenvan (AU/IE)
Simon Weins (DE/GB)
Stelios Manousakis (GR/NL)
Soheil Soheili (IR)
Zeno van den Broek (NL/DK)

A short speech by Mique Eggermont (NL), independend curator and art historian, will open the exhibition. She organized and initiated several contemporary art projects in Senegal, often linked to the contemporary art biennial, Dak'Art.

After the speech, Elsa M'bala, Cedrik Fermont and Paul Devens will give a small concert.

<https://vimeo.com/333947984>

'Dock / Ancien Palais de Justice' is coordinated and curated by Les Brasseurs (Jérôme Mayer and Corentin Lahaye), Paul Devens and Cedrik Fermont. Technical support: Frankable, Joep Hinssen, Dennis Muñoz Espandiña. Special thanks to Mique Eggermont.

This exhibition was made possible with the generous support of: Mondriaan Fund and Stichting Stokroos.

Otomax: Half Full, Half Empty for Museum De Domijnen, Sittard (NL) 2018



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvS0LqraE80>



Otomax
Half Full, Half Empty

Wood, converted utility and decorative objects, Arduino, sound amplification, video.

The artist collective Otomax presents the installation 'Half full - half empty' as a museum-within-a-museum; a transparent, wooden structure that serves as a stage for objects lifted from the 'ordinary'. This project is tailor-made for the city of Sittard as it is now: with vacancy and depopulation being tackled through new urban planning and construction projects aimed at revitalizing the city. Prior to the exhibition, the collective had a working period in an empty school. This served as a base to gather used children's toys and other items from local thrift stores and as a

workshop to transform these objects into players in an automated ensemble. An Arduino (an open-source microcontroller) controls the composition of the moving and sounding objects according to a digital score.

The reuse and transformation (circuit bending) of discarded and recycled objects in the animated installation aligns with the strategy that Otomax has set for itself, to balance on the border between the valuable and the worthless. Otomax's productions are always the sum of input from each individual member, and the process is done through improvisation. The group establishes a connection with prevailing (pop) culture through irony. The materials used are second-hand, homemade, or converted. Otomax consists of the artists Joep Hinssen, Fran Hoebergen, Mike Moonen, Nika Schmitt, and Paul Devens.

Circumstantial Radio for Instituto Buena Vista. 2018 / 2019





Circumstantial Radio. IBB, 2018

Circumstantial Radio

IBB, 2018

Radio as art; in all its diversity, this mass medium encompasses various disciplines and domains: music, spoken word, soundscape, stories and reports, field recordings, and other sound art, all in conjunction with diffusion into presumed private listening situations at people's homes or on the go. A performance or concert can be attended by a participating audience, allowing for interaction. The separation between the audience and the performers is fluid. There may or may not be a blending of roles between the act and the visitor in terms of intention¹. Such a situation relates differently to the radio listener who listens to it behind a proverbial screen. The sound information reaching the listener is also disconnected from its source and inherently disembodied. Imagination then has room to play in the listener's experience.

Engaging with the specific problem of how radio broadcasts can play an artistic and emancipatory role in the social-public domain seems like an exciting task, especially within the given situation of the IBB and Curaçao. My personal contribution as an artist will certainly be discussed because the project focuses on an 'open source'-like context where the concept and execution are shared with residents and aspiring artists around the IBB, among others. The dynamics of this participation will

¹ Referring to Jacques Rancière: 'The Emancipated Spectator', Octavo Publications 2015.

undoubtedly be influenced by the special significance of music in the identity and culture, as well as the sound palette of the island.

My initial focus concerns the sonological 'ecology' of the island. How sound is not only the result of everyday activities such as markets, transportation, and entertainment but also how sound assumes a facilitating and initiating role. The codes of social interaction and communication; sound is also a formative element in which a culture shapes and identifies itself. The 'Circumstantial Radio' project will align with the trajectory of my recent works, where I problematize my own presence as an artist (with a recording device)².

Principles:

The definition of sound/music and speech as an artistic medium is fundamental to the project's inquiry. My practice explores this through installations, CD and vinyl releases, performances, and theoretical exploration through symposia, radio art, workshops, and teaching. The dissemination of sound as an artistic strategy naturally follows. The mode of transmission influences the content: a performance in a live situation with a present audience is different from a live radio broadcast. This is fundamentally different from the listening situation where a recording is played. Is there intimacy, or does it take place in a public space where a certain experience can be shared? The public position entails recognizing the space between the creator and the listener, which becomes part of the artistic content.

Process:

The artistic research involves setting up productions based on concepts and ideas to concretize them. This is followed by establishing the studio as a condition for an artistic space. Additionally, initiating sound sessions is essential for creating and recording source material: self-generated or performed sound as well as acquired sounds through found objects and collected sounds via field recordings.

Goal:

Thus far, a work of art, including radio art, can have an achievable and concrete goal, in addition to providing ideas, imagery, perspectives, enchantment, and disquietude. This project promotes the emancipation of sound art and radio art, stimulates existing talents in sound-related expressions, and showcases their work. A more private goal is to subject my own artistic research to open debate: how do my preconceptions, resulting from continuous engagement with sound, society, and space within a changing political reality and evolving insights, relate to the local situation?³

Practical:

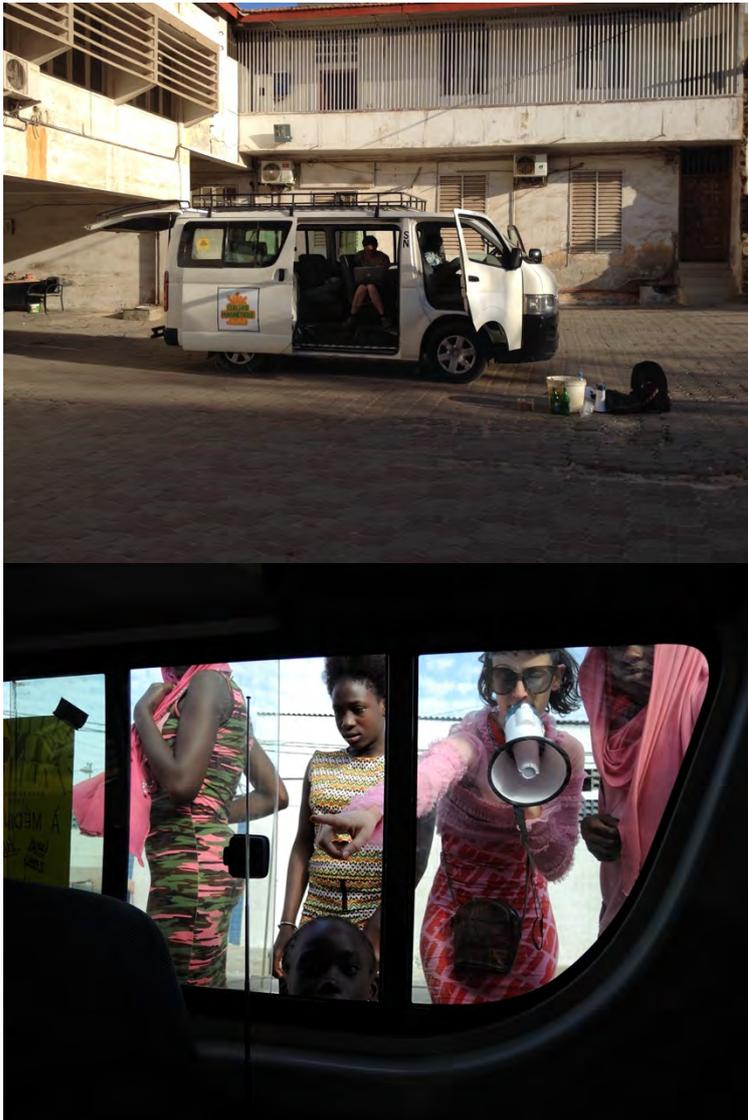
Facilitating and setting up the studio for audio editing and recording sessions, as well as installing webcast software and setting up a radio transmitter. (much of the

² In previous projects, such as 'Drop' (Jerusalem Show, Al Ma'mal 2014) and 'Tracker' (Biennale of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013), the sound recordings made and/or played in areas that are, now or in recent history, charged with meaning, evoke a compelling evaluation of my own position as a creator. Collaboration with local organizations and people holds significant ethical implications for projects of this kind.

³ The classical role of radio as a mass medium in the political arena is crucial here (among others, Jacques Attali: 'Noise and politics' from 'Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music'. Continuum). Social media partially assume that role, but the fundamental principles remain the same.

equipment comes from my studio; it has been shipped to the island as a donation)
Conducting workshops and providing artistic and technical guidance Scouting and/or
initiating concerts for the purpose of recording and conducting studio/recording
sessions.

Circumstantial Radio: Électromagnétique Mobile for the Off-Program, Dak'Art,
Biennial for African Contemporary Art. 2018





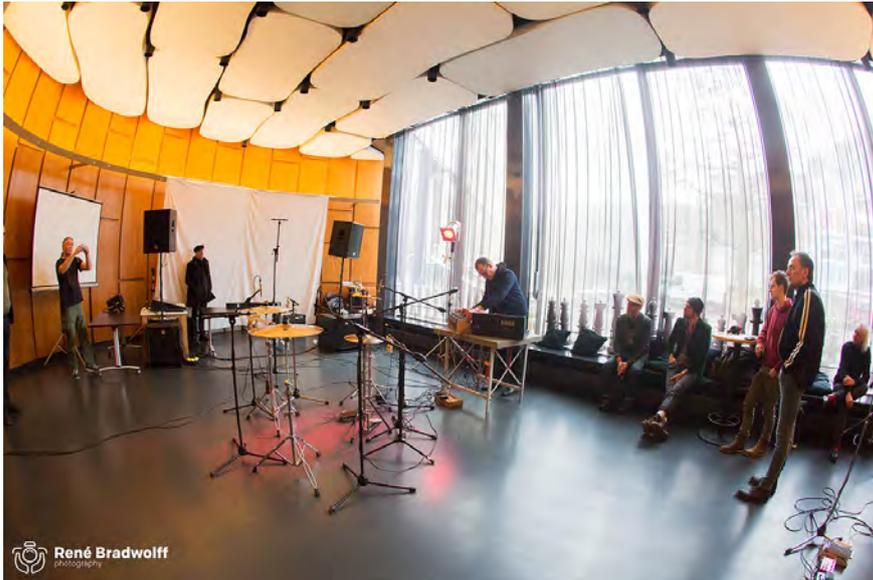
Circumstantial radio: Électromagnétique Mobile

Radio art project Électromagnétique Mobile was part of the Off program of Dak'Art the African Biennial for Contemporary Art Dakar. Curated by Mique Eggermont and co-participated by Eline Kersten, Nika Schmitt and Simone Schuffelen. It was the pilot for Circumstantial Radio.

Pulses, Pops and Kaboom A concert with robotic percussion



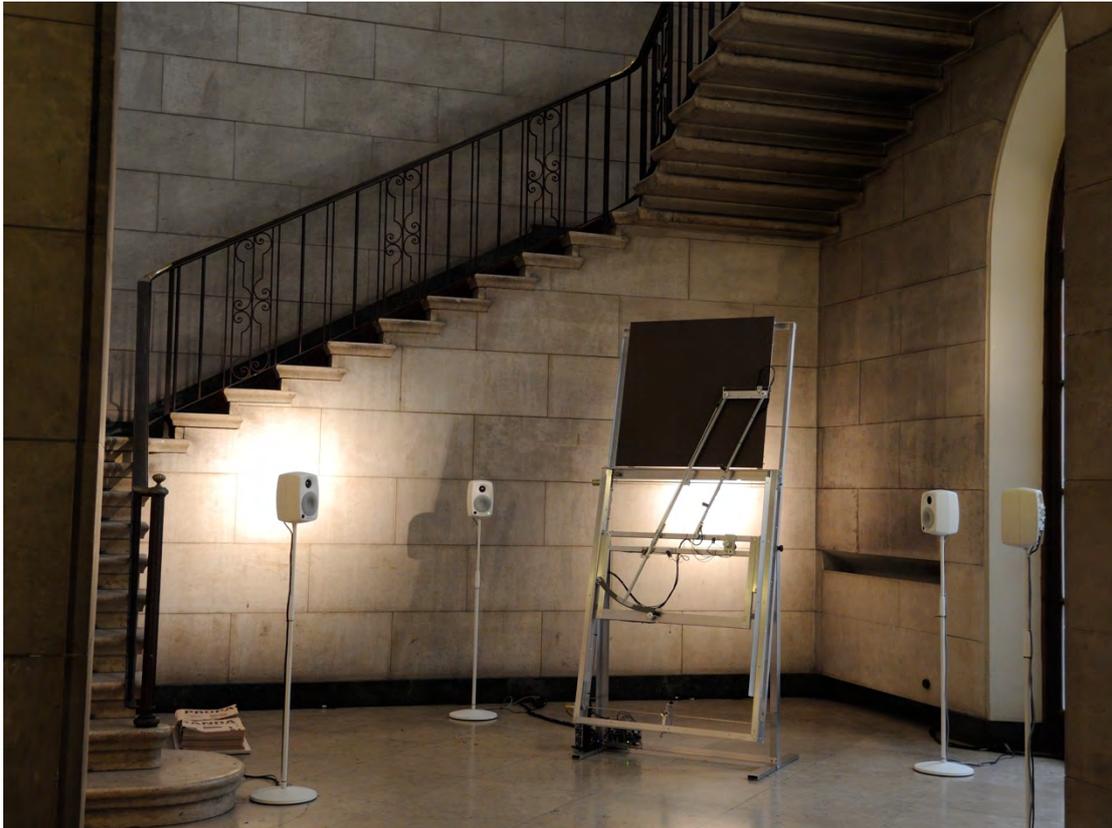
<https://ikigagalabel.bandcamp.com/track/pulses-pops-and-kaboom>



The musical improvisation 'Pulses, Pops and Kaboom' will divide time for a brief moment. Two analogue synthesizers and a drum robot will serve as tools for this electronic and acoustic composition. Performed at the (H)ear festival, Betahuis, Heerlen and The Pipe Factory, Glasgow International, Glasgow.

The Talking Machine for *Fictional Journal*, Ateliers de Clerici, Milan; DortYard, Dordrecht; Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht. 2017 - 2022





The Talking Machine

A make shift robotic arm is scanning, randomly, a surface covered with audiotape strands. The audio head, attached to this arm, moves according to a chaotic choreography, stops every now and then and plays back audiotape at that position. These tapes contain a recording of a computer voice, reading aloud Rudolf Lothar's 'The Talking Machine: A Technical-Aesthetic Essay'.

Writer and critic Lothar originally wrote this in 1924, where he reflects on the public being confronted with the illusion of an authentic human (voice) being represented by a machine, through an idiom that is defined by the relationship between noise and signals.

The installation at Ateliers Clerici utilizes references from the pioneering stage of modern technology in today's axis of time to address the basic problematics of our current intertwinement and dependency of communication technology. The use of audio tape as a medium originates from old technology that refers to the pre-digital age where forms of diffusion, broadcasting and propaganda were more tactile and serving agendas for reasons of commerce and administration not dissimilar to now.

'The talking machine' offers an illogical order of sounds, words, and movements in an ever-changing order to its audience.

"The Talking Machine" was commissioned by the webzine Fictional Journal (www.fictional-journal.com), as a contribution to their 2nd issue "Propaganda". It was exhibited at Ateliers Clerici as part of the annual Salone del mobile in Milan.

<https://vimeo.com/219303704>

Folly / Igman Hotel for bb15, Linz; Schunck* (museum), Heerlen. 2016



Folly / Igman Hotel

'Folly 2 / Igman Hotel' addresses the failure and the collapse of political systems and the subsequent human tragedies that are increasingly present today.

The installation is inspired by a hotel, originally built in 1982 - 83 by Ahmed Džuvic for the 1984 Sarajevo Olympic winter games. During the Bosnian war of 1992 - 1995, the hotel was heavily damaged and set on fire. Now, as a silent witness, the concrete structure still offers a glimpse into the optimism of the Yugoslavian modernist architecture of passed times.

In the installation, by means of power-driven mechanics controlled by an Arduino mini computer, a mock-up of the Igman Hotel is subjected to a composed movement: it slowly collapses and, after a while, rises again automatically. This programmed choreography takes about 10 minutes.

2x 122x244x125 cm. Plywood, steel cable, geared electric motor, Arduino.

Thank you: Clemens Mairhofer, Sebastian Six, bb15 Linz, Guus van den Akker
bb15.at

'Folly 2 / Igman' Hotel is acquired by the Schunck* collection.

<https://vimeo.com/162761233>

Sweet Spot for Continuum, Kerkrade, Festival of Flanders, Kortrijk; November Music, Den Bosch. 2016 - 2019



Sweet Spot

On the boundary in between industrial archeology and a modern economy, 'Sweet Spot' converts the scars in a landscape into a charged event.

A small cabin, sound-proofed with a grey felt tapestry, is furnished with a bench and two make-shift speaker-boxes that are suspended from the ceiling and aimed at thin rubber membranes in the walls. It's welcoming the visitor to take place at the bench so the centers of the rubber membranes are at ear-level.

A soundscape had been recorded on the hills of leftover rubble from the coalmines and at sites where the big headframes once stood to get the miners in- and the coal out of the earth. Now, the old sounds vanished; today's activities provide current ones. But yet, the effect of decades of mining industry in the landscape can't be ignored and still influences the resonating colors of what you hear at present. Latitude, longitude as well as altitude were tracked (by GPS) during the deed of sound gathering.

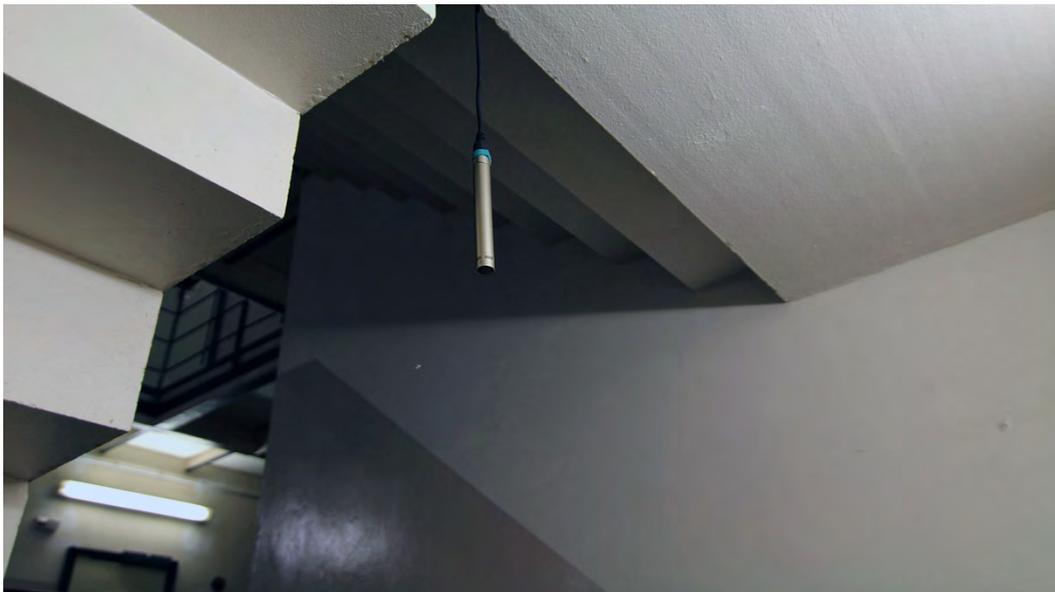
The seated listener sits in a shifting focus of the audio, as the membranes are being moved by a modulated vacuum and thus, make a parabolic 'lens'. Not unlike the directional behavior of a satellite dish. The vacuum is controlled by the tracked GPS data; this is synced with the soundscape with respect to the elevation of the sound sources.

'Sweet Spot' sound material was recorded at: industrial area 'Julia', Eyselshoven, NATO base / 'Hendrik' Brunssum, park centre Brunssum, 'Poort van Gravenrode', shaft 'Nuland', 'Schutterspark' Brunssum, stairs 'Snowworld' Landgraaf, Vincentius church / 'Emma' / 'Hendrik', 'Oranje Nassau' Zeswegen, DSM Stein, etc.

3.78 x 2.80 x 2.40 m / wood, rubber, felt, air hoses, modified 280 watt heater air fan, frequency inverter, cv electronics, waveplayer8, Tripath amplifier, Omnes Audio BB3.01 3" full range speaker, bench, metal brackets, grey paint RAL 7047, led spotlights.

<https://vimeo.com/174123448>

Bucket Brigade Attack for Hacking Habitat, Wolvenplein prison, Utrecht. 2016



Bucket Brigade Attack

From cell to cell, from a technical space to the general space, sound seem to move around in wing B of the former prison Wolvenplein. This sound is generated on the spot and consists partly out of the chatting voices of the visitors, air conditioning noises, etc. Every cell, every space has its own acoustics and become an instrument among the others within the totality of a sound-composition.

According to the technique, a tribute to the work of Alvin Lucier is at place: an occurring sound is being recorded - automatically. Then, after ten seconds, it's been played back in the same space and re-recorded again. This happens over and over: the original sound disappears and the resonances and the acoustics take over. Next

to this process, an order in sequence is being followed as WiFi is interconnecting the eight separate units.

The hijacking of sounds by the acoustics of the architecture, together with the act of recording within the disciplinary structure of the prison expresses the technology of control.

Bucket Brigade Attack:

1) The formation of a bucket brigade is a way to search and excavate collapsed building sites by passing the rubble from hand to hand in a provisional queue. Once, this was the way of putting out fire by handing over buckets of water in a line. This has a similarity to the lesser physical (and serious) 'Telephone Game' or 'Chinese Whispers', whereat information is passed from person to person. During its course this information is subjected to alteration, distortion and other biased influences.

2) A bucket brigade memory is an analogue device to delay and store electronic audio. This was used in echo-machines and other psycho-acoustic effects from around the 1970-ies and 1980-ies.

3) Bucket Brigade Attack, also known as Man-In-The-Middle-Attack (MITMA): a method of hacking a secure WiFi network by faking a genuine node.

Eight Units, each: condenser microphone, audio interface, Raspberry Pi open source computer, Supercollider software, WiFi interface, active speaker, aluminum brackets, PFE housing.

Bucket Brigade Attack at 'Hacking Habitat', Utrecht, February 26 - June 6, 2016

Thanks to: Stelios Manousakis, Ine Gevers and her team

<https://vimeo.com/167174389>

Void for Kunsthal 45, Den Helder (NL). 2015. *Exhibition by the Mondriaan Fund*

After the exhibition's closing time and at sunset, the sound installation 'Void' starts to play.

A composition is assigned to a system of eight speakers that address the specific acoustics of the separate rooms and corners of the building. The basis for this composition is noise, recorded from a VLF (Very Low Frequency) radio; a receiver which is sensitive within the bandwidth of 3 to 30 Kilohertz, the segment where atmospheric radiation, sun activity and other nature related electromagnetic forms of radiation appears. Also, the radiation from a variety of devices like streetlights, WiFi and Internet equipment and mobile phones is audible on the radio.

The entanglement of sounds, added up to this particular noise, occupies the spaces of Kunsthal 45 in the absence of an audience. A work, which exists through the withdrawal of the public ear.

The Schrödinger's Cat -like role of 'Void' deals with the problematics of the ontological experiences usually linked to art and certainly to sound art (where the 'playing' - of the audio - is allied exclusively with 'public'). It's been issued in an environment that is heavily suffering from a shrinking population in conjunction with a decreasing economics and a lack of direction in government.

Eight-channel sound installation with two sub woofers and six broadband speakers, positioned in the various rooms of Kunsthal 45, time switch, makeshift VLF radio.

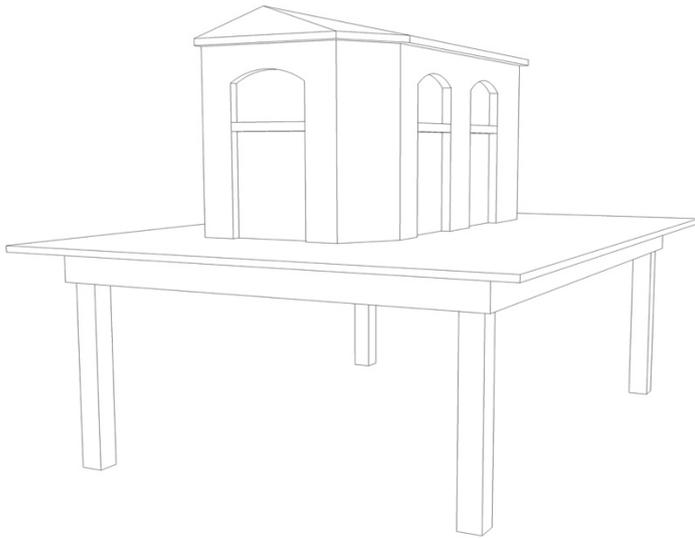




Void

Folly. For EMEA / Rooftop. Lefkosia / Lefkoşa (Nicosia); Willem Twee, Den Bosch
2015 / 2023





Folly

The house-resembling wooden shape refers to one particular abandoned store, as it has been seen in the inaccessible UN-controlled bufferzone in between the divided city of Lefkoşa / Lefkosia.

The work 'Folly' is an interpretation of this architectonic construction, according to a scale of approximately 1:8.

Previous to the exhibition, snippets of sounds from the public field were recorded in the surroundings on both sides of the border and buffer zone. The found sounds were edited to a composition, played back in the wooden mock-up and re-recorded. As the mock-up is scaled down, the sounds changed pace - as well.

The result is a soundscape, played at normal speed, yet with the assumed characteristics of the interior space acoustics of the inaccessible store.

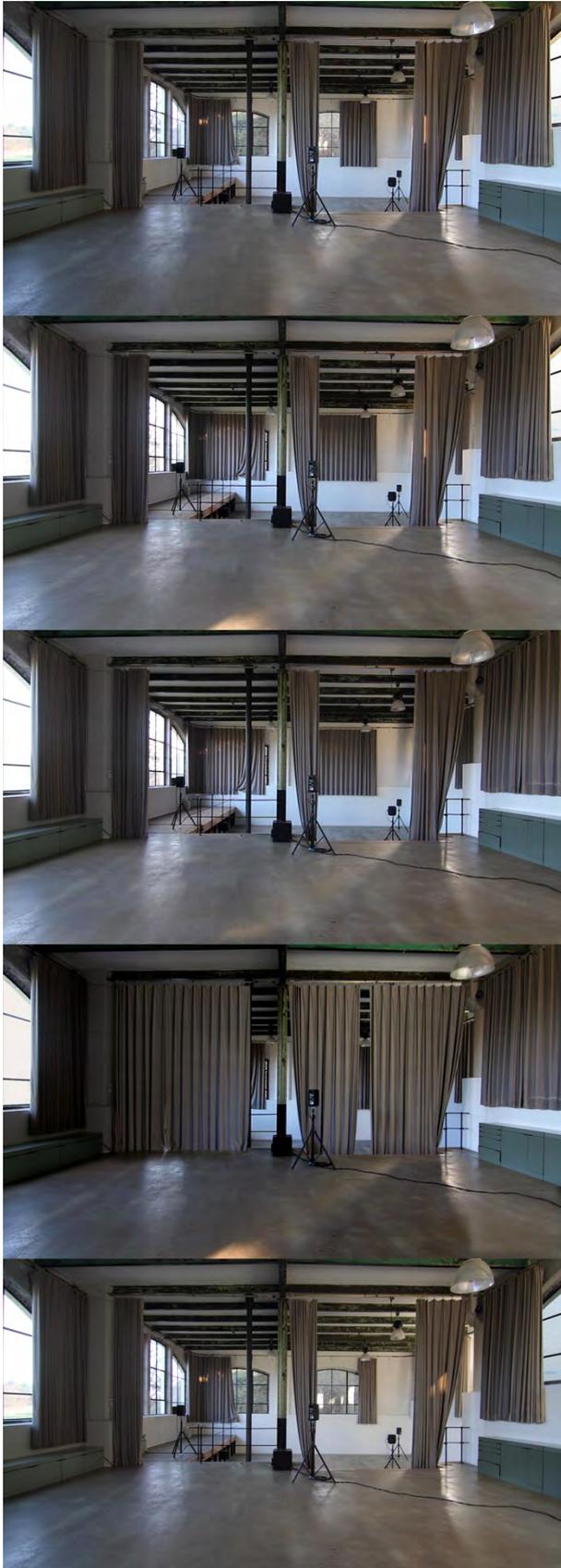
The act of imposing new sounds from the public domain in a representation of a building, of which its original is withdrawn from public life, because of conflict, could touch the idea of an attempt to reanimate its former embedment in social life by the recollective power of recorded sounds.

The abandoned building is left in no-man's-land, shifted from an operative shop within a community, to a dysfunctional, virtually decorative object.

'Folly' is acquired by the future Museum for Contemporary Art, Lefkoşa. It's an edition of 2; the second copy is acquired by the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht.

<https://vimeo.com/126367364>

Pavilion 4 for Pompgemaal Den Helder (NL); Bradwolf Projects, Amsterdam 2014 / 2015



Pavilion 4

A site-specific, acousmatic sound-installation at the Pompgemaal, Den Helder.

Sounds propagate through the rooms, previously recorded in Ramallah and the old city of Jerusalem; the on-going buzz of helicopters, the distant beats from teargas ammo and firecrackers as well as the murmur from the marketplace and the sounds of the traffic. One outtake from the number of occasions the conflict bursted into flames.

I found motives and considerations within the experiences from traveling to Israel and Palestine. The discussions among the people I worked with, within the light of the political situation and the attempt to have an ordinary life, left a big impression. Directly afterwards, at the Pompgemaal, the contrast couldn't be bigger. It became evident to appropriate this confusion as matter for the development of work. I will focus how the 'contextual conflict', such as an architectonic and a sonologic intervention, empowers the change of the experience of a place. A new reality unfolds as the existing is discussed.

The building as an actor.

According to the acoustic behavior of the interior space of the Pompgemaal, the recorded sounds (from the trip to the middle east) were digitally filtered.

First, an analysis of the acoustics was performed at 17 spots throughout the interior: in corners and cavities, on windowsills, in the middle of the space, directed to walls and curtains, etc. A collection of 'impulse responses' was the result of this operation. Collected parameters like these are capable to be imposed upon other sources of audio, to sound like they are in that room virtually.

At the Pompgemaal, after this process of filtering, the recordings played back in the actual space; a 'doubled' effect emerged. Consequently, the space itself became more apparent, became more like an instrument. A system of 9 speakers enabled this procedure to address the spatial specifics.

The sounds were intense, distorted, sometimes on a low level, almost quiet, sometimes harsh and brutal.

The sound arrangement was circulating and sometimes jumping from spot to spot in between the speakers. At the same time, the curtains of the residency closed and opened in a choreography, synchronized to the multi-track audio composition. The curtains were automated with small computer-controlled motors.

Dealing with technology as an activator within the spatial installation, the work connected metaphorically to communication technologies, historically rooted in inventions for military purposes like multiband filtering, vocoding and sound encryption. A link to the historic relationship of Den Helder with the navy and its system is not distant.

Pavilion 4 was an installation that functioned in a sensory 'direct' way; the loud noises, the silence in between, the view upon the scenery and the blocking of it, the changes of light. Staged to lead the seeing and the hearing, it questions ones position being in the luxurious retreat of the Pompgemaal and the opposite conditions elsewhere.

<http://vimeo.com/117099149>

Drop for the Jerusalem Show, Al Ma'mal Foundation. 2014



Drop 2014



("Drop" behind police lines after riot outbursts)

A 9-channel sound installation

"...Jonathan Loppin and Paul Devens approach Jerusalem's local realities as outsiders; from different points of view, they observe, witness, and underline what has been repeated on a daily basis not only in the city, but in the country itself. Devens' site-specific sound-based installation *Drop* (2014) at the Center for Jerusalem Studies- Al Quds Courtyard, takes the act of 'listenig' as 'specific, directive and political next to its everyday manifestations' through a sonic experience based on sounds movements and specific field recordings. ..."

"Sounds go up and down, move away from you and come towards you, almost describing the axis of another space within the given space of the courtyard. Specific field recordings are being lifted out of their original spot and moment, and are implemented in a new one: the habitat of the installation. Listening becomes specific, directive and perhaps political next to its everyday manifestations we are accustomed to.

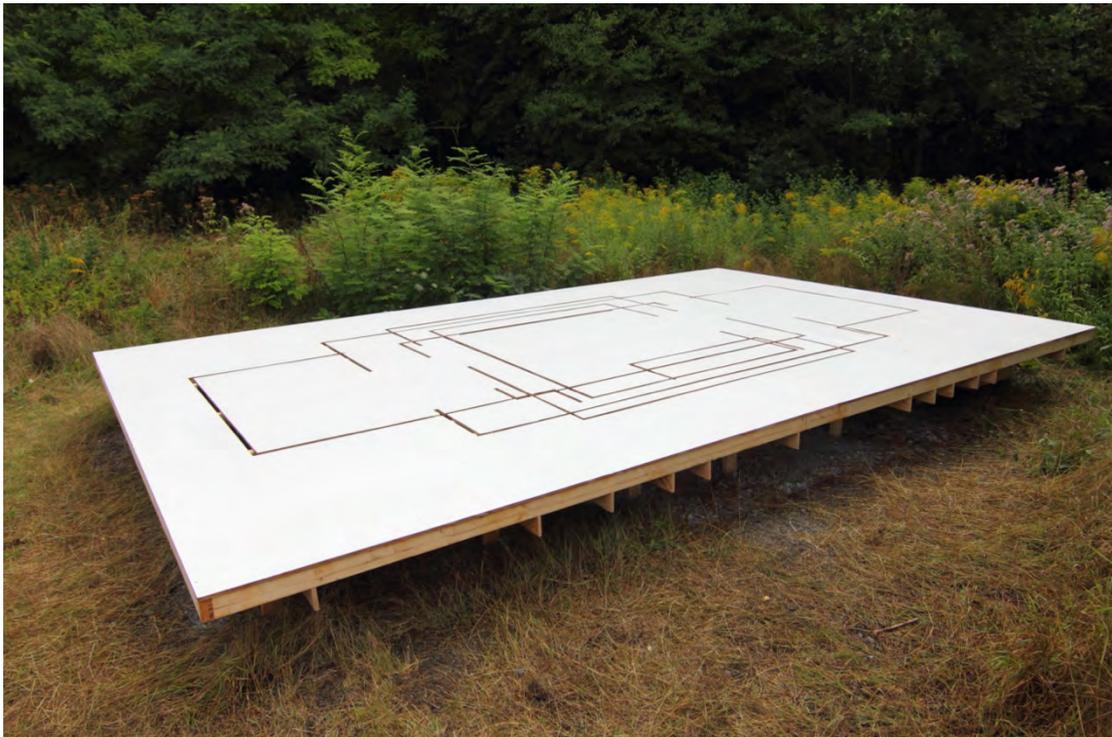
As the practice of Paul Devens is based upon the changed, re-installed, altered, shifted, manipulated and otherwise re-interpreted and represented contexts, the work

at the *Jerusalem Show* will put the audience through a sonic experience in a different space, both architectural and associative.

Sounds go up and down, move away from you and come towards you, almost describing the axis of another space within the given space of the courtyard. Specific field recordings are being lifted out of their original spot and moment, and are implemented in a new one: the habitat of the installation. Listening becomes specific, directive and perhaps political next to its everyday manifestations we are accustomed to.

As the practice of Paul Devens is based upon the changed, re-installed, altered, shifted, manipulated and otherwise re-interpreted and represented contexts, the work at the *Jerusalem Show* will put the audience through a sonic experience in a different space, both architectural and associative." lbraaz.org

Platform for the Frontenpark, Maastricht; Onomatopee, Eindhoven;
Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht. 2013 – 2022





Platform 2013 / 2022

On the former tracks of the Boschpoort train station in Maastricht, barely visible amidst the rough vegetation of the Lage Fronten, Paul Devens has built a low platform. Visitors are allowed to walk on it, sit on it, or lie down. Only then does the work fully unfold; the floor of this platform has grooves cut into it as minimal, two-dimensional indications of different spaces. These refer to regulations from building codes, legislation, and politics, which determine the minimum size a living space should be. Through the grooves in the flat surface, the acoustics of the rooms become audible, enveloping the visitor in their virtual sound experience. The acoustics are activated by a soundscape based on recordings from various European cities, capturing the sounds of traveling people.

'Platform' positions itself in the tension between idealism and authority: a minimally defined living space serves a preconceived function for the ambitions of a larger

system or power institution to which the user is subordinate⁴. The loss of participating in this type of decision-making, and thus the loss of a part of personal 'self-determination,' stems from poverty, illegality, insanity, illness, (suspected) terrorism, dependency, and weaker social position.

The soundscape is composed of recordings from locations that derive their identity from the movement of people. Travel becomes a mode where the traveler is detached from dwelling or staying, in an environment that radiates the global rather than the local, with a potential for freedom.

The sound recordings have been digitally processed; the acoustic behavior of the indicated spaces as they are cut into the platform has been made audible. Virtually, the soundscape takes turns playing in these rooms.

The rooms refer to the Dutch Building Decree on social housing (from March 2013, including through the Netherlands Standardization Institute - NEN-), the law applicable to penitentiary institutions (www.rijksoverheid.nl), the dimensions of a cell in Guantanamo Bay (<http://news.bbc.co.uk>), and a cell in the RAF prison in Celle⁵, a bedroom in one of the houses of the residential school Ravelijn⁶. The sound recordings were made in train station halls, metro stations, airport terminals, and bus stations in Bremen, Hamburg, Berlin, Rotterdam, Eindhoven, The Hague, Liège, Nancy, Salzburg, London, Tallinn, Copenhagen, Krakow, and Sarajevo.

Paint, wood, multi-channel audio. Loop: 34 minutes, 19 seconds. Special thanks to Guus van den Akker, Arek Laskowski, and Karin Peulen.

<https://vimeo.com/122801825>

⁴ Jeremy Bentham and Michel Foucault described this as disciplining architecture.

⁵ Lower Saxony, Germany. Several members of the Red Army Faction were imprisoned here, including Karl Heinz Dellwo, whose lawyer recorded the dimensions of the cell.

⁶ Just a stone's throw away from the current Frontenpark, this former residential school was built as a re-education neighborhood for troubled families from the impoverished Stokstraatkwartier. The neighborhood, dating back to approximately 1955, was built according to the principle of a panopticon.

Tracker for the Biennial of contemporary art of Bosnia-Herzegovina. 2013



Tracker

Tracker

Biennale for Contemporary Art, D-0 ARK Underground, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2013

Guilty Landscape⁷

A landscape that had been traumatized with brutal aggression and human tragedy, still resonates with its past. The scars are still visible; abandoned houses, marked from fire, the residents fled or had been dispelled, bullet holes. Graveyards spread out at former soccer fields and playgrounds. Invisible, the trauma accompanies daily life in the hearts and minds of the inhabitants. The landscape is at peace now, the stones remain shut, trees lose their leaves and get new ones, streams follow their course, but yet the landscape conceals the evidence of taking part, just because it was there.

The source

Stray dogs barking and the play of children at the 2nd world war partisan monument in the hills at Rhasno, crackling snow at the remains of the 1984 Olympic bobsled track near Trebevic, the marketplace in the centre of Sarajevo with its murmur, the muzak at the Holiday Inn Hotel, melt water dripping on broken tiles at the left and demolished houses, hotels and factories, mosques at Bijela Tabija, call in a non-simultaneous unison, the hiss of running water of river Miljacka at the Latin Bridge. And much more of these noises, found in Sarajevo, Hadzici, Malo Polje and Konjic. Sound is an apparent player in the mere existence of these places; sounds emerge

⁷ 'Schuldig Landschap' is the title of a big part of the oeuvre of Dutch artist Armando, referring to the places of horror of the Second World War. 'Guilty Landscape' became a leitmotiv, also for present-day matters (example #31 of 'Volume' by Archis)

and evaporate successively. On itself it never continues; sounds cohere with sources, with events. The moment those vanish or finish, the sounds depart with them and leave a void for other sounds to come in.

The act of recording

Recording while traveling in- and around of Sarajevo that bears the scars of the war of 1992 - 1996, issues my position as a visitor. More precise, the position as a recordist, visiting nationalist Serb shooting spots and target areas from the war and other such relevant sites, capturing present-day sounds there. The asymmetric power relation, described as one of the principles of the panopticon by philosopher Jeremy Bentham, applies to the (video-) camera, as well as for the microphone. Entering as an outsider, equipped with devices that only takes and not gives, that one could aim at situations, objects, animals and people and thus, isolate the obtained sounds from spatial context and freeze the time. A microphone with the specific characteristics to focus into distant sounds is called a shotgun microphone. The introduction of a microphone and a recording- or distribution- device is always an act of control, surveillance, discipline and / or hierarchy (Foucault). The outcome of the recording is at the disposal of the one behind the microphone and usually not the one that had been recorded.

The sound

Also, a new listening situation can emerge from the previously recorded sounds, detached from the sources and, for example, being played back through speakers. A Phenomenological shift: sounds become more autonomous while being disconnected from original location and time. 'Acousmatic listening', described by Musique Concrète-composer Pierre Schaeffer, opened-up a new auditive sphere. The asymmetric power relation in between recordist and subject can now be shared with an audience whose position is somewhere in between voyeurism - 'watching' / listening without taking part, and immersion. Reproduced sound still could provide an associative representation of the events that once caused them, given that the sounds became matter on its own: 'Soundobjects'.

At D-0 ARK Underground

'Tracker' is a work that both embodies the process of traveling and recording and creates an environment for the performance of the sounds: the installation. Physically this will be installed in one of the hundreds of units within Josip Broz Tito's atomic shelter near Konjic (Not far from Sarajevo). Secretly build in the 1950's, the shelter now is like a time-machine. Everything is kept in a mint condition to be prepared for the immediate raise of a self-supportive community / commando centre during an atomic attack. The most up-to-date technology was applied; radiocommunication, hundreds of telephone landlines, generators, cctv, airconditioners and water filtering installations, entertainment. From the fifties. After the collapse of Yugoslavia and the vanishing of the threats in between east and west, the bunker became obsolete as such and a lesser secretive and more open task was found in accommodating the exhibitions of the Biennale for Contemporary Art of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

How 'Tracker' works

Preliminary to the installation of 'Tracker', several recording trips on several days were taken to find and register the sounds. The route and the spots of the recordings were tracked on a GPS-logger⁸.

⁸ Global Positioning System. Portable device keeps track of routes and movements by satellite. The one I've been using has a 'marker' -button to pinpoint certain points of interest.

'Tracker' consists of a vinyl record with a composition of the field-recordings, a modified turntable and a stereo speaker set. A construction with an 'x' and an 'y' -axe is put over the spinning record. There, the route, taken from the GPS device, is reproduced and scaled down by the means of a programmed Arduino⁹ and stepper motors. A turntable-stylus, attached to this x & y, is occasionally lowered down to the record and plays a track. This is not necessarily the recording taken at that particular point in the route; a new ordering will appear as a result of the two entities: the reproduced route and the time that was set apart by the act of recording.

'Tracker' is acquired by the D-0 ARK Underground Collection, Konjic / Sarajevo

<https://vimeo.com/65738250>

The list of coordinates can be exported to Google-Earth - for visualization - or other applications.

⁹ Open source mini-computer

Proximity Effect for PIT / Z-out. 2011 – 2023



Proximity Effect 2011 / 2012

<https://vimeo.com/49870877>

Proximity Effect

for PIT / Z-out. 2011 – 2023

Proximity and distance are key concepts in the proposal for an art project in the Servaaskerkje in Groot-Loon. The position of the viewer and the context of the building with its simple architecture and layout, its history, and the surroundings are crucial factors.

The work 'Proximity effect' consists of a framework installed directly below the ceiling of the church. 15 small speakers are evenly spaced on this framework. Next to each speaker is an infrared sensor with a narrow detection angle.

Each speaker produces an individual tone.

When the visitor stands under one of the speakers, it is detected by the respective sensor, and that particular speaker slowly descends on a cable to a height of 2.5 meters. During this process, the tone gradually transitions into a different sound, derived from recordings made in the region around Groot-Loon, Borgloon, Haspengouw, and beyond.

After some time, the speaker rises again, and the sound reverts to a tone.

Choreography

The movements of the speakers are organized by a pre-programmed computer program. The speed of descent, the duration of the lowered state, and the speed of ascent are related to the human scale. The viewer's visual and auditory behavior and expectations are important considerations. I sharpen the relationship between the visitor and the installation: the installation is a machine for conveying an experience, just like the architecture of a church. The spatiality and arrangement serve as a reference to and embodiment of the message. The space of the Sint Servaaskerk and the newly created space within it, through the physical presence and the sound of 'Proximity effect,' become public and accessible while also delineating boundaries¹⁰.

Tones

The tones produced by the speakers in the elevated position are determined based on the acoustics and space of the Sint Servaas. Each space has a pattern of resonant frequencies: when a musical instrument or singing voice resonates, there are one or more pitches that sound louder in the space than the other tones or notes. In ecclesiastical architecture, this acoustic behavior, along with reverb and echo

¹⁰ Remarkable to me was the historical role of the church. Within the community, it was larger than facilitating the direct experience of the religious; it was also a gathering place, a place for encounters. This role existed since the Middle Ages but somewhat diminished due to secularization during the second half of the 20th century. There is a city map of Rome known from 1748 by Giambattista Nolli where the church architecture of the interiors is part of the street plan. ('Adaptation of churches' Stefanie Reyskens. Provincial College Limburg)

phenomena, was fundamental to its construction. A church was built not only for its visual aspects but also for its auditory qualities.

Before polyphonic music entered the Roman Catholic Church, the acoustic behavior of elements such as the nave, side aisles, and choir could create a polyphonic effect¹¹ for monophonic or single-voice music. Dimensioning, surface treatment¹², and sometimes the use of resonance vessels¹³ were the methods used to achieve a unique spatial sound. These practices were later studied by the Jesuit Josephus Blancanus (Giuseppe Biancani, 1566 - 1624) who described the art of echo in his work "Sphaera Mundi," and also by the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher (1602 - 1680) who observed and theorized various acoustic phenomena of buildings and forms¹⁴ in his work "Musurgia Universalis."

The Saint Servatius of Groot-Loon also has a specific pattern of resonances. As part of the preparation for the art project, researching and analyzing this pattern is necessary¹⁵. The results are then used in a composition of continuous tones that vary from speaker to speaker and, when mixed in the acoustics, form a chord.

These tones are generated live, through filtering, within the digital domain of the computer¹⁶. When lowering a speaker, the Q factor decreases, and the input of the filter gradually becomes audible. This is formed by one of the 15 channels of a special composition based on field recordings from the region and beyond.

¹¹ After 1364, the first polyphonic mass was composed. Prior to that, there was already polyphonic music, but it was seen as devilish (Wikipedia).

¹² In St. Paul's Cathedral, the so-called whispering gallery features a very smooth finished – curved or cilindric - wall that creates special echo phenomena.

¹³ Resonators or acoustic amphorae have been installed in, among others, the Basilica of San Petronio in Bologna and in the Notre Dame Cathedral of Noyon, probably to achieve a local extinction effect in the total frequency spectrum of the space. Similar amphorae have also been discovered in Greek amphitheatres (Sound Spaces of Art, Peter Kiefer). It was not until around 1850 that Hermann von Helmholtz studied the sound-physical behavior of resonators.

¹⁴ Kircher devised a horn shape as part of a building that allows sound to be amplified. In this way, eavesdropping can be done over a distance, or conversely, a voice can be made louder as a form of mass communication. Kircher also conceived buildings that could cause multiple echo times (from: Sound Spaces of Art, Peter Kiefer).

¹⁵ The analysis of space is performed by a function (tone) generator that generates a sine wave, ranging from 40 to 14000 Hertz, in a sliding scale. This is played in the space and then recorded by a calibrated speaker and measurement microphone. The differences in the loudness of the recorded sweep indicate resonant frequencies.

¹⁶ This is achieved through tuned bandpass filters with a high self-resonance (Q-factor). Band filtering or band-pass filtering is a method of sound processing where a small range of the frequency spectrum is allowed to pass through while attenuating or cutting off all higher and lower frequencies or tones. As the Q-factor approaches '1', the bandwidth becomes narrower, and self-oscillation begins to occur. When the Q-factor is '0', the bandwidth is so wide that there is no longer any filtering.

Field recording

Where the generation of tones in 'Proximity effect' connects to the historical building through acoustic principles, the reproduced field recordings refer to the 'elsewhere' and also to the 'now'. I want to compile an archive of recorded sounds from private and public spaces, including all the intermediate stages. This could include streets, alleys, libraries, cultural centers, shops, and living spaces. Through acoustics and sounds specific to the function of each respective place, the relationship with the origin is maintained. In this way, I hope to address the tension between the private and the public.

During the recording process, certain details in everyday sounds are "zoomed in" on, so to speak. Sometimes studio microphones are used, which, like a stethoscope, are sensitive to normally inaudible sounds. 'Small' sounds are amplified, elements from a more complex sound ensemble are isolated, and their relationships are altered. The selection criterion also considers the awareness of the 'intimate' listening situation of the installation, where the speaker is close to the listener's head. Subsequently, a new logic is sought in organizing the obtained sound material. The fragments from the recording sessions become the subject of a new composition. (During the exhibition period, I intend to replace/supplement the composition with new material.) An interesting parallel can be found with this rearrangement of components from an environment into a new whole in the walls of the church itself: loose stones from elsewhere, including debris from the Roman fortifications around Tongeren, were used in its construction.

The proximity effect draws inspiration, with all the mentioned characteristics, from the seminal work of John Cage's "Essay"¹⁷ or the spectacular work "Polytope De Cluny" by Iannis Xenakis¹⁸.

The proximity effect is a phenomenon in physics that occurs when two or more quantities are brought into close proximity and influence each other.

¹⁷ John Cage: "Essay" (1987) Originally conceived for Documenta 8 in Kassel, this work resides permanently in the Bremer Kunsthalle. Speakers and spotlights are directed downwards from the ceiling. Various chairs are randomly scattered throughout the space. Random factors generated by computers trigger the illumination of spots, randomly highlighting a specific area, while sound fragments are locally audible. The visitor becomes a participant in a constantly changing performance without being able to grasp it. What is audible is the unintelligible, fragmented sound of a recited essay by Henry David Thoreau, "The Resistance to Civil Government" (1848).

¹⁸ In the vaults of the Roman baths of Cluny in Paris, Xenakis installed a comprehensive performative intervention with laser beams, mirrors, flashes, and multi-channel sound during the "Festival d'automne à Paris" in 1972.



City Chase

The starting point for the installation "City Chase" by Paul Devens is the urban space. Using a mobile recorder, he travels along the most characteristic spots of the city, capturing them in audio. The constant movement avoids focusing on a particular sound, allowing for a natural transition from one sound to another.

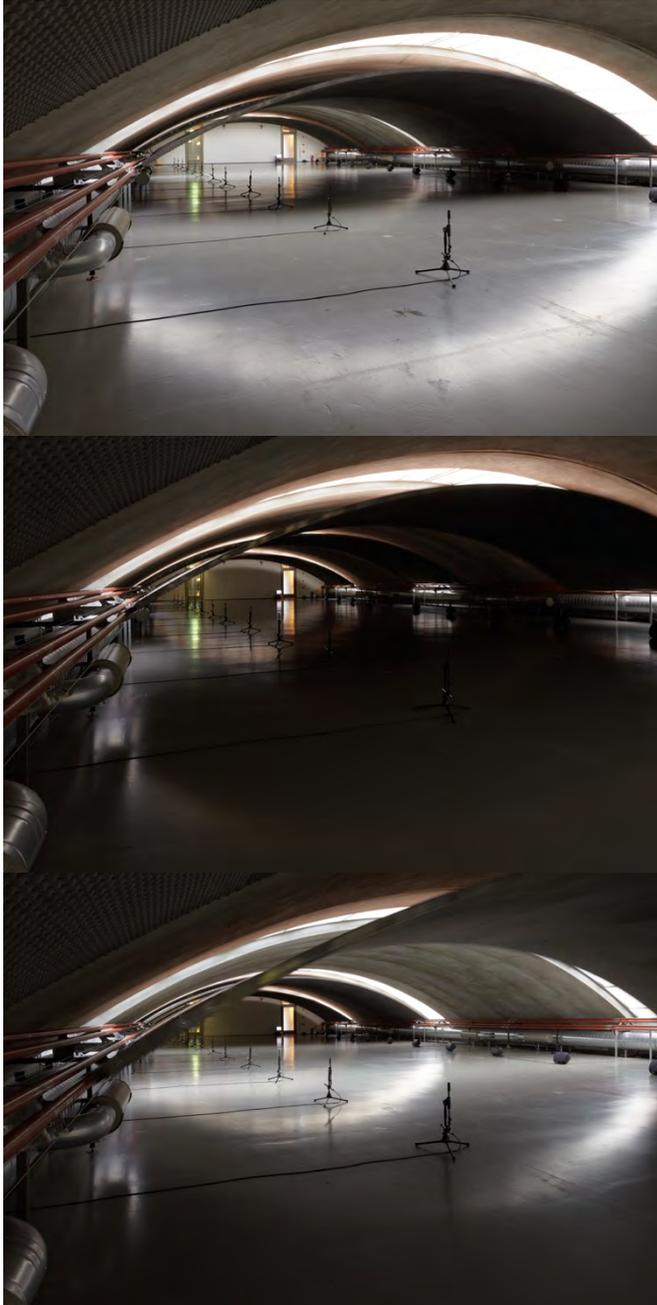
The sound recordings serve as material for a four-channel composition. The installation itself consists of a self-supporting wall with four metal rails attached to it. Each rail serves as a track for a small motorized gondola, to which a small speaker is attached. These "gondolettes" move along the entire length of the wall in both directions. Each speaker corresponds to one of the four compositions.

Paul Devens has previously created a database of sounds from the cities of Kortrijk (Belgium), Den Bosch, and Bergen (Norway). The installation, which can be viewed and listened to at the Jan van Eyck Academie, will feature city sounds from Maastricht.

The inspiration for the installation City Chase is the city and its typical sounds. With a mobile recorder the artist taped the sounds while he biked through the city, this way there is no focus on one sound and a fluent transition from one sound to the next. The installation consists of a wall with 4 speakers that move independently from each other, all playing the sounds Devens has collected. This way it feels as though you're walking through the city when you listen to the installation.

<https://vimeo.com/50525956>

Panels *An inquiry into the spatial, the sonic and the public*
for Bureau Europa / NAIM. 2010



Panels

Panels
An inquiry into the spatial, the sonic and the public

'Panels. An inquiry into the spatial, the sonic and the public' is a sound installation by artist Paul Devens (1965). The installation in the Wiebengahal, with its characteristic semi-circular concrete shell roof, covers the entire upper hall with an area of 800 m².

Paul Devens' work offers the visitor a disorienting architectural experience, in which sound and light play an important role.

NAiM/Bureau Europa has established unusual connections between different disciplines in recent years in an attempt to tap into a forgotten potential of architecture. The relationship between architecture and food production - The Edible City - revealed a new urban mission, the connection with sleep and psychology - State Alpha - unveiled an unknown experiential world, and the relationship to the interior - Changing Ideals - provided insight into how changing societal ideals were mirrored in the so-called inner world of one's own home.

Architecture - the mother of the arts - is currently approached primarily from a socio-cultural perspective. The project 'Panels. An inquiry into the spatial, the sonic and the public' seeks to broaden this perspective by engaging in a nearly forgotten discussion, where architecture is primarily conceived as a formal and abstract language. By drawing attention to the abstract qualities of architecture, the similarities with disciplines such as music and dance become apparent, creating space for interaction.

'Panels. An inquiry into the spatial, the sonic and the public' refers to previous experiments such as the Philips Pavilion, for which Le Corbusier collaborated with architect/composer Iannis Xenakis and composer Edgar Varèse. This pavilion was described at the time as a total experience, using architecture, image, and sound.

At the invitation of NAiM/Bureau Europa, artist Paul Devens has realized an installation in the upper hall with a total area of 800 m². 'Panels' attempts to provide the visitor with an intensified architectural experience. The installation consists of acoustic panels that follow the contours of the vaulted roof, largely obstructing the view of the shell roof. The panels move alongside each other, creating ever-changing patterns. By using speakers, microphones, and a computer, the so-called Larson effect (resonance) is created, transforming the space into an instrument, continuously altering the acoustic and visual experience of the *Bogenzaal*.

'Panels. An inquiry into the spatial, the sonic and the public' (2010) consists of: steel, aluminum, acoustic damping material, plywood, steel wire, electric motors, pulleys, computer, microphones, speaker boxes, sound interface.

<https://vimeo.com/18172238>

Pole for Glocal Affairs, Maastricht, 2008; Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen 2008 - 2010



Pole

Pole is an intervention in an existing space and alters the functionality of it. The appearance is based upon the phenomena of an acoustic lens or -disk. In its focus, in front of the hollow shape, a four-channel loudspeaker- and microphone system is located. A computer controls and regulates a process of audio-feedback.

At the exhibition venue, a hollow, 20 square meters, disk-shaped structure almost covered one of the walls in a former office space (the "Timmerfabriek" from 1905). Wood, Styrofoam and plaster and paint in exactly the same shade as the original paint on the walls, raised and integrated the alien structure in that room. The focal point of this disk was positioned just in front of the opposite wall, whereat a set-up with a computer, four active speakers and four microphones on a tripod was put.

Sonic feedback was established by a connection in between one microphone and one loudspeaker at the time. These items were both directed to each other via the reflection of the disk. The exact distance in between speaker and microphone induced a particular range of tonal sounds. A custom-made application on the computer, an assignable sequencer, controlled which one of the four microphones would connect with which one of the four loudspeakers. And because of a variety of distances in between those, a shift in tonal ranges became audible. To this, another

application was suppressing clear- (louder) tones, when these would take over the summed total. (This is an actual 'feedback-destroyer' with the use of frequency-trackers and notch-filters).

A big inspiration was, with others, the military pre-radar "listening observatories" along the British coastline. Those enormous concrete parabolic shapes were meant to hear (hostile) boats and planes approaching over a vast distance. As technology developed, the parabolic shape made electro-magnetic forms of communication possible: to space, or from country to country. Now, as it became an icon for mass media, an urge is expressed to look and listen what's happening elsewhere. The operational area of Pole is limited to the given space only; the producer as well as the consumer share the focus. Consequently, sound became inevitable part of the architecture.

<https://vimeo.com/2223680>
