

Sam Auinger / Bruce Odland

BOX 30/70



BOX 30/70 is a work-in-progress, an installation that transports the idea of “resonance tuning” to different European cities by presenting the identical system at a variety of different sites—Berlin, Witten, Rotterdam, Düsseldorf, Dresden and Vienna since its initial development in 2001.

The setup consists of three elements: (a) a microphone-equipped resonance tube (TUBE) in which the ambient soundscape is reproduced, (b) a mobile space (BOX) providing a listening situation that is visually and acoustically set apart from its surroundings, and (c) an exterior-mounted, cube-shaped, cement-encased loudspeaker (CUBE) that opens up a listening perspective in which the resonances and the soundscape mix. The actual transformation of the sounds takes place in the resonance tube. All frequency segments that correspond to the fundamental D tone of the tube and its overtones are amplified. Two microphones are installed inside the tuning tube at precisely calculated and calibrated positions so that particular overtone combinations can be extracted. Unmistakable sounds like ambulance sirens and the signals of trolley cars and locomotives retain their distinctiveness. Sounds generated in the immediate vicinity of the resonance tube—the chirping of birds or human voices, for instance—remain recognizable, underlain by resonances. In the BOX, the resonances of the tube can be heard with no further acoustic manipulation. With felt covering the floor and walls, dimly lit, and connected with the exterior world solely by a small window through which the environment can be made out only vaguely, the BOX resembles a “listening post” within the acoustic environment into which real-time video images of the situation outside the BOX mix from time to time. The real-time sounds alternate in a predetermined time ratio (30 to 70) with material from *Alphabet of Sounds*, a series of compositions that has been growing since 1991. Several of these pieces are based upon concrete audio material such as natural sounds like wind and water that Auinger / Odland have been recording and processing since they began their work on *Alphabet of Sounds*. Others are purely synthetic compositions, tonal abstractions that refer to the idea of a sound. What they all have in common is the thought that sounds are the result of their own respective dynamic-temporal processes. As an inwardly-directed conceptual tableau, the *Alphabet of Sounds* here provides a contrast to the alphabet of the real-time sounds in the environment.

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Translated from the German by Mel Greenwald