

place

# Max Neuhaus

sound works volume III

cantz

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Concept  
Max Neuhaus and Gregory des Jardins

Design  
Gabriele Sabolewski

Typesetting  
Fotosatz Weyhing, Stuttgart

Lithography  
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Production  
Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, Ostfildern

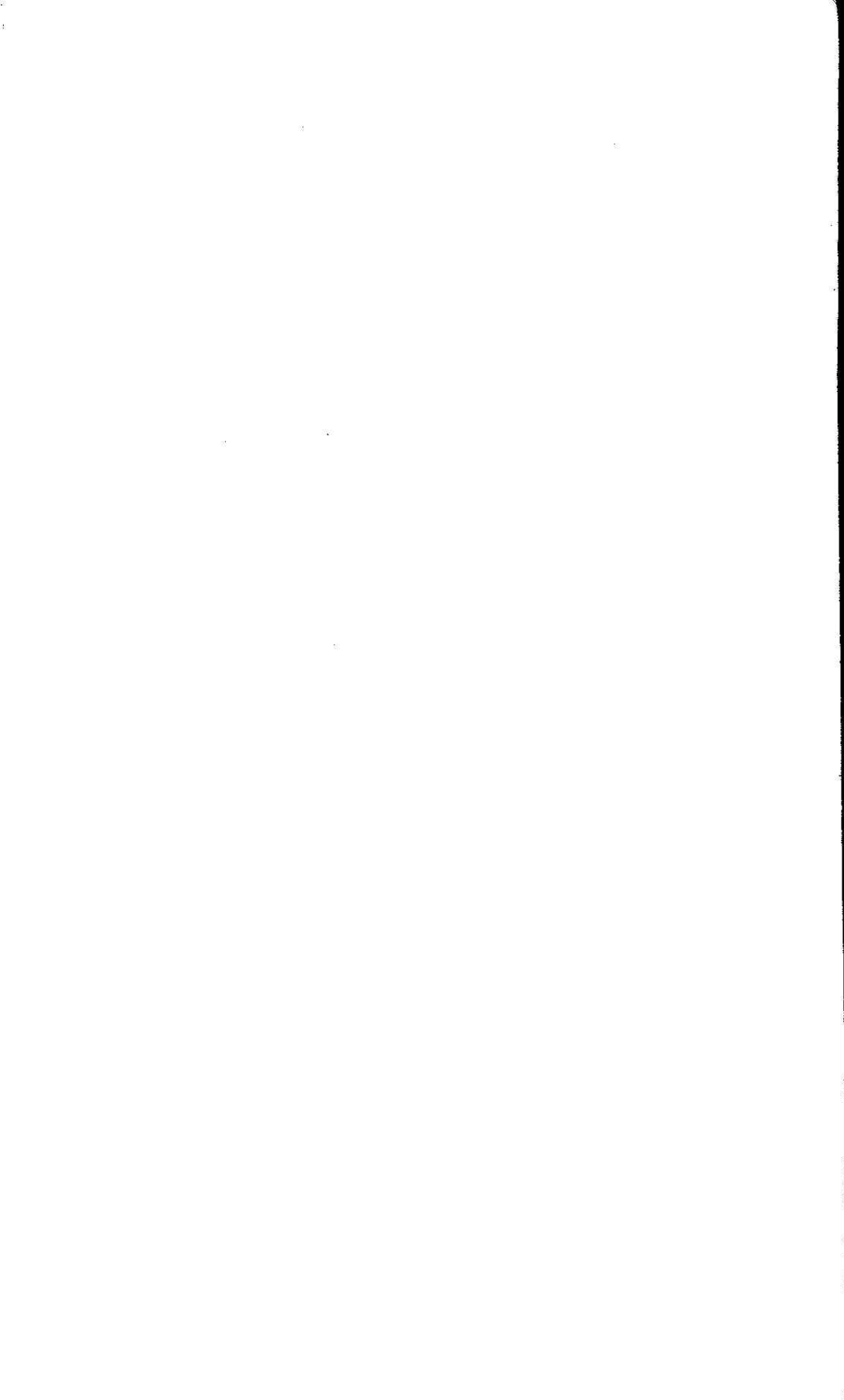
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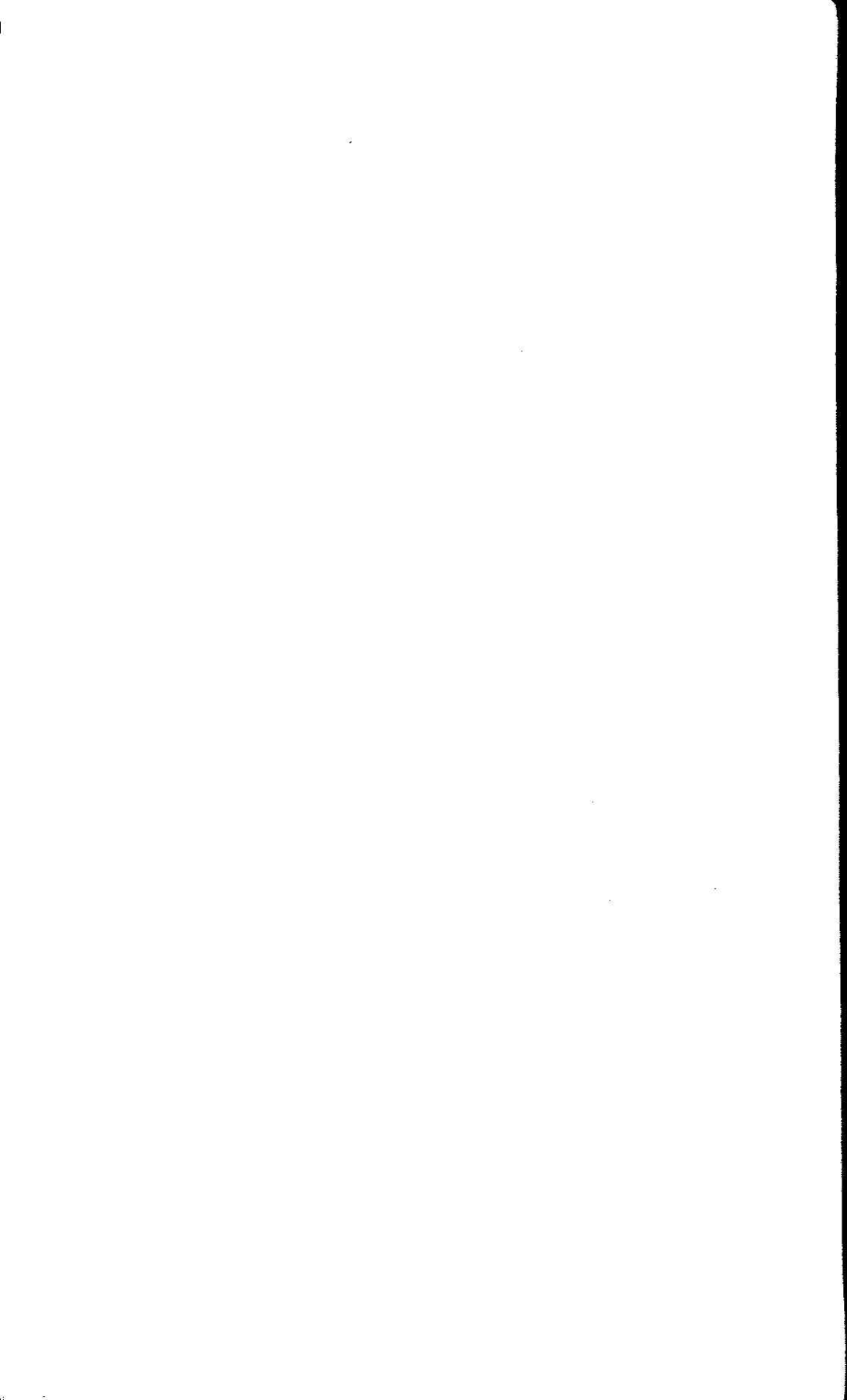


## Introduction

Communion with sound has always been bound by time. Meaning in speech and music appears only as their sound events unfold word by word, phrase by phrase, from moment to moment.

The works collected in this volume share a different fundamental idea – that of removing sound from time, and setting it, instead, in place.

M.N.



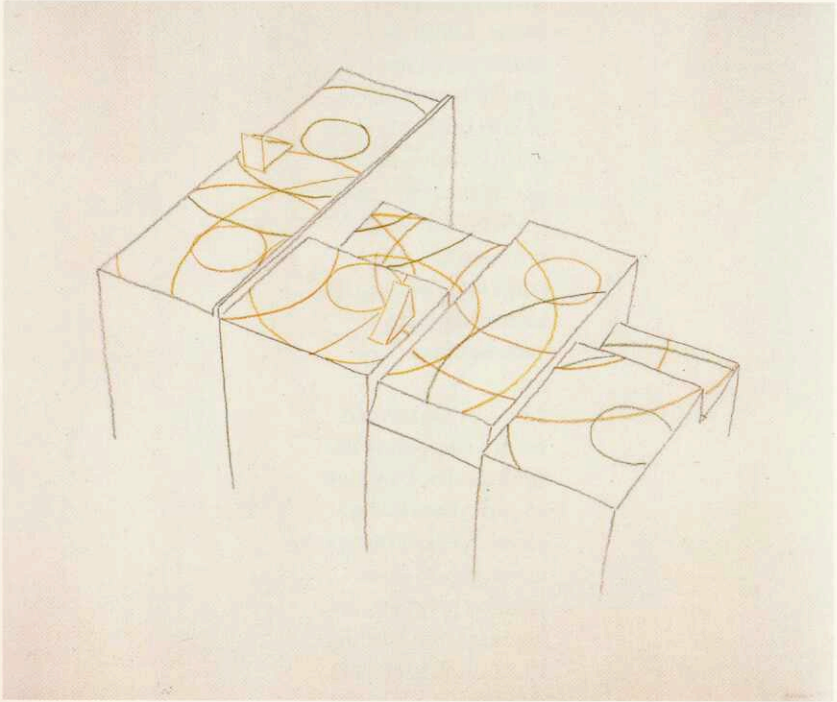
Place Works 1968-1993



The work was realized outdoors on the multileveled rooftops of four adjoining buildings in lower Manhattan. Sound sources, dispersed over the roofs, produced sonorities which intermixed to form a continuous aural topography across this urban terrain.

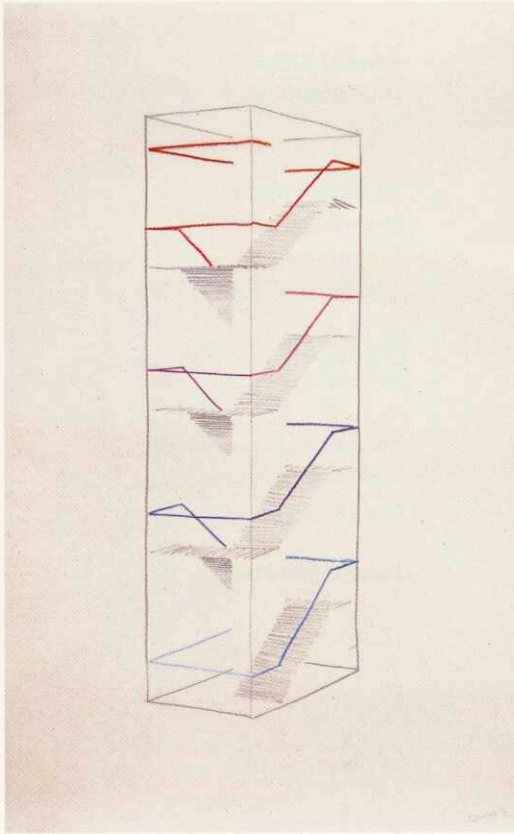
The sounds were generated from sunlight passing through the blades of rotating fans. Sound intensity was governed by light intensity; the tone color of each sonority was governed by the angle between sun and fan blade.

Thus, the sounds, beginning gradually at sunrise, shifted level with the appearance of cloud or shade, and slowly changed timbre with the movement of the sun across the sky ... disappearing again at sunset ... forming an aural landscape which reflected the passage of a day.



The space is in the shape of a squared spiral. Like many stairways of this kind, it has a sense of labyrinth: a feeling of dislocation occurs as one turns its endless corners and finds a seemingly endless succession of identical places at each landing.

The work is formed from a succession of timbres. Each of these sound colors has an element in common with its neighbor. Their gradual progression, leading from landing to landing, joins two distant sounds at the stairway's extremes.



Pairs of clicks  
in overlapping  
zones.

Gradually shifting  
from sharp to hollow,  
becoming faster  
and slower.

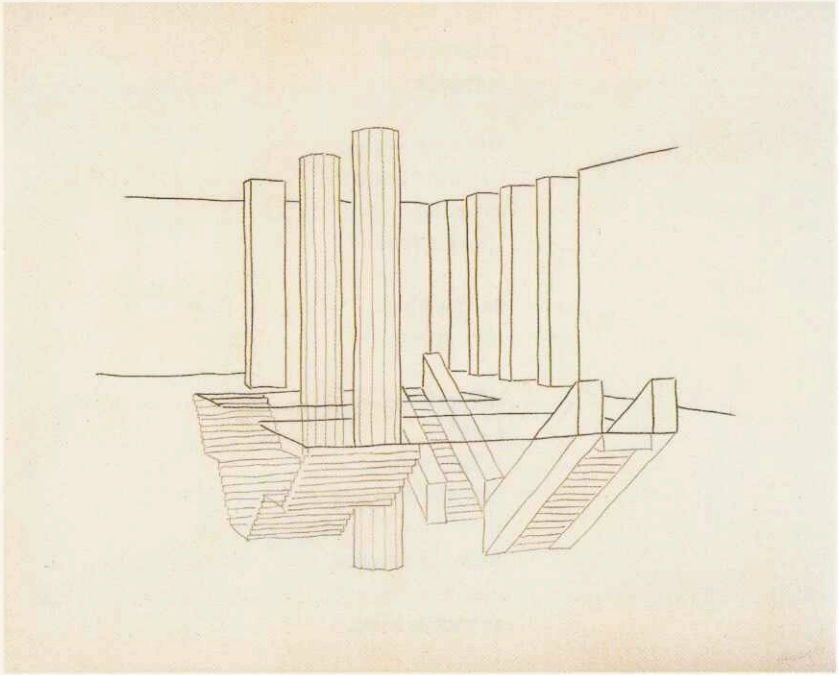
Conforming to shifts  
in weather,

Positioned in pathways  
between entrances  
and exits,

Encountered daily,

Unmarked,

Discovered  
or not  
by the passerby.



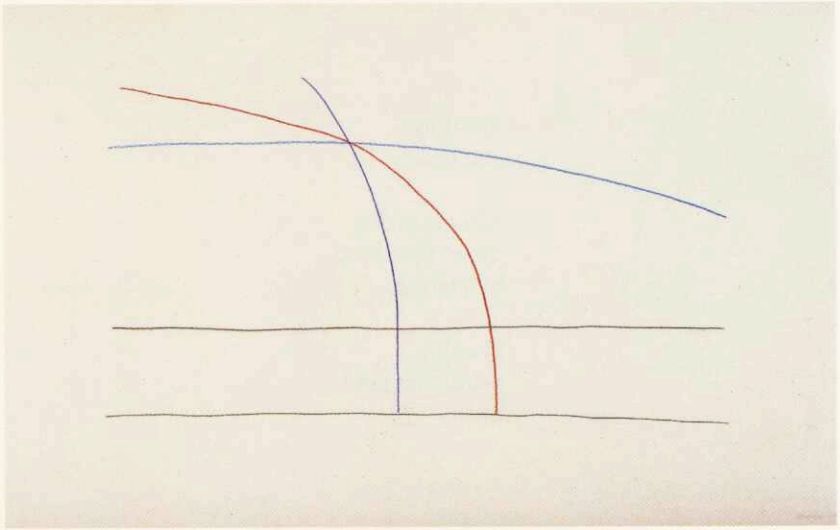
A large oval  
rotunda.

Rotating walls  
of sound texture  
pivoting on the  
space's center,

each with its  
own speed,

overtaking,  
passing,  
falling behind  
one another,

forming a round  
in space  
as well as time.

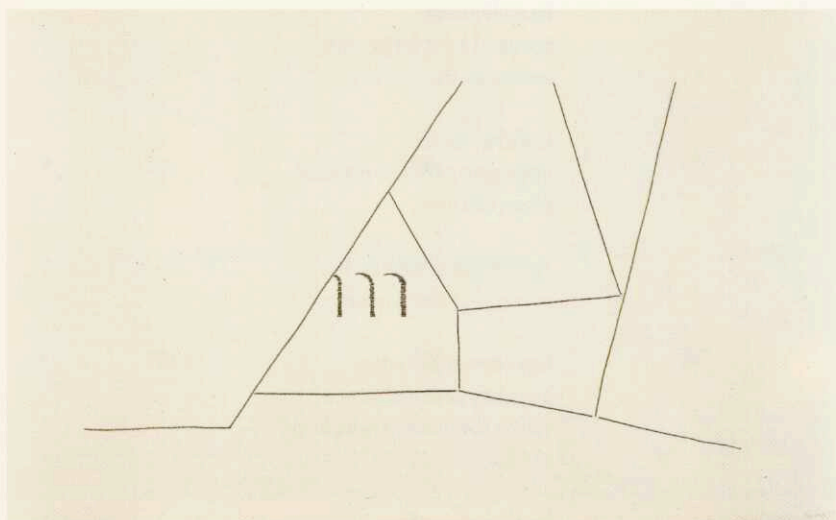




Two high  
soft tones,

Mixing at the  
upper threshold  
of hearing,

Shaping  
a different kind  
of air.



In a clearing  
secured by a large oak,  
near a path,

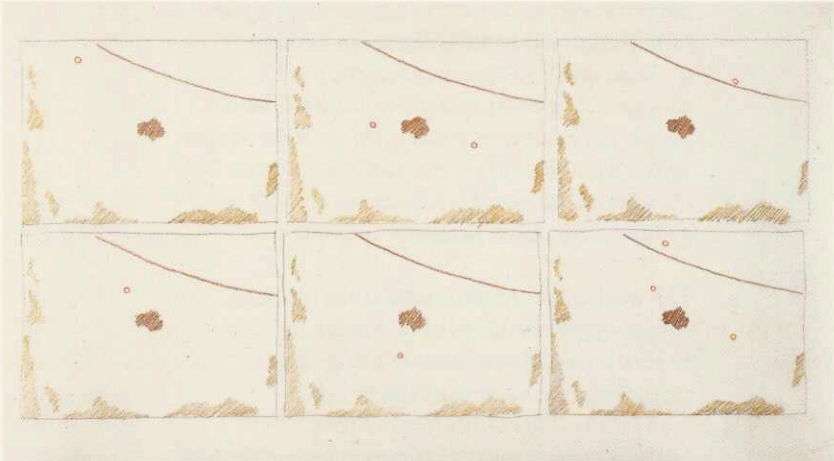
hollow clicks  
appearing on the ground  
from nothing.

Assumed at first to be  
sounds of the woods...

but then disclosing  
another sense of place  
when their contradictions  
are found.

by the passerby.

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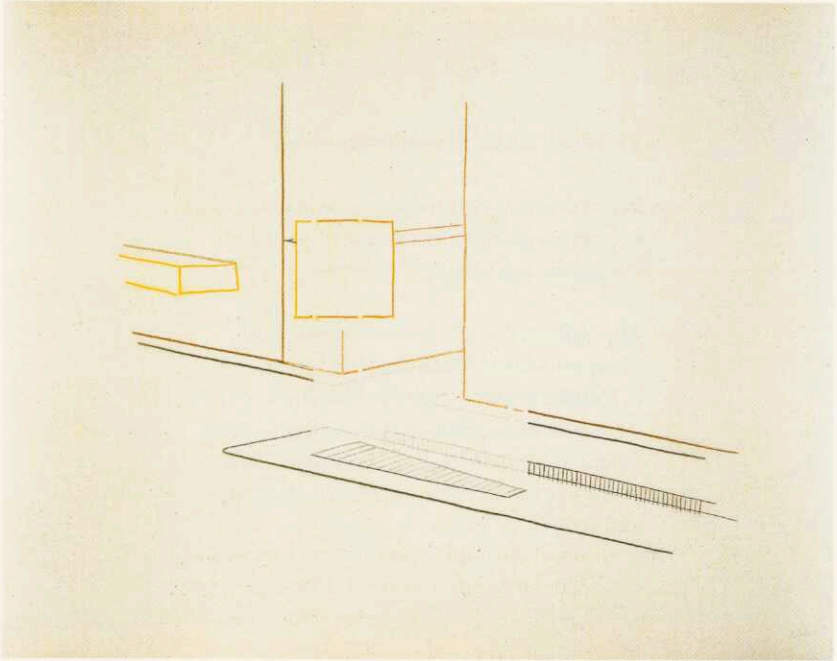
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
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NEW YORK

The work is located on a pedestrian island, a triangle formed by the intersection of Broadway and Seventh Avenue, between Forty-sixth and Forty-fifth Streets in New York City's Times Square.

The aural and visual environment is rich and complex. It includes large billboards, moving neon signs, office buildings, hotels, theaters, porno centers and electronic game emporiums. Its population is equally diverse including tourists, theatergoers, commuters, pimps, shoppers, hucksters and office workers. Most people are in motion, passing through the square. As it is a junction of several pathways across the square, the island is sometimes crossed by a thousand or more people in an hour.

The work is an invisible, unmarked block of sound on the north end of the island. Its sonority, a rich harmonic sound texture resembling the after ring of large bells, is an impossibility within its context. Many who pass through it, however, can dismiss it as an unusual machinery sound from below ground.

For those who find and accept the sound's impossibility, though, the island becomes a different place, separate, but including its surroundings. These people, having no way of knowing that it has been deliberately made, usually claim the work as a place of their own discovering.



The work had no sound of its own.

Instead, it was formed by a single tone,  
tuned to a point below our sense of sound  
but above our sense of vibration.

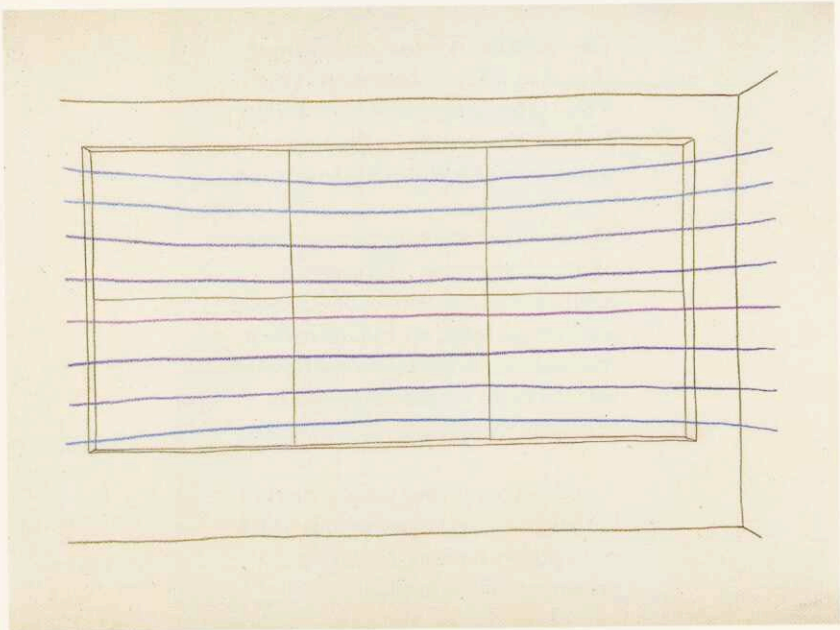
This unheard pitch generated a terrain  
of regions where each audible sound  
in the garden was slightly shifted – a  
transparent overlay on the garden's sound  
landscape – making fine shadings of hue  
in the sounds of fountains, conversation  
and street.





Turning  
texture  
in a  
small  
room.

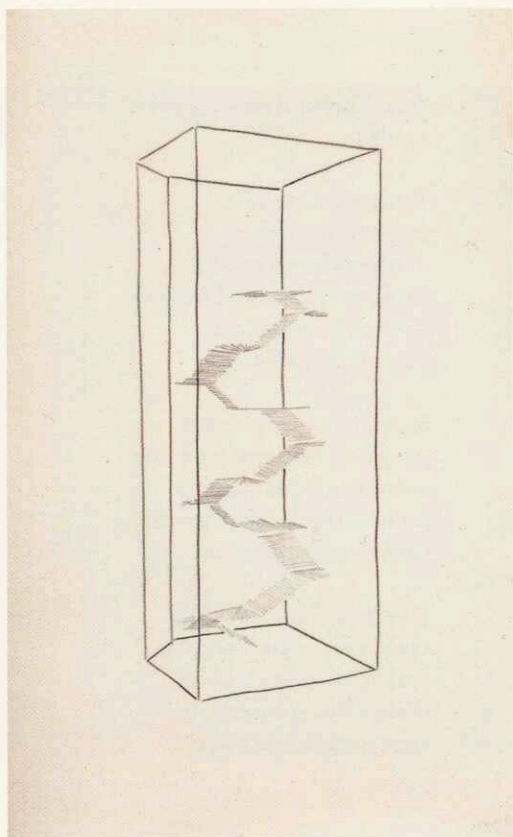
Loud,  
present.



The room has unusual proportions, almost square and four storeys high. It also offers a means of exploration in three dimensions – a floating stairway leading from top to bottom.

The work occupies the two extremes of sound spectrum. The lows are composed of resonances of the space and though loud, are hidden in their resemblance to the sounds of flowing air. The highs are soft lines which penetrate the space at various levels.

Together they form a sonic structure both delicate and massive, but which nevertheless remains more of a presence than a sound.

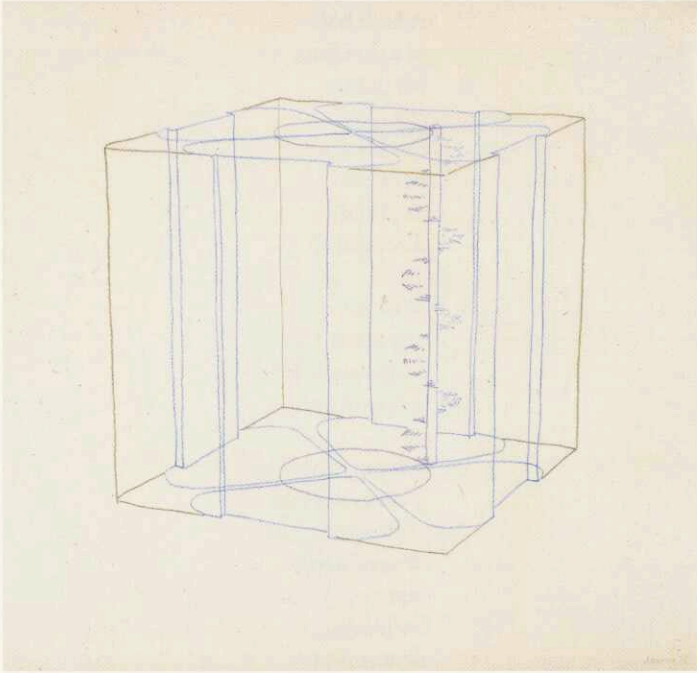


A symmetrical room, almost  
a cube.

Two quiet low tones  
resonate the space  
in two different modes  
forming large sound shapes  
– one cylindrical, the  
other four leafed.

Points of soft high tones  
placed throughout the room  
at ear width, mix only in  
each listener's mind according  
to his head's position.

Five light wooden chairs  
with arms, made in Russia,  
which listeners place for  
themselves according to  
their own inclinations.

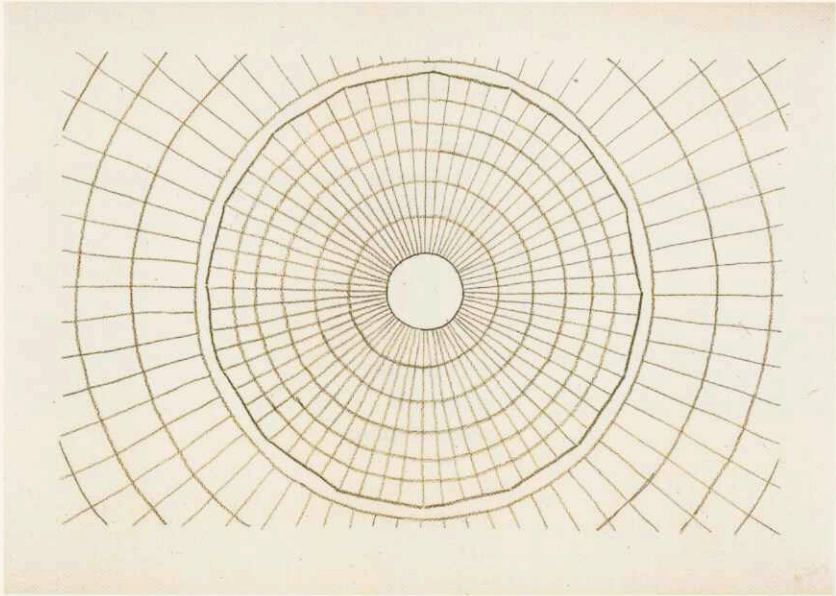


A high bell  
in a dwelling  
for plants,

Slowly pacing  
between  
cardinal  
directions,

Shifting  
attention  
from quadrant  
to quadrant,

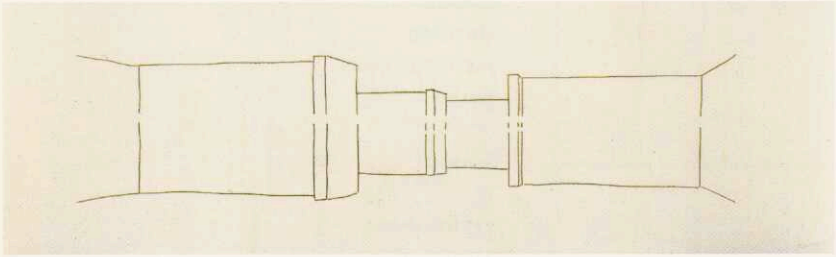
Accompanied by  
a many voiced  
chorus  
of very soft,  
fast,  
hollow  
drumming.





Quiet,  
fast moving  
sound shapes,  
interspersed  
with silence.

Lines of soft  
aural sparks,  
erecting a  
sense of space.



A hillside  
of woods.

Entered  
through  
inconspicuous  
paths.

Sound  
  
establishing  
visions of  
other  
wooded  
life.

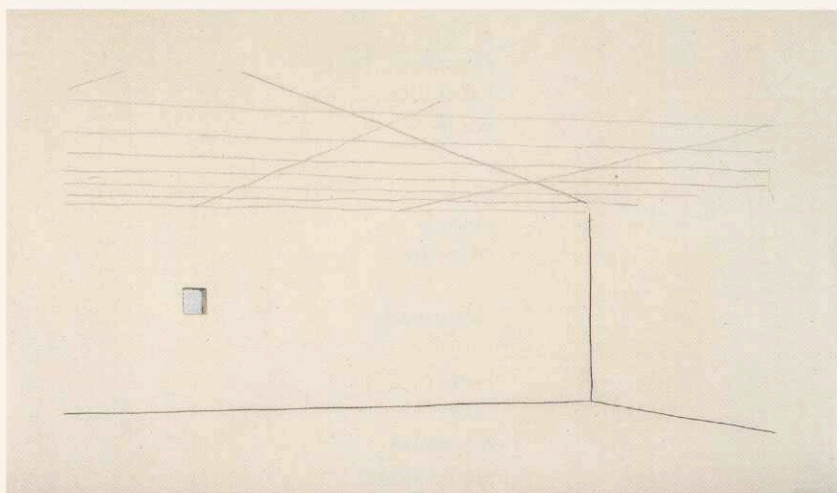


Many  
separate  
sources.

Each  
with a  
soft,  
sharp  
sound  
of its  
own.

Fusing  
as they  
come  
together  
in the  
space,

and  
dissolving  
into  
a barely  
perceptible  
wind.

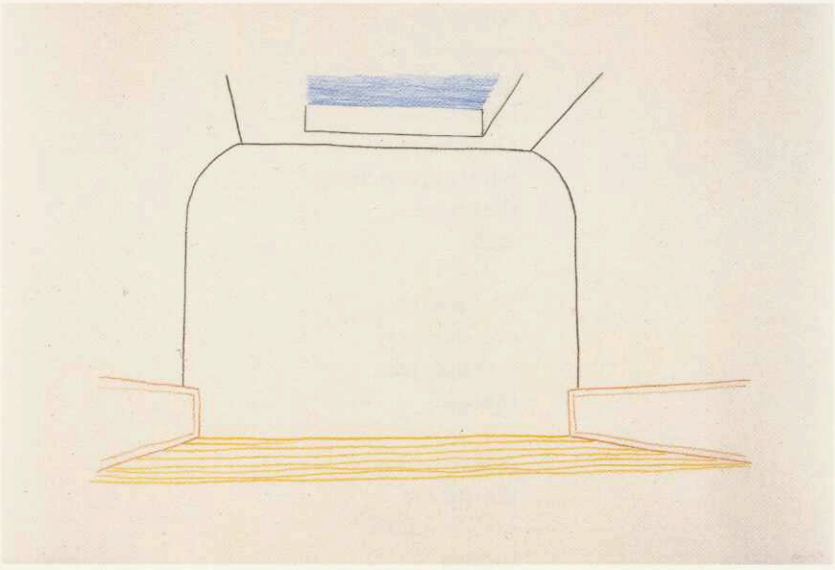


A large  
formal  
exhibition  
room

with  
sounds  
of its own.

Reformed

with  
quiet  
figurative  
replications.





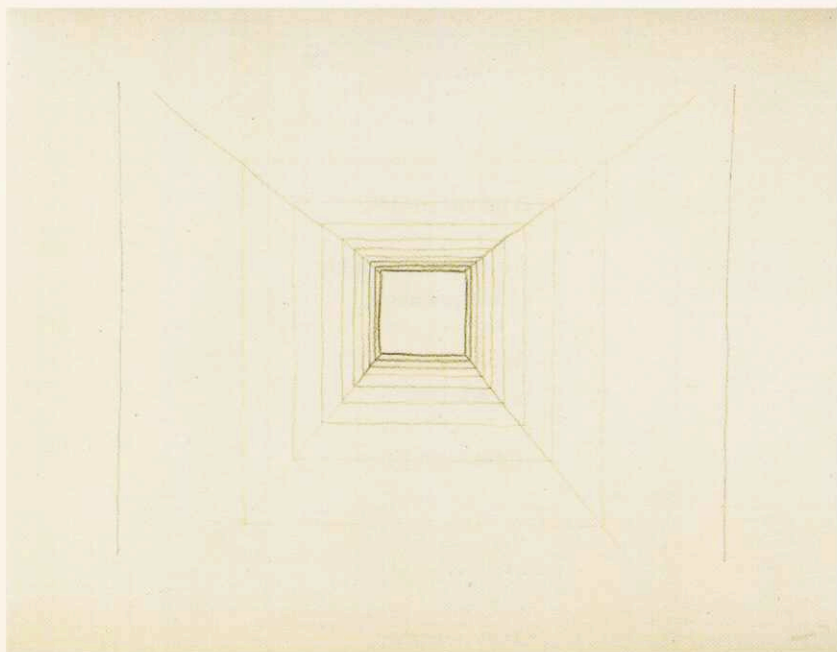
A foot tunnel  
connecting  
lake  
and woods.

Sound  
assures  
as it becomes  
louder  
and clearer,  
while approaching  
the tunnel's  
end.

The instant  
one emerges  
into the open,  
though,

is also  
the instant  
of the sound's  
sudden  
disappearance.

Exposing  
aural  
reality.

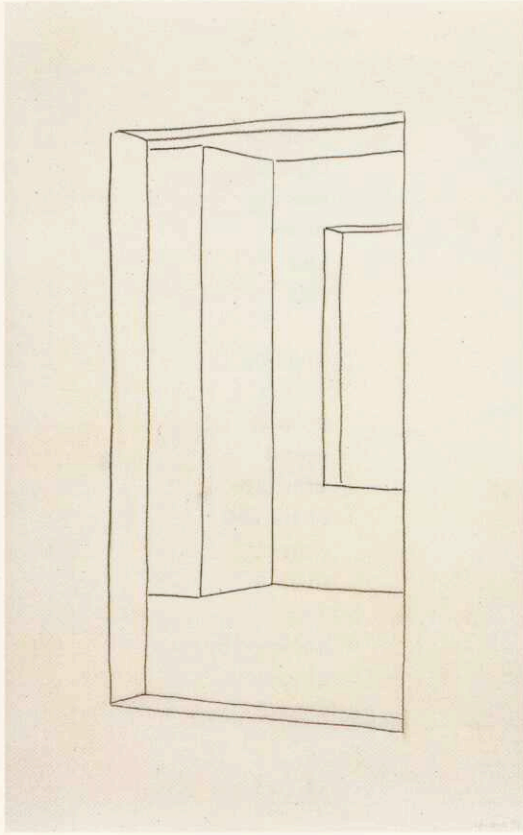


A private room.

An almost inaudible  
sound presence,

Appearing only  
in darkness,

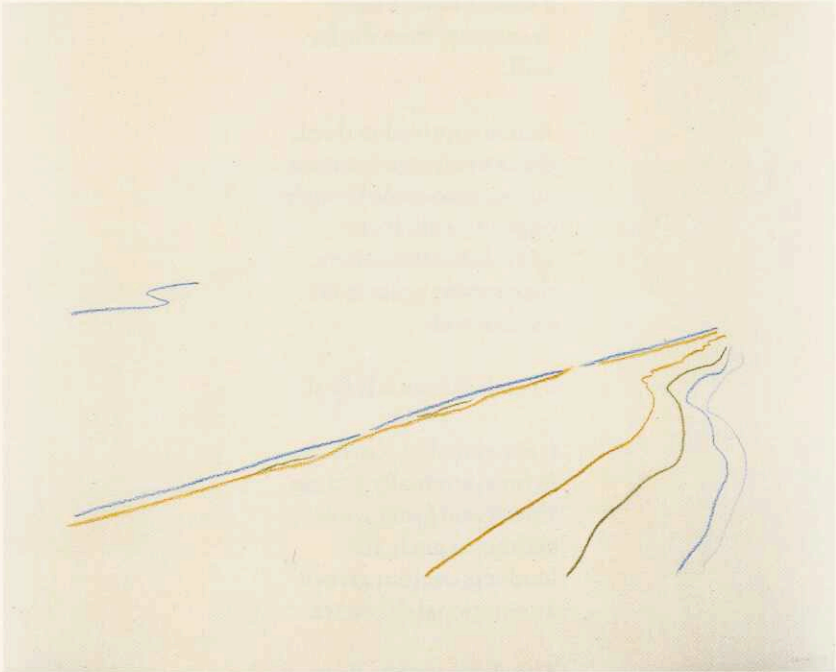
Illuminating it.



Walking  
between  
moving  
water  
and  
still.

Meeting  
a quiet  
body of  
sound  
shifting  
on the still  
water  
surface.

Enclosed by  
a lucent  
sheen.



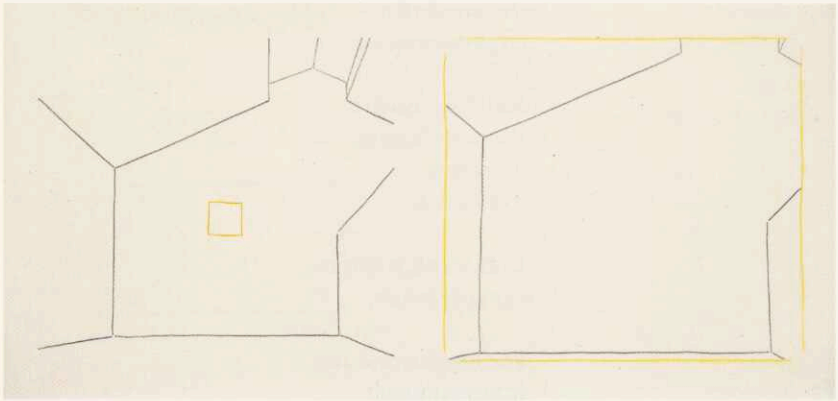
As one enters the space,  
a series of clicks seems  
to emanate from the far  
wall.

As one approaches them,  
they switch their location  
and seem to come from the  
opposite wall. If one  
approaches them there,  
they appear again from  
the first wall.

This click train is lyrical.

It expands and contracts  
in time, gradually getting  
slower and faster while  
shifting in pitch. Its  
loudness contour gives it  
an emotional character.

The clicks seem to develop  
an infinite line: a phrase  
which evolves perpetually.





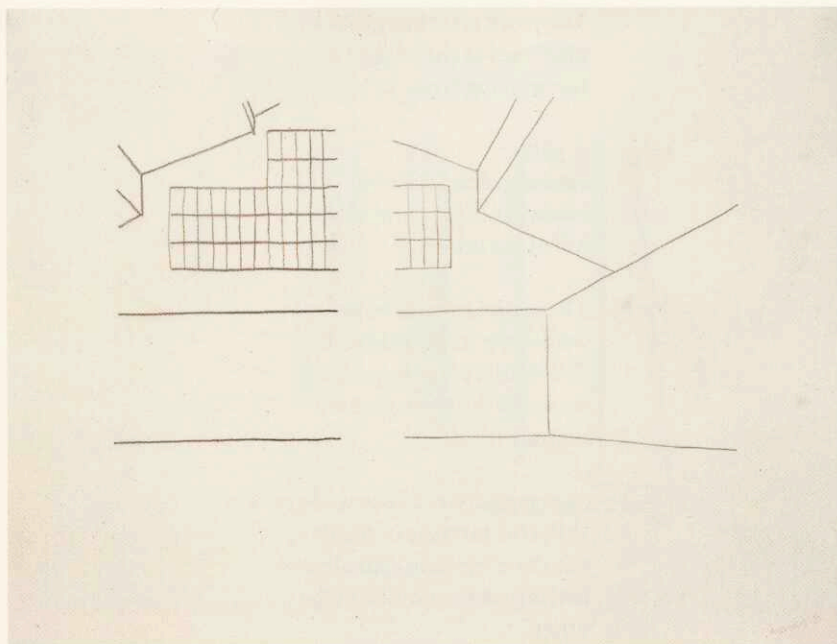
A line of sound,  
running down  
the length of a  
large open space.

Standing inside it  
the sound exists,  
outside it,  
it does not.

Unmarked, it leaves  
expanse intact,

Forming an invisible  
place within it,

Wholly separate.

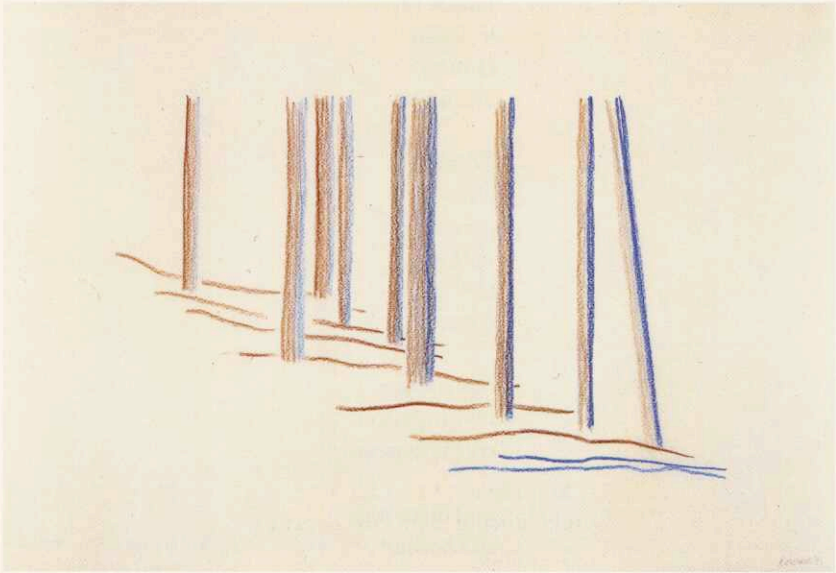


The work is set in a grove of  
pine trees at the edge of a  
fast moving river.

A path  
running along the river  
branches off to climb the  
hill of the grove.

The sound texture built  
within the trees, although  
in contrast with the rushing  
sound of the river, forms a  
union with it.

Moving between river and grove  
shifts the mixture of the two,  
rebalancing them, but always  
leaving each enfolded in the  
other.

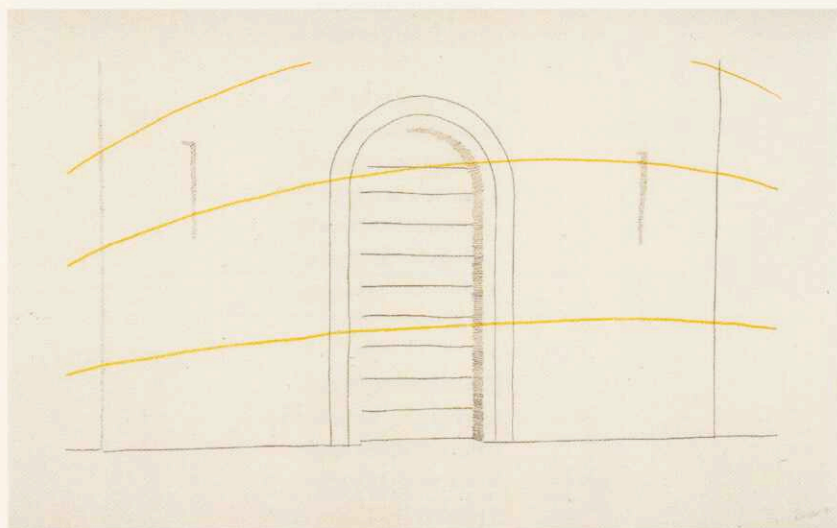


A high  
bell sound  
appearing  
from the  
facade of  
a closed  
church  
entrance,

Though  
almost  
plausible  
within  
this  
context,

it provokes  
investigation  
by the curious,

and discovery  
of another  
place of  
spirit  
facing  
the bricked up  
doorway.



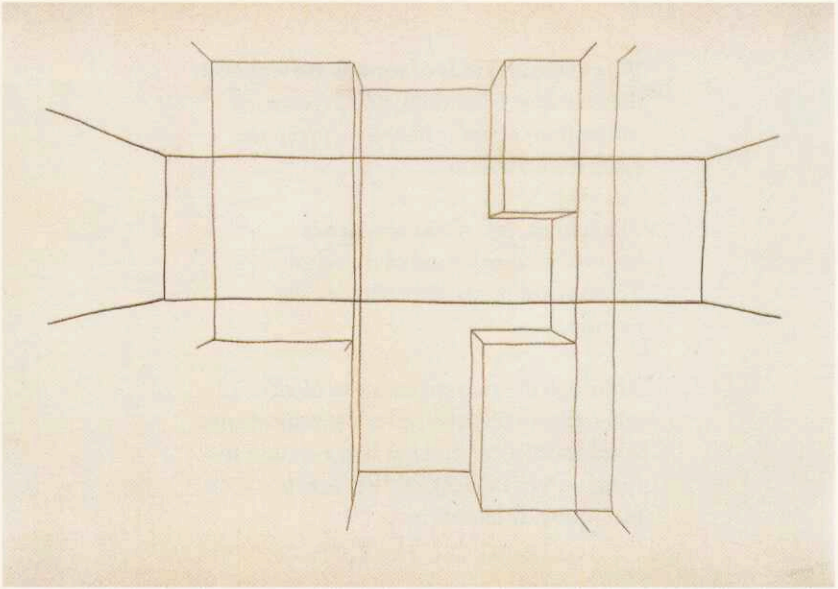
The actual space  
is a small kitchen.

Inadvertent sounds  
or talking in it,  
generate sound  
reflections which  
duplicate those of  
a much larger space.

When one is in the  
room, these are  
usually not noticed.  
The ear's sense of  
space automatically  
adjusts to the eye's  
reality and rescales  
itself.

Upon leaving the  
kitchen, however, one  
enters a much larger  
space with normal  
sound reflections.

Here the ear, with  
its new sense of  
scale, reasserts  
itself, insisting that  
this larger space is  
much smaller than it  
seems.

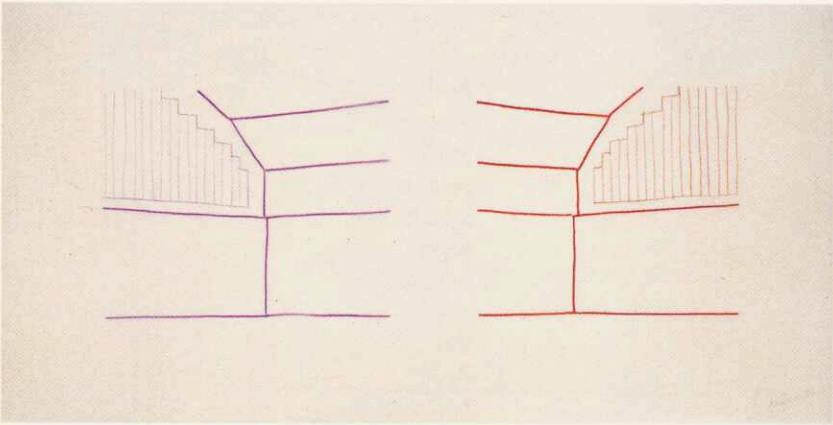




When certain kinds of sounds are very soft,  
they become something which is sensed  
rather than actually heard – a presence  
more than a sound.

The two spaces of this work each  
have a different sound of this kind.  
These two sounds have contrasting  
natures.

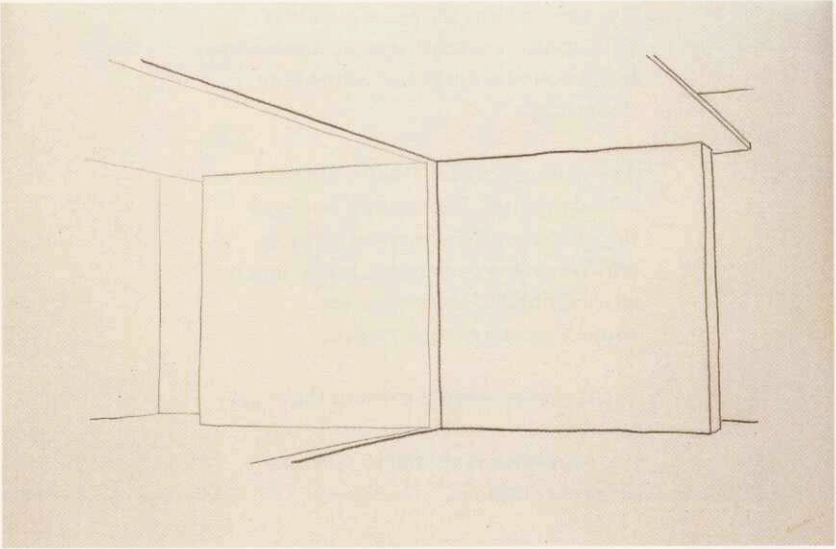
Although the two spaces seem identical  
when one first enters, after a few moments  
when aural attention has had a chance to  
focus – one realizes that they are, in  
fact, quite different.



One room  
divided  
in two.

Both  
sides  
with  
sounds  
which  
seem  
identical,

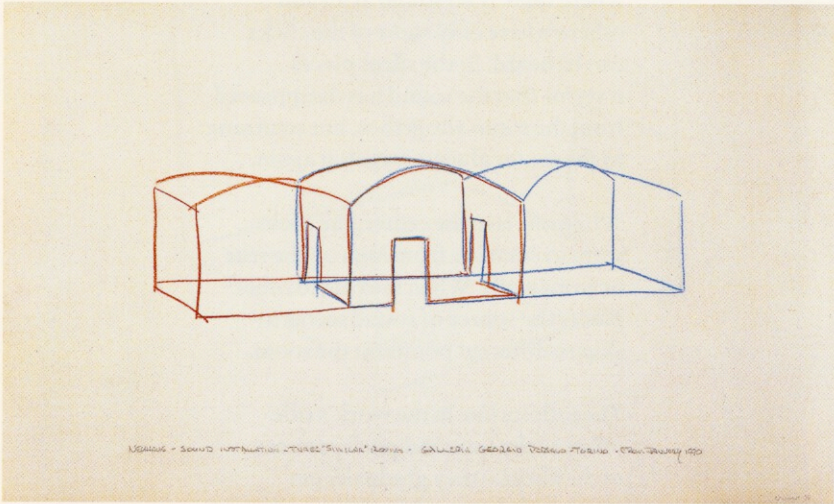
but  
open  
converse  
frames  
of mind.



The three rooms are visually similar with approximately the same dimensions, high vaulted ceilings and connecting doorways.

The work gives each room a different sound mixture. The sounds, not loud but quite easy to hear, form textures which envelop each space, not so much as something to listen to; more something one is immersed in.

In passing between the rooms the exact point of change is elusive – suddenly one simply finds oneself in a distinctly different place.



Standing in the center of the space  
one hears a series of clicks.  
Stepping away, one encounters places  
where there is no sound at all and  
others where only some of the clicks  
can be heard. In the silent places  
it seems that the sound has disappeared  
from the room altogether, but returning  
to the center always reveals it again.

While one is in the center, the clicks  
seem to emanate from high on the rear  
or front walls. When moving to other  
places the source of sound seems to  
skip to different points on the room.

The infinite line in the work's title  
refers to the time and pitch patterns  
of the clicks – they gradually get  
faster and slower while rising and  
falling in pitch, forming an endless  
phrase – always developing, never  
resolving.

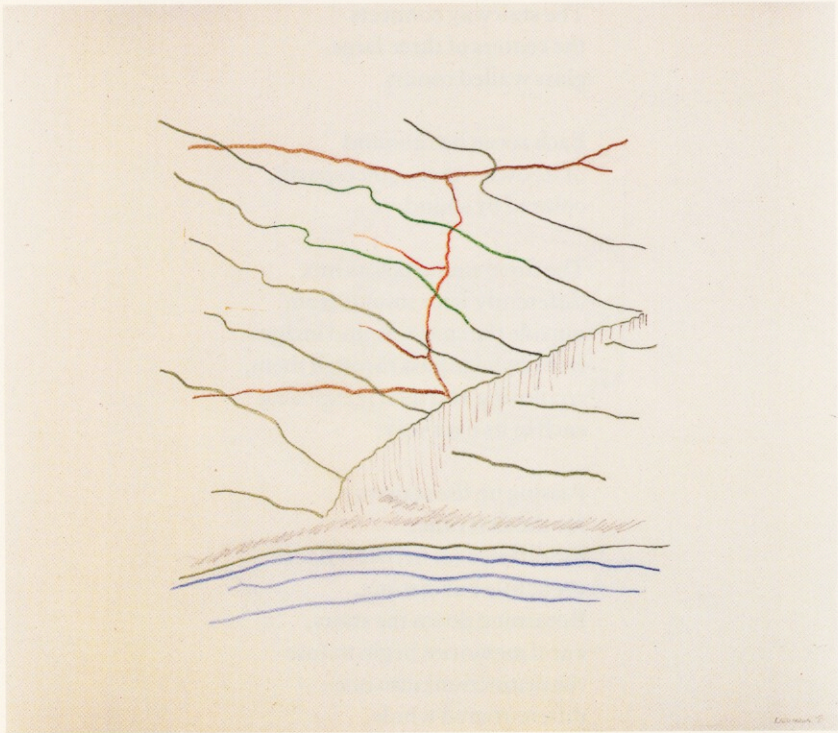




As one enters the work's wooded grove,  
one encounters a high bright sound –  
like a fine aural mist. It permeates  
the grove, seeming to come from nowhere.

At first the sound seems constant, but  
if one listens for a few minutes an  
inner detail and motion begin to appear.  
After a while the sound sometimes seems  
to disappear, becoming embedded in the  
sound of the woods. It is an intense  
but not unpleasant place to be.

Upon leaving the wood the sound becomes  
distant and things slip back to normal.

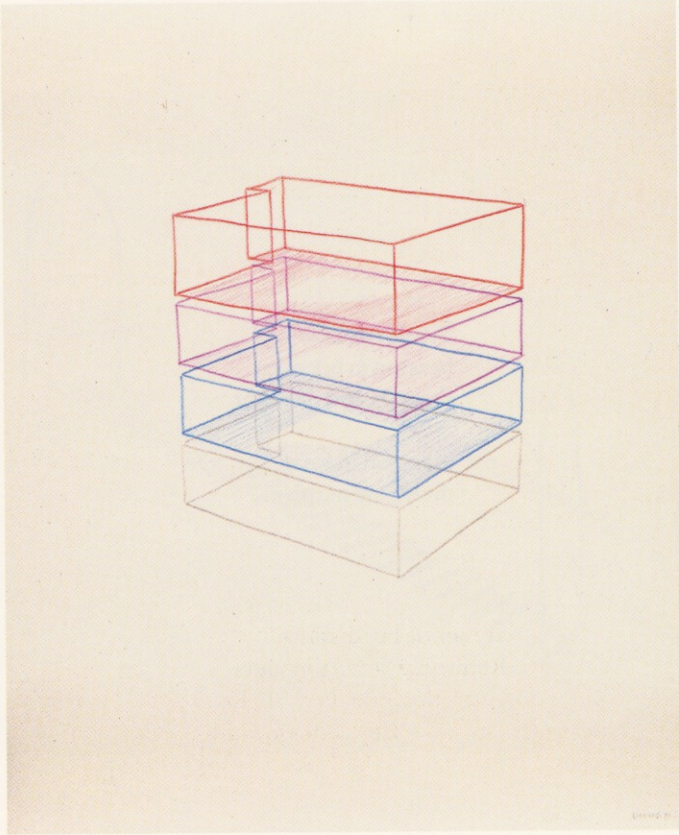


The stairway connects  
the centers of three large,  
glass walled rooms.

Each room has a sound  
of its own – three quiet spaces,  
colored by sound.

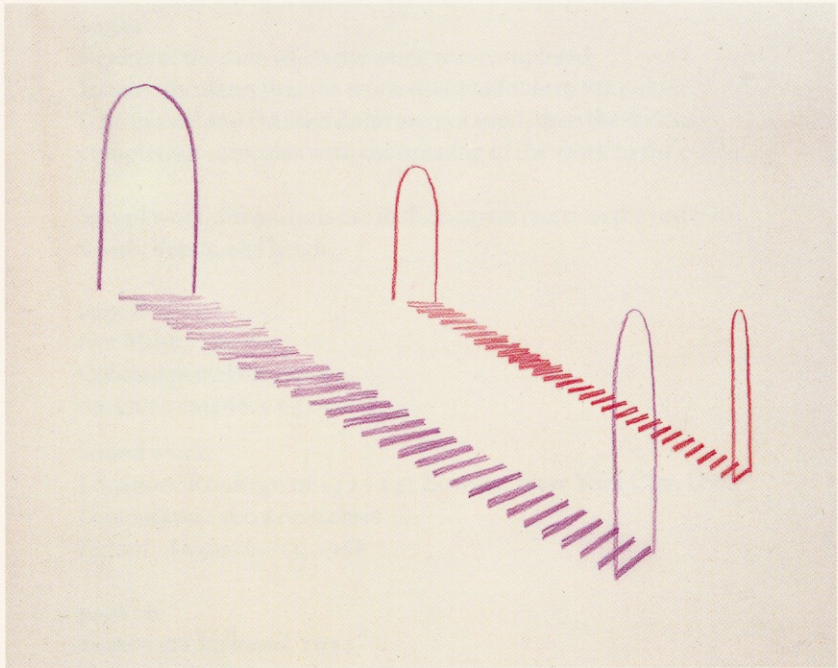
The three sound colors mix  
differently with sounds from  
outside the space. Sound images  
from outside pass through them,  
recoloring and then reexposing  
each in its own way.

Passing up the stairway  
for the first time,  
the differences between floors  
are subtle but distinct.  
Returning down the stairs,  
aural memories begin to fuse  
the distinctions into one  
differentiated whole.



Two passages,  
bearing in between  
shadow and daylight,

identical in form,  
diverging in spirit.





## List of Drawings and Sound Works

Three different terms are used to qualify dates where they apply:

Proposed: the date when the site was confirmed and realization began

Realized: the date when the work was completed

Extant: the dates that the work was available to the public

If proposed and realized dates are not used, then the date of completion coincides with the opening of the work to the public.

Sound work dimensions are to the nearest meter in the order of width, depth, and height.

page 8

*Fan Music*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

66.5 x 79 cm; 66.5 x 52 cm

Sound work:

Location: Rooftops of 137–141 Bowery, New York City, USA

Dimensions: 100 x 60 meters

Extant: August 9–11, 1968

page 10

*Southwest Stairwell*, 1992

Colored pencil on paper

82 x 52 cm; 82 x 34 cm

Sound work:

Location: Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada

Dimensions: 4 x 3 x 20 meters

Extant: Fall 1968

page 12

*Walkthrough*, 1993

Pencil on paper

60 x 75 cm; 60 x 34 cm



Sound work:

Location: Jay Street Subway Station,  
Metropolitan Transit Authority Building, New York City, USA

Dimensions: 30 x 14 x 5 meters

Proposed: 1971

Extant: 1973–1977

page 14

*Round*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

49 x 79 cm; 49 x 31 cm

Sound work:

Location: Old US Customs House Rotunda, New York City,  
USA

Dimensions: elliptical rotunda 20 x 60 x 15 meters

Extant: November 19–21, 1976

page 16

*Untitled*, 1993

Pencil on paper

60 x 97 cm; 60 x 27 cm

Sound work:

Exhibition: Rooms, P.S.1,  
Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York City, USA

Dimensions: 10 x 12 x 11 meters; 11 x 15 x 11 meters

Extant: June 9–26, 1976

page 18

*Untitled*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

55.5 x 99 cm; 55.5 x 28 cm

Sound work:

Exhibition: Documenta VI

Location: Clearing in Karlsaue Park, Kassel, Germany

Dimensions: 30 meters in diameter

Extant: Summer–Fall 1977

page 20

*Times Square*, 1992

Colored pencil on paper

74.5 x 96 cm; 74.5 x 79 cm

Sound work:

Location: Pedestrian island between  
46th and 45th Streets, New York City, USA

Dimensions: triangle 6 x 12 meters

Proposed: 1973

Extant: 1977–1992

page 22

*Untitled*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

53 x 75 cm; 53 x 53 cm

Sound work:

Location: Abby Aldrich Sculpture Garden,  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, USA

Dimensions: 60 x 20 meters

Extant: Summer 1978

page 24

*Untitled*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

68.5 x 90 cm; 68.5 x 24 cm

Sound work:

Location: Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam, Holland

Dimensions: 10 x 6 x 3 meters

Extant: September 27–30, 1978

page 26

*Untitled*, 1992

Pencil on paper

89.5 x 55 cm; 89.5 x 40 cm

Sound work:

Location: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA

Dimensions: 4 x 5 x 18 meters

Proposed: 1978

Extant: 1979–1989

page 28

*Five Russians*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

57 x 60 cm; 57 x 42.5 cm

Sound work:

Location: The Clocktower, Institute for  
Art and Urban Resources, New York City, USA

Dimensions: 10 x 10 x 11 meters

Extant: Fall 1979

page 30

*Untitled*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

62.5 x 88; 62.5 x 31 cm

Sound work:

Location: Botanical Garden, Como Park, St. Paul, Minnesota,  
USA

Dimensions: rotunda 30 x 20 meters

Extant: Summer 1980

page 32

*Untitled*, 1993

Pencil on paper

30 x 97 cm; 30 x 30 cm

Sound work:

Location: Bell Gallery, Brown University, Providence,  
Rhode Island, USA

Dimensions: 8 x 16 x 3 meters

Realized: 1982

Extant: February 11 – March 10, 1983

page 34

*Untitled*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

59 x 72.5 cm; 59 x 30 cm

Sound work:

Location: Villa Celle, Pistoia, Italy

Dimensions: 120 x 60 meters

Extant: 1983 – 1990

page 36

*Untitled*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

53 x 89.5 cm; 53 x 27 cm

Sound work:

Location: ARC 2, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris,  
France

Dimensions: 10 x 15 x 4 meters

Extant: May 6 – June 12, 1983

page 38

*Untitled*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

65.5 x 95.5 cm; 65.5 x 29 cm

Sound work:

Location: Kunsthalle, Basel, Switzerland

Dimensions: 22 x 11 x 10 meters

Extant: October 2 – November 6, 1983

page 40

*Untitled*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

68.5 x 89 cm; 68.5 x 29.5 cm

Sound work:

Exhibition: Promenades, Centre d'Art Contemporain,  
Geneva, Switzerland.

Location: Pedestrian tunnel, Parc Lullin

Dimensions: 2 x 60 x 2 meters

Extant: June 9 – September 8, 1985

page 42

*Works For One Person, Number 1*, 1993

Pencil on paper

56 x 35.5 cm; 56 x 33 cm

Sound work:

Location: Galerie Eric Franck, Geneva, Switzerland

Dimensions: 4 x 5 x 3 meters

Extant: 1986 – 1993

page 44

*Untitled*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

75 x 97 cm; 75 x 20 cm

Sound work:

Location: Domaine de Kerguéhennec, Locmine, France

Dimensions: 120 x 200 meters

Proposed: 1985

Extant: 1986–1988

page 46

*Infinite Lines From Elusive Sources # 1*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

59.5 x 121 cm; 59.5 x 40 cm

Sound work:

Location: Galerie Ghislaine Hussenot, Paris, France

Dimensions: 8 x 16 x 5 meters

Extant: 1988–1989

page 48

*Sound Line*, 1993

Pencil on paper

56 x 71 cm; 56 x 33 cm

Sound work:

Location: CNAC, Magasin, Grenoble, France

Dimensions: 2 x 60 x 18 meters

Realized: 1987

Extant: February 28–April 10, 1988

page 50

*River Grove*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

45.5 x 67 cm; 45.5 x 43 cm

Sound work:

Location: Roaring Fork River, Aspen, Colorado, USA

Dimensions: 20 x 30 meters

Extant: Summer-Fall 1988

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*A Bell For Sankt Cäcilien*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

57 x 90 cm; 57 x 28 cm

Sound work:

Location: Park adjacent to Kölnischer Kunstverein,  
Cologne, Germany

Dimensions: 10 x 20 meters

Realized: 1988

Extant: 1989–1991

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*A Large Small Room*, 1993

Pencil on paper

61 x 86 cm; 61 x 32 cm

Sound work:

Location: Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany

Dimensions: 3 x 2 x 3 meters

Extant: 1989–1992

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*Two 'Identical' Rooms*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

40 x 77; 40 x 52.5 cm

Sound work:

Exhibition: Einleuchten, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany

Dimensions: 14 x 8 x 11 meters; 14 x 8 x 11 meters

Extant: November 11, 1989–February 18, 1990

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*Two Sides Of The 'Same' Room*, 1993

Pencil on paper

61 x 90 cm; 61 x 26 cm

Sound work:

Location: Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas, USA

Dimensions: 6 x 8 x 3 meters

Realized: 1989

Extant: January 28–April 22, 1990

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*Three 'Similar' Rooms*, 1989

Colored pencil on paper

45 x 70 cm; 45 x 50 cm

Sound work:

Location: Galleria Giorgio Persano, Turin, Italy

Dimensions: 7 x 6 x 4 meters; 7 x 6 x 4 meters; 6 x 6 x 4 meters

Extant: 1990-Present

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*Infinite Lines From Elusive Sources #2*, 1990

Colored pencil on paper

45 x 50 cm; 45 x 63 cm

Sound work:

Location: Galleria Giorgio Persano, Milan, Italy

Dimensions: 5 x 5 x 4 meters

Extant: 1990-1992

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*Untitled*, 1990

Colored pencil on paper

48 x 55 cm; 48 x 47 cm

Sound work:

Location: Lake Luzern, Switzerland

Dimensions: 150 x 100 meters

Extant: Summer-Fall 1991

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*Three To One*, 1992

Colored pencil on paper

89.5 x 74 cm; 89.5 x 40 cm

Sound work:

Exhibition: Documenta IX

Location: AOK Building, Kassel, Germany

Dimensions: 7 x 16 x 3 meters; 7 x 16 x 3 meters; 7 x 16 x 3 meters

Realized: 1991

Extant: 1992-Present

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*Untitled*, 1993

Colored pencil on paper

51 x 63.5 cm; 51 x 27.5 cm

Sound work:

Location: capc Musée d'Art Moderne, Bordeaux, France

Dimensions: 3 x 10 x 4 meters; 3 x 10 x 4 meters

Extant: 1993-Present