

Volker Straebel

Sound Observation #1a (Guben)

live diffusion of four-channel digital audio (2001/11)

Program note:

Sound Observations is a series of electroacoustic works – live performances and sound installations – that observe the qualities of live or recorded soundscapes.

Sound Observation #1a (Guben) is based on a recording of an electric locomotive standing in the Guben, Germany train station. A narrow frequency band is filtered out and projected from in front of the audience, while all other frequencies are projected from behind. During the course of the piece, the frequency band in front scans the entire spectrum, from the very low to the very high.

The duration of the piece is 15'10". The dynamic relation between front and back speakers is mixed live. [The radio version was mixed by Jean Szymczak.]

Performance:

Playback through four speakers surrounding the audience, with the bandpass filter in front, the band-block filter in back. For the very low and very high frequencies – which occur at the very beginning and very end of the piece – the bandpass signal is quite soft. It should always appear dominant in comparison to the band-block signal, and its volume needs to be adjusted accordingly.

Documentation:

The bandpass filter is steeper than the band-block filter. In the band-block signal, the blowing off of steam is reduced in volume.

Farid Guendoul alias Omar Ben Noui from Algeria, who had applied for political asylum in Germany, died in Guben on February 13, 1999, after being hunted by a group of teenagers. In his attempt to flee, Guendoul kicked in a glass door and bled to death from his wounds. At the time the piece was conceived, the name of the town was mainly associated with this incident.

First performed on December 30th, 2001, at mex in Künstlerhaus Dortmund, Germany.
Re-mastered 2011.