

## Rumours / Resonances demonstrated in geometrical order (Den Haag 2001)

This audio walk was commissioned by Stroom Den Haag for their exhibition and audiowalk series "You never walk alone". I was inspired by a few different sources. Firstly, for Hans Ulrich Obrist's *Rumours* project I had started to write about the ambient sound of the city being comprised of "rumours" - an etymological leap which allowed me to hear urban background sounds, normally undefined and vaguely undesirable, as a seething source of narrative. Secondly, I (and probably everyone on my street) received a photocopied, typed and collaged letter which linked illness, radiation, the dutch secret service and the disappearance of cats into a paranoid conspiracy. Spinoza's presence in Den Haag, childhood experience with the Nuclear industry and investigations into New-Age style obsessions with tuning, frequency and harmony were incorporated into the mix.

Rumours / Resonances situates a number of short narratives about "looking for the hidden sound of the city" along a fixed route through the very centre of The Hague. Woven into this search are a number of (then current) rumours about the city: politics, mafia practices, the presence of an underground nuclear shelter, the increasing proliferation of surveillance cameras.

There is also a disturbing meta-narrative concerning the increasingly untrustworthy narrator who links radiation, vibration and electronic surveillance into a synaesthetic soup. Towards the end of the walk he confesses that, while he is guiding the listener through the streets by using his voice, there are other voices in his head guiding him.

The walk uses the theatricality of location to forge a relationship between the listener and their surroundings. A walk along one of the many streets that were once canals reveals in sound the water running under our feet. A very calm and hidden alleyway conceals a composition made of transduced electromagnetic fields, simultaneously disturbing and beautiful. Listeners are encouraged to walk around a fountain in circles. An elevator takes the listener from an underground parking garage to a balcony high up in a light-filled atrium.

One of the episodes stresses the different times present in an audio walk. The listeners walk alongside newly constructed houses, listening to a recording of the narrator walking (in the past) through the ruins of the previous houses and telling stories about who (in another time) lived or worked in which house.

Many of the recordings are made with binaural recording technique, often in the exact location of playback, blurring the boundary between recorded and live sound. Some of the voice is recorded in "radio narrator" style and some binaurally, as if the narrator is walking next to the listener.

Some of these techniques were already used in Middelburg, but here the predictability of the location and the linear structure allowed a clear dramaturgy of narrative, environmental sound, music and visual surroundings.

I also experimented a great deal with the use of music: The EMF recordings are composed into a musical structure, but having told the listeners explicitly that they are listening to EM radiation, the experience is doubled - do you lose yourself in the music as an abstract, ambient form or are you on the alert? At other moments music is used in a "film soundtrack" type manner - to set a tempo for walking, to create or emphasise transitions from one space / story to the next.

An accompanying booklet in the style of the paranoid cat-letter shows the route while presenting the whole as a kind of puzzle with extra text fragments that do not appear in the spoken narrative.

The basic premise of R/R was also in a way a forerunner of the later "Spectral Analysis" works. Conflating electromagnetic and sonic vibration, ionising and non-ionising radiation or accepting metaphors like resonance and magnetism at face value gives access to fictional conspiracy-filled possibilities which at the same time have interesting links to the

history of science and medicine.

The "untrustworthy narrator" has also resurfaced in other works (e.g. dream map). I think that breaking through the reliance on, and trust in, the guide seems to put the listener in an interesting place - the listener is more aware, more active. I think maybe I got this from listening to Willem de Ridder.

One important lesson that I learned was that siting a piece in the centre of a city can be problematic. 22 years later some of the buildings have been demolished and new ones have arisen. Some places are now completely inaccessible and others present a totally different visual aspect.

As I want to re-activate the work using TRACKS I have to think about how to deal with the discrepancies. It would be nigh-on impossible to reconstruct the material with new text, so information has to be given in some other way, with "meta" tracks or an introduction, or perhaps with texts displayed visually in the app.

A list of changes or instructions that need to be added:

Track (1) The startpoint is now the front door of the Filmhuis. Good to note that the original was played from a portable CD player (as I tell people to turn their phones off!)

Track (6) Dunne Bierkade. The alleyway used as the location is now open only at certain times of day. If the listener can't enter, they should stay by the gate.

Track (11)

"Ziet U het ronde glaswand van het AntonPhillipszaal? wij gaan daar rechts omheen en naar het volgende gebouw op de rechter kant. De Overheid. Binnenlandse Zaken. Loop onder het dakje langs het plein en blijven staan bij een van de metaal roosters daar. dan kies het volgende nummer."

The buildings named in the text have been replaced by Amare. The instruction should be: "Walk around the Amare building to the left. Stand under the narrow balcony and choose the next track." although this can also be shown in the app itself.

Track (12) BiZa = Amare. Access through the doors of the Stadhuis to the parking garage needs to be checked.

Track (13) It's now impossible to access the 13th floor with the lift. Instead, listeners need to take the lift (or the stairs?) to the ground floor and exit there.

Track (14) needs to be listened to in the Atrium of the Stadhuis.