listening sites in bonn
by sam auinger

1. Beat
2. Sound pattern
3. Colour
4. Symbolic sound space
5. Oscillation
6. Masking
7. Wide boundary
8. Reflection
9. Sound identity
10. Experiencing the space
11. Sing song
12. Gaits
13. Cut-out effect
14. Sound of the current
15. Sound reflection
16. Rhythm box
17. Grey noise
18. Sound effect
19. Distant rumble
20. Occupied sound space
21. Space sequence

Note: The listening sites 3 and 6 cannot be visited from October to April for seasonal reasons.
The periodic cycle of the traffic light in front of the entrance to Bonn’s main train station measures the ever-dominant sound of the traffic in the surrounding architectural space — swelling, toning and subsiding in a predictable manner.

The fountain colours the small square in the pedestrian zone around it with its poetic sounds of falling water. The thin water jets from the three dispensers quietly ripple into the upper basin. The water flowing over to the lower basin creates a sound that is reminiscent of voices, seemingly telling a story and having a calming effect in its tranquility.

The foundations, represented by an approximate 50 cm high wall, of Bonn’s first Roman basilica can be viewed in the inner courtyard of the former Kurfürstliches Schloss, which is a good example of this.

The spacious pedestrian zone of Bonn’s historic old town offers many possibilities to listen to the pedestrian’s various gaits. The way in which we place one foot ahead of the other results in a rhythm and an individuality that almost exclusively reveals itself in the car-free public space.

The sound of this fountain offers two important qualities to result in a new perception of space. The students’ voices from the courtyard windows, the footsteps and voices on the square and from the open colonnades enliven the space with bright sounds. Here the reflections also convey the predominately weathered masonry of the surrounding structure. Stone, wood, metal and glass amplify and colour the permeating engine sounds of the traffic passing by.

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Standing on the Münsterplatz as the large cascades roar, the pedestrian zone with its narrow streets, irregular street layout, minimal through traffic and a variety of paving styles all contribute to a strong aural identity.

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