SPEAKERS SCULPTURES

participative electroacoustic sculptures
created with recycled electronics
and communications media

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video link: https://vimeo.com/66304704

General statement:

My decision in the early 1980s to stop working with pigments and canvas came from a desire to interact directly with public spaces. This is why I decided to work with loudspeakers and media. Loudspeakers have long been integrated into modern life inside our homes, mass transportation, and public spaces -- wherever you find people, you'll find loudspeakers. The art I make is not "high tech", it's normal. Speakers are cheap and commonplace: they can be found at flea markets, second-hand stores, recycling centers or in garbage bins. I use loudspeakers much in the same way that a sculptor uses clay or wood: as a modern medium to create artworks with the added attraction that they can make the air vibrate ("sound") around them and create a public "hotspot".

My work:

Since 1983 I have been creating interactive sound sculptures -- both mobile and immobile -- made with loudspeakers for public spaces. My immobile sculptures (made with hundreds of recycled speakers) adapt to their environment by taking on various shapes like an entranceway, a temple, a gate, a clocktower and a wall.

Some examples: created for the Sound as a Medium of Art exhibition in Germany, TEMPLE was made with 3,000 recycled loudspeakers, amplifiers, radios/tuners, and one mixing board. This monumental public sound speaker was inspired by the Greek temple ruin at Delphi. For SPEAKERS GATE I was inspired by a gateway of a local medieval fortress. It was made with 350 recycled loudspeakers and electronics. For SPEAKERS WALL I incorporated an actual piece of the Berlin Wall into a sculpture that was used also as a PA system for local Djs. More importantly is that all these sculptures produce sound. For example, with TEMPLE, visitors hear white noise (not loud : just as a kind of "heartbeat") from radio receivers as well as people's voices: the public is encouraged to interact with the installation. For three minutes they can call a special, designated phone number to hear their voices through the thousands of speakers (the original Delphi temple produced oracles). In more recent sculptures (see GATEWAY and TREE) via Bluetooth receiver technology the spectators can play their own music from their smartphones and laptops through the sculpture.

My work is site-specific: each individual project is created specially for a site, sometimes directly embedded into a pre-existent structure. The work is conceived after a residency period and is formulated together with local cultural initiatives and neighborhoods. Usually public sculptures are mute, mine are experimental media sculptures: "active" prototype sculptures that act as local public "hotspots" (see SPEAKERS CORNER in Hyde Park/ London) however the calls are limited to 3 minutes. Of course the sound is regulable: the volume itself can be changed according to the situation via a mixing board. Which also means that the sculpture can be used as a PA system for public events and local DJs. The sculpture itself has only signal cable and therefore is not electrically dangerous.

Durability: some of my sculptures (see the snow-decked TEMPLE photo) are meant to last for years. Note that most re-cycled (used) speakers are very durable "classical" speakers made of solid wood that have already withstood the tooth of time. Loudspeakers are basically wood and a magnetic cone that are practically impossible to destroy: in the worst case of vandalism one basically only needs to replace the speaker. Also remember that we are talking here about a sculpture that people use themselves: why should they destroy it? A layer of roofing is needed to protect from rain: otherwise these sculptures out of weathered and patina-enhanced speakers only looks better with time. A small supply of extra replacement speakers takes care of the rest.

In terms of costs/budget: the number of loudspeakers and the expense of installing them is dependant on how the sculpture is integrated into its environment: is it embedded into a pre-existant sculpture (see GATEWAY, CLOCKTOWER, or TREE) or must a structure and foundations be build to support it (see TEMPLE or WALL)? Basically the main elements (speakers, amplifiers, radios) can be acquired from local recyling yards/ sources (for example Goodwill and Salvation Army) and sponsors (see SPEAKERS GATE). However this can take up to two or three months. Through a grassroots campaign/ public call one can also motivate people to donate their own used speakers (salvaging dad's vintage speakers from the attic) and speed up the process (while making it even more "public"). In terms of "sculptural" ideas I would suggest something in the realm of a labyrinth, an amphitheater, or even "sounding" street furniture. All these ideas would be "brain-stormed" over a residency period.

GATEWAY (2014) commissioned by the Berliner Festspiele / MaerzMusik Festival.
700 recycled loudspeakers integrated into the lobby. An interactive electroacoustic sculpture created from recycled loudspeakers. Sound (regulable via a mixing board): radio "white noise" and spectator's voices. People can call up the sculpture and talk through it for 3 minutes also via Bluetooth receivers spectators are encouraged to participate "live" by playing music from their smartphones. Photo WALTER.FOTOGRAFIE
video link: https://vimeo.com/103945269

The CUBE (2013)
Hard Rock Hotel, Palm Springs Ca.
500 recycled loudspeakers that are soldered together as an “active” public sound sculpture. The electromagnetic signals from recycled radios produce a low-level “white noise” into which local spectators can add their own tunes and pre-recorded messages. The sculpture is also conceived as a full-blown interactive sound sculpture where participants can play guitar and add their voices via bluetooth technology. Sound is regulable via mixing board.

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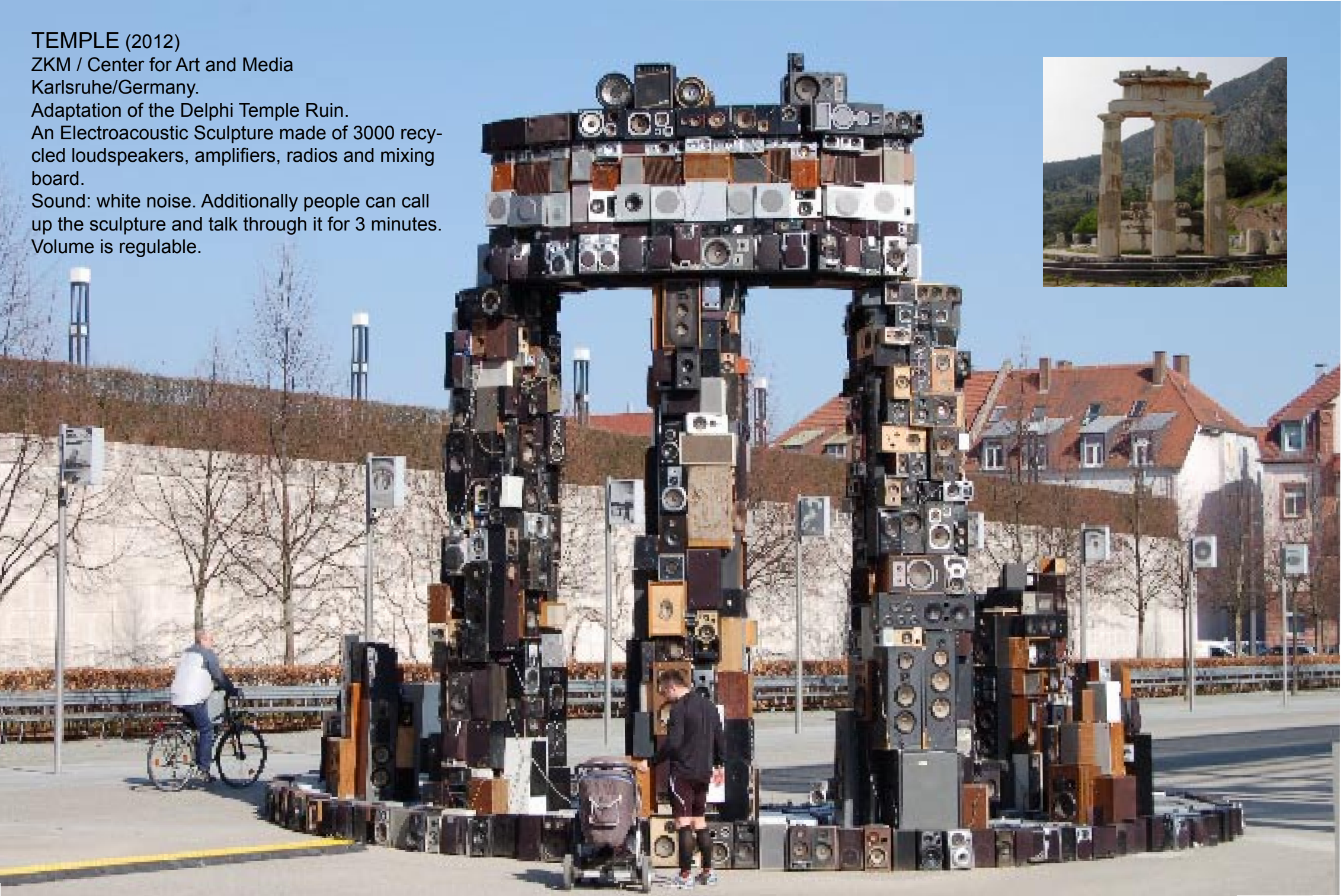
TEMPLE (2012)
ZKM / Center for Art and Media
Karlsruhe/Germany.
Adaptation of the Delphi Temple Ruin.
An Electroacoustic Sculpture made of 3000 recycled loudspeakers, amplifiers, radios and mixing board.
Sound: white noise. Additionally people can call up the sculpture and talk through it for 3 minutes.
Volume is regulable.



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video links: **https://vimeo.com/38317490**
https://vimeo.com/38317058

view at night

view in winter

construction-in-progress

SPEAKERS WALL . 2011. Le Quai-Forum des Arts Vivants/Angers. Accroche-Coeurs Festival
Materials: original Berlin Wall segment, 1000 soldered (recycled) loudspeakers amplifiers, tuners, and mixing board. Via a telephone answering machine people can call the sculpture and talk through it for 3 minutes. Sound is regulable. video link: https://vimeo.com/28495625

SPEAKERS GATE. Kirschau (Saxen) Germany. 2010.
Replica of the gateway of a 6th century fortress (the KORSE).
Materiels:350 recycled loudspeakers, amplifiers, radio receivers. Electronic elements are soldered together and amplify "white noise"(electromagnetic waves of the environment).

AUDIO IGLOO. 2013 Sculpture Museum/ Marl. 1997. Hull Time Based Arts, U.K.
2004 Parochial Church, Singuihr Gallery/Berlin. Materiels: 300 recycled loudspeakers, tuners, record players,and receivers. Sound: electromagnetic air waves (white noise).

SPEAKER'S MONUMENT. 1991.
INTERFERENZEN-- Art from West Berlin, Riga, Lithuania.
A discarded/ recycled Stalinist sculpture re-fitted with loudspeakers, telephone answering machine, and amplifier. People can call up the sculpture and talk through it.

TREE (project for Marler Sound Art Prize 2013). This electro-acoustic sculpture plays low-level white noise. Additionally via bluetooth and/or WiFi technology spectators within 10 meters can participate orally/musically with their smartphones as "oral graffitti". In effect the sculpture functions as a "Speakers Corner".

PORTE SONORE (SPEAKERS GATE)
Project for Les Abattoirs (near Lyon/ France) for the Festival Electrochoc.
materials: 1000 recycled loudspeakers, one 24-channel mixing board, 10 amplifiers,10 recycled receivers,10 recycled cassette players/ “ghetto blasters”,10 DVD/CD players. Sound: low-volume multi-acoustic white noise (white noise = electromagnetic sound waves change according to weather, time, radio stations and frequencies). Also the public can call up the sculpture via a local telephone number and talk through it “live” for 3 minutes with their telephones or use their smart phones to create tunes.

CLOCKTOWER.
Project for Bangor (Wales) Sound City 2014
5,000 weather-resistant loudspeakers, would allow the public to express itself “live” for 3 minutes via Bluetooth receivers, Wi-FI, and a local telephone number. The sculpture would also be available for local concerts and public art events.

CV : Benoît Maubrey
1952 born in Washington, D.C. of French parents.
1975 Bachelor of Arts Diploma from Georgetown University
since 1979 in Berlin and Baitz /Brandenburg/Germany.

Exhibitions, Performances and Festivals (a selection):
(2014) MarzMusik Festival, Berliner Festspiele.
(2013) Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten Marl,
-- „Nuit Blanche“ Kosice European Culture Capital.
2012 ZKM/Karlsruhe, SOUND ART.
-- STATT FARBE: LICHT Bauhaus Museum/Dessau.
2011 Festival Les Accroche-Coeurs/Angers,
2010 TonSpur Expanded: the Loudspeaker/Vienna, the AUDIO GUILLOTINE.
-- Zero1 Festival, San Jose Biennale, San Jose Ca.
-- NAISA, Toronto.
2008 MOSTRA DES ARTES SESC/ Sao Paolo, Brazil.
-- MUSICA EX MACHINA/ Bilbao.
2007 IM AUGE DES KLANGS , Schloss Moyland/ Joseph Beuys Archive.
-- INGENUITY, Cleveland Festival for Arts and Technology.
-- Digital Arts Week, Zurich.
2006 Taipei Digital Arts Festival, Taiwan.
-- Sitelines Festival, NYC.
-- SIGGRAPH, Boston.
2004 “Sonoric Atmospheres/Ostseebiennale of Sound Art.
-- AUDIO IGLOO, Singuhr-Hörgalerie, Berlin.
-- LEM Festival (Gracia Territoria Sonor), Barcelona.
2002 AUDIO BALLERINAS, Location One, NYC.
-- Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum fuer Gegenwartskunst, Berlin.
2001 KunstMuseum / Wolfsburg.
-- New Haven Festival for Arts and Ideas.
-- Seoul Performing Arts Festival.
-- Musee des Arts et Industrie, Saint-Etienne.
2000 Monaco Dance Danses Forum, Montecarlo.
1999 AUDIO IGLOO, commissioned sculpture at Hull Time Based Arts, UK.
1998 International Symposium for Elecronic Arts, Chicago..
-- Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
1997 AUDIO GEISHAS, ICC-NTT Tokyo City Opera House.
-- Ostranenie Festival, Stiftung Bauhaus / Dessau.
-- XIX International Triennale Exhibition of Milan.
-- SONAMBIENTE Sound Art Festival, Academy of Arts, Berlin.
1994 International Symposium for Electronic Art, Helsinki.
1993 MEDIALE, Hamburg.
-- ULTIMA Festival, Oslo.
1992 Cleveland Performance Festival, Ohio.
-- TISEA, Sydney.
1991 European Land Art Biennale, Cottbus, Germany.
-- INTERFERENZEN-- Art from West Berlin, Riga, Lettland
1989 Festival PERSPECTIVES, Saarbrücken.
1988 “Parcours Sonores“, Musée de La Villette, Paris.
1987 STEIRISCHE HERBST, Graz, Austria.
1986 ARS ELECTRONICA, Linz, Austria.
-- The Mattress Factory, Pittsburg, Pa.
-- Berlin Atonal Festival.

Awards: Prix Ars Electronica 1991 (Honorable Mention) , Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance NYC 2006, Palmarès du 35e Concours Internationaux de Musique et d’Art Sonore Electroacoustiques de Bourges 2004 and 2009. Marler Video Installations Preis 2008, Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten Marl.

Grants: 1999 Hull Time Based Arts, UK.
2006 Composer-in-Residence, Schloss Wiepersdorf, Brandenburg, Germany.
2010 Artist-inResidence at MuseumQuartier Vienna.
2011 DIVA artist residency in Aarhus, Denmark.

Bibliography:
LEONARDO, Vol.28, No.2, pp.93-97, 1995, Audio Jackets and Other Electroacosutic Clothes.
-- KLANG und BEWEGUNG, Berichte aus der Musikwissenschaft, Shaker Verlag ISBN 3-8322-2270-7-
-- Techno Textiles: Revolutionary Fabrics for Fashion and Design (9780500280966): Sarah E. Braddock, Marie O‘Mahony.
-- See Yourself Sensing from Madeline Schwartzman, June 2011m Black Dog Publishing, London.

Workshops / Guest artist lectures:
Oberlin College, Concordia University, Johns Hopkins University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Dresden Academy of Arts , Academy of Arts Enschede, Simon Fraser University, George Washington University. MIT Media Lab, IDEA Center Colorado College.

References (letters of reference available):

Steve Dietz , Founder, President, and Artistic Director of Northern Lights. MN. Founding Director Artistic Director of the 01SJ Biennial. See more at: http://northern.lights.mn/about/staff/steve/#sthash.vndDhDnV.dpuf
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