

Max Neuhaus - *Moment*

Neuhaus uses the term 'Moment' to describe a group of his sound works which take the form of periodic sound signals in communities. He sees these works as an evolution of the traditional communal sounds of church bells and public clocks -- as unifiers, spiritually tying together a community's diverse places and activities momentarily throughout the day.

In contrast to the traditional sound signal though, these works utilize the disappearance of a sound instead to form a silent moment of both unity and demarcation throughout a community.

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Historically the most important function of sound in communities has been as a signal. Sound has been used for simultaneous communication among the inhabitants of communities in both eastern and western civilizations, since antiquity. In Europe, by the late 700s, more than a thousand years ago, the church bell had become a definitive force in communities. It not only announced church services, but also deaths, births, fire, revolt and festivals. It was such a strong unifying force that the limits of the community itself were defined by its range -- if you lived beyond where you could hear it, you lacked the daily information necessary to be a participant in society.

A sound signal is a communicator, the first form of broadcasting, a medium that carries information to people in many different places simultaneously.

This is a form of unification.

I call one group of my sound works *Moment* or *Time Pieces*. They are artworks which take the form of communal sound signals. The basic idea of these works though, is to form the sound signal with a silence rather than a sound.

Instead of a bell which begins with a sudden clang and gradually dies away - this concept is precisely the opposite: the sound is introduced gradually, beginning inaudibly it grows slowly over a period of minutes and, at its height, suddenly disappears.

The long subtle emergence of the sound causes it to go unnoticed. It becomes apparent only at the instant of its sudden disappearance, creating a sense of silence. In this silent moment, for a few seconds after the sound has gone, a subtle transparent aural afterimage is superimposed on the everyday sounds of the environment.. a spontaneous aural memory or reconstruction perhaps, shared by all who notice it, engendered by the sound's disappearance.