

BILL FONTANA

Born April 25th, 1947

Lives and works in San Francisco

In a career spanning 55 years, Bill Fontana has become internationally recognized for his pioneering experiments in sound. Since the late 1960's, he has consistently used sound as a sculptural medium to interact with and transform our perceptions of visual and architectural spaces. Applying his knowledge of composition, he draws out patterns of sound from natural and man-made worlds to create sound works that have the potential to conjure up visual imagery in the mind of the listener. He has realized sound sculptures and radio projects for institutions, museums and broadcast organizations around the world. His work has been exhibited at the Centre Pompidou in both Paris and Shanghai; the Vatican, Rome; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Arc de Triomphe, Paris; Arter, Istanbul; MAAT, Lisbon; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow; the Blanton Museum, Austin; the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; the Post Museum, Frankfurt; the Art History and Natural History Museums in Vienna; both Tate Modern and Tate Britain and the Palace of Westminster in London; the 1999 Venice Biennale; Maxxi, Rome; Madison Square Park, New York; Soundcape Park, Miami Beach; Kunsthaus, Graz Austria, the National Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan; the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; the Art Gallery of NSW Sydney; the Kolumba Museum, Cologne; Ennova Art Museum, China. He has done major sound art projects for the BBC, the European Broadcast Union, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, National Public Radio, West German Radio (WDR), Swedish Radio, Radio France, and the Austrian State Radio.

Many of these works create live listening networks that collect information from sources as diverse as the slowly vanishing sounds of Japan, the Bosphorus River in Istanbul and its cisterns, the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, the Millennium Bridge in London, the sounds of the sea of Normandy Coast, fog horns in San Francisco, old growth forests, hydroelectric turbines, diverse urban and marine environments; the silenced bells of both Notre Dame and the Great Bell of the Vatican; the imagined sounds of the Anhalter Bahnhof in Berlin, the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, rain forests from 3 continents and the melting Dachstein Glacier in the Austrian Alps. Fontana's projects have explored hybrid listening technologies using acoustic microphones, underwater sensors (hydrophones) and structural/material sensors (accelerometers). His more recent works are explorations of the relationship between image and sound, expressed through the combined mediums of audio and video.