

Heartscopes

Heartscopes is built on the relation to hidden sounds travelling in our surroundings. These are discovered with a stethoscope or by putting ones ear on surfaces.



Sound inducer speakers gave the possibility to breathe recorded sounds at very low level inside materials to compose the core of Heartscopes polysensorial and multidimensional playgrounds in public environments.

Then as the project is born from acoustic research, there are two main families of Heartscopes installations giving five interrelated courses of action:

5. Reveal existing sounds in the surroundings
4. Modify elements of the surroundings
3. Insert created acoustic sound sculptures in the surroundings
2. Induce recorded sounds in the surroundings
1. Insert created pieces in witch sounds are induced

From this "full spectrum", the project was from day one highly polyvalent and almost endlessly adaptive.

2.



It was first conceived for a town exploration, with 80, to over a hundred spots in which recorded sounds were induced, also inviting the public to listen to pointed acoustic spots and to widen their trip to... well everything around them in space and time :-)

A Heartscopes installation can be a stand alone project, as bring a new dynamic to existing events, it can be composed of a single installation as of hundreds.

For City Sonics In Mons we focused on breathing recorded sound material inside existing structures, the epicentre of listening spots pointed to only by red stickers, forming paths and a scenography between installations exhibited by sound artists through the town.



5 to 2: stethoscope safari in the town during the festival

The stethoscope as an acoustic “sound exploration tool”, as a diagnosis tool and as a public icon, participates to the poetic relation as to making of Heartscopes an all public project.

1.



For Besançon, we developed and optimised the technical aspects and the overall potentials of the project to propose outside installations accessible throughout the town, 24 hours a day over four days.

A 1000 stethoscopes were available in the town on a 'rent/buy' system:

One gives 3 euros for a stethoscope, then either gets his money back on return, or keeps the stethoscope. Heartscopes introduces the stethoscope as a sound exploration tool and to its practice in public space, it also makes a real stethoscope available for an uncommonly small price.

The core of the project was here physical pieces:

All are stand alone installations that are linked and create the skeleton of a multidimensional exploration.

A) In the letter boxes (above and under), one could ear recordings we collected while in residence in the town. Each letter box is inhabited. One with a woman taking a shower, another by a political argument in a pub, a family conversation at their dinner table... The main idea was for the block of letter boxes to be like a building, inhabited by recordings of people who live apart in the same town...

A second twelve letter box installation was set close to the main stethoscopes distribution point.



As Heartscopes are primarily 'contact' sound installations, the level of sound leaking into the surrounding environment is low; it is one of the qualities allowing them to be integrated in the largest variety of environments while playing continuously.

Recordings can be short loops or long changing compositions, as content is met through contact, the installations became like an endless treasure hunt, and could never be met whole, creating an intimacy and a conscious or unconscious privacy. The project thus also gently induces individuals to progressively begin to 'ear' their own soundscapes inside their surroundings.

Reflect them back to their own knowledge and experience, inviting them to use and widen it... Reaching for a point where the action of just being there, has no less value than reach out to "know" what has been produced for them by others.

Visual identification of Heartscopes spots:

Red stickers identified each spot and homed written little notes, thus creating a language between what is heard, the support (letter boxes, raw wood...) and where it is placed.

Blue leds were mounted to each spots to facilitate identification for night public.



Installations:

B) Here under we built a classified ads wall, in which were played witty and imaginary ads collected from inhabitants of the town.





The DVD player and the small amplifiers feeding inducer speakers in each coloured panel; were mounted in locked safes secured out of reach.

So while we kept 24h maintenance access, electricity and the most valuable equipment is away from publics reach.

C) For this next installation, 7 local Street Artists painted their interpretation of the 7 deadly sins, while another version of the sins of the city could be heard inside each painting.





These were set at the back of the music academy along the Doubs river. Readers and amplifiers were for this installation inside of the academy.

D) This next installation on the front of the music academy situated on the main town square, is different in that there is no sound composition fed to the piece. When a person touches it, contact microphones capture the interaction; the sound is transformed and then fed back to the installation. So this really is a Heartscopes public musical instrument.



E) On this town square, there is also the Patrimonial Museum. We dressed three of its fronts with raw woods panels and coloured panels.



In the 19 panels were played dreams collected from the population of Besançon

Apart from These installations, F) there was a 'chill out' blue aquatic light and sound wall built for the passage at the main bridge from day to night and night to day spaces of the festival.

G) 3 installations on the outside windows of an art gallery beside the 'museum of time'.

H) A light graph film was created by a local association, at night this video was projected on the path leading to the 5 Heartscopes wood panels in the park here under. As this spot is an entrance to the historic underground of the town, it gave us the theme to create the recordings.



I) Here above: to ensure stethoscopes availability to the public throughout the festival, a Besançon association transformed two delivery tricycles in highly interactive Heartscopes installations: modified telephone, hidden microphones...

3. Then there were a number of acoustic installations ...



Heartscopes Cyclophone



Heartscores rain drums: tuned water drops generate evolutive percussive patterns by hitting skins all fitted to an horizontal pipe leading to the outside listening skin. Then all the installation can and was searched to find different angles of ear view.



Balaplay with it's multitude of inside moving objects was a natural Heartscores spot



One of the authors as an alive Heartscopes



After the fruits & vegetable concert

5.

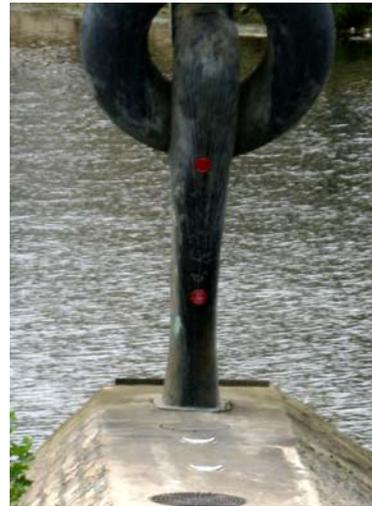
Before the festival, local associations organised stethoscope safaris, acoustic spot hunts in the town.

Throughout our residences we spotted a number of places that were interesting enough without any modification, to mark as part of the Heartscopes overall installation.

There were invitations to listen to the numerous fountains in the town, links with the installation in parks and valorisation of standing out acoustic spots like this hollow statue below:

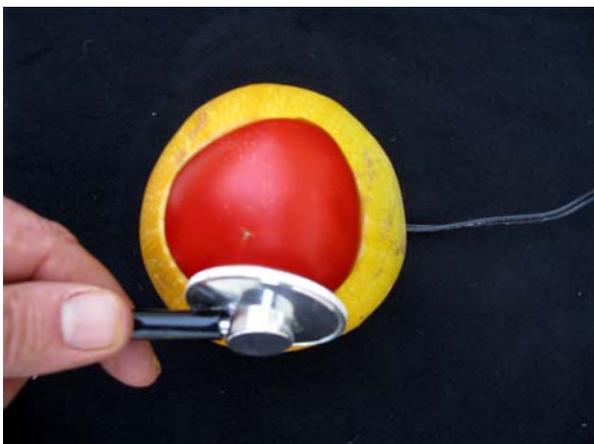


4. Every 15 minutes it became a fountain, passing through the metal sculpture, the water revealed a map of metal qualities and thicknesses. It was planed with the town that the 15 minutes span be reduced to 5 minutes.



In orchestrating with a population the creation of all public installations, outside in urban environments accessible around the clock throughout whole towns; the first Heartscopes creations set out for the highest degrees of difficulty as juggled with subtle and fragile communications alchemies.

From these events a process and a number of physical pieces have become available to other organisations. Beyond this, our challenge was to reach a first maturity of practical and technical processes, in parallel to the development of the mechanics of Heartscopes original communication languages, to render available an endlessly adaptive original new media.



Heartscopes (création 2008-2010):

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Thanks to Philou, Seb and Steph as to all who participated to the birth of this mad project ☺

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