

The Museum of Modern Art

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MAX NEUHAUS: A NEW WORK (UNDERGROUND)

A new work by Max Neuhaus will generate sound in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden from within a ventilation chamber running along the east wing of The Museum of Modern Art from June 8 through September 1978 as part of the continuing PROJECTS series exploring new directions in contemporary art.

This sound installation is the second in a series which began with an installation beneath a subway grating on the pedestrian island between Broadway and Seventh Avenue at 46th Street. The new installation, as with many Neuhaus works, has taken its form from the specific acoustical and social characteristics of the site. Like a work of visual art, it exists in a constant state which can be explored by the listener at his own pace.

Neuhaus prefers to generate sounds primarily through electronics. "It's malleable," he says, "it's a tool--the systems are close to being models of my mind, in that they make it possible to produce the sounds I want." But he is also concerned with an awareness of voices, city noises, the ongoing, natural sounds of any environment.

Some of the places Neuhaus has realized works include the Customs House at the Battery; the Brooklyn Transit Authority (in front of which small speakers broadcast high, short, rhythmic, computer-generated sounds that fade in and out of the street noise); National Public Radio's Radio Net (for which the sounds of 10,000 people whistling over the telephone were altered electronically, mixed and redistributed from a central location in Washington); and under water. "A lot of people still seem to be locked into the idea that whatever happens in a concert hall is music, and whatever happens outside the concert hall is not. I'm trying to change all that."

(more)

