

Katarzyna Krakowiak, Ph.D.

ARCHITECTURE IS OUT OF SOUND

Summary of professional accomplishments

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Appendix: documentation of the habilitation pieces

## 1. Introduction.

We are in a state of alarm. In many aspects of social, political and technological life, we find ourselves at a point of unnatural excitement and in a process of position change, of displacement-evacuation. Architecture is, of course, a reflection of this state.

Public buildings are erected with a view to the impending danger and contain concealed structures to be used in the event of an emergency. Public space is ready for an attack. It incorporates security structures, which ideally should never be used, and therefore combines potentials of immediate action and disuse. At the point when an alarm is activated, a monumentality of public buildings is stood in contrast to a minimalism and an abbreviation of an alarm sound. In times of uncertainty and constant readiness, I use both of these extreme structures to explore and compose a performativity of evacuation: displacement – movement evoked by sound. I am interested in all of its potential dimensions: the individual and group dimensions, the physical, the metaphorical and the symbolic.

My work is giving architecture a voice. Buildings speak in acoustics. I compose and analyse architecture of public use buildings. I draw attention to their hidden and dormant systems, for example, an internal evacuation system. My analyses provide a basis for creating a new set of sounds, triggering a performance of evacuation as a response to the acoustic signal. The whole setting receives a theoretical frame as well. I concentrate on a performative role of a sonic composition grounded in my exploration of architecture and detached from its initially functional role.

A commotion and a taction of architecture was a motif in my first production (*The Pavement Scale*, Poznań, 2006, MFA thesis). I transferred paving blocks into a gate of a building; passers-by triggered sounds by stepping on them. A balance installed underneath summed up their collective mass. Individuality became erased and tensions revealed between individual and mass being.

Emission of sound produced by movement in space became fundamental to my subsequent pieces. The question of public space and sound delineated a horizon of my artistic and theoretical explorations. Without a deeper understanding at the time, I began working on setting architecture in motion, on the themes of sound in architecture and of human presence within a situation so-constructed.

In everyday life, we are accustomed to our image, but not to the voice. Our presence in architecture creates a novel sound, while touching architectural detail releases a confrontation with the experience of the sound of our presence. My sculpture, presented during the 13<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale of Architecture, *Making the walls quake as if they were dilating with the secret knowledge of great powers* (2012), was a forthright reminder that listening and watching allows us to experience a common language. I discovered that architecture can be made from sound.

Listening to architecture via spaces inaccessible to the eye, as construed in my work at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art, introduced numerous new aspects to my practice, demanding closer inspection and explanation, which thus became the subject of my doctoral dissertation. Working with gravity interpreted more broadly, as the fall and a metaphor for the human condition, accrued political implications and endowed the natural phenomena of gravity and falling with a multidimensional meaning.

For me the modern-day fall of Icarus assumes, first and foremost, a political form. The theme received the broadest and fullest treatment in my work at the Szczecin Philharmonic, which is currently continued in four other European concert halls (Oslo, Blaibach, Reykjavik and Porto) – the most remarkable instances of contemporary architecture and, similarly to the Szczecin Philharmonic, recipients of the Mies van der Rohe Award. Using their alarm system, I designed sounds specific to these sites which will remain in the buildings. It was an alarm composition, but not in a functional sense. I rather focused on a relationship and a tension observable between a gravity of architecture and a gentleness of the alarm sound. The gentle sound is nonetheless a powerful intervention: both a vertical and a horizontal incision made into a space and people found therein, ultimately forcing people to be displaced and transferred. This tension introduced by the sound, to my ear, symbolises a new reality. It is also a kind of responsibility for an emergence of a new relationship – emancipation. A minute sound becomes a monumental sculpture in the context of its presentation and placement outside of the concert hall.

The structure of my compositions emerges from a greater concentration on things occurring in-between sounds: on silence, a pause, intervals etc. They acquire a particular significance thanks to my designing of both their use and their performance, which brings them to light. By creating a timeline and embedding my alarm sound in a rhythm of a space, the new sound came into being as a centre of the building's new routine and a new kind of performance specific to the site; a performance touching individual people as well as groups.

Designing an evacuation / escape route on the basis of an acoustic study of a building, I create a unique experience of a situation of alarm. The alarm composition is not purposive, does not serve a subsidiary role, becomes detached from its function and even interrupts a functional rhythm of the place. Thus, I attribute a new functionality of a significantly broader meaning to public architecture and spatial acoustics. The acoustic model of escape from a building encouraged – via sound – an improved understanding of a physical structure of the object and intimated an understanding of the current state of permanent alarm. What alarm sound is characteristic of and appropriate to our times?

Taking into account the political aspect, consequences resulting from the extremely precisely defined set of principles for public space use are beguiling. Also, a natural / wild sound understood as an element of return to the movement of an animal evacuated or pushed out of its own space by people turned out to be of great interest to my practice. An uncanny similarity could be observed between movements of clearance performed by animals and people in the context of gentrification. Numerous animals return to cities, adapting to their new architecture, which poses an interesting question of the sonic alarm's location both in these very movements as well as in the act of transfer of nature and the human.

The realisation directed my attention towards characteristics of sound employed. My long-standing work on its various qualities: range (limited and unlimited), intensity (to what extent it is audible), exploration of distance between a source of sound and its recipient and analysis of an influence of architecture on these parameters have enabled me to scrutinise the dynamic complexity of the recipient-source relationship and properties of communication or of its absence. Does the sound always have to be audible at close range and correctly understood by the ear? What happens when one does not hear the sound and must approach it, move towards its direction so as to hear it? What does it mean to be deprived of a direct access to a sound source, when a movement propelled by one's desire for understanding and hearing has to be made? In order to formulate answers to these questions, I had repeatedly employed my own voice, which became a measuring instrument, in my research, and bearing in mind the fact that the voice was female, particularly when confronted with a brutality of architecture, my device became a feminist gesture. A primary conclusion arose: the alarm sound does not need to be loud. It is more significant to know who the addressee of the alarm is, where its source is located and how it is linked to movement performed in functional architecture, or what its performative consequences are in a given architecture.

The following conclusion my activities illuminated was that sound is also a physical experience – a tacton of architecture. In the context of architecture, sound behaves like an object: it falls,

rises, moves horizontally, dilates. It also adopts specific directions, which I attempt to give it, navigating sound in space. Working with initially unattractive systems, I offer them an opportunity of becoming more human; I endow them with a human shape; I want to make them more communicative and comprehensible; I wish to construct a situation contradictory to confusion. For the purpose, I suggest a reciprocal borrowing of languages between architecture and sound, demonstrating the extent to which they are identical. Paths of transgression intersecting – via sound and the presence of an audience – in a pre-existing architectural structure is one of the issues which fascinates me most in my work.

Proto-sources of such thinking on art can be discovered on the basis of an architectural analysis of Palaeolithic characteristics of caves and paintings found on their walls, demonstrating an essential significance of sound for the culture of the first people. Acoustic research indicates that the cave paintings are situated in a place with the most powerful acoustics. We can therefore assume that the primitive people reacted to an echo of sounds entering the cave, which having been naturally amplified, seemed to come from some supernatural sources of a spiritual world. Various noises of nature reflected from the walls of caves and merged into one mighty sound.

Sound was thus a reason for and a source of creation of cave paintings as well as of a certain intervention into architecture. An activity is a consequence of sound. Similarly, the visual world had been an effect of sounds, a sound notation and a way to manage their disturbing meaning. The paintings record an acoustic memory of the site, while their figurative form directs our conceptualisation not only towards their visual aspect, but also to the sounds from which it emerged and which simultaneously enclosed it in a performativity of that very place. Hence, we arrive at an interpretation of the cave and its interior as a source of acoustic experiences and as a stimulus, or a tool for action. The cave can be perceived as a proto-source of functional architecture. The conclusion is a fundamental platform for approaching the subject in my artistic practice.

## 2. The Rise and Fall of Air – a sound of the fall of architecture

In *New Atlantis*, Francis Bacon foretold the arrival of sound houses. Creating my sound sculpture for the 13<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Architecture, I alluded to the inspiration. The work represents architecture as "a pre-existing system of listening to/for us – producing, transmitting and distorting sounds". In the piece, everything that is outside is played from the inside, while we are presented with an impression that the work continues outside.

The following step was *The Rise and Fall of Air* – a composition for all spaces, especially the hidden ones, of the building of the Zachęta – National Gallery of Art in Warsaw. Its theoretical dimension dealt with the subject of sound gravity. Analysing the concept of the fall, it drew attention to grappling with a gravity of sound and of the air that fills architecture. It also approached an understanding of what kind of space and activity and action contemporary architecture is.

My exhibition at the Zachęta – taking as its starting point reciprocal relations between architecture, sound and gravity – illuminated and problematised the ways in which these systems which organise our reality influence one another. Considering architecture, do we also consider the raw sounds it produces? In turn, when thinking about acoustics, do we also take into consideration architecture and all the spatial elements by which acoustics is conditioned? Whenever we refer to directions of sound navigation in space, usually in its centrifugal or centripetal dimension, what is the significance of gravity and of the fall of sound? Finally, what kind of relationship occurs between architecture and sound: which is the figure and which is the ground; which is a structure and what is its filling, a void, a non-use, an acoustic interior, that as the only representation of architecture is not subject to gravity?

For the first time in the history of the building and the institution, one piece concurrently involved all thirteen rooms of the Zachęta – National Gallery of Art. However, none of the rooms was available to the public, and only few were open to the gallery staff. I also used space hitherto unknown to the public and unused for art exhibition. Although the rooms are situated within arm's reach, they are too shallow and too narrow to be visited, often having no entry, and sometimes even no floor. A few were classified in architectural plans as "Voids. Technical rooms" e.g.: refuse rooms, elevator shafts, ventilation ducts, skylights, unused corridors and rooms or chambers without clearly assigned function, found between seemingly monolithic walls or mock-up skylights that are not ever marked in the designs. Nevertheless, they all make up an enormous space of over fifteen thousand cubic meters. My work had been formed in the hidden system of waste-chambers. In the context of such architecture with inaccessible areas, a choice of medium seemed exceedingly natural: nothing else could occupy this space but sounds, since only they could reach every place and transcend architecture.

Architecture is heard here through spaces available only to air and sounds. The voids occupied by my sculpture created a phenomenon which sound engineers call 'a room in a room', as even a few empty, tight and inaccessible cubic centimetres muffle sound more effectively than any wall. A function of the voids is therefore clear – they are sound-proofs,

disabling its further transmission, and instead they capture, insulate and attenuate sound. This architecture-constructed machine absorbs noises and prevents them from leaving the building. It contains them until their final reverberation, quiver, or transmits them into the all-consuming vertical skylights. The process of soundproofing by means of voids in architecture became essential to this piece as well as the fact that architecture was the ultimate listener; and its capacity to remove our sound traces and ignore us. Equally, however, the process itself can be amplified so that it propagates throughout the entire building. The presence of a building in the building, of a room in a room, of the Zachęta in the Zachęta revealed a profoundly introverted nature of the activity performed, which in turn accrued a symbolic meaning. With respect to a national gallery, the act of implosion can be interpreted as a social, a political or even an institutional symbol.

### 3. Beyond architecture

The process of sound production, transformation and transmission takes place in close connection with architecture. It results in creating compositions in which walls are treated as sound surfaces forming the principal components of a sculpture, becoming a space for realising reciprocal relations between gravity, sound and architecture. In this respect, my work at the Zachęta was a disappointment, since it unmasked an experience of dissolution of human-made sound in space; a sound whose volume depends on human activity. The viewer / visitor also propagates in natural light, filtering down through skylights opened for the first time for the exhibition. Apparently, the only element of architecture which would not be subject to gravity was sound, as it submitted to architecture itself in the first place. Subsequently, however, the sound – as everything else – fell down, demonstrating the inherently inscribed potential for defeat (the fall); a theme I further explored in my work for the Szczecin Philharmonic.

A passivity of architecture uncovered at the Zachęta consist in the fact that an initial human movement activates the sound and the building itself becomes a resonating space and speaks. Then, due to a lack of human dynamics, a lack of activity in space, it collapses, like a bad conversation. A range and directions of sound impact intermingle and as a result of the impact of gravity, they sink inward. I interpret the fact to be an institutional critique of an introvert speech, a political symbol of a lack of human action.

Subjects raised in this work demanded in-depth analysis and reflection on the interdependence of architecture and sound emitted in and from it as well on a post-functional significance and aspect of sound. Tackling the question of architecture and acoustics, I begin

with the premise that architecture is built from sound, thereby, listening to architecture is possible. Moreover, acoustics makes possible approaching architecture in a literally instrumental fashion: as an extended, active system of sound dissemination and reception. Also, my use of an actual building – on a 1:1 scale – as a material, in the context of both space and time, has opened up possibilities of employing the acoustic potential of all its rooms.

Since then, a principal subject of my activities has been complete buildings, providing a material for a work and determining a scale of my sound sculptures. The sculptures, in turn, become integral elements of architecture, while the processes I create acquire a continuous nature and take place in real time. I construct the buildings from sound, amplify them and make them tremble; I 'sonise' hidden aerial trajectories in search of a point when they cease to be buildings and become a sculpture. Nonetheless, my activities are not directed against buildings. On the contrary, on the basis on my analysis of architectural designs and acoustic models, I amplify their silent features, particularly those related to communication failures, distortions and dysfunctions. Very often, these are buildings which have dramatically altered or lost their function. My use of the scale and method of work has led to questions, essential to my practice, of significance of the building in itself and of its role in art; to the question when a monumental construction, with its proper history and function, ceases to be a building and becomes an object.

#### 4. The Great and Secret Show – grandeur of concealment

The project produced in New York in 2013 referred primarily to architecture on an urban scale, to a void and a false front of a construction which had lost its original function. The context of the metropolis, with its issues of densification and enclosure, where numerous public buildings had been suddenly deserted and, abandoned, became but a reminder of its former activity, revealed a hypocritical success of the new order. Buildings pretend to be working, just like a deserted post office. Their erstwhile activity is merely apparent and supposed to give protection from the dreadful and painful consequences of change. My role was to broadcast the social issues and consequences of these changes.

The historic James A. Farley Post Office is today one of the largest empty buildings in Manhattan. While in mid-twentieth century, the building housed over sixteen thousand employees at one time, today, there are less two hundred and only in periods of intensive use. Countless rooms, corridors, vaults, chambers and storage rooms are left empty. The function of the post in the age of digital communication undergoes an enormous transformation; hence the function and significance of the very building in the architectural plan of the city and its

urban concept are disputed, as is the role of the state, more broadly, an agent of which was, after all, the postal infrastructure. I chose this building after a wide-ranging survey of vacant buildings which operate, pretending that they exempt from the laws of crisis.

My sound installation was presented at the PERFORMA 13 Biennial in New York (2013), the world's largest cyclical review of performative trends in culture, and every person visiting the post office to take care of their business during its working hours became its audience. Within the setting of ostensible trust in the institution, an invented image of security was installed. Visitors to the exhibition, usually guided through a closed route of empty rooms and corridors, experienced sounds, mechanisms and processes of postal services in the entire building, revealing the building's past and present, while the stories so represented reflected its grand scale and significance in the municipal space.

The sound and resonance of pre-existing architecture caused the walls of the hall to vibrate, creating a membrane and facilitating an intimate experience connecting the post office's past to the present. My installation, operating like a post office, 24 hours a day, invited entering the empty space and confronting the challenging heritage of change. From the starting point of the installation, which workers call a 'viewing gallery', visitors moved into a secret system of corridors connecting thousands of the old post office building rooms, which once enabled a supervision of its working environment. In its heyday, a designated post-office policeman oversaw labour through small openings in the walls by means of an analogue CCTV recording system. My use of a recorded collection of sounds (of closing doors, sorting cards, stamping postcards, and other typical postal activities) in the context of one of the most often visited urban spaces of bygone years, triggered a whole array of questions and associations related to work performance, public service and hierarchical structures. The sound I situated in the building, composed of gentle knocks, taps, touches, lost in empty spaces, undergirded the tragic disparity between its former activity and the current deathly emptiness.

The peculiar archaeology of sound of this once most frequented urban space exposed a temporality, a materiality, transience and an intensity of bodies, objects and social systems. It was also a reminder of the extent to which our bodies and memories are shaped by sounds. My activity unmasked the multilayered emptiness of the architecture, including emptiness as a metaphor for social changes and conditions. I managed to amplify the architecture of emptiness.

##### 5. From grandeur to beauty – a sound-fractured architecture

“Architecture is out of tune,” I proclaimed in my next production (*Architecture is out of Tune*, Berlin 2015), alluding to Rem Koolhaas’ concept of space. In my understanding, architecture has become detuned and lost its ability to communicate in the modern world. The derangement refers not only to a material substance of architecture, but also to sound, which I consider to be a constitutive part of architecture. *Out of Tune* is a series of acoustic experiences in which settle my accounts with the city. As a result of cooperation with the sound engineer and designer, Ralf Meinz, a deliberately flawed sound-note was created in the process of superimposition of two melodic lines – a bird song and an artist singing – where none of the voices was comprehensible, and both, gradually merging, lost their communicative function. In such disenchantment of fractured communication, I nevertheless discover beauty, and I take architecture to be an instrument which can be of service in the re-tuning.

Similar motifs were developed in my work, *Oh No, Please Don’t* (New York, 2016). Drawing on *The House of Dust*, a poem and a structure created by Alison Knowles in 1967, over a dozen artists were asked responded to her work. The company included also the only sonic work of my making. I made use of a glass façade of a building on Fifth Avenue in New York to address passers-by with tiny sounds: Skype and other communicators’ ringtones intertwined with single, broken words, interjections. The passer-by was astonished by the sudden striking of conversation, which was, in fact, completely incomprehensible, while the gentle sounds emitted from the building’s facade were lost in a conundrum of other sounds supplied by one of the busiest streets in the world. Alienation and gobbledygook.

#### 6. *As If Nothing Could Fall except the Sun* – choreography of the fall

In the new architecture of the Szczecin Philharmonic, created by Estudio Barozzi Veiga, we immediately encounter a glaring confrontation of the luminous white interior of the foyer and the golden concert hall, which was hand-laid with 15 x 15 cm, square, golden leaves be a group of women. The encounter has engendered a desire for an intense observation of images, objects, space and a desire to approach them. The images, however, disappear and dilate in light, and their extended observation leads to dizziness, confusion, a sense of abandonment in time and space. Physically, a person / viewer responds to the situation with motion: approaching and moving away from the walls, stretching in space or shrinking in themselves, ‘rising and falling without end’. This produces a choreography torn between ascension and perdition, not unlike the movement of Icarus. My sound piece there created was an allusion to the movement, a taction of architecture from within, and a taction of sound from without.

*As If Nothing Could Fall except the Sun* is a composition dedicated to the sun, defeat, hardship and beauty. Inspired by Malevich's opera *Victory over the Sun* and the canonical representation of Icarus failing, it is a complex reflection on human ascension towards a blinding goal, a bizarre dynamics of continuous return: the fall and rising from it, the struggle against gravity and a liberating evacuation. Bedazzlement is a state of detachment from space as well as a state of distortion of the horizon. The piece is, therefore, about grappling with the horizon, in which I translate the state of bedazzlement into a functional dimension. Functional architecture provides us with instructions, limits and limitations, e.g., concerning ways of traffic distribution. Hence, I discover the blinding in the language of architecture as a space and its evacuation procedures. It is a kind of an obverse of the centripetal movement with which I worked in Venice or at the Zachęta. I wonder what is the significance of a situation when a building is directing us beyond its space, outside? Ejecting... Moreover, in this case, our evacuation from space is guided by voice. We are expelled from a space of beauty, silence and music. Is it not disappointing?

A principal composition is surrounded by eight smaller ones, lasting 23 seconds in total. The entire work has been permanently inscribed within the structure of the philharmonic, and becoming a sonic announcement of a concert, emergency and evacuation, assumed a novel function. Here, I was interested in the manner in which sound created in the concert hall seeps through its walls and leaks out, also visually, so the installation was accompanied by an animation on a wall of the main hall of the philharmonic. The sounds have been published as an album to be listened on loop so as to achieve the fullest effect of the dynamics of the minimal noises.

The composition is announced by one of the especially composed alarm calls – ringtones. Each philharmonic concert is announced by a three-time alarm call–ringtone, which has been composed especially for the venue and will be a permanent fixture at the philharmonic. Concert-inviting tones are contrasted to a concert of signals which throw us out of the building.

The album-compiled sounds come from a satellite closest to the sun. Technology has enabled my touching of the sun for a few seconds. In 2007, in collaboration with Daniel Muzyczuk and Robert Rumas, I produced a moon-touching piece, in which I transmitted myself by means of radio signals reflected off the surface of the moon. Sounds originating from NASA's research used in this composition harmonise with my long-standing exploration of the notion of a vertical dimension of sound performativity. They had been recorded by a satellite orbiting closest to the sun, as close as technologically feasible. The short set of sounds was used to create an alarm composition for the venue, where at the point of triggering of all its functionalities, it will

bring every person, including those in the golden room, to the ground, to the ground-floor and will lead them out of the building. In a frenzy of a possible evacuation, as in a blinding and burning approximation to the sun, we can see nothing. Our senses limited, we follow the sound downwards and fall down with it. Gravity pulls everything down and even the sound of the sun submits to it. Paradoxically, the sound itself becomes a choreographer of the fall; the fall in the sense of submission to the state of alarm in which are currently found and our inability to name it.

The composition encompassed the entire building of the Philharmonic. For the first time in history, I used a Voice Evacuation System as an instrument. Sound emitted with the use of the technology is beautiful in its smallness, rawness. Loudspeakers, which usually issue information about the direction of an evacuation, have since broadcast my alarm composition, and only an actual danger automatically ends the piece, revoking the original function of speakers. A sound of nature (the Sun) acquires a new functionality, and inscribed into a context of the most abstract of human activities, such as composing and listening to music, becomes a signal of mass communication. And just like music, the sound of the message acquires a universal range of influence.

The alarm composition draws on the inner life of the concert hall, just like wall paintings draw on the inner life of a cave and the sounds marauding within, merged into one by an echo, subject to a dynamics of acceleration and alteration. Therefore, a movement of ascension and descent accompanies and is inscribed into sonic activities within the space of the Philharmonic. The work was constructed on several tens of layers and surfaces emerging from capacities of navigating the system of evacuating people from the building. I created their interconnections, facilitating another fall. I constructed a horizon.

Analysing the choreography of evacuation and its extroverted motion: outward, we observe the formation of distance. The state differs e.g. from state in my Venetian project, where I wanted to arrest people inside a building. Here, gazing at the perilous beauty of the sun, we experience wonder, an attraction, while becoming aware of a threat of combustion, we feel compelled to escape.

Reflections and themes of my work at the Szczecin Philharmonic were continued during my teaching project at Oxford. In the one of the first academic centres in the world, I decided to take a look at the proto-sources of the relationship between sound and migration patterns of animals and people. I looked for traces and made attempts to understand them, bearing in mind contemporary confusion in political decisions. I developed a teaching programme based

on a contemporary notion of alarm, asking question about motives of currently made decisions of departure, detachment, escape or evacuation in a state of incomprehension and inattention, which seems to refer to the situation of primeval people in caves, to savagery of both architecture and sound.

The final instalment of my work on these problems was the installation, *Dust*, which opened at Berghain Halle in Berlin in 2018. Berghain is a concert venue with the most powerful sound and bass audio systems in the world. One half of the building is occupied by a music club, while the other is empty halls, but the whole building is continually inhabited by sound: it seeps through its walls, intense in its mass and density. I had made the decision that I wanted to work in a place which had already had sound.

*Dust* is a composition which is a purification of architecture with light and voice, where light and sound permeate the structures of the building, offering the viewer an experience of inaccessibility, collected in a common grave, where an echo of music is heard only from a distance.

Light entering the building from three rectangular openings in the ceiling creates an illusion of an enormous depth. Under ideal conditions, it also causes a disappearance of colours; it makes everything look gray. Then, the sound coming from behind walls also reaches the viewer with a faded, extra-temporal reverberation. A beam of light falling from the ceiling gives the impression of a weight falling directly onto people's heads. It produces a sense of a physical crushing and overwhelming. It is the same type of a spotlight which is frequently used in prisons, strong and unpleasant. The observers experience themselves as being very low, much lower than in actual reality. Everything is happening above them. The falling light passes through all the zones of the building: the ceiling, the balcony, the floor, to descend to level 0 and the viewers there gathered, who experience themselves as being even lower, by one level.

We enter the building by a back entrance. Above us, a post-industrial, concrete space 12-meter-high. In the past, it manufactured heat. The sound, when it becomes inaudible, turns precisely into heat (I once wondered how I could heat up the air by speaking thousands of words a day). The audience, for whom I produce a sense of disappointment, of being backstage, without a direct accessibility to sound, might not be aware of the fact. Only from time to time, a minute, figurative sound of a female voice reaches them, drowned out by the constant bass reverb from behind the wall. The sound from behind the wall is an essential moment of this composition: it is a sound over which I have no influence, overpowering my

voice at times, and giving me an unexpected space at others. This is the space of the unfair game I am playing with space and its conditions, and with the spectator.

The contemporary struggle for a dominant voice is an element in a brutal fight over space and audibility. Over who can be louder. In this project, circa every 4 minutes, the sound becomes unbearably loud for one second and the 24-channel installation of the best amplifying system in the world is used for one second of sound. It is a woman's voice, my voice, a voice of purification. It is preceded by a silence, in which my inept voice broken by the brutal architecture, like a bird song, becomes a feminist intervention. I am singing and losing my voice, stifled by the magnitude of the building. And I fall once more.

## 7. Conclusion

The sound of an alarm becomes not only a functional message, but also a crack in a daily routine and structure of architecture. Its emission in a building triggers a whole range of behaviours and displacements from the inside to the outside, according to a ceremonial imposed by a structure of architecture and a dynamics of sound. An alarm is an unpleasant experience; it is not listening to music, no matter how removed from a traditionally construed harmony. It is a sudden intervention into an activity and its alteration. It is an instant message of danger. It causes fear and a need to escape. In the context of public life, however, the escape takes place according to a certain pre-prescribed order.

Evacuation is an attempt at introducing order into a chaos of the escape and an extremely important role is played by the qualities of the alarm sound: its rhythm, intensity, reiterations. In a broader sense, the alarm is an awakening of an awareness of presence in a certain space, a presence of dangers and desires for a sense of security. In the state of alarm, all other affairs are suspended and the emancipating movement of evacuation is all that counts. The movement may be horizontal: outward – beyond structures, or vertical: earth-bound, the downward movement of Icarus away from the sun.

Public architecture, formatted so as to be extremely widely accessible to everyone, as a result of my activities, undergoes a metamorphosis. Analysing the movement of air, movement of sound, I reach towards navigating people. I expel them from their tinniest hidden spaces beyond their comfort zones and distance them from architecture. I pose the question of the functional end-use of places where I work; of what they represent. And more broadly: of an issue about which their architecture speaks.

The scale of my projects for five new concert halls – public buildings has made it possible for me to take up the subject of architecture as an ideal venue for a perfect sound, a sound we can no longer hear today. Classical performances of music pieces, ubiquitously beautiful, when brought to perfection, are simultaneously almost identical. Here, I discovered a fundamental desire for creating places and situations which are specific to a particular locality, where uniquely for a given space and context, an exceptionality of sounds and music resonating in concert halls is revealed. In my thinking about space for sound, I want to evoke other parameters as well; those which will enable me to hear a familiar work as fractured, distorted e.g. by atmospheric pressure, altitude, depth: high up in the mountains or deep underneath the ground. As in a cave.

Activities in architecture open up a new horizon of perception of architecture and sound. My sonic gesture is emancipatory, opening a novel conception of a building, a landscape, a detail. But it is also a juxtaposition of a monumentality with a detailed ornament or jewellery. It is also a feminist gesture in the face of architecture, the face of the modernist icon and modernist thought. Not infrequently, it becomes a cynical detachment from its very instrument and from architecture of a building.

Traditionally, or even prehistorically, architecture divides the world acoustically and visually into a space of the exterior and the interior. My sound gestures disrupt this perspective and turn structures of buildings into membranes / filters through which spaces can communicate with one another. Similarly to sounds, they approximate and overlap, creating a new structure. In them, architecture becomes a barrier, a sound-catcher and a loudspeaker, and the sound of an alarm helps us notice an isolation of worlds, rather than merely navigating the traffic between them. My compositions there situated and activated by my more recent performances cut out a new horizon for every building, for its connection to external landscape, to human condition and human behaviour.

Such a reciprocal permeation of acoustic environments creates a new dimension of acoustic transparency. It is also an expression of our contemporary illusions regarding an accessibility of the image, our own availability, our privacy and security. In my explorations of beauty and interruption of sound – always present in a reaction with architecture, with a human who, as I have demonstrated, is much more than just a passive recipient – I am incessantly trying to capture the thing that the alarm sound is today.

Alarm sounds are an opposition of a small short sound to the open public space of a concert hall, a school building, a post office... It happens upon you at a point when you are awaiting something. It is not just a functional ring calling you to a concert. An alarm is a composition extending far beyond functionality. Rather, it is a question of the state of summoning. What therefore are contemporary expectations of the moment of being summoned? What is the attitude we assume towards this sound? It is not a question of vowels, which exist in a language in opposition to consonants. Nor is it a question of spaces between them. I am rather asking a question of declension: of shared responsibility – ours – yours – theirs – for the times of alarm. I am searching for a score I could decipher, comprehend and choreographically render a significance of the times.

Katanga Kulkarni