



## DISAPPEAR

A sound installation designed for a gallery setting. In December 2005 it received the accolade of the winning work in the British Composer Awards New Media category.

The work consists of a fifteen minute surround sound composition combined with a text-based art piece that covers the entire gallery floor. Visitors to the work enter the space by walking over the floor-piece where they are enveloped by the moving soundscape.

The composition is made up entirely of 'endangered sounds', i.e., those sounds which might not be with us in ten or twenty years time (for example, milk bottles, wind-up alarm clocks, matches striking, and so on). The sound is played on four to eight loud speakers that are mounted around the space and controlled by a simple audioPlayer.

The accompanying visual element consists of a floor covering of about 200 descriptions of endangered sounds painted onto large torn out strips of lining wallpaper. These are then layered beside and on top of each other creating a startling carpet-effect covering the entire floor space. Visitors to the installation walk over the descriptions as they move around the space, leading to the visual component's degradation: from its untouched 'immaculate' state to one of an untidy mess. This then sets up another narrative in the installation linking the act of walking on the sounds and the destroying of the written words to perhaps the reason why many sounds might be disappearing in the first place. (A time period of six to eight weeks is ideal for this process).

Interestingly, those that enter the space listening very carefully tend to walk more gently and thus are not as destructive as those who stroll in, not really listening, with their feet scuffing the paper on the floor. The floor piece is actually therefore destroyed by those not listening...

The floor piece is created specifically for each gallery and takes about one week to complete. The work is flexible enough to be installed in galleries of differing sizes, from as small as 6m x 6m through to 12m x 9m.

Fundamentally, the work is concerned with awakening people to the notion that their soundscape is in a constant flux of change. It encourages its listeners to pay attention to the musicality of the sounds of their environment and for them to (re)consider how they relate to their surroundings. As a consequence, the work offers many possibilities for educational projects as well as novel ways for engaging with the wider public. Possibilities include submissions of favourite sounds, listening activities such as sound-walks and the creation of a local sound archive.