

The logo for 'Echolocation' features the word 'ECHO' in a stylized, outlined font and 'LOCATION' in a bold, solid black font. Two black silhouettes of bats are positioned above and below the text. The background is a gradient of colors from purple to yellow.

ECHOLOCATION

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Echolocation is a surround sound musical experience that takes not only its inspiration but also its compositional material from different species of bats that come out in the evening to feed. Usually the installation is 'performed' live, just as the evening gets dark and the bats come out in search of food, and at a location close to the bats themselves (for example, a nature reserve, church, lakeside, and so on).

The ultrasonic navigation system used by the bats is picked up by means of a series of strategically placed bat detectors, which in turn feed the biosonar calls to the installation's sound-engine before being transmitted to the listening audience. The result is a composition that is wholly dependant on the current bat activity, with the bats calls determining the piece's overall structure as well as the actual individual notes and musical phrases that form the body of the music.

The resulting musical experience is played at a whisper's level, allowing the audience to experience the different musical elements moving around them through the natural soundscape at the same time as viewing the bats' activity. To help facilitate this, the area is very gently lit allowing people to pick out the bats activity so that they can connect the sounds with their observations.

The overall effect is an evocative atmosphere that connects to the fragility of nature as well as a sense of wonderment as the audience are given a brief window into this extraordinary phenomenon of nature.

Although the sound installation has been designed as a live outside experience, it is of course also possible to host the work in a gallery as a more conventional surround sound musical experience.