

Deirdre McLeod - Chord

Start anywhere on Nieuwstraat and listen closely to your surroundings.

Pick out a sound or note that you can hear. It could be the sound of a car alarm or a bird singing. It could be a song on someone's mobile phone or the whine of an air conditioning unit.

Gently hum this note or a note that you prefer. You can hum in any way that feels comfortable to you, using long or short notes.

Start walking, humming quietly the note that you have chosen. Keep humming this note as you walk the length of Nieuwstraat. Remember to breathe occasionally. Walk for as long as you want, continuing to hum this note.

Don't worry if you lose track of your note. If you do, pick out a new sound or note from where you are now and start to hum again under your breath.

Stop when you wish.

Reports:

Steef:

During this performance, a walk becomes an exercise in remembering.

Listening to sounds that stand out, then imitating them and taking them with you. The sound, which has no clear place, origin or image, acquires its own character through repetition. It is a memory of a moment that, through repetition, acquires its own identity and forms a rhythm. Until it is supplanted by another sound that stands out and takes over. You take this next sound with you as a fragment of time in your memory, until that too is followed by another sound.

Abrupt sounds that last only a moment or a few seconds work best. They are more disconnected in time than sounds that continue indefinitely and are therefore easier to take with you. In total, I remembered about six sounds. I took the last sound from the noise of the market to the quiet of Nieuwstraat. A small sound, short and high-pitched. This sound was much more suited to its new location.

Petra:

Walking up and down the street, picking up sounds and humming along. I was very focused on the sounds I picked up. I felt like I was giving a concert. The combination of movement (walking) and soft singing was also pleasant.

Occasionally I ran into Mario and we listened to each other. The sounds we made together became yet another sound. Then we walked on, humming our own sound again.

Mario:

It's like improvising at a concert. Only your musical partner is the things, people, and sounds around you while you are in motion. I tried to pick up sounds, reproduce them, and then 'fit' them into the changing sound world around me, until another sound came from outside that I took over for some reason, edited it live, etc.

The walking gave it a kind of relaxed feeling that you miss at a real concert.

Annie:

What is humming?

It was only in the last five minutes that I was able to enjoy the performance. Before that, I was too preoccupied with how I should do it. Was I allowed to use rhythm?

At first, I thought I would enjoy this performance, but for 15 minutes it was nothing but stress. I had to free myself from the score, and then I was able to sing.

Anecdote: halfway through, I made a long wailing sound, after which a young girl came up to me and asked if I was okay. After I reassured her, she kept insisting: are you okay? Are you lost? Are you alone? So I explained, and she continued on her way, smiling.

Ienke:

As I left Nieuwstraat 7 I heard the whistling of the trees, making a a hush-kind of sound -ssjjhh- that I repeated all the way to the other end of the street. My breathing incorporated the wind, I carried it with me, it became part of me.

I stopped, listened, and heard the distant sirens of an ambulance. I took over the sound and began to hum – low, high, low-. Normally that feels very alarming, but now it became soothing. I continued to the other end of the street, then I heard a car, hummed along with it, a kind of sound like a wounded animal, and then a motorbike, a creaking sound, actually sad, painful. I was back at 7 Nieuwstraat.