

Ambient Proximity (668 kms socially-distanced) - Andrew McNiven

Requires 2 active participants, unlimited passive participants.

Participant 2 should download this file to a smartphone/digital audio player:

<https://soundcloud.com/andrewmcniven/mcniven-ambient-proximity/s-xG9Q3hD1jS7>

Participant 1 will carry the bluetooth speaker, concealed in a bag or pocket.

Participant 2 will operate the audio levels using the smart phone or audio device.

(Other participants may join the walk to experience the work - there is no restriction on numbers)

Take your places at the north end of Nieuwstraat.

Connect to bluetooth speaker.

Press 'play' on the downloaded file.

Start walking down Nieuwstraat. Participant 1 should be 2 or 3 metres ahead of Participant 2.

Other participants should be socially distanced.

As you walk, Participant 2 should adjust the level (volume) of the audio up and down. You should aim to blend the ambient sounds of the supplied audio with the ambient sounds of Nieuwstraat so that they merge and are as indistinguishable as possible - within reason, and allowing for inevitable 'sound events' in the two sites.

The recording is 5'23" in length, and should occupy the approximate time it takes to walk the length of Nieuwstraat at a reasonable walking pace.

The work is finished when you reach the southern end of Nieuwstraat.

Malou van Doormaal (participant 1)

The first walk it felt as if I was on another place, but in the Nieuwstraat at the same time. I could hear the recorded sound very well and the gulls were shouting at exactly the right spot at the market.

The second walk my sounds disappeared in the other sounds of the market. I did not hear the seagulls, but I could now just wander around and spread my sounds without anyone noticing.

Frans van Lent (participant 2)

Malou walked a few meters in front of me, carrying the shoulderbag with the speaker. I had the phone with the sound app switched on. We started walking at the northern part of the Nieuwstraat. The seagulls fitted perfectly in the passing of the fish-market.

In general it was hard to adapt the volume of the sound because there was no average volume of natural sounds. Some spots had a crowd and lot of talking and shouting, other parts were almost empty, with no people around. Our sound was often not blending in very well.

We also had a bit of a problem with the speed of walking. For Malou it was too slow and because of the length of the soundfile improvisation was difficult.

Later we did the walk a second time, when the crowd was more evenly spread in the street. We solved the speed problem by stopping now and then, and looking around for some time. The first time I remained at a constant distance from Malou and the second time we varied this distance. Sometimes we walked parallel, sometimes I even walked in front of Malou.

Paying Attention to Your Pleasure

This work requires an individual participant.

Starting at exactly 05.22 (official sunrise) on 20 June you will walk the length of Nieuwstraat in Dordrecht, from south to north, along the route outlined, and following social distancing protocols. You should treat this opportunity as a moment of profound pleasure and use it to reflect upon pleasure of all kinds. Please do not listen to audio or use headphones or earbuds.

At the end of the 307.82 metre walk you should - as soon as is practicable - make a note or record of your reflections. Please be as detailed as possible and include tangential drifts away or distractions from the principal reflection on pleasure.

This work is interested in your attention as much as your reflection.

The work will be completed by the account being collected by the organisers and sent to me at 668.8 kms distant from the finishing point (note: I may use this subsequently in my work and research - the account can be anonymised if you prefer, or if not, it will be treated as a collaboration with shared rights, etc.).

Steef van lent

Performed at sunrise and sunset, I walked the short distance from one end of the Nieuwstraat to the other, treating it as a moment of contemplation.

A couple of minutes to experience as profoundly pleasurable and to reflect on pleasure itself. First as preparation for the day ahead and afterwards as the completion of a busy day.

Two small moments of concentrated reflection disguised as a pleasurable stroll through the street.

Sent to Andrew after the performance:

Beginning

This walk was a starting point. The start of the day, the start of the festival. A brief moment, but unhurried. Separate from other activities. To simply enjoy that solitary quiet moment was a pleasure.

The performance is a beginning. The promise of something. The pleasure of anticipation. To work on something is pleasurable. The formation of ideas, trying to articulate small thoughts that rapidly pass through the mind. Some lingering, some moving, some returning, persisting. Moving thoughts as I am moving myself. That too is pleasure. Being able to move. Walking at my own pace, the rhythm of the body. The cold air on my skin, coupled with the promise of a warm room afterwards. The thought of breakfast, fresh bread. In these moments, especially early in the morning when the air is still and crisp, breathing too is an act of pleasure.

I was reminded about the wonderful book by Laurie Lee, As I stepped out one midsummer morning, which I was just thinking about rereading the other day. Reading and traveling, two pleasures at once. Freedom and adventure. The pleasure of new experiences, of discovery. But overall the greatest pleasure I think is time. Time to spend freely and unencumbered by external factors. Time to not think about time.

End

The second walk was an ending. Closing the sequence that was started this morning. A finished product, a pleasurable result. The feeling of fatigue after a very long day, with the fantastic foresight of sleep. But also the well deserved beer that I am about to drink. The beautiful skies overhead, turning orange and purple. The noise of people drinking in the square that slowly dissipates into silence as I move away from the sound. Again the reflection on the self. On this small moment of concentration ending the project. And finally the turning of the corner that completes it.