This new version of *Speeds of Time* will be a real-time sculptural sound map of the bells of Big Ben. A network of microphones starting from the bell tower itself and spreading out to surrounding rooftops and terraces, around Parliament Square and beyond, will simultaneously trace the contours of the temporal deformation of the bells. The speed of sound at 5116.4 feet per second. When you take into consideration the distances of all the microphone locations and divide those distances by the speed of sound the result is a sequence of natural acoustic delays creating a multi-dimensional sound image of Big Ben that is actually a live sound map of this part of London.

This will be a totally new version realised for the Millbank entrance at Tate Britain, and will also be a radio sound sculpture for the BBC that is streamed live on their website for the entire month of September, and also occasionally broadcast on BBC Radio 4.

Everyone knows the familiar sound of the Westminster Chimes, a symbol of time itself, and one of the most famous sounds in the world. This is an iconic concept of the sound, based upon the idea of a single acoustic perspective. The sonic reality of the bells is its complex sound field, a network of microphones starting from the bell tower itself and spreading out to surrounding rooftops and terraces, around Parliament Square and beyond, will simultaneously trace the contours of the temporal deformation of the bells. The speed of sound is 1116.4 feet per second. When you take into consideration the distances of all the microphone locations and divide those distances by the speed of sound the result is a sequence of natural acoustic delays creating a multi-dimensional sound image of Big Ben that is actually a live sound map of this part of London.

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Bill Fontana

Speeds of Time

Bill Fontana's work with live sound transmission and audio recording of the natural environment culminates in Speeds of Time, a new work of aural and conceptual complexity based on the clockwork mechanism of London's Big Ben. This installation is the most poignant among a group of site-specific sound sculptures that combine the artist's attraction to the sound generating capacity of objects and mechanical devices and his lifelong interest in the substance of time as measured by the speed of sound.

The movement of sound from its source to its destination in Fontana's work begins with his observation of what he describes as the 'soundscapes of time', and his recognition of 'the intimate relationship between the auditory perception of space and the visual contemplation of a representational landscape. Far from being a sensation of the ears and the visual as an illusion, the world that we see is in constant communication with the world that we hear. The visual and the aural are not two independent systems that are somehow in harmony, but we can only see the world as it is heard,' writes Fontana.

The title Speeds of Time is one of the terms that have been used to describe some of the projects of the artist, and it is also the name of this installation. It refers to the different speeds at which sound travels through different media, such as air, water, and solid materials. The speed of sound in a given medium is determined by its density and elasticity, and it increases with temperature and decreases with pressure.

In Speeds of Time, Fontana has chosen to focus on the speed of sound in air, and he has used a variety of recording techniques to capture the sound of the Big Ben clock tower and its surroundings. The installation includes a real-time sculptural audio map of the sound of Big Ben, which is displayed on a large screen in the gallery as the sound is transmitted from the tower. The installation also features audio recordings of other sounds, such as the sounds of the river Thames and the sounds of the city at night, which are played on a series of speakers placed throughout the gallery.

The installation is designed to create a sense of the passage of time and the complexity of sound events. The sounds are amplified and mixed in real-time, and they are transmitted through a series of speakers that are located throughout the gallery. The installation also includes a number of interactive elements, such as a microphone that visitors can use to generate their own sounds, and a series of speakers that play back the sounds that have been recorded.

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Organized by the Chelsea Programme, Chelsea College of Art and Design and Tate Britain. This project has been kindly supported by Chelsea College of Art and Design, Tate Britain, Haunch of Venison and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, National Public Radio, West German Radio (WDR), Swedish Radio, Radio France in Vienna, Tate Modern, London, the 48th Venice Biennale, the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Brooklyn Museum of Modern Art, the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, the Post Museum in Frankfurt, the Art History and Natural History Museums in Vienna, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Museum of Modern Art in Sydney and the new Kolumba Museum in Cologne. He has created major radio sound art projects for the European Broadcasting Union's Trans Europe Radio, the American Radio Network and the Australian State Radio. Fontana has worked extensively in the UK, including Tate Modern's Turbine Hall (Harmoic Bridge, 2000), Tate Britain's Tate Triennial and the Phoebes at Duke Beach, 1999, and its continuation, a space in which was unveiled at Leeds City Art Gallery in 2004.