

Electrical Walks: Chicago

by
Christina Kubisch

Christina Kubisch's *Electrical Walks: Chicago* enable a new experience of the city, one that uncovers Chicago's hidden acoustic phenomena. Armed with special magnetic headphones that amplify the perceptibility of electromagnetic currents in the environment, and a map marked with local acoustic landmarks, visitors are offered an auditory adventure that shifts the perception of everyday reality by giving substance to invisible wavelengths and charges.

What will you hear? The electromagnetic fields that surround us in the city manifest as drones, hums, pure tones, beeping patterns, and a variety of other sounds. Remember – you're not hearing a recording in your headphones, but the real-time experience of otherwise invisible and inaudible signals that are all around us, all the time.

The walk is free of charge, but you will need to leave your driver's license, passport, state ID, valid student ID, or suitable alternative as a deposit.

Using the headphones is not harmful, but please be cautious, as certain sound sources, particularly security gates, can be quite loud. The headphones have a volume control that you can adjust. And please take care when crossing roads.

The route indicated on the map is a suggestion only – feel free to explore the Loop as you choose. Some of the sounds indicated on the map may not be present all of the time. Walk slowly, and sometimes just stop and turn your head around – electromagnetic fields can vary greatly within very short distances.

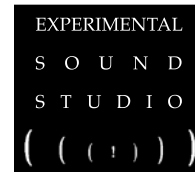
Please turn your headphones off when not in use in order to save the power of the batteries, and return them promptly to the Visitors Center after your walk.

Christina Kubisch (Germany) has made sound pieces using the system of electromagnetic induction since the end of the 1970s. She studied painting and later on composition and electronic music. She works in several artistic disciplines, such as sound installation, visual arts and electroacoustic composition. Her career of exhibitions and performances spans more than thirty years and includes numerous solo exhibitions and festivals, such as documenta, the Venice Biennale, and Ars Electronica. She is a professor of audiovisual arts at the Academy of Fine Arts, Saarbrücken, and she lives and works in Berlin.

Special thanks to the volunteers at the *Electrical Walks: Chicago* headphone desk, and to Sara Schnadt and Laura Chmielewski of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs.

Artist accommodation provided by Days Inn Lincoln Park North: www.lphdaysinn.com.

Electrical Walks: Chicago is presented by Experimental Sound Studio (ESS) in partnership with the Goethe-Institut Chicago as part of the 2007 Outer Ear Festival of Sound. The festival is curated by Lou Mallozzi for ESS. Project coordinator: Tim Shaw. Additional support for the project is provided by the Governor's International Arts Exchange Program of the Illinois Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



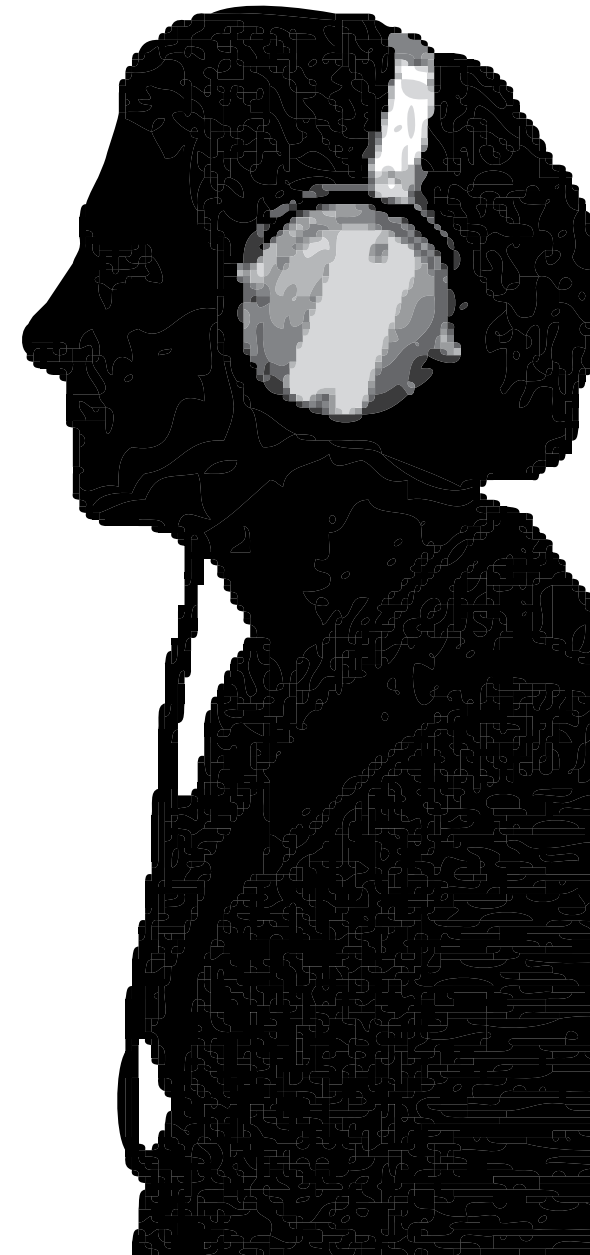
Experimental Sound Studio (ESS) is a non-profit organization for the production, promotion, presentation, and preservation of diverse and innovative approaches to the sonic arts, and to their integration into the community.

ESS is funded by its members and benefactors, and by the generous support of the DEW Foundation, the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, the Alphawood Foundation, the MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, the BMI Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. For more information please visit www.ExSoSt.org.



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

A great nation
deserves great art.



Electrical Walks: Chicago

- 1 **CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER** – Pick up your headphones. The walk is free, but you will be asked to leave a document such as a drivers license or passport.
- 2 At the entrance of the Cultural Center, go down to the **METRA UNDERPASS**. Go straight towards the entrance of the Metra station (indication: track 2/3/4). Stand still and move your head slowly. Also listen near the ticket machines.
- 3 Take the exit to Michigan Avenue. Cross Michigan Avenue and walk towards the **PRITZKER PAVILION**, but stop at the first landing along the stairway (the “Bean” is to your right). Listen in all directions. Look up and you will see various antennas.
- 4 At the end of **CHASE PROMENADE**, cross the street (be careful) and stand at the railing overlooking the train tracks towards the **ART INSTITUTE** (put volume down if necessary). Get your ears a rest, take the headphones off (please turn off to reserve batteries) and walk up Monroe Street on the left side.
- 5 Put headphones on. In front of **55 E. MONROE** listen closely to the screen of the city information sign in front of the building.
- 6 Enter the building at **55 E. MONROE**. Listen closely to the various ATM machines and the screens of the video building directory. Exit on Adams.
- 7 **BUS STOP** with large electrical advertising sign (ICDecaux). You will find more throughout the city. They all sound different.
- 8 **ADAMS STREET**. Go close to the neon signs in the various shop windows along the south side of the street.
- 9 **CVS PHARMACY** on State Street. Walk closely along the windows at State Street side. Cross the street through the underpass of the red line.
- 10 **AKIRA**. Security systems at entrance (attention, signal is very loud)
- 11 Neon signs of the **COSMO BEAUTY SHOP**.
- 12 **PAYTON SHOES** (security system).
- 13 **SIMPLY FASHIONS** (security system).
- 14^a Turn west on Van Buren Street and take the escalator to the **EL TRAIN STATION**. Lean over the railing next to the ticket machines (left side) at the train entrance and look down the street. Listen as trains come by.
- 14^b Get a ticket and enter the station. Stop directly under the **LED SIGNS** opposite the turnstiles. Lean your head with your back to the sign. (If you do not want to take the train, go back to State Street and skip to #18.)
- 14^c Take the **ORANGE** or **PINK LINE TOWARD MIDWAY**. While waiting for the train, walk up and down the platform. Ride the train and until the **WASHINGTON/WELLS STOP** and take the last exit at the end of the platform in the direction train is headed.
- 15 Walk around the corner to the right along Washington Street. Enter **CITY HALL**. Enjoy the electrical silence. Exit at Randolph Street and cross the street.
- 16 **DRESS BARN** (security systems at various entrances).
- 17 **PAUL YOUNG JEWELRY** – Stand close to the LED signs. Listen to the rhythm. Go to State Street.
- 18 **ABC SEVEN** – Listen closely to the tall LED signs outside of the building.
- 19 **ORIENTAL THEATRE** – Listen closely to the screens of the program advertisements.
- 20 Enter **MACYS** at Randolph Street. Look for the Cosmetic department. Move closely along the cosmetic displays of **CHANEL**. Exit onto Washington Street.
- 21 Turn left on Garland and walk to the black fountain at end of the street. Return your headphones. **THE END**

Additional suggestions: Take a bus ride... Take a ride with the underground... Listen to the various banks and ATM machines in LaSalle Street... Listen to the various security systems along State Street.

