



## aroundNorth

As the Earth spins on its axis, and day becomes night becomes day, our view on the near universe changes as seen by the changing positions of the stars in the sky. One star appears to stay stationary (the North Star) and the rest take about 23 hours 56 minutes and 4 seconds to complete one complete revolution.

The *aroundNorth* sound installation offers its listeners the opportunity to hear this phenomenon in real time. As stars cross equally spaced virtual lines emanating from Celestial North Pole, their sound is heard corresponding to their position in the sky, as well as their size, distance from Earth, brightness and temperature, creating a mesmerising sound map of the universe as viewed by our turning planet. On a clear night, in an average dark place, it might be possible to see around twelve hundred stars, depending on the weather, eyesight and light pollution. By contrast, *aroundNorth* refers to twelve thousand nearby stars, and thus genuinely opens up how we think about our stellar neighbours and our place in the Universe.

For each presentation the installation is adjusted so that the stars heard are specific to the hosting location. That is to say, the installation plays the stars potentially visible from the site where the installation is to be placed, and in real-time, tracking their movement across the sky. In this way, an audience is able to listen to an accurate portrayal of what is actually happening directly above them, as Earth turns on its axis and moves through space.

As well as the gallery version of the work, there is also a touring ‘performance’ version which has been designed for outside presentation. This uses eight battery-powered loudspeakers, each with their own built in synchronised sound system, and so the installation can be set up without wires, and without access to an electricity supply. This version of the installation will run on battery power for at least ten hours.

Surprisingly perhaps, *aroundNorth* works very well in daylight and therefore also in gallery conditions; however, under a clear dark sky the experience is very special indeed. In this case, the installation benefits from an area of land with a good view of the sky, and preferably without nearby light pollution.

*aroundNorth* humanises the astronomical, giving us an emotional key to help us relate the unfathomable heavens to our own experiences of time and space. With echoes of a Neolithic monument of ancient myth, the installation introduces us to a universe full of interest, encouraging us to think differently about the cosmos and our place within it.