



## SOUND AND THE CITY

A sound installation designed for a gallery setting.

The work was created in response to the Chinese city of Chongqing in September 2005 after an invitation by The British Council to create a sound installation to mark the opening of the city's new Planning and Development museum.

The work was created in response to not only the sounds of the city itself but also an extensive community programme reaching out to the people of Chongqing. This request was for descriptions of the public's favourite sounds and especially those that were unique to the city or helped to define it in some way. People from all walks of life contributed their descriptions, pointing the artist in the direction of what to record and how to organise the visual element.

The result is a fourteen minute quadraphonic sound composition that visitors walk into and experience from within. As the visitor listens to the sounds moving around them they are also surrounded by the installation's visual element. This is composed of the submitted descriptions of the sounds that acoustically define Chongqing. These are written vertically in Chinese characters and hung side by side on the four gallery walls making an abstract connection with the City centre's skyline.

The ideal space for the installation is a room of about eight metres square, although owing to the flexibility of the piece it is possible for it to be housed in a smaller or larger space as well as one more rectangular shaped. The sound is played on four loudspeakers, one in each corner, and is controlled by an installation specific audioPlayer.

The work questions the musicality of our cities, not just Chongqing. As we are becoming more adept in describing where we live in terms of what we see, it asks whether it is time to also consider how we would like our cities to sound. As such, the work offers many opportunities for educational projects as well as novel ways for engaging with the wider public. Possibilities range from submissions of favourite sounds through to the creation of a response piece, made up of the sounds of the host town, for a comparison of the works.