

The Observatory Project
Acoustics and Vibration Research Centre

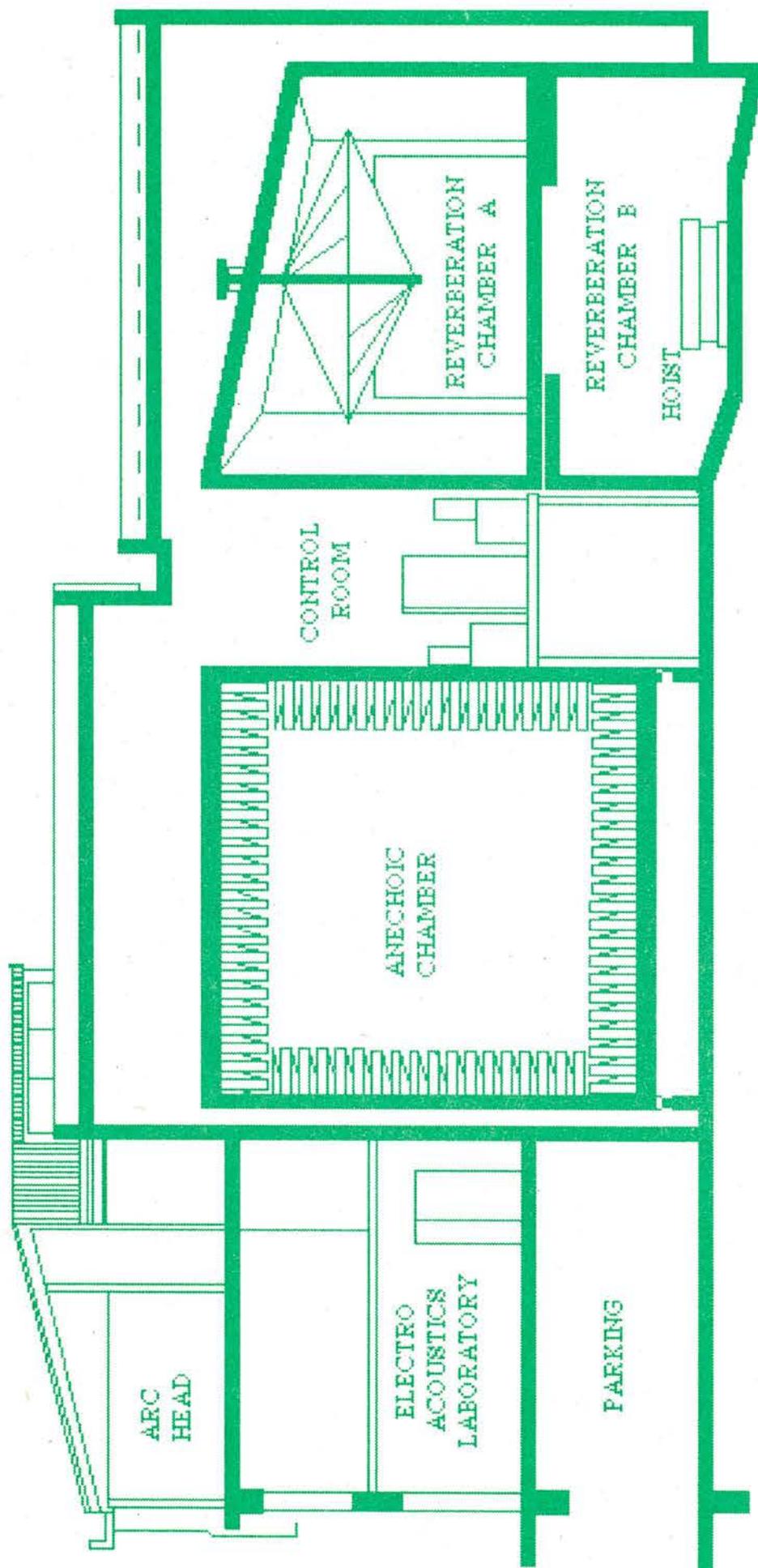
30-11-24

01-12-24



The Acoustics and Vibration Research Centre is comprised of three reverberation chambers and an anechoic chamber used to study acoustics – the field of science associated with the generation, propagation and effects of sound and vibration. Between the 27th November and the 2nd December 2024, The Observatory Project is based at the centre, working in the space to install the Adaptable Sound Interferometry Equipment A SINE, making towards new sound and video artworks, and conducting research towards our concept of “not-measuring events”.

Formed in 2017 after encountering gravitational wave sonification, The Observatory Project is the collaborative research-led project of Eamon Edmundson-Wells and Ziggy Lever that explores making in relation to scientific processes. This project operates at the intersection of art and science, by using sound, video, custom-made electronics, and sculptural installation as a means to diagram, interpret, and imagine scientific processes of observation. To facilitate this research, The Observatory Project designed and built the Adaptable Sound Interferometry Equipment (A SINE), a series of modular sound-generating sculptures that span across perspex-housed devices and large steel cabinets. Recent research includes sea-cliff interferometry, ‘not-measuring’, provisional making in observatories and laboratories, and documentation of machine calibrations.





NO SMOKING

Control Room

154

MEASUREMENT
IN PROGRESS

PLEASE CALL SHAWN
BEFORE ENTRY

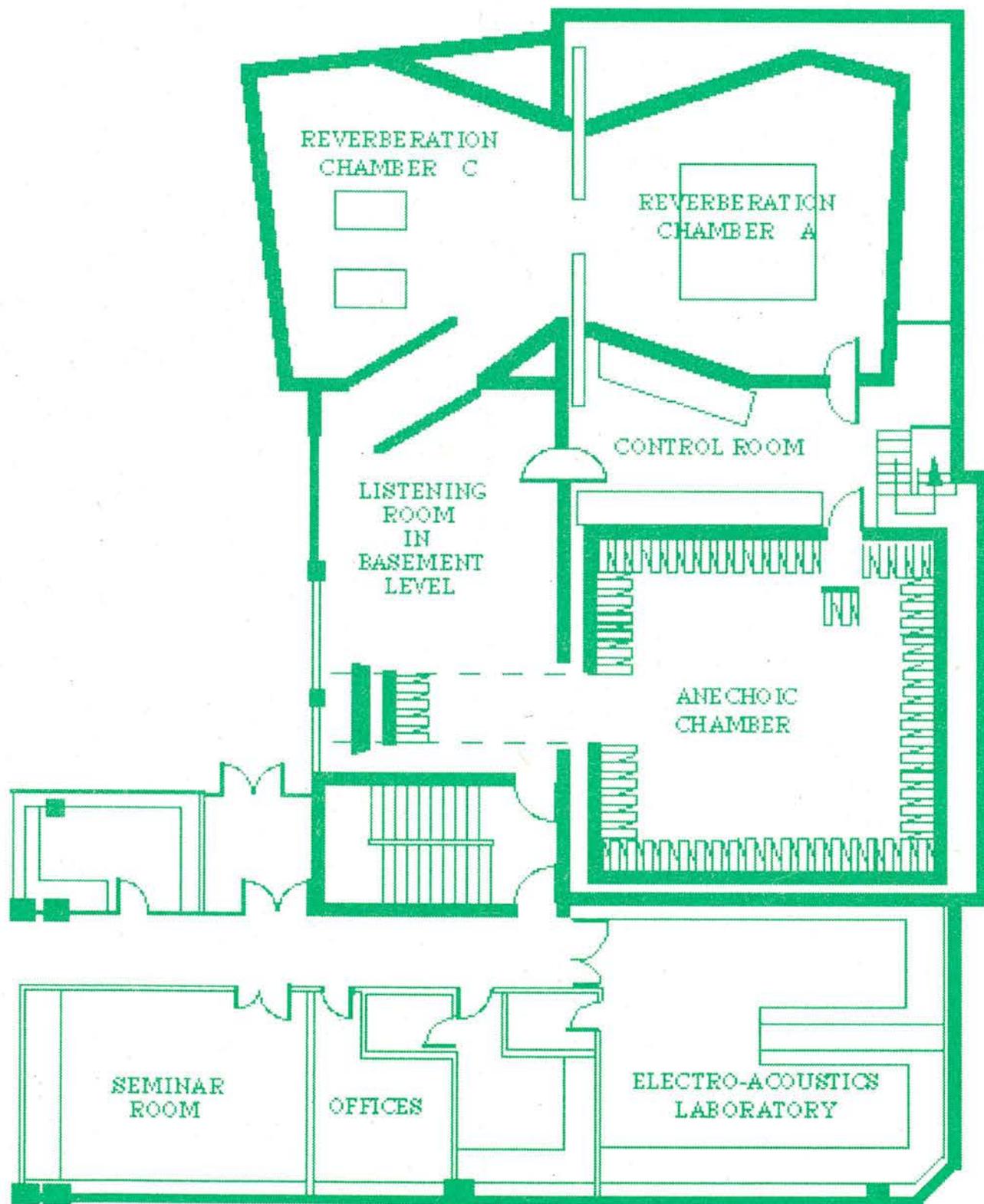
	<p>The Observatory Project Acoustics and Vibration Research Centre Acoustics Testing Facility</p>	ISO9001
		30-11-24
		01-12-24

Name	Group Number	Time Start/End

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

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On Saturday, the 30th of November, and Sunday, the 1st of December, 2024, thirty-three participants were invited to visit The Acoustics and Vibration Research Centre for a tour alongside The Observatory Project led by researchers Dr Andrew Hall, Yousif Badri, and Dr George Dodd. Upon arrival, guests were given clipboards and split into two groups so as to minimise the acoustic interference of our bodies in the four chambers visited (chambers A and C were combined).

In the anechoic chamber, we experienced the quietest room in Aotearoa – a room suspended on springs and “de-coupled” from the rest of the building. We heard about how the material and shape of the 1m deep foam wedges mounted to the ceiling, walls, and floor (under the suspended astroturf field) are designed to minimise reflected sound. Earlier that week, ground impedance measurements were taken, and the floor of the chamber was set up with layers of MDF, Chux cloths, and astroturf to simulate the acoustic properties of grass.¹ After some time, the first sound event occurred.

The other three chambers visited were reverberation chambers. There are no parallel surfaces in a reverberation chamber, decreasing the interference from standing waves and increasing the potential for sonic reflection. As the large door to Chamber C was closed, the sound of birdsong and light rain outside faded and each small movement made was seemingly amplified as the echo increased. Panels mounted to the walls of Chamber C re-directed these reflections, and large rotating vein diffusers mounted to the ceiling further stir up the sound field. In the reverberation chamber, it can be difficult to isolate where the source of a sound is located.

The wall between chambers A and C was removed making both chambers into one space. The *Adaptable Sound Interferometry Equipment (A SINE)* was installed in Chamber A, and was the source of sound events that were heard simultaneously across all four chambers. Attached to the walls under tension were panels of CNC cut MDF – “metamaterial” filters that dampened frequencies around 2000 kilohertz.² Not-Measurements of the sonic field were taken by the Observatory Project, as sub-base frequencies pressurised the chambers. Numbers were read and recorded: frequency ranges, decibel levels, distances (in mm), and reflections from surfaces. Twelve-sided speakers were suspended in the corners of the chambers. A small door to an unused silent air supply was opened, releasing some of the pressure and a radio affected by the interference of measuring equipment on the radio field was removed.

1 Go, Sung Tyaek, Michael J. Kingan, Gian Schmid, and Andrew Hall. ‘On the Use of Ground-Board Mounted Microphones for Outdoor Noise Measurements’. *Journal of Sound and Vibration* 584 (August 2024): 118432. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsv.2024.118432>.

2 Hall, Andrew J, George Dodd, and Emilio P Calius. ‘Multiplying Resonances for Attenuation in Mechanical Metamaterials: Part 1 – Concepts, Initial Validation and Single Layer Structures’. *Applied Acoustics* 170 (December 2020): 107513. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apacoust.2020.107513>.



Not-measuring differs from simply not taking measurements. To make a not-measurement, the action of measuring is performed with an intention to not produce data. Any traces of that not-measurement event act as documentation, reframing the event as an artwork. Not-measuring events interrupt the normal processes of making measurements and observations by focusing on the act of *measuring as making*.

In Chamber B, located directly below chamber A, a microphone swung in an arc around the space. The microphone was mounted atop a large hydraulic lift, and looking up, you could see the removable floor that is used for experiments in materials and sound-proofing. Here Andrew and Yousif demonstrated a cylindrical metamaterial filter made to respond to a specific frequency range. Wooden boards and bags of foam rested against the walls and floor, in what at first seemed like a simple storage solution but was revealed to be a specifically positioned arrangement of acoustic absorption and diffusion. We heard how the chamber was built to ISO standards in the 1980's, but that now standards have shifted. In Chamber B they work to change the acoustic quality of the room without building a whole new room.

At the end of the tour, participants were invited to take the first part of this ephemera, and leave their notes and observations behind to be distributed at a later date. Designed to be inserted at the back of the initial ephemera, the following pages feature drawings, notes, and observations made.







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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
KRISTIAN	1 1	? - 2:10 PM

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

1.2 M FOAM WEDGES ANECHOIC DOWN TO 40-50 HZ
LEFT WITH WHATEVER IT IS THAT YOU'RE LEFT WITH
BLENDED TINNITUS
BOSS FREQUENCIES LESS DISCERNABLE PANNING WISE

} A
N
E
C
H
O
I
C

REVERB CHAMBER (1ST)

META MATERIALS - SOUND CLOAKING - ACOUSTIC BLACK HOLES
WHITE NOISE
LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION SURFACES & ANGLES

REVERB CHAMBER (2ND)

MEASURED REVERBERATION DISSIPATION TIME
FREQUENCY BAND GAPS

HELICOPTER

DOMESTIC ?
SCALES ?



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Eamon	1	250/25

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

1. 28.1

46.1 -1040

2. 43.6

86.4 39

3. 45.8

4. 46.5

5. 45.1 -925

92.3 - 1149

6. 48 -1139

89.7 - -380

7. 40.4 -178

82.3 - 26

8. 43.7 91

114.4 -756

9.

102.6 942

Number box reset = 91

2nd event - 64

Number box reset 79.2 -912

Rado 115am



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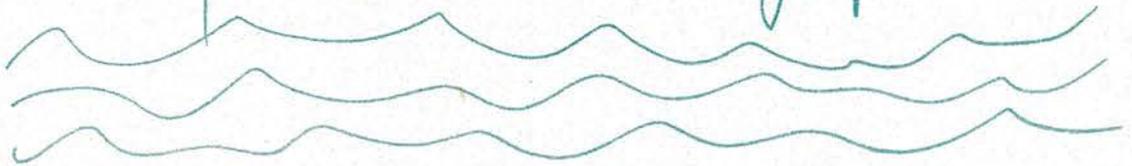
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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

travelling waves - band gaps



ball speaker

short wave radio
parked between two yellow lines
on the keep clear territory.



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Harriet Stockman	1	1.07

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Mechonic
- without
reverb

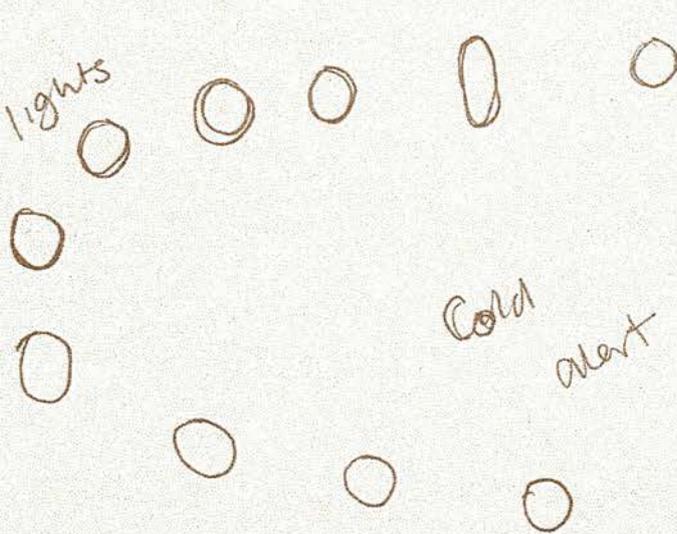
step edious
Reflex
wamm

Penicils on paper
disturb is noisy.
wmm

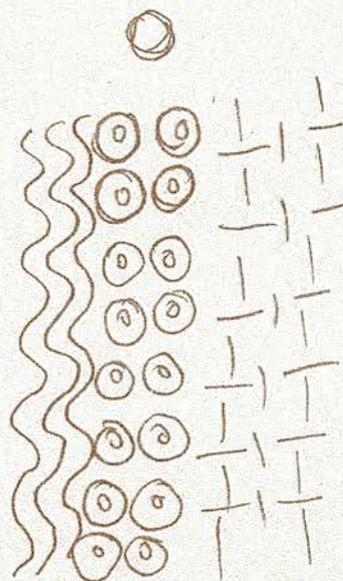
Chamber 1
cold

Chamber 2
warm.

lights



Cold
alert



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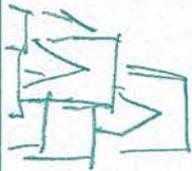
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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Joseph Jwith	2A	13:12 - 14:05

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

"The quietest room in Acoveon" "Suspended on rubber" "Imbricated foam shingle"



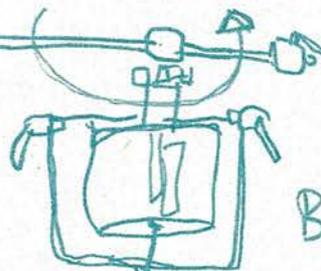
direct to brain

"A diffuse field environment"

"meta-materials"

cavities, oscillators

Baffles sized to match frequency



Band gaps

"Absorption coefficient"



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Shelley	One	1.10 - 1.50 pm

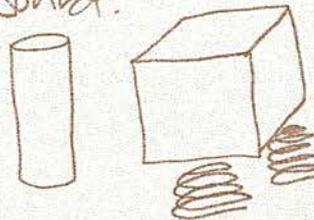
NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Room 1 - Anechoic Room without reflection... No bouncing sound ≈ 1981

Voice sounds very dull, clean, clear Snells Law
Feel pressure in your head \rightarrow your ears tell you are in
a room, but a conflict between what you see + what you
hear - delicate things in your ear - muscles ^{contract} pull little
bones inwards to protect them \rightarrow the Stepedius Affect
Forget to breath, like the body is interrupted... Isolating
the body in the environment, less responsive, less embedded.

Chamber B - lower reverb chamber \rightarrow quite alive
with reverb. Panels reflect sound waves all around the
room. Sloped floor - angled to reflect sound.

Bass hoars Feels warm in the
body.



Ziggy measuring 61.8

Armon entering into machine - long, loud,
low

Eye contact is important
92.3
89.3
82.3 @ 26 1.14.4



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
<i>Eamon</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>25000/250</i>

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

<i>25 - 64.8 - 25000</i>	<i>36.3 - 33403</i>
<i>89.7 - 25400</i>	<i>47.4 - 32105</i>
<i>84.1 - 24788</i>	<i>41.8 31542</i>
<i>86.5 - 24476</i>	<i>43.8-30733</i>
<i>97.6 - 22671</i>	<i>43.3 - 30422</i>
<i>105 - 22929</i>	<i>45.3 - 30129</i>
<i>732 - 21285</i>	<i>48.9 - 29404</i>
<i>83.0 - 20165</i>	<i>44.4-29015</i>
<i>99.3 - 19255</i>	<i>49.6 - 27841</i>
<i>100.7 - 18527</i>	<i>44.9 27443</i>
<i>96.0 - 17934</i>	<i>53.5 27175</i>
<i>80.3 - 17205</i>	<i>Reset 27175</i>
<i>Reset 17205</i>	<i>3353</i>
<i>5016</i>	<i>115 am</i>
<i>Reset - 33656</i>	

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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Alex Jones	1	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Room 1

LIKE BEING IN A FIELD OF DEEP SNOW
(ACOUSTICALLY SPEAKING).

NOT AS PROFOUND AS JOHN EDGE
MAKES OUT THAT'S FOR SURE.

Room 2

SURROUND SOUND

Room 3

RETRO-FUTURISTIC



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Selina Ershadi	2B	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

"I feel like we're in a sci-fi like" - L -

- transmission loss

Diffuser - diffuse field of sound

Object to receive sound from every angle.

Panels - perforations, perforations, dashes & concentric rings

- passive technique.

- feedback

- Z's hands movements, animating the sound waves.

- sounds of pencils on paper

Standing in the frame of the invisible, missing wall
a threshold

repetition of 2 voices, calling out to measurements. Behaves

Spins a sub-spin Elliptical motion.

Bootes slowly pacing through room

Z up a small radio, dist signals disintegrating int static.

Sounds like waves, sea waves.

Enter the anechoic chamber. Abrupt cut of radio transmissions

- negative DB

- Mask.

- freezing time

- viscosity of air, four types of dissipation.

Z - do people start to feel weird.

- It felt like it was emanating from inside me. - Erotic. Alien.

- "L. did you hear/ feel your heart beat?"

Spiritual.

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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Jonathan Alexander Kennedy	<u>ONE</u>	13:00 hrs → 14:06 hrs.

measurement → use? do the number of people effect experience?

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

rm
l.

echo ~~vs~~ VT
↓
repeat
no
Anechoic chamber
room of wedges,
direct sound,
no reflection

1m² reverberation room chamber
unsure of purpose as host.
George did not get a briefing.

many recording measuring devices.
people present that seem to know verbalising/playing.
↑ removes floor/ceiling to allow tests to occur.
floor lift

more data the better

absorption vs. insulation
sound

stereodisc ear muscle
construction

small sounds as speaker plays.

reason for

human element.

conductor for data.
am radio noise
feedback.

Measure Sound

When does the sound stop?
/ come from?

61.8 Hz
89.3 Hz

high
low



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Stephen Cleland	2B (Sunday)	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Rm ① - Xiset

'Superposition of ~~all~~
sound wave'

Rm ② - DB

'viscosity of air'

Rm ③ Change the volume of
the room, without
making a new room



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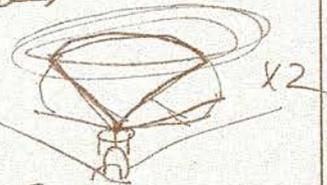
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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Diana Jansen	A	1 PM

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

1981 - testing alarm
Measurement system - absorbing
- through door ① - into the bunker - reverbs changed
rotating diffusers - no parallel walls
no standing waves

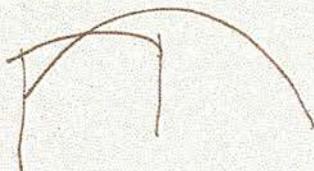
- ears stop below 20hz
effectively people are deaf
listening to 20-20000 with 10000 reverb
measuring at 250hz - 29.1 @ 201



frequency affecting my hearing - blood flow very
unpleasant pressure
surviving underwater in a bunker with a
1970s computer
- What is silence?
pidaw up transmission - frequency 100

spot ② - What is silence
supersonic reflection = sound
sound waves fall -
my ears are loud - pinitus
ultra 20000 - Snell's law
turb - vibrating - hearing analogue oscillators

isolated
from context
common



spot ③ - at greater depth - has fish
- spins
- microphone
- recording
light blue swimming pool
looking for cable - a floor
spinning - the centre cannot hold
mixing deck - recording audio





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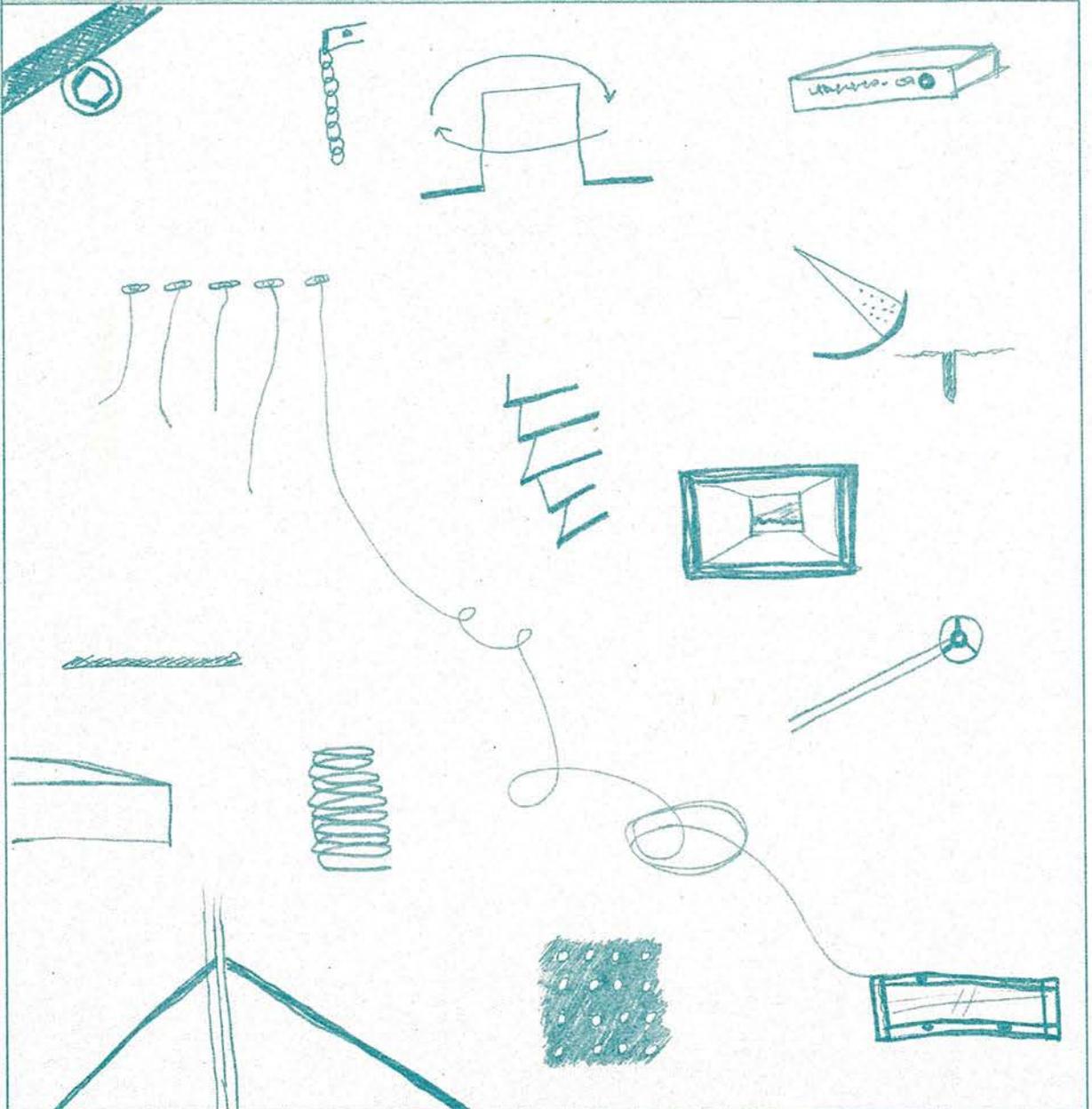
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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Emily O'Hara	2B	1310 - 1420

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:



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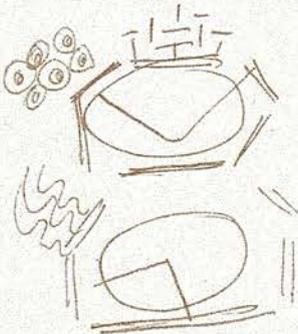
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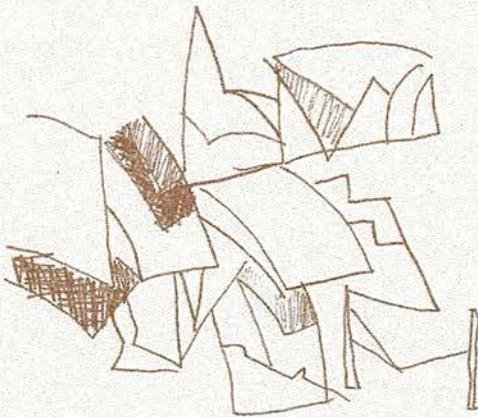
Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Monique Redmond	A	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Perforator panels
Take note how you are hearing the space.



< 20



Does sound ^{know} what
colour the substrates
are?

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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Emily D'Hara	2B	0120 : 0210

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

- on entering, I want immediately to sing.
 - "impulses"
 - impulse to sing = high
 - hear reverb more than the voices creating the origin sound
 - Alien sound
 - "Meaning 25hz"
 - "64.8"
 - moving around to find more resonance
 - "89.7"
 - sound filling inside my ears now
 - "25.4"
 - impulse to sing: LOW
 - "84.1"
 - when it peaks, it enters my body
 - I like the rumble
 - Is it my tympanic (sp?) membrane that is vibrating?
- A.E.C: dissipation of sound
"viscosity of the air"
- sleeping in the jungle
- 44 - Desire to sing: high (again)
- Waaaaaaaaaaaaa
~~~~~  
~~~~~



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Ziggy Lewis	Group A	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

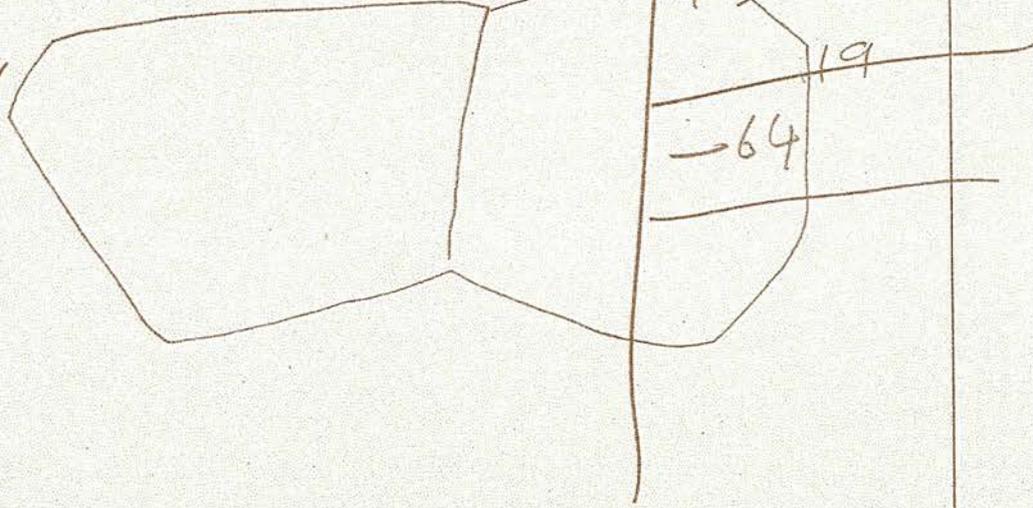
Flametal Resonators
acoustic black holes

Metamaterial panels
2000 Hz

61.8	250 Hz
92.3	28.1
89.3	43.6
82.3	45.8
114.4	46.5
102.6	45.1
79.2	48
	40.4
	43.7

No standard waves
100 Hz
phononic crystals

Snell's law



28

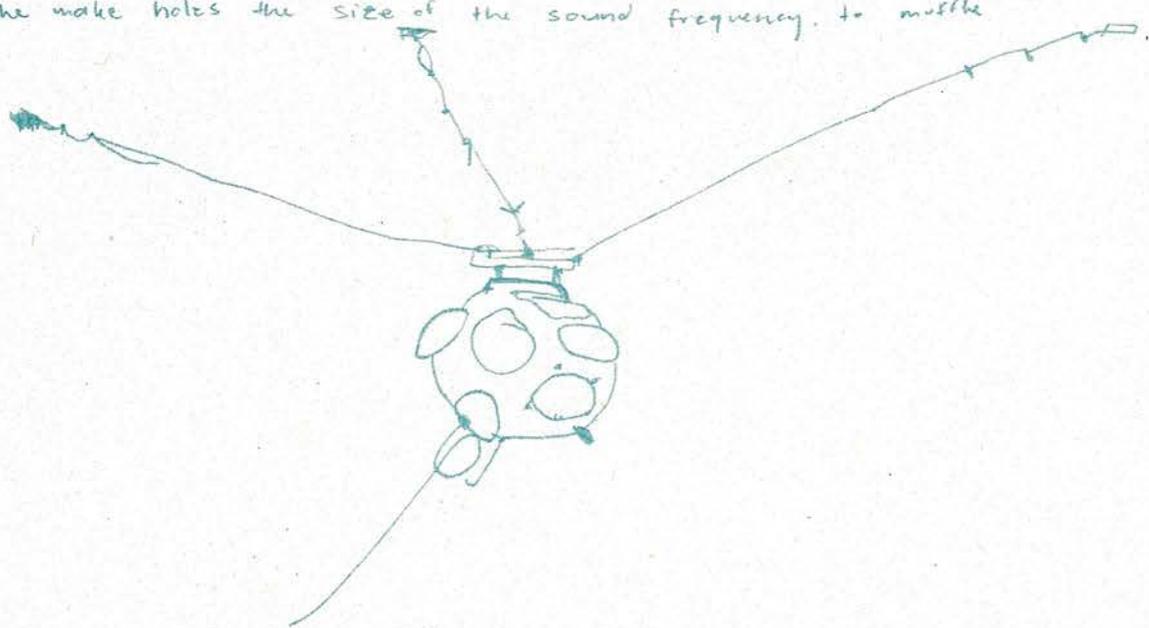
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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Nikita	1	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

It feels like going deep underwater and the pressure is in your ears.
 the door is funny how you have to lift it.
 sound turns into heat
 I feel sleepy & peaceful

This room is like a ship or being in a pool with no water.
 the make holes the size of the sound frequency to muffle.



I like it when it goes really pressure in my ears
 SSSS SSSS 119 1m 420 cm

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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Margaret Colligar	A	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Foam Room

- Calm environment - claustrophobic after a while.
- Sound is lost by being converted into heat
- Snells law Lots of physics involved.
- My pulsatile tinnitis is clearly obvious 
thud thud - I've got hearing loss...
arrgh its too late in

Room 3

MRI - Whoa

Scanning us

Feels cold - is it the blue floor??



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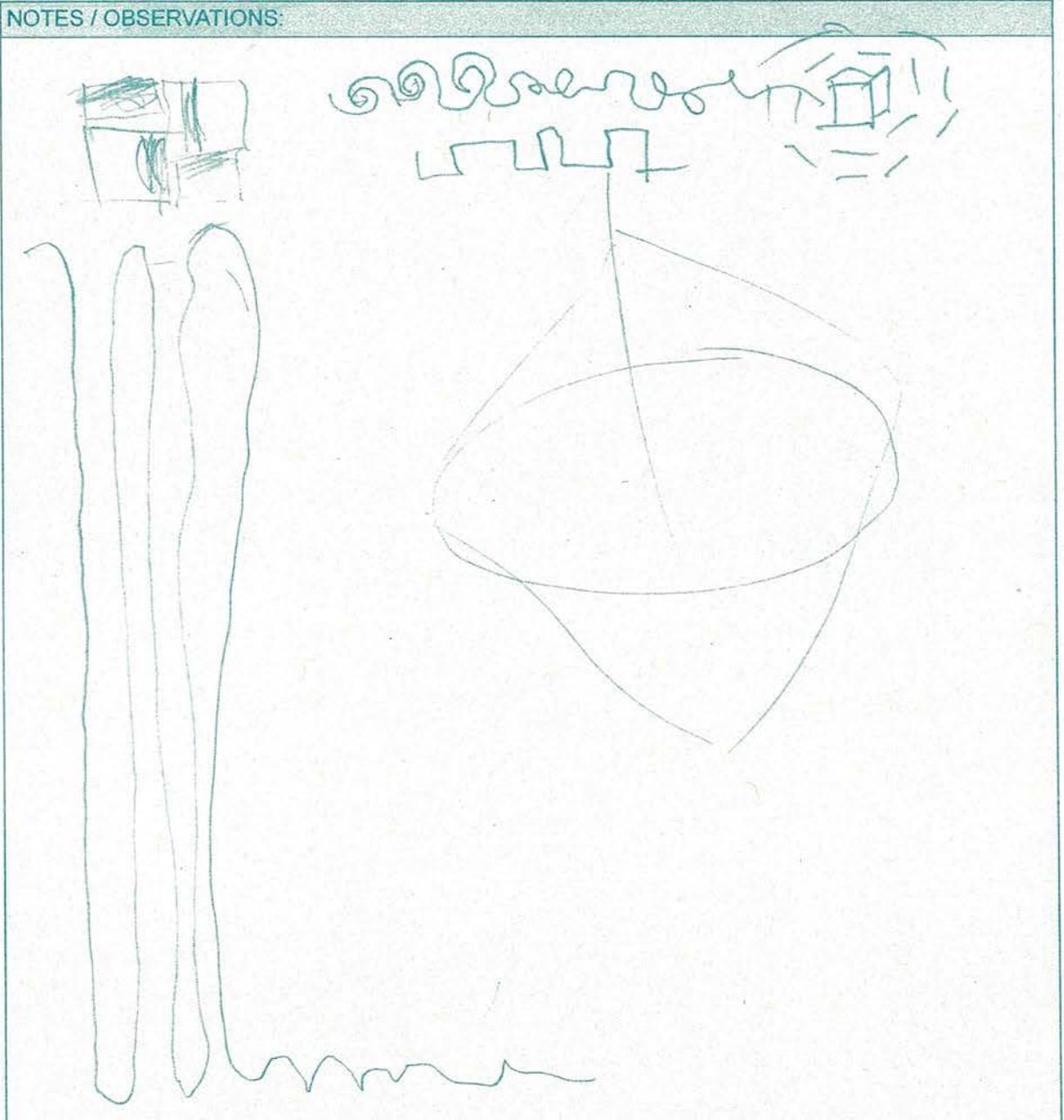
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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
	1	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Margaret Colligan	A	1300

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Chamber One

Hearing the space & my perceptions
Diffuse field chamber - evenly spaced frequency.
∅ parallel walls → evenness of sound
< 20 Hertz ears cannot detect.

Diffusion - wiggly panels
reflections in panels 

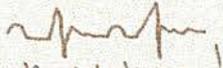
Phononic crystals  wavelength of panels

Acoustic black holes / acoustic cloak
trap sound

250 Hertz wheel spins →

{ - sound
thumping
Low

Heart starts
pumping


thudding!!

About to take off
Really loud band bass

Radio in wall - static m
Liken to alien moving
into next hemisphere



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Lucy M	ZB	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

tapping machine

diffuse diffusion

source of excitation

structure

superposition

sound wave

air moving through the gaps

25 Hz	64.8	86.5
89.7	25.4(?)	24.476
84.1	24.788	97.6
		22.671
		105

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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Robert Laking	Group A	1-2 pm 30-11-24

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Metamaterials for ducting.

NO ONE KNOWS WHY
WE'RE HERE

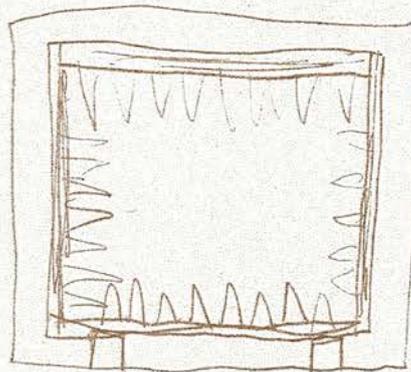
} after George asked us
in the anechoic chamber

Binaural sound
traveling around
the room

Sound insulating vs sound absorbing materials

|
concrete

|
foam



61.8 @ 25k2

92.3 @ 114

Reverb room
↳ boom mic



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Lucy M	2B	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

FREE FIELD OF SOUND

moor wen a
trouit w moor eht fo
trous neelies tu
changing the volume

British
French
experiment
with
sound

MY PENCIL SOUNDS
VERY LOUD

SIRENS / COUNTERPART

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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
	A	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Testup - doors
floors

Even waves - diffuse even as possible

Cars don't detect under 3H.

Rehearsed different ways of testup

Testup sand on diffrent boards.

snells law

Dead room -

Size of material proportional to height of wave.



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Jess Robinson	2	

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ISO9001

30-11-24

01-12-24

Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Beth Dawson	1 A	13:00-14:00

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:



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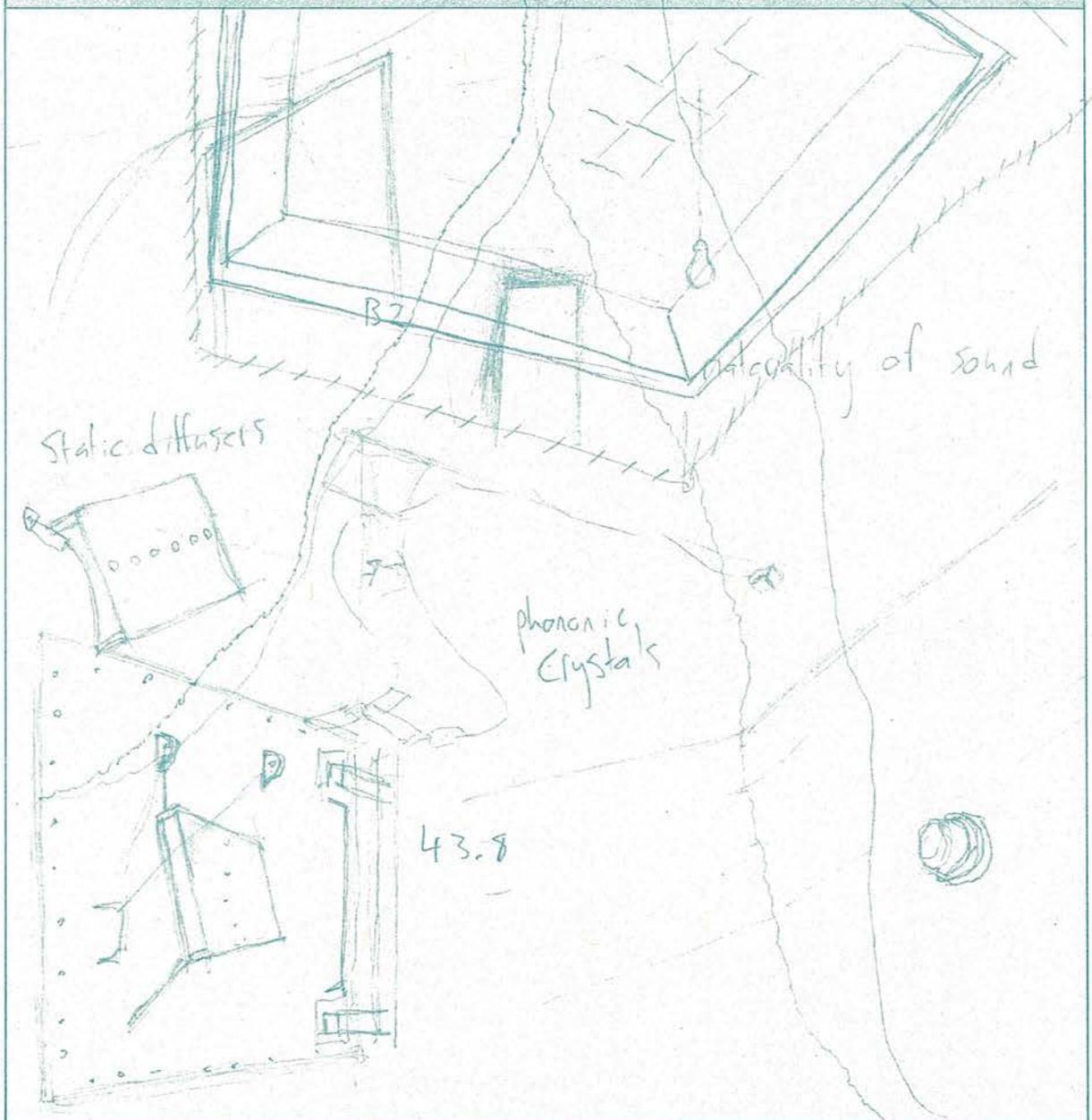
ISO9001

30-11-24

01-12-24

Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Josh Whitaker	#1	11:30-12:00

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:



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01-12-24

Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
FRANKLIN BRICE	1	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Absorption Dissipation reflection

anechoic chamber

Single point source is obvious
modulated tones are fatiguing

Looking at a speaker is enough to tell whether it is on

Reverb basement

Point source is also obvious

Tone changes completely with head movement

Phase is

SPL up stairs

SPL is almost constant through the room

Echo is singular reverb
anechoic not at all





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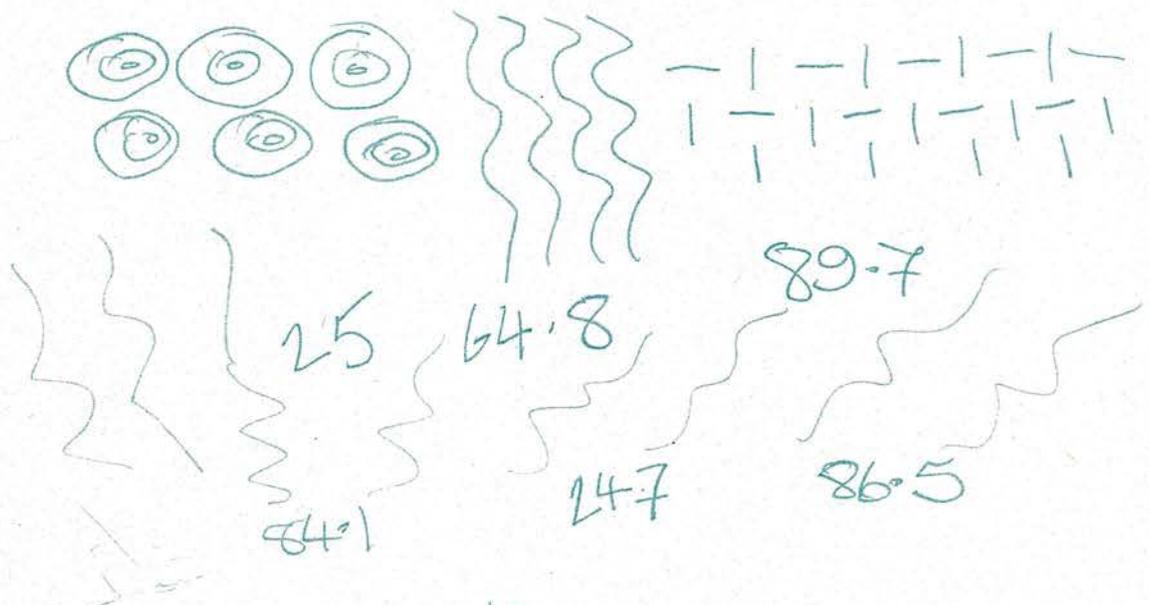
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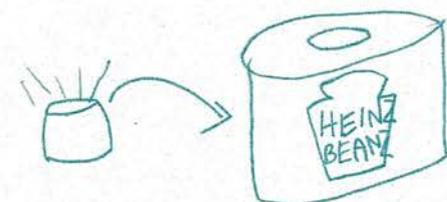
01-12-24

Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Deborah Rundle	23	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:



HIGH TECH
LOW TECH



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Shelley	One	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

102.6.
resetting / circling / whomping
79.2. crunching walking scratching
language? Radio frequency / static / attempts.



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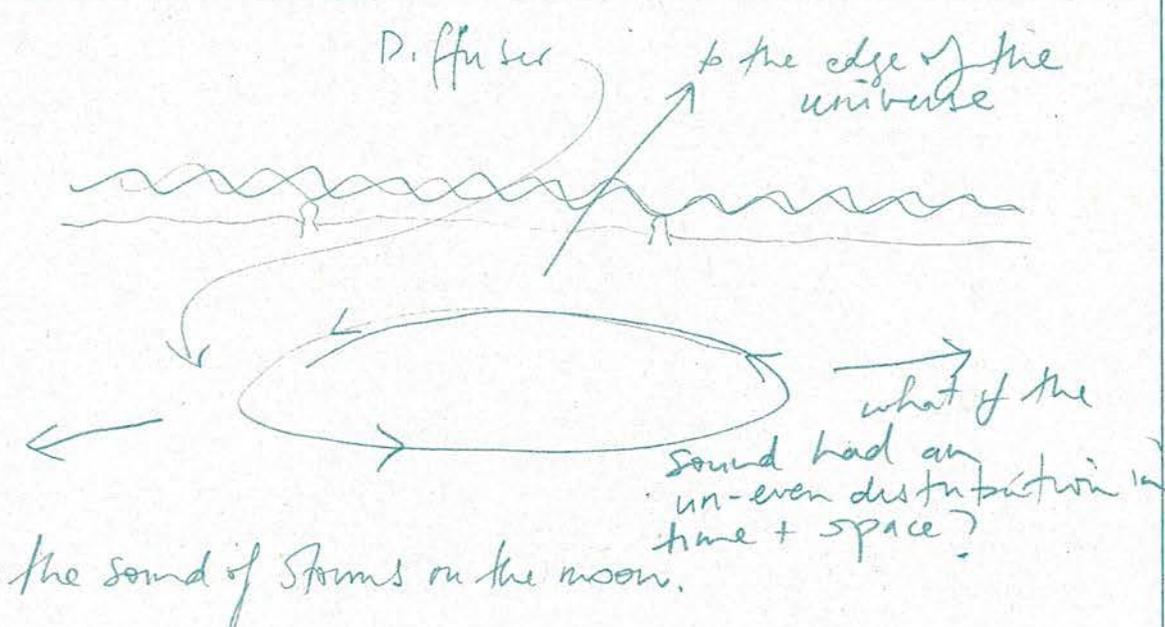
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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Lisa Crowley	2B	

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:



The measurers. are reading out numbers of different sizes

anechoic chamber allow sound to have clear direction it doesnt have backwards



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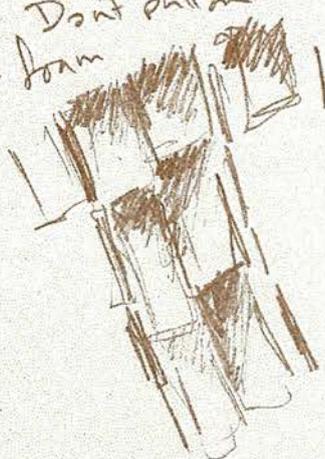
Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
	Group 1	13:11 / 13:55

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

reverb vs echo

too many reflects to make echo

Don't pull on
- foam



① Anchoic Chamber

direct sound w/out reflection

sound insulation vs sound absorbing

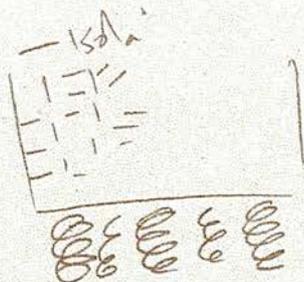
concrete

- impact ear
pressure

absorption.

sound wave
buries the
treatment.

friction of
rubbing - side



stereos reflex
noise

Jarvis Anderson song
pant rubbing

brain creating noise or
speaker rumble?

- clear directionality of sound

Room 2 + Chamber B - low reverberation chamber.

sound transmission testing

- tapping machine

- Japanese ball



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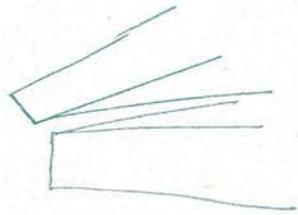
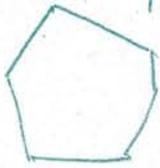
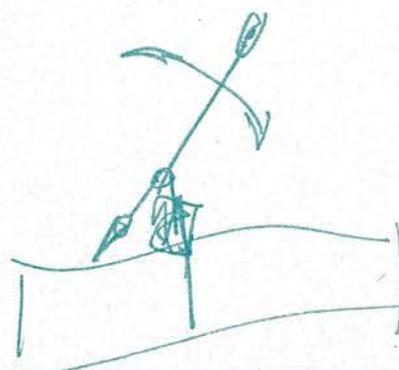
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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
	1	13.10

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

reflection - absorption
direct sound 
different pulsative frequencies
mix together -
my pulse with tinnitus and heart ~~beat~~
3- static diffusers - room 2
white noise
like a sound trap  hexagon full of holes
 frequency changing with rotation
room 3 - rotating ~~diffusers~~



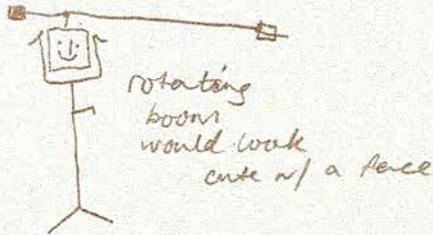
Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
TASH VAN SCHAARDENBURG	①	1:13 — 1:53

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

ANECHOIC
NO REFLECTIONS

STIFF EAR

- everyone sits very still & moves little when you can hear them move a lot
- pressure
- It rumbles the speaker or the blood in my ear? wump wump



• moving head changes the sound quite a bit - almost feels like it changes the timbre but it's not that.

100HZ — 3M

- Everyone goes quiet when Ziggy says he's taking a measurement
- Sub makes floor feel funny, air combo with pressure in ears
- Below the smaller spinning diffuser there is much less overall drone pressure
- The sound my brain keeps trying to say is the high pitch scrape of the spinning diffusers but I know it's not, they're silent.
- The wind tunnel could just fit one person inside I think.
- Soft static radio sounds like rain



Name	Group Number	Time Start/End

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

Andrew + Yusef (Acoustic Centre)

Eamonn + Ziggy

Vibrations + Acoustic test system

Anechoic chamber.

112 metres of foam each side

Wedges shaped to trap noise, stops.

Anechoic down to 40 Hz

6 metre wave lengths - ANATZHOIC no

reflection - direct sound.



a suspended room

- speech masky

- flat sounds

- map sound

4 channels

Ideal place for recording the kinetic movement of lips.

reverberation chamber

Metamaterials - in tuned structures

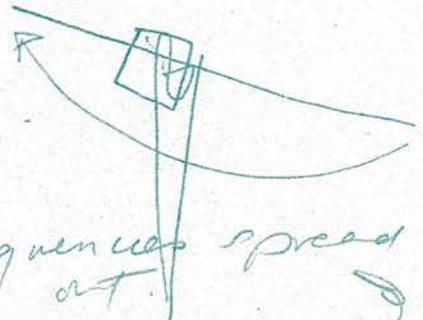
what is inside the materials



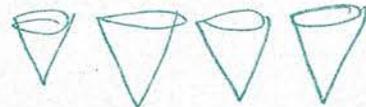
Material paper



contains



low frequencies spread out.



What happens to sound in a cone?

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Two Rotating diffusers - test walls + 4 rooms



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Name	Group Number	Time Start/End
Sarah Smith-Kennel	A.	1 pm

NOTES / OBSERVATIONS:

meta materials - internal geometries (like Jazz)
Reverberation Chamber ^{phononic crystals}
wave length = bending wave - freq

No parallel walls - no standing waves

100 Hertz - wave 3 meter low sub woof

40-30 Hertz -

below 20 we can't hear

phyc acoustic

panels = - scatter bending waves in panels - with geometry

⊙ ⊙ ⊙ - 2000 hertz

low freq oscillate materials - avoid depending on wave length
~~they push back~~

Sound pressure waves - is like a piston

acoustic - black hole

- cloake

250

28.1

43.6 - start to hear wave itself - like a pressure on whole body

46.5

- suppress reflections = (absorbing material) weight of concrete =

With special thanks to Gian Schmid, Andrew Hall, and George Dodd from the Acoustics Testing Laboratory, and to the Audio Foundation for supporting this event.

<http://www.observatory-project.info>

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/engineering/our-research/discover/research-areas-and-facilities/acoustics.html>

<https://www.audiofoundation.org.nz/>