

Rooms of Stillness

I long thought about how one can create rooms where one can withdraw and find rest, where one can see, hear and concentrate, where one is shut off from the external world and yet takes part in it. They should be simple, empty rooms that create an ambience of stillness with the aid of art or music or both together.

I seek rooms that can be hidden, in private apartments, in public buildings, they can be in the cellar or solitary in a forest, at a lake, or in the loud city. They should be scattered everywhere: in Berlin, where I live, in Tokyo, Los Angeles, or New York, the whole world could be spanned with an ever-tighter net of such zones of calm, practically with little artistic ecological niches for us.

One should have access to them at certain times and be able to enter them alone.

In my opinion, the mere idea that quiet zones in fact exist can help to calm this world down. Rooms of Stillness are not necessarily acoustically still; they can, on the contrary, be loud; thus they are quiet in a higher sense. In the Society for Current Art in Bremen, at the beginning of the year I took the first step toward such a room. *Chamber Music No. 1* was the title: a small room empty except for two white rectangular columns surmounted by loudspeakers. The loudspeakers were angled toward the middle of the room, in front of them was a chair where one could sit down and, with the music at one's back, look through the windows at the Weser Bridge with all its traffic and the river. In this case, music was very important, so important that one was not supposed to concentrate on it, which is the reason why one could look out the window. The music from the two loudspeakers met at the listener's neck, and he felt it precisely there.

I'm thinking of more such rooms, some without windows, rooms with only one work: a floating plate of iron, for example, that seems to float through the music, calmly floating.. I'm thinking of rooms into which one can withdraw alone, rooms that create an ambience of stillness, but not stupid stillness.. how should I put it.. active stillness, a kind of state of suspension, stillness.

There are several works I could entrust to such rooms, simple texts perhaps, or yellow and blue pigments or loudspeakers that breathe..

Rolf Julius, 1987