

## **Kristen Roos – The micro radio project**

The basic human need to feel sound as opposed to be treated to a passive, treble-inflicted listen can be observed most often at the afternoon rush hour. Regardless of the tune, the almost unbearable levels of bass and vibration leave the passengers of these tiny mobile discos lost amidst a common yet indispensable catharsis.

Sound Artist Kristen Roos manages a more ambient and sophisticated approach to bringing this kind of visceral sound to the masses. Through public installations like 2007's Nuit Blanche project, Roos presented this primal urge to turn our equalizer presets up to ten with added subterranean intrigue.

One warm autumn evening saw thousands rushing down several flights of stairs underground to the Lower Bay Ghost Station of the Toronto subway system. At the bottom, they found a dimly lit stretch of the abandoned line with a string of subterranean cars parked on either side. Equipped with internal subwoofers, they became grand alloy whales washed up on the tracks, booming and vibrating from within to an unsettling degree.

Already made familiar by our own stories of hauntings, the abandoned venue had a healthy injection of new life and meaning to its history. Amidst the rattle of the tactile transducers vibrating nuts and bolts to simulate construction noise, there was no discernible melody, just the impression of pattern and repetition with supernatural components. That is to say, the piece not only referenced the evocation of the supernatural by way of Zimbabwean tribal rhythms, an on-going inspiration in Roos' work, but very much seemed haunted in and of itself. A brand new haunting, as it were.

One doesn't so much observe Roos' work as encounter it. These audio experimentations go beyond intriguing into the realm of necessity. Effectively, the specificity of the installation quickly sidesteps "art observed" to deftly become "art universal."

**Carolyn Tripp** is an artist and writer living in Toronto. Her work has been published in Spacing, Eye Weekly and Mondo Magazine. Currently, she is working on a collection of short stories under the working title, *Operation Centaur Rodeo*.