

# BAU

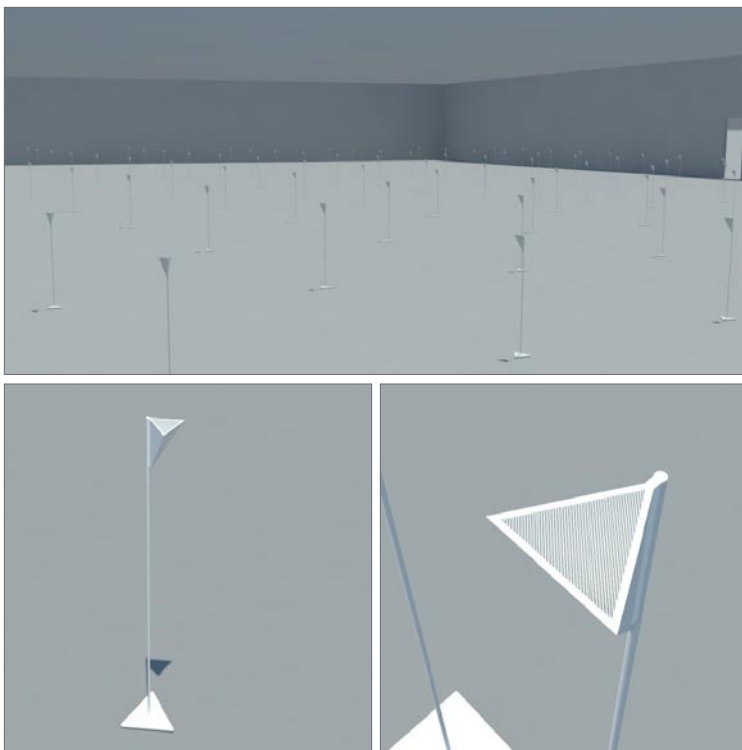
## sound labyrinth

*We are obsessed with building labyrinths, where before there was open plain and sky.*

THOMAS PYNCHON

*We stand at the dawn of an era that will see the emancipation of architecture from matter. The intuition that allows us even to consider architecture as 'frozen music' or music a 'molten architecture' comes from a deep and ancient understanding that, in its very essence, architecture exceeds building, as music exceeds sound.*

MARCUS NOVAK



In the distant past, the labyrinth was not only a place of disorientation and fear. Its mesmerizing qualities were as often used for contemplation as for imprisonment. Like the cloister, the labyrinth was a place to walk; like the rest of a fanciful garden, it was an amusement. The labyrinth might be built of stone in an underground dungeon, or it might be clipped out of densely packed bushes. In the case of Bau, it is created from sound.

Bau is a labyrinthine space constructed of sound waves. Where the traditional labyrinth uses walls and corners to delineate its passageways, Bau uses sound, thus: the piece occupies a large walled space in which dozens of free-standing sound generators are placed in an asymmetrical geometry. These devices emit a variable combination of frequencies such that the entire room may be mapped in different patterns. The room itself is half-lit and filled with a synthetic fog. In low visibility, visitors enter through one door and must listen and decipher the frequency map, making their way through the vastness of the room, in order to find the exit door.

Above the installation, concave dishes are hung. These have the effect of focusing a group of tones on a particular location; the tones are gathered from waves reflecting up from the immediate vicinity, and thus give a layered summary of their respective places.

The intersection of architecture and sound is an under-explored space. Buildings are traditionally constructed with sound isolation or dampening in mind. The idea is that what sound there is which is not under control is a nuisance at best. Since sound elements associated with architecture (wind, street noise, etc.) are often constant forces, their dispersion or containment is an ongoing problem. Coming now is an architecture in which the qualities of complex diffused sound will inform the space and the construction that sound occupies. Bau is a mass-less, texture-rich piece of architecture.