

**Beth Coleman and Howard Goldkrand**

We would see them show up, these weird distended figures tautly held by their ears. They brought a phalanx of miniature units through which energy was dispersed in sound waves. Overdeveloped ears, they heard with their whole bodies, swaying to the subsonic bass, their slender frames bowed slightly toward the source. Their figures made a gathering of “U”s and “S”s. With multiple sources in attendance, the scene would become some obtuse ballet mechanic, all units moving in an encrypted cross-pattern. As the signals cross and merge new algorithms would form, hanging in the air, then disperse in the birth of a new one. It dawned on us that sound began to creep away from the deserted construction site where we had gathered. Volume instead of growing became inverted in the pink noise cancellation pattern they danced. There was a legend for the pattern, we’d heard, but no one had yet to be able to read it. Secret agents of the crowd, they would show up at the train tracks, in the street, by monuments on holidays and bend the sound of the throng. Their machines ate the urban ambient of metal-in-motion.

Pink noise rests somewhere on the spectrum between white and black. White noise gives you the intensity of a burn. The vanilla factor is a recognized experience among the noise terrorists. The sound is grown in a self-regenerative lattice that mirrors cellular reproduction. One thing fractures and its breaking creates a synthesis. The synthesis makes a mutation, and so on. Like the wailing of an explosion, it crumbles apart in the ear like glass turned back to sand. The sonic build comes from the acceleration of the process, i.e. sound breaks



**Figures 14.1, 14.2, 14.3**

*Mobile Stealth Unit (Pink Noise) Series 002*, Beth Coleman and Howard Goldkrand, 1999, mixed-media sculpture (workman tricycle, sound system, Web camera, laptop, software, electronics). Pink noise, the parenthetical in the piece's title, describes sound behaving not as content but as an investigation of context. Pink noise is the name of audio used in tuning sound systems by engineers. It is a signal sent out in frequencies to test the architectural-acoustic dimensions of a space. *Mobile Stealth Unit* is designed as an investigation of the dynamic space created between sound source and listener, between remote audiovisual input and local. In the case of the *MSU*, pink noise describes an investigation of space in the form of a two-way transmission: sound circulates out to the local listener, impacting that immediate environment, while the remote viewer manipulates a virtual visual field from the Net, run concurrent with audio broadcast. Different yet simultaneous spaces are charted and interlinked by the double transmission.



open and then open again, continually—that is, continually until entropy catches up with forward motion. The space built from this motion is a clearing ground. Everything gets dead. It builds until the ear reaches stasis and all sound floats. The body tingles in the stillness. The walls of sound press in, filling every bit. The ear and the body discuss the dematerial world. Two squirrels chattering over nuts.

Black noise gets you located in time. Immersed in invisible yet physical information. Time code variable, but always set to lead. Witness—*The Mobile Stealth Unit*; antenna, process filter, generator and transmitter. Boom-Biff—Boom-Biff—Bap 8-bit talking drums, fat tree stump speakers sending a signal frequency of which there is only the dynamics of feeling and not words or sounds. Felt again and remembered. Dub tensions and release. An architecture of continuous fragmentation. There they were rockin' hacked hearing aids with remote control processors and dumb, double wide smiles. They look like they're listening to you, but fer real, in their ears, it is you sounding like the teacher from *Peanuts* sucking helium. Good Luck. Black Noise. Hence the smile, intoxicated with witnessing the world as a sample data input. Re-encoding a complex presence of phase relations and harmonics.

—Journal entry 794001, Betty Mann Chronicles