

The Operating Ear. Beyond Acoustics.

According to the German Cochlear Implant Society, 300.000 people worldwide have already used a cochlear implant (CI) as a hearing aid in 2011—and the number is growing steadily. But even if the number of CI wearers is (still) manageable, it can be assumed that our 'culture of hearing' will escalate. The CI as a technological artifact is already emancipating from the usual hearing mechanisms by creating a short link between medium CI and other media-technical devices and, thus, excluding the acoustics. This is followed by a new consideration of hearing and associated understanding of sound. While people without hearing impairment only have access to acoustic signals, the CI also allows the techno-mathematical world to be heard. This means that even today, the *Sonik*—a term introduced by media scientist Wolfgang Ernst—no longer depends on transforming sound, generated in electrical space, into audible acoustic events. Consequently, with the separation of the auditory nerve from the ear's mechanical part, the *Sonik* has also become an autonomous object of science. It carries *sonikation* in tow, a hypothesis that can only be presented in theory. [Notice: To prove my hypothesis, I invented *The Theremin for the Deaf* in 2018.] Furthermore, it remains questionable what advantages a CI wearer has through *sonikation*, since such experienced auditory events are described as rather disturbing.