

“The world’s entire financial system is built on trust. When assets are traded, both parties must be sure they will receive their part of the transaction. Given the complexity, speed and quantity of assets involved, a fast, secure and trusted third-party is absolutely essential for settling transactions.” This third part is Clearstream, a banking system specialised in clearance and settlement, this is what can be read on Clearstream’s official website. The poetical fusion of the words *stream* and *clear* recalls the sound and the image of a fountain, or the idea of a recycling system that enters exploited people’s sweat and blood on one hand and miraculously spits a transparent and healthy fluid on the other. In fact Clearstream is also the name of a wastewater treatment system that, “through aeration and clarification, provides a proper environment for aerobic bacteria and other micro-organisms that convert the incoming sewage into clear, odorless, and organically stable water.”

The ageless dream of quickly cleaning profit from the traces of pain and theft is perfectly exemplified by Clearstream this “third part” between exploited and exploiters. This system has been twice denounced as a source of major frauds in the past years. In *Révélation* (2001), by investigative reporter Denis Robert and ex-Clearstream banker Ernest Backes, Clearstream was accused of being an international platform for money laundering and tax evasion via an illegal system of secret accounts (the "Clearstream Affair").

In Spring 2004, a "Second Clearstream Affair" began, which attracted more attention in 2006. Peripheral to the primary Clearstream Affair, it accused several French political figures, industrial leaders, and members of the secret services of maintaining secret accounts at Clearstream, which allegedly were used to transfer kickbacks in a France–Taiwan frigates scandal.

Claire Fontaine gave the title of *Clearstream* to a sound piece which consists in white noise diffused in the exhibition space. The peculiarity of the white noise is to help people’s concentration and to induce children’s sleep. The white noise also has a particular frequency that absorbs all the other sounds and makes speech inaudible. In relation to the impossibility of discovering the truth about the international speculations that surround us, the white noise is supposed to evoke the narcotic sound of a waterfall or a continuous refrain that doesn’t signify anything but keeps us in a state of wordless regression.