

**SOUND ART (Mar 2002)
(8,000 words).**

Following are edited excerpts from the CRUMB New Media Curating discussion list <<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/new-media-curating.html>>. They have been spellchecked, edited, and arranged in order to follow a particular thread of debate. The full postings can be seen and searched via the web site.

The list is the public forum for the web site The Curatorial Resource for Upstart Media Bliss <<http://www.crumbweb.org>>.

Edited by Verina Gfader, with Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook, 2007.

sound art: list of resources
"swiss@drake"
26 Apr 2001

New Media List --

As you know, I asked for sound art references. You kindly supplied a number of them. Below are many of the responses, which I post here for others who might need these resources in the future.

Thanks. Thom Swiss

Date: Tue, 24 Apr 2001
From: Nat Muller

Thom,

- 1) Sonic Boom at the Hayward gallery last year, curated by David Toop, was truly wonderful!
<http://www.hayward-gallery.org.uk/>
- 2) You might also want to have a look at Futuresonic
<http://www.futuresonic.com/>
contact Drew Hemment [log in to unmask]
- 3) Upcoming is the annual sonar festival in Barcelona: <http://www.sonar.es/>
- 4) International Computer Music Conference icmc, should be a good resource
<http://www.icmc2000.org/>
- 5) Also try the STEIM studios in Amsterdam for content in/out, update on new technologies www.steim.nl
- 6) last year's nato summit at DEAF_00 in Rotterdam www.v2.nl/deaf
- 7) people like Ron Kuivila [log in to unmask], Ed Osborn [log in to unmask], Paul de Marinis [log in to unmask] and Guy Van Belle [log in to unmask], Gollo Foellmer [log in to unmask] are def. worth a try
<http://crossfade.walkerart.org/index.html>
www.roving.net
<http://www.well.com/~demarini/>
- 8) recently a new list came up on gender and music technology WAVE_LIST, owner is Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner
mailto:[log in to unmask]
This is a great resource on women and electronic music.

cheerio,

nat

V2_Organisatie

Eendrachtsstraat 10, 3012 XL Rotterdam, Holland
www.v2.nl

Date: Wed, 25 Apr 2001
From: iliyana nedkova

thom,

just wondered whether you can possibly compile all the crumbs of
contacts/projects URLs, etc after processing the advisory notes from across
the list. [...]

-il

Date: Sun, 22 Apr 2001
From: "Thomas Bell, Psy. D."

Thom,

I've been doing some editorial work with Dmitry Bulatov for a
Russian/English sound/visual poetry -project he's put together to tour
Russian - a lot of major international figures and cds and recordings as
well as historical/critical information, etc. ...

tom bell

----- Original Message -----
From: "swiss@drake"

Date: Mon, 23 Apr 2001
From: Chris Byrne

Thom,

Try here: <http://www.mediascot.org/drift>

A sound art/acoustic ecology event we organised in Glasgow during 1999.

Best

Chris

Hello Thom,
I noticed your post on the curating list and wanted to mention a group of artists that work as e-
Xplo in New York -- sound artists Erin McGonigle and Heimo Lattner and video artist Rene Gabri.
Recently they have been performing sound work on bus trips through Williamsburg called DenCity.
It was written up in the latest ArtByte Magazine. Their new project is upcoming and I'll forward the
email about it following this.

Regards,
Alison Cornyn

Some helpful contacts from:

Professor dr. Sue Golding [johnny de philo]
Head of Theory, The Jan van Eyck Akademie, Post-doctoral/Post-Academic
Research

Institute in Fine Art, Design and Theory, Maastricht
and
Professor of Philosophy in the Visual Arts & Communication Technologies,
University of Greenwich, London

Dear Thom,

Your note was forwarded to me so I couldn't resist a response.

I am a composer and media artist so not being a critic or curator,
I'm not sure if it is appropriate for me to respond.

However, I have just completed "Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual
Reality," a critical anthology of seminal articles by artists and
scientists that chronicles the evolution of the medium. As you can
see from the title, the approach is focused on the role of composers
and interdisciplinary artists whose work in the time-based arts has
impacted our contemporary notion of media art. The book is coming out
in July from W.W. Norton and there is a companion Website on-line at
Artmuseum.net (<http://www.artmuseum.net>).

I am also at work on a series of networked sound installations
entitled "Telemusic." For more on my work, see my Website:
<http://www.zakros.com>

Best,

Randall

Thom

a colleague of mine from New York named Ben Portis has been organising a sound festival every
year in London, Ontario (Canada) for some time now, and I understand the "no music festival" will
take place in NYC this year. He would be a great curator to speak about musician-crossover-artists,
and his festival could be a good case study.
You can reach him at [log in to unmask]

Also, do you know about the exhibition "Sonic Boom: The Art of Sound" which took place at the
Hayward Gallery in London? Curated by David Toop. look at www.hayward-gallery.co.uk for more
info.

Sarah

=====

dear Professor Swiss,

a subscriber to the new media curating list, Denise Delgado of the bass
museum, forwarded your post to me.

i am an artist and composer living in miami, Florida.
my sound (and video) works have been installed in the Bass Museum, Center
for the Fine Arts (now the Miami Art Museum), and the Lowe Art Museum, among
others. my work has been featured in the Meet the Composer series and on
National Public Radio. my composition for the Computer Music Journal is
featured in the sound anthology of the current issue (Computer Music Journal
volume 24, number 4, published by The MIT Press).

i would be quite interested in the exhibition you hope to plan for the
conference; please let me know how i might participate.

best regards,
Edward Bobb

=====

We did a very good show on sound art here at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center.
It was called "Volume: Bed of Sound." The website has excerpts of many of
the works, and I encourage you to have a look:

www.ps1.org/cut/volume/index.html

good luck!

Anthony Huberman
P.S.1

dear mr swiss,

thanks for opening up to the list. if you can read german or like
pictures etc.
please try my page. <http://home.sunrise.ch/artclay>

i would glad to help with he project to further any ideas which may be
interesting.

arthur clay

=====

Dear Thom Swiss,

Dr.Thomas Bell send me your information about your sound event. I'm curator of National Centre
for contemporary art (Kaliningrad branch, Russia). Here is my last project, may be you like it. I'll
present this anthology at Polipoetry Festival in Maastricht (Holland) in May, and I'll read lectures on
contemporary sound poetry.

With best regards,
Dmitry Bulatov

HOMO SONORUS.
AN INTERNATIONAL ANTHOLOGY OF SOUND POETRY
"To hear hundred times"

National Center for Contemporary Art (the Kaliningrad Branch) announces about the beginning of
the Program of presentation of the sound-poetry genre in Russia. Pilot project of the program (the
ideologist and curator - Dmitry Bulatov), the work on which is currently under way - publication of
the Anthology of the world sound-poetry "HOMO SONORUS" (4 CD-collection, bilingual Russian-
English catalogue, postcard) - is the FIRST project in Russia focused on granting a UNIQUE
opportunity of acquaintance with a phenomenon of the contemporary literature and arts, absolutely
UNKNOWN to the Russian audience, which for today is an international SOUND-POETRY trend. The
practical part of the project represents collection of sonor-poetic products of ONE HUNDRED poets
from twenty-five countries of the world working presently in this genre and adjacent audio-art
directions. Theoretical base of the anthology consists of illustrated articles of leading sound-poets
and research works in this field devoted to problems of the genre and history of development of
various schools of poetry in different countries of the world. For the first time addressing to such an
extreme direction as sonoric (sound, phonetic) poetry will allow the Russian listener to follow the
occurring changes in the historical field of concepts and to reveal problems, which are being put
forward by the modern experimental poets. All the theoretical articles and audio materials are sent
by the participants to the Center SPECIALLY for the publication of this anthology.

Hi,

you might want to check the work of Maria Blondeel, and artist combining
sound and light:

<http://users.pandora.be/MariaBlondeel>

best,

guy

=====

Thom,. Saw your message on new media list. Be sure to contact Mattress factory in Pittsburgh. They did one of the leading sound art shows in US last spring. D-

Date: Wed, 25 Apr 2001
From: Jorge Luiz Antonio

Thom Swiss,

Is your interest only in sound art resources?
I can send my resources about sound poetry, books and cd roms, but in Portuguese, with a guide to read.

Jorge Luiz Antonio (Brazil)
=====

sound art: list of resoruces
Chris Paul
27 Apr 2001

May also be relevant to your interests :

<http://www.idea.org.uk/splitshift>
archive of art radio training project
<http://www.artslab.net>
weekly streaming Thu 8-10 pm GMT or BST and archive
<http://www.yourserver.co.uk/revolting>
seminar site, part of ISEA98

--
Chris Paul - IDEA @ @
Innovation in Digital and Electronic Arts \ /
Grosvenor Building, Manchester, M15 6BR @ - @ - @
mailto:[log in to unmask] / \
0161 273 4414 fax 0161 273 4432 @ @
<http://www.idea.org.uk/go> A Catalyst For Art and Ideas
<http://www.idea.org.uk/archive>
<http://www.idea.org.uk/cinemaconcret>

Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Beryl Graham
7 Mar 2002

Dear List,

Sound Art: March Theme of the Month

In new media art, the visual tends to dominate the scene. But what about the aural? What are the problems of 'exhibiting' or distributing new media 'sound art'? What do we call it? Are the models 'the concert' 'the installation', the group, the individual, or something else? Is sound the neglected element in mixed media works? Does it live in Turing-Land or Duchamp-land? Can you find a good sound installation technician? Has it got a whole different audience? How does it work in mixed shows? Does it work as public art?

These small questions could be tackled this month. The discussion list has touched on sound before, including Thomas Swiss' useful resource list of Thu, 26 Apr 2001, but hasn't looked at the question in depth. This month's theme and guests has been chosen in collaboration with Kathleen Forde and Benjamin Weil of SFMOMA.

This Month's Invited Respondents: Kathleen Forde, Media Arts Curatorial Associate, SFMOMA. Naut Human, San Francisco, freelance curator /producer and record label director. Kevin Mc Hugh, Creative Time/independent curator, New York. Zina Kaye, radio streamer, Australia. Elke Moltrecht, Podewil, Berlin. Sneha Solanki artist/radio streamer, Newcastle. Philip Samartzis, curator/artist, Australia. Joseph Thompson, MASS MoCA. David Toop, Sonic Boom curator, London. Benjamin Weil, Media Arts Curator, SFMOMA.

Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Beryl Graham
11 Mar 2002

Dear List,

I'd like to help this month's theme along by asking this month's guests, (and others), their opinions on whether sound art does best in sound-art-specific events or in mixed shows.

Something I noticed about the press coverage of the show "010101" at SFMOMA was that sound magazines and journals tended to review only the sound art in the exhibition, and that the visual art magazines didn't say much about the primarily audio works. There was, however, a little crossover, and evidence that reviewers were starting to think about media that they would not have otherwise considered.

Does mixing the media help to mix the audience, or does it lead to mutual incomprehension?

I look forward to hearing of your experiences,

yours,

Beryl

Fwd: b l i p : sci/art discussion : Rodney Berry : 18 March
Beryl Graham
11 Mar 2002

A relevant sound-art event:

.....

.... b l i p :

- sci/art discussion -

.....

first meeting:

Rodney Berry: interactive sound installations and works in progress...
Monday 18 March, 7:30pm at Lighthouse, Brighton UK

.....

Announcing b l i p : a new sci/art forum based in Brighton. The first meeting is on Monday 18 March, with Australian artist Rodney Berry: interactive sound installations and works in progress..

b l i p : is a new forum for people interested in new forms of art that explore ideas about interaction, emergence, generative and procedural processes, telepresence, artificial life and other related areas. We aim to make this as wide and open a space for debate as possible and hope that this becomes a place where all types of artists and scientists can meet, collaborate, seek inspiration, and show off their latest work. We welcome people attending from the academic world, commercial design and the wider digital arts scene. Meetings will alternate between Sussex University and Lighthouse Centre.

The first b l i p : meeting will feature Australian artist Rodney Berry, currently based at the ATR research labs in Kyoto, Japan. Berry will show and discuss some of his latest work, including the interactive biologically-inspired music environments 'Listening Sky' and 'Feeeping Creatures'. b l i p : will take place at Lighthouse, 9-12 Middle Street, Brighton at 7.30 pm on Monday 18 March 2002.

For more information about this and upcoming events see the b l i p : website <<http://www.cogs.susx.ac.uk/users/samw/blip/BLIPFRM.HTML>>. If you are interested in coming please join the b l i p : mailing list [log in to unmask] or email [log in to unmask] so we can get an idea of numbers. If you have ideas or work that you would like to share in future b l i p : events please email us.

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- sci/art discussion -
- sussex university and lighthouse -

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<<http://www.cogs.susx.ac.uk/users/samw/blip/BLIPFRM.HTML>>

Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Kathleen Forde
12 Mar 2002

thanks for kicking this off beryl . . .

in response to your question, "does mixing the media help to mix the audience, or does it lead to mutual incomprehension?" from my perspective, (and thankfully) it does both. while not adverse to shows that focus primarily on sound, i am an avid believer of mixing things up. without question it will lead to mutual incomprehension at times, but not without first mixing the audience which i believe can only be a positive progressive step. and at the end of the day, a bit of miscomprehension will do far more to interject sound into the landscape of contemporary art than silence any day.

speaking from a musicological perspective, by consistently introducing the medium of sound within the context of a museum that displays all mediums and within specific shows that highlight a variety of disciplines, an institution such as sfmoma is able to not only reach an audience who already has knowledge and an interest in this field but also the larger general museum public, many of whom may not be aware of the history and importance of the medium.

i'm speaking here more about the type of viewer who probably won't happen upon a sound event or installation at loft/warehouse/ alternative space where this work is more common. it really functions like a domino effect. sound when placed within the context of the museum is automatically afforded a certain deserved validity to an audience that might not necessarily be aware of it otherwise. it generates interest which in turn, generates more support from the public for more sound programming and installations. . . which generates more interest from the public . . . more sound programming and so on and so on.

and then there is the support, dialogue and brainstorming sessions from the fantastic sound artists/producers in the san francisco community that has emerged as a result of our forays. yet another spice in the mix that in turn makes our program stronger. so you see we have all of this dialogue being generated, and comprehensible or not, it is the conversation and process that ultimately will lead to the validation and improved visibility of this work.

speaking of shows that focus primarily on sound . . . has anyone in the group seen/heard the current frequenzen show in frankfurt? i'd be interested to hear some feedback on that.

kathleen

Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Sarah Cook
13 Mar 2002

Kathleen and others,

I did see Frequencies, the exhibition of sound art currently on view at the Kunsthalle Schirn in Frankfurt. However, I feel thoroughly unqualified to write a review of it, which is why I am looking forward to this month's discussions. I saw Sonic Boom at the Hayward Gallery here in England two years ago and that exhibition is my only point of reference regarding contemporary sound installations grouped by media rather than by content or theme. Through my travels to media art

festivals I have attended many new media music/sound/vj performances, but feel that the time-based element of those experiences means comparison to sound art installations in exhibition spaces is not productive. (Is such a distinction useful to developing aesthetic criteria or not?) My initial thoughts on Frequencies are below, but I'd love to hear more experienced curators/participants speak to their knowledge of sound art in mixed-media shows, perhaps the successful yet ghettoised installation in BitStreams (Whitney, 2001), or the inclusion of sound works (such as Douglas Gordon's) in theme shows, such as Let's Entertain (Walker Art Center, 2000).

Regardless of what it sounds like, Frequencies, the exhibition of sound art currently on view at the Kunsthalle Schirn in Frankfurt looks beautiful. The Hayward's clumpy architecture aside, the installation design of Frequencies put the similar exhibition seen here in London two years ago - Sonic Boom - to shame. White foam sound insulation squares cover the walls - the names of the artists, titles of the works and short descriptions are engraved into the top two like roman stone carving. In the long thin white cube space each work had its own room off a spacious corridor. In the catalogue the installation designers explain they were working from the idea of stretching a frequency - a sound wave - out in space. it works. only rarely can you hear another piece interfering with the one you are looking at/listening to. the show is airy and brightly lit, it feels at times ethereal.

The selection of works veers towards the visceral - very high frequencies, very low deep frequencies (both make you worry you are doing damage to yourself) accompanied in some cases by strobe lights (the amazing and deeply unsettling Nauman-esque narrow corridor by Roy Ikeda) in other cases electricity (Tommi Gronlund and Petteri Nisunen's facing concave mirror installation). All of the pieces are of course, as they struggle to be visual, in some way overarchingly conceptual (case in point Mika Vainio's three out-of-synch clocks on the wall look like a Feliz Gonzales Torres threesome; they are wired with microphones to amplify the sound of the minute hand moving).

Some works of note: the three installations outside the museum and the three designed for the museum's particular architecture (a round windowed space and the stairwell you mount to get to the exhibition galleries) are very good (Carsten Nicolai's is recognisable as his work before you even get into it - I love that he is so talented that even his completely minimalist sound pieces have developed into an evolving trademark style). The weakest work in the show in my opinion is Daniel Pflumm's video shown on a monitor embedded in the wall showing advertisements for products with all text, logos and name brands removed soundtracked by unrelenting techno music - next to all the other installations/sculptures, it feels completely out of place and doesn't hold it's own conceptually. One piece, that of Carl Michael von Hausswolff is nicely new-media in that it reinterprets the frequencies from the museum's own electrical systems (presumably the buzz of the lights and the hum of the air circulation unit) amplifies them, puts them through an oscilloscope, and then records the image appearing on the oscilloscope and projects it back in real time onto the gallery wall.

I would have liked to have seen/heard more works involving the acoustics of recognisable spaces or of found /collaged sounds (only two pieces were overtly narrative: Knut Asdam's piece consisting of a darkened space defined by blackout curtains, which upon entering you sit on a bench and staring out the window listen to a story told by two different women and Ultra-Red's video diptych of images from the USA-Mexico border

visible from both inside and outside the building, while the soundtrack - taken from the Quebec City Summit riots - could only be heard outside). Where were the Christian Marclay's, the Janet Cardiff's? I asked myself. Then I realised that they weren't there because in fact the show was very tightly curated around the theme of the "frequency" and not around the theme of sound art (which is what distinguishes it from Sonic Boom most dramatically). And in that, the show seems to be very successful.

-Sarah

Thoughts
Philip Samartzis
13 Mar 2002

Hi Everyone,

To broadly respond to the question. My experience leads me to conclude that audiences are more than willing to forgo any visual stimulus in order to focus on the tactile and immersive qualities of a pure sonic experience. Each person brings their own history of listening to any sound work and are therefore able to negotiate that work predicated on those experiences. Sound after all is as personal as it gets. It is there all around us and we all devise strategies to psycho-acoustically mask or enhance those experiences depending on how we feel. Sound in the gallery space often presents an audience the opportunity to re-address their own perceptions about what is a pleasurable or meaningful sonic experience. The kinds of experiences we tend to ignore or forget within the din of public interaction.

Where as audiences tend to engage in an open and spontaneous manner with a sound work in the gallery site, critics often lack the vocabulary to thoughtfully and articulately engage with these very same works. Therefore they often give these works scant attention and quickly move on to something that is fundamentally visual or sculptural based. It reflects the prejudices that sound art continues to endure within the gallery space. A prejudice reflecting a general ignorance of the methodology, history and context that these works are formed by, and the broader discourse they are currently engaged in.

Just as drummers make the best music producers. . ie, they actually listen to the other members...so do sound artists make the best critics of sound art. They are certainly much harder to deceive with art world pyrotechnics such as interactivity, immersive environments and psycho-acoustics.

However I do get the sense that there is an increasing awareness of the importance of sound art, and that it is only a matter of time before a broader understanding of the practise and installation of sound in the gallery will be in evidence.

Philip Samartzis

Thoughts
Josephine Bosma
13 Mar 2002

> critics often lack the vocabulary to thoughtfully and articulately engage with these
> very same works. Therefore they often give these works scant attention and quickly move on
> to something that is fundamentally visual or sculptural based.

The same happens for most interactive art.

> However I do get the sense that there is an increasing awareness of the importance of
> sound art

When dealing with sound art that incorporates a computer and a network of computers it is hard to speak of it as only sound art though.

So a new criticism and different view of both art and sound art is in order, like I believe Beryl Graham suggested too in her intro. We need critics that can experience instead of just observe.

greetings,

J
*

a good curator
Alison Craighead
13 Mar 2002

[To follow on from some of what philip said, but more as a direct response to beryl's initial questions about siting audible art...]

A group/mixed show environment incorporating audible components really offers up a challenge for the curatorially inclined amongst us, whether it be in our more obvious institutional spaces, or alternative and other ones... In many ways the difficulties of introducing sound into such contexts only serves to highlight fundamental curatorial concerns that apply to presenting any collection of artworks

Rather than simply assembling mundane exhibitions that group artworks by medium, available wall space or whether they respond to the theme of 'The Sea' (for example), the considerable problems posed when wanting to show noisy things alongside object things or video, or painting or sculpture or whatever, provides an opportunity for curators to really show skill, personal vision and sensitivity.

Once you accept that sound is virtually impossible to contain (on most artworld budgets anyway :) and doesn't work on an, 'out of sight out of mind' basis unless at very low levels or presented through headphones, you can start to accommodate that leakage and allow artworks to feed off/complement each other.

Just as we all know that viewing different paintings side by side effects the reading of each individual work, allowing sounds to combine with other work, or even to construct moments where two sound works will layer, counterpoint or harmonise with one another are all issues that can be configured, engineered or (more to the point) curated.

It's a far from easy task, but surely it is possible to bring works together (with consent of course) that when viewed, watched, used and heard in careful overlapping proximities would each and all be seen at their best *because* of the way in which it was all curated and not despite it

I for one, would far rather see all the myriad strands of contemporary art practice (sound included) curated and combined with personal vision and less often by committee.

bw

jon thomson

Thomson & Craighead
www.thomson-craighead.net
www.dot-store.com

a good curator
Patrick Lichty
13 Mar 2002

> Once you accept that sound is virtually impossible to contain (on most
> artworld budgets anyway :) and doesn't work on an, 'out of sight out of
> mind' basis unless at very low levels or presented through headphones, you
> can start to accommodate that leakage and allow artworks to feed
> off/complement each other.

Right. In many cases video is isolated through headphones. Not only does it
eliminate the sound bleed, but it eliminates the problem of the docents &
guards being driven crazy by repetition.

However, I curated a show that incorporated neon and lasers in a gallery
space. Neon is nearly as problematic as sound as the light it generates is
so compelling.

> I for one, would far rather see all the myriad strands of contemporary art
> practice (sound included) curated and combined with personal vision and less
> often by committee.

There are tradeoffs on each. One could be much more tightly biased and
elide large bodies of work simply not known to the single curator, but then
committees are guilty of 'design by democracy'...

A sound event in New York
Beryl Graham
13 Mar 2002

A relevant sound event (NY):

>Date: Sat, 09 Mar 2002
>From: Ebon Fisher
>Organization: Hunter College
>X-Accept-Language: en
>To: Alejandro Dron
>Subject: CREATIVE NETWORKS IN THE MEDIA STORM
>
>Film & Media Profiles presents:
>
>-----
>CREATIVE NETWORKS IN THE MEDIA STORM
>Four New York Perspectives
>
>Featuring:

>
>WAYNE ASHLEY, The Brooklyn Academy of Music's first Manager of New Media
>
>ELISE BERNHARDT, Director of The Kitchen
>ROBERT ELMES, Founder & Director of Galapagos Art Space in Williamsburg,
>Brooklyn
>EBON FISHER, Media Breeder and Assoc. Professor, Hunter College, Film &
>Media Studies
>
>Thursday, March 14th, 6:30 PM, 2002 --- FREE
>Ida K. Lang Hall, Rm. 424, N. Building, Hunter College
>68th St. at Lexington Ave., New York --- 6 Train to 68th St.
>(212) 650-3606 <http://filmmedia.hunter.cuny.edu>

>
>FILM & MEDIA PROFILES is sponsored by Hunter College's Dept. of Film &
>Media Studies.
>For more information call (212) 650-3606 or (718) 391-9216 or email:
>[log in to unmask]
----- End Forwarded Message -----

Another Sound event in the UK
Beryl Graham
13 Mar 2002

Suddenly, everyone is doing sound festivals!

>From: "cybersalonuk"
>
>Cybersonica
>
>International Festival of Digital Music and Sound
>symposium / exhibition / installation / performance
>ICA, London June 4th - 7th 2002
>For more info see: <www.cybersonica.org>
>
>
>Call for papers, presentations, demonstrations, installations and
>performances focussing on creative, innovative practice and theory in
>music and sound.
>
>If you wish to participate email a proposal or abstract (max 500
>words,
>plain text + URLs) by 31 March 2002 to:
>
>Symposium: John Eacott
>Performance: Lewis Sykes
>Exhibition: Stanza
>Installation: Clifton Evans
>
>Cybersonica is supported by the University of Westminster & CARTE

Musik
Elke Moltrecht
14 Mar 2002

dear list,

i speak as a curator for music with a wide range i'm trying to bring scenes together, i'm looking for projects that want to present intersections between art. the discussion i can follow speaks mostly about sound art in the context of exhibition. but i think sound art is also happen in concerts (all the different ways of presenting acoustic or electronic music in clubs, galleries, concert halls). but in concerts nobody is missing objects. many concerts are doing the same like a room installation, 8 channel loudspeaker systems, videos, screenings in different ways, interactivities between musicians and electronic, in laptop contexts as well as in the academic electroacoustic music.

i couldn't see bitstream or sonic boom, but i have seen frequencies. i agree with sarah cook when she said soundart installations in exhibition spaces are not productive. i would say not often. one reason could be, that the most of the installations are not in process, other than in sound art in concerts or interactive installations or installations that includes frequencies (hausswolff) or such installations from knut asdam. many works are ready and get presented in loops or they are permanent.

an other problem could be that many installations, done by musicians, using nearly the same sounds or frequencis, sinus frequencies etc. and adding just objects. installations, done by "fine arts" artists presenting often objects and adding just sounds (i agree that the exhibition "frequencies" is very successful more in the focus on frequencies as around the theme sound art. to find a balance between the quality of objects/visuals and sounds is a difficult trying.

Elke Moltrecht
Music Curator

Podewil
Klosterstr. 68-70
10179 Berlin
www.podewil.de

Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Axel Lapp
18 Mar 2002

dear sarah,

thanks for your review of 'frequenzen' in frankfurt. i am trying to add a few thoughts:

i too was very impressed with the show, since it was so tightly constructed - around the theme of visualising audiowaves and audiolising (?) images.- and so beautifully arranged. the formal concentration eases this considerably (as it would in an exhibition of paintings, if you would only take small scale formats).

frequenzen is a show that concentrates on the medium, presenting the minimalistic basics. in it i found the works, which are dealing with visitors' perceptions the most successful. ann lislegaard's piece in the staircase, for example, where a microphone is built into an added step and the noises people make by stepping on it, are r-played with a few seconds delay, so that everybody hears their own steps, in their own individual speed, resonating from the past. or mika vaino three clocks - that you found

overarchingly conceptual -, the sounds of which are amplified to thunderous beats. thus, producing an extremely slow yet clear rhythm, that, as if from a metronome, structures all the surrounding noises and turns them, theoretically, into a continuous musical piece; though this rhythm is escaping human perception, as the minute that passes between the beats is too long to remain assessable as a time interval. i also found franz pomassl's e extreme environments (very high tone and brightly lit / dark and very deep and loud tone) very exciting, really creating experiences for the whole body. or the installation by the artist group farmersmanual, that transforms digital data streams from various sites of the internet into a two-dimensional sound and image space. colours, forms and arrangement of the video image that is projected on the ground are constantly re-assembled, and are also influenced by the movements of the visitors, whose spatial overlapping with the image is caught by a camera in the ceiling and again fed into the projection. the accompanying noises follow a recognizable structure just as little as the pictures do, but our hearing strives to detect a correlation and creates it in consequence. i spent ages trying to figure out, how my movements were influencing what i heard and saw.

where the show was only concerned with making something that is, or that might be there visible or audible, i found it often too simple, too much concerned with the technical possibilities, in the end banal. angela bulloch's disco-lights are one example, translating disco music from the 1970s into 9 colour planes (featuring high quality light boxes which can display over 16 million different colours - wow!).

nevertheless, it shows the basics and is very successful at it. it is definitely a show to continue! but with the next shows it will not be that easy. the piece you mentioned by ultra-red, dealing with globalisation (images from the us-mexican border, and sound from a demonstration in quebec) is not really part of the exhibition. without a map, visitors will not usually find it, will perceive it as an installation in the book shop instead. several of this calibre (with a narrative / with content) could not have been displayed in the same space, i e it would have been killed by bulloch's seventies music drifting around the room. then you would have needed several individual spaces, which would have meant a less coherent show.

- all of you who can travel to berlin, and who have not seen janet cardiff's 'forty part motet' in the hamburgerer bahnhof yet, go and see it! it is fantastic (the venice piece is boring in comparision!)

- axel

--

axel lapp
engeldamm 22
d-10179 berlin

Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Kathleen Forde
18 Mar 2002

axel - i just wanted to second your kudos to cardiff's "motet". i haven't seen it in berlin, just in new york at ps1. it was brilliant. i am curious how it was installed there - as the view out of the windows overlooking nyc at ps1 seemed to me to be a really interesting context for the piece . . .

in that the vista definitely functioned as some sort of cinematic window to the outside world while listening to her sound. was it enclosed with four walls? another point to be made with regards to the site specificity of sound work in relation to the environment i suppose . . .

kathleen.

-----Original Message-----

From: axel lapp

Sent: March 17, 2002

dear sarah,

thanks for your review of 'frequenzen' in frankfurt. i am trying to add a few thoughts:

i too was very impressed with the show, since it was so tightly constructed
- around the theme of visualising audiowaves and audiolising (?) images.-
and so beautifully arranged. [...]
- axel

Scale///Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Kevin McHugh
18 Mar 2002

Kathleen and Axel,

Glad you brought up the Cardiff piece. It brings up one of the biggest challenges in the installation of sound works: scale. This seems to operate on several axes: dimension, volume (in the phonic sense) placement, and acoustics.

Like any sculpture, sonic work relies on the relationship between the form and the size of the audience, as well as the work's interface with the space it occupies. Some work well in headphones, others need high volume, others need large acoustical spaces, etc. This can present a problem when an exhibition space can't accommodate the dimensions for either acoustics or volume.

The PS1 installation of the motet was a great example of how a sound work can be exhibited in an intimate, but acoustically appropriate space. Also, the human-scale placement was crucial to the piece, so trying to "fill" a bigger space could have destroyed it.

Kathleen raises an interesting topic of what we see when experiencing a sound work. I've heard varied responses from artists as to the context they prefer. This year's Whitney Biennial features sound installations in a near-black room, which was elegant and appropriate. But how much room is there for variation, and how close are we to the black box becoming the default presentation mode for sound art?

best
Kevin

Kevin McHugh
Associate Curator
Creative Time

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www.creativetime.org

Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Axel Lapp
19 Mar 2002

kathleen,

in berlin, cardiff's 'motet' is displayed in a white walled space with two rows of columns on either side. there is a window on the wall opposite the door (i think), but you don't get any exciting visuals from it. it is a very centred installation, as the speakers are positioned in a circle and are projecting inwards. i usually was also looking in the direction of the centre, looking at the people moving around. only right in the spot, i remember looking outwards, but did not stay there very long, as i preferred walking along the individual voices.

the space is of course very important - in a pitch black room, it would create very different experiences.

are loud sound pieces in a controlled setting (you can leave when you want to!) always exciting? i just thought about pomassl's low tone in a dark space, that has a sound pressure of 120 db, or some of viola's installations.

a.

Scale//Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Slavica Ceperkovic
19 Mar 2002

Kevin, I think you brought up a good point about the black box/white box model for displaying sound art.

In thinking about space and scale, I just wanted to mention the upcoming .wav festival. Brugge is facilitating 20 site specific public sound installations for the city, as it is designated as this year's European cultural capital. Sound is an ideal medium for public based projects.

Opening June 14, for three months 20 artists, emerging to established, were invited to use the city to make a sound work. From canals to alley ways, bridges to public squares nothing was off limits. As an artist doing a piece for the program, I don't think I have ever been presented the opportunity to make such an open work. With a small preview to the intended projects, I must say, I think it could be quite interesting.

Best,

Slavica Ceperkovic

Harmony///Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Kevin McHugh
19 Mar 2002

Slavica,

The .wav festival sounds interesting. I think that public sites for sound works are not only a valuable contribution to opportunities for artists, but they represent an important step for public art.

Sorry for bringing up another abstract issue, but I wonder what people think about harmonic/musical issues in acoustic (non-headphone) installations. Many sound artists are focusing on environmental sounds. Not that harmony is losing its place, but where (if any) is the boundary between a harmonic installation and playing music?

Maybe this is too abstract...

best
Kevin

- >
- > Kevin, I think you brought up a good point about the black box/white box
- > model for displaying sound art.
- >
- > In thinking about space and scale, I just wanted to mention the upcoming
- > .wav festival. Brugge is facilitating 20 site specific public sound
- > installations for the city, [...]
- > Slavica Ceperkovic

Harmony///Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Beryl Graham
20 Mar 2002

On 19 Mar 2002, Kevin McHugh wrote:

- >Slavica,
- >
- >The .wav festival sounds interesting. I think that public sites for sound
- >works are not only a valuable contribution to opportunities for artists, but
- >they represent an important step for public art.
- >
- >Sorry for bringing up another abstract issue, but I wonder what people think
- >about harmonic/musical issues in acoustic (non-headphone) installations. [...]
- >Kevin

Dear Kevin and List,

I was interested in your comment about sound art in acoustic spaces, and it made me consider the effect of sound art using public/existing sound spaces, such as Ed Osborn's 'Vanishing Point' installation at the Berkely Art Museum (2001) which sent recorded tones to the Museum's big picture windows and caused them to resonate.

As someone who admittedly knows little about sound technology, such environmental or site-specific pieces tend to be the ones which strike and engage me, and maybe I feel less uncomfortable standing around in a

public/social space than I do in the middle of a bare room. For me, 'harmony' suggests more of a 'sit-down and listen' experience, the harmony being something which sustains a narrative form over extended time, whereas the environmental sounds suggest a located, 'pass-through' experience common to museums and galleries, or maybe even 'ambient' (although that does unfortunately make me think of squashy furniture and chilling groovers!)

Maybe the List could tell me of some good examples of harmony in 'non sit down and listen' contexts?

yours,

Beryl

Scale///Sound Art: March Theme of the Month
Joe Thompson
29 Mar 2002

At our museum (MASS MoCA), we only own 4 works of art (the rest of our programming is temporary):

A clocktower carillon piece, with electronic bell tones triggered by location and intensity of sun (Christina Kubisch).

A work called Harmonic Bridge, sited under a state highway overpass at the edge of our museum property, by Bruce Odland and Sam Auinger.

Music for a Quarry, in an abandoned marble quarry, by Walter Fahndrich.

And Visitations, by Ron Kuivila, an aural excavation of the labor history of our site (which was formerly a factory space).

Each has it's own space, each is permanent, each requires a certain amount of care and feeding (electronics are far more fragile than even the most fragile of conventional art pieces), and each is specific to it's place and time.

We love them, and so do our visitors.

Besides those, I'd venture that nearly 50% of what we show in galleries involves sound: a large work called 14 Stations, by Robert Wilson, is, in my view, a complex soundscape, with some visual props. We spend a lot of time trying to keep the sound environments sorted out. We've found that sometimes, a little sound overlap is OK. See this link for more...

http://www.massmoca.org/visual_arts/sound_art.html

Joe Thompson
Director
MASS MoCA

> -----Original Message-----
> From: Kevin McHugh
> Sent: March 18, 2002
>
> Kathleen and Axel,
>

- > Glad you brought up the Cardiff piece. It brings up one of the biggest
 - > challenges in the installation of sound works: scale. This seems to
 - > operate on several axes: dimension, volume (in the phonic sense) placement,
 - > and acoustics. [...]
 - > Kevin
-

Thoughts
Joe Thompson
29 Mar 2002

Sound art is slow art. I've noticed in our current exhibition of Robert Wilson's 14 Stations, which is in effect 14 sound art environments, accompanied by elaborate visual props, that many visitors and critics spend the usual 4.8 seconds per station (that's about the average viewing time for visual works). The sound loops, which are marvelous, often take 10 or 20 seconds, or even 3 or 4 minutes, to fully reveal themselves. And they create a complex emotional effect, often missed by those who don't stop, and listen.

What to do? We try the obvious. Our docents move through that exhibition slowly. Our written material notes the importance of sound. No "go slow" signs, but everything short of that.
Joe

- > -----Original Message-----
 - > From: Josephine Bosma
 - > Sent: March 13, 2002
 - >
 - > > critics often lack the vocabulary to thoughtfully and articulately engage with these
 - > > very same works. Therefore they often give these works scant attention and quickly move on
 - > > to something that is fundamentally visual or sculptural based. [...]
 - > J
 - > *
-

soundart
Adam
24 Nov 2004

hi,

I remember a few weeks ago there was a short chat about good ways to present sound art. I didn't read much of it, but I wanted to append the discussion briefly with a mention of a great piece of work I recently saw in South Africa.

The piece is called 'Cell Stories', it is located within the cells on Robben Island, the prison for political prisoners during apartheid. There is a brief mention of it here:
http://www.robben-island.org.za/departments/heritage/mayibuye/building_archives.asp

When I attended the exhibition most of the works were down for maintenance, however one component of the show stood and it was this that had more impact than possibly any other sound work I have experienced. In one of the cell blocks where the piece is situated you can hear, drifting

down the prison hall, the sound of singing. The singing is from a group of three or four men, it is very soft and chant-like with subtle melodies. After each song there is the faint banter of these men talking to each other.

Approaching the cells I found myself wondering if the chorus was recorded or perhaps sung by some tacky tourist group. I was prepared for disappointment. I could not see into the cells until I was right next to them, and until I peered inside I could not tell what created the sound. Finally on entering the first cell I still could not see the source, the cell had been left just as it had been during the occupation by political prisoners of the apartheid era. In the three cells from where the sound emanated, there was nothing new except a small photo of the ex-prisoner that once occupied the cell. The photo was annotated only with the name of the tenant, and the years they occupied the cell.

The sound was coming from the small intercom mounted on the wall within each cell. The intercoms were the original piece of communications equipment used by the wardens.

From each intercom came the solo voice of the prisoner in isolation, but singing in harmony with the rest of the voices.

It was the most evocative sound installation I have experienced. It was simple and sublime.

Many thanks to Ashwell Adriaan & Roger Meintjes for creating this project.

adam

Adam Hyde
~/ .za

radioqualia
<http://www.radioqualia.net>
Free as in 'media'

Sound art database – baby steps

Seth Cluett
01 Dec 2004

hi all,

just a quick post to warn everyone that in 6 months
<http://sound.artdocuments.org> will become a curator friendly sound art research device.

it will be a database similar in project to experimental television center's video history database, save that it will deal with sound as an art medium. it will also have a useful keyword system for texts and artists works searchable and viewable where possible.

i have been working for a number of years now on a bibliography of texts regarding sound art as well as accumulating and annotating a linklist. a number of you have contacted me offlist for one or the other, suffice it to say you are all welcomed to have both, contact me for the bibliography by replying directly, go to <http://www.onelonlypixel.org/soundart.html> for a reduced flat-file version of the links list.

please send me additions for both, PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE, i know this is not comprehensive, its at the consolidation phase, additions offlist are most welcome.

take care all,

seth cluett

"