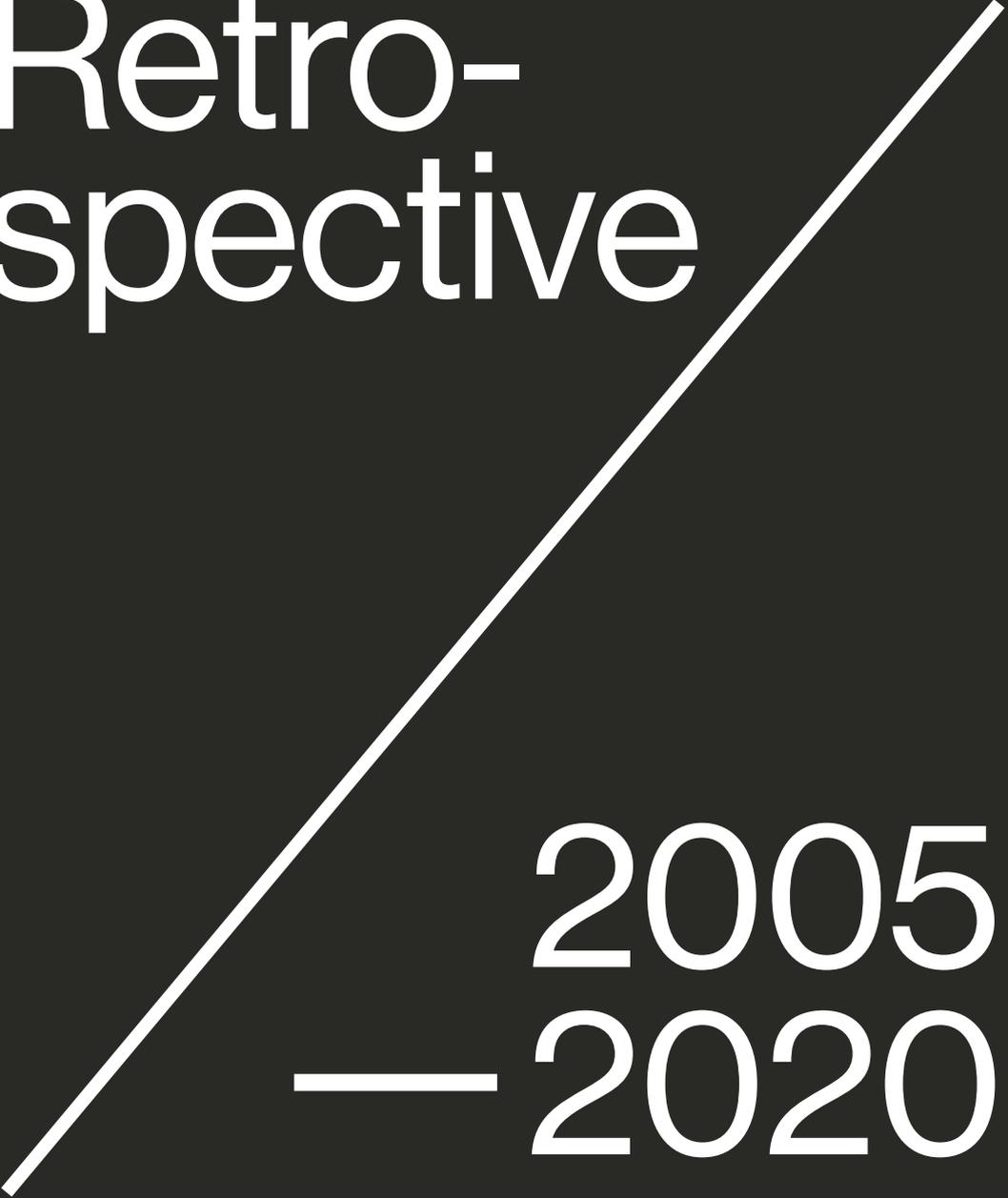


Lydgalleriet Retro- spective



2005

— 2020

Maia Urstad,
Meanwhile in Shanghai, 2012.
Photo: Thor Brødreskiift.



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Foreword

*Julie Lillelien Porter
& Sissel Lillebostad*

This book celebrates Lydgalleriet's 15 years of existence, beginning with a careful but determined start in 2005, via a series of events in various public spaces such as Galleriet shopping centre and Sparebanken Vest, to its own genre-adapted place in Østre Skostredet. The launch of this book marks a new phase in Lydgalleriet's history as we move our physical platform to a new space in Strandgaten.

During the years between 2005 and 2020, Lydgalleriet has hosted a number of artists and sound makers, had many visitors, and has been supported by a dedicated and faithful group of friends and enthusiasts who have gradually grown in number throughout the years. During this same period, sound art has moved from being almost an outcast in the general contemporary art field, to having built up a theoretical portfolio involving an official history, whilst also becoming a natural and integrated part of a heavily institutionalised art community.

In still being a unique platform for exhibiting sound art in Norway and Scandinavia in 2020, Lydgalleriet continues to question and experiment with the ways in which sound art can exist and give agency, how sonic experiences and meaning can be made within artistic contexts and situations, and continues to research the endless spaces and opportunities that exist between sound art and experimental musicality and spatiality.

Lydgalleriet's retrospective publication is composed of articles reflecting upon its own history – mirrored towards a surrounding sound art community in Norway and Europe. Together with these you will find four artist portraits of key persons in the beginning of Lydgalleriet's history, and a complete overview of all of Lydgalleriet's activity since 2005. Through the whole book there are images from a myriad of events hosted by Lydgalleriet throughout the years.

Lydgalleriet would like to thank everyone who has ever stopped by, the artists having shown work in particular, the founders,

members of board, employees and volunteers.

We hope for many more years to come of testing out ambitious sonic ideas.

Knut Vaage, Sissel Lillebostad,
Thorolf Thuestad, *For stadig å bli*, 2017.
Photo: Jiska Huizing

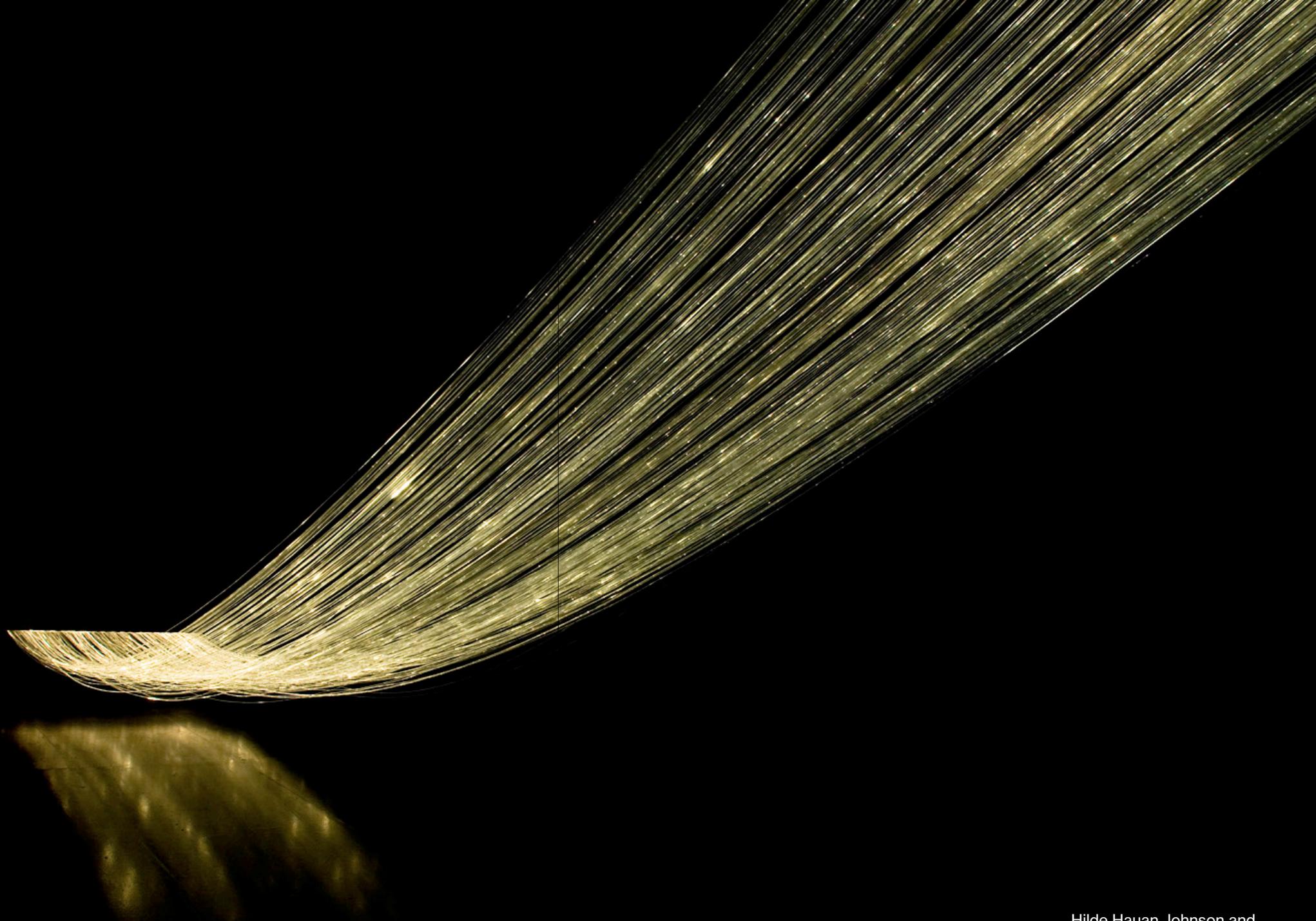


Icaro Zorbar, from the exhibition
Shaping Lines, 2019.
Photo: Johanne Karlsrud.



Ignas Krunglevicius,
Thermo Bay, 2018.
Photo: Bent Synnevåg.





Hilde Hauan Johnson and
Maia Urstad, *01001*, 2009.
Photo: Thor Brødreskift.



Tomoko Sauvage,
floe/flow, 2015.
Photo: Henrik Beck.

Sleppet, 2007.
Photo: Jørgen Larsson.



The Properties of Sound

Negotiations in Space and Time:
About the Porous in Sound Art
Bjørnar Habbestad

Resonance, Acoustic Phenomena
and Auditory Perception
Sissel Lillebostad & Carsten Seiffarth

The Sound in the Tower
Sissel Lillebostad

Negotiations in Space and Time: About the Porous in Sound Art

Bjørnar Habbestad

Lydgalleriet's ten-year production history wends a path through Bergen's cultural life, from guerrilla tactics and nomadic activities in a range of arenas to international networks and an expanding institutionalisation. What have people heard at Lydgalleriet? How have they listened? This text, by Lydgalleriet founding member Bjørnar Habbestad, unravels some of the many threads of sound art, delving into its traditions and materials, with a constant eye on the gallery's exhibition activities of the past years.

This story of sound art in Bergen is framed by two major cultural events: the Grieg commemorations of 2007 and Bergen Assembly 2016. In addition to being convenient pegs on which to hang our story, these events serve as useful indicators of the way sound art is received in the city. With the exhibition 'Sleppet' (2007), Lydgalleriet's curator Jørgen Larsson made significant inroads into territory usually held by composed music, an achievement that demonstrated the determination of a lively but hitherto largely ineffectual sector to redefine the power structures. The exhibition's focus on Grieg's *listening* as opposed to his music offered an alternative narrative about

the role of music, with a reduced focus on the canonisation of a national icon. Tarek Atoui's decision, ten years on, to make the practice of sound, and especially listening, one of the main pillars of the second edition of the triennial Bergen Assembly, was an emphatic recognition of sound as a natural and integral aspect of the contemporary art field. Here one can speak of a significant transformation for the field, from institutional appropriation to integration.

What went on between these two milestones? A quick glance at the foundation's production history provides not so much a picture of clarity as an impression of abundance and antagonistic ideas: the articulating of many points within a fine weave of traditions, techniques, theories and ways of reading from the fields of visual art and music. This text celebrates the porous definitions by cutting between various close readings of works, artistic oeuvres, canons, discourses and localities that relate in one way or another to Lydgalleriet.

In the absence of a canon

In Bergen, one historical precedent for the development of an arena devoted to hybrid artistic practices that have sound as a common denominator has been BIT-teatergarasjen: close ties between local artists, the growth of sound-art theory among art historians at the University of Bergen, and a desire to influence a national agenda for new forms of artistic expression are factors that clearly echo developments in the performing arts scene of the mid-1980s. The absence of a museological history is another common feature. Around the turn of the new millennium, audiences with an interest in sound had few opportunities to encounter and learn about seminal historical soundworks, apart from various contemporary music festivals, which focused largely on concert music. The historical dimension has never been a major priority for Lydgalleriet – quite the contrary – meaning that the absence of a widely known canon has remained a characteristic feature of the Bergen scene. With few artists represented in terms of retrospective exhibitions, developments, changes and trends within the field have re-

ceived little attention. It is noticeable that audiences for sound-based art have few preconceptions about the works presented and the context in which they belong. Between exhibitions the sound fades and audiences have little to fall back on but their own auditory memories.

This porosity is reflected by the lack of uniformity within the field with regard to theory and choice of materials. This relative freedom from canonisation processes can be viewed as a positive factor, for both artists and audiences. For artists, first and foremost because it leaves them freer to explore materials and forms of presentation. For audiences, because it gives them greater scope to understand, interpret and read the field in terms of a range of traditions. In the absence of a well established sound-art canon, people resort to an alternative, expanded set of ideas, impulses, theory and historical models through which they can manoeuvre at will. Thanks to this freedom, works can be read as belonging to several narratives, and the contours of a multi-dimensional interpretative space begin to emerge, in which meaning is contributed by the contexts of music, performing arts and the visual arts. This porosity, whereby the field is defined not by historical consensus but in terms of an interest in exploration and asking questions, has proved highly valuable. Thus the creation of an arena for sound art has been a matter not just of building a house, but also of listening and discussion, reading and negotiating.

Listening to history

Robert Morris's *Box with the sound of its own making* (1961) is a good example of a muted work that needs to be listened to. In accordance with the conventions of the time, the work and its title form a single whole: what is exhibited is a relatively small cube of polished wood that carries associations to furniture and designer objects. Concealed inside it are a tape deck that plays back a recording of the sounds that occurred during the making of the box, which itself functions as a small resonance chamber. From the perspective of the visual discourse, the work is often cited as one of several early examples

that show the impact of the emerging American minimalism. The rejection of the subjective aspect of abstract expressionism in painting, and the critique of Clement Greenberg's theory of modernism are firm coordinates for such a reading. Ignoring for a moment the formal sculptural qualities in order to consider the work's sonic dimension, the first thing that strikes me is the overlapping of two temporal periods: the "now" of when we view the object for the first time and a "then" that is conveyed via the sound. A very simple but effective contrast between two types of material – wood and sound – each with its own temporal dimension, both of which derive meaning from their relation to each other and to the title. Not least the latter plays a vital role here; it is as if the work were biting itself in the tail, as if it were imagined, planned and realised in a single action. Such a reading emphasises the immediate experience, the paradoxical aspect of presenting the object's own creation through sound, at the expense of the visually oriented narrative of pathos-laden American painting.

Prior to the impact of relational aesthetics on sound art, and long before sound studies and the use in anthropology of sound recording as an ethnographic method, a silent break occurred with the aesthetics and technology of the radio studio. *Presque rien no. 1: Le lever du jour au bord de la mer* (Almost Nothing No. 1: Daybreak at the Seashore) (1970) by Luc Ferrari is often viewed as a rejection of the absolutist aesthetics of Pierre Schaeffer and his focus on the acousmatic listening ideal.¹ During a summer holiday in a small village beside the Black Sea, Ferrari was struck by the silence. He experienced the absence of urban noise as overwhelming, and established a clear routine for documenting the slow transformation from silence to sound. Based on his field recordings, he compiled a presentation to illustrate his personal experience – a work he calls *Almost Nothing*, as if to emphasise how little he himself functions as a participant. It is difficult not to read this work in relation to found objects, Duchamp's ready-mades, or the ecologically oriented projects of the land-art movement. The appropriation of a sound environment and the isolation of

site-specific qualities can be understood as a method for creating "non-work", a rebuttal of the objectivised concept of a work associated with musical tradition. Here the creator's role is more like someone who sets the scene, someone who shares a technically mediated view of nature, in the tradition of Duchamp and Cage more than that of Stravinsky and Stockhausen.² Ferrari regularly figures in his own work. Mumbled small talk, the noise of handling the microphone, his way of exposing the subjectivity of the recording medium – all this has contributed to the interpretation of his practice over the interceding decades.

Neither Morris nor Ferrari has endured as a defining artist in their respective fields. Instead, they are generally mentioned as reference points, artists who worked in the borderland between the relevant and the irrelevant, on the periphery of established practice. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why their work raises questions that are still of relevance to the artistic discourse about what sound art could be fifty years on.

Fields, fjords and plywood

The search for the optimal exhibition format for sound art in Bergen led artists and sound gallerists to undertake ever-new interior and exterior refurbishments of the building in Østre Skostredet. But the acoustic spaces used for exhibitions and concerts have been far more extensive than the few cubic metres available in central Bergen. The panorama ranges from James Beckett's *Sirene* to Golden Serenades' cacophonous guitar installation – the former quietly suggestive in its overwhelming physical form, the latter loud enough to deafen a district – and embraces utterly different spaces, both imaginary and physical. Thus practical and physical limitations have steadily been overcome in the quest for the best way to stage a work, project, concert or concept. For this particular listener, a number of unique locational experiences stand out as unforgettable:

The raw, hollow sound of vibrating metal, set in the motion by a cello bow. Charles Curtis performs *Naldjorlak I* by the French synth-minimalist Éliane Radigue for a small but highly attentive audience reclining on cushions in the loft of Østre

Skostredet 3. A work that has since featured as a cornerstone of festival programmes in London and New York. Remember: you heard it first in Bergen in 2006.

Same space, right up under the roof beams, where the floor is covered by Christian Marclay's old vinyl records. Dry, crunchy vinyl; opera, disco, piano concerti, folk and 50s rock, all crackling under my feet, creating a rhythm that could not mask the feeling of doing something highly incorrect.

Jana Winderen and Natasha Barrett's synthetic rooms, on either side of a sonic "airlock", on what is today the upper floor of Litteraturhuset. Barrett's enveloping darkness like an empty frame for a hyper-realistic audio experience. Near and far merging seamlessly with each other, with subtle and meticulous manipulations of distance and depth. On the other side of the airlock, an open view of the outside world. The dim street light shining on old wooden weatherboards helped to highlight all the technical equipment, which Barrett's darkness had kept us from seeing. Cables, sound cards and computers linked to long series of loudspeakers, a distinct sculptural idiom that simultaneously helps and hinders concentration. Are we inside a glacier or outside it in a gallery? The loudspeakers make the illusion possible and impossible at one and the same time.

Maia Urstad's radios fill a former printer's workshop, floating above the floor in neat lines. The suspension wires and horizontally laid extension cables scream out a contrast to the old radios, of every conceivable shape, size and colour. Urstad's materials are familiar. This isn't the first time I have heard her walls built of radio signals. But in this venue, in this form, the radios are clearer, the voices more distinct, opening up the space and filling out the format in a way that seems new.

Tomoko Sauvage's ice sculpture performs a slow progression of drips. A room in the spirit of Morton Feldman, a volume marked by the distances between single notes. Here there are no changes in sound, only in duration, intensity, and pitch. And suspended chunks of ice, diamond-like prisms melting in front of us.

Lydgalleriet smells of scorched birch wood. Cecilia Jonsson and Signe Lidén have turned the room into a hole, an

open wound in the ground, brought to us by means of sounds and smells, pictures, technical installations and video. Mobile acoustic zones and small listening stations on the walls close the circle and point back to Jørgen Larsson's *Norske Ledd* (Norwegian Links), shown at BIT-teatergarasjen in 2002.

These fragments of listening experience, my personal archive of ocular and aural activity from Lydgalleriet's short but intense history, illustrate the sheer breadth of the foundation's artistic project. But it is only when one looks beyond the obvious and takes a closer look at the individual works that the value of this project comes fully into view (or perhaps better: earshot).

Two spaces, two times: Blom vs. Røed

An array of bells, strings, lights and whistles grows from the surface of a 1960s-style table, like members of a genus that share solder and wires of steel and copper as common features in some obscure branch of evolutionary history. There is something coy about the aesthetics of this fragile mechanical construct. Accordingly, from a distance, Christian Blom's *al Khowarizmis Mekaniske Orkester* (al Khowarizmi's Mechanical Orchestra) (2008–11) could easily be overlooked. It doesn't take up much space, either sculpturally or acoustically. But at the very margin of the work's physical extension, at the boundary between it and the room in which it stands, one observes something remarkable happening. Small springs, pulleys and wheels stretch, open, rise and sink bringing brief compositions to life.

As a sculpture, one involuntarily thinks of a miniature version of Yves Tinguely's mechanical shadow-casting installations. The rickety surface also puts one in mind of Arte Povera, or Calder's mobiles, or the later DIY aesthetic of technology-based art. Even so, the constructed object is in itself an interface, a point of access to a sound and time dimension that makes itself known as one approaches the space of the work, in accordance with standards set by Blom rather than the conventions of installation art. In an almost passive-aggressive way, one has to invade the object's intimate space to appreciate the

details of the interplay between mechanics, software and artist.

As a musical work, Blom's orchestra reflects a tradition of formal strategies that seek to minimise the number of links between the creator and his audience. In Blom's case, the mechanism also includes essential aspects of the artist's own creative input. Because strictly speaking, this orchestra does not play Blom's compositions, but waits instead for the software's repeated efforts to create new music, using the algorithms that Blom has designed for it. In this respect, it could be argued that the title of the work is misleading and confusing, because the work's strength derives not from its similarities to cooperative human performances, but rather from transferring the power of definition from the composer to the machine (for, as the title tells us, it is the orchestra of the mathematician al Khwarizmi, rather than of Blom). With the composer out of the picture, things *happen*. Among the spaces between the individual sounds from the various instruments and the choreographic qualities of all kinds of small mechanical operations, a kind of work emerges. Something is performed, a practice is established. And with that, the orchestral instruments become labouring men and women, who succeed and fail in their exertions in equal measure. Perhaps this also explains why, or so Blom tells us, the most common response he hears from his audiences is "I'd like to hug this machine!" In this fragile and fallible machine, we recognise ourselves and respond with solicitude.

The diametric contrast to Blom's appropriation of the gallery space is supplied by Ellen Røed, who composes with the temporal dimension of the exhibition format. In her exhibition 'Skyvelære' (Slide Gauge) at Kunsthall 3,14 in 2013, she showed eight independent works that formed a larger whole in what was once the reception area of the former bank, and in adjoining rooms. Two pure sound works, a sound sculpture and an audio-visual work made up half of the eight pieces in the exhibition, which was dominated by two video works, projected onto large panels mounted on either side of the room.

Røed uses the progression from work to work to create

rhythm, an interaction between the potential of the separate items to command attention and point the way further into the exhibition's universe. This is a game neither of narrative theatre, where each episode leads to the next, nor of symphonic structure, where motifs are developed, elaborated and transformed, but rather a game between text and reader, sound and listener, object and viewer. For audiences are by no means powerless in relation to Røed's compositions. They participate in a negotiation about how the exhibition is to be understood, experienced and eventually shared. The disposition of the works within the space, the balance between the various media and formats and the encounter with the various temporal dimensions that the works imply produce a kind of meta story. The soundless video that shows the path of the sun through the course of a day in the wilderness of northern Finland sets a basic pulse that one continues to feel when moving on to the other works. This is a fictional slowness, for the day flickers past at high speed, in the style of countless cinematic clichés. The fact that the work entrances and captivates us even so is due in no small part to the camera operator's failure to live up to her ambition. Technology, nature and the artist's own body are all obstacles to a 24-hour exercise in concentration. The various glitches, the slippages of focus, large and small, the shudders and disturbances are valid material to the same extent as the spectacular nature. The perfectly retouched nature photograph that poses as absolute truth is rejected in favour of a subjective gaze that recognises its own methods and vantage point. As with Ferrari, the presence of the observer is crucial to the work.

The artist's subjectivity would appear to be counterposed to the scientific objectivity implicit in the exhibition's many references to calibration, measurement and measuring instruments. For calibration *per se* – the need to adjust the way one refers to something – emerges as a central theme. The tension between art and science is, however, greatest on the superficial level, in the small talk and nervous discussions of solar researchers, who serve to put the silent objectivity of scientific instruments to the test. Do the many images of different scientific instru-

ments constitute documentation, a claim to truth, or digested memories?

The exhibition sums up its own manoeuvring through formats by means of a negation. In Kunsthall 3,14's smallest and darkest room, Røed depicted a panorama of the empty exhibition space that echoed the video sequence from northern Finland. It is a device that binds together the temporal modes of the exhibition, the works and the audience in a single formal gesture. A visual counterpart that functions like the sound in Morris's *Box with the sound of its own making*.

From being a meeting place for artists who lack a defined genre or methods, the sound-art field as managed by Lydgalleriet has grown into an arena for hybrid experiences, readings and interpretations. Each of the two exhibitions just discussed articulated this hybridity in their own way. In the case of Blom, the sculptural format defines a primarily musical work that exists beyond the experiential horizon of the concert hall. The object's relation to the space and the audience relocates the work from the public focus of the stage to the intimacy of the gallery, while simultaneously transforming its sonic and temporal structures into a social and conceptual game. Røed's exhibition demonstrated the same transformation of formal strategies, albeit in inverted form. In this case, time, like rhythm and the temporal experience, provided the structuring elements within the gallery space. The format still insists on articulating its concept through photos, videos, installations and sound, but in a context that is first and foremost performative. For me, this pair of cross-fertilisations can be related directly to the efforts to elucidate the porosity of the sound-art field, as two different points on the trajectory that runs from 'Grieg07' and 'Sleppet' to Bergen Assembly 2016.

It would be difficult to overestimate Lydgalleriet's role in this process of change, both as a catalyst for local, national and international art activity, but also as a factor influencing the way sound is used and understood in Bergen's art circles. In other words, the story of Lydgalleriet has been as much about stimulating dialogue as about institution building. This story, the de-

velopment of a physical and conceptual meeting place for the negotiation of visual and auditory strategies for sound-based art, constitutes the porous core of Lydgalleriet's existence.

Translated from Norwegian by Peter Cripps.

- 1 Acousmatic sound is sound that someone listens to without being able to see its physical source. The term is derived from the Greek word *akousmatikoi*, which referred to pupils of the philosopher Pythagoras, who were required to listen in silence while their teacher delivered his lecture from behind a curtain. In recent music history, it has been used in conjunction with *musique concrète*, the French electro-acoustic tradition that originated with Pierre Schaeffer (1909–95). Schaeffer's acousmatic listening ideal assumes the experiencing of sound without an awareness of its origin, implying a sonic phenomenology free of external references.
- 2 In the field of music, the role of the composer has traditionally been highly hierarchical and controlling, what is known in leadership theory as a heroic management style. Cage's successive efforts to dismantle the composer's authority for the benefit of the general listener paved the way for what we might today call a post-heroic composer.

A Conversation on Resonance, Acoustic Phenomena and Auditory Perception

*Sissel Lillebostad
& Carsten
Seiffarth*

Carsten Seiffarth, director of singuhr hoergalerie in Berlin, curated five exhibitions at Lydgalleriet between 2009 and 2014. He was also deeply involved in the organisation of the conference 'Ephemeral Sustainability' in 2012. Carsten has also influenced the profile of Lydgalleriet by acting as a mentor to Jørgen Larsson and as a live channel to an international network. Carsten reflects on some of the choices behind the various exhibitions at Lydgalleriet and on developments in the field of sound art and its current condition. Notes from a conversation between Sissel and Carsten, between Berlin and Bergen, February 2016.

"Lydgalleriet and singuhr explored somewhat different aspects of sound art," Carsten begins. singuhr was more focused on specific places, initially the fantastic space of the Parochialkirche, a church in Berlin, with limitations that called for specific choices, and later the comparable yet different possibilities of the water towers in Prenzlauer Berg. "What I really

wanted to do was show interesting group exhibitions, with a certain phenomenological and experiential angle. The auditory field was just right for this. Today, after almost thirty years of activity, sound art is established as an independent field in the creative arts, but when we started out it was referred to as intermedial art or something similar.”

Carsten emphasises that one of the objectives behind the Lydgalleriet collaboration was to integrate the gallery with the broader European network. “I gave feedback,” Carsten says, “both directly through conversations and the like, and by curating a few exhibitions. I think the first was ‘Apparatus’. We had a lot of fun in the early years. Back then, the Lydgalleriet space was a bit of a ruin, a ‘fake space’. Hidden behind the black curtains was a lot of rubbish and dirt, loose cables and half a flight of stairs, a real punk hang-out. When Martin Riches first visited the venue in Østre Skostredet, where he was due to show *Talking Machine*, he called me and said, ‘I can’t open my boxes here. I have to go back.’ It took some careful cajoling to get him to set up his installation. But this is by no means a neutral venue. Sound always needs space for perception. You can’t mount an exhibition without thinking about how the sound interacts with the walls, the ceiling – its reverberations, echoes.”

SISSEL LILLEBOSTAD: But what was it that really drove singuhr and Lydgalleriet to collaborate, to exchange artists and exhibitions?

“What I recognised in Lydgalleriet when I met Jørgen,” says Carsten, “was this sense of burning urgency. An institution needs a leading artistic force. singuhr had a bit of a muddled start; it was a mix of interest and opportunities. I was coordinator for a programme at Parochial and was given responsibility for a small room in the tower. The church was being used as a cultural centre that presented concerts and similar events. Initially, the preparation of a spatial, auditory installation in this small space in the tower was just one incidental activity. But, influenced by the art, we were able to investigate and exper-

iment with the acoustic setting, the experience of the space. In the visual art field, people were more open to playing with parameters. By contrast, music was still stuck in a rule-based mindset. The influence of the art sector was very apparent, and in many ways that’s the field in which singuhr has operated, but I have always retained the musical connection, partly for pragmatic reasons. You have to remember that Berlin has more than 2,500 visual artists competing for scholarships and grants, but only a couple of hundred serious composers and musicians. Consequently, it was easier to achieve something with sound art if it was classified as music. Sound art is essentially ephemeral; it vanishes. But the space does not. In this respect, sound art is a slave to the location. Consequently, it was a good policy to have a long-term relationship with a place, a situation. Sound installations should be viewed as a material that arises in a spatial situation, rather than as purely temporal phenomena, as is the case with music.

“I curated several exhibitions for Lydgalleriet, let me see – I remember the dry-run version of *Extensions*, a work by Stefan Rummel, in which we simulated a pre-existing work, a water work – in other words, an artwork for water. But it didn’t work out, even though at the time the gallery was directly beside the water. So we made a dry version with two boxes connected by glass, among other things. Another work I remember spending time with was Alvin Lucier’s classic *Music on a long thin wire* from 1977, which involved stretching out a wire in a small church – Korskirken, if I remember rightly. A fantastic space to work with. This too was a piece that focused strongly on the perception of sound as a spatial phenomenon.”

Why did you choose to show these artists at Lydgalleriet?

“Well, Alvin Lucier is a pioneering figure in the field of sound art. As a composer, he has made eight or ten works that function as installations. But Alvin is important here because he has established sound as a material, exploring feedback, vibrations, resonance. And Alvin is central to my interest in the

phenomenological. My first exhibition was, however, 'Apparatus', which featured Martin Riches and Erwin Stache. Again, the approach was phenomenological. I wanted to see what an exhibition with these two different – indeed very different – artists could develop into. Erwin Stache always works with found materials, which he combines in ingenious ways to form new instruments. He's from former East Germany, which had a strong DIY ethos. Erwin has a background in mathematics and music.

"Martin Riches is a British architect, a humorous perfectionist in his own way. He builds everything from raw materials, after long periods of thorough research. It took him some thirty years of solitary work to develop *Talking Machine*. He's a typical loner. Martin isn't really a sound artist, but he makes perfect machines, often in wood. And he takes nature as his starting point. *Talking Machine* is essentially a copy of the human larynx, the movements of which it imitates in order to make sound. The machine produces simple syllables which it combines to articulate words. I wanted to create an exhibition without loudspeakers, without a single Genelec speaker. The sound should come entirely from his gadgets. At the opening, Erwin gave a performance. As a performer, he's entertaining, playful, engaging. Despite the somewhat punkish aspect of the venue, the whole exhibition was a good experience, and it had a surprisingly energising effect on the audience. An analogue production of language.

"The second exhibition I curated was 'Bergen R1'. The poster had the names of both Sam Auinger and Bruce Odland, but in practical terms it featured the work of Sam. I think the house in Østre Skostredet was closed at the time. In any case, the exhibition was essentially a pretty robust outdoor installation. Jørgen was granted permission to use the space outside Kunsthallen, in the passage between the concert hall (Grieghallen) and the 'Munch museum' (Rasmus Meyers samling). The work consisted of a long tube with a microphone in it. The sound was sent to loudspeakers that were cast into a concrete block. This was positioned with the speakers facing

the ground. All the sound one heard came from a four or five metre radius. The tube was mounted on the wall facing the busy street, whilst the concrete block stood in the passage between the buildings. From the place where you could hear the sound, you couldn't see the tube, and vice versa. The idea of the work was the transformation of sound waves and resonance. To a certain extent it was as if the sound was stuffed inside the tube. The placing of the microphone was carefully calibrated and tuned in order to achieve a series of overtones which were then emitted from the loudspeakers. But, and there is always a little but, the tube we used was too narrow. We just hadn't considered that it might be difficult to get hold of five metres of 12 cm diameter tubing. But it was. Eventually we had one sent over from Oslo, but that was only 10 cm in diameter. Sam was really upset, but even though we only achieved two overtones, I felt it worked. Admittedly, the sound was a bit flat, but it was well suited to the situation. The speakers were positioned so that you looked out onto the open space of the central lake, a bit squashed in between the buildings. The limited overtone series worked well in the setting. The filtering and a tiny delay harmonised the sound, so that the rhythms of the soundscape, the light signal and the traffic all contributed to the rhythm of the work as a whole."

What I notice about the exhibitions you curated at Lydgalleriet is that each relates to one space, they are site-specific. Can you say something about that?

"All sound works are site-specific or related to a given situation. They relate on the one hand to the architectural and social space, on the other to acoustic phenomena and auditory perception. The exhibition 'Extensions' addressed all these aspects, with works by Alvin Lucier, Stefan Rummel and Pierre Berthet, who demonstrated the physical dimension of sound. Rummel sought to transmit the sound of the landscape into the room. An obvious point of reference for this work was Maryann Amacher's *Boston Harbor*, from 1976. Rummel did a dry run

for this work in a version that had previously been shown in Maastricht. That proved too expensive to move. Instead, we came up with a solution where the movement of the water was replaced by car suspension springs. The sound was transmitted through long elastic silicon threads, with the result that the work was more of a visualisation of sound than an actual sound work. You could observe the motion of sound. By contrast, Alvin's work was invisible to the eye. Its central element was a roughly thirty-metre long wire stretched out inside the Korskirken church, high above eye level. The wire was tuned to suit the dimensions of the space, with the sound picked up by a microphone and transmitted to speakers via a mixer. It was a simple, crystal-clear work, yet one that was also complex and rich in associations.

"In Borggården at USF Verftet, Pierre Berthet set up an installation that was both playful and visually effective. He stripped down some ordinary speakers, removing their diaphragms to expose the magnets. He then attached steel wires between the magnets and empty metal containers, most of them rusty old paint buckets, which served as resonators. It functioned like a kind of tin-can telephone. The key term for all three works was sound transmission and what I would call musical environment.

"In 2013, I curated an exhibition with Gordon Monahan, together with Ivar Smedstad. Built around a collection of reconstructed speakers, this installation had its own inherent physical location. An orchestra of analogue speakers, where all the sounds were produced mechanically and live, in situ. Gordon had set up his cabinets so that, in front of them, you could simply listen to the music they emitted, but if you went round behind them, you could see, for example, a small device that poured water into a cup, and that the whole thing was controlled by a pump that was running continually. In other cabinets one discovered similar situations, small tableaux of moving elements that made sounds. It was a *musique coquette*, music from nowhere. But it represented a classic approach in sound art: devices that produce sound autonomously.

"One finds a similar kind of thought process in *Empty Vessels*, a work by Alvin Lucier that was shown in 2014. This uses the technological and abstract properties of sound in the form of feedback. It consists of an 8-channel system, with microphones that pick up the sound inside specially tuned glass vases. The signals are sent to loudspeakers, which produce feedback by causing their respective vases to resonate. Theoretically, and also in practice, the audience could play the work like an instrument, by moving between the vases and the speakers, thus interrupting the feedback link. I had already shown this work on an earlier occasion, but the vases had since been bought by a museum. Once again, we had to do a bit of rewriting in order to mount the installation, first at Ultima Festival in Oslo, and then in Bergen. *Empty Vessels* had also been shown in Switzerland, and fortunately the woman who made the vases still had them in her basement. We had them sent to Oslo and Alvin's trusted assistant came over to set the whole thing up. It worked better at Lydgalleriet. Ultima only had very small Genelec speakers, so one could only hear the higher frequency feedback. The effect was too thin. Fortunately, Lydgalleriet had invested in larger Genelecs and had more of them, which allowed the production of a more spacious sound. It was as if the vases could listen to each other. When sound oscillations pass through a material they acquire a slight delay. With speakers that can manage a broader spectrum, the sound interactions between the vases also became part of the acoustic picture. It was a stable / unstable composition."

It strikes me that these exhibitions don't just relate to their respective sites, they are also adapted to the specific situation. The challenges of production and installation have to be solved according to the possibilities of the venue and the work.

"When working with sound, you're always concerned to a large extent with the 'weather'; the situation plays a role. Within the European Resonance network, works are often passed on

from one venue to another. It's only rarely that a work can be presented in almost the same condition in different places. But then this network has always been something of a mixed bag. It includes both festivals and galleries.”

Didn't you also attempt to set up a joint residency?

“That was the result of an EU programme that helped us – i.e. Resonance – to fund artistic projects. But it fell apart after a while, because it turned out that different places within the network were subsidising artists in different ways; some gave money for production, others didn't. Sometimes the money was simply spent on the wrong things. It was a situation that proved unacceptable for both Lydgalleriet and singuhr. Even so, Resonance is a good network. And I'm glad singuhr was able to help Lydgalleriet establish some international contacts and help to build its credibility in the early years.”

Translated from Norwegian by Peter Cripps.



Natasha Barrett, *Adsonore*, 2006.
Photo: Sissel Lillebostad.

The Sound in the Tower

Sissel Lillebostad

Adsonore is an interactive sound installation with an almost endless temporal horizon. Inspired by the function of the human immune system, it is controlled by a computer programme that allows for continuous input. The commission, drawn up by Public Art Norway (KORO) for the artist Natasha Barrett, stipulated that the work should be interactive, constantly changing, site specific, and relevant to the building's function. Moreover, it should stand for twenty years. Lillebostad revisited this work in 2016, more than ten years after the work was installed. Just halfway through its scheduled life-time, *Adsonore* had fallen silent.

The building in question, which houses the department of Basic Biological Research (BBB) at Haukeland University Hospital, is a compact cluster of buildings at the foot of Bergen's defining mountain, Ulriken. The terrain around the BBB is steep, and the buildings are partially sunk into the hillside, with stone staircases and walls as connecting elements between the various levels. Access is via a narrow opening

between stone walls, but on stepping inside, one finds oneself in a spacious, open lobby with many staircases. It is from this lobby that the casual visitor can enter the nine-story stairwell, where *Adsonore* is installed.

The physiology of the work

According to Natasha Barrett, *Adsonore* consists of seven microphones, twenty-one infrared sensors, fifty-six loudspeakers and one centrally located computer.¹ In the catalogue published by KORO, *Adsonore* is described as follows:

The microphones detect sounds made by people moving on the stairs, while movements are registered by other sensors. The speakers, which are freely suspended in the stairwell, distribute sound between the second and ninth floors. Custom made software controls when sounds should be recorded, determines whether or not the sound is new or already known and detects people's movements, which influences which speakers in the space are to be activated. In order to be detected by the system, the sounds made have to exceed a certain level. The sounds are processed in a variety of ways and simultaneously stored in the computer's memory. In this respect, the work constitutes an "organism" that is constantly growing; it registers information (sensing), stores it (memory) and responds to it (action). The work uses principles derived from the body's immune system in the way it responds to sounds within the stairwell.²

"The fact that our biological immune systems respond in different ways and at different tempi, is highly interesting from a musical point of view," Barrett writes. Taking its inspiration from the immune system, *Adsonore* produces an acoustic response to activity in the stairwell, which is subsequently modified over a protracted period.

In simple terms, someone passing through the stairwell can initiate a recording of up to seven seconds by creating a

distinctive sound while moving past the sensors. The computer programme then modifies the soundbite and broadcasts it into the stairwell. The work is spatial in that the sounds move, both with and contrary to the visitor, up or down the tower. It is also virtually unending in the sense that the work continuously picks up new sounds. Recording and playback consist of up to eleven layers, modified to varying degrees during the process. "Interesting sounds create an interesting work, whereas dull sounds result in a boring work," Barrett writes. To enrich the work, some of the layers are provided by independent recordings retrieved from a kind of "sound bank";³ these are selected to interact with the new sounds on the basis of similarity. The compositional structure ensures that sounds are emitted in different forms depending on where in its internal cycle the sound installation happens to be. According to Barrett, some of the sounds are barely audible, and are reduced almost to the level of the room's background noise:

Each sound is continuously looped and processed with a randomly controlled choice of reverberation, delays and high-Q resonant filters of numerous different frequency ranges. This processing stage produces a very quiet result heard just above the natural background noise level, starting at the floor on which the door sensor was activated and moving slowly up and down the main loudspeaker chain. One sound may be looped for up to four minutes, and thus at most times of the day *Adsonore* will constantly "murmur". The looping and transformation effects take advantage of the tower's natural acoustic to produce a pulsating drone. Some people have suggested this makes *Adsonore* "alive".⁴

Other sounds, she writes, amount to rapid responses, corresponding to the cells that guard the portals of entry into the body. These come hurtling towards you at each entrance to the tower and are heard as a brief surge of sound. On detecting a familiar sound, the computer immediately processes

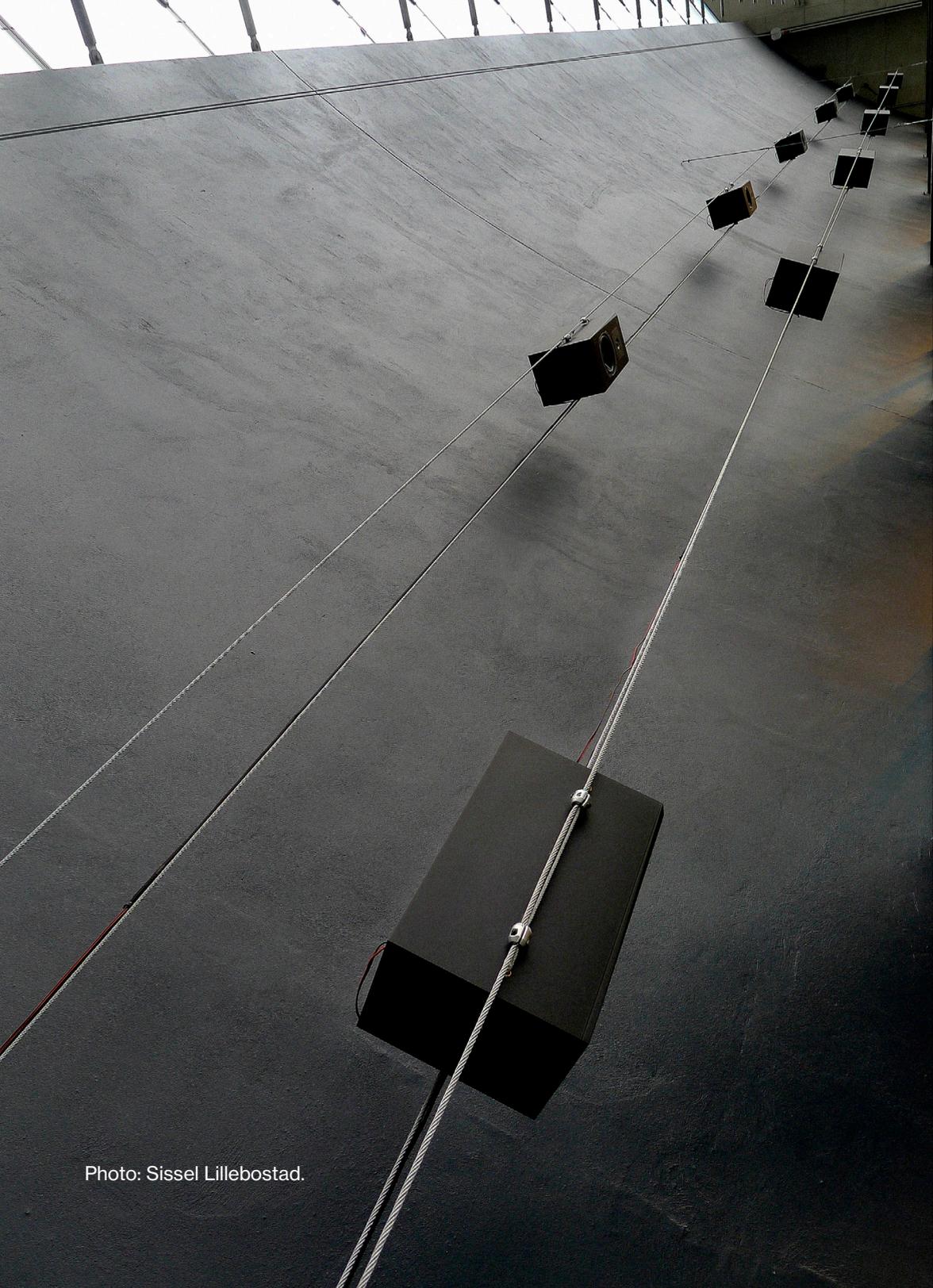


Photo: Sissel Lillebostad.

it and broadcasts it through small and large speakers in the direction of the movement. But, as Barrett writes: “If the motion information is ambiguous, this is one instance when the sound is spacialised in the direction of the last clear detection.”⁵ This suggests to me some kind of advanced ping-pong game, in which the sound is thrown rapidly back and forth between the glass and the concrete, up and down between floors. With a total of eleven layers, each of which makes a different contribution to the overall play of sound, anyone passing through the tower should be presented with a highly complex composition.

A brief guide to the work on the panels in the stairwell invites visitors to interact directly with the installation. According to the sign, those who use the stairwell also have the option of passing in silence. If one produces no sound, then nothing is recorded and there can be no playback. As we will see in due course, in practice it is difficult to remain silent in the space, since merely entering the stairwell creates a distinct sound, and there are sensors located just a few steps from each door.

Intrusive contemporary art

Both Barrett and the clients were aware of the various challenges a sound installation was likely to face. In the process leading to the final version, the work underwent a series of modifications. One challenge, Barrett writes, was the acoustics of the tower itself. She therefore conducted acoustic tests to determine the best range of frequencies for her work, a process that also influenced the placing of the loudspeakers. The sound level was adjusted so as not to exceed local sound levels within the stairwell, and the period in which it was operational was reduced to office hours, following several statements of concern about noise and unfamiliar sounds late at night.

Despite these adjustments objections to the work persisted among those who use the building. When I visited the building, what remains after the years of mistrust, opinion polls and opposition are two stacks of silent speakers, suspended by wires between the glass façade and the concrete staircases that form the core of the tower. The sensors and microphones

have also been disabled. The loudspeakers are covered in a layer of dust, but not thick enough to suggest neglect or that they have been forgotten. Hanging there as relics against the panorama of Bergen through the window and the buildings snuggling heavily up to the mountain, they give me a vague sense of melancholy. What went wrong?

On her website, Barrett herself suggests that objections to *Adsonore* came primarily from just a few of the building's more influential users. Moreover, the sound installation was not the only target of opposition: "Nevertheless, from the beginning, there was a group of department staff who did not wish for any intrusive contemporary art in their building, and *Adsonore* was no exception."⁶ Steinar Sekkingstad, who wrote the catalogue text about *Adsonore* and conducted a series of guided tours of the BBB in 2006, says that opposition to the sound installation began almost immediately after it was installed. He wonders whether this might be because the information panels about the work were only put up long after its completion. The sound level was not particularly high, he said during an informal interview in September 2012. The noise normally produced by people going up and down the stairs was in fact louder than the work itself.

Gerd Tinglum, one of the two art consultants for the building, remembers that opposition varied, some of it being rather ambivalent. On the one hand, many users were enthusiastic about *Adsonore* and Barrett's description of its conceptual design. On the other, there were those who used the objections and discontent to fuel a dispute that eventually grew out of all proportion. Concerning the explanatory notices, Barrett says that the BBB repeatedly delayed putting up such information. Other artists were also affected by the same tardiness, with the result that one of the projects was eventually entirely abandoned.

However, since objections had already become apparent during the planning phase, the committee sought the opinions of various professionals during its work. Dag Wiersholm of Public Art Norway says they consulted the acoustician and composer Tor Halmrast, who provided an expert and reassuring assessment for the worried user representatives on the

committee. At that point in the planning, the tower was still not finished and hence its acoustic properties were unknown. Perhaps, in planning her work, Barrett focused on the commission specification and the intellectual requirements that *Adsonore* was meant to meet more than on the physical aspect of the new building. The opinion was that it would be possible to resolve acoustic problems when they arose.

Even sounds offered with the best of intentions can be perceived as pollution when they intrude on one's private space. According to Torbjørn Dall-Larsen, who was user coordinator for the BBB building, this was one of the considerations that made people sceptical towards the installation. Roughly a year after the work had been installed, Dall-Larsen conducted a user survey. Although it was unofficial and did not cover all the University of Bergen staff who worked in the building, it was undertaken in response to people's profound dissatisfaction with the auditory experience in the stair tower. In an informal interview in September 2016, Dall-Larsen emphasised that the survey did not question all concerned, but of the 127 people who responded, 95 had a negative view of *Adsonore*. When I asked why he thought people felt this way, he speculated that one reason could be the lack of personal control over the sounds that were produced. It was, he pointed out, nothing more than a simple motion sensor that caused a recording to be made. The recording was then processed, significantly distorted, and broadcast back into the stairwell. One could recognise one's own voice, but the sentences came out as disconnected fragments; it was easy to misunderstand what was said. Moreover, the noise level was a problem, especially for those working in adjacent offices. The stairwell tends to amplify sounds of all kinds. The background noise of the sound installation was reminiscent of transformer hum, a low 50 Hz buzz. In other words, the tower sounded like a machine. But the installation did not remain functional for long, he said. In 2006, the computer broke down, and even after various discussions involving the artist, KORO and the IT administrator at BBB, the installation remained silent.

When asked about this, Barrett said that she, the BBB and KORO had frequent discussions, but in the end there was nothing more she could do than send a detailed list of parts that needed replacing to the relevant person at BBB. After which she heard nothing. “We left the situation hoping that those in charge would move on, and the upkeep of the work taken on by someone more enthusiastic,” Barrett wrote in an email on 30.09.12. “(...) It’s really quite sad to think about the state it’s in now.”

The traces of a work

Adsonore, some people recall, was like an organism, a breathing body that brought the stairwell to life. Anyone who entered the space on one of the floors was immediately located, defined, treated as a passer-through or intruder, and pursued by sound. The work meant that anyone entering the tower was remembered and incorporated into the message that was constantly being transmitted back to the environment. As Barrett admits, a computer from 2003 has limitations when it comes to speed and the processing of acoustic information. To which she adds that the relatively narrow spectrum of sounds that were picked up as input within the stairwell effectively limited the variations in sound.⁷ So, how does one perceive sounds in this monumental tower?

Anyone entering the stairwell has to pass through one of the fireproof doors located on each floor. These doors slip back into the latch with a loud metallic thud. Having come to see what’s left of the sound installation, and in order to listen to the space, I walk up the stairs, slowly. The acoustics are noisy. Each tiny sound I make – such as my bag brushing against the handrail (a hollow steel tube) or my shoes hitting the floor with dry click – is multiplied in countless echoes. Others entering the space make their own sounds. The slam of doors, footsteps on the stairs and the shuffling of clothes and shoes all echo endlessly. It is as if the sound were rolling up and down the glass façade, rumbling a little between steps, lightly kissing the concrete walls, only to be thrown back once again in a new

form, whispering across the tower’s smooth surfaces. When ascending close to the core of the staircase, the echoes are less prominent than the new sounds that are constantly being made, quite inadvertently. These, however, create an acoustic space that indirectly conveys a sense of the tower’s size. In a way, the stair tower functions as a sound machine, and anyone moving through it is like a bat. The space picks up and plays with sounds that are made inside it, throws them around and lets them interact with the glass and concrete until the sound waves have been absorbed by the materials.

It was into this repertoire of resonant surfaces that *Adsonore* introduced a new element. As already mentioned, Barrett was aware that the acoustic space would be difficult. Indeed, several attempts were made to adjust the installation, but sound is movement, and movement is something we are programmed to detect. This programming lies in the deep structures of our brains and cannot be rationally overridden. We also respond to isolated sounds more readily than to backdrops of noise, while unfamiliar sounds are what trigger the quickest response. The latter need to be analysed and located rapidly (close/distant? dangerous/harmless?). As most people will attest, unexpected sounds that suddenly come from nowhere prompt a physical reaction. Sounds from our surroundings that are isolated as short recordings will almost certainly have this aspect of unfamiliarity. As something strange, they could be indicative of many things that warrant wariness. It is this that makes the experience of unexpected sounds so ambivalent. Sound is usually associated with a specific source. In some cases, when we fail to identify the source, such sounds can be perceived as almost abstract.

The impression that the sound source in the stairwell was independent of the loudspeakers was heightened by the fact that sounds wandered quickly from one speaker to the next. The sound was disembodied, existing as nothing other than acoustic waves. There is no reason why this should in itself be perceived as frightening, since we are surrounded by sound waves emitted from invisible sources in almost all commercial buildings, but

what the latter sounds have in common is that they are meant to reassure us or impart information. They usually consist of various kinds of music with the essential quality of being recognisable. According to its description, *Adsonore* also played with time on various levels. Things that happened there and then (in the work's functional time, the sense of here and now) were inter-mixed with archived material, things that *had* happened. The past, the outcome of which was known, was thus mixed with the present – the person on the stairs, the present time of the work – the outcome of which no one could predict.

Back in the stairwell, I try to imagine what impression the play of sound would make on me, if it were something I heard every time I used the stairs. The door behind me clicks into its latch; the first sound is mechanical. Would I feel embarrassed about contributing, about creating the next – preferably interesting – sound on passing a sensor? Would my inhibitions limit my repertoire to a suppressed cough or some tentative drumming on the handrail? Many people said they felt unfree. They could hear the sounds they made in a duplicated and uncontrollable version. Is this feeling also attributable to inhibition?

It is tiring to have to remain attentive to oneself and one's own timidity. To remain attentive, genuinely attentive, towards one's surroundings is even more tiring. And maybe it was this kind of attentiveness that *Adsonore* demanded. Could this be why *Adsonore* was silenced?

Clean and messy sound

The way I understand Barrett, it doesn't matter for *Adsonore* what is said, who it is who makes a sound and whether or not the sound is recognisable. What is of interest is the raw sound and what happens to it as a result of the predetermined parameters of the composition. Barrett uses the term *acousmatic* in describing her work: "The focus of this work stems from an acousmatic approach to sound, the aural images it can evoke, and an interest in high quality or unusual recording techniques that reveal details the ear will normally miss."⁸ The term *acousmatic* was coined in 1966 by

Pierre Schaeffer, famous for *musique concrète*, to describe a sound that is perceived as having no identifiable source. In this context, a good introduction to this musical method may well be Schaeffer's best known work, *Symphonie pour un homme seul*, a collaboration with the composer Pierre Henry. In creating this work, the intention was to use and manipulate the sounds of human activities. These would include anything from whistling and percussion playing to footsteps and knocking on doors. Premiered on 18 March 1950, this was also the first time a work of *musique concrète* had been performed for an audience. The aim in manipulating the sounds was to defamiliarise them so as to enhance the focus on timbre, rhythm and pitch.⁹

One tentative conclusion we can draw is that in art, sound constitutes a material. The advent of sound recording and archiving made it possible to experience sounds independently of the events that produce them. Recently I have attended many concerts in which all the sound has come from computers. Many such sounds do of course suggest acoustic phenomena, but one also accepts that sounds can arise without any particular physical origin. In the case of *Adsonore*, however, although the sounds were treated as purely sonic material, most of them had concrete origins. Might this help to explain the stubborn opposition to the work? When sounds that are familiar to us are transformed, without any obvious cause, into fleeting, distorted whispers floating around a stairwell, like ghostly echoes of ourselves, it is likely to make us tense. In *Kunstens nye stemme* (Art's New Voice), which includes an analysis of two sound-art works, one of which is *Adsonore*, Steinar Sekkingstad writes:

One can expect a person to find it threatening if they suddenly hear a human voice right beside their head when they happen to be alone in the stairwell. These aspects of the installation show that sound can function in ways that are completely different from the purely musical. It is hard to hear fragmented recordings of footsteps as music if you find such sounds genuinely frightening.¹⁰

Sound has qualities that can trigger emotional responses. These can be unpredictable since the experience is personal and related to the individual's own experiential horizon. In an informal interview in September 2012, Dag Wiersholm said that if someone claims to be scared by a work, we have no way to refute them. Such feelings are hard to deal with other than by either reducing or eliminating the source of fear. Wiersholm stressed that they are looking for effective ways to counter such feelings, but so far they have not found a solution that meets with general acceptance.

Natasha Barrett showed a high level of ambition, both compositionally and with regard to the type of knowledge that the BBB represents. She made use of principles that are familiar to the fields of music and sound art. The title of her work can be read as a reference to *objets sonore*, a term Schaeffer used in conjunction with acousmatic perception, and she herself readily admits to being inspired by this method of sound processing. She wants to draw our attention to the things the ear fails to detect and which for most people "pass under the radar". The aim of making us aware of what we tend to overlook, or in this case, what remains silent for us, amounts to a strong undercurrent in contemporary art. Art is perceived as a realm in which we can experience what it means to exist in the world, a world that often seems paradoxical, complex, messy and unpredictable. Art *is* demanding, because it *wants* something. Public space is also demanding, for the simple reason that it is public. While the encounter with art provides a personal experience, the public sphere is a realm of regulated social interaction. In the concert hall these two phenomena come face to face. There one can experience music in a way that challenges one's personal boundaries even if others present do not perceive it in that way. One good aspect of this potentially dizzying experience is that, in the concert hall, it has a clear time frame. In the case of *Adsonore*, although the work was clearly defined in terms of location, there was effectively no limit to its temporal extension.

At the same time, a stair tower is hardly a place that offers much scope for enlightening personal experiences. As

a public space, it is already overburdened with functionality and the needs it has to serve; it is defined by expectations of communal interaction. And as we have considered, sound can be difficult to ignore, yet has the potential to trigger emotional responses, which can make it seem overwhelming. Public space ought to be able to accommodate challenging and critical art (it *is* demanding to listen attentively), but for such interaction to work, we should still be given the freedom to ignore art's more demanding aspects. Sound – at least when it figures as art – can be hard to ignore.

Translated from Norwegian by Peter Cripps.

- 1 <http://www.natashabarrett.org/bergenweb/quickguide.html>, *Full text* (accessed on 12.9.12).
- 2 www.koro.no/filestore/BBB_kat_web.pdf, p. 42 (accessed on 17.9.12).
- 3 "In total, 980 prepared stereo sounds of duration 0.5-120 seconds were created. Male and female vocal materials, as well as some internal body sounds such as rumbling tummies, were used as source materials and in turn crafted to create a variety of attacks, textures, and developing morphologies." Natasha Barrett, *Adsonore*, <http://www.natashabarrett.org/bergenweb/quickguide.html>, *Full text* (accessed on 12.9.12).
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 www.koro.no/filestore/BBB_kat_web.pdf, p. 43 (accessed on 17.9.12).
- 9 Source: http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Schaeffer (accessed on 27.12.12).
- 10 Steinar Sekkingstad, *Kunstens nye stemme. Noen betraktninger om lyd i samtidskunsten*. Bergen: University of Bergen, 2004, p. 104.

An Auditory Space

Lydgalleriet's Formative Years
Sissel Lillebostad

The Perfect Space:
Low Threshold and Loud Sound
*Jørgen Larsson, Steinar Sekkingstad
and Sissel Lillebostad*

Outside the Sound Gallery:
Sound Art in Public Space in Norway
Hild Borchgrevink

Lydgalleriet's Formative Years

Sissel Lillebostad

A quick review of the activities at Lydgalleriet since its launch reveals three primary fields of focus: an ongoing discussion about the experience of sound in relation to the scope and effects of auditory space (sonic ambience); composed sound produced by kinetic installations and mechanisms; and the exploration of the borderland with the field of music.

These three fields – the auditory environment, the kinetic installation, and the relationship to music – evidently influence each other. Their relationships can be represented by the simple model of a triangle. As a form, a triangle defines an area with an interior and an exterior. To elaborate the model, we could represent each of the three fields as a circle at one of the triangle's corners. The triangle thus defined by Lydgalleriet's activities can be viewed as the distinctive domain of sound art. One focus of investigation is the effect different auditory environments have on us and how sound in public space can be read as a reflection of the various power struggles that take place there. Sound has an impact on us and triggers emotional responses. Everyone knows how stressful loud, sustained sound can be. In the gallery space, by contrast, sound can be isolated so as to allow its analysis almost as a pure phenomenon. Sound art, like many other specialised fields, has the need to define itself and have a recognisable identity that can, in turn, create a space for action. Common to most delimitations and attempts to develop definitions are problems relating to transitions, usually to other fields or genres. For Lydgalleriet, it was important to discuss these distinctions, as an attempt to mark boundaries, but also in order to manoeuvre within as large a field of activity as possible. When Lydgalleriet was first established, the sonic field did not have the same support or recognition that it has today. The field was described by Jørgen Larsson as 'the noisy cousin': costly, demanding, and impossible to 'have in the living room'. One question that can be asked at its current stage in the maturation process is simply this: If sound art has been tamed and house-broken, has it retained the same open potential that existed in its early development?

The first decades of Lydgalleriet's existence have been intensely productive, at least when seen from an external perspective. The field has been explored from all angles, with low-brow and high-brow culture and the slow and thorough building of a field-specific milieu. Lydgalleriet has introduced us to innovative machines and intricate devices that emit torrents of composed sound images, reminders of everything that produces sound, independent of human cause. This broad and bewildering field that lies so close (too close?) to that of music has also been explored through the concert format.

Sound art is a concept that has descriptive power. However, as Carsten Seiffarth notes, when sound artists started working in the early 2000s, there was no special term for this category of artistic practice. It was called 'inter-media' or 'audio-visual art'. This does not mean the field lacked historical references. If sound art was under-communicated ten years ago, the archive, as far as can be seen, reveals frenetic activity aimed at filling a niche that was perhaps invitingly open and empty. Through the years, Lydgalleriet has developed an archive containing traces of many productions, sonic works and experiments, concerts, installations, collaborations, and workshops. The international network, particularly Resonance, has produced results in the form of exchanges of exhibitions, a residency programme, and infrastructure for field-specific collaboration. During these years, Lydgalleriet has built a space for sound art, rented out much needed equipment and space, and become an institution that explores sound, silence, writing, space, and the voice.

But what, quite specifically, has happened over the years? The information in this publication can confirm which productions and artists have been presented, which concerts were organised, who Lydgalleriet has collaborated with, and in which arenas it has operated. In addition, all the collaborators and contributors are listed in one form or another. Once again, seen from an external perspective, this type of summary soon becomes a litany – a lean list of dates, names, and titles. On the other hand, lists are often wonderful sources for gleaning

deeper layers of information. Strictly speaking, the list is an overview of the activity of a small institution run mainly by a few interested parties, yet which has succeeded in creating an environment and a network of deeply involved artists and cultural actors.

Establishing a gallery for sound

Lydgalleriet was initiated by a group of artists, art historians, and cultural workers – the most central being Erlend Hammer, Maia Urstad, Bjørnar Habbestad, Steinar Sekkingstad, and Jørgen Larsson. The ambition was to present sound art to the public, but based on the premises of the works themselves, under optimal communicative conditions. Lydgalleriet's initial mission statement was as follows:

Present sound-based contemporary art to a wide public, in a well-suited arena that allows the premises of a work to be the basis for its exhibitionary conditions.

Stimulate increased knowledge about sound-based art and sonic culture through production and outreach, and to deliver premises to the public discourse on art.

Contribute to developing and challenging an expanding field, and to present new expressions through new models for collaboration and production.

The address Østre Skostredet 3 gave the newly established gallery a room in which to unfold, but the start was slow and trying. The first event, 'North of the North', a concert and installation lasting two days, starting on 4 February 2006. The material consisted of field recordings from Northern Norway, with the artists Xavier Charles, Marc Pichelin, and Ivar Grydeland. But it was not until 8 December 2006 that Lydgalleriet used the same locale, this time for a Christmas soirée with paper instruments, ruined telephones, and the world premiere of an ambisonic work. The collaborating artists were

Jørgen Larsson, Bjørnar Habbestad, Jeff Carey, and H.C. Gilje. This was the start of Lydgalleriet's life at Østre Skostredet 3, a site that was initially described as 'a ghost house' (Tommy Olsson), 'terrible' (Martin Riches), 'fake' (Carsten Seiffarth), or simply as being in charmingly poor shape.

Of the seven projects that Lydgalleriet presented in 2007, five were realised in the 'ghost house'. But it was perhaps 'LYDBANK', presented at the bank Sparebanken Vest on 14 March, in collaboration with Borealis and Ny Musikk Bergen, that made the gallery's activity visible to more than the immediate circle of interested people. Although 'LYDBANK' lasted for only one day during the bank's opening hours, it reverberated widely in people's experience of the bank. The participating artists were Leon Milo, Jana Winderen, Jørgen Larsson, Maia Urstad, Thorolf Thuestad, and Jørgen Træen.

Breakthrough

Lydgalleriet's first venture after moving into its own premises was 'Sleppet' (2007). This had wide appeal and a large public, thanks in great measure to it being linked to 'Grieg Year 2007' – the centennial commemoration of the Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg. Jørgen Larsson formulated the ambition for 'Sleppet':

'Is sound, by itself, an abstraction or illusion? Do we hear sound itself, or the meaning of the sound? In this range between placement and displacement, material and dematerialisation, we find artists working with field recordings. The degrees of recontextualization and manipulation become important questions in this field of art. Not least, we see that artists nurture a desire to recreate or develop expanded audial experiences of nature, thus making the work "larger than life". New technology enables composers and sound artists to create sonic images that give the public experiences of presence and spatiality that have previously only been possible in costly forms of presentation. The interaction between new technologies and

the raw complexity of nature thus becomes part of these works' horizon of understanding.'

The participating artists were Steve Roden (US), Mark Behrens (DE), Natasha Barrett (NO), Bjarne Kvinnsland (NO), Chris Watson (UK), and Jana Winderen (NO). The works were largely based on the experience of nature and the transition from winter to spring.

Jana Winderen worked with hydrophone recordings from the Folgefonna glaciers and followed the meltwater's course all the way to the North Sea. The work combined the sound of ice crunching and cracking, gurgling water, and the sound of fish and shells moving about in a composition for six loudspeakers. Natasha Barrett created four movements using different 'microclimates'; these were made for 16 loudspeakers placed in a three-dimensional circle in an almost completely dark room. Marc Behrens gathered stones from the valley Våtedalen in Gloppen Municipality and created an 11-metre square bed of stones. Under the bed were nine motors that carefully moved the rubber mats on which the stones lay.

Bjarne Kvinnsland made a 20-minute four-channel composition based on field recordings, in addition to a black acrylic panel into which the contours of the glacier Brenndalsbreen were engraved. When the neon back-light was switched on in various patterns, the picture appeared in almost its original form. Steve Roden construed three video works based on calculations and distances which he found important, including, among others, distances relating to the hut where Edvard Grieg worked on his musical compositions. The soundtrack to the work consisted of manipulated field recordings. Chris Watson presented a four-channel sound work for eight loudspeakers. The sonic material was based on melting ice as a metaphor for changes in sound:

'In the winter here, the sound is almost coalesced into a block, frozen in time, and then follows a slow release throughout the course of spring, the course of 'Sleppet'.

My piece will go from the frozen part of winter to the openness of spring.'

WA 66-page catalogue was produced in English and Norwegian, with pictures, interviews, and curatorial texts for the project. 'Sleppet' was important for Lydgalleriet because it attracted many visitors and resulted in the gallery making a name for itself both nationally and internationally.

Permanent Premises, Rotten Rooms

In February 2008, Lydgalleriet succeeded in signing a contract for the long-term lease of Østre Skostredet 3, in Bergen's city centre. The building, as mentioned, was in poor shape, and the conditions of each room varied drastically. Despite the physical environment's shortcomings, during that year Lydgalleriet established a venue for sound art, a shop for time-based expressions, sonic curiosities, and other media. In addition, Lydgalleriet provided a service for the rental and sale of high-quality systems for optimal multi-channel renderings of sound art and other related art forms. At the same time, Lydgalleriet carried out technical tests and developments in order to optimise listening conditions and frameworks for experience in exhibitions. The ambition was to build acoustic and technical competence that could be transferred to other arenas. In Østre Skostredet 3, Lydgalleriet was able to construct a crookedly-built room for four-channel frontal presentation, and a flexible 8 or 12-channel room for intimate presentations. The gallery was also able to purchase a range of high-quality speakers, digital audio interfaces, and visual display equipment that enhanced the production value of subsequent exhibitions.

The two most visited exhibitions of 2009 were 'Zuper Klassik Freaky Avantgarde', with 2,145 visitors, and 'Apparatus', with 2,874 visitors. 'Zuper Klassik Freaky Avantgarde' was a group show with contributions from Lydgalleriet's founders and their invited guests. Maia Urstad and Hilde Hauan Johnsen presented the first-ever gallery version of the series 01001-101. Thorolf Thuestad and Alwynne Pritchard presented



Ingvild Langgård,
Wonders Beyond Yonder, 2008.
Photo: Jørgen Larsson.



the loudspeaker installation *A Cognitive Theory of Metaphor*, and Steinar Sekkingstad exhibited works on tape by Mágnus Pálsson in the room for small-scale presentations. Bjørnar Habbestad exhibited a work by Petri Henriksson on the upper floor, and in the loft, Jørgen Larsson installed his work *The Screaming Room*. In the introduction to the exhibition, one reads the following:

‘When working with sonic expression in a room, the room is very much a part of that expression. The room becomes the work’s instrument: art’s first resonance chamber. The public encounters the work through the room – the room acts as a filter. Museums and larger galleries are built for silence; the smallest sound is amplified and resonates for a long time in such rooms, serving as embarrassing punishment for anyone who dares to make a sound. This is authoritarian acoustics, which require rooms to be silent, as if saying: “In the encounter with Art, Silence is the only possible response.” Even though many galleries and museums have now adapted their acoustics to be less noisy, this sonic servility lingers in the public’s behaviour – a sacral respect manifesting itself in silence and whispers. In this field of experience, sound-based art forms become rebels, regardless of whether they intend to or not.’

This text, written by Jørgen Larsson, can in many ways stand as the basic description of sound art’s conditions, and of what Lydgalleriet initially wanted to achieve through dedicating itself to sonic art. At the time, sound art was rarely presented in exhibition venues. Competence was perhaps lacking, and the field itself also suffered from having an underdeveloped theoretical portfolio. Lydgalleriet therefore chose to present as many of the field’s diverse facets as possible. From 2007 to 2013, Lydgalleriet produced exhibitions dedicated to formats for playing recorded sound (‘Vinyl’, ‘Kassett’), acoustic phe-

nomena ('Catabolizer', 'Extensions', 'Sirens'), sound-producing objects ('Apparatus', 'Felix Machines', 'The Owl Project', Christian Blom) creating sonic environments ('Zuper Klassik', and 'Composers in Space'), and listening strategies ('Drones and Headphones').

A good example of the category focusing on sound-producing objects was the exhibition 'Apparatus', curated by Carsten Seiffarth and featuring works by Martin Riches and Erwin Stache. Erwin Stache presented his installation *Saiten-Kasten-Matrix*. It consists of about 80 chest-drawers across which strings are strung. They are played with the help of vibration motors from mobile telephones. Through interacting with the motor speeds, the strings make varying repetitions of tones. Martin Riches presented several works, including his most famous *Talking Machine* – a work consisting of organ pipes which he made to resemble the human vocal apparatus's sound-creating forms. The public could make the machine talk by feeding it with sentences via a computer. *Talking Machine* has a vocabulary of 200–300 English words. This was Seiffarth's first curatorial project for Lydgalleriet, and neither of the artists' works had been exhibited in Scandinavia before. About 'Apparatus', Carsten Seiffarth had this to say:

'At the centre of this first exhibition in October 2009 are sound apparatuses – artist-created electromagnetic or electronic apparatuses – that only through contact with the public fully reveal their interesting potential and their particular sonorous qualities. Sound apparatuses refer to sound art's historical roots. We can see this in the music boxes of Mozart's day, the musical machinations built since the end of the 1800s, the Orchestrions, in futuristic music machines such as Luigi Russolo's clamorous *Intonarumori*, in Jean Tinguely's kinetic installations, and in the Fluxus artists' instruments made with everyday objects.'

New Premises: Østre

Starting in 2010, Lydgalleriet's unstable and punky home at Østre Skostredet 3 underwent extensive renovation, upgrading, and remodelling. This meant that, once again, borrowed locations, nomadic life, and outdoor installations became relevant for the gallery's activity. In 2010 four exhibitions and two concerts were realised. In 2011 the activity increased to five exhibitions and five concerts, since Lydgalleriet was fortunate enough to borrow a space on a semi-permanent basis at the art and cultural centre USF Verftet. Collaboration with EKKO Festival, which would later form the basis for the cooperative cultural centre Østre – the renovated Østre Skostredet 3 – manifested itself in joint concerts with, among others, Pierre Henry at Studio Bergen.

The renovation ended up costing more than the amount budgeted. Its completion was also delayed. Eventually, along with EKKO, Lydgalleriet could finally move into new and specially adapted rooms at Østre on 5 October 2012. Østre was built to be a cross-disciplinary arena for electronic music and art in Bergen. The building contains exhibition rooms on the ground floor, a combined exhibition room and concert hall on the middle floor, and a joint office space on the top floor. The concert hall has a 5-metre ceiling height and can accommodate 200 people. With this new building, a new era could begin, and the first exhibition was Martin Messier's 'Sewing Machine Orchestra'.

Right after moving into its renovated building, Lydgalleriet used its collective competence and international network to organise the conference 'Ephemeral Sustainability', curated by Carsten Seiffarth, Jørgen Larsson, and Julie Lillelien Porter. The list of participants reads like sound art's heritage archive: David Toop (UK), Christoph Cox (US), Raoul Mörchen (DE), Anne Hilde Neset (NO), Seth Kim-Cohen (US), Salomé Voegelin (CH), Helga de la Motte-Haber (DE), Christina Kubisch (DE), Kabir Carter (US), Edwin van der Heide (NL), Tore Honoré Bøe (NO), Carsten Seiffarth (DE), Seth Cluett (US), Nicole Gingras (CA), Maia Urstad (NO), Rolf Sachsse (NL), Per Platou (NO), Joost Fonteyne (BE), Anne Marthe Dyvi (NO), Daniela Cascella (IT), Asbjørn Tiller (NO), Sarah Cook (UK), Signe Lidén (NO), Julia

Gerlach (DE), Aernoudt Jacobs (BE), Lars Mørch Finborud (NO), and Søs Gunver-Ryberg (DK).

Not surprisingly, the new venue was somewhat more expensive to run than the old nomadic model, which involved borrowed locations and temporary and dilapidated rooms in the old Østre Skostredet 3. During 2013, the collaboration revealed that the content producers, Lydgalleriet and EKKO, lacked sufficient earnings to run a whole building with a concert stage, bar, gallery, and offices. Østre ('house for experimental music and sound-based art practices') therefore took on a larger role as administrator of the premises and its income.

Lydgalleriet continues to deliver art and other sound-related content; the rooms on the ground floor function as a gallery, with windows facing onto the street and a potentially new public. Lydgalleriet as a competence centre is an important premise, and both the technical and the curatorial responsibilities are managed by a directorial board and an artistic advisory committee. At the start in 2012, long-term plans were laid, a strategic five-year plan for sound art. The goals, as ever, are specific and honed in on sound:

Establish a joint arena for cross-disciplinary mediation of sound-based artistic expressions and electronic music.

Reach out to a large and diverse public by being located in the centre of Bergen.

Spread knowledge about, and interest in, sound-based art and electronic music.

Allow for necessary development time to test experimental art forms.

Be a competence centre, practically, technically, and artistically.

Recruit producers and artists from the 'underbrush' of electronic art and music in Bergen.

Be open to external concert organisers and actors.

Translated from Norwegian by Arlyne Moi.

The Perfect Space: Low Threshold and Loud Sound

Jørgen Larsson and Steinar Sekkingstad in conversation with Sissel Lillebostad about Lydgalleriet's early years.

JØRGEN LARSSON (JL): I think the first project that was done under the Lydgalleriet name was 'Kunstmuzak Inc. – heismusikk med sjel' (Art Muzak Inc. – Elevator Music with Soul) at Galleriet shopping mall in 2005. That was followed by 'Vertikale øyeblikk og lineære forløp' (Vertical Moments and Linear Processes) at Landmark.¹

STEINAR SEKKINGSTAD (SS): Catchy title!

JL: The elevator music was a curated programme where all of us who were part of Lydgalleriet at that time² contributed ideas for a programme of ninety minutes or thereabouts. The whole thing was replayed in loop for a full day at Galleriet.

SS: I think it ran in all the shops, right?

JL: Yes, in every loudspeaker we were allowed to use. Instead of Christmas music, they played a programme of ambient music and muzak. It included both Erik Satie and Brian Eno. There's a connection between muzak and the music of Satie – the latter coined the term furniture music, *musique d'ameublement*, to describe background music. Musically and ideologically the two things are very different, but as a curated programme it was a lot of fun.

SS: We played with the idea of juxtaposing these two ways of using music, since muzak – which is a purely commercial marketing device – does in fact have something in common with Satie and Eno and the spatial aspect of ambient music. Everything was played at a fairly

low volume, so it took some time before people realised this was not your normal background music.

SISSEL LILLEBOSTAD (SL): Did you make that clear in any other way?

JL: We made a poster that was shown on screens around the mall. A cryptic green poster with the image of a reel-to-reel tape recorder and the title *muzak*. It was a challenge to make our point.

SS: I seem to remember Erlend Hammer gave a lecture.

JL: You're right, he did! In Galleriet, on one of the upper floors, wasn't it?

SS: Yes, but not many people came.

JL: We didn't publicise it very well either.

SL: Did you get any feedback from people who worked at Galleriet, people who were exposed to the music for the whole day?

JL: It was rather varied. Within Galleriet, the musical playback was complex since some shops had speakers that were on the broader PA system, while others played their own music and hardly noticed what was going on elsewhere. When you play something at a steady volume, it works, but what we presented had quite a dynamic range. Especially Satie – his furniture music isn't quite the kind of piano music most people are used to. He uses a lot of loops, and to really drive home the point, we doubled the length, recording about 15 minutes or so. Some of the staff found it a bit hard. I remember one person in the bag shop getting almost hysterical. We had to make some adjustments so the loop didn't recur quite so often. But otherwise it worked out well, as a one-day stunt.

Building on the experience gained at Galleriet, I teamed up with Maia Urstad for the project 'Lydbank'.³ For this we used a bank as our venue, which we filled with sound for a day. Maia is good at getting people to feel involved, and she managed to make everyone in the bank think that this was a truly fantastic project. Everyone was happy, even when the project was finished. All interventions in public space are challenging for the public, but

sound projects are often more of a challenge than visual ones, and they need more careful planning. It's difficult to introduce sound in places that are usually quiet or have at most only location-specific sounds. Those who will have to live with the new audio environment need to be primed for the change.

SS: It was a time when sound art had started moving into the territory of the visual arts – galleries, museums and public spaces. But in public spaces, the difference between sound art and other types of art is massive. It was these experiences that fed the idea that we needed a gallery specifically for sound art.

SL: Did you know what kind of profile it should have?

SS: I don't think there was much discussion about a specific exhibition profile. We talked more about the kind of opportunities a space dedicated to sound-based art would offer. There would be much greater scope to try things out. In Norway at that time, there was a shortage of exhibitions that focused on sound in space or the spatial use of sound, or which explored the relationship between sound and objects. Here I'm thinking of exhibitions that need a gallery space rather than performances that need something like a concert stage. Take for example the 2008 exhibition 'Sirens' at Lydgalleriet, curated by the artist James Beckett. In cultural-historical terms, this was almost a classical museum exhibition about auditory culture, and a good example of the varied approach to the field among Lydgalleriet's early projects.

A broad and varied group

JL: Those who were part of Lydgalleriet when it started had very varied interests. We wanted to cover anything that had to do with sound. We tried to distinguish between different approaches to sound art, ranging from discussions of auditory culture to pure sound installations.

SL: Did you see Lydgalleriet as an administrator of auditory culture and was it an ambition to build an audience that would understand sound art and its history?

JL: Yes, the only common thread was that every exhibition was different. They covered a very broad spectrum.

SL: I see from the archive that you featured a number of iconic historical works, in addition to younger people, contemporary artists, who were experimenting in the field.

JL: Yes, I also persuaded a few composers to create sound art. It was a disastrous exhibition – ‘Composers in Space’. It was quite revealing to see how far apart composition and sound art can be and how much the mindset needs to change in order to view the gallery space as a communicative arena. In the world of sound art, you have to catch your audience as they’re walking past your work. And to do that, you have to communicate in a different way.

SL: You wanted to show the full breadth and depth of sound art, including the peripheral and experimental zones over which you had less control. But the goal was still to capture people’s interest, right?

JL: Yes, that was the aim.

SL: I find it interesting that the group who started Lydgalleriet was so varied and came from such a mix of disciplines. Was that just coincidence, or was there a broader interest at that point in time, something that made it possible for Bergen to have this focus?

JL: Quite a few of us were disappointed that Landmark didn’t become the place we wanted it to be. That was one factor, but there were also the links with Maia Urstad and BEK (Bergen Center for Electronic Arts). Then there was Steinar Sekkingstad and Erlend Hammer, who both wrote MA theses on the subject of sound art at the same time.

SS: I started working on the exhibition ‘Sonic Presence’ in 2005, which was shown at Bergen Kunsthall in 2006.⁴ That was just when we were launching Lydgalleriet. First and foremost we were a bunch of interested students who hung around and discussed things with Jørgen Larsson and Trond Lossius. I interviewed Maia Urstad for my MA thesis, which is how I came in contact with the circle.

SL: That too could just be coincidence. But when you get a series of coincidences, it creates a kind of synergy.

JL: Exactly, but this kind of broad cultural environment is fairly typical of smaller cities. Everyone’s involved in a whole range of fields, because if they weren’t, nothing would happen. The classic example is the Kristiansand Jazz and Punk Club. It was the same mechanism that spawned the band Munch, something that can only happen when jazzers and punks hang out together.

SL: And just happen to go along to each other’s concerts. That’s not so common either.

Expertise and infrastructure

SS: If you look at the production of theory about the sound-art field over the past decade, it’s incredible how much has happened. In this respect, the timing of Lydgalleriet was interesting, because there was a real need for an exhibition venue combined with a genuine interest in sound art.

JL: It was a time of change. In Berlin there was the festival Sonambiente, a hugely important event for sound-based forms of expression. It was obvious to so many people that there was a need for a separate venue for sound art. I would say Lydgalleriet was part of an international trend, and in Norway it was possible to get such a project financed.

SL: In the early applications for financing that Lydgalleriet submitted when it was just finding its feet, it described itself as a centre of expertise. You argued that Lydgalleriet should be a place that promotes the professionalisation of work with sound art, by providing good loudspeakers and other equipment. Why was that important?

SS: The need to raise standards was at the heart of our early discussions. It happened again and again that, when working with sound in established exhibition spaces, things just weren’t what they should be. The problems weren’t just technical, there was also a lack of knowledge and communication.

JL: I remember we had numerous discussions about whether an ideal space was even possible. We ended up with a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, we conceptualised the ideal space from a theoretical angle. On the other hand, you can never

predict what will happen the moment you bring the people who are going to make sound into that space.

What we learnt from working with artists at the old premises at Østre Skostredet was that coming to grips with a space that is unprepared tends to stimulate the creative process. An artist might think: “OK, what do we have here? What are the possibilities? What happens if I put this here? How should this be placed to make it work in the best possible way?”

That’s something you lose in a perfect space. There you just set up your work. It’s supposed to be perfect, but it’s not right, because everything happens in a context, as the artist is very well aware.

SL: What is the perfect space for sound, a white cube?

JL: The most important thing is that it works acoustically. Many works are created for large spaces. A sound object gives a completely different experience in a space with a lot of reverb than it does in a small, quiet room. Sound is far more sensitive to surroundings than visual art.

SL: A space will always respond to sound and sound is influenced by the space. The size of an audience also affects the sound, both physically and how one experiences it.

JL: It’s very dynamic. If your audience is sitting on a bench and you have a screen on the wall four metres away from them, where are the listeners’ ears? Where do you place the speakers? It’s dealing with simple issues like this that builds expertise.

SS: There’s a greater awareness now than there used to be about how sound should be handled in an acoustically challenging white cube. This kind of issue now receives more attention, but you still find examples which show that things don’t work everywhere.

JL: One early discussion at Lydgalleriet was whether we should have our own venue or should focus instead on curated exhibitions in existing spaces. The conclusion was that doing the latter would help to spread knowledge to raise standards at the institutions involved, whereas if we had our own space, we would never curate exhibitions at other people’s venues; we would end up thinking, “No, if they want sound, then they must

come to us.” Which would effectively mean abandoning the admirable goal of nurturing broader expertise.

SS: I think this idea of a dedicated space has been extremely important in many ways. Compared with the early years, Lydgalleriet’s profile has become much more open. Initially, our programming was strategic, almost educational. We wanted to show different aspects of the field. But as Lydgalleriet gradually became more established, the context also became more robust. The fact that Lydgalleriet went through a phase of defining itself means it can now be much freer about the projects it accepts.

JL: That was something we talked about a lot during the start-up phase. We thought that once Lydgalleriet was established, you could exhibit classic landscape painting there, and it would be interpreted in an entirely new way. Because everyone comes to Lydgalleriet with their ears open. That was the dream.

Breakthrough, free for all, and independent

SS: ‘Sleppet’ in 2007⁵ was an important exhibition because it meant Lydgalleriet was involved in a large-scale production, with what were then some of the coolest international artists around.

JL: It was an utterly crazy exhibition. It was important for us because it allowed us to organise a major exhibition in a large venue. And within a mainstream framework; it was part of the centenary commemorations of Edvard Grieg’s death.

SS: ‘Sleppet’ was important because of both the scale of production and the curating, which took us beyond the self-referential, internal discussion, which sound art so often seems to indulge in. Every sound art exhibition, whether at MoMA or some other major venue in recent years, still circles around the question “What does it mean to listen to something in a gallery?” In ‘Sleppet’ we left that question behind us. The themes here were Grieg and nature, and at the heart of the work was a batch of field recordings. In scope it was both narrow and broad at the same time.

JL: It was nice to attract a big audience.

SL: Would you say 'Sleppet' gave natural romanticism a hard technological edge?

JL: There is a lot of natural romanticism in the tradition of field recording, and we emphasised the connections to an art tradition that has little to do with technology, for example, Grieg's use of field recordings when researching folk music. It was 'Sleppet' that helped us to convince Pallas, the owners of the venue in Østre Skostredet, that Lydgalleriet was not just a narrow, arcane set-up. Pallas wanted to create an environment that many people would want to be part of, and to do that, they would have to choose socially engaged partners. Nothing super-mainstream, that would be too stupid, but at least it should attract enough people. As an exhibition, 'Sleppet' showed that Lydgalleriet could get plenty of people coming through doors, a crowd that made the premises look good within the framework such as it was. This was an important argument in persuading them to let us set up shop in a part of town that was in high demand. It was after 'Sleppet' that we really started renting the house at Østre Skostredet 3. That same year we also organised a Christmas exhibition⁶ that was well visited. There was a constant stream of people passing through the tiny premises to look at Lasse Marhaug's decaying Christmas decorations and some stuff that stood there vibrating. By the end of 2007 I for one was fully convinced that this was a place where people would keep on coming.

SL: And then Lydgalleriet produced 'Super Classic Freaky Avant Garde' – a great title.

JL: We saw it as a kind of "this-is-how-far-we've-come" exhibition.

SS: It was a bit anarchic, but the purpose was to profile all the artists with some kind of connection to Lydgalleriet, on their own terms, and each independent of the others.

JL: There was no unifying curation – no overall arbiter for the exhibition.

Building your own space

JL: When planning an organisation on paper, you always imagine you could create a more complex structure than the one you actually end up with. In small organisations with very small budgets and just a few dedicated people, broad-based structures just aren't feasible because you don't have the means to make it work. So in some ways, I was the one who ran the place. But I wouldn't have dared to try without some professional and reliable support.

SS: I think it was important that, at the outset, the entire group of initiators were included in the artistic advisory committee. It was an environment where we could meet and test out programme ideas. But it's important to stress that the burden wasn't shared equally. In a very real sense, it was Jørgen who built up Lydgalleriet as we now know it.

Collaboration and strategies

SL: What about the cooperation that was eventually established with Carsten Seiffarth, the director of singuhr hoergallerie in Berlin?⁷

JL: Carsten is a solid resource when it comes to hardcore sound art. We met a few times and he made suggestions for exhibitions. The first was in 2009 – 'Apparatus'.

SL: The links between singuhr and Lydgalleriet have grown pretty close over the years, not least in connection with a residency scheme?

JL: Right. Both took part in Resonance, an EU project where the participants curated sound-art exhibitions that were shown at five or six venues around Europe. Lydgalleriet and singuhr were the only spaces that were truly dedicated to sound; the other participants in the network were either galleries that featured sound art on an occasional basis, or festivals. Carsten knew everyone and was well acquainted with specialised corners of the sound-art field that Lydgalleriet's programming hadn't yet reflected, but he respected what we were doing. Seiffarth travels around the world curating sound art. Through him we made contact with a number of sound artists we would have had no

access to otherwise. For example, without his help Lydgalleriet would never have been able to host Martin Riches' *Talking Machine*.⁸

SS: What other benefits have come from the cooperation with singuhr and international networking?

JL: Lydgalleriet has built up a reputation as a credible production partner, which means that really big names now see Lydgalleriet as a place where it's worth showing their work.

SL: Did Lydgalleriet become more strategic in its choice of exhibitions after Resonance?

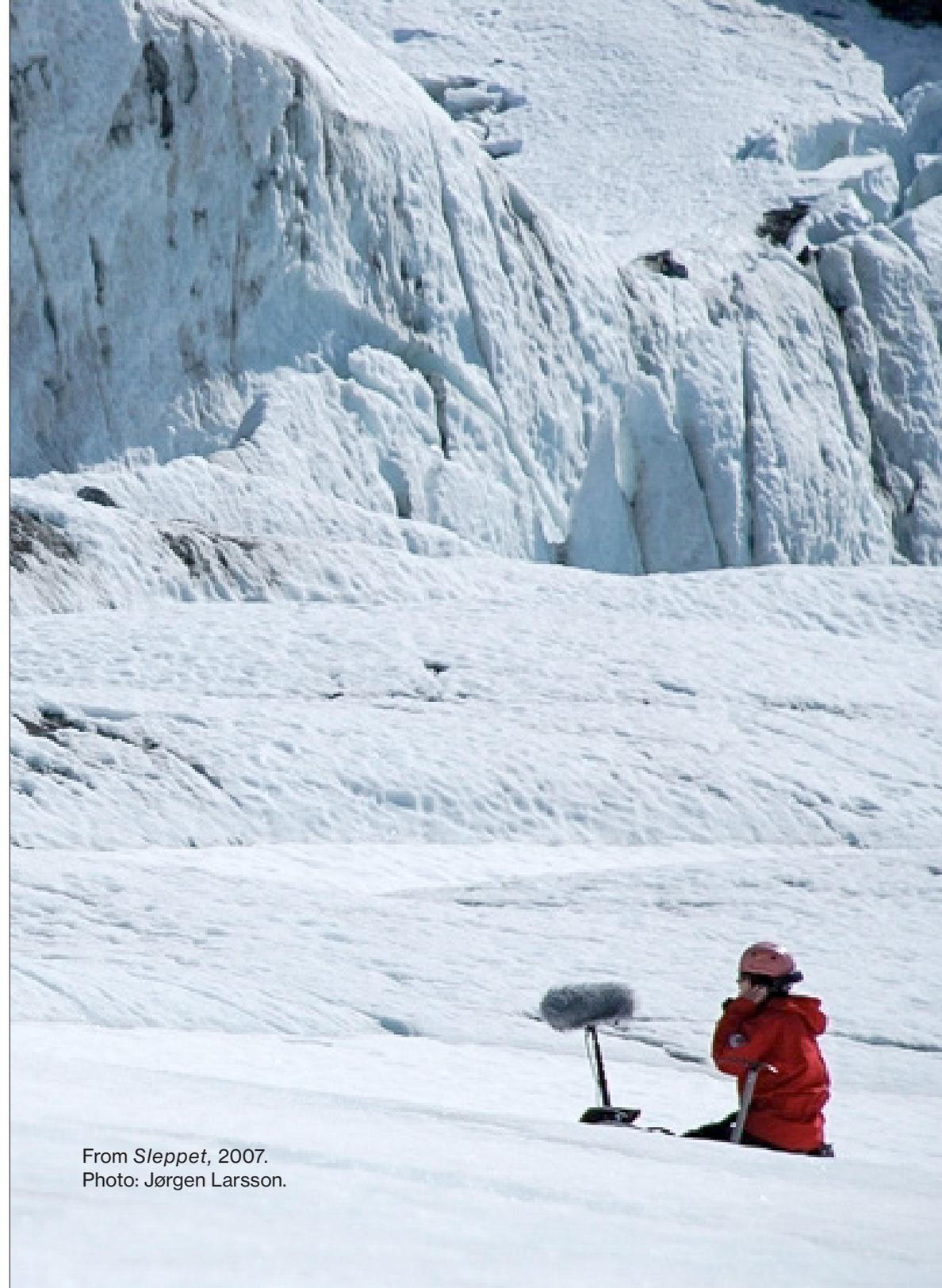
JL: Institutions that don't hold collections demonstrate strategy in terms of programming. They need good facilities for showing work, but they also need to show they take art seriously. Sound art is often placed in contexts that can make it seem a second-tier discipline. Our strategy was to build credibility among the founding circles of sound art. We had to win the trust of the 1970s generation. And in order to meet that commitment, we had to have a space that is fully protected against fire, is not too damp, and has a steady and reliable power supply.

SS: But to be seen as someone who takes their art seriously you have to do more than just meet physical requirements. Many of these artists feel they have to explain their work every time they visit a new venue, because sound art is still so peripheral. The artists and their art can rarely assume that an institution will have a thorough understanding of the history of sound art, and there's always the danger of venues making both technical and rhetorical mistakes.

SL: Was your strategy for building an audience something you discussed right from the start?

SS: Yes, and we made serious attempts to reach out without compromising .

JL: We tried not to set the threshold too high. It might be nothing more than a pin are invited to touch. Even so, we've always asked questions about the response to each new exhibition. We tried to figure out what it was people didn't understand. Was there something they



From *Sleppet*, 2007.
Photo: Jørgen Larsson.

reacted to? What did they find important? And then we'd think, okay, the next text we write will be able to present this much better.

SS: In retrospect, I think it's clear that we have sought to open up the field. One of the great strengths of Lydgalleriet is that we have frequently succeeded in expanding people's notion of what sound art can be and created a vocabulary for it.

SL: Do you have an impression of how Lydgalleriet has been perceived by composers?

JL: Lydgalleriet has oriented itself more towards jazz and the visual arts than towards composed music, with more emphasis on the playful. You're free to move things about, it doesn't have to be so highbrow or esoteric. Lydgalleriet isn't in the business of music, it's concerned with something completely different. To reach a larger audience, you shouldn't be afraid to make things accessible.

SL: Has this broad platform and the international network helped to shape Lydgalleriet as it is?

JL: The conference 'Ephemeral Sustainability'⁹ in 2012 was a culmination of Lydgalleriet's work to cover the breadth of the sound-art field and build up an international network of collaborative partners. By then the network was in place and we could make full use of it. An incredible number of really cool people came together in Bergen, offering several days' worth of lectures and artist presentations. And the Østre venue was on the map. But for me, that's where I bowed out. Those who have taken Lydgalleriet forward are just as important. They're the ones who are making the next phase possible.

Translated from Norwegian by Peter Cripps.

- 1 'Kunstmuzak Inc.', Galleriet shopping mall, 25.11.2005, 'Vertikale øyeblikk og lineære forløp, Landmark', 11.12.2005; with Bjørn Askefoss, Bjørnar Habbestad, Leif Inge, Jørgen Larsson, Nicholas Møllerhaug, Maia Urstad and Jana Winderen. Curated by Erlend Hammer and Steinar Sekkingstad.
- 2 Maia Urstad, Bjørnar Habbestad, Erlend Hammer, Thorolf Thuestad, Jørgen Larsson and Steinar Sekkingstad
- 3 'Lydbank', 14.03.2007, at Sparebanken Vest, Bergen. Collaboration with Borealis and Ny Musikk Bergen.
- 4 Group exhibition in Bergen Kunsthall. Co-curated by Solveig Øvstebø.
- 5 'Sleppet' in 2007 was Lydgalleriet's first major project in its own venue. It drew a large crowd, largely thanks to its links to the Grieg anniversary. Participating artists were Steve Roden (USA), Mark Behrens (D), Natasha Barrett (N), Bjarne Kvinnsland (N), Chris Watson (UK) and Jana Winderen (N). The project was based on field recordings made during a ten-day excursion through Western Norway. *Sleppet* was shown in Bergen from 31.08. to 23.09. and in Oslo from 01.10. to 14.10., the latter in conjunction with the Ultima festival.
- 6 Lydgalleriet's Christmas exhibition was conceived as an annual event, where artists are invited to produce new miniature works for sale. In its first year, 2007, it attracted 3,000 visitors.
- 7 Carsten Seiffarth, director of singuhr hoergallerie, Berlin, curated five exhibitions at Lydgalleriet in the period 2009-14. Singuhr had its own venue in Berlin from 1996 to 2014. Website: <http://singuhr.de/en/singuhr>
- 8 Martin Riches: *Talking Machine* (1990) consists of 32 organ pipes and a vocabulary of several hundred English words. The audience can type in sentences, which the machine then articulates. *Talking Machine* can also recite the alphabet and count to 100 in English, German, Danish and Japanese.
- 9 Curated by Carsten Seiffarth and Jørgen Larsson, the conference 'Ephemeral Sustainability', (1-3 November 2012) was "about presenting, documenting, collecting and archiving sound-based contemporary art".

Outside the Sound Gallery: Sound Art in Public Space in Norway

Hild Borchgrevink

Silence is the white cube of sound. Although the composer John Cage had, with his work *4:33* (1952), demonstrated that there is no such thing as complete silence and that, as listeners, audiences are active participants rather than just passive recipients, much music and sound art presupposes the kind of concentration provided by concert halls, headphones or gallery spaces.

By contrast, there is also music and sound art that deliberately shuns such relative silence as a frame. This text is an attempt to put the idea of an audio gallery in perspective by discussing a selection of Norwegian soundworks that have been presented to audiences outside the setting of concert halls and galleries. With reference to the period 1984–2016, this perspective will hopefully also offer a few glimpses of sound-art practices outside of Bergen that formed a prelude to the founding of Lydgalleriet in 2006. Relinquishing silent spaces does not necessarily mean moving outdoors, although it does generally involve exposing the sound medium and audiences to less controlled conditions, where the work as a statement mingles – and has to compete – with other sound events.¹

The term sound art is often associated with industrialisation, the sound of machines, and the capacity of recording technology to separate sound from its original cause and context. The French radio engineer and composer Pierre Schaeffer, whose first field recordings from 1948² helped to establish the term sound object (*l'objet sonore*), was interested in the role of the loud speaker in framing sounds as objects by concealing their original source. Although here we should not forget the Norwegian fiddle player Torgeir Augundsson, better known as Myllarguten (1799–1872), who also worked with context when he exposed his listeners to a kind of elusive sound art by hiding behind a rock and playing a melancholy bridal march (*Karislåtten*) as the wedding party of the girl he loved passed by.³

Another example of a public sound phenomenon that had an indirect but significant impact on Norwegian music and sound art were the church bells that rang out across the country following Norway's liberation in May 1945. As a young scout in Larvik, Arne Nordheim was responsible for ringing the bells at

his local church, and in later years he frequently mentioned this experience of being immersed in sound as crucial to his career as a composer.

Thus it is by no means obvious where one should begin when tracing the history of sound art in public spaces in Norway. The telling of this story is further complicated by the difficulty of gathering information about the soundworks discussed in this text. All too often one gets the impression that relevant documentation is almost as ephemeral as the sound-work itself. Web sites from the infancy of the internet have either been hacked or taken down, recordings on magnetic tape have deteriorated, and the machines on which to play those tapes are no longer in production. In many cases, the history of sound art must therefore rely on fallible memory.

Nevertheless, technology has gradually broadened the range of possibilities for combining Myllarguten's concealed recital with the qualities Schaeffer regarded as constitutive of sound objects. As playback technology has increased independence from the radio studio, the opportunities to present sound to listeners in new places have steadily grown.

Artificial nature

In 1988, Galleri F15 commissioned the work *Fuglan veit* from the composer John Persen (1941–2014). The work premiered on the island of Jeløya the following year. The expression “fuglan veit” is a northern Norwegian variant of the Swedish “det vet fåglarna” – meaning something one cannot know for sure (literally: “the birds know”). In 1990, the work was installed in Nygårds Park in Bergen as part of the contemporary music festival Music Factory. *Fuglan veit* consisted of 48 green-painted wooden boxes that resembled nesting boxes, which were hung up in the trees. Each box contained a loudspeaker that emitted synthesised electronic sounds. The sounds were stored on tape and played back from tape decks hidden somewhere nearby. In other words, the sound material consisted not of field recordings, but of synthetic sounds that entered into dialogue with both the birds in the park and the

park itself as a place that was simultaneously artificial and natural. Apparently, one group of enthusiastic listeners spent a night in the park listening to the installation.⁴ Nobody knows what the birds heard, because birds and humans do not perceive sound in the same way. But it was reported that the birds did begin to sing differently and continued to do so for a while after the boxes were taken down.

When, later that same year, *Fuglan veit* was set up at St. Hanshaugen in Oslo as part of the ISCM Festival, the outcome was rather different. The birds at St. Hanshaugen never had a chance to measure themselves against the work. An irate local resident complained to the police, who duly removed the installation. In other words, the simple act of situating a sound-art work in a public space does not guarantee that people will want to hear it.

Four years earlier, Persen had created the work *Mot kalde vinder* (Against Cold Winds) (1984). Like *Fuglan veit*, this work was structured around oppositions. It was planned in two parts, one indoors, one outdoors. The audio material was held on three stereo tapes of different lengths, so that when played back in loop simultaneously, the overall sound image would never be the same. First off, the work was to be played as a six-hour concert in a warm room, brightly lit by 1,300 burning tea lights. Although it was presented in this way in the Netherlands in 1984, a plan to stage the work at Black Box Theatre in Oslo was halted by the fire inspector. For the second part, the recordings were to be played outdoors, but in Oslo Persen failed to get approval for the work to be performed at any of the places he suggested: on public transport, in Oslo harbour, in what was then the open pit at the construction site for the new Norges Bank building at Bankplassen. His final suggestion for where the second part could be played quite literally involved putting it on ice. The idea was to perform it on a remote and inaccessible mountain in Jotunheimen, which would presumably have required the help of various intermediaries and would at the very least have seriously limited the likelihood of people stumbling upon the work by chance. Persen was interested in

the idea of exertion as a productive force: the experience of art should not and could not be simple. Both indoors in extreme heat and outdoors on the mountain, people should be free to come and go as they please. What he considered essential, however, was that in order to experience art his audience should exert themselves and be prepared to endure inhospitable temperatures.⁵

Compared to Persen's extreme situations, the composer Cecilie Ore's outdoor ring-tones for the small clockwork bells in the former Frydenlund Brewery in Oslo is more low-key. But as a permanent installation that would sound several times each day, it would soon become tedious if it merely sought to be oppositional. Instead, her work *IN SITU* explored time from both the historical and musical angles. Frydenlund Brewery was closed down in 1991. When Oslo University College moved into the renovated premises in 1995, Cecilie Ore composed a new ring-tone for the bells that still hung above the open square in front of the main entrance – bells that had once announced lunch breaks, changes of shift or of guards etc. when the brewery was still in use. *IN SITU* uses an edited and processed recording of the larger of the two bells, which is played back digitally in such a way that one never hears exactly the same ring-tone. The installation is active from Monday morning to Friday evening. It plays four times a day – at 8am, midday, 4pm and 8pm – and each ringing sequence lasts between 45 and 90 seconds. In the morning, the sound is brighter and becomes steadily more dense and longer in duration, while in the afternoon, the process is the opposite. The principle is derived from so-called *change ringing*, a complex system developed in England in the 17th century to achieve the greatest possible acoustic variety when ringing church bells of different sizes. *IN SITU* addresses the transformation from an industrial to a knowledge-based society, in a period when several of Oslo's former industrial buildings are being converted to house cultural and educational establishments.

One work that dates to the year before *IN SITU* – 1994 – was 'Prosjekt i Gamlebyen' or PiG (Project in the Old City).

This was recently the subject of a retrospective seminar in Oslo arranged in conjunction with 'Munch Museum on the Move', a four-year programme of exhibitions and projects to mark the impending relocation of that museum from Tøyen to a new building in Bjørvika. 'Prosjekt i Gamlebyen', which ran from 26 May to 5 June 1994, consisted of some eighty site-specific art projects in the district. The project was initiated by the artists Harald Fetveit, Ketil Nergaard and Christel Sverre. The temporary works explored many different media, including sound. One of the soundworks was *Birdmachines* (1993),⁶ in which the artists Anna Karin Rynander and Per-Olof Sandberg played recordings of birdsong for car drivers waiting at red lights on one of districts large four-lane intersections. According to the artists' website, the playback was coordinated with the traffic lights, so that when the lights were red, waiting drivers would be treated to one of a selection of bird recordings. When the light turned green, the installation fell silent.

Another of the soundworks included in PiG, by the artist Jens Haaning, consisted of a speaker attached to a lamppost on Grønlands torg, a public square in Oslo, on which Danish jokes were told in Turkish. Jon Øivind Eggesbø presented the telephone project *Call Now, Talk Live* in telephone boxes across the district, in which people were invited to call a special mobile phone number. PiG also included a music programme compiled by Per Platou.

Reviewing the PiG seminar in the journal *Kunstkritikk*,⁷ Simen Joachim Helsvig wrote that, in Norway, "site-specific art had its origins in the 1990s". From the perspective of music and sound art, this could be disputed. It should be noted, however, that none of the PiG sound projects mentioned above specifically addressed Gamlebyen as a unique place, in the way Cecilie Ore's *IN SITU* addresses the history of Frydenlund Brewery. In other words, the sound art projects in PiG could have worked just as well in other, demographically similar parts of Oslo or in other cities, despite the obvious link to Gamlebyen being produced and presented there. In other words, when it comes to sound art the function of place is nothing if not vari-

able. In many ways, the PiG seminar was a reminder of the fact that, on the one hand, temporary, situational artistic statements are always at risk of being forgotten more quickly than works that endure, while on the other, it is the temporary aspect of these projects that make them relevant to new power structures and narratives. Thus they could be used retrospectively by an institution such as the Munch Museum purely on the basis of geographical proximity, despite the fact that PiG didn't even thematise that institution.

Radio as studio and gallery

According to the artists Yngvild Færøy and Søsja Jørgensen, it was the fact that they couldn't find a studio in the capital that prompted them in 1996 to start the programme *Ballongmagasinet* (Balloon Magazine) on the radio station RadiOrakel. Whether or not radio counts as public space is debatable, but sound art via the airwaves certainly has the potential to reach a broad audience. Unlike concert halls and other physical venues that have to be visited in person, *Ballongmagasinet* represented a challenge also to the conventions of the radio medium. During the ten-plus years that *Ballongmagasinet* was regularly broadcast, its creators sometimes received the feedback that the programme was too abstract and at other times that it was too bourgeois (meaning "artistic") for the local radio medium.

In addition to presenting journalistic reviews of sound-art projects, the artists used the programme as a platform and frame for their own sound-art creations. As Jørgensen put it, part of the concept was to explore the "unclear boundaries between you and me", even if RadiOrakel marked off this free space in the manner typical of radio with opening and closing jingles.⁸ In due course the project was expanded with the addition of a dedicated website, ballongmagasinet.com, which included an audio gallery devoted to the history of sound art. In 2000, the site won the title of "Art Website of the Year". According to the artists the site has since been hacked and is no longer accessible.

In 2000, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, NRK, took up the idea of a sound art magazine, with the journalists Tilman Hartenstein and Eyvind Solås creating a series of four programmes on the subject.

Whereas the radio medium broadcasts just a few voices to a large, anonymous audience, the project *Wonderphones* transforms random collective soundscapes into personal audio experiences for single listeners. Elin T. Sørensen, who also contributed to *Ballongmagasinet*, created *Wonderphones* in 1998 together with Tina Buddeberg. The project subverts the function of headphones in a fascinating way. Instead of shutting out sound from one's surroundings, *Wonderphones* acts as an acoustic filter that transforms the various sounds occurring around the wearer. The transformation is achieved by purely acoustic means, without electronic processing. The sound changes in part because each set of headphones has a different shape, in part because the acoustic input from the environment varies of its own accord, and in part as a consequence of any movements the person wearing the headsets makes. A CD with seventeen tracks reflecting the kind of soundscapes produced by the various *Wonderphones* was also released together with pictures of each headset.

Anna Karin Rynander and Per-Olof Sandberg were the artists behind the sound showers that form part of *Human in Motion*.⁹ As a kind of crossover between a work, a gallery and a communications channel, these "showers" both play back and reflect sounds in a way that partially shields the listener from the random noise of their surroundings. The work was designed for Oslo's new airport at Gardermoen, which opened in 1998. A few years later, *Human in Motion* became the subject of an interesting discussion about the boundaries between material, medium, context and communications channel in sound-based works.

The sound showers are mounted on the platforms serving the airport trains and at several points in the transit halls of the airport itself. The eleven sound showers invite the traveller, who is between locations in both the literal and the figurative sens-

es, to pause and listen. In order to hear the sounds, the traveller must move close up to the structure, which from the outside looks like an upright post supporting a parabolic reflector. A loudspeaker projects the sound into the reflector, which throws it back to an area around the height of the listener's ears. The presence of potential listeners passing by is detected by a motion sensor, which then triggers a "shower" of sound. The actual audio material consists of processed whispering voices and sounds of nature. A second element of the work is an illuminated board at the entrance to the arrivals hall, which uses a dense array of LEDs to depict a human figure in continuous motion.

The combination of sound and light in *Human in Motion* reflects an idea that is steadily gaining ground, namely that the term "electronic art" embraces all forms of electronic material, whether in the form of sound, light or video. In 2000, Atelier Nord and Notam in Oslo, BEK in Bergen, i/o Lab in Stavanger and TEKS in Trondheim joined forces to establish PNEK, the Production Network for Electronic Art. Lydgalleriet has been a member of PNEK since 2008.

By any measure, sound art was prominent around the turn of the millennium. The year 2000 was notable not just for the abovementioned series on NRK, but also for the temporary soundwork *Speaking Mountains* by Tulle Ruth in Bergen.¹⁰ The work was based on a visual similarity that the artist noticed between the silhouette of the seven mountains that surround the city and the representation of vowel sounds in digital analyses of spoken language. The project had the ambition to discover "the mountains' own language" by feeding digital models of the terrain around Bergen into a language analysis programme. Throughout the summer months, people walking the seven-peaks trail around Bergen would encounter a sound installation on each of the various mountains.

The project *Telart* (2001–10)¹¹ by the musicians Bjørnar Habbestad and Jørgen Larsson had a number of audience interfaces – in public spaces, galleries, and people's mobile phones. In the first version, a group of artists were invited to produce soundworks of 15 seconds duration. These were

distributed to 10,000 mobile phones. In another version, *Telart_automat*, ordinary telephone boxes were taken over without any visible indication of their repurposing. The kiosks were disconnected from the phone network and instead recorded the words people spoke into the receivers. More than a thousand people left messages, which were then distributed to anonymous telephone users in the Stavanger area. They could also be listened to on phones in a sound installation at the arts centre Tou Scene. In total, six different versions of *Telart* have now been shown.

In *Trollofon*,¹² a project organised under the umbrella of another radio channel, namely *Pilota.fm*, Espen Sommer Eide and Nicholas Møllerhaug once again illustrated the links between electricity and sound. Between 2001 and 2006, *Trollofon* regularly sent out an old trolleybus, which carried members of the public along the last trolleybus route in Bergen, while artists played electronic music using the same power source as the bus. The louder the musicians played, the slower the bus moved.

The medium is the message?

In 2002, Notam and NRK¹³ collaborated on the sound installation *Norge – et lydrike / Norway remixed* at Oslo Central Station (Oslo S) as part of the Ultima Festival in October. Artistic direction was in the hands of the composers Asbjørn Blokkum Flø, Risto Holopainen and Trond Lossius. The installation played back recordings and ongoing broadcasts from NRK's many regional studios across the country. The sound was piped into a soundproof room at Oslo S that was open to the public, where people could also influence the sound structure. An original composition by Asbjørn Flø, based on the transmitted audio material, was also performed and broadcast on NRK P2. One part of the installation consisted of commercially available parabolic reflectors that were set up on the station concourse. The similarities to Anna Karin Rynander's sound showers at Gardermoen made the work a source of controversy. Rynander wrote an article in *Dagbladet*¹⁴ in which she argued that *Norway remixed* offended her intellectual

property rights, although Notam disagreed with her.¹⁵ In a public response published in *Ballade.no*,¹⁶ Jørgen Larsson maintained that the conflict could be attributed to a clash between different conceptions of the artwork and of traditions associated with two artistic media that overlap in sound art: composition and visual art. Whereas composers often identify the artwork with an actual episode of sound, which they strive to present with the best possible acoustic quality, knowing that the performance medium can be highly variable, a visual artist is more likely to view the choice of medium and the structure of the listening situation as part of the work. Thus Larsson felt that Notam and NRK should have credited Rynander.

In connection with the project at Oslo S, Notam also organised a seminar in Oslo entitled 'Electronic Art in Public Space',¹⁷ which again reflects how sound art and other electronic art forms are increasingly perceived as an interdisciplinary field. In addition to audio and video, the internet itself is now gaining relevance as an artistic space with its own audience. The lectures at the aforementioned conference included titles like "The Internet as a New Public Space", and among projects presented was the country's first commission for a public artwork on a website, *Tegnemaskin 1-12* (Drawing Machines 1-12), which was located on the government's information website at odin.dep.no. The conference also presented all the nodes in PNEK, the network that had launched two years earlier.

Inspired by Radio Sweden's commissioning of sound-works from Swedish artists in the 1960s, *Ballongmagasinet* launched the project *Blind Film* in 2003. Following a pilot project, in which 24 artists, writers, filmmakers and composers were invited to develop sketches, six works were chosen in consultation with the author and performance artist Øyvind Berg, composer Lars Petter Hagen, and NRK radio producer Tilman Hartenstein. Audiences encountered *Blind Film* on a number of platforms: on radio, in cinemas as part of a short film festival in Grimstad, and on a CD produced by Office for Contemporary Art (OCA) as part of the Nordic contribution to the Venice Biennale that year.

In 2003, Søsja Jørgensen was involved in the project *Sørfinnset skole / the nord land* in conjunction with Nordland County's latest large-scale initiative *Kunstneriske forstyrrelser* (Artistic Interruptions), curated by Per Gunnar Tverbakk. Sørfinnset school housed a studio for Radio Congo,¹⁸ a local radio station in the FM spectrum for the small village of Gildeskål in Nordland, where local residents went and sat on the school steps with their transistor radios in order to get the best reception of the broadcasts they themselves and their neighbours had helped to make. Radio Congo drew on the support of several other artists and artist groups, such as Geir Tore Holm, Rakett (Åse Løvgren and Karolin Tampere) and Hans Hamid Rasmussen. When in 2005 *Ballongmagasinet* served as curators for the sound art exhibition 'The Idea of North' at Galleri F15, it was possible to listen to the exhibition catalogue on the car radio while driving out to Jeløya, the island where the gallery is situated.

In 2005, the group Motherboard, which consisted of the artists Amanda Steggell and Per Platou, presented the sonar artwork *Den åttende søster* (The Eighth Sister). For this they created a pin-up girl from coins and reflective silver strips, which they lowered onto the seabed such that it could only be seen by means of sonar. Fishermen who passed over the location in their boats would glimpse the outline of a female body taking shape on their sonar screens. "Is this art?" asked *Dagbladet* in an article that discussed several projects that had been granted financial support by one of Arts Council Norway's expert committees in 2007.¹⁹ A few months before the sculpture was made, the editor of *Se og Hør*, Knut Haavik, who at the time was himself a relatively new appointee to Arts Council Norway, had asked in the TV2 programme *Holmgang* whether the decision to finance *Den åttende søster* had been taken at the Council's Christmas party. Per Platou responded in the same newspaper that the pin-up girl reached out to the residents of the Helgeland coast in a way that the art in Oslo's various galleries could never have done and that small grants for a wide range of projects were essential to the vitality of the

independent art scene. When NRK interviewed the artists about the project in 2012,²⁰ the pin-up girl had already been lost to the tides.

During the same period, a group of musicians and sound artists in Bergen produced several projects in public and semi-public spaces. One of these took place in the Galleriet shopping mall, while another, 'Lydbank', was situated in the reception area of a bank in central Bergen. Bjørnar Habbestad, Jørgen Larsson, Nicholas Møllerhaug and Maia Urstad were also involved in a project at Bergen Kunsthall, where the art historians Erlend Hammer and Steinar Sekkingstad linked them up with three invited sound artists, Jana Winderen, Bjørn Askefoss and Leif Inge. This project is relevant because it was a milestone on the road to the founding of Lydgalleriet.

Several artists have explored semi-public, commercial spaces as settings for sound art. In 2007, Ny Musikk chose the Oslo City shopping mall as venue for its Happy Days festival, which consisted mostly of live concerts. But as far back as roughly 1970, Ny Musikk, under the leadership of the musicologist Kjell Skyllstad, had arranged a concert with the genre-busting American vocalist Cathy Berberian in Oslo's Glassmagasinet department store.²¹ One project that may well have influenced such initiatives is John Cage's *Silent Prayer* from 1948, in which he replaced the muzak of American shopping malls with silence.

Bandrom (Band Space), a series of concerts organised by the composer Øyvind Torvund, is worthy of mention because of the way it integrated and explored the spatial and visual contexts of live music performance. At the heart of *Bandrom* is the idea that musicians teach each other short musical clips "by ear", in the way folk musicians pass on material from one performer to the next. In *Bandrom*, this process is opened up to the public, often in informal settings. In *Bandrom 3*, which took place during Happy Days in 2005, audiences could listen to musicians teaching each other Torvund's newly-composed folk music in a camper van parked under a motorway bridge at Vaterland in Oslo, or they could take a drive in a pimped up BMW together with a percussionist playing an animal skin Sami

drum in dialogue with the car radio. In 2009, the camper van and *Bandrom* moved to the Norsk Folkemuseum, where Happy Days performed concerts inside and outside the museum's log cabins and houses for a full day.

For the 2008 sound-art exhibition 'Absorption and Resonance' at Henie Onstad Art Centre, Espen Sommer Eide created the work *Karusell* on the Centre's forecourt. The installation consisted of a metal carousel of the kind found in children's playgrounds in Norway in the 1970s and 80s. Once the carousel had been set in motion, its speed affected the frequency of the sound coming from four loudspeakers placed around it. At first sight, the work seemed rather simplistic, but on interacting with it, one became aware of its many layers: the contrasts between the amorphous, immaterial sounds and the heavy iron carousel, the invitation to interaction, and the way the carousel linked visible movement with sound and physical activity.

Under the directors Ole Henrik Moe and Per Hovdenakk, Henie Onstad soon became a force to be reckoned with in the fields of international contemporary music and sound art. The Centre's founders wanted the institution to devote special attention to interdisciplinary and transient forms of expression, sound art and music included. Back in 1983, John Cage spent a week at Henie Onstad, giving concerts and seminars with local artists. To mark its 40th anniversary in 2008, the Centre issued a publication that looked back at the many events and temporary art projects it had hosted, with material from its archive.²² Some of these events took place outside the building. In 2011, the Centre commissioned a permanent eight-channel sound sculpture, *Within the Toll*, from Camille Norment, which is now installed around one of the Centre's lawns. The sound material for this work features recordings of a glass harmonica that were made inside the Vigeland Mausoleum, a building with a long reverberation. The word "toll" alludes both to the tolling of bells and to the surcharge added to the price of services or goods.

A K Dolven's *Untuned Bell* was another temporary work that invited audience interaction. In 2010 one of the bells was removed from Oslo City Hall because it was out of tune relative

to the others in the carillon. The plan was to return it to the Olsen Nauen Bell Foundry, where it had originally been cast. But prior to that, Dolven arranged for the 1.5 ton bell to be suspended for three months high above Tullinløkka in Oslo. Passers-by were invited to ring the bell by means of a pedal set into the ground directly beneath it, and thousands of people did just that in the period it hung there. One of the artist's justifications for the project was that the bell had, as it were, been cast out from its community for being out of tune. But it was only out of tune relative to the other bells in the carillon. Although it is acoustically possible to hear the bells of the City Hall from Tullinløkka, this one bell that hung on its own was given a new lease of life as an independent sound source.

With climate change becoming ever more difficult to ignore, one notices a steady increase in the number of field recordings that deliberately emphasise the close links between sound and ecology – in contrast to Pierre Schaeffer's emphasis on the sounds of industrial machinery. The artist Jana Winderen frequently captures changes in nature in her recordings, for example deep in the sea beneath the Arctic ice shelf, beneath the ice on Greenland, or in the acoustic communications between birds, fish, seals or plankton. Whether presented as indoor installations, as live concerts or on home-use media, her recordings document sounds in open spaces that are rarely accessible to the human ear. "Concentrated listening to small things helps us to see relationships and details better, and with that you start to tread more carefully," she said to the Authors' Climate Campaign in 2016.²³

Another project in the same category is 'Dark Ecology' in Kirkenes. For this the Dutch organisation Sonic Acts and curator Hilde Mehti invited Norwegian, Russian and European artists to rethink our ideas of nature and ecology in light of climate change. The project resulted in public events on both sides of the Norwegian-Russian border in 2014, 2015 and 2016, of which several took place outdoors. Among the Norwegian sound artists who participated were Jana Winderen, Espen Sommer Eide and Signe Lidén.

In her reflections on her artistic development, *Skyvelare* (Slide Gauge), the Norwegian film artist Ellen Røed describes how sound art as an autonomous form of expression disrupts the established distinctions between experience, medium and representation, amounting to a shift from an object-oriented mindset to one that is more relational and factors in people as active contributors to artistic situations.²⁴ One of the thinkers Røed cites is Salome Voegelin, who wrote in the journal *The Wire* about "the shift away from the transparent microphone man, towards the body inhabiting the field".²⁵

Perhaps it is the very qualities that make sound art so difficult to document, and which thus leave it vulnerable to being forgotten, that also explain the more important experiences it can convey. The effects of climate change can be difficult to perceive and understand not least because they are sometimes abstract, involving slow change that cannot be directly observed. Sound can provide a direct experience of something vulnerable and ephemeral, and thus perhaps also the dangers to which we are exposing both ourselves and the climate.

Translated from Norwegian by Peter Cripps.

- 1 Art projects permanently mounted inside public buildings had to be bracketed out from this article due to limited space.
- 2 <http://fresques.ina.fr/artsonores/fiche-media/InaGrm00003/pierre-schaeffer-cinq-etudes-de-bruits-etude-aux-chemins-de-fer.html>. NB: all websites referenced in these endnotes were last accessed on 21.11.16.
- 3 <http://slattepiano.com/de-17-slattene/>
- 4 Kjell Habbestad (ed.): *Arrangement, arenaer og aktører i norsk samtidsmusikk*. Norsk Musikforlag, 1992.
- 5 Conversation with Jøran Rudi, 02.11.16, and http://users.notam02.no/~joranru/John_Persen_Electronic_works_n.pdf
- 6 http://www.rynander.com/Rynander_Sandberg_Team/birdmachine.htm
- 7 <http://www.kunstkritikk.no/kommentar/fortiden-opp-av-hatten/>
- 8 Conversation with Yngvild Færøy and Søsja Jørgensen, Oslo 15.11.16.
- 9 <http://rynander.com/Soundshowers/soundshower.htm>
- 10 http://www.notam02.no/ekunst_i_offentlige_rom/index.php?side=verk_mountains&m=vp
- 11 <http://www.bjornarhabbestad.com/projects/telart/>
- 12 http://trollofon.bek.no/trollofon/trollofon_e.htm
- 13 Other partners were Ultima, Bergen Senter for Elektronisk Kunst (BEK), Produksjonsnettverk for Elektronisk Kunst (PNEK) and Rom for Kunst på Oslo S, represented by Kulturbyrået Mesén.
- 14 <http://www.mic.no/nmi.nsf/doc/art200210112270721085374>
- 15 <http://www.ballade.no/sak/notam-vi-stjeler-ikke/>
- 16 <http://www.ballade.no/sak/lyddusjer-i-norge-nar-komponister-og-billedkunstnere-ikke-leser-lyd-kunst-pa-samme-mate/>
- 17 http://www.notam02.no/ekunst_i_offentlige_rom/index.php
- 18 <http://sorfinnsetskole.blogspot.no/>
- 19 <http://www.dagbladet.no/magasinet/2007/02/19/492467.html>
- 20 <https://www.nrk.no/kultur/plasserte-pin-up-pa-havbunnen-1.8255942>
- 21 Berberian performed at Henie Onstad Art Centre in 1969, a year after the centre opened, and in 1970 NRK broadcast a portrait of the artist, for which she was interviewed by Skyllstad.
- 22 Caroline Ugelstad and Hild Borchgrevink (eds.): *Høvikodden Live 1968–2007*.
- 23 <https://forfatternesklimaaksjon.no/2016/05/28/jana-winderen-livet-under-vann/>
- 24 Ellen Røed: *Skyvelære*. Bergen Academy of Art and Design, 2015, p. 121. <http://www.khib.no/media/3078267/erskyvelaere.pdf>
- 25 Salome Voegelin: "Collateral Damage". *The Wire*, May 2014. http://www.thewire.co.uk/in-writing/collateral-damage/collateral-damage_salome-voegelin

Piere Berthet, from the exhibition
Extensions, USF 2011.
Photo: Jørgen Larsson.



Ephemeral Sustain- ability

Boxes

Daniela Cascella

Talking about / possible impossible
objects/ the inaudible: The sound of
Unicorns and Airplanes

Salomé Voegelin

Installation Works in Public and Private
Collections

Christina Kubisch

The Ephemeral Sustainability Conference

A conference about documenting, collecting and archiving sound-based contemporary art, which took place between 31st October–3rd November 2012.

The Ephemeral Sustainability Conference was hosted by Lydgalleriet in collaboration with the EU-funded sound network Resonance. Over three days a large group of artists, writers, curators and academics gathered in Bergen for a conference consisting of lectures, panel discussions, hybrid forms of concerts and presentations, as well as an exhibition program.

The background idea for Ephemeral Sustainability was to come to terms with issues concerning the documentation, presentation, collection and preservation of sound-based art and ephemeral art pieces in general. In 2012, the field of European sound-based art practices encompassed a large number of practices including installation, sculpture, electronic art, performance, kinetic art and music. The lines of inquiry investigated within the conference were based on the idea that, in general, sound art installations are site and situation specific. Therefore, they are at all times relating to surrounding spatiality and physical, social, historical, architectural and political characteristics of the presentation space, and thus cannot be easily transferred to any other space.

Participants were invited to reflect around medium sensitive aspects related to production, presentation and preservation of sound art and site-specific works of art that are essentially time-based, site/ situation/medium specific, and potentially elusive. The program was structured in the following three areas of inquiry:

Is it only through documentation and human witness reports that this mode of art can be appreciated in hindsight, or are there other strategies to strengthen the bonds to the past?

Is the field of sound art in its nature and ideology impossible to transport, collect and reenact, or does it have a potential in more traditional art collections and museums?

Do we need a new practice and new venues to collect and present this art or is it possible within the frames of already existing structures and organisations?

During *Ephemeral Sustainability*, discussion did not only focus on the preservation of ephemeral art for the future and how to present them to collectors and museums. Essential and important conversations about what defines sound art became the crux of the three day conference. Speakers and artists were: Helga de la Motte-Haber, Kabir Carter, Daniela Cascella, Seth Cluett, Sarah Cook, Anne Marthe Dyvi, Lars Mørch Finborud, Joost Fonteyne, Julia Gerlach, Nicole Gingras, Aernoudt Jacobs, Christina Kubisch, Signe Lidén, Barbara London, Anne Hilde Neset, Per Platou, Søs Gunver Ryberg, Rolf Sachsse, Carsten Seiffarth, Asbjørn Tiller, David Toop, Maia Urstad, Edwin van der Heide and Salomé Voegelin.

The conference also featured an exhibition program including Martin Messier's 'Sewing Machine Orchestra' and Tore Honoré Bøe's 'Acoustic Laptops' at Lydgalleriet and 'The Ritual of Walking in a Circle' by Kjersti Sundland, Ellen Røed and Anne Marthe Dyvi at Galleri S12.

Three of the reflections from *Ephemeral Sustainability* are presented here in the form of texts by Daniela Cascella and Salomé Voegelin, together with Christina Kubisch's transcribed lecture.

Ephemeral Sustainability full program audio recordings can be accessed from www.videokunstarkivet.org



From *The Ephemeral Sustainability Conference*, 2012.
Photo: Elisabeth Færøy Lund.

Boxes

Daniela Cascella

Daniela Cascella writes and researches forms of criticism that inhabit, echo, and are haunted by their subjects: literature, voices, and concealments of the self. Writing in English as a second language, writing as a stranger in a language, she is drawn toward unstable and uncomfortable forms of writing-as-sounding, and toward the transmissions and interferences of knowledge across cultures. The echoes and resonances of this text are elaborated upon further in Cascella's book *F.M.R.L. Footnotes, Refrains, Mirages and Leftovers of Writing Sound* (Zero Books, 2015)

My archive has been in fragments since I decided to leave Italy six years ago. It resurfaces intermittently when I write. My physical archive – documents, CDs, books, leaflets, source material used for projects, tapes and ephemera – was left at the end of 2008 in the basement of my parents' house, waiting to be shipped back to me in London. Circumstances and lack of space prevented me from organising one major shipping. The shipping has been taking place bit by bit all these years as I arranged, every few months, having a box shipped to me with randomly mixed items inside – at once a

reminder of a collection, an erosion and a recombination of my archive and of my histories of sounds, an unpredictable prompt to re-collect.

In the box I received today I found, on top of the pile, an old VHS tape from the Italian national TV archives, marked *Pasolini / Pound*. On a smaller sticker, I'd written *voicing heritage*. I no longer have a VHS player but I can remember what the tape holds. I recall some verses: *What thou lovest well, remains, the rest is dross. What thou lov'st well shall not be left from thee. What thou lov'st well is thy true heritage*. I recall these verses as they are read by Pier Paolo Pasolini during an interview he did in 1967 with Ezra Pound. I recall Pasolini as he reads aloud, in an assertive voice broken by gasps of hesitation, Pound's verses from *Canto 81*, embodying one of those crucial encounters between writers when the voice of one inhabits the words of the other, and gives them another sense from within their reading. Pasolini was concerned about injecting a *desperate vitality* into the heritage and the voices of a vanishing culture: the Italian peasant culture, its dialects, idiolects and inflections, usually mistaken for *the voices of trees and of yard animals, at the most as the voices of a separate and archaic culture*. He attempted to work with his heritage as if it were a driving force rather than an encumbrance. His heritage didn't radiate from any ideas of permanence: it chronicled the metamorphoses of an attachment. *What thou lovest well, remains... What thou lov'st well is thy true heritage*.

And what shall I do with my heritage of listening? How shall I archive this heritage when I write? Does it make sense to want to preserve such heritage or is it better instead, like Pasolini would say, to claim tradition back from the monopoly of traditionalists: to work with it as a dynamic force?

Of late, everything when I write after listening has been taking on the form of a recollection from a past, and yet it is not nostalgic: it is pervaded by the feeling of how the supposedly linear life of each listening moment is transformed, because of its end, into an overarching curve. A curve that curls words and

rhythms on itself, and prompts to hear. *What thou lovest well, remains*, I repeat to myself. *What thou lov'st well is thy heritage*.

In the Italian translation of Pound's *Canto*, *heritage* rhymes with *vanity*: *eredità, vanità*. Heritage and Vanitas. The more I think of heritage, collections, archives, the more I am reminded of a vanishing, a silencing. Most of my archive is silenced: pages and pages written in Italian, a language few will understand. Yet it resonates every other time I write. And if my heritage is supposed to inform my identity, then I think of how in 16th-century English, the word *identity* was spelled *idemptitie*. Any assumed identity of sound, defined through its archives, contains an empty – an emptiness which is also a resonating space for the echoes of my silenced words.

In the box I find an old Penguin Books edition of *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) by Jean Rhys, and inside it, on page 25, a postcard of a painting from the Munch Museum in Oslo. On the back of the postcard I'd scribbled: *Heritage, or: the sorrow that my heart feels for*.

The painting by Munch is entitled *The Heritage*: it presents a conventional frontal structure – mother holding child in the tradition of the Renaissance Madonnas – and yet, as often is the case with Munch, something is out of control. The child is a milky white foetal figure in the middle of the composition, milky figure surrounded by a white elliptical shape. The whiteness is glowing. And yet as I get closer to the image, I notice the white central oval is soiled all over by little red dots: I move my eyes toward the mother and notice that her mouth is covered by a handkerchief. She has been coughing blood, the drops on the white child are both suffocation and relief.

This painting is entitled *Heritage*. What is the heritage of sound? Is it white, pure and sanitised, or is it infected, splattered with the bloody dots of many legacies? Isn't the heritage of sound splattered with the bloody dots of any attempt at coughing some words out of it, a sickly half-formed lullaby to hush it into silence? On page 25 of Jean Rhys' book, I encounter a verse from a song: *The sorrow that my heart feels for...*

I couldn't hear the end, but I heard it later, before I slept, *The sorrow that my heart feels for*. The moment I begin to write, sound is no longer sound. It is infected by the small, unsettling dots of another presence, and this presence needs consideration because it is not born out of sound but affects it. Like the final scream in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, one hundred and twenty-odd pages accumulating in the premonition of a howl intense and secret, cut off and relieved by the final, far-away scream of the madwoman in the attic, one hundred and twenty-odd pages crashing onto the final question, *Why did I scream?*, to write sound is to write a premonition and a presence, and to keep asking that question at the end: *Why did I write?*

I once knew somebody with a huge record collection, who would put little marks on the back of his record sleeves and CD covers, to point out the songs and tracks he believed were worth saving for future listening. *So I will know exactly where to go next time I listen to each record*, he maintained. No record was spared the treatment: he would single out specific elected timeframes, even in apparently monolithic works. Each mark in his archive, a tentative shortcut to memory: a tentative way of hanging on to an illusion of permanence. It reminded me of some classmates at school who would underline the allegedly important bits in their books, slightly afraid of what might be left, afraid of what was not prone to synopsis. Always this looking for an indelible mark, an inventory of permanence. But what do we mark, or keep, in and after listening? Where does the ephemeral mutate into a presence? Somewhere at the margins I look for shadows, closer to the shape of my hearing. I think of all the records in these boxes, my archives of sound. Archives seem to protract an illusion of possessing history and knowledge. Moreover, archives are often mentioned in relation to the verb *access* – archive accession number, accession form – in turn implying a boundary, a border: to access, a step into and out of. And how about what is not archived? What is silenced, and cannot be accessed? Could I think of my words as silenced chronicles, set against their shadows? Could I think of these

silenced chronicles as the journal of an apparition, borrowing the title of a text published by Robert Desnos in a double issue of *La révolution surréaliste*, October 1927? It describes the mysterious appearance of a woman, marked by three asterisks, who constantly slips away. Meanwhile, words and characters on the pages rehearse an absence.

In the box I find a photocopy of a poem by Emily Dickinson, *I Felt a Funeral in My Brain*, that I once used to outline the paragraph beginnings and rhythmic patterns of a text I wrote for an Italian artist. That poem – a descent into obsession, conveyed by sonorous signs and repetitions – also reflected my state of mind in 2008, when I found myself at a standstill, I stopped writing, and I took some distance from the world of *sound art*. I could no longer think of sound as a generic entity, detached and pure, without feeling confined. Like the barren scenario in Dickinson's poem, I was solitary in a world where talks of sound, sound art, art and sound seemed more and more preoccupied with their own form, exclusive and excluding, as they outlined sound art as a credo. Many museum directors and curators would only welcome projects if they featured at least one of the superstars of sound art. At conferences, people would only appear to acknowledge references to certain artists-authors-authorities. Those references were like the underlined parts in the books at school, like the marks behind my friend's CDs: they represented the illusion of one, canonical history.

Many seemed impermeable to the rest, to less accessible works, to what could not be certain, consolidated, archived according to the canons of sound art. Weighted with generalisations, the discourse around sound art was slowly morphing into a dictator of a certain type of aesthetic experience only accessible through certain doors and through a certain way of presenting it and writing it, where the only possible space had to be public, where the only references had to be funnelled in the narrow corridors of Nauman. To my ears and words those doors were closed, they prevented me from accessing any

experience of listening, and writing afterward. The term *sound* became a way of adding an aura of mystique, which I found hard to relate to. Press-release recurring trope: *This is a new project in which the artist uses... SOUND*. But *what* sound? Please don't write that the artist worked with *sound* as a magic key into an exclusive understanding. Tell me, *what* sound, *how* sound, *where* sound. The sound of a tone generator? The heavily distorted sound of sheets of paper being crumpled? The sound of the recording of the last surviving Kuau'i O'o A'a bird in the Hawaii? The sound of muffled voices emerging from an old reel-to-reel machine? The sound of work songs? The sound of old lamentation rituals recorded by ethnographer Ernesto De Martino in Southern Italy in the 1950s? I could not hear any of those sounds, in the words around *sound*, any more.

I distrust any talk of sound art when it operates like certain religions do: like a set of rules in between you and some fixed divine notion, using a cryptic jargon enclosed and controlled, a language which does not voice much engagement with listening. At the time I had nightmares of the Church of Sound Art as it wrote its holy scriptures of *tactics of augmented aurality, auditory paradigm, the problematisation of strategies of listening*. Strategies? Tactics? Nobody ever told me that to listen you had to be in politics, or at war, or both.

What had begun as sonic pleasure became my sonic doom. I stopped writing. I had to find another way for my words through sounds.

To write sounds does not mean to document them, to preserve them as intact entities, but to contribute to their decay, at times to be pervaded by a sense for something that may have not been: to write a history of dissolving and dying, a tanatography. Every word is a *rubato*, stolen from each sound as it expires – stealing a piece of time. To write sound is perhaps to build up an archive of approximations to nothing. Or maybe these word-archives are only cataloguing themselves, as sounds... a trick? Listen and then write, and you'll know you're being framed by this sense of vanishing and there is no

big explanatory sign at the end. Stop prostrating to the moral of making sense, to the frenzy of documentation. To write after listening is to forget the sense and the scene. Words mess up any univocal comprehension, like a sound produced by the simultaneity of two vibrations that do not coincide. They pour out the hopelessness of sense and of subject, in the plurivocality of each line as I speak it. As the Italian performer Carmelo Bene once said, words as they're read out loud are not symbolic: they are diabolic.

In the box I find a copy of *The Blue Rider* almanac published in 1912. I read *The Relationship with Text* by Arnold Schönberg, an essay that supports intuition in listening, beyond instructions. In any point you pin music, he says, it will bleed. However you might want to dissect it, you will see a blood flow. At the time Schönberg was writing against programme music, intended as a faithful correspondence between a prescriptive text and subsequent sounds. I'd like to turn the issue upside down and think of the relationship between sound *before*, and the words that may or may not come *after*.

So what happens when I write *after* listening, even more so when I write in a foreign language that sometimes leaves me grasping for words? Can I shift the trite question I am often asked, *Do you dream in English or in Italian?* into *Do you listen in English or in Italian?* And then, write. The fact that I am more inclined to write of my listening experiences in English – a language that bears more opacity to my ears, not being my mother tongue – tempts me to make the opacity between sounds and words even more obvious: any correspondence between them is illusory. Words exist in the porous space of my listening in a foreign language, and struggle to be anchored to anything definitive: because the only anchors belong to another language and to another listening which are gradually drifting away, becoming ambiguous. Between voicing and silencing, to which extent can my words channel the inner soundings of other references, of other archives that fewer and fewer people know?

I leave aside the old remark that it's impossible to write about sound, and think instead of writing away from sound. I stop considering writing as a by-product of listening, constantly frustrated by not being sound. As a document of sound, writing fails. Writing after listening seems closer to fabulation: a creative act, grounded on its own devices and artifices, that implies a number of formal choices. It supports the ephemeral in listening, it is not tied to a permanent origin: out of the complexity of each encounter with sounds, words voice the oscillations of memory. They construct and open up each experience of listening rather than being subordinated to it: they create another space for inhabiting sounds. They gradually *shape my recollections of each listening moment*, until they feel so close because they're closer to my understanding of them now, not to the reassurance of their past. Like music for Schönberg, if you pin words they will bleed, too.

At the borders of the I and of the archive, on each individual experience of listening I stitch words together and let the resulting off-centred construction clash with any ideas of permanence. I realise that a distinctive pace holds my words, with recurring rhythms and turns of phrase. At first I don't understand it, yet I keep listening, I'm open to the shape my words take on as they lay over sounds with their own pace. It is the pace of my thinking-breathing, that inhabits me although I cannot tell how it functions; it is the space where my archive really comes back to life, the space where I stitch all those fragmented records and traces together, the references that have been layered in my listening and understanding through the years, the singular experience in every edit, in every voicing, absorbed and shadowed by what happens around my words and in spite of them. Then, I am tempted even more to claim for the precariousness of any writing after listening. Because if I believed that these words could stand forever on their own, and keep any experiences of sounds still within, I would be beaten: they are eroded by what they do not say. Like sounds, words won't outlast me.

Boxes everywhere, my archive of sounds. Are these

boxes all that's left of a life? In another of my notebooks I find a quote by Luc Ferrari. It says: *... a different manner to use the autobiography, like media, that is, labyrinth kind of transporting information*. The quote is from his notes to a piece called *Now, or Probably my Daily Life is There, in the Confusion of the Places and the Moments* (1981/2). Projects of sound art, events, reviews, in the confusion of the places and the moments... Over the years since I packed and moved, they keep returning unevenly, as harmonic frequencies of myself. This archive is not a keepsake: torn between two countries and two languages or more, it shakes any sense of safety and yet it keeps prompting me. This archive is like a sibylline presence. It won't answer any of my questions, so I have to reinvent myself in a silent state of hearing and find the answers in everything that the records in the archive do not keep and do not tell me.

To record comes from Latin: *recordor*. 'Re' is 'again', 'cor' is 'heart, soul, mind'. To record and to recollect: back to mind, back to heart. *What thou lov'st well is thy heritage*. *Recordare* is also a section in the Requiem Mass. So, to record is partly a mourning, partly a repetition that brings back to heart, mind, soul. Any permanence, eroded in its mourning. To record in words is not about keeping, but about sounding a vanishing. Alive, and against any evidence.

At the bottom of the box, I find a mix-tape of old Italian pop songs. Titles and verses seem to prompt me: *Words Words Words, I No Longer Know Anything, This Desert Full of Voices*. Syrupy or trashy pop music, by starlets and songwriters who either could not sing, and sang nonetheless, or who exaggerated their melodic prowess. To some ears, these songs might sound tasteless and yet what I seek, as I rummage through my archives of listening, is: less taste for sound.

I close the box. I see a writer, sitting on the steps of a museum where a sound art show is kept, sitting outside, listening to the leaves as they fall and to the siren from an ambulance darting on the street, and her words after the show will be

quivering in the rustling of those leaves, shaken by the uneven
rhythm of the siren: outside, and outside.
The words will be soaked in all the sounds she did not write.

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Talking about / possible impossible objects / the inaudible: The sound of Unicorns and Airplanes

Salomé Voegelin

Salomé Voegelin is an artist and writer engaged in listening as a socio-political practice of sound. Her work and writing deal with sound, the world sound makes: its aesthetic, social and political realities that are hidden by the persuasiveness of a visual point of view. The Ephemeral Sustainability conference presented an opportunity to test and explore ideas that were then developed into the book *Sonic Possible Worlds: Hearing the Continuum of Sound* (Bloomsbury, 2015).

Unicorns

“So it is said that though we have all found out that there are no unicorns, of course there *might* have been unicorns. Under certain circumstances there would have been unicorns. And this is an example of something I think is not the case... I think that even if archaeologists or geologists were to discover tomorrow some fossils conclusively showing the existence of animals in the past satisfying everything we know about unicorns from the myth of the unicorn, that would not show that there were unicorns.” (Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, p24)

In this passage from *Naming and Necessity*, Saul Kripke explains that this thing found by the archaeologists and

geologists, even if matching all the traits of what we call unicorn, could not be a unicorn because that name “unicorn” has already been given to something else: to that mystical beast that we know from fables, images and songs and that thus exists within the context of those representations. Any similarity would be coincidental rather than real, and thus would not warrant calling the fossilized animal by the same name. Instead, the bones we find now will demand their own designation.

The unicorn we speak of is a real beast because it has a name, and thus it exists in that name, referencing particular properties however imaginary. It does not have to be validated in flesh and bones, and were such bones to be found they would be of something else; they could not retrospectively occupy its designation and reality, which is the knowledge we have of it.

Kripke’s reasoning why there cannot have been animals we can call unicorns moves the philosophy of language away from a descriptive theory of reference, where a chair is a chair because it obeys the logic of its description and fulfills the demands of its criteria, toward a process of naming as calling.

His theory of language outlines a realist philosophy that does not describe or structure the world with words but that names, as in baptizes, the objects and subjects in the world, which then remain named so in all counterfactual situations, even if their description, what they are doing, sound and look like, and their valuation, what we think of them, change.

His language does not represent an object or subject but names it through “rigid designators” whose reference remains and is unchangeable even though everything else about the object or subject might change. In this regard, his realist philosophy of language, arrived at through a renewal of Aristotle, turns analytical philosophy on its head and demands complete reconsideration of the relationship between words and the object, subject thus designated.

Kripke’s designators are rigid but they do not restrict: rather, and seemingly paradoxically, his realism, his focus on the way things are, does not rely on a priori description, similarities

and differences, but generates a linguistic space for things to exist, which means the named can be a much more fluid object or subject that is called what it is – a unicorn, a chair, a human – but there are many ways of how it can be so without ceasing to be itself.

This non-referential naming suits the thing of sound as it acknowledges its fluid nature. However, sound’s invisible mobility also means that the name is not only a designator but also a portal, granting entrance to an experience that will have to be renamed continually.

Sound Words

Through my blog soundwords (www.soundwords.tumblr.com) I tried to write about the predicative of the sound, I try to catch the ephemeral and temporal thing thinging rather than its name. It is a constant struggle against the pull of language to reference and describe, in favour of engaging with the doing of the sound as verb and I am not sure I ever succeed but keep on trying nevertheless.

blog entry October 08, 2012, 10:10pm

Airplanes landing

sound a menacing shape in the dark. Periodically bursting forth from nowhere, to pierce a thin whining line that eventually flattens out into a thick form that covers my space, formless but determined. A small murmur becoming large; a great big dragonfly enveloping my room, expanding its body and imploding its shape to enfold the whole space with the force of its cry, until it moves on, lighter now as if unburdened, vanishing into the night.

Language has great difficulty in locating sounds and finds it hard to testify to their existence. The name ‘the sound of airplanes landing’ is not the sound’s name, it is the landing airplane’s attribute, and thus I cannot place the validity of the thing of the sound in it, I cannot make it an object. The notion of ‘the

sound of the airplane' makes us aware of the airplane overhead, that is however not the object of the sound, but is sound as the signifier of the airplane. The sound itself has no sign, and so my experience of it, once we disregard the signification of its source, is much harder to locate, and harder even to articulate in language. I can try onomatopoeic exclamations but they mimic the sound, only producing another, rather than articulating its actuality. So it remains without a name and without a location, eschewing geography and semantics, and thus it must continue as a thing thinging presently proffering possibilities rather than one actuality.

The sound of the airplane landing offers me a possible thing that might not be the airplane landing at all, but a narrative, an encounter. Listening I extend what I hear well beyond the recognition of the object into the imaginary scenario of the sonic thing, of what it could be: a British Midland flight, a fighter plane crashing, a rocket taking off, the central heating system breaking down, a 'big dragonfly enveloping my room', ... And so sound hints at the improbability of one truth and meaning of things, and instead opens the imagination to the possibility of all that could be. In this sense it is unstable and doubtful: I can never be sure of what I hear. Instead I invent a contingent reality of the heard that is not an actuality but a possible reality. Sound is not ideal, it does not strive towards one truth about the actual but enables the imagination of all that could be real.

It invites us to generate a plurality of things out of its own temporal passing, and in this way it offers us an alternative perspective on objectivity *and* subjectivity. This other perspective is not based on a fundamental essentialism that separates the sonic material from visuality. Rather it is an acknowledgment that different materials, sonic and visual, fare differently in terms of their influence on what "there is" in the sense of "what there is as an accepted and shared actuality". Sounds' participation in the notion of actuality is not equal to that of the visual. So to focus, just for now, on a sonic materiality and engage in a sonic version of events should not be seen as essentialist and

separatist, but as a temporary inhabiting of a sonic world that, having strengthened its own articulation, will inevitably re-meet the visual, which in truth it can never really leave, but which on its return it can illuminate with new insights.

Sound can invite us into a different world in which we can appreciate objects as things, autonomous of their name, established contingently and temporarily, generating different material dynamics and relationships.

With my blog I try to write this invitation, working with language that eschews reference and the role of the attribute, that challenges the noun and its centrality in our perception, and instead I seek to explore the predicate, the doing and the action of what is being done established not in outcomes but in process: sonic processes, linguistic processes, material unfolding, refolding, unfolding, offering not object nor subject but a glimpse of the audible as an alternative state of affairs.

The possible-thing of sound proposes a different truth and coherence than the name of its source might have us believe, and thus the language articulating this heard must be ready for a complex plurality of truths and consistencies also.

To try this suggestion I want to play a recent composition of mine that in some ways at least, produces a possible-thing of sound

not quiet sitting down for 6 minutes, stereo track (2012)

To talk about this and other sound work, I do not want to name the sonic but engage in its processes and materialities. I want a language that is part of the listening practice, and that understands that this participation is generative in that it produces words, the material of language, in response to the material of sound, and invites listening as a material process also. I propose a 'predicative language' that ignores the subject, the noun, in favour of the verb, and that can embrace the possible world of sound from the action of its possible sonic things, and can reflect on the limitations, hierarchies and idealities of the actual world that sits in its own name.

Such a language takes care of the audible as the possible, the “what could be” or indeed the “what there is” if we would only listen; it gives us access to what is there if we would look past the object into the complex plurality of its processes and materialities; *and* it can also unlock the possibility of the sonic impossible, understood as the as yet inaudible but nevertheless present sound.

The inaudible is a possible-impossible-thing of sound not because it does not sound, but because we do not hear it yet. And we do not hear it yet because it does not correspond to an object or subject in the world we consider to be actual or possible: it is not an airplane and not even a unicorn.

The inaudible is what the artist works with in his her doubt of the actual and her constant pressure on the audible.

Thus the inaudible is not non-sounding, it is not a thing that does not thing, but it is not heard. There is a deliberateness in this stance, culturally and ideologically, a desire not to hear or a disinterest strong enough to block it out, to keep it apart. The sonic materiality is there, but we lack the sensibility, will and wherewithal to hear it.

Musicology and arts discourse want to actualise the work, often ignoring the possible thing of sound and sweeping past the inaudible thing of sound all together in their endeavour to tie down “what there is” and “what it is like”. They will not face the “namelessness” of the possible and will not admit to the possibility of the impossible, insisting instead on an actuality that makes linguistic sense.

If the sonic possible thing lacks language adequate to express its essence, the sense of its experience, rather than name its source, the sonic impossible thing lacks listeners even, but it nevertheless has an impact and thus is worth considering, it is worth talking about and listening out for. Since, this is where the artist works and this is where, out of inaudible strands of sound the impossible but nevertheless real emerges and makes the audible sound.

Listening to the inaudible

While the sonic possible is an alternative state of affairs that might not convince everybody, that might not be taken into account, that might be deliberately marginalised or simply ignored, it nevertheless demonstrates a possibility or possibilities even, in how things might be if only we listened. It will for many remain without influence, otherwise it would be actualised, but there is a momentum of conviction in its coherence and truthfulness strong enough to consider the “if that...” and come to a sonic “then what...” of possibility.

Beyond that “then what...” of the possible thing of sound the inaudible meets no such conviction and cannot make itself heard. Actual listening, listening that obeys the rules of the actual world cannot hear it. The inaudible is not immaterial but is unheard material, the material that cannot bring notice to itself and only exists in the solitary and contingent imagination of a listener, who listens to the possible of sound and guesses that there is more to hear.

A possible impossible is, to use Daniel Nolan’s words, ‘badly behaved’¹: it does not follow the logic and non-contradiction rules of the actual world, and does not produce coherence with it because it has a property contrary to its essence. But what is the property of the inaudible and how can we make it sound the essence of actuality?

If the inaudible contradicts the essence of the actual world then it is not because what is inaudible is contradictory but because the notion of actuality depends on naming and knowledge and the inaudible is what we do not yet know and thus cannot name. However it is intrinsically knowable and in its possible impossibilities can expand what that knowledge is.

The sonic possible and the sonic possible impossible, the audible and the inaudible, do not contradict but extend the logic of the actual world and challenge the scope of its language. The possible-sound-thing makes apparent the plurality of the object as things thinging. It brings to attention its processes and materialities and makes it graspable as sensorial material. The inaudible augments these insights and deepens them. It has the

permission to be further away from actuality and so does not have to start with the limitation of the actually known, and neither does it have to be limited to the imagination of the possible, but can generate the as yet unknown and unimagined from all that might sound; ultimately influencing the notion of the known and the imagined, discreetly expanding the idea of actuality.

The audible as possible-sound-thing makes apparent the limitations of the notion of actuality, revealing what it hides in its opaque clarity, and the inaudible as possible-impossible-sound-thing makes apparent that there is something we do not know yet but which is already here. The possible-sound-thing and the impossible-inaudible-thing both have an extensional quality, they extend the actual object, the work and the world, and make the inconceivable conceivable as part of the future actual work and actual world and also remind us how to live in it.

With the possible-impossible-inaudible-thing-of-sound to quote Nolan again “we allow ourselves to talk of what cannot be, in a way which allows us to nontrivially make claims about how things would be if various impossibilities were the case.”² These impossibilities are aesthetic as well as political, facilitating the discussion of exclusion: exclusion of work, exclusion of people, exclusion of ideas.

Conclusion: the politics of possible-impossible-inaudible-things

The inaudible is a possible impossible, not only because it is not, but because ‘it cannot be’, which is to mean it should not, could not, really would not do to be. It is not only that its proposition cannot hold logically or in terms of physics, rather it hints at a greater impossibility of inclusion and that is not trivial and that is why it is so important to listen out for it: to engage not only in the audible but in what could be heard also given the right circumstance.

The line between what is listened to and what is heard can get precariously slim. The inaudible is not the dialectical opposite of the heard but is the extension of its audibility (and

ultimately also extends the visuality of the visual). It is anti-semantic, against a name to name things and beings, but invites the extension of what can be inhabited as semantic material, sensorial, plural and inexplicable.

The impossible-inaudible-thing is always there, but our interpretative listening edits it out, ignores it, pushes it into the background to hear something else, something deemed important and valuable, something inline with a current notion of sense, validity and purpose. We need the sonic possible to make visible the invisible and deal with its consequences, and we need the sonic possible impossible, the inaudible, to become able to imagine the as yet unimaginable and let it infiltrate actuality to make it real as a lived experience.

I am still not sure ‘what it is like’ but I know where it is. The inaudible is where expectations, aesthetic preconditioning, musical training as well as social and political ideas determine the non-existent, and where ideology, hope and despair cross in the sand of social and political noise making.

It is the writers job, and the listeners challenge to engage in the inaudible to tease it out, not to come to an ideal audibility but to constantly work on the boundary between the audible and the inaudible

In the ephemerality of sound the horizon between what exists and what does not is in doubt. The inaudible, understood as that in the work which for reasons of expectation, knowledge and ideology we cannot access but that nevertheless influences our perception of the work should at least be assumed to be there.

This inaudible is what the artists/composer works with, what we should learn to listen to, what the writer needs to insist on trying to hear and write about, and what the curator needs to make accessible in the staging of the work.

We need to talk about what we hear to prise it away from the confines of a naming language. And we need to talk about the inaudible as the possible impossible which one day, when we know how to inhabit its environment, becomes the possible and the actual enabled by and hiding another inaudible yet

again. The inaudible is the real criticality of the work, it is its radical edge over what we know, pushing at the boundaries of the known into that which we deliberately or inadvertently exclude from our horizon.

I am interested in soundwork that seeks the inaudible anew all the time. Soundwork that embraces its passing ephemerality, soundworks in other words, that embraces its own essence in disappearance, and accepts its fleeting property, has a contemporary relevance because it works continually on what is as yet not audible. In response we need to listen and write about continually anew too. And thus we do not need to store work, but make work and listen to work, to practice a sonic sensibility of the as yet unheard.

This is an aesthetic and a political sensibility that implies an ethics of participation in a contemporary “musica practica”, that defies the monumental, the permanent work in favour of its fluid name and predicative nature.

1 Nolan, Daniel, 'Impossible Worlds: A Modest Approach', in *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 38(4), 554, Fall 1997.

2 *Ibid*, p545

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Installation Works in Public and Private Collections

Christina Kubisch

Christina Kubisch belongs to the first generation of sound artists. She was invited to talk about the life of a few of her sound installations that reside in permanent collections around the world. The talk is about the preservation of her work, not about the work itself. In this transcription from the talk, she discusses pieces that have remained, those that have decayed and deteriorated, those that have been renewed, and one that was never even shown.

Snow White and Raven Black, 2001

I have just arrived from a place in Germany called Unna, and from the Centre of International Light Art. When the centre was being established, I was invited to produce twelve site specific sound installations in what used to be the fermentation rooms of a beer brewery. The whole building exists under the earth and only one of the twelve elements has remained. Before the installation process I was informed of exactly this, and so I built the other eleven installations in a form they could exist in for a year or two, whilst the one installation that I wanted to re-sound, *Snow White and Raven Black* was designed for a longer duration, with a sound piece that developed over time.

Recently, I was contacted by the museum. They were planning a celebration for their ten year anniversary, and they had asked me to check if everything was ok with my piece. The museum had changed its director and staff since the work was originally installed, and they needed a refresher on the context and the background for the piece in question. The inspiration for the work was rooted in the former brewery basins where the beer had been produced. It was a huge space. I found one place which I put 260 speakers in. This specific space was enlightened with a special pigment I had produced with ultraviolet light, so the speakers were not only speakers, but also light sources. You can see all the traces and scars on the wall because of this lighting, as it reacts to higher frequencies than the normal eye.

When I returned to revisit my piece, now after ten years, it was a shadow of what it once had been. When installing the work, I had given the museum all the relevant information: the twenty soundtracks on ten cd players, the instructions of how to use the data, a specially constructed amplifier which was solid and working. But the twenty cds had nothing on them, apart from only a very weak sound. So this was very disappointing, as I had given data and instructions to make new copies of the data every six months. The museum had never done this, and I had not been informed. The work was losing its acoustic memory. The work was disappearing.

Within the exhibition space there was ten years of dust to deal with, and the speakers had never been cleaned. The light had disappeared as well. So the restoration of this installation was a huge cleaning job, getting all the dust and stones that were speakers and making unwanted noises. For the piece to be restored, we needed to use new digital techniques and I had to start searching for the old data to put everything together again. I felt like an archeologist rediscovering my own work. After some time, I uncovered my original intention and pulled everything together, and I think that the work ended up sounding better than before. After the speakers were cleaned, the light started shining through again, and the piece really changed in an incredible way.

The Clocktower Project, 2000

Another work of mine in a permanent collection is *The Clocktower Project* at MASS MoCa in Massachusetts, U.S. The piece works together with solar energy exposed on an old clock tower. Initially I attempted to get some of the original sounds from the bells, but they were too rusty to function as bells normally do. However, I was able to use them in another way. Together with a group of music students, we produced an enormous amount of different sounds by rubbing, hitting, and singing into the bells, collecting approximately 600 different sound samples.

In this work, every fifteen minutes a computer calculates how much light energy has been collected in the solar panels, and in relation to the amount of light certain sounds from the bells are played. The sounds indicate the freshness of the morning sun, whether it is overcast and gloomy, whether it is sunny or completely dark.

Locally the work was greatly appreciated and accepted. The four speakers playing the work merge into the landscape of the small industrial town in which they are situated. Partly, the piece is a landscape in itself.

When the work stopped because of a lack of light, people reacted. They asked what had happened to it, which holds a really nice resonance. The MASS MoCa later became one of the most important museums for installations, because of its huge spaces. The institution really cares for *The Clocktower Project*: they tell me if something happens to it, they inform me about the developments in the work and they document it. This is an exceptional thing, I would say. As it is a big museum, it is quite official and the work is secure.

Fire Light Sky, 2006

I was invited to Gasometer Overhausen – a very big place with a metal skin, 100 metres high and 60 metres deep. They wanted me to make a piece which could work in between various art installations and exhibitions that they only do once a year. They also wanted to be able to switch the

work on and off as they pleased.

It was a difficult task. I went there twice and thought that I couldn't do it. But then I had this idea that came from Schinkel's design set for *The Magic Flute*. I thought of little lights and the structure of the metal. Wherever you find yourself in the building the sounds are very different, and I discovered this through tests to investigate the acoustics properties. The resonance of the metal skin is almost transparent. From the outside you can hear trains, ships, planes merging with the sound sources from other resonant instruments.

Some of the sounds are extremely distant and you don't really hear what they are, depending on whether it is raining, a ship is arriving, there is traffic, etc. *Fire Light Sky* is a really site specific sound piece, also constantly changing. The problem with it is that it exists in a private building. It is not owned by the government, so in order to finance Gasometer Overhausen's activities people are often invited for parties and other events there. Guests have their dinners there and they just put on the lights and say "oh how beautiful". But that is not the idea of my work. They use my equipment, which is good equipment, and play music through my speakers, changing the very fine tuning which was done over many days and levels.

After these parties I would go there and hear that some sound, for example, is incredibly loud or has disappeared entirely. In order to find out what happened, I would need some sort of sound art detective. Perhaps that could become a profession of the future for sound artists' works. The sound art detective visits pieces to inspect that everything is working, to see if it is all still there.

The True and The False, 1992

Another piece I like a lot is called *The True and The False*, which is a kind of a drawing. It is a piece made of cables and circular grinding abrasive discs, a hidden black light with speakers behind them, and sounds of vibrating glass. The piece was commissioned by the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, but ended up in storage because of a disagreement between changing

directors. It is still in the basement of the museum with all the instructions on how to use it and with all the technical equipment. Although the Hamburger Bahnhof commissioned a unique piece, not a repeated piece, it has never actually been taken out of the basement and exhibited.

An Expansion of the Sonic

Exercises in Non-human Listening
Espen Sommer Eide

Sonorous Figures
Samuel Brzeski

Conversations, Scripts, Traces
Roar Sletteland



Espen Sommer Eide,
Imaginalia revisited, 2019.
Photo: Paal Rasmussen.

Exercises in Non-human Listening

Espen Sommer Eide

Espen Sommer Eide's 2019 exhibition *Imaginalia revisited* at Lydgalleriet was a poetic and musical composition across video and sound. At the core lay our relationship to nature, and various connections and differences between our way of seeing and listening, compared to other living beings. The following text accompanied the exhibition.

In 1934 Jakob von Uexküll described the world experienced by a tick in a novel way. Working with the tick's sensory abilities, such as its ability to detect the heat of a mammal, and thus a potential blood meal, Uexküll showed that a tick knows and makes *worlds*. He found a new way to describe landscapes as *scenes of sensuous activity* – where creatures are not inert objects but knowing subjects.

But this description is not without its limits. It isolates the creature in a bubble-like world of its few senses. Uexküll's vivid storytelling hides the view of the tick as a participant in the wider rhythms and histories of the landscape.

The starting point for the artist or composer is not to walk out into nature and find inspiration, and then translate the experience into music – an image of the lone genius that today feels antiquated and clichéd. I grew up in a vast, beautiful and sublime landscape encircling Tromsø, a city in the arctic regions of Norway. Still the experience of this landscape has never

felt like it directly translated into my music. As children, nature was a site for possible play and narratives. We never stood still long enough to listen to the spring ice cracking on the river or the bird mountain cacophonies of summer. The sounds were all around us, but they felt more like wind in our hair. The only wonderful thing about the midnight sun was that we never had to go to bed.

But can there be alternative ways to meaningfully describe the interactions between the artist and nature? Like in Uexküll's stories the artist is already *there*, inside a scene of sensuous activity, but also participating inside the larger network of senses and sense-like structures, acting and reacting – human senses, creature senses, plants and fungus and bacteria. Stones and soil and wind. All is always already there. If I pick up an axe and cut down a tree, various creatures immediately enter the open patch to form a new sensuous landscape. The composition is already being made; a kind of assemblage. The network is not a perfect machine that can be traced and translated scientifically. It is rather a mixed-up, messy and unresolved translation process, full of misunderstandings and new beginnings. The noise of the machine is as integral a part of the music as the clean signal.

The mosquito has a remarkable way of hearing. I have been interested in the mosquito for many years, and made music and artworks inspired by it. The tundra and taiga expanses in Northern Norway are places where the mosquito is found in extreme amounts during summer. A place where the insects make you move constantly with no opportunities for long or deep thoughts.

The mosquito has feathered antennae that are used to picking up sound waves. Their ears reach out and touch the sounds. The male can hear sounds in the range of 30-2000 hertz, specialised for listening to the flight tone of female mosquitoes. It listens for the sound of her wings buzzing at around 400 hertz, and starts adjusting its own tone in what may be called a tuning duet. The unique aspect of this is that these antennae are not picking up frequencies in the same way as our

human ears do, when analysing the fundamental tones. Recent research shows that they are actually specialised in picking up what is called 'intermodulation distortion', also called 'subjective tones'. It is a distortion that is happening between tones, made by the hearing organ itself. So in short the male mosquito is actually hearing a third distorted ghost tone between its own flight tone and the female flight tone and is tuning into this.

It's only natural. We pick out tonal signals and discard the noise. The mosquito tunes into the noise and discards the signal. If we try to further analyse this way of hearing, several important aspects stand out. It is a listening by tuning, and by making sound oneself simultaneously. And it is a listening-performing in duet with another being, there is no solitary listening activity of a neutral receptacle.

How can the composer become a mosquito? Or take part in this dual way of listening-performing? By imitation, or some animistic ritual? The challenge is that a mimesis in many ways replicates all the problems of translation. It immediately becomes a question of the quality of the reproduction and appropriation to our mode of sensing, and the otherness of the animal sensorial system and its life-world is lost in the process.

Let us talk a little bit about the salmon. A step above the mosquito in the food chain. And also a creature dear to my heart. In fact, my whole family is more or less obsessed with it. My mother is a microbiologist researching salmon diseases, my father works with salmon export and my grandfather was a great fisherman of the salmon rivers of the Barents region, including Nikel and the Pasvik river nearby.

So I grew up with countless hours of salmon stories and long boring hours in the river boat together with my grandfather hunting for this mythical creature.

Now there are certainly a lot of fascinating aspects to the salmon's sensory world. But if I continue my exploration into hearing and sound, there is one particular ability of the salmon that is not so well known: the fact that it can sense and hear infrasound. That is, sounds that are much lower than what we can hear. Below 20 hertz. In fact we can sense them, but then

in a more tactile way, like a push of wind against the skin or similar, just on the border of where sound becomes wind, or just a barometric pressure change. It is still sound, because it is still traveling cyclical waves. In fact they travel much further than sounds of higher frequencies. And even further when under water.

Since the salmon is suspended in the medium of the sound itself, it hears with its whole body. So in a way it hears sound like we feel the wind. The otolith stone inside its ear functions like an accelerometer sensor that translates the vibrations through relative motion. And the swim bladder works to increase the volume.

So what does the salmon use this sense for? It is still a mystery. One recent theory goes that they may utilise infra-sound patterns in the ocean for orientation and navigation, as it migrates from the river into the sea and then returns as an adult to spawn in the same river and same spot it grew up.

In this theory, the salmon utilises the relative speed and direction of layered ocean currents, so it can find a current coming from its home river, also smelling its way.

Another way it navigates could be that it senses the water movements associated with surface waves. The waves are distorted and refracted at shallow depths in the infrasound region, providing potential cues for detecting underwater topography.

The emerging picture is that the salmon might be detecting a complex acoustic landscape, with distinct landmarks and information about distant structures, as well as the local environment of sounds and noise. In many ways it is swimming in historical sound.

If we are to imagine ourselves projected into the lifeworld of the salmon we need to imagine that we are in this way remotely listening to the ocean surrounding us with our bodies. Then perhaps also our own history, our memories will come back to us as if they are attached to the sounds.

Anthropologist Rane Willerslev has in his studies of hunters in Siberia¹ described their special form of animism. The hunters dress up and disguise themselves as the animal they

are hunting. A detail here is that the disguise is not *too perfect*. Then they would lose themselves and completely become the animal. So they enter an in-between state, between the animal and the human. As Willerslev points out: “Yukaghirs attempt to assume an animal’s point of view by intentionally acting as an imperfect copy.”

I imagine an instrument being built according to the Yukaghir animism. Such an instrument should ideally not translate or transduce between worlds, but rather transform them topologically, working as part of the system itself, modulating the speed, the movement, the folding, the reversing, the constant change. It needs to be an open-ended instrument, an imperfect mutant between scientific and musical. Part animal – part digital. Flawed and badly patched together out of scrap collected on my travels, people point at it and laugh when it is brought out of its case. When sounded it should produce a chord that poses a question to a place – simultaneously about its physical, biological and historical character. And after resonating and reverberating through the material, it should return to us. An image from Baudelaire’s poem ‘Le Cygne’ illustrates this double connection or mirrored structure of the resonating act, where an old memory blows hard in a hunting horn and the sound reaches us in the depth of the forest:

*Ainsi dans la forêt où mon esprit s'exile
Un vieux Souvenir sonne à plein souffle du cor!*

Last summer I returned to the north of Norway with recording equipment, hoping to capture new material for an upcoming sound installation. I travelled with my microphone along the rivers and tundras of my childhood memories. What is a microphone? And what is its relationship to memory? Where does it start and end? At the membrane? Or in the magnetic field of the transducer? Should the handling noise and the wind noise be reduced by attaching extra equipment? I should perhaps put the microphone inside the instrument for a better recording? And the instrument into a tent outdoors? One could imagine the

microphone like the rolling ball in the playstation game Katamari Damacy. Rolling along, sticking to and folding into itself, all the sounding objects in its path. Gradually like a snowball, it increases in size. Every new object recorded, also becomes a new membrane for the next. The area around my tent, the valleys and the rivers also become part of the microphone. Herds of animals, people on their way to work, cities, oceans. Finally, after weeks, months – a lifetime of recording – we reach a microphone of earth magnitude, recording itself in the silence of space.

Beatrice Dillon & Keith Harrison,
Ecstatic Material, 2020.
Photo: Thor Brødreskift.



Sonorous Figures

Samuel Brzeski

In 2020, Lydgalleriet initiated an annual writer-in-residence program. Throughout the year, artist and writer Samuel Brzeski was commissioned to write a series of texts in response to the exhibition program at the gallery, and in reference to broader themes in sound art and sonic culture.

The following text was written in response to the performance *Ecstatic Material* by musician and producer Beatrice Dillon and artist Keith Harrison, which took place at Lydgalleriet in March 2020 as part of Borealis Festival for Experimental Music.

...does sound hold form in form?

We find first of all wave phenomena
which are the prototypes of periodicity
these are followed by formations and organised patterns
at the same time different forms of movement appear
rotations, circulations, to-and-fro motions, and pulsations
but these processes are caused purely and simply
by vibration and nothing else
periodicity is inherent within them
it lies in their nature to be rhythmic
whether in form, in configuration, in movement
or as a play of forces
sculptural shapes are actually formed
in the juddering rust from the track trains
or the dancing dust on the sewing machine
on to the organisation of the locomotive system
of circulation and respiration
and of nerve activity
all of which have their being in rhythmicity
sound holding form in time
a throbbing chest muscle will feel good
after a solid set on the bench press
and will feel better in front of the mirror later
the requirement of the installation of a pacemaker
in the ailing heart of a senior family member
will send shudders of intergenerational worry

that echo through family WhatsApp group chats
concentric ripples that propagate outward
from the epicentre of a sonic event
every effect of vibration bears the signature of configuration,
movement, and a play of forces
plays of forces can be overcome by sleights of hand
sleights of hand can be washed and reused
the water poured back into a high tarn
the surface of which is kissed by crepuscular light
simultaneously, crypts like honey combs are formed
while, close by, protuberances of every kind are thrust up
some with explosive dynamic force
others in apparent tranquility
holding their form for only the slightest of instances
before curling back and clamping their mouths tight
a reminder that all structures are temporary
and subject to the vibratory resonances
that echo around a bull pit
lattices and hexagonals
sound holding form in form
repeating on itself
entering into a syncopated resonance
holding the body in a soliloquy of déjà vu inducing loops
visual rhyme rote with outlined ghosts
images that fit first with the present

cantilevered cadences gingerly opening to reveal
the billow sacks of half remembered junctures
the needleskin drag of an intermittent memory
events do not take place in a continuous sequence
but are in a shifting state of constant vibration and undulation
throughout the living and the non-living world
we find patterns of recurrent rhythms and periodic systems
in oscillation and pulsation
these rhythmic patterns can be observed
not only in the beating of the heart
in the circulation of the blood
and in the inhaling and exchanging of breathing
but also in the recurrent formation of cells and tissues
in the rhythmic movements of the oceans
the wave motion of sound and hypersonic vibrations
and in the vast universe
extending from the cosmic structures of solar systems and galaxies
down to the infinitesimal world of atomic and nuclear structures
all vibrations are temporal
looping from a disturbance into an abeyance
rippling out from the centre point of a cup of water on a dashboard
to the dismay of a wide eyed child.

There are at least four basic human sounds
ooo
mmm
urr
and
aaa
ooo's and aaa's can be heard at any fireworks display
when confronted by the presence of a new born baby
and during more successful instances of love making
mmm's are typically heard in agreement
or as a general response to an occurrence
sometimes indicative of the initiator of the sound's indifference
to the subject matter of the conversation
or in anticipation of the consumption of a scrumptious cake
urr is heard as a dissent to disgust or revulsion
in brief moments of surprise or upheaval
or can be paired with mmm during contemplative pauses
between words
ooo
mmm
urr
and
aaa
a
om

hung

ram

dza

ooo mmm urr and aaa

a om hung ram dza

oommmurrandaaa

aomhungramdza

•

In 1874 Alexander Graham Bell and Clarence Blake

constructed a device for writing sound

uncle of the telephone

father of the phonograph

the ear phonautograph isolated and extracted sounds

with the intent of making sound visible

it consisted of an excised human ear

attached by thumbscrews to a wooden chassis

by using the eardrum and the small bones surrounding it

to channel and transduce sonic vibrations

leading whispers and vibrations to written form

relayed through a piece of straw attached to the ear bones

producing ghost-like tracings on a sheet of smoked glass

the direct effects of tympanic vibrations

170 through the medium of the ear of the dead.

•

If all form is frozen sound

then all frozen forms can be sounded

in an air-tight test-subject kind of way

propagating a deep sense of loneliness

by the activation of an autotune function

and calling it a collective refrain

a generation of airwaves have had their larynxes

unable to open at the rhythm of their own respiration

caught in a half-breath half-pant oscillation

grunting for appreciation

or at least a recognition

ooo

mmm

urr

and

aaa

a

om

hung

ram

dza.

171 •

Artist duo and romantic couple Jeff Louviere and Vanessa Brown
made a series of Chladni inspired photos called Resonantia
they mirrored 19th century German physicist Ernst Chladni's process
placing sand on a metal plate and subjecting it to vibration
this time eschewing the violin bow for Jeff's electric guitar
OK

when subjected to the cymatic process of figuration
sand settles in to the places that have least vibration
to create oscillations and correlations
integrated effects of interference and turbulence
images to be read in the shifting sand
the results of which were then photographed
Jeff had heard of the brown note
the one that supposedly makes you shit yourself
Jeff found the brown note and played it
they saw in the sand what appeared to be a demonic face
"It looked like Satan," Jeff said.
"We were like, oh my god."
no mention is made as to whether the brown note
caused any bowel
movement
or to the ironic synchronicity
between exercises and surnames

Rhythm refers not only to vocal emissions
or to the sound of acoustic matter
but also to the vibration of the world
rhythm is the inmost vibration of the cosmos
and poetic acts are an attempt to tune into this cosmic vibration
rhythm is a mental elaboration of time
a common code that links time perception and time projection
the emanation of sound is part of the overall creation
of a socially motivated cosmos
stars pulsate with a regular rhythm
a being brought about from space to matter
by the recital of a five sound progression
a
om
hung
ram
dza
the exercise of the mouth trying out different shapes and sizes
to attempt to find a body for sound
the sounds of the human body are artefacts of living matter
muscles are in a state of vibration when we move them
twitch them
when soldiers march across a bridge they always break step
in order to prevent the bridge from entering into vibration
like the second prong of a tuning fork does

when the first prong is struck
ttllliiiinnngggg
the flexing of a foundation
iron girder in the concrete
concrete spinning in the mixer
flwap flwap flwap flwap flwap
a wet sandy applause
the solitary clap
clapping and stamping emphasise the relationship
between our bodily symmetry
and symmetrical sounds
clapping breeds clapping in others
clapping, the dry minimum sound
clapping, the non-thinking act
clapping
it demands the presence of others
in order for it not to be perceived as a sarcastic act
clapping
or a lonely one
after all the only thing sadder than no one clapping
is one person clapping
(sad clown)
clapping in a large group sometimes leads
to the synchronisation of the applause
clap ping

clap ping
clap ping
we are clap ping
it comes on almost by surprise
hang on – are we all...?
yes, that is exactly what is happening
once you are stuck in it, it is almost impossible to break it
sometimes I try,
hating the feeling of being in an enforced experience
of communal synchronicity
like, how did we even get to this?
I try to clap on the off-beat
clap(clap)ping(pong)
clap(clap)ping(pong)
clap(clap)ping(pong)
clap(clap)ping(pong)
in an attempt to break step
stop the crowd from entering into vibration
like the second prong of a tuning fork does
when the first prong is struck
it rarely works
going against the movement has its own difficulties
I mean,
have you tried drinking a beer whilst operating a jackhammer?

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Beatrice Dillon & Keith Harrison,
Ecstatic Material, 2020.
Photo: Thor Brødreskift.



Conversations, Scripts, Traces

Roar Sletteland

Taking a close look at the work of Signe Lidén, the following text from Sletteland elaborates on divisions and cycles of time, of silent pasts and of speaking presents.

Dear Shao Hua, this is the third time that I approach you without getting an answer so I started to imagine your answers: Life digs holes, carves into mass, creates forms – in layers, again and again, and garbage becomes history, covered in ice, water, stone, mould, sand, where newcomers carve into the masses, creating forms and holes. [...] An objectless archive! A collection of the aura of the objects, not the objects themselves, stored material memory. Shao Hua, occupied with these thoughts and questions, a new work is about to transpire.

The origin lay in an archive. As a guest at a wedding during a trip to China, Signe Lidén got to hear about a cave in the south of the country, not far from the Lijiang River, where knowledge was stored about the crafts, literature and art that had been suppressed during the Cultural Revolution. What was particular about this archive, and what captured the artist's imagination, was that, unlike other archives, this one was devoted not to objects, the products of knowledge, but to the collection, systematisation and preservation of knowledge about the processes themselves, the rituals surrounding the creation of objects. Enclosed within the mountain, sealed off from society and history, lay a repository of something as intangible and impractical as an impulse or cause, something that formed a precondition for actual production. An impossible undertaking: to preserve something that does not yet exist. The actual archive would prove as elusive as its contents, for the artist's repeated

attempts to open a dialogue with the Chinese archivist were all ignored, with the result that ultimately she had to abandon her attempts to learn more about the place and was forced to rely instead on rumours and her own imagination. The place never became a material reality.

Instead, these fragments of information became an anecdote, a scrap of text that grew into a kind of declaration of intent for the *Writings* installation project that Lidén produced in 2013. As a precursor to the work, there was a statement. What kind of statement? It could be seen as a subjective impulse, an inspiration for the artist in her work, or a blueprint for how to manage the process. Or possibly as a note in the margin, something that provides an external framework or reference point. At the very least, it was a text that marked the beginning of the process that would lead to the work, and which thus stood in a symmetrical relationship with the Chinese archive; two things that mirrored each other on either side of the work's historical inception, one might say. On one side lay a reconstruction carried out from the remote vantage point of posterity, an attempt to grasp the object at the moment of creation, the inscrutable transition from potential to reality. On the other, a reality, a text, the implications of which were just beginning to reveal themselves. On the one hand – a silent past; on the other – a resounding, speaking future.

Prior to *Writings* came the set-up known as Resonance, a network of European venues for the production and presentation of sound-based art. It consisted of galleries, production structures, festivals – organisations that were searching for new and unexplored forms of expression, new currents and works, and which aimed to harness these currents by creating the conditions to nurture them. There was singuhr hoergallerie in Berlin, Intro in Situ in Maastricht, Festival van Vlaanderen in Kortrijk, Le bon accueil in Rennes, and Lydgalleriet in Bergen, with the festivals Skanu Mezs in Riga and Audio Art Festival in Kraków as associated partners. With funding from the EU, Resonance was able to provide an economic and institutional framework for the production of new works, workspaces and time, exhibition ven-

ues, a specialised environment and discourse. The project was intended as a meeting place and shared platform for the participating institutions – an attempt to create dialogue between them, and perhaps also a means to produce some unity around the somewhat vague concept of sound art. A conversation conducted by means of objects, places and works in addition to dialogue, in a process we could call the institutionalisation of sound art. Each participating institution proposed an artist who would create a work during a residency at one of the other organisations. This was then shown at several of the venues, generally with modifications to suit the respective space. During the first phase, Lydgalleriet was represented by Maia Urstad's radio installation *Meanwhile, in Shanghai ...* (shown in Kortrijk, Berlin, Riga, Maastricht and Bergen), while during the second phase, Signe Lidén was the selected artist.

Writings was presented in the Buda Tower, a former brewery in Kortrijk, Belgium, and as part of the Festival van Vlaanderen in spring 2013. It was later shown at Intro in Situ in Maastricht, and on the square outside Kraków's Mocak art museum, built where Oskar Schindler's historically important factory once stood, and finally, in a miniature version, in the botanical garden of Riga in May 2014. Venues devoted to the preservation, systematisation and presentation of knowledge, art and history, places of insistent individuality that eschew the neutrality of the white cube. This prehistory with its pre-established structures formed the setting for a project whose primary themes were the past, place and conversation. Four starting points or foundations: an archive, a text, an organisation, and these locations – also four in number – each with its own unique history and character. Such were the parameters for *Writings*, and with these in place, the work could take shape.

Sediment

The installation consisted largely of sand. Three large heaps in the middle of the room – dirty river sand containing the debris of human activity, pieces of old wood, brick, glass and marble. Gravel and clumps of clay. Suspended from a

motorised drive mounted on the ceiling above each heap were a number of long rods. These traced paths through the sand, gradually eroding the heaps over the duration of the exhibition period. Thus, up on the ceiling, various moving parts – gears, motors and drive belts – while down on the floor, heavy, unwieldy matter. Here cause, there effect; here active, there passive. Attached to the rods were microphones that picked up the vibrations, which could then be listened to at listening stations – boxes with built-in speakers – located along the walls. Thus there were two sets of sounds that corresponded to two different types of space. Firstly, the large open space where one could hear the hum of the motor and the mechanical rattle of the drive belts and rods that linked together people, surroundings and objects. And secondly, the cramped boxes in which one could hear the sounds from the rods as they scraped through the sand. Isolated and amplified, brought close up to the listener.

Writings is about the past, how to listen to it, engage it in dialogue, how to access the life that made it what it was. In the installation, we encounter the past in the form it usually assumes: an undifferentiated mass containing encapsulated fragments of signification, which we ourselves have to excavate and inscribe into a meaningful whole, into what we call history. One could say that the sand heaps were assigned the task of representing the past, in the form of an image or symbol; they have a certain expression and a content. Could we call this a symbolic relationship? Only if we remember that the word *symbol* derives from potsherds: in ancient Greece, the term *sumbolon* referred to a piece of pottery broken in two, leaving parts that fit together perfectly along the line of fracture; each (complementary) fragment proved the authenticity of its counterpart. A reciprocal relationship, in which one part refers to the other without it being possible to say that either one is an expression and the other content – both are both. Expression and content are the same kind of entity; the heaps of sand refer to the past, but are themselves the past, an excerpt or fragment of it, carved out from the soil in Kortrijk, Kraków and

Maastricht. Buried in the riverbed, the sand is dead, inactive, but also preserved, with the potential to communicate something about the past. Where have these fragments been? What lives have they been interwoven with? The excavation and transport to the provisional gallery space transforms the sand into something distinctive, to which such questions can be addressed. From potential to reality, from silent earth to statement – the sand contains a past, yet one that only finds expression when transformed into an installation. A kind of ready-made, where, one might say, these two simple operations – extraction and relocation – achieve a transition from matter to art. The sand refers to more sand – to its origin, the place from where it was taken, and the hollow left by its removal. Here a heap, there a cavity. The same material, the same form, but different orientations. There, silent past, here, speaking present. Perhaps also a discreet reference to the cave with the Chinese archive – the heap of sand refers to the hollow in the ground, which refers to the cave in the mountain.

Pas de deux

In the installation, the negative spaces are represented by the listening boxes, into which people stick their heads. It is there the past speaks to us, the dead matter and traces of past life are transformed into contemporary and immediate presence, the brief moment when the work meets the audience. The rotating rods literally pick up the hum of history; they enable the material to reverberate, capturing a low-pitched rumble, tones from the resonant frequencies of the rods and microphones. The sound is a direct, unprocessed transferral of the contact between the rods and the sand. Time spent in the listening boxes is in a sense extracted from history, an eternal present, a presence without before and after. An unending flux that does not develop in any particular direction, but which never repeats itself either. Thus we see that *Writings* divides time into three expanses. Outside the listening boxes, in the exhibition space, we encounter a different time – what we might call the visit time – where the installation manifests itself in front of us. As

an object accessible to observation, subject to our own time and interest. A break from our everyday lives, a brief distraction from our respective careers, on which the installation will make an impression either large or small. But there is also a third type of time, what we could call the installation time, alluded to by the circular marks in the sand. Each rotation of the rods reduces the sand heap a little further, flattening and widening it, until at some point the rods reach as far down as they will go and no more sound is possible. *Writings* was not created for the museum, but participates instead in the same cycle of birth and death to which all life is subject; it is part of history. Installation time runs parallel to the individual's time and is thus essentially communal, something people might identify with. Corresponding to each of these three times is a certain type of space, a certain role for the viewer, a specific configuration of subject and object, of eyes and ears. When the visitor sticks her head inside the listening box, she is blind, cut off from other people in the room, but still subject to their gaze. One makes oneself an object, presenting an impersonal back or backside, which others can see but not communicate with. Yet it is this position that gives the visitor access to the past. A one-sided form of conversation, whereby we listen (or try to listen) to the past, which neither listens nor responds to us in return. The listener is rendered passive, obliged to stand still and receive what the work has to offer. History itself remains indifferent.

In its idealised form, conversation is conceptualised as an equal relationship between two parties who alternate in the roles of speaker and listener: first one voice and one pair of ears, then the other voice and the other pair of ears. Argument and counter argument, question and answer, face to face. Two interlocutors bound together by a mutual interest in what the other has to say, and a shared desire to keep the conversation going. In *Writings*, this connection is broken. The preconditions for such a connection – a shared language, place and time, what we call context – are not present. The past is reluctant to speak. To persuade it to do so, one literally

has to poke at it, by means of rods that scrape into the sand, making a kind of inscription. And mechanical inscriptions wear a mechanical expression. On the one hand, the connection to history is direct, for there is no interpretative intermediary between what you listen to and what the sand expresses. The vibrations in the speakers are the same as the vibrations in the rods, which are produced in turn by the movements of the rods as they drag through the sand. What we hear is the surface and consistency of the sand, and the material properties of the rods and microphones. On the other hand, the connection does not produce sense; it tells us nothing, contains no information about the past. In other words, the work presents a kind of conflict between meaning and expression (which has a parallel in the opposition between the objects and processes in the Chinese archive, and possibly also between artworks and knowledge, the two polarities contained in the archive); a “script” without meaning produces a “speech” without meaning. What kind of speech is this, which tells us nothing, and what kind of conversation? The goal of the hermeneutical approach that we find in history books and archaeological excavations is to construct a comprehensive picture of the historical context, to interpret the fragments in light of their original use and function. It enables us to identify in some way with the past by producing a (fictional) link between us and it, as if the people of the past were speaking to us directly. An impression of continuity between past and present, as if the present were somehow latent in the past, like a seed, whose subsequent growth can be traced backwards, providing insights into the nature of the past and how we have become what we are today. But *Writings* does not offer any such answers; there is no continuity, no shared platform, other than the physical space of the installation. In the listening boxes we do not experience the past as it was, but as something enduringly alien and incomprehensible. Like Odysseus tied to the mast, we stand there listening to the sound, but without the opportunity of coming into contact with the source. The gulf is unbridgeable.

Processes

A work of art is an object that (usually) has a material aspect and a form, and is presented to an audience. It also has a history: an origin and development, a process by which it materialises – and an afterlife: in archives, memories, literature, museums. Since these are the issues that *Writings* addresses, the work is in a sense self-referential; it displays its own genesis. Its subject matter was also inscribed into the production process right from the outset. Location, history, inception, caves, conservation, dialogue – elements that were already present in seminal form from the very beginning. The dialogue that never took place, the failed attempts to reach out to the Chinese archivist, the paradoxical aspect of conservation processes and rituals, the resistance to transforming them into information. A text as a starting point, but with a murky link to the finished product. An enquiry that was never answered, a statement that fell on deaf ears, a work that arose from silence. At one stage, the current author was engaged as an assistant and interlocutor for the development of the work. A position where one observes a work coming into being: an idea emerges from a subject, takes shape and becomes an object. The embodiment of an idea in an object is guaranteed when it is the subject who originally conceived the idea who performs the transformation into the work. It is the artist who is responsible for the connection, and hence also for the link to the audience, the conveying of the message. But when a new subject is involved in the process, it can get out of control, and the link between the idea and the work becomes less certain, prone to negotiation, doubt and questions. And this is precisely what happened in the development of *Writings*. The work process was characterised by lengthy, in-depth discussions that were sometimes so extensive that they interfered with the need to produce something. The shared reflections also had an impact on the ultimate design and content of the work. In their form, the discussions anticipated the installation, not by breaking down, but by heading off in unexpected directions: they were associative and desultory, often with long breaks and inactivity, or they involved putting

words in each other's mouths or speaking past each other. Trivial and practical questions often got mixed up with existential and artistic reflections. Random associations and memories segued into stringent reasoning, supplemented with information about electronic circuits and mechanical components, all in a constant, babbling stream that carried as many falsities, pauses and digressions as it did constructive contributions. Viewed from the outside (or in retrospect), the work process seems chaotic and fragmented, having more in common with the content of the sand heaps than with the idiom of the finished work. Who were these conversations conducted for? No one. As part of a process, a tool or a method, they were not intended for the ears of outsiders. The process does not reveal itself, but is evident only in its outcome. One imagines the course of history as a straight line running from the inception of the artwork to its realisation, as if the process could be reconstructed by tracing the steps backwards to the original impulse, which encapsulated the truth of the work as an idea. This way of picturing the work's history is implicit not least in the institutional expectation of a target-oriented approach, the requirement that content and methodology must be accounted for before the project can commence and are ultimately embodied in the final result. In *Writings* this produced a degree of tension, since both the content of the installation and its practical implementation followed a completely different logic. The path from the anecdote about the Chinese archive to the completed work was twisting and unpredictable. Other elements accumulated along the way, and the story as such receded into the background – as something that remained essentially hard to grasp. With what justification could one claim it to be present in the installation? Or in the process, or the finished work? It is one element among many others, covered by layers of sediment. Although slowness and inefficiencies could be inferred from the theme of the work, still they came into conflict with the requirements of the Resonance project, which stipulated that the installation should be ready for viewing at the scheduled time. A tension between existence and essence, one might say, with the target-oriented approach

standing as a necessary precondition for the creation of the work, while the work itself points in the opposite direction. The way in which *Writings* was presented serves as an illustration of how the work presented history. The sand heaps represent a past that is inherent in the work itself, and by the same token, the process of realising *Writings* is both a statement about history and an actual episode of it: an episode in the history of art, the history of Lydgalleriet and the other Resonance institutions, and in the respective biographies and careers of those who took part in it. A statement in which history is both object and subject.

And there it now lies, on the scrap-heap of history, as one might say, or at least as a fragment of the past. In each of its incarnations, the work existed for just two to three weeks before being dismantled and banished to the archives, reduced to memories and scattered fragments. The sand was returned to the ground where it came from, the mechanical and electronic components were packed away, the boxes and rods destroyed. The work no longer exists. It has become what it was all about and can only be recalled in the form of memories, writing, pictures and sound recordings. Characteristically, the final version of *Writings*, in Riga's botanical gardens, was a miniature, in which the installation had itself been reduced to historical material. Two boxes, a model of the installation (visible through a peephole), sound recordings, texts and images. Thus the work addressed itself as an object, its own past, its own material, as if contemplating itself from the outside, from a safe distance. The exhibition that took an archive as its initial starting point had in turn become an archive, as if already savouring its transition into history.

The conversations were resumed in 2016, with the aim of reassessing the project from the perspicuous vantage point of posterity. What was it ultimately all about? It was an occasion to fetch out texts and pictures, to try to recall how the process unfolded, to forge a kind of understanding of this small slice of history. A new text, almost complementary to the first, in the process of being shaped, a text that could speak directly both

to those who experienced the work and to those who missed it. What was *Writings* really all about? New conversations, just as convoluted and associative as the earlier ones, but this time directed at an object in the past – not with the aim of resurrecting it (which would be perfectly possible; a new version of the work could easily be constructed), but rather to fix it in language, in writing. Two voices, two pairs of ears, fleeting statements that vanished the moment they were uttered, abandoned to blatantly fallible memory.

Here is a kind of summary. Writing captures and represents. It shows its content without remainder and without noise. But what is that content? What is the core, the truth, that we are chasing after? And in what sense can it be expressed in writing? *Writings* is already script – as is evident in what is for most people the first aspect of the work that they encounter, namely its title. It is also evident in the project's mythical or mystical starting point, and in the channels that the rods draw in the sand. None of these things captures anything. On the contrary, they open the way to interpretations, as historical objects do. The anecdote about the Chinese archive belongs to the prehistory of the work, while the tracks in the heaps of sand belong to its culmination, to the gradual erosion of those heaps until they could no longer produce sound. The process of writing neither reveals nor conveys the content of the work; it merely makes it historical. The rods inscribe the work into history. It becomes its own content, abandoned to the effects of time, the slow but relentless erosion by external forces, ending, ultimately, in silence.

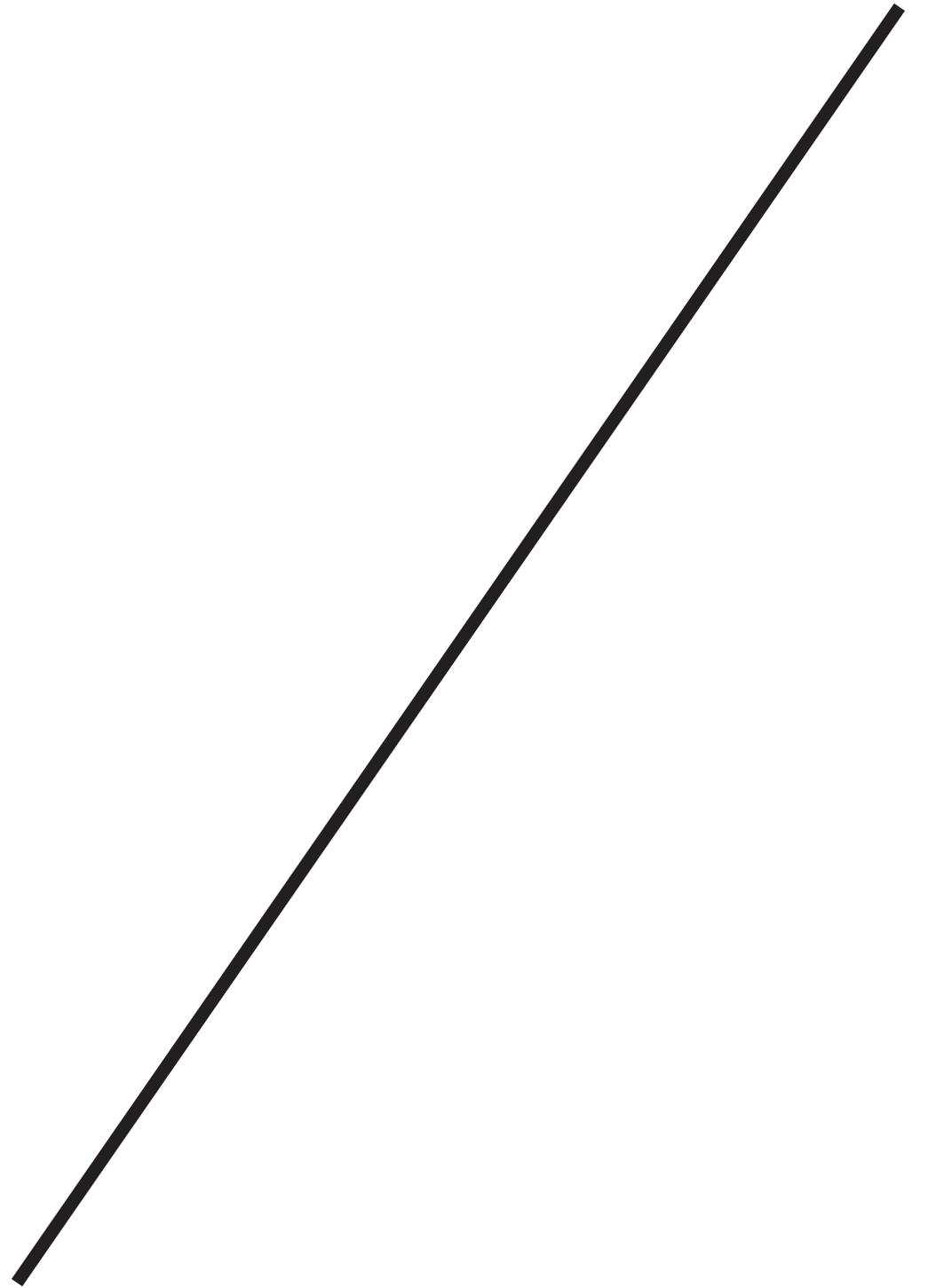


Greg Pope, 2010.
Photo: Sverre Sivertssen.

Aernoudt Jacobs,
Photophon, 2014.
Photo: Sverren Sivertssen.



Appendix



Artist profiles

A presentation of four artists who were key to Lydgalleriet's development in the early years, including Jana Winderen, Maia Urstad, Christian Blom and Natasha Barrett.

Jana Winderen



Photo: Jana Winderen.

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Jana Winderen has a background in both visual art and the natural sciences, including mathematics, chemistry, biochemistry and marine ecology. In her work she focuses on sounds that cannot easily be perceived by the human ear. For the past thirteen years, she has concentrated in particular on sounds that occur underwater, or inside ice. Using highly sensitive hydrophones, she has recorded various kinds of fish, water insects and crustaceans, but also frequencies in the ultrasound range, such as the echolocation sounds of bats and toothed whales. She enables us to listen in on sensitive ecosystems and species we rarely hear, think about, or notice.

She has produced hydrophone recordings in Greenland and the Barents Sea, to a depth of 90 metres beneath the ice, and in warmer regions, such as Belize, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. She has explored river systems in many parts of the world, including the River Coquet in Northumberland, UK, which she followed from source to sea in conjunction with a commission for the AV Festival in Newcastle. In 2010, Winderen opened a permanent sound installation at the Knut Hamsun Centre in Hamarøy, Norway. She has created compositions for the outdoor installation *The Morning Line* in Istanbul and Vienna for 50 speakers, commissioned by TBA21 (Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary). In 2013, she exhibited a 16-speaker installation, *Ultrafield*, at MoMA in New York, curated by Barbara London. In summer 2014, she created the 80-speaker installation *DIVE*, based on underwater recordings, in the Park Avenue Tunnel in Manhattan, commissioned by the New York Department of Transportation. In connection with her nomination for the Lorck Schive Art Prize in 2015, her installation *The Wanderer* was shown at Trondheim kunstmuseum. Works she presented in 2017 include: *Rats - Secret Soundscapes of the City*, commissioned for Munchmuseet on the Move / nyMusikk; *Transmission*, commissioned for the V-A-C foundation at Geometry of Now, GES 2, in Moscow; *Classified* for the Borealis Festival in Bergen; and *Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone* for Sonic Acts Festival in Amsterdam.

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In 2011, Winderen received the prestigious international award Golden Nica for Sound Art and Digital Music at the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz, Austria. Her work has been acquired by Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, RMIT University's Sonic Arts Collection (Melbourne, Australia), and Arts Council Norway. Most recently, Winderen's work *Rising Tide* has been added to the collection of the Norwegian National Museum.



Maia Urstad



Maia Urstad, *Meanwhile in Shanghai*, 2012. Photo: Thor Brødreskift.

Maia Urstad is working at the intersection of audio and visual art, primarily with spatial sound installations and performative sound works, and often with series in continuous development over several years. Many of her works are site-specific where visual and sonic expression both characterize and influence a site's characteristics. In the last couple of years, she has developed and presented sound installations for, amongst others, a train carriage in Struer, a site for Cider production in Hardanger, a barn at Osterøy, a passage in Bonn, a site-specific sound commission for German FM radio, as well as more traditional exhibition spaces.

Maia was educated at the Bergen National Academy of the Arts and was a member of ska/new-wave group Program 81, releasing four vinyl records and touring between 1979-84. In the eighties, her artistic medium migrated toward sound experimentation, and she has been an active contributor to the Norwegian and international contemporary art scene since the mid-eighties.

Technological progress and communications technology are pervasive themes in many of her projects, and she frequently uses radio as a key auditory, visual and conceptual element. These comment on the volatility of present technology and what traces and stories we leave behind when new inventions enter our everyday lives. Her work also tends to focus on flops, lost causes and developments that are on the border of obsolescence, leaving behind scant traces of their existence.

Many of her projects also derive from the interest in various methods and technologies from our recent history to be able to communicate or travel (move) over large distances. Examples range from communication between the captain on the bridge and a noisy engine room on a boat, via telegraphy, Morse and other radio communications, to today's digital terrestrial networks and fiber optic cables. Common sonic denominators in these projects are characteristics of the various forms of communication; i.e. the human voice, with brief information or instructions, such as numbers, train announcements, directions (north, south, west, east), news, or time and place oriented

information. Also important are the surrounding soundscape of this information, like ethereal waves, interference, machine noise, railway tracks, hiss, wind or silence and “just” a spatial presence. Many of the works are multi-channel, which help to shape the experience of the sound sculpturally as a surrounding force of influence.

In 2019 Maia was awarded the Rune Brynstad Memorial Grant (NO), and in 2017 she was appointed by Bonnhoeren as City Sound artist of the year in Bonn (DE), exhibiting the commissioned work *Zeit-Ton-Passagen* from 2017- 2019 in a public passage. The work was in the form of a 40-channel site specific sound installation, based on audio material in about 40 languages from the archive of international broadcasting station Deutsche Welle. Her sound installation *MURMUR* was recently acquired by the Norwegian National Museum (NO, 2020), consisting of portable radios with recorded sounds from the FM-soundscape in Bergen after Norway’s migration from FM to DAB+.

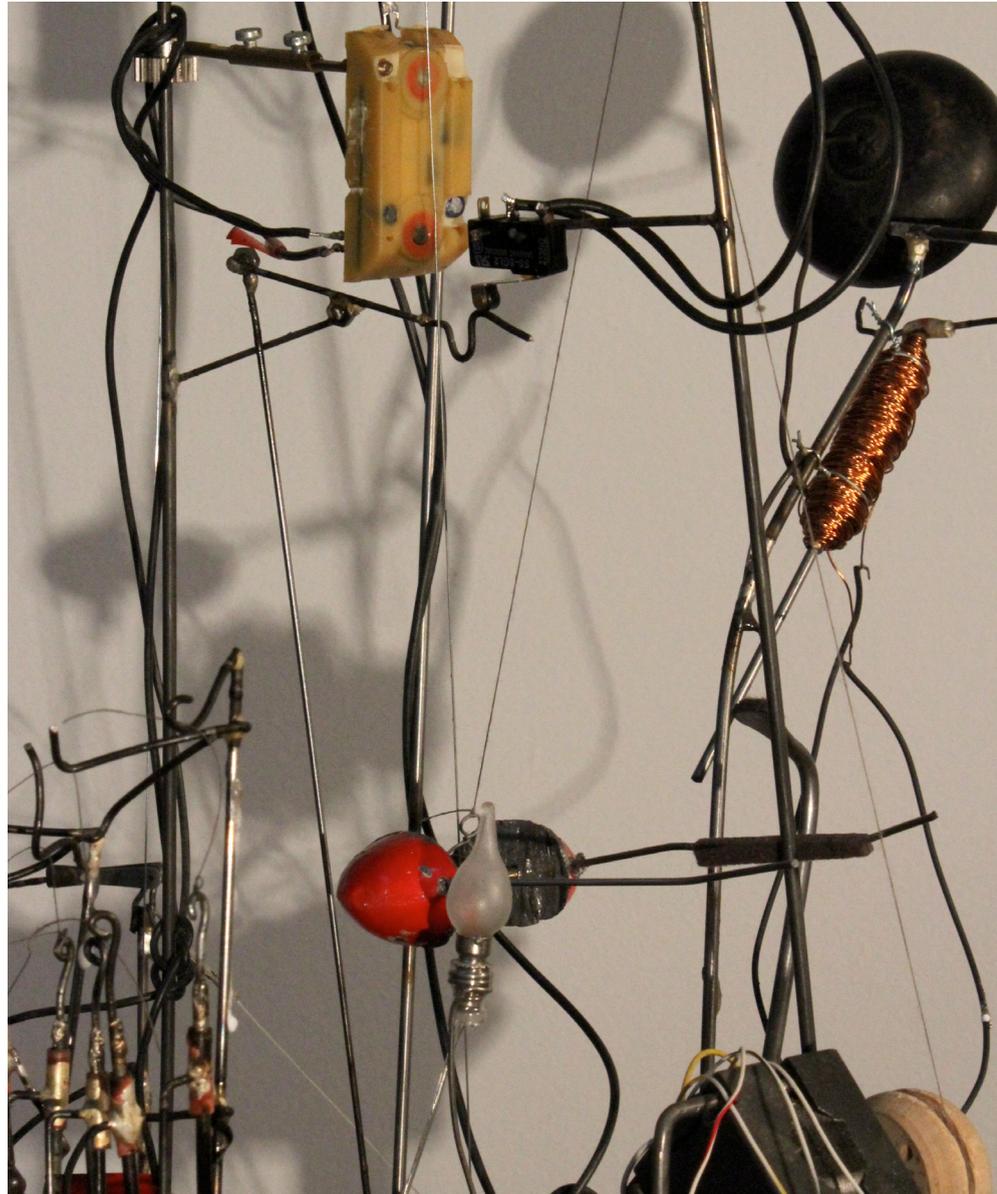
Maia Urstad works alternately with solo projects and in collaboration with other artists, including Hilde Hauan and Lars Ove Toft and is part of the collective *MÆKUR* with Anton Kats and Eva Rowson,. She has been a member of *freq_out* since 2004 and *freq-wave* since 2020. Maia was a co-founder of Lydgalleriet.

Her sound installations and performances have been presented at spaces such as: The XIV Biennial of Media Art, Santiago de Chile (CL), Kabuso (NO), Struer Tracks (DK), Bergen Kunsthall (NO), Borderline Festival (GR), Fundacion Proa (AR), Radiorevolten (DE), Trafo Kunsthall Oslo (NO), High Zero Festival (US), Barents Spektakel (NO), Singuhr Sound Gallery (DE), Lydgalleriet (NO), Moderna Museet (SE), The 5th Marrakech Biennial (MA), KODE (NO), Johannesburg Art Gallery (SA), Prefix ICA (CA), and Electrohype at Malmö Konsthall (SE). Permanent installations feature at Kongsvinger Fortress and Herdla Museum (NO).

Maia Urstad,
The Return of the Prime Meridian,
2016. Photo: Walter Zellien.



Christian Blom



al Khowarizmis Mekaniske Orkester, 2011.
Photo: Christian Blom.

Christian Blom is currently serving as the Director at Notam, the Norwegian center for technology, arts and music. Blom recently completed a degree in artistic research on the topic of transmedial composition. In recent years he has received both an Edvard award and a Spellemann award.

As an artist Blom works in music composition, installation art and performance, as a solo artist and in collectives. He has received commissions from NRK, Bit20-ensemble, asamis-masa, Ensemble Ernst, Ellen Ugelvik, Eir Inderhaug, NUSO, NOTAM and Ny Musikk amongst others. His main collaborators are Verdensteatret, Winter Guests and Ellen Røed. Blom's work has been showed at Ircam, Empac, Shanghai Biennale, National Art Museum of China, Guangzhou Art Museum, Audio Art Festival Krakow, Lydgalleriet, Metamorf, PS122 New York, Ultima, Steirischer Herbst, Theatre Der Welt, Philadelphia Live Arts Festival, Nordic Music Days, World Music Days and several other national and international institutions.

Below, Blom describes his work, *al Khowarizmis Mekaniske Orkester*.

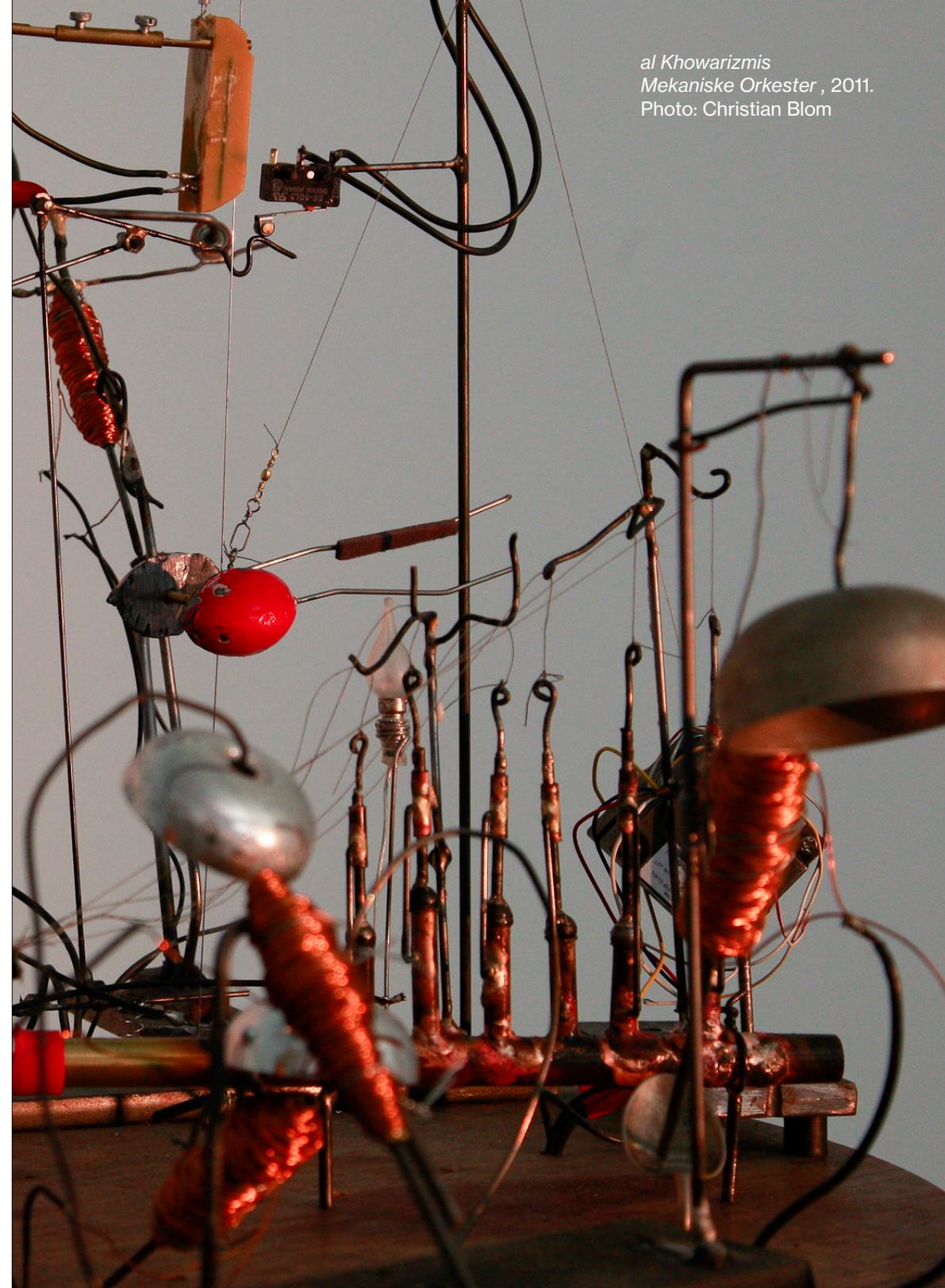
There is a small button lit by a diode. It is mounted on an arm that sticks out of the installation. This interface reminds one of a technical museum or the start button for the model railway. When the diode is lit the audience can press the button. When the button is pressed *al Khowarizmis Mekaniske Orkester* plays a suggestion of a music, as if to say this can also be music, or, here is a way to organize light, sound and movement in a musical fashion.

The automated composer, the software, is constructed like a collection of dice, metronomes and grids. By pushing the button you roll the dice which sets the framework for what the music can be by numerating the fringes of the musical parameters. The mesh size of the grid is decided on and the metronomes start. The tempo is to be between 50 and 70. Thirty percent of the beats are let through the grid and distribute themselves among

three instruments in two layers. You get a brittle music, long intervals of silence and maybe a string or the flute has chosen longer notes, in which case you'd get a line against a background of points – a musical archetype. As an alternative the music falls apart. The intervals become too long, the tempo sinks and eventually the points fail to connect. Other times all the instruments fall into one layer, and perform what they think of as a unison. This almost unison is a batter of will to be precise which unfortunately, and efficiently, is stopped by mechanical joints, friction and the special challenges of the physical world – gravity and all sorts of resistance one has to put up with. But it can be a unison of music in the listener's head. If you understand where the music wants to go and add what is missing. Then you are gluing it together and creating a steady, limp trot.

It is in the grey areas among possible musics that this work can become interesting. *al Khowarizmis* at its best lays out possible connections where the listener can weave his or her own music from the available threads. A point of departure where music is something the listener creates by actively listening structures into a sonic matter. In its utmost consequence this does away with the composer. The statement is polemic, but not without a shred of truth. And this shred is the basis for *al Khowarizmis Mekaniske Orkester's* music.

al Khowarizmis
Mekaniske Orkester, 2011.
Photo: Christian Blom



Natasha Barrett

Photo: Natasha Barrett.



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Natasha Barrett composes acousmatic and live electroacoustic concert compositions, sound and multimedia installations and interactive works. Spatialisation is particularly important to her approach and, since 2000, she has developed compositional techniques employing Ambisonics and 3-D sound, addressing its contemporary artistic role.

Some of Barrett's main inspirations stem from the immediate sounding matter of the world around us – the way it materialises, the way it behaves, and the systems and traces that those systems reveal. These interests have called for cutting-edge audio technologies and exciting collaborations involving solo performers and chamber ensembles, visual artists, architects, geoscientists and computer scientists.

Barrett's works are commissioned, performed and broadcast throughout the world, have been purchased by Public Art Norway and the Norwegian Cultural Council, and have also been released on CD and collected in international anthologies. Amongst a core of concert commissions and performances, sound installations add important articulations to Barrett's artistic output. Notable projects include the multimedia work *we are not alone* (in collaboration with Anthony Rowe), the interactive work *Oslo Sound Space Transport System* (in collaboration with OCEAN Research Design), and the multi-part interactive sound art exhibition 'Aftershock' (in collaboration with geoscientist Karen Mair).

Originally from the UK, Barrett moved to Norway in 1999 after completing her doctoral degree in electroacoustic composition from City University in London. During these early years in Norway she won the Nordic Council Music Prize, (Nordic Countries), the Giga-Hertz Award (DE), the Edvard Prize (NO), Jury and public first prizes in Noroit-Leonce Petitot (FR), five prizes and the Euphonie D'Or in the Bourges International Electroacoustic Music Awards (FR), Musica Nova (CZ), TEM international composition competition (IT), CIMESP (BR), Concours Scime (FR), International Electroacoustic Competition Ciberart (IT), two prizes in Concours Luigi Russolo (IT), two prizes in the International Rostrum for

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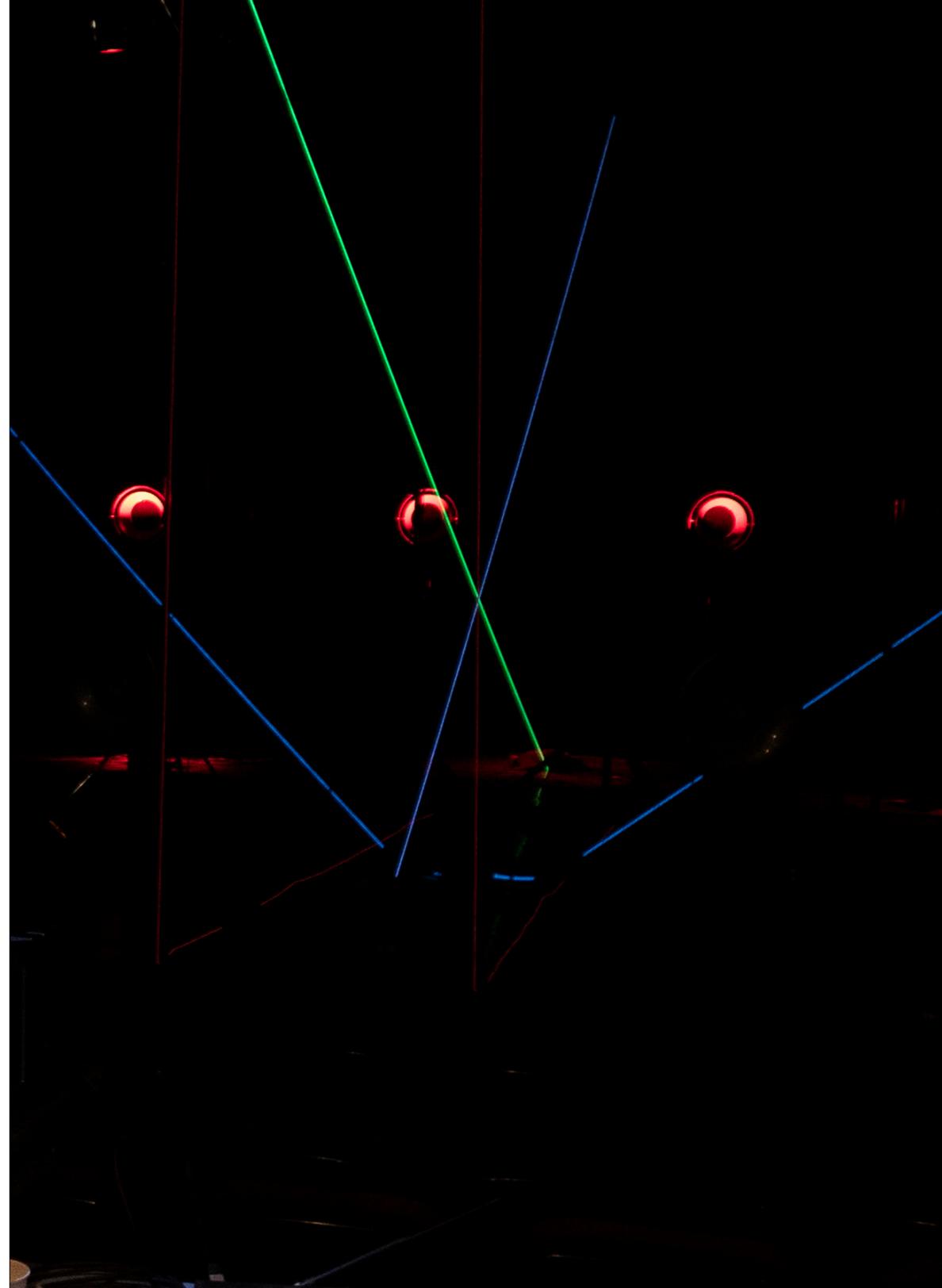
electroacoustic music, and two prizes in two Ars Electronica competitions.

In 2017 Barrett's work ventured down a 3-D audio-visual path in what is now an ongoing collaboration with artist and computer scientist Marc Downie (USA). Their first work, commissioned by IRCAM, has been performed as a concert and an installation for extended periods of time over a 54-speaker 3-D array with 3-D video and as interactive VR, in amongst other places the Pompidou Centre (FR), EMPAC (USA) and Taipei (TW).

Barrett's connection to Lydgalleriet dates from 2007 when she received an installation commission as part of the 'Sleppet' project. The work called *Microclimates III-VI* was a four-part 3-D Ambisonics sound installation inspired by both the sound landscape of western Norway and a direct experience of it. She recorded her encounters with an ambisonics microphone, regular microphones, hydrophones and an ultrasonic microphone, aiming to capture a multiple perspective on the sounds we hear as well as sounds that are hidden. The final compositions explore a 'close-up' micro-universe of details and musical transformations of waterfalls, high-speed gales, underwater glacial sounds, ice, birds, livestock, stone, sand, dripping and running water, mud and turf. In this work, Barrett was interested in evoking a 'total sense experience' through sound alone. Although she was already performing 3-D ambisonics concert compositions as early as 2000, *Microclimates III-VI* was the first time in Norway that a higher-order ambisonics 3-D sound installation was presented to the public.

Being also active in performance, education and research, some years later Barrett's connection with Lydgalleriet was resumed when she was invited by Bjørnar Habbestad to collaborate on designing the 3-D loudspeaker array for a 'listening night' series, which transpired into the MULTI concert series.

Barrett currently co-directs the Oslo-based spatial-music performance ensemble EAU (Electric Audio Unit), founded 3DA (the Norwegian society for 3-D sound-art), and holds a professorship in composition.



Lydgalleriet's activity 2005–2020

2005

25.11
*Kunstmuzak Inc. –
heismusikk med sjel*
Music programme in
public speakers
Galleriet shopping centre
Lydgalleriet's first
experiment

11.12
*Vertikale øyeblikk og
lineære forløp*
One day event
BJØRN ASKEFOSS,
BJØRNAR HABBESTAD,
LEIF INGE,
JØRGEN LARSSON,
NICHOLAS
MØLLERHAUG,
MAIA URSTAD,
JANA WINDEREN
Landmark
Curated by Erlend Hammer
and Steinar Sekkingstad

2006

12–17.09
*H"stL,,d 2..6 – en
minifestival for
eksperimentell lyd*
Festival
CHARLES CURTIS,
LEIF ELGGREN,
BRANDON LABELLE,
SANDRA TRUTÉ,
ATLE SELNES NILSEN,
ARNE BAKKE
Landmark

04–06.02
North of the North
Concert, installation
XAVIER CHARLES,
MARC PICHELIN, IVAR
GRYDELAND
Østre Skostredet

8.12
Jule-Soirée
Concert
HC GILJE, JEFF CAREY,
LISE HERLAND,
BJØRNAR HABBESTAD +
JØRGEN LARSSON
Østre Skostredet

2007

25.03
SNIKK SNAKK
Concert
VIBEKE JENSEN,
ALISON GERBER,
KARINA SIEGMUND,
TRIOEN A3B,
BECAYE AW, ADAMA
BARRY, ANNEKE
BJØRGUM,
CASIOKIDS,
DJ BARABASS,
VJ APELONIUS,
FANNY HOLMIN,
JØRGEN LARSSON
Landmark. In collaboration
with SnikkSnakk

11–22.04
Back in Track
Exhibition
PAUL LESLIE GRIFFITHS,
MARCO BRUZZONE,
SANDRA TRUTÉ,
CHARLOTTE THIIIS-
EVENSEN, PEDRO
GOMEZ-EGANA, TOVA
MOZARD, NIM-JO CHUNG
Lydgalleriet

18.03
*Couperins hode, skulder,
kne og tå*
Exhibition
CHRISTIAN BLOM
Lydgalleriet. In collaboration
with Borealis

14.03
LYDBANK
One day event
LEON MILO,
JANA WINDEREN,
MAIA URSTAD,
JØRGEN LARSSON,
THOROLF THUESTAD,
JØRGEN TRÆEN
Sparebanken Vest.
Curated by Maia Urstad and
Roar Sletteland

31.08–23.09
Sleppet
Exhibition
STEVE RODEN,
CHRIS WATSON,
MARC BEHRENS,
NATASHA BARRETT,
JANA WINDEREN,
BJARNE KVINNSLAND
Lydgalleriet, Kunsthall 3.14.
Double CD in collaboration
with +3db records

10–14.10
The Emotion Organ
Exhibition, concert
AMANDA STEGGELL
Lydgalleriet

31.10–18.11
Effondrements/Crash
Exhibition
JEAN-PIERRE GAUTHIER
Lydgalleriet

01.–23.12
Juleutstilling
Exhibition
LASSE MARHAUG, LISE
HERLAND,
AUDUN ERIKSEN,
ESPEN SOMMER EIDE,
BJØRNAR HABBESTAD,
GOLDEN SERENADES,
JØRGEN LARSSON
KRISTOFFER MYSKJA,
ATLE SELNES NIELSEN
Lydgalleriet

2008

23.02–16.03
SIRENS
Exhibition
JAMES BECKETT
Lydgalleriet. In collaboration with Borealis – festival for experimental music

07.03
Origami Boe and Lee Patterson
Concert
ORIGAMI BOE,
LEE PATTERSON
Lydgalleriet

04.04–04.05
Script for a rehearsal
Exhibition
BRANDON LABELLE
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Jørgen Larsson

16.05
BjNilsen og Hildur Gudnadóttir
Concert
BJNILSEN,
HILDUR GUDNADÓTTIR
Lydgalleriet.
In collaboration with NyMusikk Bergen

21.05–10.08
Festspillutstillingen
Exhibition
GOLDEN SERENADES
(JOHN HEGRE+
JØRGEN TRÆEN)
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Jørgen Larsson

29.08
BLUR
Exhibition
ARTURAS BUMŠTEINAS
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Jørgen Larsson

12.–28.09
The Owl Project
Exhibition
SIMON BLACKMORE,
ANTONY HALL,
STEVE SYMONS
Lydgalleriet

19.–21.09
alt_cph
ART FAIR
Copenhagen

28.09
Phase 1
Concert
THOMAS WARKISS
Lydgalleriet

10.10–9.11
Wonders Beyond Yonder
Exhibition
INGVILD LANGGÅRD
Lydgalleriet

07.11
SLW and Akiyama/Taxt/Lønning/Reinertsen
Concert
SLW (LUCIO CAPECE
(AG), TOSHIMARU
NAKAMURA (JP),
BURKHARD BEINS (DE),
RHODRI DAVIES (UK)
AND AKIYAMA/TAXT/
LØNNING/REINERTSEN
Lydgalleriet.
In collaboration with NyMusikk Bergen

20.11–31.11
Holiday in Arcadia
Exhibition
CATHERINE BOLDUC
(CA), JEAN CARN
& LARRY LEVAN
(US), MAI HOFSTAD
GUNNES & RYUICHI
SAKAMOTO (NO/ JP),
BJØRN-KOWALSKI
HANSEN (NO), KRISTIN
NORDHØY (NO),
MARTIN SKAUVEN (NO),
SEX TAGS (AT/ NO),
ØYSTEIN AASAN (NO)
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Erlend Hammer

04–23.12
PIKSEL
Exhibition
TRISTAN PERICH,
KUNAL GUPTA +
KATIE SHIMA,
JAN CARLEKLEV,
BEN BOGART,
MARTIN AASERUD
Lydgalleriet

2009

16.01–15.02
Composers in Space
Exhibition
BJØRN ERIK HAUGEN,
ARNT HÅKON
ÅNESENS,
BJØRN THOMAS
MELHUS,
THERESE BIRKELUND &
JØRGEN KARLSTRØM,
RAYMOND INGAR
BERGE, HENRIK
MARSTRANDER
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Jørgen Larsson

29.01–15.11
PARABOL
Directional speaker pieces
PETER CUSACK,
GREGORY WHITEHEAD,
TAYLOR DUPREE,
ALEXANDER RISHAUG,
YOICHI NAGASHIMA
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by Jørgen Larsson in collaboration with Kunsthall 3.14

13.02
MURAL
Concert
JIM DENLEY,
KIM MYHR,
INGAR ZACH,
HÅVARD VOLDEN,
PHILIP TAGNEY
Lydgalleriet. Collaboration with NyMusikk Bergen

20.02–20.03
Drones and Headphones
Exhibition
PHILL NIBLOCK,
ELIANE RADIGUE,
BRIAN ENO,
JIM O'ROURKE,
JACOB KIRKEGAARD,
MERZBOW,
LEIF ELGGREN,
MAEROR TRI,
STEVE ROACH,
ROBERT RICH,
STARS OF THE LID,
TANGERINE DREAM
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Jørgen Larsson

20.03–3.05
Project Jericho
Directional speaker piece
GREGORY WHITEHEAD
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by Jørgen Larsson in collaboration with Kunsthall 3.14

06.03
Parallax
Concert
STIAN OMENÅS, ARE
LOTHE KOLBEINSEN,
ULRIK IBSEN Thorsrud
Lydgalleriet

25.03–05.04
Disrehearspectaktak
Exhibition
PHILIP TAGNEY
Lydgalleriet

17.04–01.05
Felix's Machines
Exhibition
FELIX THORN
Lydgalleriet

8.05–28.06
Weather & Worn
Directional speaker piece
TAYLOR DEUPREE
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by Jørgen Larsson in collaboration with Kunsthall 3.14

22.05–05.07
ZUPER KLASSIK FREAKY AVANTGARDE
Exhibition
MAIA URSTAD,
HILDE HAUAN
JOHNSEN,
THOROLF THUESTAD
OG ALWYNNE
PRITCHARD,
STEINAR
SEKKINGSTAD,
PETRI HENRIKSSON,
JØRGEN LARSSON
Lydgalleriet

25.05
Neanderthals Electronics
Workshop
DEREK HOLZER
Lydgalleriet. In collaboration with Pikkse

27.05
Sleppet
CD release and concert
STEVE RODEN,
CHRIS WATSON,
NATASHA BARRETT,
BJARNE KVINNSLAND,
JANA WINDEREN AND
MARC BEHRENS
Lydgalleriet. In collaboration with +3db records

19.06
Jeff Carey
Concert
JEFF CAREY
Lydgalleriet

03.07–09.08
My Favourite Place
Directional speaker piece
ALEXANDER RISHAUG
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by Jørgen Larsson in collaboration with Kunsthall 3.14

14.08–04.10
Coin's Journey
Directional speaker piece
YOICHI NAGASHIMA
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by Jørgen Larsson in collaboration with Kunsthall 3.14

28.08–27.09
Vinyl
Exhibition, concert
CHRISTIAN MARCLAY,
FLO KAUFMANN,
JANEK SCHAEFER AND
OTOMO YOSHIHIDE
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Jørgen Larsson

0.9.
Janek Scafer and Mick Barr
Concert
JANEK SCAEFER AND
MICK BARR
Lydgalleriet

15.09
Wet Sounds
Underwater concert, performative event
MAIA URSTAD,
ESPEN SOMMER
EIDE OG MAGNAR
ÅM, HILDEGARD
WESTERKAMP,
SAM SALEM, MICHAEL
MCLOUGHLIN, ROBIN
EDWARDS, ANNIE GOH,
ERIC DE LUCA, SLAVEK
KWI OG MARK VERNON
Sentralbadet. Curated by Jørgen Larsson

02.10–08.11
Apparatus
Exhibition
MARTIN RICHES,
ERWIN STACHE
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson

13.11–17.11
Satelitt
Exhibition
VICTORIA JOHNSON
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson

2010

09–13.03
Catabolizer
Speaker exhibition,
concert
GERHARD ECKEL
Lydgalleriet, Rom 8. In
collaboration with BEK
and Borealis – Festival for
experimental music

15.01–21.02
Google Secrets
Directional speaker piece
WANG ZHEYING
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

23.04–23.05
Swarf Series
Exhibition
ZIMOUN AND
FLO KAUFMANN
Lydgalleriet, Rom 8
Cancelled?

30.04–30.05
*A Gift of Despair for My
Friends*
Directional speaker piece
ZHANG LIMING
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

30.07–26.09
Bergen R1
Site related installation
SAM AUINGER,
BRUCE ODLAND
Outside Bergen Kunsthall.
Curated by Carsten
Seiffarth

20.08–03.10
Hot Topic
Directional speaker piece
LE TIGRE
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

8.10–14.11
*The Aqua moon behind
the green sunset is nearly
visible*
Directional speaker piece
ALICE HUI-SHENG
CHANG
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

15.10
Kassett
Exhibition
LASSE MARHAUG ++
Lydgalleriet, Usf Verftet.
Curated by Lydgalleriet

15.10
KNUDSEN & TRÆEN
Concert
JØRGEN KNUDSEN,
JØRGEN TRÆEN
Lydgalleriet, Usf Verftet.
Curated by Lydgalleriet

09.11
*Bruce McClure, Greg
Pope, John Hegre*
Concert
BRUCE MCCLURE,
GREG POPE, JOHN
HEGRE
Landmark. In collaboration
with PNEK

2011

21.01–26.2
Hope Lake
Exhibition
ROBYN MOODY
Lydgalleriet, USF Verftet
Curated by Lydgalleriet

21.01–6.03
In my language I am smart
Directional speaker piece
DRAGAN TODOROVIC
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

11.03–30.04
*Prepare for F1 Students
Visa Interview Answers*
Directional speaker piece
LOC PHUONG
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

22.03–17.04
Christian Blom
Exhibition
CHRISTIAN BLOM
Lydgalleriet, USF Verftet.
Curated by Lydgalleriet

06.05–05.06
Zimoun
Exhibition
ZIMOUN
Lydgalleriet, USF Verftet.
Curated by Lydgalleriet

08.05–19.06
Sorted Speech
Directional speaker piece
JÖRG PIRINGER
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

17.06–17.07
Extentions
Exhibition
ALVIN LUCIER,
STEFAN RUMMEL,
PIERRE BERTHET
Lydgalleriet, Usf Verftet,
Korskirken. Curated by
Carsten Seiffarth

24.06–14.08
Kreken II
Directional speaker piece
ESPEN SOMMER EIDE
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

19.08–25.09
Stinch n Glitch
Directional speaker piece
CÉCILE BABIOLE
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

23.09–15.10
Minimal
Exhibition
JOYCE HINTERDING,
TRISTAN PERICH,
PETER VOGEL
Lydgalleriet, USF Verftet
In collaboration with
EKKO

29.09
ATOM
Concert
ROBERT HENKE
(MONOLAKE),
CHRISTOPH BAUDER
Studio Bergen. In collabo-
ration with EKKO

01.10
Pierre Henry
Concert
PIERRE HENRY
Studio Bergen. In collabo-
ration with EKKO

15.10
EKKO POST-PARTY
Concert, DJ
TANJA ORNING,
ALEX NOWITZ,
MARI KVIEN
BRUNVOLL,
APPLEBLIM
Landmark. In collaboration
with EKKO

01.11
The Microtonal Tuba
Concert
ROBIN HAYWARD
Korskirken. Part of the
concert series NON
FRONTAL

30.11
TRIPPEL SOLO
Concert
KJETIL MØSTER,
MORTEN OLSEN, JOHN
HEGRE
Kafé Knøderen. In collabo-
ration with +3db records

2012

20.01–28.09
*Ruined Piano:
Unfinished Business*
Directional speaker piece
ROSS BOLLETER
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

09.02–12.02
Kinetica Art Fair
Art Fair
CHRISTIAN BLOM,
TORE HONORÉ BØE,
ATLE SELNES NIELSEN
London

24.02–01.04
URSTAD/DEVENS
Exhibition
MAIA URSTAD, PAUL
DEVENS
Lydgalleriet, Skostredet. In
collaboration with Creative
EU project Resonance

03.04
MUU FOR EARS
Concert
TROND LOSSIUS AND
JOONAS SIREN
Lydgalleriet, Skostredet.
Part of the concert series
NON FRONTAL

18.05–01.07
*Language Removal
Services: 60 Second
Anthology of American
Poetry*
Directional speaker piece
CHRIS KUBICK
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

24–28.09
Make this sound
Directional speaker piece
LULLATONE
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

04.10–16.12
*Music for Listening to the
Moon*
Directional speaker piece
YAN JUN
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

05.10–04.11
*Sewing Machine
Orchestra*
Exhibition
MARTIN MESSIER
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Lydgalleriet

31.10–03.11
Ephemeral Sustainability
Conference
DAVID TOOP (UK),
CHRISTOPH COX (US),
RAOUL MÖRCHEN
(DE), ANNE HILDE
NESET (NO), SALOMÉ
VOEGELIN (CH), HELGA
DE LA MOTTE-HABER
(DE), CHRISTINA
KUBISCH (DE), KABIR
CARTER (US), EDWIN
VAN DER HEIDE
(NL), TORE HONORÉ
BØE (NO), CARSTEN
SEIFFARTH (DE), SETH
CLUETT (US), NICOLE
GINGRAS (CA), MAIA
URSTAD (NO), ROLF
SACHSSE (NL), PER
PLATOU (NO), JOOST
FONTEYNE (BE), ANNE
MARTHE DYVI (NO),
DANIELA CASCELLA
(IT), ASBJØRN TILLER
(NO), SARAH COOK
(UK), SIGNE LIDÉN
(NO), JULIA GERLACH
(DE), AERNOUDT
JACOBS (BE), LARS
MØRCH FINBORUD
(NO), SØS GUNVER-
RYBERG (DK)
Lydgalleriet, Østre, Gimle,
Kunsthall 3.14, Galleri S12
Curated by Jørgen
Larsson, Carsten Seiffarth
and Julie Lillelien Porter
for Creative EU project
Resonance

31.10
Ephemeral Sustainability
Concert
STIAN WESTERHUS
Østre. Collaboration with
EKKO for concert series
NON FRONTAL

31.10
Ephemeral Sustainability
Concert
LEMUR/CRITICAL
BAND
Korskirken. Collaboration
with NyMusikk Bergen
and EKKO for concert
series NON FRONTAL

01.11
Ephemeral Sustainability
Performative lecture,
performance
DAVID TOOP,
ORIGAMI BOE
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Jørgen Larsson and Julie
Lillelien Porter for Creative
EU project Resonance

01–3.11
Ephemeral Sustainability
Morning soundscape
concerts
LASSE-MARC RIEK
(NO), SARAH COOK
(UK), SIGNE LIDÉN
(NO), JULIA GERLACH
(DE), AERNOUDT
JACOBS (BE), LARS
MØRCH FINBORUD
(NO), SØS GUNVER-
RYBERG (DK)
Lydgalleriet, Østre, Gimle,
Kunsthall 3.14, Galleri S12
Curated by Jørgen
Larsson, Carsten Seiffarth
and Julie Lillelien Porter
for Creative EU project
Resonance

01.12.2012–15.01.2013
Peter Vogel Retrospective
Exhibition
PETER VOGEL
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Lydgalleriet

2013

24.01–17.02
Music from Nowhere
Exhibition
GORDON MONAHAN
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Carsten Seiffarth and Ivar
Smedstad in collaboration
with Atelier Nord

23.02
Ghost in Surround
Concert
MONOLAKE
Lydgalleriet, Østre.
Collaboration with EKKO
as part of the concert
series NON FRONTAL

22.02–24.03
Binatone Galaxy
Exhibition
STEPHEN CORNFORD
Lydgalleriet. In collab-
oration with Borealis –
Festival for
Experimental Music

05.04–11.04
Kollisjonsindeks
Exhibition
HILD BORCHGREVINK,
TOR KRISTIAN LISETH,
ØYSTEIN NESHEIM,
ROAR SLETTELAND,
THOROLF THUESTAD,
ØYVIND ÅDLAND
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Lydgalleriet

25.07–11.08
*Untamed Choir /The
Beaters*
Multichannel sound
installtion
PETER BOGERS,
THOMAS RUTGERS &
JITSKE BLOM
Lydgalleriet. In collabo-
ration with Creative EU
project Resonance

25.10–17.11
Light crossing light
Exhibition
MORTEN KVAMME
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Bjørnar Habbestad in
collaboration with EKKO

10.11
CODE-CONTROL-NOISE
Concert
JEFF CAREY,
MARIJE BAALMAN,
TILL BOVERMAN,
MIGUEL NEGRÃO
Lydgalleriet, Østre
Curated by Bjørnar
Habbestad for concert
series NON FRONTAL
05.12–12.01
Stratigrafi
Exhibition
CECILIA JONSSON,
SIGNE LIDÉN
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Bjørnar Habbestad

2014

17.01–23.02
Empty Vessels
Exhibition
ALVIN LUCIER
Lydgalleriet. Curated
by Carsten Seiffarth, in
collaboration with Atelier
Nord

18.01
*HANDMADE
ELECTRONICS*
Concert
NICOLAS COLLINS,
BERGEN IMPRO
STORBAND
Lydgalleriet, Østre.
Collaboration with BEK

28.02–16.03
Kosmos Wurlitzer III
Exhibition
ÅNOND VERSTO
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Tolga Balci

19.03–12.04
PHOTOPHON
Exhibition
AERNOUDT JACOBS
Lydgalleriet. In collab-
oration with Borealis –
Festival for
Experimental Music

19.03–12.04
BERGEN TRACKS
Exhibition, publication,
audioguide
DAVID HELBICH
Lydgalleriet. In collab-
oration with Borealis –
Festival for
Experimental Music

10.05
MIKROPHONIE
Concert
LEMUR, BENJAMIN
LAUMAUS
Lydgalleriet, Østre. Part of
MULTI concert series

24.05
GATEFEST SPESIAL
Installation, concert
SVARTE GREINER,
ALEXANDER RISHAUG,
TOLGA BALCI
Lydgalleriet, Østre. In
collaboration with EKKO
and Maksimal

10–23.05
Samples of Inclinations
Exhibition
TOLGA BALCI
Lydgalleriet. Curated
by Lydgalleriet

26.06
*Parmerud /Brummer/
Barrett /Lopez-Lezcano/
Vinjar*
Concert
ÅKE PARMERUD,
LUDGER BRUMMER,
NATASHA BARRETT,
FERNANDO LOPEZ-
LEZCANO, ANDERS
VINJAR
Lydgalleriet, Østre. Part of
MULTI concert series

07–29.06
*Lydhørt I: Her jobber Skog
og Hegre*
Exhibition, performance,
workshop
KAREN SKOG,
JOHN HEGRE
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Signe Lidén, part of the
Lydhørt Series

24.06
Dreamspaces
Installation, concert
ANTONIO DELLA
MARINA,
ALESSANDRA ZUCCHI
Lydgalleriet, Østre

05–28.09
Lydhørt II: Room Tone
Exhibition
VICTORIA SKOGSBERG,
MAGNUS OLEDAL
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter,
part of the Lydhørt Series

09–12.10
Sonic Game Space
Exhibition
JACOB SIKKER REMIN,
MARIEKE VERBIESEN &
RAQUEL MEYERS
Lydgalleriet

17.10–01.11
A Voyage To Arcturus
Exhibition
TWO RUINS: JIM COLQUHOUN AND STEVEN HOLLINGSWORTH
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Julie Lillelien Porter, in collaboration with EKKO

17.10
Tafjord Analogikk
Concert
ASBJØRN FLØ, MAJA RATKJE, ALEXANDER RISHAUG, HILD TAFJORD
Lydgalleriet, Østre. In collaboration with BEK and EKKO

09.12
FLAMMEPUNKT
Acousmatic concert
ANDERS TVEIT, NATASHA BARRETT, ANDERS VINJE, RUBEN SVERRER GJERTSEN
Lydgalleriet, Østre.
Curated by Electric Audio Unit for the concert series MULTI

20.11–14.12
Lydhørt III: Writing Sound 2
Workshops, exhibition
DAVID TOOP AND RIE NAKAJIMA, DANIELA CASCELLA AND SIGNE LIDÉN, ELIN ØYEN VISTER, JOHN HEGRE
Lydgalleriet, Østre.
Curated by Daniela Cascella, part of the Lydhørt Series

2015

06.02–01.03
Lydhørt IV: Small Wrists
Workshops and exhibition
RUNE SØCHTING AND HONG-KAI WANG
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Rune Søchting, part of LYDHØRT Series

12.03
KORPUS
Concert
THOROLF THUESTAD, NATASHA BARRETT, REBECKA SOFIA AHVENNIEMI, BETHAN PARKES
Lydgalleriet, Østre. Part of MULTI concert series

12.03
MicroSleepDub
Installation, concert
PETER LENAERTS
Lydgalleriet, Østre

12–22.03
Floe/Flow
Exhibition
TOMOKO SAUVAGE
Lydgalleriet. Part of Borealis– festival for experimental music

22.04
Background Noise
Book launch
BRANDON LABELLE
Lydgalleriet

13.05
The girl who never was
Performance
ERIK BÜNGER
Lydgalleriet

02.06
F.M.R.L. Footnotes, Mirages, Refrains and Leftovers of Writing Sound
Book launch, concert
JEREMY WELSH, CONRAD KEMP+ MAIA URSTAD, SIGNE LIDÉN
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Daniela Cascella

14.05–07.06
A lecture on Schizophrenia
Exhibition
ERIK BÜNGER
Lydgalleriet

24–30.06
Prospekt acousmatic encounters
Workshop
ROAR SLETTELAND, KJERSTI SLETTELAND
Lydgalleriet

04–23.08
Hybridity and Synaesthesia
Exhibition
JOHN MURRAY (US) ANASTASIA SALTER (US), ANDY SIMIANMOTO (AU) ANDY KAREN ANN DONNACHIE (AU), MEZ BREEZE (AU) ANDY CAMPBELL (UK), PHILIPPE BOOTZ (FR), ANGUS FORBES (US), JOELLYN ROCK (US) ALISON AUNE (US), CAITLIN FISHER (CA) TONY VIÈRE (CA), JULIE VULCAN (AU) ASHLEY SCOTT (AU).
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Kathi Inman Berens and Roderick Coover

06.08
Hybridity and Synaesthesia in Electronic Literature
Book launch
Lydgalleriet

30.11
Nocturne#1 – Sediments
Exhibition, concert
LES BALTAZARS
Østre, USF. Collaboration with BEK and BIT Teatergarasjen

01–25.10
Situation Aught
Exhibition
NIKLAS ADAM
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Lydgalleriet

04–20.12
LYD EROSJON
Exhibition
DAVID A. RIOS
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Lydgalleriet

09.12
acousmatic encounters
Concert
TROND LOSSIUS, JOSEPH ANDERSON, JULIA HANADI AL-ABED
Lydgalleriet, Østre.
Collaboration with BEK

2016

05.03–16.03
Throw
Performance, exhibition
RIE NAKAJIMA
Lydgalleriet. In collaboration with Borealis – festival for experimental music

10.03
Julian Skar & Kari Telstad Sundet
Concert
JULIAN SKAR, KARI TELSTAD SUNDET
Lydgalleriet. Part of MULTI concert series

13.03
O YAMA O
Performance, concert
RIE NAKAJIMAM KEIKO YAMAMOTO
Lydgalleriet, Østre. In collaboration with Borealis – festival for experimental music

15.04–29.04
Torn Tracks
Exhibition, audio guide in public space
JISKA HUIZING
Lydgalleriet

27.05–07.06
LULL
Exhibition, concert, artist talk
CAMILLE NORMENT, CAMILLE NORMENT TRIO, SOFIA JERNBERG, ANNE HILDE NESET
Lydgalleriet, Østre

13.06
We choose to go to the Moon
Concert
KARI TELSTAD SUNDET, ROSELLA STRYKEKVARTETT
Lydgalleriet, Østre

31.08–13.09
Reading Stanley Brouwn
Exhibition
TAO G. VROVEC SAMBOLEC
Lydgalleriet. In collaboration with KHIB

03.09
The sculpture sinks, thinks, sings
Performance, conversation
DANIELA CASCELLA, DOMINIQUE HURTH HURTIGRUTEN

23.09–09.10
Lydgalleriets jubileumsutstilling 10 år
Exhibition
CHRISTIAN BLOM, CHARLOTTE PIENE, ANDERS FØRISDAL
Lydgalleriet, Østre

03.11
Bethan Kellough & Nilas
Concert
BETHAN KELLOUGH, NILAS
Østre. In collaboration with BEK and EKKO

26–27.11
Smarginature
Two day event
DANIELA CASCELLA, NATASHA SOOBRAIMAINEN, CIA RINNE, CLAIRE POTTER
Lydgalleriet, Østre

2017

03.01
Radio Ferrante
Online radio
DANIELA CASCELLA, NATASHA SOOBRAIMAINEN WITH GUESTS
On air. Part of Writing Sound Bergen

20.01–15.02
For stadig å bli
Exhibition
KNUT VAAGE,
SISSEL LILLEBOSTAD,
THOROLF THUESTAD
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Sissel Lillebostad

08.03–12.03
Sonic Writing
Workshop
BERGSVEINN
BIRGISSON,
THOR MAGNUSSON
Lydgalleriet. In collabora-
tion with Borealis – festival
for experimental music

09.03
*Tolga Balci, Yvette
Jackson, Jacqueline
George, Craig Wells*
Multi channel ambisonics
concert
TOLGA BALCI,
YVETTE JACKSON,
JACQUELINE GEORGE,
CRAIG WELLS
Lydgalleriet, Østre
In collaboration with
Borealis – festival for
experimental music as
part of the concert series
MULTI

12–28.05
Works for listening
Exhibition
TINE SUREL LANGE
Strandgaten 224. Curated
by Julie Lillelien Porter

04.09–09.09
Only Expansion
Workshop, audio guide in
public space
DUNCAN SPEAKMAN
KODE. Curated by Mei
Szetu and Julie Lillelien
Porter

15.09–27.09
The ES Series
Exhibition
EIRIK BRANDAL
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter

13–15.10
Blister/brumm
Exhibition
JOHANNA LETTMAYER,
RHIANNON INMAN-
SIMPSON
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter

22–29.10
Dubtables
Exhibition
ROAR SLETTELAND
Lydgalleriet. In collabora-
tion with EKKO

10.11–03.12
Noösphere
Exhibition, artist talk
ERIN SEXTON
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter

15.12
Blue Rinse XM Edition
Concert, live performance
CRAIG WELLS,
TROND LOSSIUS,
JULIE SILSET,
FRIDTJOF
WESSELTOFT,
TIJS HAM,
JONAS HAMRE,
EIRIK HAVNES
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Craig Wells, Tijs Ham and
Julie Lillelien Porter

17.12.
Curtis Roads,
multichannel concert
Lydgalleriet, Østre
In collaboration with
Notam, BEK and
nyMusikk

2018

19.01–22.02
Soundtrack for Webcams
Exhibition
MAGNUS BUGGE
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter

23.02
*Blue Rinse Booklaunch
Edition*
Book launch, concert,
performance
JØRGEN LARSSON,
JISKA HUIZING,
JULIE SILSET,
MATHIAS LOOSE,
ALAN O' RAGHALLAIGH
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Craig Wells, Tijs Ham,
Julie Lillelien Porter

08.03–01.04
Sue Tompkins
Exhibition
SUE TOMPKINS
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter, in
collaboration with Borealis
– festival for
experimental music

10.03
St St Steadicam High
Performance
SUE TOMPKINS
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter, in
collaboration with Borealis
– festival for
experimental music

21.04–22.04
Noöspherics
Conference
ERIN SEXTON,
MASAHIRO KAHATA,
MARIA WITEK,
EIRIK STORESUND,
BERGEN
KRINGKASTER,
DEEJAYE TORNADO DE
ÅSANE
Lydgalleriet, Østre.
Curated by Erin Sexton

27.04
*Blue Rinse Scattered
Reflections Edition*
Concert, performance
LIVE SOLLID
SCHULERUD,
BÅRD AARVIK,
GURO MOE,
ROAR SLETTELAND
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Craig Wells, Tijs Ham,
Julie Lillelien Porter

11.05–03.06
*Rulers and Rhythm
Studies*
Exhibition
CEVDET EREK
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Rune Søchting

07.06
Lazuli
Record launch, concert
HILDE MARIE HOLSEN
Lydgalleriet, Østre

08–15.06
*Thresholds of the
Algorithmic*
Workshops, exhibition
DAVID PIRRO,
HANNS HOLGER RUTZ,
EIRIK BLEKESAUNE,
MAX FRANKLIN,
ERIN GEE,
KOSMAS
GIANNOUTAKIS,
DANIELE POZZI,
THOROLF THUESTAD,
TIJS HAM,
ALICIA CHANPLIN,
NIKLAS ADAM,
STEFANO
ZORZANELLO
Lydgalleriet. In collabora-
tion with BEK and Notam

29.06
*To see yourself from the
outside*
Performance
KAREN EIDE BØEN,
HUGO HEDBERG
Lydgalleriet

17.08–09.09
THERMO BAY
Exhibition
IGNAS KRUNGLEVICIUS
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter

15.09
Superare Sensibus
Exhibition, performance,
one night event
AVALANCHE BOYS,
GABRIELLA
FORZELIUS,
TINE GÜNTHER,
SARA KOLLSTRØM
HEILEVANG,
TARIK HINDIC,
ARNE SKAUG OLSEN,
HILDE JØRGENSEN,
JULIE LILLELIEN
PORTER,
MARIE VALLESTAD,
KOBIE NEL,
SNORRE MAGNAR
SOLBERG,
IDA NERBØ,
NADDA NOOR
UBÅT PRESS.
CURATED BY HILDE
JØRGENSEN, TARIK
HINDIC AND JULIE
LILLELIEN PORTER
Ubåt Press

21.09
Blue Rinse Portal Edition
Performance, concerts
FELIPE IGNACIO,
JULIE LILLELIEN
PORTER,
ARTHUR HUREAU,
MAGDDALENA
MANDERLOVA,
FRIDA BLOMBERG,
ESPEN SOMMER EIDE,
OMAR JOHNSEN,
KNUT-OLAI MJØS
HELLE,
CRAIG WELLS,
OLE-ANDRÉ FARSTAD
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Craig Wells, Tijs Ham,
Julie Lillelien Porter

28.09–21.10
Cancamon
Exhibition
CARA TOLMIE
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter

23–27.10
Talk a bit, then we'll check
Sound piece
MALIN ELGAN
Lydgalleriet, Lydbenken
outside Lydgalleriet.
In collaboration with
Octoberdansk

02.11
Primær
Concert, performance
ESPEN T. HANGÅRD
Vestre. In collaboration
with EKKO

16–25.11
Innimellom er lyden stille
Multichannel installation,
exhibition
LINE HORNELAND
Lydgalleriet. Curated
by Mei Szetu and Julie
Lillelien Porter

2019

11.01–03.02
Speaking Signs
Exhibition
NORA ADWAN
Lydgalleriet. Curated
by Mei Szetu and Julie
Lillelien Porter

13.01
For One, For Many
Performance, concert
THOROLF THUESTAD,
ALWYNNE PRITCHARD,
JOSTEIN GUNDERSEN
Lydgalleriet, Østre. In
collaboration with
Neither Nor

08.02–03.03
Neonmeditasjoner
Exhibition, performance
PER HESS,
RISTO HOLOPAINEN
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter in
collaboration with Notam

15.02–07.04
Stereocilia for 2 Ears
Directional speaker piece
JACOB KIRKEGAARD
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated
by Julie Lillelien Porter
in collaboration with
Kunsthall 3.14

06.03–07.03
Lydarbeid i visningsrom
Workshop
JØRGEN LARSSON
Atelier Nord. In collabora-
tion with PNEK

07–31.03
Shaping Lines
Exhibition, performance
ICARO ZORBAR
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter in
collaboration with Borealis
– festival for
experimental music

05–28.04
Freaky Avant Garde
Exhibition
CARSTEN ANIKSDAL,
ANNE MARTHE DYVI,
EIRIK HAVNES,
ADMIR KORJENIC
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Admir Korjenic and Julie
Lillelien Porter

05.04
*Blue Rinse Freaky Avant
Garde Edition*
Performance, concert,
live sets
CARSTEN ANIKSDAL,
GUISEPPE PISANO,
MARIAM GVINIASHVILI,
ADIVAN (IDA NERBØ
AND IVAN PAULSEN),
ARTHUR HUREAU
Vestre. Curated by Craig
Wells, Tijs Ham and Julie
Lillelien Porter

26.04–09.06
*Combined National
Anthems*
Directional speaker piece
LAURIE LAX
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated
by Julie Lillelien Porter
in collaboration with
Kunsthall 3.14

10.05–02.06
Interferens
Exhibition, concert
GUNHILD MATHEA
OLAUSSEN, ANE
MARTHE SØRLIEN
HOLEN
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter

14.06
*Blue Rinse Summer Sonic
Edition*
Performance, concert,
live sets
ZENO VAN DEN BROEK,
ANDREA PARKINS, ERIN
SEXTON
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Craig Wells, Tijs Ham and
Julie Lillelien Porter

21.06–08.09
Plommehagepartitur
Directional speaker piece
ELIDA BRENNALINGE,
MARI KVIEN BRUNVOLL
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated
by Julie Lillelien Porter
in collaboration with
Kunsthall 3.14

16.08–15.09
Imaginalia Revisited (2019)
Exhibition
ESPEN SOMMER EIDE
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter

20.09–08.12
Shotgun Architecture
Directional speaker piece
JUSTIN BENNETT
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated
by Julie Lillelien Porter
in collaboration with
Kunsthall 3.14

04.10
*Blue Rinse Gentle Hearts
Edition, Performance,*
concert, live sets
SAMUEL BRZESKI,
KIM HANKYUL,
ANDREA URSTAD TOFT,
MRD, NEO BORNEO,
KRISTIN KESSLER
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Craig Wells, Tijs Ham and
Julie Lillelien Porter

08.11–01.12
Anthems
Exhibition
AMBER ABLETT
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter

2020

10.01–23.02
Long Distance
Improvisation in Real Time
Directional speaker piece
XIMENA ALARCON
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated
by Julie Lillelien Porter
in collaboration with
Kunsthall 3.14

10.01–02.02
Department of X
Exhibition
NANNA K. HOUGAARD
Lydgalleriet. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter

28–30.01
Lydarbeid i visningsrom
Workshop
JØRGEN LARSSON
Kunstnernes Hus.
In collaboration with PNEK

07.02–01.03
Skrivespillet
Exhibition
INGRID BERVEN,
CECILIE LØVEID
Lydgalleriet. In collaboration
with LittFest Bergen 2020

06.03–09.08
a financial story
Directional speaker piece
ARTHUR HUREAU
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

06–07.03
Ecstatic Material
Installation, performance
BEATRICE DILLON, KEITH
HARRISON
Lydgalleriet. In collaboration
with Borealis– festival for
experimental music

29.08–27.09
False Spring
Exhibition
THORA DOLVEN BALKE
Lydgalleriet. Curated by Julie
Lillelien Porter

04.09–25.10
Orogeny
Directional speaker piece
EMILIE WRIGHT
Kunsthall 3.14. Curated by
Julie Lillelien Porter in collabo-
ration with Kunsthall 3.14

SONIC GAME SPACE
 RAQUEL MEYERS
 JACOB SIKKER REMIN
 MARIEKE VERBIESEN
 ØSTRE 9. OKTOBER — 12. OKTOBER 2014

STEPHEN CORNFORD
 BINATONE GALAXY
 ØSTRE 22. FEBRUAR — 24. MARS

MAIA URSTAD PAUL
DEVENS
 28. FEBRUAR — 1. APRIL

KONSERT 19. JUNI KL. 21.00 50,-
JEFF CAREY

KONSERT 9. 10. & 12. MARS KL. 20.00
CATABOLIZER
 9. - 12. MARS

KONSERT TIR 9. NOVEMBER KL. 21.00 LANDMARK 70,-
BRUCE MCCLURE
GREG POPE
 LYD AV JOHN HEGRE

TOMOKO SAUVAGE
FLOE / FLOW
 ØSTRE 12 — 22 MARCH 2015

BERGEN TRACKS
DAVID HELBICH (BE)
 ØSTRE 19. MARS — 12. APRIL 2014

KOSMOS WURLITZER III
ÅNOND VERSTO
 ØSTRE 28. FEBRUAR — 16. MARS 2014

HOPE LAKE
 AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF MANLEY NATLAND
 21. JANUAR — 26. FEBRUAR

KONSERT 6. MARS KL. 21.00 50,-
PARALLAX

SWARF SERIES
 23. APRIL — 23. MAI

ATOM:
ROBERT HENKE & CHRISTOPH BAUDER
 DJ JØRGEN LARSSON
 TORSDAG 28. SEPTEMBER STUDIO BERGEN

KONSERT ØNS 20. NOVEMBER KL. 19.30 KJØBEREN 50,-
KJETIL MØSTER
MORTEN OLSEN
JOHN HEGRE

AL-KHOWARIZMIS
MEKANISKE ORKESTER
 22. MARS — 17. APRIL

ZIMOUN
 6. MAI - 5. JUNI

VINYL
 28. AUGUST — 27. SEPTEMBER

KONSERTSERIE MULTI PRESENTERER OMSLUTTENE LYDOPPLEVERSER
ANDERS VINJAR (NO)
AKE PARMERUD (SE)
LUDGER BRÜMMER (DE)
NATASHA BÄRRETT (NO/UK)
FERNANDO LOPEZ-LEZCANO (US)
 ØSTRE 26. JUNI TORSDAG KL. 20:00

KONSERT: HÅNDLAGET ELEKTRONIKK
NICOLAS COLLINS (US)
BERGEN IMPRO STORBAND
 ØSTRE 18. JAN LØRDAG KL 20:00



BYGGGALLERIET | HINDÅRD 14 14. | WWW.LYDGALLERIET.NO

PHOTOPHON
AERNOUDT JACOBS(BE)
 ØSTRE 19. MARS — 12. APRIL 2014



BYGGGALLERIET | HINDÅRD 14 14. | WWW.LYDGALLERIET.NO

SIRENS
 ANDRÉ AVELAS, MARK BAIN, RALPH BOURLAND, ALEC FINLAY OG CHRIS WATSON, RAVIN GANCHROW, MAX NEUHAUS
 JAMES SICKETT
 23. FEBRUAR — 16. MARS



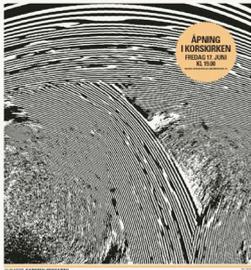
BYGGGALLERIET | HINDÅRD 14 14. | WWW.LYDGALLERIET.NO

ERWIN STACHE
APPARATUS
 2. OKTOBER — 8. NOVEMBER



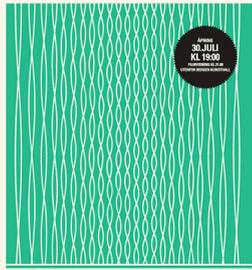
BYGGGALLERIET | HINDÅRD 14 14. | WWW.LYDGALLERIET.NO

ÅPNING I KORSKIRKEN
 FRIDAG KL 19:00
EXTENSIONS
 17. JULI — 17. JULI



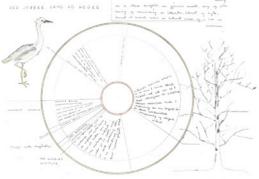
BYGGGALLERIET | HINDÅRD 14 14. | WWW.LYDGALLERIET.NO

ÅPNING
 30. JULI KL 19:00
BERGEN R1
 30. JULI — 26. SEPTEMBER



BYGGGALLERIET | HINDÅRD 14 14. | WWW.LYDGALLERIET.NO

LYDHORT PRESENTERER:
KAREN SKOG
JOHN HEGRE
 ØSTRE 7-29 JUNI 2014



BYGGGALLERIET | HINDÅRD 14 14. | WWW.LYDGALLERIET.NO

HOLIDAY IN ARCADIA
 CALVINWOLF BOLIGEN | JEAN CAIN & LADY LÉVINE | MAI HOFSTAD
 GUNNER & RYCHIC | SAKAMOTO HILJA | BJØRN-KOWALSKI HANSEN |
 KRISTIN NORDHØY | MARTIN SKAUGEN | SEX TAGE | ØYSTER KÅGAN |
 25. — 31. NOVEMBER | ÅPNING: TORSDAG 20. NOVEMBER KL 19:00



BYGGGALLERIET | HINDÅRD 14 14. | WWW.LYDGALLERIET.NO

COMPOSERS IN SPACE
 ROLF ANDRÉ ANDRÉ | BARRY THOMAS BRIDGE | THOMAS BRUNDELLO OG JØRGEN KARLSTROM | RAYMOND NIGAM STORV | ERIK ENK | HENRIK HANSEN | HENRIK MARSTADEN
 16. JANUAR — 15. FEBRUAR



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GORDON MONAHAN
 MUSIC FROM NOWHERE
 ØSTRE 24. JANUAR 2013 — 17. FEBRUAR 2013



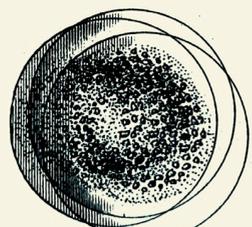
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BRANDON LABELLE
SCRIPT FOR A REHEARSAL
 4. APRIL — 4. MAI



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DRONES AND HEADPHONES
 20. FEBRUAR — 20. MARS



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JULEUTSTILLING
 LISE HERLAND, AIDUN ERIKSEN, KRISTOFFER MYRÅGA, JOHN HEGRE, JØRGEN TRICKEL, KASSE MARHAUG, KYE SEINER NIELSEN, BJØRNAR HARBESTAD, ESPEN SOMMER EICH, JØRGEN LARSSON
 1. — 23. DESEMBER



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**ZUUPER
 KILASSSIKK
 FITREANKYY
 AVANNIT
 CGARRUDE!**
 BJØRNAR HARBESTAD | PETH HENNINGSON | STEINAR SEKONSTAD
 MAJNDE PÁLSSON | MAIA URSTAD | MILDE HAUGA | JØRGEN ALBYNNE | PRITCHARD | THOROLF THØSTAD | JØRGEN LARSSON
 22. MAJ — 5. JULI 2009



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ALVIN LUCIER
 EMPTY VESSELS
 ØSTRE 17. JANUAR — 23. FEBRUAR 2014



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JEAN-PIERRE GAUTHIER:
EFFONDREMENTS / CRASH
 31. OKTOBER — 18. NOVEMBER



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INGVILD LANGGÅRD
WONDERS BEYOND YONDER
 10. OKTOBER — 9. NOVEMBER



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FELIX THORN
FELIX'S MACHINES
 17. APRIL — 1. MAI 2009



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Thora Dolven Balke,
False Spring, 2020.
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