dive into an antrum of a constantly changing fluid universe, revealing inaudible yet vaguely familiar worlds. The work acts as a network activated at different points in space; it is organic and relational, prompting dialogue between the attending elements—sounds, sculpture, visitor—that come together to create a whole in its own right. Lines of force and listening paths are created, altered and replayed.

Our relationship to sound within The Circulation of Fluids [1] is closely linked to the work’s materiality and its connection to space and time. To produce the audio document, we numerically captured variations in movement and distance generated by the 11 sonars placed near the horns. Since each sonar is associated with a loudspeaker and an independent audio source, we have also recorded the sounds transmitted through the 11 paper horns. By using the same computer program as in the installation process, we have collected 11 audio tracks resulting from the variations in volume produced by the sonars and mixed them in stereo. Through this technique, we created the audio piece here, which represents, as far as possible, the diffusion and listening context of The Circulation of Fluids.

Note


Catherine Béchard and Sabin Hudon form an artists’ duo who live and work in Montreal in the fields of sound sculpture, kinetic sound installations, audio art, electronic art and performance. Animated objects and their components have been at the heart of their research and creation from the very beginning. They are interested in listenership through resonance itself (resonance as source and reception), in acoustically generated sounds/noises, their propagation and the impressions they create, as well as the things and empty spaces that make up our perceptual fields. By assembling the fleeting pull-forces that sight, touch and sound exert on each other, the duo realizes works that attempt to make visible and audible trivial details of our everyday microcosm. These are shaped by the space environment itself as well as the motion or stillness of people in their installations. The duo’s works put into perspective the transient and ever-changing nature of things and beings as well as our temporal presence in the world. Their collaborative works have been featured in solo and group exhibitions throughout major Canadian cities, the Czech Republic, Brazil, the United States and Germany.

Maia Urstad: Meanwhile, in Shanghai... 
Stereo remix of site-specific sound installation created by the composer, 2011–2013.

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Meanwhile, in Shanghai... is a site-specific sound installation that I have been developing since 2011. It was created for the European sound art network Resonance, and was exhibited in five European cities between 2011 and 2012. Each exhibition situation has been different in character and appearance—from an acoustically dry garage in a former tobacco factory in Riga to a reverberant, white space at Singuhr Sound Gallery in Berlin. The work has thus been adapted both visually and sonically to each new space. The installation employs dozens of portable radios, suspended on long steel strings from the gallery ceiling, each playing a multichannel sound composition consisting of recordings of radio transmissions from around the world. This audio is transmitted wirelessly via local FM transmitters to the radios, creating a rich spatial environment. The radios appear as personalities with stickers, stains and traces of different owners, and with a variety of designs, from 1960s transistor radios to 1980s square boombox marvels to the pocket radios of today—all the latest smashing hi-tech wonders of the day they hit the market, ending up in ruins after 5 years of use. Each speaker gives a rich variety of sound quality; upon entering the installation, the visitor comes into close contact with these properties, which reflect the relationships among technological development and physical movement, proximity and distance, and notions of globality and contemporaneity.

The title Meanwhile, in Shanghai... was inspired by the way that thought bubbles in comics describe illusory time—and place—movement; the title just as easily could have been: Simultaneously, in Baltimore... or Later, Somewhere near Cairo... For this work I collected radio clips referring to concrete places and times: 23 Uhr in Deutschland, Cinco de la Mañana en Madrid, or 7:00 in Nova Scotia. These clips are joined to form a composition, along with recordings of other radio-specific, unintended sounds such as white noise, crackles and interference. The polyphony of voices, tones, buzz and noise forms a backdrop for on-air specific explorations about time and place—a phonogram of a 24-hour cycle on the air.

Fig. 3. Maia Urstad, Meanwhile, in Shanghai... site-specific sound installation of dozens of portable radios suspended on long steel strings from the gallery ceiling, each playing a multi-channel sound composition consisting of recordings of radio transmissions from around the world, at Singuhr Sound Gallery, Berlin, 2012. (Photo © Cyan, <www.cyan.de>.)
Contemporaneity is the thematic point of departure; our living contemporaneity is consciously invoked by the radio. The radio follows the day like a clock, where hourly news updates provide us with a shared routine that synchronizes the rhythm of everyday life [1]. Tuning between stations, this contemporaneity changes with the world’s time zones, and each hour has a distinct character. At any time, one can, from one’s local space somewhere on the globe, tune into the daily rhythms of different time zones and visit all places at all times. Today, we assume that the world lives in one global time in a universal existence. But—economically as well as ecologically, we are simultaneously connected to people who find themselves in completely different daily realities and environments.

The installation invites the audience to move between the radios in the exhibition space, with the sound changing as one moves. The track on this CD presents a stereo remix intended for headphone listening. It is thus a specific work for close-range listening—the experience of being inside the installation is replaced with a pure auditory experience.

Reference

Maia Urstad is an artist working at the intersection of audio and visual art, predominantly with sound installations and performances. She was educated at the Bergen National Academy of The Arts and also has a background in rock music. Her recent work interrogates the history and methodology of communication technology: from Morse code and other long-range signals to digital terrestrial networks and the use of fiber optics. Radio is a central theme in her work, in that the authority of the medium opens up visual and conceptual possibilities. Urstad’s solo and collaborative work has been presented at spaces such as Singularity Sound Gallery, Berlin, Germany; Reina Sofia Radio, Madrid, Spain; Bergen Art Museum, Norway; Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa; Prefix ICA in Toronto, Canada; Mamam do Patio, Recife, Brazil; and Electrolyte at Malmö Konsthall, Sweden. Urstad curates and produces art projects through her company Maur Projects, and she is one of the founders of Lydgalleriet Sound Art Gallery in Norway. She is a member of the international sound art collective freq-out, curated by CM von Hausswolff, and her soundworks are published by Touch Music [MCPS].

TANIA CANDIANI: SOUND PIECE FROM PLATAFORMA SONORA/TORRE RELOJ

Forty-eight alarm clocks recorded in a studio, with 48 aluminum trumpets, 48 speakers, three amplifiers and metal structure, Condesa D.F., Mexico City, 2012.

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This work is an architec tonic and sound intervention. My intention was to reflect on the present and on memory, on our activities and schedules, on sleep and rest. With this piece I wanted to explore the possibility of manipulating the perception of time and its sound. If at a symbolic level we use mechanical and programmed rhythms, such as the sounds and melodies of old alarm clocks, as metaphors for the elasticity of time, the physical properties also allow us to talk about continuous symmetries and time translation. Between the two levels, the piece works as much in its capacity for connecting harmonic qualities as in its manifestation of the potential energy stored in the sound waves. To view a video of the installation, see <https://vimeo.com/43941806>.

MENDI + KEITH OBA DIKE: AUTOMATIC

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Automatic is at once a sound art meditation on hip-hop techniques and an homage to the intersecting work of two painters. Keith recorded himself performing words found in the paintings of Raymond Saunders and Jean-Michel Basquiat, and we used the textures and rhythms of those recordings as the foundation of the composition. We riff on these artists as they riff on others. This imaginary sonic meeting (of the more senior West Coast painter Saunders with East Coast painter Basquiat) was created in a real-time performance (not unlike a studio dub mix) with a number of filters from an early hardware-based digital mixer and a customized granular processor.

Both Saunders and Basquiat are famous for employing the language and techniques of graffiti and are well known for creating works that pull from ideas from the street and the gallery. As in hip-hop, Saunders’s and Basquiat’s specific ways of employing found objects are key parts of their own voices.