

1st SEM SOUNDING BOARD

December, 2015 ♦ Austin, TX ♦ The Companion Gallery

December 3-6, 2015
3-8 pm

The Companion Gallery (next to the Wright Bros. Brew & Brew)
908 E 5th St #106
Austin TX 78702, five blocks from the Hilton Hotel

This collective sound exhibit showcases the creative work of scholars attentive to the spatial, acoustemological, and ethnographic potential of sound. This SEM SOUNDING BOARD aims at operating in the interstices between sound-as-episteme and sound-as-performance, sound-as-symbol and sound-as-affect, sound-as-ethnography and sound-as-art.

The exhibit is an opportunity for sound-minded scholars to:

- *explore* other avenues to circulate advanced or incipient research projects
- *deploy* the sound installation as an acoustemological tool to understand unattended research horizons
- *reflect* on ethnography as a process, for instance by making use of audiovisual material collected during fieldwork
- *collaborate* with other sound-minded people, such as ethnographic collaborators and scholars working on similar topics or places
- *stimulate* dialogue between ethnomusicology and other academic fields such as sound studies, sound art, ecomusicology, anthropology, and media studies
- *establish* a point of contact between SEM and the local community during the annual meeting

The first edition of SEM SOUNDING BOARD displays nine sound works that probe into sonic in-placements (water and wind), sonic displacements (the telephone, the radio, and the microphone), sonic emplacements (the acoustic territories of urban Taiwan, the Brazilian hinterlands, and West Texas), and sonic mix-placements (in Mexico City and Havana).

Leonardo Cardoso
1st SEM SOUNDING BOARD Curator
Co-chair, Sound Studies Special Interest Group, Society for Ethnomusicology

Works

I – SONIC IN-PLACEMENTS

Pool of Sound

Lina Dib (Rice University)
Navid Navab



Pool of Sound, is an interactive two channel sound installation. As visitors walk through this dynamic area, they push the sound of water with their bodies. The enchanted zone literally becomes a pool of sound where sound becomes substance, something to be physically and playfully encountered. In other words, sound with this installation becomes palpable, sound is made (in)to matter. The larger the visitors' gestures, the louder and stronger the sound

of water becomes. Their bodies leave no traces except those of the sound waves created by their presence. Unlike sight, sound is immersive and simultaneous. It physically hits and penetrates. It bundles us with it. It requires and even creates our presence, such that we are not in front of something, but within it. In Jean-Luc Nancy's words: "Sound has no hidden face; it is all in front, in back, and outside inside, inside-out."

Wind Noise

Marina Peterson (Ohio University)

These are recordings of wind noise: the always unwanted sound, the "noise" that disrupts, obscures, erases content. (Everyone uses windscreens.) They are an engagement with the transparency of the microphone, as common to both noise measurement and field recording. They are an effort to reveal the microphone as technology by disrupting it. Wind noise is sound as touch – this is the sound produced by touching the microphone, whether by finger, breath, or air.

These recordings do not capture the sound of wind, but the sound wind makes on the microphone. The sound the microphone makes when touched by wind. Though electronic, the sound is not uniform. Wind is a force with variation. Wind masks, but not fully. We can hear sounds connected indexically to their source: Cars pass by. Planes fly overhead.

These recordings are process, methodological: an investigation of the microphone. They are a way of learning about microphones and the recording devices to which they are attached. They are a way of experiencing sound as subjective sensation and objective measurement. They are about atmosphere and im/materialities – forms and forces of energy.

II - SONIC DISPLACEMENTS

The Schizophone

Schizophone lead: Craig Campbell (UT Austin)

Schizophone calling Son Jarocho collaborators: Julian Etienne, Juan-Pablo Gonzalez, Cameron Quevedo

The Schizophone project foregrounds the archival encounter over deep histories, pointing to the inimitable complexity of everyday life at the anxious moment of its disappearance. This work builds on R. Murray Shafer's 'schizophonia' to signal the profound but also banal experience of listening to recorded sound. The schizophone recruits the telephone--a mundane, though now largely residual technology--to frame and structure an encounter with archival recordings. We encourage serious play in the archive as an antidote to the strict sobriety that dominates much of archival research. The Schizophonic Archive attempts to resuscitate affect through a studious attention to the sonorous encounter with the listening body in space. The term schizophonic is meant to draw our attention to here/now and then/there effect of meeting audio documents; of thinking about the act of listening to the sensuous particularity of a recording event. The written word is predictably flawed when employed to describe the audible. The sensuous richness of sound is necessarily flattened, contorted, rendered thin, and ultimately other in the mediatizing processes of historical description and writing. We explore in this work the idea that to listen, even naively, is to brush more closely to the event of the past. Finally the project toys with the locality of the archive, the mobility of archival records, and the human encounter with the archival machine itself. The schizophone performs temporal and spatial disjunctures where one ear is here and one ear is 'there.'

The Schizophone is an access point to an archive of field recordings and with this iteration we present an archive of recordings associated with Son Jarocho music from Mexico. This archive is less a study of Son Jarocho than an exploration of the collection and dissemination of this cultural form as well as its production as a category of musical performance.

Radio Texas International: a Micro Radio Station in the Austin Wavescape

Tom Miller (Berkeley College)

Tuning the radio dial, an interface for calibrating and navigating the frequency spectrum, enacts a manual and auditory mapping of imagined places onto invisible space. During the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Austin I will operate a low power Mini FM Micro Radio station in the gallery or host venue. Tuning to open frequencies, a legal micro power transmitter will broadcast to receivers distributed within a 200-foot radius as a hyperlocal, pop-up intervention into the FM band. Using headsets, listeners will tune the radio dials seeking to locate the signal interspersed with the music, religious broadcasts, news, foreign language programming and static of the local radio wavescape. Program material includes original transcriptions and experimental remixes of wax cylinders from ethnographic archives in Berlin, Vienna, and New York; original field recordings; shortwave interval signals, and other radiophonic elements including audio producer David Goren's mixes of Peruvian shortwave operators, Brooklyn Caribbean FM pirates, and others. Guest DJs, musicians, and others connected to the SEM conference and the Austin music scene will be invited to join us on the air for live performances and interviews.



III - SONIC EMPLACEMENTS

Dry Signals

Michael Silvers (UIUC)

"Dry Signals" explores the sounds of drought in northeastern Brazil. From trickling reservoir spillways to the auguring call of the laughing falcon, from the *aboio* cattle calls of farmers to the music and shuffling feet of dance parties in dusty fields, these sounds tell stories of labor, birds, politics, agriculture, plants, mass media, corruption, water, and the quotidian experience of life in the semi-arid Brazilian hinterlands.

雜 (dza)

Emily Wang (University of Toronto)

Wendy Hsu (Dpt. of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles)

Two ethnographers explore the meaning of “雜 (dza)” through materializing the mixed, blended, miscellaneous, and insignificant odds and ends of sounds in Taiwan. Crossing the public and the intimate, the artistic and the pragmatic, the structural and the tactical, this sound installation creates incidental “acoustic pockets” throughout Studium. We will produce an ad hoc, lowtech installation with 10-15 pairs of headphones connected to mobile listening devices, each playing a loop. Recomposing with field recordings of Taiwanese night markets and their kaleidoscopic cacophony of popular culture and the ethnographers’ personal/professional histories, we create sound loops that go in and out of sync with each other. These composed loops recontextualize the sonic materiality of the informal economy and quotidian life exemplified at a Taiwanese night market, and interact with the spatial and sonic elements of the venue and its role within the emerging art-as-enterprise share economy.

Resting Place

Michael Austin (Howard University)

I grew up on the high plains of the Texas Panhandle, and in my adolescence I spent many hours of solitude out in the country - resting, reflecting, relaxing - beneath enormous skies and countless stars, trying to envision my place in the world. *Resting Place* is based on the old cowboy song "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie." Not only does this work confront listeners with thoughts of mortality and final resting places, it embodies the wide open spaces of my childhood home and serves as a place of peace and relief for the here and now. This piece also presents an audio allusion to the cowboy culture of Texas (especially West Texas and the Panhandle). Using one Holosonics AudioSpotlight AS-24i speaker installed in the ceiling, the piece will play in a continual loop. Because of the speaker’s hyper-directionality, the audio can only be heard when listeners are standing directly beneath the speaker.

IV - SONIC MIX-PLACEMENTS

Derrumbeat: The Beats of Collapse

Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier (University of Victoria)

DJ El Jigüe

Smilé / Smahh !?!



This audio-visual work has been made in collaboration with two electronic musicians (El Jigüe from La Havana and Smilé / Smahh !?! from Montreal) and myself, an anthropologist. The project came as I was conducting fieldwork in Cuba in 2012 and 2013 about electronic music, digital music circulation and consumption. El Jigüe and I visited an abandoned building located in Centro Havana, which belonged to the RCA Victor Records before the Revolution. We fell in love with the abandoned site and began to record sounds of falling rocks, cements and sticks. We also recorded musicians

playing in the building. *Derrumbeat: The Beats of Collapse* is made of two beats. The first one is called *Derumbeat* and is the result of a first composition made by DJ Jigüe made with the sounds recorded in situ. The second composition is called *Derrumbeat: The Remix* and is a composition made by Smilé / Smahh !?! with the same original sounds collected in Havana.

El Caracol: A Stroll through Space and Time in Mexico City

Anthony Rasmussen (UC Riverside)

The megalopolis of Mexico City is experienced by many who live there as a network of 'known' places, laden with both personal memory and collective meaning. Sounds provide inhabitants with a powerful means of navigation: the unique calls of street vendors, song fragments, speech, and protest chants echolocate the listener within a vast spatiotemporal grid. The title of this piece ("the snail") refers to the prolific spiral motif in Mesoamerican cosmology and alludes to a non-linear vision of time and space.



Guests are invited to sit at a desk, put on headphones, and peer into a viewing hole in a box containing a small monitor. Audio-visual material is organized in a 20-minute loop. The video element consists of footage captured while walking through various sites in Mexico City and represents the phenomenological 'present'. The audio element provides a counterpoint to the visual; as the loop begins the audio corresponds to the action on screen, but with increasing frequency (based on the "Fibonacci Spiral") the contemporary sounds will be 'ruptured' by historical recordings of Mexico City that drift further back in time. Thus this instillation provides an artistic representation of the discursive relationship between sensory experience, memory, and sense of place.

Contributors

Michael Austin is Assistant Professor of Media, Journalism, and Film at Howard University in Washington, D.C. where he teaches courses in radio, music production, and sound design for film and video games; he also serves as coordinator for the School of Communication's Interdisciplinary Studies Program. He holds an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Humanities - Aesthetic Studies (with specialization in Arts and Technology) from UT-Dallas where he wrote his dissertation on the phenomenological analysis of sound art. As an active composer/arranger/sound artist, Austin has written for chamber ensembles, choirs, vocal and instrumental soloists, film, new media, museum exhibitions, and sound installations. His sound art works have been exhibited at the Dallas Museum of Art, White Box (NYC), UT-Dallas, and at the 2015 annual conference of the University Film and Video Association in Washington, D.C. His research focuses on sound and music in new and emerging media; he is currently working on two book projects: one is an edited collection on music video games (Bloomsbury Academic Press), and the other is a monograph on representations of subalterity in music videos (Oxford University Press).

Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier is Professor of Visual Anthropology at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada. She directed two audio-visual installations presented at Ethnographic Terminalia: *Echo – the first tie* exhibited in Montreal (2011), and *DataTrack* in Washington DC (2014). She produced the films *Golden Scars* (2010; 61') and *State the Rhythm* (2008; 53') about music and youth in Cuba, and more recently, co-directed *Fabrik Funk* (2015; 25') an ethno-fiction about funk music in São Paulo, Brazil.

Craig Campbell is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Texas, Austin. He is actively involved in producing works that span the range of expository and experimental writing to art exhibition and curation. He is a curator with Ethnographic Terminalia (www.ethnographicterminalia.org); his second book *Agitating Images* was published by University of Minnesota Press in 2014. More about his work can be seen on his website: www.metafactory.ca

Lina Dib is a Houston based multimedia artist and anthropologist. She is an affiliate artist at the Topological Media Lab at Concordia University and she teaches at Rice University. She has received grants and awards from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Canada's Social Science and Humanities Research Council, AMIDA's European training program, and Rice University's Humanities Research Center. Recent publications include *The Forgetting Dis-ease: Making Time Matter (differences)*, *Of Promises and Prototypes: The Archeology of the Future (LIMN)*. Recent exhibits include Hierarchy Gallery, Washington DC; Lawndale Art Center, Houston; Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco; MOP Projects, Sydney; and The Museum of Fine Arts Houston.

Julian Etienne is a doctoral student in the Radio-Television-Film department at the University of Texas at Austin. His interests include media, technology and culture; memory practices and digital media as well as non-theatrical cinema and media heritages in Latin America. Currently he is conducting research on non-theatrical cinema, 16mm film and media repositories in Mexico.

DJ Jigüe is a member of the Cuban jazz group Yissy & Bandancha and composes experimental beats deeply influenced by his Afro-Cuban roots. He lives in Havana and is the director of an artists' collective called Guampara Music.

Navid Navab is a Montreal based media alchemist, composer/improviser, audiovisual sculptor, gesture bender, and multidisciplinary artist. His pieces, which take on the form of gestural compositions, responsive architecture, theatrical interactive installations, site-specific interventions, and multimodal improv-based performances, have been presented at festivals and venues including McCord Museum, Musée d'art Contemporain de Montréal, Musiikin Aika Finland, Canadian Center for Architecture, Festival du Nouveau Cinema, Shanghai eArts, MUMUTH Austria, Roulette New York, Western Front Vancouver,

Timisoara Romania, Museum Fine Arts Houston, International Digital Arts Biennial, CURRENTS New Media Festival Santa Fe, dance: made in canada/fait au canada' festival (d:mic/fac), Festival international Montréal/Nouvelles Musiques, Galleri Monopoli ChampLibre Montreal, CINARS Biennale, Electric Eclectics Festival Meaford, Pop Montreal, Monument-National TANGENTE, and CCRMA Palo Alto.

Wendy Hsu is an ethnomusicologist and sound ethnographer working on public humanities and civic design projects. Hsu has published on digital ethnography, sound-based pedagogy, public humanities, open access publishing, Asian American indie rock, Yoko Ono, Taqwacore, and Bollywood. Her recent research on street music-culture in postcolonial Taiwan focuses on the urban underclass experience of mobility and low-resource technology. Her civic arts data project LA Listens (<http://lalistens.org>) explores the sensory, social, and ecological aspects of Los Angeles streets by providing a creative and engagement platform for community-oriented artists, planners, and organizers. Combining her interest in sound research and civic art, she co-founded Movable Parts, a maker collective that reimagines public spaces in Los Angeles. Hsu received her PhD in the Critical and Comparative Studies in Music program at the University of Virginia and currently works as a digital strategist with the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs after completing her ACLS Public Fellowship at the department.

Tom Miller is Professor of Social Sciences and Humanities in the School of Liberal Arts at Berkeley College in New York City, and director of Brooklyn-based Ninth World Music and Curatorial Consulting. He has a B.A. in music from Wesleyan University, studied ethnomusicology at the University of Washington and received the M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Anthropology from Columbia University. His current research focuses on early ethnographic sound archives, the history of phonographic anthropology and the music of shamans in the circumpolar north. A National Endowment for the Arts award-winning sound artist, he has created installations and mixed media performances at Franklin Furnace, Hierarchy Gallery in Washington DC, and the Linden State Museum of Ethnology in Stuttgart, Germany among many other venues. Dr. Miller has curated exhibitions with the American Museum of Natural History, Anchorage Museum of History and Art, Proteus Gowanus and Ethnographic Terminalia, and produced radio programs for WKCR-FM New York, KRAB-FM Seattle, and Pulse of the Planet. His work has been published by University of Washington Press, Smithsonian Institution Press, Rolling Stone Press, Dietrich Reimer Verlag and numerous others. He has taught at NYU's Clive Davis Institute for Recorded Music, Rutgers University-Newark, SUNY Empire State College, Pratt Institute and Drew University. Past residencies include the American Philosophical Society Library, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Bates College Department of Theatre and Rhetoric and the University of Iceland. SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/thomas-ross-miller>

Marina Peterson is associate professor of performance studies in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts at Ohio University. An anthropologist, her research focuses on the sensory politics of sound, energy, and infrastructure in Los Angeles and Appalachian Ohio. She is the author of *Sound, Space, and the City: Civic Performance in Downtown Los Angeles* (2010) and coeditor of *Global Downtowns* (2012) and "Audio Work: Labor, Value, and the Making of Musical Aesthetics," a special issue of *Journal of Popular Music Studies* (2012). Her work has appeared in *Anthropological Quarterly*, *O-Zone: A Journal of Object-Oriented Studies*, *Space and Culture*, *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, and *Urban Anthropology*. Her musical practice focuses on exploring the sonic materiality of the cello through experimental improvisation. She has recorded for *Die Schachtel* (with Ossatura and Gene Coleman) and *Striking Mechanism* (Solo Series). She has worked with a range of artists working in diverse media, including Joe Adamik, Jim Baker, Jonathan Chen, Gene Coleman, Mike Cooper, the daKAH Hip Hop Orchestra, Luc Ferrari, Mariella Greil, David Grubbs, Mazen Kerbaj, Yan Jun, Toshimaru Nakamura, Ossatura, Christine Sehnaoui, Ken Ueno, and Taku Unami.

Cameron Quevedo is a documentary filmmaker and ethnomusicologist currently based in Austin, Texas. His work explores issues of visual representation, community-based media production and transnational expressions of cultural heritage, including music and dance. He has directed a number of short documentary films in Mexico and the U.S., including *Violineros: Voz de la Sierra de los Tuxtlas* and *Lanza En El Aire Una Espiga*. Cameron is currently pursuing an MFA in Film Production at the University of Texas

and holds an MC in Indigenous Documentary Film and an MA in Ethnomusicology from the University of Washington in Seattle.

Anthony Rasmussen is a Ph.D. candidate in ethnomusicology at UC Riverside. His dissertation research concerns sound studies in contemporary Mexico City and explores acoustic representations of power, identity, and knowledge within the discursive circuits of subject and society. Anthony holds a MFA in Integrated Composition, Improvisation, and Technology from UC Irvine and has composed for film, a range of traditional and non-traditional ensembles, and has collaborated with members of the Eclipse String Quartet, Silk Road Ensemble, and the John Fogerty Band. Currently, Anthony is singer/songwriter for the experimental pop group, The Fantastic Toes. Anthony Rasmussen has received the UC MEXUS Dissertation Research Grant (2015-2016), the UCR Chancellor's Distinguished Fellowship (2012-2015), and is the first recipient of the Manolito Romero Memorial Award – granted in support of Iberian/Latin American dissertation research (2014-2015).

Michael Silvers is an assistant professor of ethnomusicology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His work has appeared in *Ethnomusicology* and *Vibrant: Virtual Brazilian Anthropology*, and he is currently writing a book called *Voices of Drought: Forró Soundscapes in Northeastern Brazil*. He is a 2015 fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies and a 2015-17 junior fellow of the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory at UIUC.

Smilé / Smahh !?! is one of the most prolific rappers and beatmakers from Montreal. He is active among the K6A collective as well as in the Montreal electro-experimental scene for his various performances at Artbeat. He owns a sound company based in Montreal called Studio Quai#6.

Yun Emily Wang is a PhD candidate in Ethnomusicology at the University of Toronto. Her doctoral dissertation is on the role(s) of sound (of music, of speech, and of the quotidian) and listening in the home-making process among diasporic Chinese in Toronto.

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