This collective sound exhibit showcases the creative work of scholars attentive to the spatial, acoustemological, and ethnographic potential of sound. SEM SOUNDING BOARD challenges distinctions between sound-as-episteme and sound-as-performance, sound-as-ethnography and sound-as-art. The exhibit is an opportunity for sound-minded scholars to:

- **explore** other avenues to circulate their main or incipient research projects
- **deploy** the sound installation as an acoustemological tool to understand unattended research horizons
- **reflect** on their fieldwork, for instance by making use audiovisual material collected in the field
- **create** collaborations with other sound-minded people, such as ethnographic collaborators and other scholars working on similar topic or place
- **stimulate dialogue** between ethnomusicology and other fields, especially 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 – SEM  
Lecturer, Texas A&M University and UT-Austin

**When**  
December 3-6, 2015, 3:00-8:00 pm

**Where**  
[Studium Record Store](#)  
908 E 5th St #106 → just five blocks from the Hilton Hotel  
Austin TX 78702
Studium is a co-disciplinary space for art and objects from Punctum Records and Books and Byron & Blue, as well as Wright Bros. Brew and Brew, Stowe Provisions, and Attendance Records.

Works

I – SONIC IN-PLACEMENTS

Pool of Sound

Lina Dib (Rice University)

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)
Schizophren 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 Schizophrenic 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
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 EMLACEMENTS

**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 Jigüé

Smilé / Smahh !?!?

This audio-visual work has been made in collaboration with two electronic musicians (El Jigüé 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 Jigüé 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 Smilê / Smahh I?! 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.