

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART STRIVES



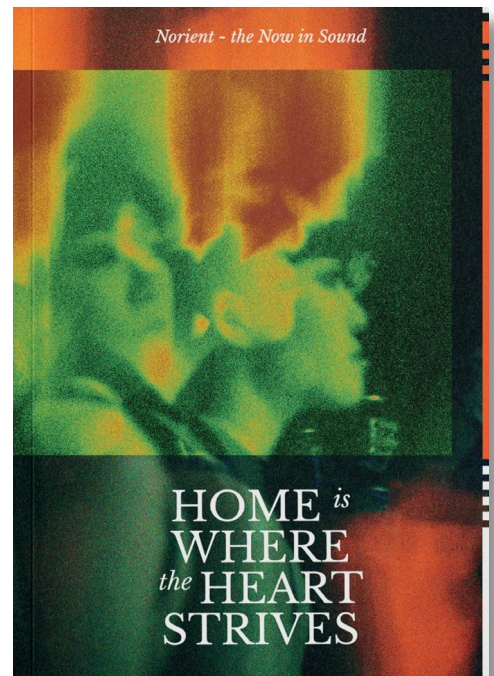
*How does listening shape a place –
and how does a place shape listening?*

*How do global nationalism, politics
and wars influence music and art?*

*How can unbearable living conditions
inspire ideas of unactualized places?*

—

The new Norient book *Home is Where the Heart Strives* explores what place means in relation to music and sound. 85 contributors from 38 countries map their sonic landscapes of migration, war, queerness, and home through essays, poems, articles, artworks, photos, and songs. From a metalhead smuggling banned tapes across the Syrian border to an oasis in the mountains of Bogotá where people gather to vogue, we are looking for places where differences don't dissolve but resonate.



Home is Where the Heart Strives
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Kadallah Burrowes, Thasil Suhara Backer,
and more thinkers and artists worldwide.

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BOOKS



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As I write this, bombs are stealing
people from houses
As I write this, ghosts of forgotten
dreams are waiting to surprise me
As I write this, the bass transforms
dread into pleasure
As I write this, Bell Hooks calls out
the crowned fools on X
As I write this, my skin is longing for
the breeze of your breath
As I write this, a jazz band is playing
6 milliseconds off the beat
As I write this, coherence is exposed
as a lie from the 90s when everyone
wore jeans and a T-shirt
As I write this, the moon isn't shining
until it's reflected in broken glass
As I write this, the sound is
listening to you
it hears all these feelings
without words
all the resentments you were taught
and now turn against yourself
and the quiet thrill of staying
with the dissonance
I swear

Home is where the heart is, but
place is where the heart strives.
A place – like this book,
perhaps – where writers and
artists worldwide explore
meanings of place through
queerness, connection, sorrow,
dancing, exile, love, and
resistance. Where differences
don't dissolve but resonate.

Philipp Rhensius

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HOME IS WHERE THE HEART STRIVES



BOOKS

Norient - the Now in Sound

HOME *is*
WHERE
the HEART
STRIVES

FROM SHAMISEN TO KAYAMBA



Artwork: dudusquad

SALLY GARAMA

ESSAY

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After growing up in Japan, Sally, a Kenyan teenager, wanted to reconnect with Kenyan music upon returning home, while dealing with the meaning of that term, «home». In the process, she came to terms with her multicultural experience and identity.

Unamed City, Japan, 2002. Sandwiched between my brother and sister in the back of the family car. I watched my dad sift through a CD album and place his choice in the CD player. A chorus of groans would rise from the back as E-Sir's music began to emanate from the speakers. He was a big deal back home.

I wondered why dad insisted on this ritual because outside of the vehicle and culture festivals held at school, my life did not depend on my knowledge of Swahili musicians, but rather, on how fast I could assimilate into Japanese culture and understand the American education system. Picture it. A Kenyan child with an American accent belting out a Japanese song based on folklore taught earlier that week in preparation for setsubun — a Japanese holiday celebrated at the beginning of Spring.

Back Home: Foreign

Returning to Kenya in 2006, I often spoke with varying levels of fascination at the differences between Japan and Kenya. When I realized we would not return to Japan, I started to adapt. However, in many ways, I was still a foreigner to my classmates and larger family. In those moments when it got to me, I found solace in Linkin Park and Coldplay. From time to time, I stumbled across a song by a local musician playing on the radio. While I understood the language, I would politely request that the station be changed, wondering how the radio hosts would praise what to me sounded like a clumsy imitation of popular music at the time.

Confirming My Plurality

Ngugi wa Thiong'o said that life was a battle of «...the forces that are pledged to confirm our humanity and those determined to dismantle it.» Looking back, I can see my father was attempting to renegotiate the domineering presence of Western music in my life. By then I adored how much alternative rock could capture and express my feelings. So much so that the style of metaphors and lyricism would creep into my work and sense of self. For the longest time, «Somewhere I Belong» (Linkin Park 2003) was the embodiment of my teenage years.

Growing up, love and affection were expressed through material possessions and food. When I entered university in Nairobi, peers and

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FROM SHAMISEN TO KAYAMBA

«We have to work with what we have. That's the biggest challenge in Kenya: staying inspired and not feeling jaded.»

Karun, is a Nairobi-based R&B/soul artist. The quote is taken from the Nairobi episode of the podcast series *TIMEZONES* by Norient and the Goethe-Institut, curated and produced by Thomas Burkhalter, released on October 1, 2020.

WHAT IS KOREAN ABOUT K-POP?



Artwork: Kai Oh

K-pop is a genre primarily identified with the place of its origin: South Korea. This essay attempts to analyse the relationship between place and sound: How do they shape each other? Does K-pop «sound Korean»? And what would this mean?

Defining what makes K-pop Korean is no easy feat. The debate is ongoing and lacks consensus, especially as the genre evolves and gains more and more popularity beyond its national borders. First of all, K-pop is neither produced nor performed exclusively by people of Korean nationality or ethnicity: for instance, some of its most famous faces include Lisa from the girl group Blackpink, who is Thai, and Sana from Twice, who is Japanese, and many of the producers behind the scenes come from all over the world. Notably, Erika de Casier, a Portuguese-born Danish singer-songwriter known in the underground music scene for her experimental pop, is credited as a writer and composer on a few tracks by the latest K-pop sensation, the girl group NewJeans. Secondly, K-pop is not solely sung in Korean. From its inception, its lyrics have often mixed Korean with English and included words and catchphrases in other languages as well. Songs are also often translated into Japanese and Chinese to enter those markets more swiftly, and today, more and more tracks are being released with full lyrics in English, often to get radio play in the Western world.

A specific K-pop sound is hard to pinpoint. Unlike genres such as reggaeton, for instance, which is instantly recognizable by a specific drum pattern, K-pop lacks a distinct rhythm: songs can be in a variety of tempos and styles. From dance pop to R&B to even afrobeats in recent times, K-pop constantly draws from a diverse array of musical influences worldwide. While there have been songs incorporating traditional Korean music elements, such as «Daechwita» by Agust D aka Suga of BTS, which samples the sound of a piece of old Korean military music, or Stray Kids' «소리꾼 Thunderous», which is inspired by *pansori*, a form of musical storytelling, K-pop is a genre encompassing a multitude of others, both local and foreign.



The night writes the stories
by itself into the film reel of my camera.

Constant Value #27 is an experimental Techno party
series and label in Seoul, South Korea. This photo was
taken in 2018.

Lieux de Voix

by Sasha Langford

listen closely to my voice:

you will hear a child crawl out
of my mouth.

you will hear a first cry.

you will hear a cut
and what tears,
both perineum and pressure.

my voice –

never not a ledger
of gauze
and daylight
and blood.

never not a document of milk,
and scissors,
and singing.

my voice tells me that skin
is the same thing
as listening.

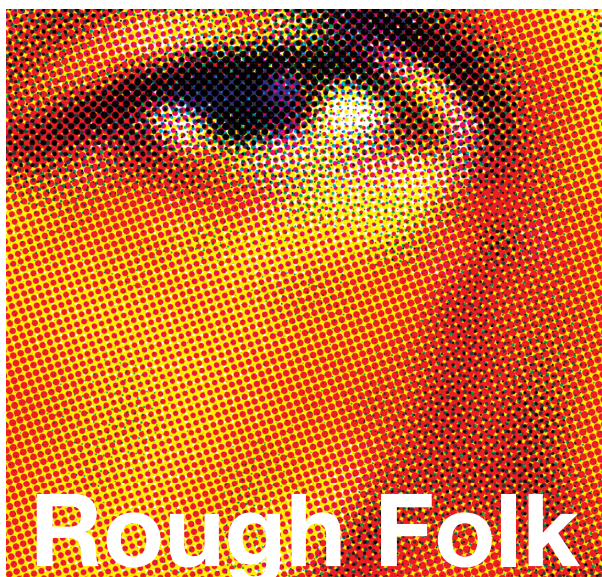
my voice tells me
to forgive my mother:

it's not her fault
she made me audible.

it's not her fault
she made me able
to be alone.

RECOVERING SAMPLE AUTHORSHIP: THE CASE OF SOHAN LAL

As digital samplers became more prominent during the 1990s, the «soundware» industry grew, providing sample libraries for music producers to use in their derivative works. South Asian sounds have long occupied a place in this market while being advertised as «world» sounds. Here, Chris McGuinness discusses the case of Sohan Lal, a Punjabi singer whose voice ended up in such a sample library and was used in many popular songs. A case study that shows how sampling aesthetics and Lal's anonymity are intertwined, yet also a product of Indian musical lineages.



Artwork: Studio Flux

In 1997, British company Zero-G released *Deepest India*, a three-CD sample library of performances by Indian folk and classical musicians. Library owners are granted permission to use the samples to create new music without owing royalties to neither Zero-G nor the recording artists. While samples from *Deepest India* have contributed to many hip hop and electronic music songs, one sample in particular — that of the voice of Sohan Lal — stands out, having been used for well-known songs spanning decades. Despite the wide reach of Lal's voice, his identity remains largely unknown.

The Sample's History

Lal's voice first gained notoriety in India during 2004 when it was sampled for Shamur's song «Let the Music Play». Lal's rough folk voice was autotuned over up-tempo hip hop beats, and the song was embraced by Indian youths for its timely mixture of tradition and modernity. Yet, few knew that Shamur was not Indian, but rather an Italian group using royalty-free samples.

The story continued further: In 2014, electronic musician Axel Thesleff released the track «Bad Karma», which manipulates the pitch of Lal's voice over synthesizers and beats in the style of the genre trap. «Bad Karma» garnered hundreds of millions of YouTube views, and Shamur's representatives sent legal notice to Thesleff^[1] claiming ownership of the sample, only to find out that the voice belonged to a royalty-free library. Many listeners were also confused about

[1] This claim was made by Thesleff on his own Facebook page in 2015, see Thesleff 2015.



How to get ready for a protest: Sivasagar, Assam, 2019.