

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART STRIVES



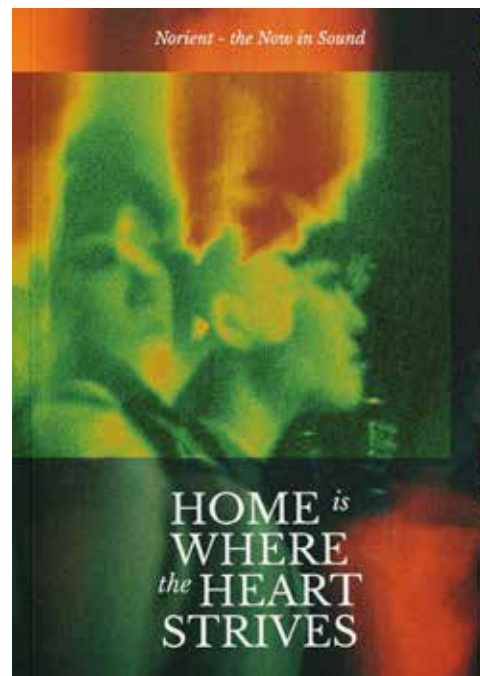
*How does listening shape a place –
and how does a place shape listening?*

*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

edited by Philipp Rhensius, Janina Neustupny, Thomas Burkhalter, Hannes Liechti, and Vinzent Maria Preuß

with contributions by

Sally Garama, Faravaz Farvardin, McKenzie Wark, Ronja Falkenbach, Tanasgol Sabbagh, Majd Shidiac, Raphael Kariuki aka DJ Raph, Sergio Salazar, Suvani Suri, Gisela Swaragita, Rehab Hazgui, Kadallah Burrowes, Thasil Suhara Backer, and more thinkers and artists worldwide.

Four colors, softback
16,5 × 23,5 cm, 314 pages
ISBN 9783952544464
DOI: doi.org/10.56513/VLGZ1905
Print 29 EUR.–

Release

published by Norient Books
Bern, Switzerland
June 12, 2025
norient.com/books



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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NORIENT

HOME is WHERE the HEART STRIVES

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.

Unnamed 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.

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

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.

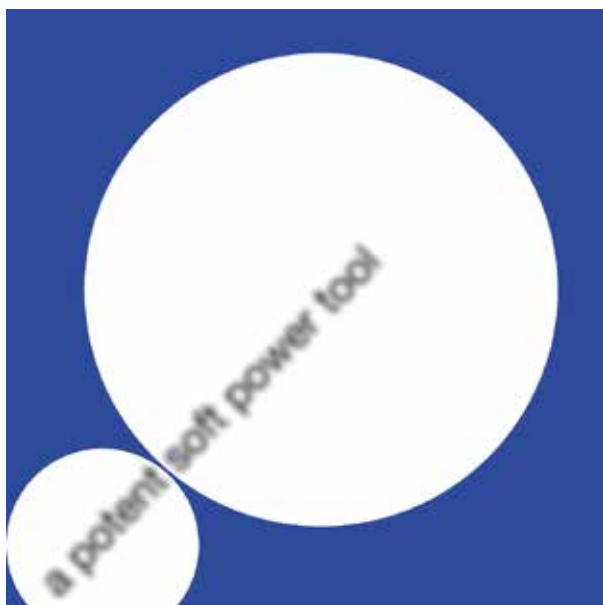
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FROM SHAMISEN TO KAYAMBA

«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?

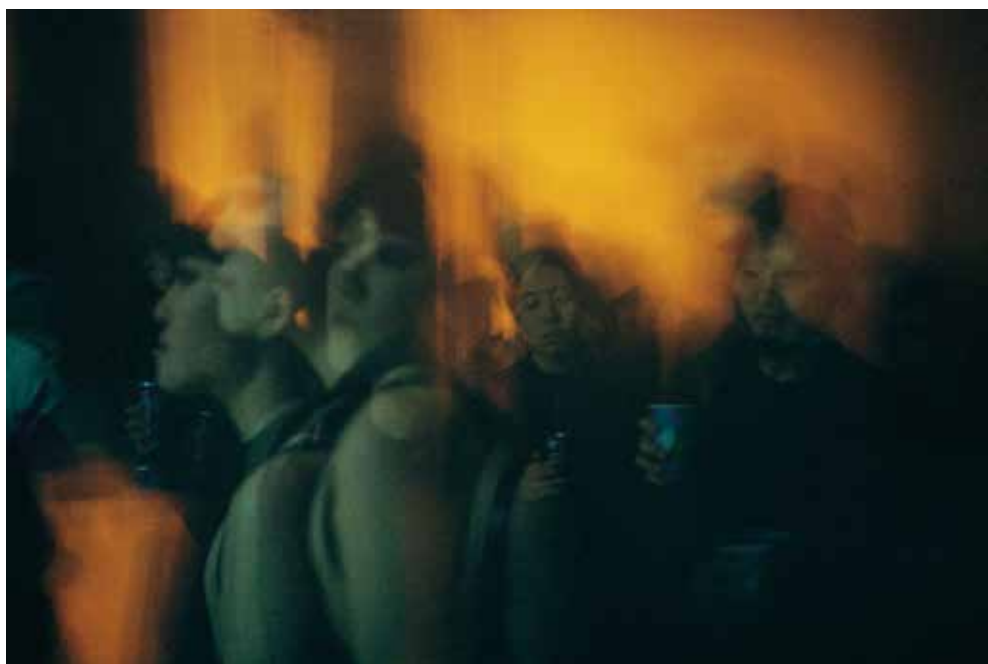


Artwork: Kai Oh

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.

HOME IS WHERE
THE HEART STRIVES

POEM

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LIEUX DE VOIX

SASHA LANGFORD

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.

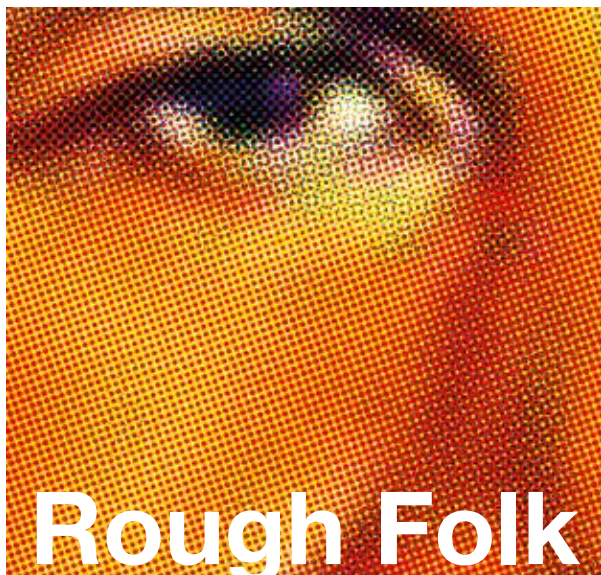
my voice tells me that skin
is the same thing
as listening.

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



Artwork: Studio Flux

CHRIS MCGUINNESS

ESSAY

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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.

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.

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RECOVERING SAMPLE AUTHORSHIP: THE CASE OF SOHAN LAL

How to Get Ready for a Protest

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Photo by Thasil Suhara Backer



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

Franziska Buhre (ed.)

Klangteppich V Magazin

Seit 2021 veröffentlicht Norient gemeinsam mit Klangteppich, dem Berliner Festival für Musik der iranischen Diaspora, ein Online-Special. In der Zwischenzeit hat sich diese Publikation zu einem Archiv lebendiger Perspektiven auf das zeitgenössische Musikschaffen im Iran und in der iranischen Diaspora entwickelt. Die Texte entstanden als Einladung an Künstler*innen des Festivals und andere Autor*innen, eigene Erzählungen und bedeutsame Historiographien vom Austausch zwischen Iran und der Welt zu vertiefen. Damit möchten wir nicht zuletzt dazu anregen, das Bewusstsein für komplexe Realitäten zu schärfen, in denen diasporische Künstler*innen arbeiten. Die fünfte Festival-Ausgabe ist nun Anlass, eine Auswahl der bisherigen und neue Texte in einem gedruckten Magazin zu versammeln.

Since 2021, Norient has been publishing an Online Special together with Klangteppich, the Berlin-based festival for music from the Iranian diaspora. In the meantime, this publication has developed into an archive of lively perspectives on contemporary music-making in Iran and the Iranian diaspora. The texts have been created as an invitation to festival artists and other authors to deepen their own narratives and meaningful historiographies of exchange between Iran and the world. With this Special, we want to raise awareness of the complex realities in which diasporic artists work. The fifth festival edition is now an opportunity to collect a selection of previous and new texts in a printed magazine.

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Franziska Buhre (ed.)

Klangteppich V Magazin

Festival für Musik der iranischen Diaspora

with contributions by Hadi Bastani, Franziska Buhre, Sophia Grobler, Amin Hashemi, Ali Kamrani, Nikan Khosravi, Matthias Küntzel, Erum Naqvi, Shayan Navab, Shabnam Parvaresh, Shaahin Peymani, Tanasgol Sabbagh, Arshia Samsaminia, and Pardis Zarghampour

four colors, magazine

18 × 24 cm, 80 pages

languages: English / Deutsch

ISBN 978-3-9525444-5-7

CHF 5.– / EUR 5.–

Release

Published by Norient Books

Bern, Switzerland

June 8, 2023

<https://norient.com/books/klangteppich>

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Franziska Buhre

ist Journalistin für Musik und die Projektleiterin von Klangteppich. Festival für Musik der iranischen Diaspora.

is the organizer of Berlin-based Klangteppich. Festival for music of the Iranian diaspora and a journalist for music.

Klangteppich V *Festival for music of the Iranian diaspora*

Musik verklingt und die Aufführung ist unwiederholbar. Für die Ereignisse im Raum, die ein Konzert im Austausch von Musiker_innen und Publikum ausmachen, brennen wir. Darauf arbeiten wir hin, jedes Jahr aufs Neue.

Doch in der Auseinandersetzung mit Künstler_innen der iranischen Diaspora wurde seit 2018 auch deutlich, dass wir unsere Begrifflichkeiten hinterfragen und Kontexte reflektieren müssen, um keine Klischees, keine eindimensionalen Erzählungen von Begegnungen zwischen Menschen aus Iran und Deutschland zu reproduzieren. Es wurde deutlich, dass immer wieder «Vermittlungsleistungen» gefragt sind: Kontexte sollten zugänglich, Positionen und Hintergründe erklärt und sichtbar gemacht werden. So lernen wir, andere Blickwinkel einzunehmen und ganz persönlichen Geschichten von Verlust, Schmerz, Neuanfang, von der Konfrontation mit Erinnerungen und Vorurteilen, von musikalischem Erbe und neugefundenen künstlerischen Verfahren zuzuhören.

So entstand der Bedarf, ein Archiv lebendiger Perspektiven auf zeitgenössisches Musikschaffen in Iran und der iranischen Diaspora anzulegen, wie wir es seit 2021 mit dem Klangteppich Special auf der Plattform für Musikforschung Norient.com tun. Die Texte entstehen als Einladung an Künstler_innen des Festivals und andere Autor_innen, eigene Erzählungen und bedeutsame Historiographien vom Austausch zwischen Iran und der Welt zu vertiefen. Damit möchten wir nicht zuletzt dazu anregen, das Bewusstsein für komplexe Realitäten zu schärfen.

Die fünfte Festival-Ausgabe ist nun Anlass, eine Auswahl der bisherigen und neue Texte in einem gedruckten Magazin zu versammeln. Ihnen und euch wünschen wir eine anregende Lektüre.

Franziska Buhre, Initiatorin von Klangteppich und Hannes Liechti, Kurator und Redakteur Norient

Klangteppich I 2018

Alireza Mehdizadeh



Festival artists 2018



Klangteppich I

Oymin Samawatie

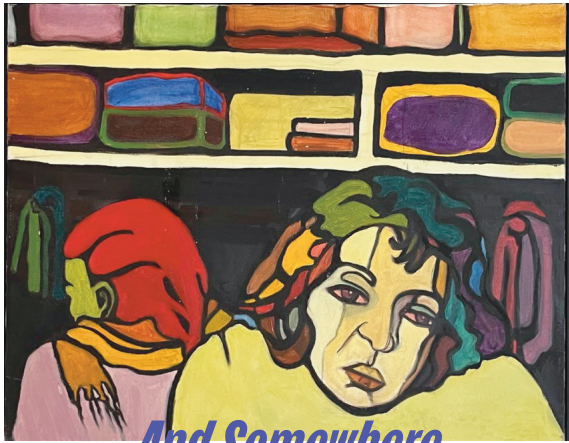


Hamid Saneily



Pari San





«displaced» (1981, oil on canvas) - By Nasrin Nawab (the author's aunt)

And Somewhere I've Heard the Screams Before

In this personal essay, the diasporan writer Shayan Navab reflects on the sounds of the Iranian revolutions of the past decades as delicate stories he has heard when listening to and watching brutal videos circulating online after the murder of Jina Mahsa Amini in September 2022. Snippets of conversations between him and his aunt Nasrin Nawab explore the role of the Iranian youth in the protests of both 2022/2023 and the 1980s. They are an honest attempt to interact with the shards of his family's heritage.

I tap the circle of my sister's Instagram story. It is a video of Mohsen Shaker's mother,¹ recorded in late 2022. After following her pleas, her husband's begging, and her public suffering over the past week, there she is, in front of Evin.² She has just been told of her 22-year-old son's execution. She is wailing. She is screaming. It is a sound that should not exist and could not exist elsewhere. A sound that belongs to her and her son. It is a sound no one has ever heard or will ever hear again.

Yet, as it echoes through my arms and into the depths of my mind, it is met with a horrific choir. Screams as unique as hers. An endless opera void of costumes, comedy, and climax.

In a moment, the sound has reduced me to a shell filled with the noise of crashing waves and broken lives. Hunched over my phone, the video repeats itself between clasped fingertips. I realize that this sound, despite its cruel novelty, has found a designated seat. It has sat in its place, amidst rows of pews filled with its kind. I realize it has found a familiar embrace amongst all the other screams I so often heard of, but never heard.

The Many Sounds of Revolution

Since the murder of Jina Mahsa Amini on September 16, 2022 and the rise of the Woman, Life, Freedom movement,³ Iranians outside of Iran have followed the gutsy efforts of the protestors and the violent crackdown closely. Major news channels and outlets fail to appropriately cover the situation in Iran, leaving the bulk of journalistic efforts to Iranians, their smartphones, and social media. Hence, every video that has bravely snuck and slithered past the regime's internet shutdown has been closely watched, analyzed, and shared. Amongst some of the most cherished are those that depict the fearless movement in full swing, full of the sounds of revolution: cheers as young women and girls burn hijabs, thuds of feet climbing onto cars, ecstatic rhythms as they dance in public spaces, and chants echoing the names of those that shall never be forgotten. Sounds, which if one is familiar with the Iranian context, demonstrate a bravery that is

the substance of myths and martyrdom. Then there are the grueling videos, Kian Pirlalaki's mother clawing at her son's grave, Nika Shakarami's brittle voice performing with all the charm and vibrance in the world, the infamous Evin Prison in flames as gunshots ring across the capital. Luckily, the videos are blurred through my tears, but the sounds crawl through me, crystal clear. But it does not matter. These are sounds one has the duty to hear, because the pain is nothing, nothing, compared to that which is endured in Iran.

As a second-generation diasporan, a disturbing fragment of familiarity arises with every new video. I am shattered, I am nauseous, I am devastated, but I struggle to feel entirely taken by surprise. Not because I take for granted or have become accustomed to the violence that Iranians are subject to. Rather, because I have heard these videos with empty eyes. Eyes that have time and again told stories of shattered lives, so delicate and with care, as though the shards of the past might cut their lips as they speak.

(I have just deleted a paragraph. I wanted to tell one of these stories. I wanted to tell you about a time my own grandmother screamed. Though I will remain anonymous and do not plan to share this text with my family, I have not yet learned to handle these shards. I am scared I will cut someone. I am once again standing sheepishly on my tiptoes, balancing on slippers that have been thrown my way, waiting for my parents to sweep away the remnants that are too sharp for me to handle.)

¹ Mohsen Shakeri was executed in Iran on December 8, 2022. His case is known as being the first execution in Iran as a direct result of the 2022 Woman, Life, Freedom movement.

² Evin refers to Evin Prison in Tehran. It has been used to incarcerate political dissidents since the early 1970s and is infamous as a place that exercises torture and other abuses. Due to the number of intellectuals and students housed there, a recent protest chant has been «Iran has turned into a prison; Evin Prison has turned into a university».

³ «Woman, Life, Freedom» translates to «Jin, Jivan, Azadi», a chant used by the Kurdish Workers Party in Northern Syria. It has informed much of Kurdish political thought.

A Veteran Youth

My aunt Nasrin Nawab spent some of her late teens and early twenties in Evin. She talks and paints about it. My uncle never does (at least not in front of me). My aunt has told magical stories filled with anguish and proximity.

«I can send them to you later because this picture I have here is a picture of a picture I have taken. There is a picture where if you look, you'll see there is no placard, which means no one organized this; for me that is important, it means all the kids/everyone just poured out. People came out. It's different from a protest which has been organized, where there are banners and things. Maybe in all of these, there is not one banner between all of these people. And all these high school students poured out, it is them, who from what I saw, that made up the population of the prisons.»

Here, she is describing 1981, though it sounds like she is describing these past months. I think she is describing both.

I do not believe that history repeats itself. The movement today largely revolves around and consists of youth. It is a fresh fountain of blood, painting the cracked and infertile soil. The videos show young girls at war with the senile patriarchy, gasping for breath as they are suffocated by gas and perennial oppression. From my perspective, which is as insignificant as it is distorted, every act of protest seems to revitalize a youth which at times has withered and at others is born anew.

The point here is that this youth has always been here. This youth as we see it now was born by the Islamic Regime, or maybe even earlier. In this sense, the youth that is now on the streets is fresh and full of power, but also full of wisdom and experience. Though this might be a juxtaposition, there is nothing poetic about it. We are seeing a veteran youth that has had to learn to survive and nourish itself while under the constant attack of censorship, violence, and patriarchy. A youth that repeatedly sacrifices itself in the name of the future and something younger. A youth, shoulder to shoulder with my aunt, taking the shape of a young

girl's middle finger as it says «fuck you» to the bearded men. It is a youth that we in the Global North have had the fortune not to meet. It is the youth of legends and myth, the one that one can drink from mystical fountains, that is cunning and full of brutal hope.

«I was your age during this time, I was in the fourth year of university when the revolution happened, I only realized later when I was in prison. I realized that I was one of the old ones. Everyone was actually a high schooler in prison. When I saw the pictures of today, I realized it's the same kids that are in prison, many of the people on the streets right now are also high schoolers. They mass arrested all the young kids, either at the end of high school or beginning of university.»

«I realized it's the same kids that are in prison.»

When the Sounds Return

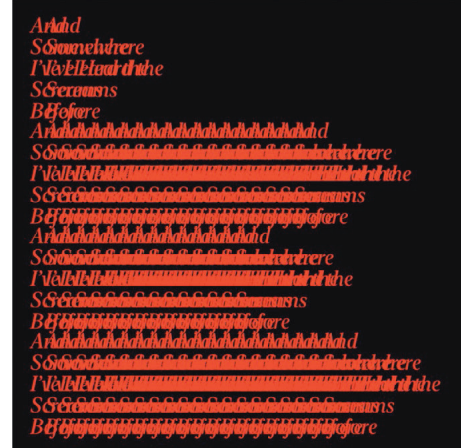
If it is the same kids that are in prison, then it must be the same sounds too. It must be the same men ruining the same hopes of the same youth. But obviously, it isn't. It is individual lives that are being shattered and individual girls being tortured and killed.

I merely asked my aunt to tell me stories, to tell me about the revolution and about her past. I am transfixed by this passage and these words (I wonder whether these videos will change the stories?). For me, these videos are past stories that have become digitalized in real time, with urgency and the need for action. But what are they to her? How does it feel to hear the sounds of your own youth play out on your screen? To hear that one's friends are being imprisoned and executed once again? Does she feel proud when she hears the crackle of a burning hijab and the clamor of resistance, as they pour out onto the streets without placards and fear?

Or does she feel scared?

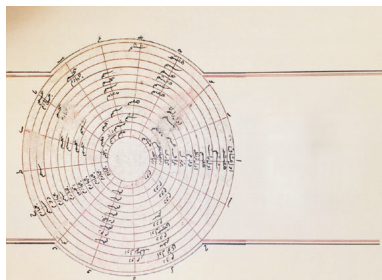
And what about Mohsen's mother?

Has she heard her scream before?



Shayan Navab is a writer focused on Iranian protest culture and his own fragmented identity. In his words, he attempts to understand the responsibility of his identity, made up of a heritage engrained with sorrow and pain but a European life of comfort, vis-à-vis the heroic youth in Iran.

Making Persian Music More Accessible to Outsiders



The circle of scales, taken from Safi al-Din al-Urmawi's book «al-Adwār» (al-Urmawi 2019).

How can a composer of contemporary music use the micro-intervals of traditional Persian music as raw compositional material? How can we convey these micro-intervals to performers regardless of their cultural background? These are questions asked by the artist-researcher Arshia Samsaminia in both his artistic and academic work. In this article, he summarizes some of his findings and draws on the history of microtonal Persian music and its notation, beginning in medieval times.

Compositions based on Persian dastgāh/maqām¹ music with its specific intervals can be challenging for performers unfamiliar with Iranian music. Performing maqāms on instruments whether fretless or fretted is less of a challenge for musicians well-versed in performing traditional Iranian music, because of the abundance of these intervals in this country's music, including lullabies, folk songs, popular music, and the audible media spheres. Thus, along with the experience of belonging to a certain world region, these factors can be a reason why a person's ear becomes more accustomed to these intervals.

Composing for electronics, however, can open up a way for performers with a different musical upbringing to develop an understanding of Persian dastgāh/maqām music by introducing the specific intervals to the computer software being used. The results of my research in this field, which I will summarize in this article, became the core of my doctoral dissertation «Composing Based on the Iranian Maqāms and Tunings Using HEJ Notational Systems».

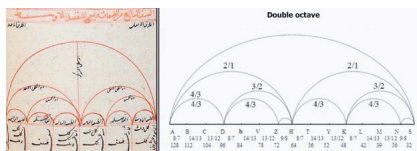
Medieval Roots: Safi al-Din al-Urmawi

In traditional Persian music theory, as well as the music of other Islamic countries, the book of al-Adwār is the first extant work on scientific music theory, written by the musician and music theorist Safi al-Din 'Abd al-Mumin al-Urmawi in 1267. Al-Urmawi used the abjad notation, an alphanumeric code

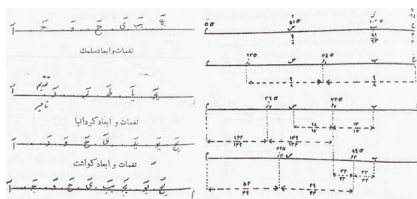
¹ Dastgāh is the modal system in traditional Persian art music, while maqām is the older system of melodic modes used in traditional Arabic music.



A manuscript copy of «Risalah al-sharafiyyah fi al-nisab al-talifiyyah», one of al-Urmawi's most famous works, 18th century (photo: Adinor Collection).



Transcript of al-Urmawi's calculations from Arabic to English (photo: Adinor Collection).



Abjad letters taken from the book «Kitāb al-musiqi al-kabir» (al-Fārdabi 1999).

1	A (f)	1/1	6,00
2	B (b)	256/243	90.22
3	C (c)	65536/59049	180.45
4	D (d)	9/8	203.91
5	H (h)	32/27	294.13
6	V (v)	8192/6561	384.36
7	Z (z)	81/64	407.82
8	H (c)	4/3	498.04
9	T (t)	1024/729	588.27
10	Y (y)	262144/177147	678.49
11	YA (y)	3/2	701.96
12	YB (y)	128/81	792.18
13	YC (y)	32768/19683	882.40
14	YD (y)	27/16	905.87
15	YH (y)	16/9	996.09
16	YV (y)	4096/2187	1086.31
17	YZ (y)	1048576/531441	1176.54
18	YH (z)	2/1	1200.00

The transcription of the ratios and tones taken from «al-Adwār» (al-Urmawi 1993).

in which the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet are assigned numerical values, to create music with and without lyrics. In this way, all musical intervals were also precisely defined. However, his theory was based on Pythagorean tuning, whereas as the maqām evolved into the dastgāh, Persian instruments began using some form of temperament.

The 24 Equally-Tempered Division of the Octave (EDO): Ali-Naqi Vaziri

In the 20th century, 700 years after al-Urmawi's theory al-Adwār, the composer, educator, and musician Ali-Naqi Vaziri (1887-1979) introduced a 24 equally-tempered quarter-tone scale. Vaziri was one of the first Iranian musicians who traveled to Europe to study music. In France, he studied the principles of harmony and composition, as well as the piano and violin. In his book *Musiqi-e nazari*, first published in 1934, he set forth the proposition that all the modes of traditional music could be conceived within an octave scale of 24 equidistant (tempered) quarter-tones. There are two main microtonal accidentals developed and practiced by Vaziri, influenced by Western music notation: *Sori*, which raises a tone by a quarter step up, and *Koron*, which lowers a tone by a quarter step down.

However, I believe that Persian music intervals are not as simple as explained by these accidentals suggested by Vaziri. But how can a composer of contemporary music use micro-intervals of traditional Persian music as raw compositional material instead? How can we convey them to performers regardless of their cultural background? How can these intervals be introduced to computer software to allow performers to hear the right Persian scale?

Spectralism

I realized that a possible solution could be the systematization of the Persian dastgāh micro-intervals through spectralism. I tried to match the notes and ratios resulting from the harmonic series to dastgāh music in

Size in cent	-150	-100	-50	0	50	100	150
Accidental							
Alteration	3/4 Down	1/2 Down	1/4 Down		1/4 Up	1/2 Up	3/4 Up
	Flat koron	Flat	Koron	Natural	Sori	Sharp	Sori sharp

Accidentals proposed by Vaziri in Persian traditional music (Vaziri 1921).



Specific measurements of the tempered 24-EDO proposed by Vaziri (Khaleghi 1980).



«Ich bin eine Palme, ich brauche keine Mauer und gar keine Zäune.»
– Ein Gedicht von Ali Kamrani (Photo: pixabay)

Lass mich mit Hass nicht allein

In dem Gedicht für sein gleichnamiges Lied beschreibt der iranische Schauspieler und Dichter Ali Kamrani seine Erfahrungen als Einwanderer in Deutschland.

Kamrani reichte das Lied 1993 bei dem Wettbewerb «xenos – Fremde brauchen Freunde» ein. Der Wettbewerb wurde ausgelobt vom Ausländerbeauftragten des Senats der Freien Hansestadt Hamburg und gefördert durch das Bundesministerium für Frauen und Jugend, Die Göttinger Gruppe, Oskar und Vera Ritter Stiftung, sowie die Deutsche Telekom. «xenos» wurde 1994 im NDR Fernsehen live übertragen. Kamranis Lied wurde abgelehnt.

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Ich bin eine Palme, ich bin eine Palme,
Ich brauche Wasser, und viel Sonne.
Ich bin eine Palme, ich bin eine Palme,
Ich kenne keine Mauer und gar keine Zäune.
Ich bin eine Palme, ich bin eine Palme,
Ich brauche Erde, ich brauche Luft.
Ich bin eine Palme, ich bin eine Palme,
Ich brauche Liebe und Vernunft.
Lass mich hier nicht eingehen,
Ich kann keine Grenze mehr sehen.
Du hast mich hierher gebracht.
Ich hätte nie daran gedacht,
Liebe am Anfang, Hass am Ende,
Herrliche Zeiten, hässliche Wende.
Tag ein, Tag aus, unter dem Schutz deines Hauses
Wuchs ich über mich hinaus.
Lass mich leben, wie ich will
Leben und leben lassen ist mein Stil
Ohne Liebe gehe ich ein
Lass mich mit Hass nicht allein.

28. Juni 1993



Ali Kamrani, geboren 1962 in Teheran, ist Dichter und Schauspieler. In Teheran wirkte er mit in Theaterproduktionen von Mohamad Ostad Mohammad, Hooshang Tozie, Khojasteh Kia, Farhad Wajdabadi und anderen, er schrieb Lieder u.a. für die Sängerin Nelli. 1979 zog er nach Frankfurt/Main, lernte Deutsch und bewarb sich an Hochschulen für Film und Schauspiel in Berlin, Hamburg, München und Frankfurt. Alle seine Bewerbungen wurden abgelehnt. Kamrani war Ehrengast der Podiumsdiskussion zum Rangarang Chor, die am 2. Juni 2021 im Rahmen von Klangteppich. Festival für Musik der iranischen Diaspora III als Livestream stattfand.

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Klangteppich IV 2022

Parigestan



Parigestan

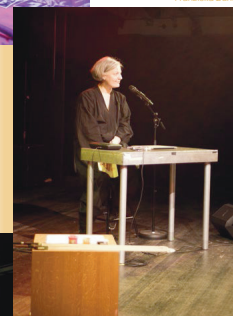
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Klangteppich IV

Parigestan



Franziska Bühne



David Dör / Biana Askari, Tamaspol Sahghagh



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Monia Acciari & Philipp Rhensius:

POLITICS OF CURATORSHIP – COLLECTIVE AND AFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

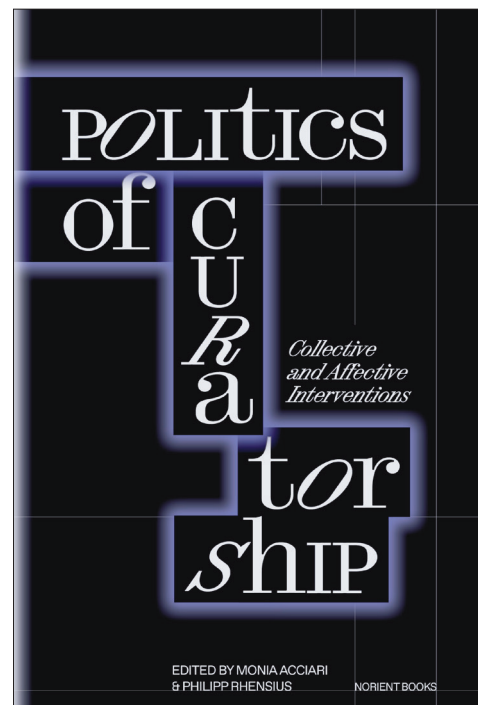
What happens to curatorial practices when treated as multi-voiced, pluralistic, and process-based? *Politics of Curatorship – Collective and Affective Interventions* asks what curatorship could be when it is freed from its elitist notions. It assembles a range of different interventions by 32 writers, artists, journalists, and scholars from all over the world. They reflect on curating as a practice of meaning-making that is subject to multiple parameters: contextual, affective, bodily, sensorial, personal, aesthetic, economic, and political. On the occasion of Norient's 20th anniversary, we attempt to disentangle the term curatorship from the received definition as a mere selecting process within the creative realm.

For 20 years, Norient has been successfully publishing texts, films, and sounds that offer new ways to think about and with music and sound from all over the world. This book is a reminder of what Norient stands for: an urge for deep research that doesn't ignore nor fetishize the senses, and constant questioning, expanding or revising of cultural canons. The volume shows that what has become known as «decolonization» to an often malevolent mainstream discourse might need to be addressed as a matter of curation and curatorship. A more challenging, surprising and less boring way of cultural production is not only a question of what but how one curates. May this book find the readers it deserves and needs.

Diedrich Diederichsen

This collection is an insightful curation in motion: it weaves together both nuanced and textured experiences, existences, imaginations, voices, presences, journeys, tales, stories, and narratives about the art of «cura» in all its forms – from photography, performing arts, journalism, film, music, sound, radio, DJing, and poetry. Critical outlooks onto curatorial worlds; radical affective and emotional engagements – sparkled with subtle humor, and astute craft – this contribution is an uplifting, refreshing, deep, joyful, and indeed both timely and urgent intervention!

Jenny Mbaye



**Politics of Curatorship –
Collective and Affective Interventions**
edited by Monia Acciari & Philipp Rhensius

with 33 contributions incl. short essays, comments, poems, articles, and photo essays by Monia Acciari, AGF aka poemproducer, Ailin Grad aka Aylu, Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock, Lendl Barcelos, Sandeep Bhagwati, Phila Bergmann, Thomas Burkhalter, Vivian Caccuri, Chico Dub, Daniel «duex» Fontana, Andrea Goetzke, Natalie Gravenor, Nikhila H., Rim Jasmin Irscheid, Raphael Kariuki aka DJ Raph, Steph Kretowicz, Ari Robey-Lawrence, Sulgi Lie, Imaad Majeed, Laura Mascarenhas, Thea Reifler, Philipp Rhensius, Sergio Salazar, Rebecca Salvadori, Suvani Suri, Gisela Swaragita, Chafic Tabbara, Lucia Udvardyová, Gita Viswanath, Salomé Voegelin

four colors, softback
16,5 x 23,5 cm, 288 pages
ISBN: 978-3-9525444-4-0
DOI: doi.org/10.56513/duj2028
EUR 34.– (Print)

Release
published by Norient Books
Bern, Switzerland
April 13, 2023
www.norient.com/books

Monia Acciari
is an associate professor in film and television history at De Montfort University, U.K.; she researches and writes about film curatorship, film festivals, and Indian cinema (broadly speaking). She is also currently writing her monograph on the history of film festivals in India. She has been visiting professor at Indian universities and delivered practical courses on film festival organization and film history.

Philipp Rhensius
is a Berlin-based writer, musician, sociologist, poet, musicologist, curator, and editor of Norient. His projects are driven by the idea that feeling the chains is the first step toward emancipation. Currently, he is doing artistic research on alienation, and works on new formats such as the audio essay and the monthly Norient column «Sonic Worlding» for which he invites contributors to think with rather than only about music and sound.

WHAT HAPPENS TO CURATORIAL PRACTICES WHEN TREATED AS MULTI-VOICED, PLURALISTIC, AND PROCESS-BASED? «POLITICS OF CURATORSHIP – COLLECTIVE AND AFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS» ASKS WHAT CURATORSHIP COULD BE WHEN IT IS FREED FROM ITS ELITIST NOTIONS. IT ASSEMBLES A RANGE OF DIFFERENT INTERVENTIONS BY 32 WRITERS, ARTISTS, JOURNALISTS, AND SCHOLARS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. THEY REFLECT ON CURATING AS A PRACTICE OF MEANING-MAKING THAT IS SUBJECT TO MULTIPLE PARAMETERS: CONTEXTUAL, AFFECTIVE, BODILY, SENSORIAL, PERSONAL, AESTHETIC, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL. ON THE OCCASION OF NORIENT'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY, WE ATTEMPT TO DISENTANGLE THE TERM CURATORSHIP FROM THE RECEIVED DEFINITION AS A MERE SELECTING PROCESS WITHIN THE CREATIVE REALM.

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— DIEDRICH DIEDERICHSEN,
Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien

This collection is an insightful curation in motion: it weaves together both nuanced and textured experiences, existences, imaginations, voices, presences, journeys, tales, stories, and narratives about the art of «cura» in all its forms – from photography, performing arts, journalism, film, music, sound, radio, DJing, and poetry. Critical outlooks onto curatorial worlds; radical affective and emotional engagements – sparkled with subtle humor, and astute craft – this contribution is an uplifting, refreshing, deep, joyful, and indeed both timely and urgent intervention!

— JENNY MBAYE
City, University of London



NORIENT
BOOKS

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Politics of Curatorship: Collective and Affective Interventions

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POLITICS of CURATORSHIP

*Collective
and Affective
Interventions*

EDITED BY MONIA ACCIARI
& PHILIPP RHENSIUS

NORIENT BOOKS

ESSAY

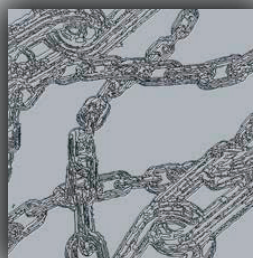
On

SUBVER
gateke
for Black

SIVE
EPing
Qti

*When the DEI Tactics
Weren't Enuf*

BY ARI ROBEY-LAWRENCE



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NORIENT SOUNDS



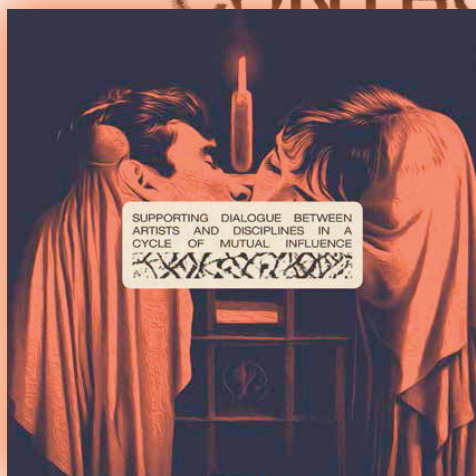
Despite the global trend for white Wokeness in the aftermath of Black Lives Matter, Black queer, trans, and intersectional artists still face exclusion in the electronic dance music industry. In their essay, Ari Robey-Lawrence explore how practices of exclusion affect BQT/POC musicians in the dance music scene, and how a subversive curatorial practice could enable a more equitable and organic environment.

In the dance music industry, gatekeeping is the chief mechanism by which Black queer, trans, and intersectional (qti) artists with intersectional backgrounds are excluded from opportunities and professional mobility within the scene. Such artists, who use their platform or work to call into question unjust and inequitable aspects of the current status quo in the industry, particularly those who do not fit Eurocentric beauty standards, can be deemed «problematic» by white industry professionals or white-led organizations because their work or their perspective may unsettle them or their audiences.

The mechanism I am describing here represents only a small facet of how Black qti artists, whose work is not easily digested by the industry's neoliberal/capitalist model, goes overlooked. Despite the fact that some still consider the scene to be partially underground or community-based, we still don't see enough industry gatekeepers supporting Black qti artists as they circumnavigate neoliberal capitalism's predatory industry structures, unless they have been given a gold seal of approval by insiders or the culture machine (Moore 2021), or a given social movement or current

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«GATEKEEPERS» ARE PEOPLE WHO CONTROL



THE MEANS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION.»

SHORT ESSAY

If you'd have asked me if I identified with the notion of «content curation» a decade ago, I'd have vehemently said no. As editor-in-chief of the niche interdisciplinary art publication *AQNB*, I wanted as little to do with any notion of gatekeeping as I did the gauche 2010s trend towards Tumblr users declaring themselves «curators» of their image streams. Yet here I am, 10 years on, being invited to write about my experience of the term at the helm of a site with a very specific art and music niche and its own sizable, oddball following. It's a platform with a distinct focus on contemporary critical discourse, political theory, and creative culture online, with myself having final say over what, and who, is featured. «Gatekeepers» are people who control access to something, in this case to the means of cultural production. As the last part in the hierarchy of artists, colleagues, and writers who contribute to and appear on *AQNB*, I think the word pretty much sums it up.

That's the short of it, but the long of it is a little more complicated. For the many who might not know, *AQNB* is a digital editorial and publishing platform, co-founded by myself and Guillermo Fraile, that has operated independently since 2009. First established in London a couple years before I joined, the site launched at the tail end of the early-millennial Web 2.0 blog boom, its name an acronym of the phrase *atractivo que no bello* («Attractive, but not beautiful») from Guillermo's native Spanish. When I came to *AQNB* – purely as a freelance contributor he'd solicited on an online marketplace in 2011 – it had a lower-case brand logo and a navbar packed with categories, including «graphic», «moving image», and «technology».

ORGANIZING INFORMATION FOR AN AUDIENCE

Animation was a frequently covered topic, as was photography and new software. The music featured was mostly local London indie pop and the art was institutional. There was little editorial direction and, even if there was, I wasn't interested in most of it. I was a struggling culture journalist, recently moved from Australia to the UK, with a foundational education in rock music criticism and a need for any income. Guillermo told me I could write about all things «sub-culture and arts», which I did for a little over a year

NORIENT SOUNDS

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SHORT ESSAY

At the same time, I was so preoccupied with not giving anything away that *AQNB* often struggled to define what it was. Post-internet's sweeping assault on the existing art canon allowed me, a neophyte, to enter a world with its own customs and vernacular, networks and class distinctions, through the back door of an online culture that emerged with a younger cohort of creative practitioners. The knowledge and technical skill required to navigate this new language of digital technology was so specific that it alienated anyone who wasn't raised with it, presenting somewhat of a carte blanche of self-determination and identification for those who were.

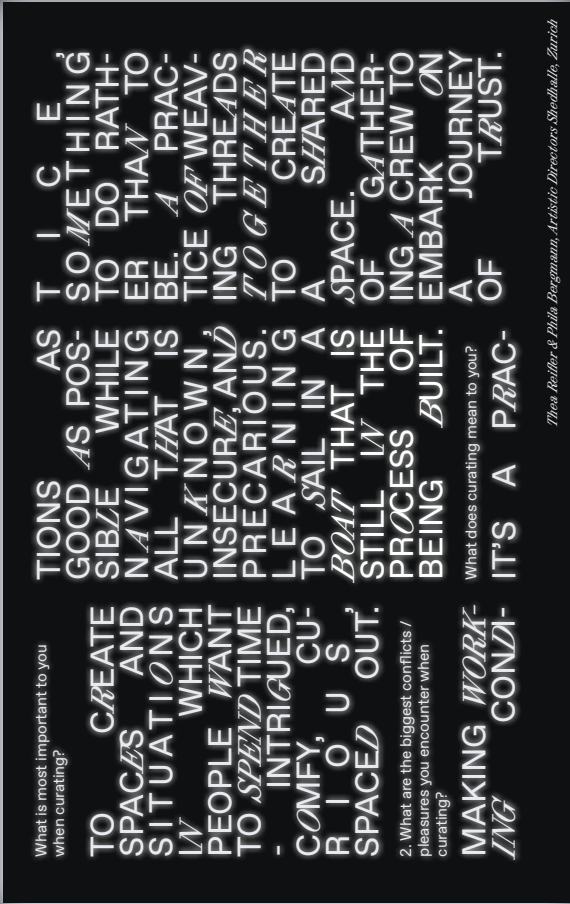
While there are broader, more global issues around internet access worth noting, in the limited scope of an educated web-literate millennial crowd, this monumental technological shift *meant* that everything was up for debate. A site like *AQNB* exulted in that unknowing, where it learned, developed, and changed alongside the generation it vaguely represented. That bode badly for our countless unsuccessful public funding applications, but well for the site's cultural dynamism and editorial freedom.

Now it's coming up to *AQNB*'s 10-year anniversary since it started to become what it is right now – with a forthcoming print anthology where my colleagues and I have the opportunity to account for the legacy of a publication and the art scene it had a hand in shaping. In doing so, we've also been tasked with retrospectively organizing a decade of content to stake our claim as a significant point in the alternative art continuum. In some ways it feels like a defeat: by accepting the reality of cultural influence, *AQNB*'s unspoken aspiration for destroying the canon meant curating its own in the meantime.

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NOBILIT SOUNDS



Thema Reiller & Phila Pogmann, Artists' Directors Stedelijk, Zurich

PHOTO ESSAY

NOBILIT SOUNDS



One of the first lessons of photography is that a «good» image is a long and laborious process. Magic requires a lot of work – no matter who is in front of or behind the camera, or where and why the photo is happening. Finding the right angle, the right light, and the right framing is a hell of a job. Even when everything is right your character might close his eyes, someone could pass in front of the camera, or the clouds could change. During this process a lot of digital trash piles up in cloud storage and on hard drives.

A photographer's photo dump is a heavy burden. This photo essay explores the reasons that lead us to discard a photo. It is an attempt to make sense of the non-sense, to bring together the outcasts of curatorship. To break the rules. Susan Sontag can help us understand why these images are still relevant and inspiring to look at:

«Photos that in themselves cannot explain anything, are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation and fantasy.»

(Sontag 1977, 17)



A REALLY NICE POSE OF A POLICEMAN.
SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL (2016)

This photo was taken during a protest against the impeachment of the former Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff. In reality, a coup d'état, the beginning of a period of much hatred and result that will last until the end of the current far-right government. During this time I was working as a photojournalist.

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In more than a month of coming to the Apocryphe, not once had I paid attention to the way the music transitioned. It had been a blanket without a snag; I had noticed no rip or seam. But I did remember the melody of the record I was now listening to in the headphones; I had heard it numerous times but, I now realized, not all the way through. At the precise moment when a voice interrupted the melody, another track was usually overlaid. Which one or which ones, I wasn't sure; I didn't know any of the song titles.

— Anne Garréta (2015, 21–22)

There are an infinite number of ways to go about selecting, collecting, and preparing for a mix – each method brings a specific variety of curatorial politics of frequency. A DJ might stick to (or be expected to stick to) songs of a particular locale or time period, play pieces in alphabetical order, decide to use track titles or so-called

«genre» as a guide, use machine-learned algorithmic suggestions, or tend toward any number of other strategies and their permutations. Every tactic pulls the mix in different directions, splitting the singularity of a DJ's auditory experience into multiphonic gardens of forking paths. All this happens under the time-pressure of a track's duration: there is an urgency of selection that occurs with every choice, a certain time-limit that counts down to a silent zero, though there are many technological methods of time-dilation to ensure silence is delayed.

Depending on a DJ's preparation-style, they might curate a set of tracks to play beforehand, taking into account the set and setting of the journey along which they would like

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While Indian TV debates enter loudness wars, household devices entail noise reduction features. Read an essay speculating on curatorial tactics that can collectively mobilize a practice of

CRITICAL LISTENING.

Peter: «An invisible system, but powerful nonetheless. Sounds that in a sense guide people through the city. I mean they are not conscious of it, but it's there, and it's different in all parts of the city...»

Ellen: «So each part of the city has a different chord?»

Peter: «Well, every part of the city has its own instructive atmosphere. It's impossible to disconnect the sound from the collective state of mind. It affects the people, you understand? Why do people feel the way they do, why do people act the way they do, there is a reason... there is an order here.»

This dialogue is from Michael Tyburski's 2019 film *The Sound of Silence* about a professional house tuner named Peter Lucian, who visits people's houses to detect inaudible and discordant resonances that are a cause of anxiety for the residents. The awry acoustic could be a frequency emanating from a refrigerator that's interfering with someone's sleep, or it could be traced to the toaster's piercing pops, or even the way the floorboards squeak. Lucian culls these covert and uncanny frequencies from unexpected parts of the home, and eventually equalizes, harmonizes or re-tunes them to render the domestic space «din and clamor free», thus restoring a sense of calm.

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19 UN-CURATORIAL NOTES — MEMORANDUM OF OUR COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES

THE FOLLOWING IS NOT ANOTHER SET OF RULES THAT DEFINE A PRACTICE, OR A MANIFESTO TO ADHERE TO. IT IS A TAPESTRY OF AFFECTIVE VIEWS ON PRACTICES AND INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH CURATORSHIP. WE UNDERSTAND UN-CURATING AS A POSITIVE PRACTICE WHICH IS INFORMED BY A POLYPHONIC ARRAY OF MULTIPLE STIMULI AND AFFECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE APPROACHES, RATHER THAN ON FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE. SUCH METHODS HAVE THE POWER TO ACT UPON CREATIVE SELECTIONS. UN-CURATING HINTS AT CURATING OTHER FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE, WHICH ARE PERSONAL, SPONTANEOUS AND IRRATIONAL.

1. WE STILL DON'T SEE ENOUGH INDUSTRY GATEKEEPERS SUPPORTING BLACK QTI ARTISTS AS THEY CIRCUMNAVIGATE NEOLIBERAL CAPITALISM'S PREDATORY INDUSTRY STRUCTURES, UNLESS THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN A GOLD SEAL OF APPROVAL BY INSIDERS, OR A GIVEN SOCIAL MOVEMENT OR CURRENT EVENT HAS EFFECTED PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE MATERIAL PRACTICES OF GATEKEEPERS.
ARI ROBEY-LAWRENCE: SUBVERSIVE GATEKEEPING FOR BLACK QTI ARTISTS

2. I BELIEVE THAT IN CURATING, THE DISREGARD FOR AND THE INVISIBILITY OF CERTAIN ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND ARTISTS IS OFTEN NOTHING MORE THAN THE RESULT OF SLOPPY THINKING AND LAZY RESEARCH: RESEARCH THAT DOES NOT WANT TO SEE THROUGH THE SYSTEM OF EXCLUSION THAT IT RELIES ON - AND THAT DOES THEREFORE NOT EVEN LOOK FOR WAYS TO COUNTERACT IT.
SANDEEP BHAGWAT: NEW WAYS OF CURATING MUSICING

3. A LAW-ABIDING LITTLE GIRL ALSO WOULD NOT CURSE IF THE COOL RADIO ANNOUNCER DECIDED TO CUT THE SONGS WITH GREETINGS, ADS, OR JINGLES, BECAUSE SHE WOULD NOT PUSH THE RECORD BUTTON WHEN THE SONG PLAYED.
GISELA SWARAGAT: THE CRIME OF LISTENING WHAT YOU WANT

4. I FEEL GUIDED BY A COLLECTION OF VARIED INTERCONNECTED EXPERIENCES.
REBECCA SALVADORI: LIKE A FRAGRANCE IN A ROOM

5. «UNCURATING» IS NOT A REJECTION OF CURATION. IT DOES NOT PRESENT A PURE NEGATIVE WHICH CARRIES AN

ANTINOMIC LOGIC THAT SUBSUMES ITS ALTERNATIVES. INSTEAD, IT IS AN UNTETHERING OF CURATORIAL PRACTICE FROM ITS POLITICO-HISTORICAL FRAME. THIS ENTAILS AN UNTYING OF THE CURATORIAL FROM THE EXPECTATION OF EVIDENCE AND REFERENCE TIED TO SINGULAR AND APPROVED ANCHOR POINTS.
SALOMÉ VOEGELIN: ON UNPERFORMING THE CURATORIAL

6. TO PUSH FURTHER TOWARDS A FEMINIST IMAGINING WHAT KIND OF COMMUNITY THIS SPACE WOULD FOSTER. THE TRAJECTORY WAS NOT JUST ABOUT MAKING MALE-DOMINATED SPACES FEEL SAFE FOR WOMEN, BUT WE WERE SLOWLY QUEERING THE SPACE, MAKING ROOM FOR ALL KINDS OF LIVED EXPERIENCES.
IMAAD MAJID: QUEERING A SPACE THROUGH CONVERSATION

7. THE ACT OF CURATING LEADS TO AN ACT OF MEANING-MAKING. IN THE COURSE OF SELECTION, THE CURATOR GENERATES A CONVERSATION AMONG ARTISTS, CRITICS, AND VIEWERS ABOUT THE CONTEXT AND MEANING OF THE ART PIECES/FILM AT HAND. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THERE IS AN INTERSECTIONALITY IN THE PROCESS OF CURATION AND PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE.
NIKHILA H. AND GITA VISWANATH: CINEPHILIA

8. CONSIDERING SPACES OF CURATORSHIP (AND THEIR EMOTIONAL INVISIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE) ALLOWS US TO DECOUPLE THE CHOICE OF ONE FILM OVER ANOTHER FROM THE PARAMETERS OF PERSONAL

TASTE. A FILM IS NOT ONLY AN OBJECT OF SCRUTINY, BUT ALSO A DENSE METAPHOR OF ABSENCES AND DISCONNECTIONS.
MONIA ACCIARI: ON EXPOSING THE CURATORIAL «US»: CURATORIAL NOTES #3

9. GOING DEEP IS PRINCIPLE 1 FOR CONDUCTING STRONG, RIGOROUS RESEARCH, GOOD CURATION, AND HIGH-LEVEL JOURNALISM. HOW DO I GET CLOSER TO MUSIC, CLOSER TO MUSICIANS, AND CLOSER TO PHENOMENA AND MOMENTS IN AND AROUND MUSIC?
THOMAS BURKHALTER: NORIENT: FROM TASTEMAKING TO MULTIMODAL STORYTELLING

10. GIVING VOICE TO EMERGING, MARGINAL, AND UNDERREPRESENTED PERSPECTIVES, WHILE SUPPORTING A DECENTRALIZED MODEL OF ARTISTIC DIALOGUE BETWEEN ARTISTS AND DISCIPLINES, PRACTICES AND PRACTITIONERS.
STEPP KRETOWICZ: GATEKEEPING WITHOUT A GATE

11. BECAUSE OPENNESS REQUIRES SOME CONSTRAINTS, STRUCTURE IS ESSENTIAL TO ALLOW FOR A DIVERSITY OF PRACTICES WITHIN THE PROTOZONE. CONCENTRATION ON PROCESS, PROTOZONE, AND INTENSITIES PROVIDES BOTH CURATORS AND

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Carsten Seiffarth and Carsten Stabenow (eds.)
on behalf of Beethovenstiftung
für Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn

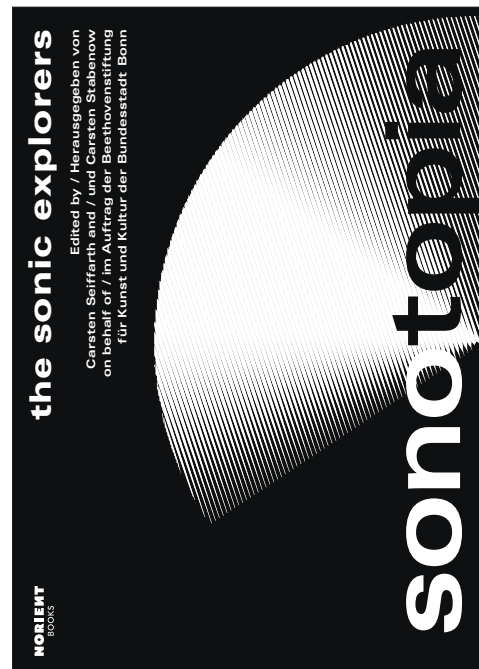
sonotopia – the sonic explorers

The international exchange project «sonotopia – the sonic explorers» by «bonn hoeren» on behalf of the Beethoven Foundation for Art and Culture sent six young European sound artists on artistic expeditions to four cities on four continents on the occasion of the Beethoven anniversary year and the conclusion of «bonn hoeren». After residencies with two young local sound artists in each of the respective cities – Tehran, Dakar, and Valparaíso/Bonn – all of the twelve artists came together in Bonn.

A final exhibition showed works created in Bonn, documented the working process and the individual works by the young artists, and reflected about the outcomes of the collaborations and the specifics of their local contexts. Materials, field recordings, sketches, traces, sound cartographies, ideas, artifacts, devices, and atmospheres: what and how did the young sound artists hear and what did they experience during their time together? What remains? This publication documents and reflects the process and the results of the residencies with text contributions of the participants and mentors, countless images, and interviews.

Das internationale Austauschprojekt «sonotopia – the sonic explorers» von «bonn hoeren» schickte im Auftrag der Beethovenstiftung für Kunst und Kultur anlässlich des Beethoven-Jubiläumsjahres und zum Abschluss von «bonn hoeren» sechs junge europäische Klangkünstler*innen auf künstlerische Expeditionen in vier Städte auf vier Kontinenten. Nach Residenzen mit jeweils zwei jungen lokalen Klangkünstler*innen in den Städten Teheran, Dakar und Valparaíso/Bonn kamen alle zwölf Künstler*innen noch einmal zum Finale in Bonn zusammen.

Eine abschliessende Ausstellung in Bonn zeigte die entstandenen Werke, dokumentierte den Arbeitsprozess und die einzelnen Arbeiten der jungen Künstler*innen und reflektierte die Ergebnisse der Zusammenarbeit und die Besonderheiten der lokalen Kontexte. Materialien, Feldaufnahmen, Skizzen, Spuren, Klangkartografien, Ideen, Artefakte, Geräte und Atmosphären: Was und wie haben die jungen Klangkünstler*innen gehört und was haben sie während ihrer gemeinsamen Zeit erlebt? Was bleibt? Diese Publikation dokumentiert und reflektiert den Prozess und die Ergebnisse der Residenzen vor Ort mit Textbeiträgen der Teilnehmer*innen und Mentoren, zahlreichen Abbildungen und Interviews.



Carsten Seiffarth and Carsten Stabenow (eds.)
on behalf of Beethovenstiftung
für Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn
sonotopia – the sonic explorers

with contributions by Constanza Alarcón Tennen, Mehdi Behbudi, Adramé Ismaël Coly, Ali Hashemlou, Kathrin Lambert, Karl Ludwig, Torsten Möller, Michel Poblete Montoya, Lorenz Pasch, Maurice Pülm, Stefan Rummel, Kaveh Sattari, Nika Schmitt, Martin Tornow, Anna K. Wane, and Christiane Wien

four colors, softback
17,2 × 24,4 cm, 304 pages
languages: English / Deutsch
ISBN 978-3-9525444-3-3

CHF 19.– / EUR 19.–

Release
March 2, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.56513/mztc7892>
<https://norient.com/books/sonotopia>

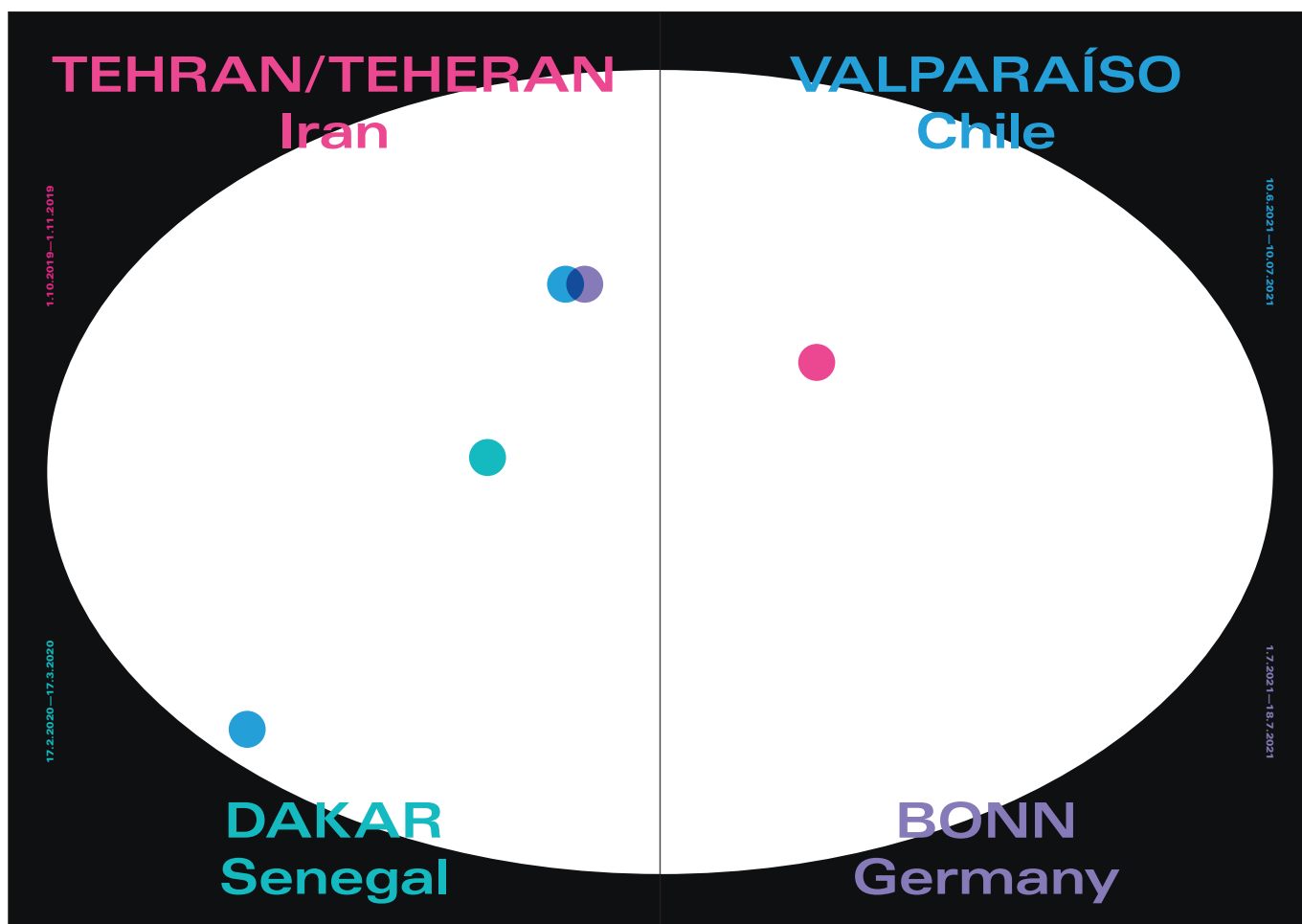
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Preface

With the present publication, "sonotopia – the sonic explorers," another landmark occasion in the "bonn hoeren" project (2010–2021) has been brought to completion. The winners of the European student competition "sonotopia," sponsored by the Beethovenstiftung für Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn (Beethoven Foundation for Art and Culture of the Federal City of Bonn) from 2015 to 2019 to support the work of emerging young sound artists, were given the opportunity to develop and present their own sound installations in Bonn. In honor of Beethoven's 250th anniversary, the "sonic explorers" project gave six previous sonotopia finalists the chance to further develop their work in the context of an international research exchange. From 2019 to 2021, on location in Tehran (Iran), Dakar (Senegal), and Valparaíso (Chile) / Bonn (Germany), they shared their sound experiences with local emerging artists, studied the urban soundscape, and developed new sound installations together. In the summer of 2021, six artists from Iran, Senegal, and Chile joined the sonotopia finalists in Bonn for a concluding residency, where they put on an exhibition at Künstlerforum Bonn that was designed to reflect the different sound experiences of the cities where the various residencies had taken place. Moreover, the stay in Bonn facilitated an intimate artistic exchange among the artists across borders and cultures.

The project underscores the mission of the Beethovenstiftung Bonn "to foster culturally outstanding projects that advance the prestige and the international profile of Bonn as a center for culture and the birthplace of Ludwig van Beethoven." The project "sonotopia – the sonic explorers" represents the connection between international networks, innovative sound art, and the advancement of emerging sound artists. It was the first final follow-up project of "bonn hoeren" (2010–2019) which had focused above all on the realization of sound installations in the public space by annually appointed city sound artists and has turned the City of Beethoven into a focal point of creative sound art far beyond Germany's borders.

I would like to thank the curators and artistic directors of the project "sonotopia – the sonic explorers," Carsten Seiffarth and Carsten Stabenow, the production head Markus Steffens, as well as the artists, their mentors, and everyone else who participated in this three-year project and the present book, for their outstanding work and their engagement. I would also like to thank the Kunststiftung NRW (North Rhine-Westphalian Art Foundation), the Beethoven Anniversary Society (Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH), the participating Goethe Institutes and institutional partners for their generous sponsorship and support of the project. Last but not least, many thanks to Norient for publishing this book.

Grußwort

Mit der hier vorliegenden Publikation „sonotopia – the sonic explorers“ findet ein weiterer Schwerpunkt des Projekts „bonn hoeren“ (2010–2021) seinen Abschluss. Der von der Beethovenstiftung für Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn 2015 bis 2019 ausgelobte europäische Wettbewerb „sonotopia“ eröffnete Studierenden der Klangkunst die Möglichkeit, als erste Preisträger in Bonn eine eigene Klanginstallation zu erarbeiten und zu präsentieren. Mit dem Projekt „sonic explorers“ erhielten nun sechs ehemalige Finalisten des sonotopia-Wettbewerbs im Beethoven-Jubiläumsjahr die Chance, ihre künstlerische Arbeit durch einen Forschungs- und Austauschaufenthalt im internationalen Kontext weiterzuentwickeln. In den ausgewählten Orten Teheran (Iran), Dakar (Senegal) und Valparaíso (Chile) / Bonn (Deutschland) konnten sie 2019–2021 ihre Kangerfahrungen mit jungen Künstlerinnen und Künstlern aus diesen Ländern teilen, gemeinsam urbane Klanglandschaften studieren und neue Klanginstallationen entwickeln. Im Sommer 2021 kamen die sechs Künstlerinnen und Künstler aus den drei Ländern und die ausgewählten Finalisten des sonotopia-Wettbewerbs zu einer abschließenden Residenz in Bonn zusammen, wo sie gemeinsam eine Ausstellung im Künstlerforum Bonn realisierten, die die unterschiedlichen Kangergebnisse in den Städten reflektierte, in denen die Residenzen stattfanden. Der Aufenthalt in Bonn ermöglichte darüber hinaus allen Beteiligten einen engen künstlerischen Austausch über Grenzen und Kulturen hinweg.

Die Beethovenstiftung für Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn unterstreicht mit diesem Projekt ihren Auftrag, „kulturell herausragende Vorhaben zu fördern, die das Ansehen und die internationale Bedeutung Bonns als Kulturstandort und Geburtsstadt Ludwig van Beethovens stärken“. Das Projekt „sonotopia – the sonic explorers“ steht für die Verbindung von internationaler Vernetzung, innovativer Klangkunst und der Förderung des Austauschs junger Klangkünstler. Es war das erste finale Erweiterungsprojekt des Projekts „bonn hoeren“, bei dem seit 2010 vor allem Klanginstallationen im Bonner Stadtraum durch jährlich berufene Stadtklangkünstler realisiert wurden, was die Beethovenstadt weit über Deutschland hinaus als einen zentralen Ort kreativer Klangkunst bekannt gemacht hat.

Ich danke den Kuratoren und künstlerischen Leitern des Projekts „sonotopia – the sonic explorers“, Carsten Seiffarth und Carsten Stabenow, dem Produktionsleiter Markus Steffens sowie den Künstlern, künstlerischen Mentoren und allen weiteren Beteiligten an diesem dreijährigen Projekt und dem vorliegenden Buch für ihre wunderbare Arbeit und ihr Engagement. Der Kunststiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen, der Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH, den beteiligten Goethe-Instituten und den institutionellen Partnern danke ich für ihre großzügige Förderung und Unterstützung des Projekts. Zu guter Letzt geht mein Dank an Norient für die Veröffentlichung dieser Publikation.

Monika Wulf-Mathies

Chair of the Board of the Beethoven Foundation
for Art and Culture of the Federal City of Bonn

Vorsitzende des Kuratoriums der Beethovenstiftung
für Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn

To open the world for oneself or to open oneself to the world – both processes commence with listening. Our perception of the world “out there” begins with listening, long before we are born. The act of listening is the foundation for every type of communication and social interaction, both of which have to be learned. This is no different today than it was in Beethoven’s time – but the contemporary world is a much larger and more differentiated listening space.

sonotopia – the sonic explorers

How do cities on distant continents sound? How do individuals in other cultural spheres listen? Can we, with our European-trained perception, learn something from them and perhaps come to understand an increasingly globalised listening world better in its local expression as a consequence? What does Bonn really sound like nowadays?

In stereophony, the spatial shifting of two sound sources creates a reproduction of reality that is as natural as possible. "sonotopia – the sonic explorers" aims to interpret this shift in perspective metaphorically in terms of a multi-lateral residency project.

With "bonn hoeren", the Beethovenstiftung für Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn (Beethoven Foundation for Art and Culture of the Federal City of Bonn) has been engaged in pioneering work in the production, presentation and mediation of sound art since 2010. In addition, since 2015 it has also been organizing an annual European student competition for installation-based sound art with "bonn hoeren – sonotopia". This prize for the promotion of young sound artists was the only one of its kind in Europe. The annual competition by invitation was endowed with prize money amounting to 10,000 euros, made available for the realisation and presentation of a new sound installation in the city of Bonn. As a result, Bonn has been privileged to host and experience a series of excellent works of sound art over the past years, created by promising young European artists who have by now become firmly established as professional art practitioners.

The international residency and exchange project "sonotopia – the sonic explorers" turned former Bonn prize winners into travelling researchers and sound art ambassadors, sending them out into the world on an artistic expedition. Three pairings

of sonotopia prize winners each traveled to Tehran/Iran, Dakar/Senegal and Valparaíso/Chile (moved to Bonn in June 2021 due to the pandemic), respectively, where they spent an entire month engaged in project and research residencies and worked together locally with two young artists from the countries in question. Finally, on the occasion of the Beethoven Anniversary Year in 2020, all 12 participating sound artists were supposed to come together for a joint residency in Bonn, in order to share their experiences and explore and deepen their work within a new context. Because of the pandemic this had to be postponed to 2021.

About a Perspective of Listening in Urban Spaces

A large number of studies have been conducted that focus on the radical transformation of cities under the influence of globalisation (see Saskia Sassen, Richard Sennett, David Harvey, among many others), yet acoustic aspects continue to be neglected in the realms of fine art, design, architecture and city planning. As early as 1989, sound artists and sonic thinkers Bruce Odland and Sam Auinger expressed this state of affairs as follows: "Since the Renaissance we have had an agreed visual perspective and language to speak accurately about images. This we still lack in the world of sound, where words fail us to even describe for instance the complex waveforms of an urban environment, much less what those sounds do to us and how they make us feel."

Since then, the growing number of artistic and scientific works dealing with the acoustic, social and cultural aspects of hearing in urban space has provided an eminently important tool for the development of innovative urban practices, for example with regard to problems of noise control in cities and the conception of acoustic environments in public space (see projects such as tuned city, bonn hoeren or Berlin Sonic Places). However, these findings are still only hesitantly applied in urban planning concepts, which also indicates that public space has increasingly been challenged by global flows of capital as well as the privatization of urban development. In order to avoid reducing the examination of sound exclusively to noise control purposes, it is absolutely necessary to illuminate the nature of the acoustic consequences of this social, political and aesthetic transformation and their corresponding effects on our lives and work in urban environments.

Artistic Research and Project Work

Unlike in Beethoven's time, today in big cities listening is largely determined by overly complex perceptual situations, by increasing spatial concentration and decontextualisation. Alongside changes to the local social structures involved in coexistence, an alteration of the qualities of individual perception and the fundamental patterns of reception can be observed as well. For this reason, the project at hand focused on the artistic examination of locally divergent urban phenomena from a sound perspective, on their interpretation and transformation using the most diverse creative means. The adoption of another cultural vantage point served as both foundation and catalysing element. In this regard, the project pulled in both directions: Young "sonic explorers" from "central peripheral locations" in terms of Western perception (Tehran, Dakar, Valparaíso) were involved in the artistic project work from the very beginning, first in the local surroundings familiar to them alongside the European artists, who had in turn a sort of "home field advantage" in the final part of the project in Bonn. At all of the planned locations, the participants researched and reacted directly to local situations, or became involved in them personally through artistic interventions. The tangible results of these processes were sound installations, sound sculptures and sound performances in public space, in addition to reflections (in talks and workshops within the local contexts as well as in the form of an online blog) and documentations, all of which were made accessible in the final Bonn exhibition in 2021. The site for this examination was Bonn Nord, a part of the city officially categorised as a problem zone from a social point of view, and one which provides prototypical perspectives of tendencies in urban development found elsewhere around the globe. The district was explored jointly by all 12 "sonic explorers".

Today, most Europeans take the ability to travel for granted, stays abroad have become part of our normal learning experience – rarely is this phenomenon seen as a privilege anymore from a Western perspective. Nevertheless, many of the world's regions elude general attention. "sonotopia – the sonic explorers" aimed to encourage young artists to explore unusual places. Particularly for young artists it is important to perceive nuances and subtle shades in an immediate and unfiltered manner. It is especially the areas on the fringes of our usual ranges of motion – whether geographic or cultural – that are interesting in this connection. This project sought to create spaces for the gathering of experience that would be inconceivable and unrealisable within an artist's everyday existence governed by pragmatic considerations.

"sonotopia – the sonic explorers" invested in the next generation of creative talents – for all of the participating artists it was both an expedition and an experiment. The "sonic explorers" set out to explore new dimensions of urban sound art together with local sound artists. Within unfamiliar sonic environments, they experienced unforeseen situations, challenges and moments, provoked reactions and created new realities. The "sonic explorers" gathered impressions, sounds and encounters and returned with even more questions ...

Project Phase I: Exploring Tehran (2019), Dakar (2020) and Valparaíso / Bonn (2021)

In 2019 and 2020, just before the pandemic, two groups consisting of two former sonotopia prize winners each spent one month pursuing a project and research residency in Tehran/Iran and Dakar/Senegal. In each location, two young local artists associated with the partner organisations worked together with the European artists. An experienced local artist guided the work of the group as a mentor artistically and shaped the process in order to ensure focus and adequate professional supervision. The respective partner hosting organisation supported the group in establishing connections within the community and to successfully integrate their activities. Due to the political situation in Chile in November 2019 and then due to the pandemic, the module in Valparaíso could not take place as planned. In order to make the joint research residency of the young sound artists possible nevertheless, we moved the module to Bonn at short notice. The young Chilean artists collected sounds and ideas in advance in Valparaíso and brought them with them for the joint work with their German colleagues in Bonn in June 2021.

The individual project process was documented in a logbook (in the form of an online blog) by all involved artists. This logbook was accessible to the general public on the project website, though it was also intended to promote an exchange of information between the residency locations themselves (as an internal platform) and was carried on both locally and virtually.

For the duration of the project residencies a dialogue in diverse formats (presentations, public interventions, open studios, jour fixes, etc.) served as a catalyst for collaboration in the respective local contexts and enabled the incorporation of immediate feedback from the public into the process.

The choice of locations was made in conscious contrast to Central European and Western perspectives. Totally different urban situations and cultural conditions as well as very specific local issues generated a series of important thematic fields. Both globally and locally relevant social and ecological lines of inquiry, such as city and population growth and concentration, climate change, segregation/gentrification and globalisation, opened interesting perspectives for potential working approaches.

The residencies resulted in site-specific sound art works in Tehran, Dakar and Bonn and were presented publicly as well as critically reflected and discussed within the local context in close co-operation with the project partners. The documentation of the process, of the works themselves and the local engagement was itself an important element of the project.

Project Phase II: A Shift in Perspective – Beethoven's 250th Birthday, Bonn 2020 (postponed to 2021)

"Ludwig van Beethoven is the most frequently performed of all European classical composers. He was also a radical artist who constantly reinvented himself, expanded the boundaries of music and posed questions to society. Even today he inspires people all over the world." So reads the official greeting from the Beethoven Anniversary Society. For more than a decade, the "bonn hoeren" project of the Beethovenstiftung für Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn has embodied this sort of radiant energy in an impressive manner while continually supporting new artistic work in a constant examination of issues related to urban, social, societal and aesthetic development.

What role does Beethoven play for young artists from other cultural milieus in the era of globalisation and cultural standardisation? Our "sonic explorers" discussed this question as well. The project intended very consciously not only "to go out into the world" to research, but to extend an invitation of its own as well. In an opposite motion to the exploration of the unknown, the process was to be mirrored and brought back to Bonn. For this reason, on the occasion of Beethoven's 250th birthday in 2020, the young artists from the partner cities were invited to Bonn to do a project residency. Together with their European counterparts, they worked for two weeks in the city, continuing and intensifying the discourses begun at home.

Of course, the urban sound world of Bonn was an entirely different one during Beethoven's childhood and youth in the late 18th century. Not only was the pre-industrial city a different one from an acoustic perspective – the perception of sound at the time was also more significantly influenced by a value system informed by Christian morality that elevated "silence" above all else, one in which the "loud" was associated with the "bad" (i.e. with the unbearable, polyphonic chaos of Babel, the noise of Hell, the profane ...) and silence with the "good" (contemplation, reverence, obedience...).

What does it sound like in today's Bonn, and how does one listen there for that matter? Do we hear or listen differently than it was the case in Beethoven's days? How has the perception of sound changed historically? What is the sound of a Western European city in the 21st century? What role does acoustic perception play in this age of multi-medial overstimulation? Can the city be understood and designed differently in its architectonic and social structure through listening intently? What insight can we gain from the study of historical sound realities and their artistic interpretation? Can we learn from the experiences of the listening worlds of other cultural regions?

The final exhibition at the Künstlerforum Bonn in July 2021 showcased the resulting works and documented the working process, the individual working methods of the artists and partner organisations and the particularities of the respective local contexts while reflecting on the results of the realised co-operations from both perspectives.

Carsten Seiffarth / Carsten Stabenow, 2019–2021
on behalf of the Beethoven Foundation
for Art and Culture of the Federal City of Bonn



ALL HUSBANDS WORKING IN PUBLIC SPACE OF TEHRAN - SHARING LISTENING EXPERIENCES WITH RANDOM AUDIENCE
ARBEITEN IN ÖFFENTLICHEN RAUM TEHRANS - GETEILTE HÖRERFahrungen MIT ZUFÄLLIGEN PUBLIKUM

Sich die Welt öffnen oder sich der Welt öffnen – beides beginnt mit dem Hören. Unsere Wahrnehmung „der Welt dort draußen“ beginnt mit dem Hören, lange bevor wir geboren werden. Grundvoraussetzung jeglicher Kommunikation und sozialen Interaktion ist der Akt des Zuhörens. Beides will gelernt sein. Das ist heute nicht anders als zu Beethovens Zeiten – aber die Welt ist heute ein viel größerer und differenzierterer Hörraum.

sonotopia – the sonic explorers

Wie klingen die Städte auf entfernten Kontinenten? Wie hört man in anderen Kulturkreisen? Können wir mit unserer europäisch geschulten Wahrnehmung etwas davon lernen und eine zunehmend globalisierte Hörwelt im Lokalen dadurch besser verstehen? Wie klingt dann Bonn heute?

In der Stereophonie wird eine möglichst natürliche Wiedergabe der Realität durch die räumliche Verschiebung von zwei Klangquellen erzeugt. „sonotopia – the sonic explorers“ interpretiert diese Verschiebung der Perspektive metaphorisch mit einem multilateralen Residenzprojekt.

Die Beethovenstiftung für Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn leistet mit „bonn hoeren“ seit 2010 Pionierarbeit in der Produktion, Präsentation und Vermittlung von Klangkunst. Zudem veranstaltete sie zwischen 2015 und 2019 mit „bonn hoeren – sonotopia“ einen europäischen Studierenden-Wettbewerb für installative Klangkunst. Dieser Preis zur Förderung junger Klangkünstlerinnen und Klangkünstler war europaweit einzigartig. Der Einladungswettbewerb wurde jährlich veranstaltet und war mit 10.000 Euro zur Realisierung einer neuen Klanginstallation dotiert, die in Bonn umgesetzt und präsentiert wurde. So hat Bonn in den vergangenen Jahren eine Reihe exzellenter Klangkunstwerke erleben dürfen, geschaffen von erfolgversprechenden jungen europäischen Studierenden, die nun bereits im aktiven Künstlerleben stehen.

Das internationale Residenz- und Austauschprojekt „sonotopia – the sonic explorers“ machte ehemalige Bonner Preisträgerinnen und Preisträger zu Forschungsreisenden und Klangkunstbotschaftern und schickte sie auf eine künstlerische Expedition in die Welt. Für jeweils einen Monat reisten je zwei von ihnen zu Projekt- und

Forschungsresidenzen nach Teheran/Iran, Dakar/Senegal und Valparaíso/Chile (pandemiebedingt verlegt nach Bonn im Juni 2021), um dort gemeinsam mit zwei jungen Künstlerinnen und Künstlern des jeweiligen Landes zu arbeiten. Zum Beethovenjubiläum 2020 (pandemiebedingt verschoben auf 2021) schließlich sollten alle 12 beteiligten „sonic explorers“ für eine gemeinsame Residenz in Bonn zusammenkommen, um ihre Erfahrungen auszutauschen, ihre Arbeit in einem neuen Kontext zu hinterfragen und weiterzuentwickeln.

Über eine Perspektive des Hörens in urbanen Räumen

Eine Vielzahl von Studien hat sich mit der radikalen Transformation von Städten durch die Globalisierung beschäftigt (Saskia Sassen, Richard Sennett, David Harvey u.v.a.), doch akustische Gesichtspunkte werden in Kunst, Design, Architektur und Stadtplanung nach wie vor vernachlässigt. Bereits 1989 formulierten die Klangkünstler und -denker Bruce Odland und Sam Aulinger „Seit der Renaissance haben wir eine einheitliche visuelle Perspektive und eine Sprache, um präzise über Bilder zu sprechen. Dies vermischen wir noch immer für die Welt des Klangs, wo uns die Worte und Begriffe fehlen, um beispielsweise die komplexen Wellenformen einer städtischen Umgebung zu beschreiben, geschweige denn, was diese Klänge mit uns machen und was wir dabei empfinden.“

Die wachsende Zahl künstlerischer und wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten, die sich mit den akustischen, sozialen und kulturellen Aspekten des Hörens im urbanen Raum befassen, hat seitdem ein eminent wichtiges Instrument für die Entwicklung innovativer urbaner Praktiken geliefert, zum Beispiel im Hinblick auf Probleme des Lärmschutzes in Städten und die Konzeption akustischer Umgebungen im öffentlichen Raum (siehe Projekte wie tuned city, bonn hoeren oder Berlin Sonic Places). Allerdings werden diese Erkenntnisse in städtebaulichen Konzepten nach wie vor nur zögerlich umgesetzt, was auch darauf hinweist, dass der öffentliche Raum durch globale Kapitalströme sowie die Privatisierung der Stadtentwicklung zunehmend in Frage gestellt wird. Um die Auseinandersetzung mit Klang nicht nur auf den Lärmschutz zu reduzieren, ist es unbedingt erforderlich zu beleuchten, welches die akustischen Folgen dieser sozialen, politischen und ästhetischen Transformation sind und wie sich diese auf unser Leben und Arbeiten im urbanen Milieu auswirken.

Künstlerische Recherche- und Projektarbeit

Anders als zur Zeit Beethovens ist das Hören heute maßgeblich durch überkomplexe Wahrnehmungssituationen in den großen Städten, durch zunehmende Verdichtung und Dekontextualisierung bestimmt. Es verändern sich nicht nur die lokalen sozialen Strukturen des Zusammenlebens, sondern auch die Qualitäten individueller Wahrnehmung und der zugrundeliegenden Rezeptionsmuster. Im Fokus des Projektes stand daher die künstlerische Untersuchung lokal unterschiedlicher urbaner Phänomene aus klanglicher Perspektive, deren Interpretation und Transformation mit verschiedensten künstlerischen Mitteln. Die Einnahme eines anderen kulturellen Blickwinkels war zugleich Grundlage wie katalysierendes Element. Das Projekt zielte dabei in beide Richtungen: Die jungen „sonic explorers“ aus „zentralen Randlagen“ westlicher Wahrnehmung (Teheran, Valparaíso, Dakar) wurden von Anfang an in die künstlerische Projektarbeit eingebunden, zuerst in der Arbeit in ihren vertrauten lokalen Umgebungen zusammen mit den europäischen Künstlerinnen und Künstlern, welche wiederum im finalen Projektteil 2021 in Bonn einen „Heimvorteil“ hatten. An allen Orten konnten die Beteiligten recherchieren und mit künstlerischen Interventionen direkt auf lokale Situationen reagieren bzw. in sie eingreifen. Ergebnisse waren Klanginstallationen, Klangskulpturen und Klangperformances im öffentlichen Raum, dazu Reflexionen (in Talks und Workshops vor Ort wie auch im Online-Blog) und Dokumentationen, die dann in der finalen Ausstellung in Bonn 2021 zugänglich gemacht wurden. Ort der Auseinandersetzung war Bonn Nord, ein Stadtteil, der offiziell als soziales Problemgebiet eingestuft wird und prototypische Perspektiven globaler Tendenzen der Stadtentwicklung in sich vereint. Das Viertel wurde von allen 12 „sonic explorern“ gemeinsam untersucht.

Reisen sind heute für die meisten Europäer eine Selbstverständlichkeit, Auslandsaufenthalte sind Teil unserer Lernerfahrung geworden – selten wird dies aus westlicher Perspektive noch als Privileg wahrgenommen. Dennoch entziehen sich viele Regionen der Welt der allgemeinen Aufmerksamkeit, „sonotopia – the sonic explorers“ wollte junge Künstlerinnen und Künstler ermutigen, ungewöhnliche Orte zu erkunden. Gerade für sie ist es wichtig, Nuancen und Zwischentöne direkt und ungefiltert wahrzunehmen. Besonders die Randbereiche der üblichen Bewegungsradien – ob geografisch oder kulturell – waren dabei interessant. Das Projekt wollte Freiräume schaffen, um Erfahrungen zu sammeln, die in einem durch pragmatische Überlegungen strukturierten Künstleralltag nicht denkbar und realisierbar wären.

„sonotopia – the sonic explorers“ investierte in den künstlerischen Nachwuchs – für alle Beteiligten war es zugleich Expedition und Experiment. Die „sonic explorers“ machten sich auf die Suche nach den unkartografierten Gebieten der Klangkunst. Sie brachen auf, um gemeinsam mit lokalen Künstlerinnen und Künstlern neue Dimensionen städtischer Klangkunst zu erkunden. In ungewohnten klanglichen Umgebungen erlebten sie unvorhergesehene Situationen, Herausforderungen und Momente, provozierten Reaktionen, schufen neue Realitäten. Sie sammelten Eindrücke, Klänge, Begegnungen und kehrten zurück mit noch mehr Fragen ...

Projektphase I: Exploring Teheran (2019), Dakar (2020) und Valparaíso / Bonn (2021)

Ende 2019 und Anfang 2020, gerade noch vor dem Beginn der Covid-19 Pandemie, verbrachten jeweils zwei ehemalige sonotopia-Preisgewinner ihre Projekt- und Forschungsresidenz in Teheran/Iran und Dakar/Senegal gemeinsam mit jeweils zwei lokalen jungen Künstlerinnen und Künstlern. Ein erfahrener Mentor wurde der Gruppe zur Seite gestellt und betreute sie inhaltlich und künstlerisch. Die jeweilige Partnerorganisation begleitete den Prozess vor Ort und katalysierte Integration und Vernetzung. Wegen der politischen Situation in Chile im November 2019 und danach pandemiebedingt konnte das Modul in Valparaíso nicht wie geplant stattfinden. Um die gemeinsame Forschungsresidenz der „sonic explorers“ dennoch möglich zu machen, verlegten wir das Modul nach Bonn. Die beiden chilenischen „sonic explorers“ sammelten vorab in Valparaíso Klänge und Ideen und brachten diese für die gemeinsame Arbeit im Juni 2021 in Bonn mit.

Der individuelle Projektprozess wurde von allen beteiligten Künstlerinnen und Künstlern in einem Log-Buch aufbereitet und dokumentiert (Online-Blog). Dieser war öffentlich auf einer Projektwebseite zugänglich, diente aber auch dem Austausch der Residenzorte untereinander (als interne Plattform) und wurde sowohl lokal als auch virtuell weitergedacht.

Während der Projektresidenzen wurde ein Dialog in diversen Formaten (Präsentationen, öffentliche Interventionen, open studios, jours fixes etc.) als Katalysator für die Zusammenarbeit vor Ort und als Möglichkeit für ein direktes Publikumsfeedback geführt.

Die Auswahl der Orte erfolgte in bewusstem Kontrast zur zentraleuropäischen und westlichen Perspektive. Ganz unterschiedliche urbane Situationen und kulturelle Gegebenheiten sowie sehr spezielle lokale Problematiken generierten eine Reihe wichtiger Themenfelder. Global wie auch lokal relevante soziale und ökologische Fragestellungen wie Stadt- und Bevölkerungswachstum und Verdichtung, Klimaveränderung, Segregation/Gentrifizierung und Globalisierung eröffneten interessante Perspektiven für konkrete Arbeitsansätze.

Die Residenzen resultierten in ortsspezifischen klangkünstlerischen Arbeiten in Teheran, Dakar und Bonn und wurden in enger Zusammenarbeit mit dem Projektpartner im lokalen Kontext öffentlich präsentiert, kritisch reflektiert und diskutiert. Die Dokumentation des Prozesses, der Arbeit selbst und der lokalen Auseinandersetzung war wichtiger Bestandteil des Projekts.

Projektphase II: Perspektivwechsel – Beethovens 250. Geburtstag, Bonn 2020 (2021)

„Ludwig van Beethoven gilt als der meistgespielte Komponist der Europäischen Klassik – und er war ein radikaler Künstler, der sich immer wieder neu erfunden hat, der die Grenzen der Musik erweiterte und die Gesellschaft in Frage stellte. Weltweit inspiriert er uns bis heute.“ So lautet die offizielle Grußbotschaft der Beethoven Jubiläums Gesellschaft. Das Projekt „bonn hoeren“ der Beethovenstiftung für Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn illustrierte diese Strahlkraft mehr als zehn Jahre lang auf eindrucksvolle Weise und förderte kontinuierlich neue künstlerische Arbeiten in ständiger Auseinandersetzung mit Fragen urbaner, sozialer, gesellschaftlicher und ästhetischer Entwicklung.

Welche Rolle spielt Beethoven für junge Künstlerinnen und Künstler aus anderen Kulturkreisen im Zeitalter der Globalisierung und kulturellen Normierung? Die „sonic explorers“ sollten auch dieser Frage nachgehen. Das Projekt wollte ganz bewusst nicht nur forschend „in die Welt gehen“, sondern auch einladen. Der Prozess der Erkundung des Fremden sollte gespiegelt und in einer Gegenbewegung zurück nach Bonn gebracht werden. Zum Beethovenjubiläumsjahr 2020 (Projektaktivitäten verschoben auf 2021) waren die jungen Künstlerinnen und Künstler der Partnerstädte zu Projektresidenzen und Workshops nach Bonn eingeladen. Zusammen mit den europäischen „sonic explorern“ arbeiteten sie für zwei Wochen in der Stadt, um die begonnenen Diskurse fortzuführen und zu intensivieren.

Natürlich war die städtische Klangwelt von Bonn während Beethovens Kindheit und Jugend Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts eine ganz und gar andere. Nicht nur war die vorindustrielle Stadt akustisch verschieden, auch das Klangempfinden der Zeit war noch deutlicher durch ein christlich-moralistisches Wertesystem der Stille geprägt, in dem das „Laute“ mit dem „Schlechten“ (dem unerträglich vielstimmigen Chaos von Babel, dem Lärm der Hölle, dem Profanen ...) und die „Stille“ mit dem „Guten“ (Kontemplation, Andacht, Gehorsam ...) assoziiert war.

Wie hört sich das heutige Bonn an und wie hört man in ihm? Hören wir anders als zu Beethovens Zeit? Wie hat sich das Klangempfinden historisch verändert? Was ist der Klang einer westeuropäischen Stadt im 21. Jahrhundert? Welche Rolle spielt die akustische Wahrnehmung im Zeitalter multimedialer Reizüberflutung? Kann Stadt in architektonischer und sozialer Struktur über das Hören anders verstanden und gestaltet werden? Welche Erkenntnisse liefert die Untersuchung historischer Klangrealitäten und deren künstlerische Interpretation? Können wir aus den Erfahrungen der Hörwelten anderer Kulturkreise lernen?

Die finale Ausstellung im Künstlerforum Bonn im Juli 2021 versuchte sich an der Beantwortung dieser Fragen, zeigte die entstandenen Arbeiten, dokumentierte den Arbeitsprozess, die individuellen Arbeitsweisen der jungen Künstlerinnen und Künstler sowie der Partnerorganisationen, die Besonderheiten des jeweiligen lokalen Kontextes und reflektierte die Ergebnisse der entstandenen Kooperationen aus jeweils beiden Perspektiven.

Carsten Seiffarth / Carsten Stabenow, 2019–2021
im Auftrag der Beethovenstiftung für
Kunst und Kultur der Bundesstadt Bonn



TEHRAN/TEHERAN



Kathrin
Lambert^{DE}

TEHRAN

Kaveh
Sattari^{IR}

Lorenz
Pasch^{DE}

IRAN

Ali
Hashemlou^{IR}

► Tehran

Introduction ◀ ▶ 26 ◀

TEHRAN - IRAN

Dates: 1 October – 1 November 2019

Artists: Kathrin Lambert, Lorenz Pasch + Kaveh Sattari, Ali Hashemlou
Mentor: Mehdi Behbudi (Tehran)

Events: 2 October – Project Presentation, 7pm @ Kooshk Residency

30 October – Open Studio, 12pm – 9pm @ Deegar Platform, Darbast

Platform and Tehran Navab Bathhouse

Partner organisation / Residency location: Kooshk Residency

Supporter: Cultural Section of the German Embassy in Tehran

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Last Weeks of Pre-Covid Tehran

An introduction by Mehdi Behbudi

Finding a chance to explore your city together with a group of enthusiastic sonic explorers is an amazing experience. On the first day of the residency in Tehran, I found that chance to go on a sound walk in the middle of my noisy crowded city, together with Kathrin, Ali, Lorenz, Kaveh and Carsten Stabenow.

It was a beautiful start. Carsten left a few days later and I was left with 4 artists who each had a special view of the world. Ali and Kathrin were more into exploring the city. Kaveh was obsessed with the acoustic qualities of an old bathhouse in Tehran. And Lorenz was experimenting and working inside – paying attention to details and interactions. As a mentor, being involved in 4 parallel lines of exploration and realization of different ideas is like trying to be a kind of Buddha: Observe, observe, observe, be calm and help.

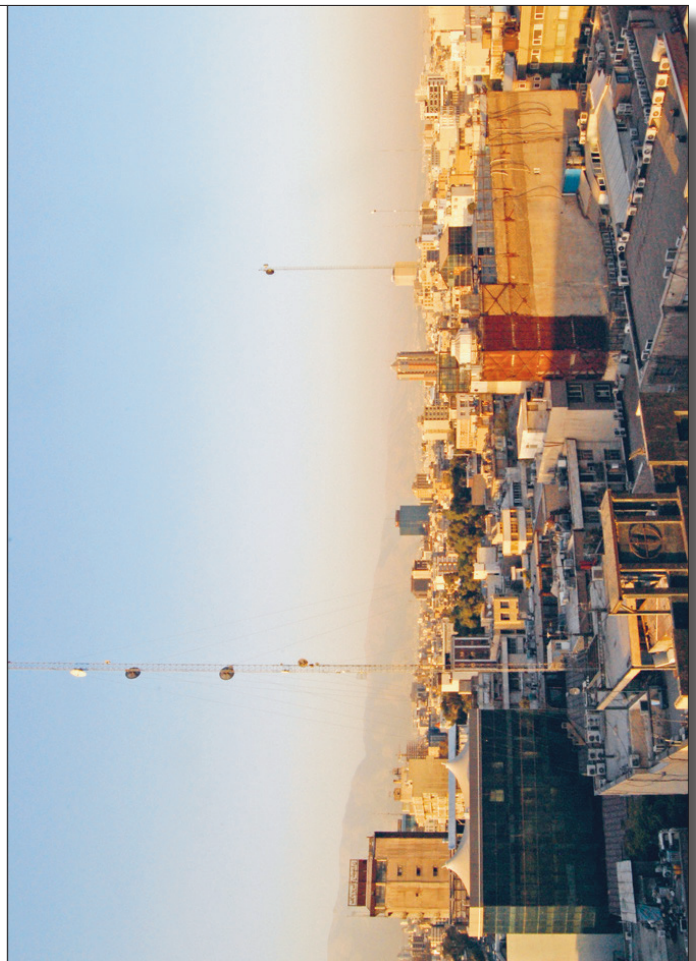
With Kathrin we had 2 kinds of explorations: Exploring the city for water and exploring the bazaar of Tehran to find materials and mechanical parts for making a sound sculpture working with the city channels' scarce water flow. It was an amazing journey. At some parts of the work we had to go and search for a water source that could feed our intended channel. While working on her idea, Kathrin was busy taking photos all the time and making field recordings that were presented beautifully on the open studio day. ▶ 33

With Ali, development of an idea was very quick. On the first day's sound walk he somehow fell in love with metal ventilation channels that are very common in Tehran. These channels are usually made to route the cool air from water cooling systems on the roof top to different parts of the house. Because air flows in these channels, they always contain vibrations and sound. Realizing Ali's idea involved a lot of metal and electrical work. ▶ 63

With Kaveh we spent most of the time just listening. He had his idea ready from the beginning: remaking the sonic ambience of a bathhouse. But the exploration of the bathhouse acoustics changed the outcome of the idea. In the end we had to listen to the way that the building was responding, resonating and giving feedback. ▶ 45

Lorenz's RROOOOMMM was like a small-scale, deformed Tehran in a room. The most important part of working with Lorenz was talking about ideas. With him my main acts were: listening, observing and enjoying. ▶ 53

TEHRAN IMPRESSION TEHRAN IMPRESSION





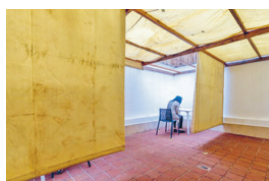
TEHRAN CITY EXPLORATION **TEHRAN** STADTERKUNDUNG

THE SONIC EXPLORERS TEHRAN **TEHRAN**



TEHRAN OLD TOWN NEAR SAVAB BATHHOUSE
TEHRAN ALTSTADT NAHE SAVAB BADHAUS

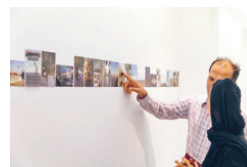
TEHRAN CITY EXPLORATION
TEHRAN STADTERKUNDUNG



OPEN STUDIO IMPRESSIONS, **DEGAR** STUDIO

SAVAB BATHHOUSE **SAVAB** BADHAUS

KOOSIK RESIDENCY



OPEN STUDIO IMPRESSIONS, **DEGAR** STUDIO

TEHERAN - IRAN

Daten: 1. Oktober – 1. November 2019

Künstler: Kathrin Lambert, Lorenz Pasch + Kaveh Sattari, Ali Hashemlou
Mentor: Mehdi Behbudi (Teheran)Events: 2. Oktober – Projektpräsentation, 19:00 @ Kooshk Residency
30. Oktober – Open Studio, 12:00 – 21:00 @ Deegar Platform, Darbast
Platform und Navab BadehausPartnerorganisation / Residenzort: Kooshk Residency
Unterstützer: Kulturabteilung der Deutschen Botschaft in Teheran

Die letzten Wochen von Pre-Covid Teheran

Eine Einführung von Mehdi Behbudi

Seine Stadt zusammen mit einer Gruppe begeisterter Klangforscher zu erkunden, ist eine erstaunliche Erfahrung. Am ersten Tag der Residenz in Teheran fand ich die Gelegenheit, zusammen mit Kathrin, Ali, Lorenz, Kaveh und Carsten Stabenow mitten in meiner lauten, überfüllten Stadt einen Soundwalk zu unternehmen.

Es war ein schöner Anfang. Carsten verließ uns ein paar Tage später und ich blieb mit 4 Künstlern zurück, die alle eine besondere Sicht auf die Welt hatten. Ali und Kathrin wollten die Stadt erkunden. Kaveh war besessen von den akustischen Qualitäten eines alten Badehauses in Teheran. Und Lorenz experimentierte und arbeitete drinnen – und achtete auf Details und Wechselwirkungen. Als Mentor war ich an 4 parallelen Serien der Erforschung und Umsetzung verschiedener Ideen beteiligt und musste versuchen, eine Art Buddha zu sein: beobachten, beobachten, beobachten, ruhig sein und helfen.

Mit Kathrin gab es zwei Arten von Erkundungen: die Erkundung der Stadt nach Wasser und die Erkundung des Basars von Teheran, um Materialien und mechanische Teile für die Herstellung einer Klangskulptur zu finden, die mit dem knappen Wasserfluss der Stadtkanäle arbeitet. Es war eine erstaunliche Reise. An einigen Stellen der Arbeit mussten wir nach einer Wasserquelle suchen, die unseren vorgesehenen Kanal speisen konnte. Während der Arbeit an ihrer Idee war Kathrin die ganze Zeit damit beschäftigt, Fotos und Field Recordings zu machen, die am Tag des Open Studios wunderschön präsentiert wurden.

Bei Ali ging die Entwicklung einer Idee sehr schnell. Am ersten Tag des Soundwalks verliebte er sich in die in Teheran weit verbreiteten Lüftungskanäle aus Metall. Diese Kanäle dienen normalerweise dazu, die kühle Luft von Wasserkühlsystemen auf dem Dach in verschiedene Teile des Hauses zu leiten. Da in diesen Kanälen Luft strömt, enthalten sie immer Schwingungen und Geräusche. Die Umsetzung von Alis Idee erforderte viel Metall- und Elektroarbeit.

Bei Kaveh haben wir die meiste Zeit nur zugehört. Er hatte seine Idee von Anfang an parat: die Klangatmosphäre eines Badehauses neu zu erschaffen. Aber die Erforschung der Badehausakustik veränderte das Ergebnis der Idee. Am Ende mussten wir zuhören wie das Gebäude reagiert, mitschwingt und Feedback gibt.

Lorenz' RROOOOMM war wie ein verkleinertes, deformiertes Teheran in einem Raum. Der wichtigste Teil der Zusammenarbeit mit Lorenz war das Reden über Ideen. Bei ihm waren meine Aktivitäten: zuhören, beobachten und genießen.

IN 2012, KATHRIN LAMBERT BEGAN HER STUDIES AT HKRSAR. PREVIOUSLY ACTIVE PRIMARILY IN THE AREAS OF PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND MEDIA DESIGN, IT QUICKLY BECAME CLEAR TO LAMBERT THAT SHE HAD A FURTHER PASSION: SOUND. SHE ALLOWS EXISTING SOUNDS TO BLEND, TO COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER OR TO CONTRAST THEM. SHE EXPLORES THE SOUNDS OF HER SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT AND ATTEMPTS TO WORK WITH GIVEN STRUCTURES AND COMBINE ELEMENTS FOUND ON SITE INTO PIECES THAT ENABLE THE VIEWER/LISTENER TO EXPERIENCE SPACES IN AN ENTIRELY NEW WAY. PRIZE WINNER (SPECIAL DISTINCTION) IN THE 2015 EDITION OF THE SONOTOPIA COMPETITION.

2012 BEGAN KATHRIN LAMBERT IHR STUDIUM AN DER HOCHSCHULE DER BILDENDE KUNSTE SAAR. ZUVOR ÜBERWIEGEND IN BEREICH FOTOGRAFIE, VIDEO UND MEDIEN-DESIGN TÄTIG, WAR SCHNELL KLAR, DASS ES NOCH EINE WEITERE LEIDENSCHAFT GIBT. SOUND. VORHANDENE KLÄNGE LÄSST SIE FUSIONIEREN, MITTEINANDER VERGLEICHEN UND KONTRASTIEREN. SIE ERFORSCHT DIE SOUNDS IHRER UMGEBUNG UND VERSUCHT, MIT GEBENEN STRUKTUREN ZU ARBEITEN UND DIE DORT BEFINDLICHEN ELEMENTE ZU EINEM STÜCK ZU VEREINEN, SO DASS DIE BETRACHTER/HÖRER EINEN RAUM GANZ NEU ERLEBT. PREISTÄGERIN (AUSZEICHNUNG) SONOTOPIA-WETTBEWERB 2015.

► [HTTP://KATHRIN-LAMBERT.TUMBLR.COM](http://kathrin-lambert.tumblr.com)



Teheran commands an expanded system of water channels all over the city. Most of them had run dry by the time we arrived, but some conduct water all year long. A few are even quite powerful. Roaming our neighbourhood, I fortunately found one of them at a street called Nirumand, which actually means "powerful" in Farsi. That's the origin of my sound object.



Residency Impressions

October 1, 2019, excited, well-prepared, or not.
Meeting something new with an open mind and ears, the task.
Discovering things and letting them affect you.
An unknown culture with different rules and customs.
30 degrees Celsius, long clothes, the headscarf changes your hearing and behaviour.
The tap water is not drinkable.

EXPLORING WATERWAYS: ERKUNDUNGEN DER WASSERWEGE

Sunrise, it's quiet, the streets are empty, we drive towards the city.
Almost idyllic, when does it start?

Arrived in the city, first walk.
It is loud, dusty and smoggy.
The streets are busy, at least during the day.
A constant rumbling envelops the city.
The traffic, especially motorcycles.
A small family can find space on one.
Father, mother, child, child, maybe one more.
Symbols instead of familiar letters.
The language, sounds without connection.

The bazaar is a labyrinth of goods, screaming and the clatter of the transport wagon wheels.
Countless small shops and stalls.
One street offers wood, the other metal, the next household goods.
Merchants in the streets scream, they loudly announce their special offers, the masses are interested.
People who speak to themselves walk the streets, are they crazy? No, they talk about their product range, hoping to find customers.

From time to time, you can hear the muezzin singing from horn loudspeakers.
Pretty indifferently, the singing gets lost in the street noise.

Cats, cats everywhere. They scream terribly, especially at night.
Next to it, the soft hissing of the regulators.

In the mountains.
Dogs, they howl on our hike, accompanied by the crunch of the gravel under the hikers' shoes. Individual acoustic irradiation by the excursionists' portable loudspeakers. Wow.
Thursday, today will be full. The city dwellers want to go out into nature.
Some musicians earn a little money at the edge of the hiking trail.

The desert, non-reflective, wide, quiet.
From afar, a shepherd and his goats. You can hear their bells.
The camels, quiet and uninterested, at least in us.
A rumble approaches, trucks carrying raw materials from the desert.
Now and then, a lonely bird chirps by.

The Caspian Sea, actually a lake.
At our backs, something like the Iranian rainforest.
Engine noises everywhere. Quads, moto-cross, boats, merry-go-rounds.
On the promenade, on the beach. Here one likes to amuse oneself in a motorized fashion.
At night, small campfires on the beach. Holiday, we have a party in the headlights of the car.

Just a few impressions!

Teheran verfügt über ein ausgedehntes System von Wasserkanälen in der ganzen Stadt. Die meisten von ihnen waren trocken, als wir ankamen, aber einige führen das ganze Jahr über Wasser. Einige wenige sind sogar ziemlich mächtig. Als ich durch unsere Nachbarschaft streifte, fand ich glücklicherweise einen von ihnen in einer Straße namens Nirumand, was auf Farsi „mächtig“ bedeutet. Das ist der Ursprung meines Klangobjekts.



Residenzimpressionen

1. Oktober 2019, aufgeregt, gut vorbereitet oder nicht. Neuem mit offenem Geist und offenen Ohren begegnen, das ist die Aufgabe. Dinge entdecken und auf sich wirken lassen. Eine unbekannte Kultur mit anderen Regeln und Bräuchen. 30 Grad Celsius, lange Kleidung, das Kopftuch verändert das Gehör und das Verhalten. Das Leitungswasser ist nicht trinkbar.

Sonnenaufgang, es ist ruhig, die Straßen sind leer, wir fahren Richtung Stadt. Fast idyllisch, wann geht es los?

In der Stadt angekommen, erster Spaziergang. Es ist laut, staubig und smogig. Die Straßen sind belebt, zumindest tagsüber. Ein ständiges Grollen umhüllt die Stadt. Der Verkehr, insbesondere Motorräder. Auf einem findet eine kleine Familie Platz. Vater, Mutter, Kind, Kind, Kind, vielleicht noch einer. Symbole statt vertrauter Buchstaben. Die Sprache, klingt ohne Verbindung.

Der Basar ist ein Labyrinth aus Waren, Geschrei und dem Klappern der Transportwagenräder. Unzählige kleine Läden und Stände.

Die eine Straße bietet Holz, die andere Metall, die nächste Haushaltswaren. Händler in den Straßen schreiben, sie kündigen lautstark ihre Sonderangebote an. Die Massen sind interessiert.

Menschen, die mit sich selbst sprechen, gehen durch die Straßen, sind sie verrückt? Nein, sie sprechen über ihre Produktpalette und hoffen, Kunden zu finden.

Ab und zu hört man den Muezzin aus Hornlautsprechern singen. Ziemlich gleichgültig geht der Gesang im Straßenlärm unter.

Katzen, überall Katzen. Sie schreien fürchterlich, besonders nachts. Daneben das leise Zischen der Gaszähler.

In den Bergen.

Hunde, sie heulen auf unserer Wanderung, begleitet vom Knirschen des Kieses unter den Wanderschuhen. Individuelle Beschallung durch die tragbaren Lautsprecher der Ausflügler. Wow.

Donnerstag, heute wird es voll. Die Städter wollen raus in die Natur. Einige Musiker verdienen sich am Rande des Wanderweges ein wenig Geld.

Die Wüste, nicht reflektierend, weit, still. Von weitem ein Hirte und seine Ziegen. Man kann ihre Glocken hören. Die Kamele, ruhig und desinteressiert, zumindest an uns. Ein Rumpeln nähert sich, Lastwagen mit Rohstoffen aus der Wüste. Ab und zu zwitschert ein einsamer Vogel vorbei.

Das Kaspische Meer, eigentlich ein See. Hinter uns so etwas wie der iranische Regenwald. Motorgeräusche überall. Quads, Motocross, Boote, Karussells. An der Promenade, am Strand. Hier vergnügt man sich gerne motorisiert. Nachts kleine Lagerfeuer am Strand. Feiertag, wir haben eine Party im Scheinwerferlicht des Autos.

Nur ein paar Impressionen!

Hannes Liechti

This Track Contains Politics

The Culture of Sampling
in Experimental Electronica

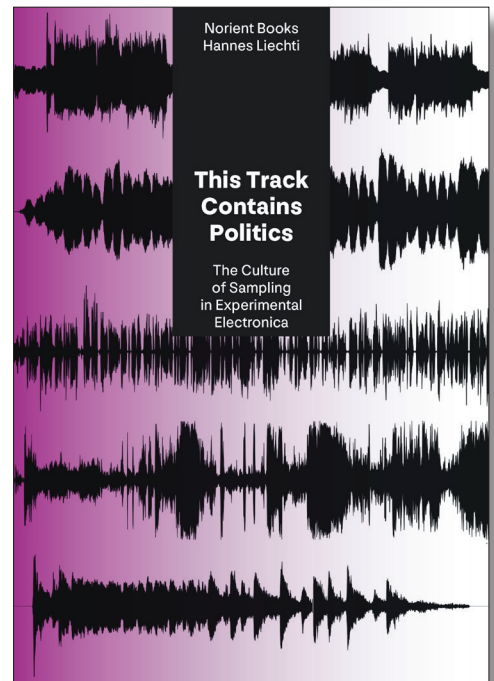
What does it mean to process field recordings from the Ukrainian war in an electronic music track? How can the sampling of an Armenian keyboard melody be read as a critique of traditional gender roles? And what does it say about voyeurism in our culture when a techno producer uses viral YouTube videos as the basic material of his compositions?

Across five detailed case studies, Hannes Liechti discusses the culture and politics of musical sampling from a new perspective. Giving particular attention to the reasons behind sampling processes, Liechti's in-depth analysis of sampling strategies by artists such as COOL FOR YOU and Lara Sarkissian shows that sampling political material, and sampling with political intentions reveals a complex net of contexts, meanings, and often deeply personal choices and creative decisions.

Offering tangible tools and concepts for further exploration of sample-based music, the book illustrates the potential of popular music to tell stories about the world, and it describes the habits, thoughts, and realities of the laptop producer, one of the core actors in 21st century music-making.

Liechti's careful study is a welcome and needed contribution to our understanding of sampling as a central practice in the production of music – and of meaning. Grounded in ethnographic fieldwork and focusing on poetics rather than reception, this book steers clear of interpretive speculation about what certain samples might mean. With analytical rigor and nuance, and a laudable focus on non-commercial productions spanning various styles, Liechti foregrounds producers' perspectives as he examines a range of approaches to "political" sampling. Going beyond questions of what is being sampled and how it has been processed, Liechti's work crucially addresses why certain producers deliberately link sampling to politics.

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This Track Contains Politics:
The Culture of Sampling
in Experimental Electronica

four colors, softback
16,5 × 23,5 cm, 354 pages
ISBN 978-3-9525444-1-9 (PDF)
ISBN 978-3-9525444-2-6 (Print)

open access (PDF)
CHF 35.– / EUR 29.– (Print)

Release
September 22, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.56513/xkvv4402>
<https://norient.com/books>

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Introduction

This book aims to reveal, listen to, and analyze narratives behind popular music.

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"It's sharing your narrative. That's what it is." This is how one of my interviews with U.S. electronic music producer Lara Sarkissian ended. We were discussing my research into sampling and I asked her why she had agreed to take part in this study. "It's sharing your narrative," she answered briefly and without much consideration. Being involved meant, for her, the opportunity to share her story, her viewpoints, her experiences of the world. It meant talking about and reflecting on her own position, which is considerably shaped by her affiliation with social minorities.

It's sharing your narrative. That's what it is.

Sarkissian grew up in the Armenian diaspora of the Bay Area in California. She took part in community events and parties, attended an Armenian elementary school, volunteered at the cultural diaspora organization Hamazkayin, and regularly visited one of the four Armenian churches in the region. Moreover, as a female producer, DJ, label owner, and concert organizer, she operates in a field which is, at the time of this study at the end of the 2010s, still prevailingly male-dominated. Her music in general, and her sampling practices in particular, reflect these personal experiences. Conducting research into her music—and finally, also, reading this book—means listening to her story. It means discovering her perspective.

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Why should we do so? Why should you, the reader of this book, listen to the story of a "lonely" laptop producer at the fringes of electronic popular music? Why should we care about such an individual narrative far away from the musical mainstream? Because that is at the core of the enterprise of cultural anthropology: the attempt to listen to people, to analyze the acquired data, to generalize, and finally to make sense of our world. Moreover, in light of the emergence of postcolonial theories, it is also the task of research to question and challenge established power relations. If we want to do this, we especially need to listen to those on the other side of power, to those belonging to minority groups, to those at the margins of society, of our scope as researchers, and of our own individual worldviews. This book aims to reveal, listen to, and analyze narratives behind popular music.

"It's sharing your narrative. That's what it is." This phrase could also serve to explain Sarkissian's reasons for sampling. It is through sampling—the technique of musical production whereby external sound material is taken and processed in new musical compositions—that Sarkissian shares these narratives. It is through sampling that she talks about Armenian culture and history and her own role as a female electronic music producer.

In this book, I argue that analysis of the culture of sampling is one possible way to access particular narratives of this world.¹ The inclusion of external music, environmental noises, or found media material brings the world into popular music tracks in a condensed form. Timothy Taylor (2001, 139) describes sampling as providing "aural glimpses of the social." Every process of sampling represents a complex net of contexts, meanings, choices, creative decisions, and musical strategies. In-depth analysis of such processes and their socio-cultural ramifications means revealing and interpreting this net as far as possible.

To examine what a particular sampling strategy tells us about the narrative of a music producer, and thus about the world we live in, we particularly need to ask about the reasons for adopting such strategies: why has a particular sound been sampled? This task has to date rarely been undertaken by researchers. This is thus a book about reasons for sampling; about the motives, motivations, and intentions that lead to the inclusion of particular sound material in electronic music tracks. It is not a book about all sampling since, for many artists, using samples is just a banal aspect of their music-making routine. In fact, this is a book about very particular but meaningful sampling practices.

This is a book about reasons for sampling.

¹ In musicological contexts, the term "analysis" is often related to the analysis of the musical text. I do not follow such a narrow concept. Instead, I rely on H. Russell Bernard's (2011, 338) definition of analysis as "the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place." Moreover, analyses contain interpretation as a particular analytical step.

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In this introduction I first want to embed my research in a historical context and to offer a very brief overview of the history of musical sampling. Second, I will comment on the relation between sampling and the political. This book focuses on electronic music tracks that contain political sampling material. I have identified at least seven dimensions on which sampling and the political clash; only two of them are covered by this book. A historical overview and a discussion of the social-political potential of sampling will then help to identify gaps in the research on sampling. Accordingly, this book focuses on the reasons behind the sampling of non-copyrighted material beyond hip hop. At the core of this book there are five in-depth anthropological, musicological, and production-oriented analyses of experimental electronic popular music tracks. Ultimately, I will close this first chapter by presenting in detail the object of study, its core interests, and its structure.

A Very Brief History of Musical Sampling

Four rough stages have so far shaped the development of sampling in popular music and the research on this production technique.²

Stage One: Technological Development (1970s and 1980s)

The first devices to make sampling available to music producers were developed in the 1970s. Most authors claim the Fairlight CMI (Computer Musical Instrument), arriving in 1979, as the first instrument with a built-in sampling function. Paul Harkins emphasizes that the Fairlight CMI was not the first tool allowing the reproduction of externally recorded sounds. It was, however, "not only the most commercially successful of the first digital sampling instruments; it was also the most widely used instrument for sampling" (Harkins 2016, 16).

Still, due to its high cost, the Fairlight CMI was only affordable to a few producers with high-end studios—such as Stevie Wonder, Peter Gabriel, and Kate Bush—or institutions such as broadcast companies and academic departments. This first stage of sampling was thus shaped by technical and economic developments. Later, drum computers with built-in samplers, such as the E-mu SP-12

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² Other authors have provided more detailed historical approaches to sampling: Davies (1996) presents a general history of sampling including its precursors reaching back to the ancient empires of China and Rome. Schliess (2014 [2004]) discusses sampling in hip hop, while Morey (2013, 2017) focuses on British dance music. Finally, Harkins (2016) addresses the subject from the point of view of important technical devices.

(1985) and the Akai MPC60 (1988), were much cheaper, making the technique available to a broader range of producers. Moreover, new instruments continuously increased sampling capacity, from a half-second to one second (Fairlight CMI) up to more than thirty by the end of the decade (Harkins 2016).

In the second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s, the technique of sampling became increasingly widespread in popular music, especially in hip hop and newly emerging electronic dance music (EDM) genres such as house, techno, and drum and bass. The technique was particularly embraced in hip hop, because it allowed producers to adapt previously developed DJ techniques—cutting and repeating breaks—into new recordings. Mark Katz (2010) and Joseph Schloss (2014 [2004], 25–61) both highlight the significance of DJ practice for the understanding of sampling in hip hop.

Beyond the early breakbeats of hip hop, the academic literature discusses further precursors to sampling in music history.

Among them we find versioning in dub (Sanjek 1994) and avant-garde techniques from art music (musique concrète; e.g. Davies 1997, de la Motte 1995) and beyond (cut-up by William S. Burroughs; Cutler 1994).³ Rather than tracing a single line of development, sampling should be explained non-teleologically, with reference to multiple origins.

With regards to the sampled material, at first the focus was primarily on single short sounds from instruments or the environment (such as breaking glass). As the storage capacity on sampling devices increased, longer “sound bites” became processible, such as larger melodic lines and rhythmic patterns from other records, or media material from popular culture and daily political life such as movie dialogue and political speeches (Butler 2006, 61).

Stage Two: the Golden Age of Sampling or “Sampladelic” (1986–1991)

It was toward the end of the 1980s that sampling became a celebrated production technique in popular music. In relation to hip hop, Kembrew McLeod labeled the period between 1986 and 1992 as “the golden age of sampling” (McLeod and DiCola 2011; McLeod 2015).⁴ Among the outstanding sample-based hip hop productions from this period is Public Enemy’s album *Fear of a Black Planet* (1990), which was made up of hundreds of “fragmentary samples” (McLeod 2005, 81; Sewell 2014b).

Sampling in EDM also flourished during this period. Between 1988 and 1991, Justin Morey (2017, 145) observed a “flowering of sampling practice in underground dance music and the mainstream.”

³ Fischer (2020, 109–43) offers a well-arranged overview on the historical development of sampling in the 20th century.

⁴ McLeod (2015) included the year 1992 as well. However, the lawsuit against Biz Markie’s rap song “Alone Again” in 1991 can be considered a turning point in the history of sampling, as Sewell (2013) argues.

The history of sampling should be explained non-teleologically, with reference to multiple origins.

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Mark Butler (2006, 61) remarked that sampling was an essential “part of track construction” at that time, referring to Simon Reynolds’ (1999, 41–43) description of the period as “sampladelic.”

Stage Three: Lawsuits, Restrictions, and the Decline of Sampling (1990s–ongoing)

Several high-profile lawsuits in the U.S. followed, marking the provisional end of the limitless sampling of copyrighted material (Sewell 2014a). In both the hip hop and EDM genres, observers and fans used expressions such as the “decline of sampling” (Morey 2017; Leydon 2010, 197) or, even more fatalistically, the “death of sampling” (Marshall 2006). At the turn of the millennium, Morey (2017, 205) considered the big beat genre to be “the ‘last hurrah’ of the sampling composer in mainstream dance music.” Since this period, the practice of sampling copyrighted material has mainly been pursued by underground or niche musicians who count on being under the radar, or by music business heavyweights who can afford greater sums for copyright (sample clearance).

As Holger Lund (2015) has shown, the practice of sampling faced yet further restrictions during the 2000s. The closure of on-line file hosting service Megaupload and the voluntary erasure of thousands of megabytes of uploaded music on Rapidshare “meant that music bloggers [and sampling artists] lost their cyber warehouses and these warehouses’ contents.” With regard to Europe, the implementation of the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market, approved by the Council of the European Union on April 15, 2019, might in future further affect the creative practices of sampling in music and beyond (Romero-Moreno 2018; Fischer 2020).

Stage Four: Ubiquitous Studio Technology and “Post-Sampling” (2000s–ongoing)

At present, it is widely recognized that these lawsuits shaped the further development of the production technique, at least regarding the processing of copyrighted material in mainstream music. However, sampling is flourishing as never before. It has become an indispensable and ubiquitous technique in the production of popular music. Behr, Negus, and Street (2017, 2) write that “sampling is no longer exceptional but, rather, embedded in commercial (and much other) popular music practice with significant consequences for the aesthetics and ethics of music making.”

Besides multitrack recording, signal processing, MIDI sequencing, and sound synthesis, popular music scholar Timothy Warner (2003, 22) considers sampling one of the “essential techniques which dominate the creative process involved in the production of pop music,” while Reynolds (2011, 311) describes

Sampling has become an indispensable and ubiquitous technique in the production of popular music.

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sampling as an “every-day part of our listening lives.” The rise of digital audio workstations (DAW)—music production software such as Live by Ableton, launched in 2001—substantially facilitated and stimulated the use of samples (Brett 2019; Ismaïel-Wendt 2016, 119–53; Fischer 2020, 143).

Only a few scholars continue to analyze the functions of sampling in this latest stage of its development. Among them, and following Wayne Marshall (2017), a tendency towards “a more atomized approach to sample-based music” can be recognized. According to Marshall, instead of “looping breakbeats or well-worn melodies,” popular and obscure electronic dance music of the last decade has focused on “a set of brief sonic signifiers” (ibid.). While these samples are clearly audible and recognizable, Harkins identifies an important sampling strategy of recent decades where the opposite happens: with “microsampling,” he refers to the digital reproduction of “rhythms, melodies, and voices at the micro level” (Harkins 2016, 185–86).⁵ In this approach, original sampling sources remain hidden.

Others have already proclaimed the arrival of the era of “post-sampling,” describing various strategies and techniques that allow artists to employ a sampling aesthetic without using samples in a recognizable way. Following Morey (2017, 295), such methods are “replays, using samples as a source of inspiration that is subsequently discarded, treating their own recordings as if they were samples, obscuring the sample, or seeking out the obscure.”⁶ Morey further concludes that “in a largely post-sampling musical landscape, the habit of finding ways to work with sound materials as if they were samples endures” (296; italics original). In his study on sampling, copyright, and creativity, Georg Fischer (2020, 307–18) labels these practices with the term “Umgehungs kreativität” (workaround creativity).

Behr, Negus, and Street (2017, 2, 15), finally, describe a “post-sampling” musical environment” as the combination of sampling and other musical practices. According to them, sampling has lost its standalone character and must be considered as a “musical field in which listening practices, creative habits and habitus are informed by and realized through a technical and musical sphere to which sampling is integral.” These thoughts directly correspond with my own understanding of sampling as a multilevel creative process.

→ Chapter 2

After this brief outline of the history of sampling, I will now address my own focus on the subject. To do this I will discuss two perspectives from which I can develop the scope of my research: the socio-political potential of sampling and the lack of anthropological perspectives in the academic literature.

⁵ See also the reworked chapter in Harkins’ book on digital sampling (2020, 103–16).

⁶ Marshall (2006) describes a similar strategy by discussing the sample-free but sample-shaped sound aesthetics of the beats by hip hop band The Roots.

The Socio-Political Potential of Sampling

In approaching narratives behind sample-based music, I focus in this book on political sampling material or political strategies. I conceive of “the political” as a signifier of the social. In search of significant stories and traceable intentions and motivations, I was looking for tracks in electronic popular music whose sample material contains (layers of) meaning, pointing beyond a merely musical or personal level. In other words: I was interested in sampling material (or sampling processes) with significance and relevance for a broader part of society.

Meanwhile, these areas—sampling and the political—potentially clash in many ways. I have identified at least seven dimensions to this clash. In combination, they illustrate the socio-political potential of sampling. To strengthen these perspectives, I have elsewhere published a collection of short essays (Liechti, Burkhalter, and Rhensius 2020) which provides examples for most of these categories. Some of these articles are thus presented briefly below, among other references from the academic literature on sampling.⁷

(a) Sampling Political Material

The processing of political material is a common strategy in popular music. Especially in hip hop, samples from black political leaders and activists such as Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and Stokely Carmichael became “commonplaces,” as Russell A. Potter asserts (1995, 43). Beyond hip hop, early examples include the avant-garde synth-pop group Art of Noise, who sampled a political speech in their 1984 track “A Time for Fear (Who’s Afraid)” (Warner 2003, 99), and Paul Hardcastle’s 1985 synth-pop track “19,” which used samples from a documentary about the Vietnam war (Morey 2017, 124).

In EDM, the practice encompasses—among uncountable others—The Orb’s “Little Fluffy Clouds” from 1990, with its sampling of World War II airplane sounds (160–63; Holm-Hudson 1997), as well as Matthew Herbert’s highly conceptual sampling art, which processes war sounds such as bullets and bombs (DJ Empty and the 2013 EP *The End of Silence*), or captures the destruction of products from multinational enterprises (as Radio Boy).⁸ In her brief survey of the sampling of political speech across dance music, Lora Baraldi (2020) looks for strategies that go beyond the well-known modes

An extended definition of the concept of “the political” follows in Chapter 2.

The case studies on M.E.S.H.’s track “Methy Imbiss” (Chapter 10) and Eomac’s “Perversas” (9) particularly deal with this category.

The processing of political material is a common strategy in popular music.

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⁷ This subchapter was previously published in Liechti 2020. This edited collection of short essays offers further examples of sampling strategies within the seven dimensions presented here.

⁸ The political sampling strategies of Matthew Herbert are further discussed by Velasco-Puffeau (2020), Burkhalter (2015a), Harkins (2013b; 2016, 229, 240–47) and Großmann (2005).

of social commentary and denunciation, often taking the shape of danceable satire. Just as this book does, Baraldi examines the aims, motivations, and intentions behind particular sampling strategies. This dimension further includes the processing of police sirens and gunshots, a practice popular in various fields, from hip hop and dancehall to recent experimental electronica (Amobi 2015).

(b) Sampling with Political Intent

Even if sampling material is not political as such, it can be used in combination with intentions or concepts that are **political in nature**. Prominent examples include John Oswald's *Plunderphonics* (1988) and Den Sorte Skole's *Lektion III* (2013).⁹ Both projects combine a broad range of samples from external musical recordings—samples that are not explicitly political—to “challenge the existing laws and the music business” (Den Sorte Skole cited in Lund 2015). They can be conceived of as musical protest against copyright norms.

Again, Matthew Herbert's highly conceptual sample art serves as an example here, for instance when he processes sounds from a pig's life (*One Pig*) to criticize the globalized food industry.⁸ Another example is mentioned by Morey (2017, 212): in the track “Power to the Beats,” the electronic group Utah Saints sample testimonies from Metallica and Chuck D given before U.S. Congress as part of the debate around the filesharing platform Napster. Producer Jez Willis remembered that this “was a statement for me (but again, no one got the reference!)” (ibid.). This example is a first indication that political sampling strategies do not need to be obvious to the listener.

(c) Sampling in Conflict with the Law

A third category collects sampling strategies that neither process political material nor are linked with a political intention per se. Instead, they are in conflict with the law because they process copyrighted samples without clearing the rights. There are countless examples of this political dimension of sampling: one could for instance look at the German lawsuit between electro pioneers Kraftwerk and the hip hop producer Moses Pelham, who used a two-second sample from a Kraftwerk track in one of his productions (Ismaiel-Wendt 2016, 171–84; Fischer 2020, 13–19).

The academic literature has broadly covered this area. The ramifications of such laws regarding musical practice have, for example, been raised by Michel Brasil, who portrays the sampling practice of underground beatmakers in the local hip hop scene of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He shows that the decision to use the technique

⁹ For further discussion on John Oswald's *Plunderphonics* see Cutler (1994), Holm-Hudson (1997), and Weber (2004).

Political intentions behind sampling processes are discussed in the case studies of COOL FOR YOU's “STABILIZED YES!” (Chapter 6), Lara Sarkisian's “Kenats” (7), and Moro's “Libres” (8).

Political sampling strategies do not need to be obvious to the listener.

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of sample chopping is both economic and political, since producers are forced to chop samples due to copyright issues (Brasil 2020). This is yet another example of the aforementioned “workaround creativity” in sampling (Fischer 2020, 307–18).

This book does not cover this category. The following three political dimensions of sampling will also not be amplified further. This is because they are defined from the perspective of reception. As explained below, this study mainly focuses on the perspective of musical production.

(d) The Problematicization of Sampling Strategies

The processing of external sound material has always stoked (and continues to stoke) controversy among scholars, journalists, and fans. In most cases, they criticize an imbalance of power between the sampling artists and the authors of the sampled sources. In research, the processing of ethnographic sound recordings in particular is criticized by many authors such as Timothy Taylor (2003, 73).¹⁰ He observes that “one of the ways Westerners appropriate other music is to construct the original makers of that appropriated music as anonymous.”

Taylor brings up the case of the new age band Enigma, who sampled a song by the Taiwanese musicians Di-fang and Igay Duana without permission or credit in their hit single “Return to Innocence” (1994). Similarly, Susanne Binas-Preisendörfer (2004, 2010) discusses the song “Sweet Lullaby” (1992) by new age group Deep Forest, which is based on a Melanesian lullaby from the Solomon Islands.

In EDM, sampling practices are also regularly criticized as exoticizing or as cultural appropriation. DJ and label owner Simian Keiser (2016), for example, criticizes the exoticizing tendencies in club culture's sampling of African music, the so-called “outernational sound”—exemplified by Four Tet's 2013 track “The Track I've Been Playing That People Keep Asking About And That Joy Used In His RA Mix And Daphni Played On Boiler Room.”¹¹

¹⁰ See Binas (2004, 2010), Feld (2000), Hesmondhalgh (2000, 2006), Stokes (2004), Taylor (2001, 2003, 2012), or Théberge (2003).

¹¹ Similar cases have been analyzed by Chris McGuinness (2020), Luigi Monteani (2020), and the Laura Collective (2020). McGuinness explores the story of Punjabi singer Sohan Lal, whose voice ended up on a globally distributed compilation containing a sample library of South Asian sounds. From there his voice found its way into mainstream electronic dance music productions, as did samples of Indonesian car horns called “om tololot om.” Monteani analyzes this phenomenon as part of a local youth culture. He problematizes the global use of these samples in between the benefits of recognition and the discriminatory structures of Orientalism. Using samples, Monteani argues, is far from a harmless practice. Finally, the Laura Collective asks to what extent sampling practices maintain or disrupt an exoticized ideal of indigenous populations. The Brazilian research collective compares the example of a worldwide EDM artist who repeats the clichés of exoticizing cultural appropriation through sampling, with an indigenous rap group who use cultural sampling “to occupy the Western visibility regime as a way to express and make their own narratives heard.”

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The processing of external sound material has always stoked (and continues to stoke) controversy among scholars, journalists, and fans.

(e) Provoking Conflict

In the previously discussed dimension, sampling is political because sampling practices become problematic through reflecting established power relations. This fifth dimension now categorizes direct provocations through the use of particular sound material. The British techno DJ Dax J was sentenced to one year in jail after playing a track that sampled a Muslim call to prayer in a live set at a nightclub in Tunisia in spring 2017. Dax J had to immediately flee the country to avoid arrest. On social media, he later apologized for the incident, mentioning that “it was never my intention to upset or cause offence to anybody” (O'Connor 2017).

This case is also discussed by Liam Maloney (2020). He considers sampling “a microcosm for political and ideological disparities across the globe” and argues that sampling has become a “politically charged act, trapped between secularism and theocracy.” Despite its unifying history, he says, sampling has become “a divisive process.”

(f) Sampling in Politicized Contexts

Another encounter between sampling and the political occurs when a non-political sample, or sample-based music devoid of political intentions, is played in a politicized context. One striking example would be the use of sample-based music as propaganda or within a political campaign. The meaning(s) of the sampled materials might change considerably in such contexts. While I cannot offer concrete examples here, it should be evident that such situations could potentially occur.

Another fitting example, discussed by Mattia Zanotti (2020) and Nico Mangifesta (2019), is *Stregoni*, an Italian music project working with asylum seekers and refugees. The project draws on participants' smartphones as individual sample libraries for improvisation and the realizing of performances. Sampling, in this case, facilitates an attitude of community, and Zanotti asks whether the production method can even help to represent and recreate identity. This practice of sample-based music is political not least because it brings together refugees and native Italians and because it relies on the smartphone, a symbol “mentioned with grievance by those who line up against immigration” and, on the other hand, a “strongbox that preserves identity” for the refugees (Zanotti 2020).

(g) Sampling as a Political Act

A final perspective considers sampling on a meta level. It regards sampling as a cultural technique, containing processes of selecting and combining creative material. This technique could be considered political as such. Three articles from my publication on political

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sampling explain this dimension.

Marcel Zaes (2020) examines what he calls the “textural sampling” of Japanese electronic artist Kyoka. He finds its political quality in the producer's blurring of the lines between sample-based club music and synthesis-oriented experimental music by “destroying out-of-context materials, stripping them of their meaning, [and] rendering them extremely dense collages.” In doing so, sampling challenges listener expectations and value sets attached to the experimental or popular music markets. In Kyoka's so-called “techno punk,” Zaes sees the “subtle resistance of a conscious, self-designated outsider.”

Vinicius Fernandes (2020) analyzes the cut-up technique, one of sampling's predecessors, developed by writer William S. Burroughs in the 1960s. “The reallocation and deformation of signs” enacted through cut-up “produces a suspension of normal expected coherence” between these signs and the underlying medium. Fernandes understands sampling techniques as a “powerful weapon” and a political tool, helping to produce a “political conscience” by suspending “semiotic normality” and thus “uncovering the subjects operating perversely behind” particular signs. Fernandes argues that the cut-up method can be read as a premonition of 21st century phenomena like the 2018 Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal.

Lastly, remix researcher Eduardo Navas (2020) reflects on how automated and self-training forms of production are reshaping creative possibilities in music and culture. His take on the politics of sampling in the age of machine learning invites us to extend into the future our thoughts on the interplay of sampling and politics today.

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The above categorization is neither exhaustive nor systematic. A further study that pays particular attention to political sampling could further verify and enlarge these categories. In the present book, I will primarily discuss the first two dimensions: the sampling of political material (a) and sampling with a political intention (b).

I have so far presented an overview of existing research on sampling from two angles. The first chronologically traced the development of the production technique since its early days in the 1970s, while the second focused on the political dimensions of sampling. Two further perspectives will be pursued later: in Chapter 2 I will contrast various definitions of the term, and in Chapter 3 I will systematically discuss typological attempts to describe the processing of samples. Although there is, as we have seen and will see, considerable output on the phenomenon of sampling in (academic) literature, there are still substantial gaps that need to be addressed.

Gaps in Sampling Research

Sampling studies have so far been largely centered on questions of copyright, authorship, originality, and creativity. This is no surprise: legal issues are key when one examines the political dimensions of sampling. However, Harkins (2010a, 2) rightly assumes that this interest might “overemphasize the role of the law in making musical decisions.” A second focal point of sampling studies has been the genre of (U.S.) hip hop. It was only in recent years that a larger number of studies started to focus on genres associated with EDM. Today, there are around twice as many available studies on sampling with a focus on hip hop than there are on EDM. Beyond both fields, sampling is even less analyzed. As a result, we do not know much about the differences in sampling practices between various genres.

Schloss (2014 [2004], 146) has further argued that “symbolic meaning (as opposed to pragmatic value within the musical system) is almost universally overstated by scholars as a motive for sampling.” In his critique, the ethnomusicologist refers to the predominant conception of sampling as a referential or intertextual practice. Joanna Demers (2010, 52) seconds this view and observes an overestimation of quotations as “intentionally included.”

This book is, on the one hand, yet another study with a strong emphasis on the generation of meaning and the analysis of intertextual relations. On the other hand, however, I develop an approach that allows us to carefully differentiate between a broad range of motives and intentions behind sampling processes.

Another gap concerns the lack of in-depth analyses of musical examples. There are only a few studies that substantially analyze individual tracks of sample-based music.¹² In most studies, tracks are instead addressed through short references to underline a particular argument. It is surprising that one of the main objects of popular music remains largely absent. Even if tracks or songs are thoroughly analyzed, such as in the anthology *Song Interpretation*, there is no example with a considerable emphasis on the processing of sampling material (von Appen et al. 2015). To pave the way towards filling this gap, I will analyze sampling strategies from the perspective of individual tracks, and I will further investigate the development of appropriate analytical tools for sample-based music—which, owing to the aforementioned gaps in the academic literature, remain absent. Furthermore, existing track analyses rarely

I develop an approach that allows us to carefully differentiate between a broad range of motives and intentions behind sampling processes.

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¹² The following authors invest certain efforts in the analysis of individual tracks. This is a small number relative to the overall number of studies on sampling: Binas (2004, 2010), Bonz (2008), Brøvig-Hanssen (2010), Efflein (2010), Di Fede (2014), Hein (2016), Holm-Hudson (1997), Ismaïel-Wendt (2011), Metzger (2003), Miyakawa (2005), Taylor (2003), and Williams (2015).

combine methods from cultural anthropology and musicology. As I will illustrate here, this combination can help us to reach in-depth descriptions of musical phenomena.

Finally, regarding the analyzed sampling sources, the overwhelming number of studies focus on the sampling of previously recorded, officially released, and thus copyrighted music. Hence, this study will focus on understudied sampling material such as found footage, environmental noises, media material, and other either unreleased or not officially released music.

These gaps in the research on sampling illustrate the need for a closer focus on aspects of production, a call that was already made in 2003 by Tara Rodgers (2003, 313), who recognized that the “musical and political goals” of sampling artists have not been adequately explored.¹³ Rodgers proposed a set of questions that should be addressed by further studies. She asked, for example, “How do electronic musicians use the ‘automated’ mechanisms of digital instruments to achieve nuanced musical expression and cultural commentary?” (ibid.).

In the following years, Rodgers’ call was answered. Many subsequent studies refer to her demand and state that sampling must be conceived of as a result of conscious creative decisions and as a part of the compositional process. However, the actual in-depth analysis of these chains of decisions, and an analysis of the perspective of the artists involved, remains an unfinished task. This might be due to the considerable methodological challenges such an endeavor entails.

Perhaps the first scholar to focus considerably on the perspective of sampling artists was Joseph Schloss. In his seminal study on the practices and ethics of American hip hop producers (2014 [2004]) he identified a set of ethical and practical rules guiding the compositional process of hip hop beat makers. Based on anthropological fieldwork, he also addressed how particular beats are made and the reasons behind creative decisions within the sampling process.

After Schloss, it is only in recent years that scholars have continued to fill this research gap. In his dissertation, Harkins (2016, 2020) described the sampler “as a compositional tool,” focusing on the history of sampling from the perspective of the technical devices deployed. He showed that the use of music technologies is shaped by an “interpretative flexibility.” This means that the practices of the users of sampling devices were not congruent with the purposes these devices were originally designed for.

¹³ Rodgers was not the first to call for an intensified study of the perspectives of artists and other actors involved. Before her, Hesmondhalgh (2000, 281) and Taylor (2001) made similar appeals.

I will address these challenges and limitations, and discuss how I dealt with them, in Chapter 2.

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In another dissertation, Justin Morey (2017) studied sampling practices in British dance music between 1987 and 2012 with a close focus on concepts of creativity and creative practice. He examined the pathways of individual sampling artists and traced how they became successful. He further analyzed the ramifications of copyright law on the sampling practices under analysis. In his history of sampling in EDM-associated genres in the U.K., Morey primarily focused on *what* has been sampled and *how* producers processed their material, without much stress on the “why.”¹⁴

By focusing on the production- and artist-related aspects of sample-based music, this book aims to close some of the aforementioned gaps. This study does, however, focus more on the *culture* of musical production than on musical production itself. Moving beyond issues of copyright and the genre of hip hop, this book takes a track-oriented approach by analyzing five particular sampling strategies. The triangulation of methods—between musical analysis and anthropological fieldwork—will offer new and in-depth perspectives on the artistic application of the producing method in question. Concerning what Rodgers (2003, 313) refers to as the “musical and political goals” of sampling artists, there is still a lot of work to do through research in the field of sampling studies.

I now want to further clarify the object of study and my core interests. This will be followed by a short excursus on the challenges and opportunities related to focusing on the issue of intention—in other words, why should we analyze the “why?”

Object of Study and Focus

In search of the narratives behind popular music, this study focuses on the key medium of electronic popular music in the digital culture of the 21st century: the track. The track is *the* format through which electronic popular music is widely distributed. Tracks circulate online and are accessed through platforms such as SoundCloud and Bandcamp. In clubs, we dance while listening to tracks played by a DJ. Tracks are joined together in DJ mixes, playlists on streaming services, and radio sets. Most of the time, artists start releasing individual tracks before presenting their first EPs or LPs—be they digital or physical. Often, tracks are the first channel through which artists try to reach a greater and global audience.

The analyzed tracks in this book all belong to what I call the

¹⁴ There are two further smaller scale studies that take a production-related perspective. Puig (2017, 2020) examined the strategies of a Palestinian hip hop musician living on the edge of a refugee camp in Lebanon. Although using anthropological methods, Puig’s analyses do not go beyond mere description of the processed material. In a paper more oriented towards philosophy, Chapman (2011) discussed Walter Benjamin’s concept of the “aura” and his practice of quotation. He based his thoughts regarding the creative process of sampling on interviews with sampling artists in Montréal, Canada.

field of experimental electronica. This field allows for a fruitful analysis of sampling strategies. Experimental electronica tracks are predominantly instrumental and, in place of lyrics, it is the task of samples to connect them with extra-musical content. These tracks represent 21st century music: they are hybrid, digital, and globally connected. The sound is abrasive, ambivalent, and apocalyptic. These tracks regularly discuss socio-political issues such as gender, queer identity, racism, and colonialism. As I will show, this field allows for an in-depth analysis of sampling strategies and gives access to narratives of present-day music making.

However, as mentioned previously, this book does not focus on all forms of sampling, instead highlighting sampling strategies that have not been addressed to a great extent by previous research. Accordingly, I will not analyze the sampling of music that has been officially released. This can be conceived as the “classical” sampling method, and is already well documented—no surprise considering the academic literature’s fixation on issues of copyright. Moreover, I do not examine the processing of single notes from musical instruments, nor the sampling of domestic musical material that has been generated for previous musical projects. Hence, this book focuses on the sampling of *external sound material*.

Moreover, I focus on political sampling strategies. In terms of the dimensions of political sampling presented above, this study highlights the first two: the sampling of sound material that could be conceived as political, and the sampling of “neutral” or non-contextual sound material with an intention that could be characterized as political. This emphasis allows us to access the complex narratives and traceable intentions behind the analyzed tracks. In other words: no one samples a heavily political sound such as the explosion of a bomb in a military conflict without a clear motive and intention. Moreover, there is a good chance that these intentions are still traceable even after the process of production has ended.

Finally, there are two more constraints on the object of study. First, I have only analyzed tracks released between 2015 and 2017. This constraint has substantially facilitated access to the circumstances of production: the more time that has elapsed since the production of a track, the more confused a producer’s memories may become. Second, I have focused on the production stage only; I do not analyze processes of reception. This is not to say that a study of reception is not important. On the contrary: for a holistic analysis of a musical phenomenon, a perspective on reception is essential. Based on the thinking of semiotologist Jean Molino, Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1990) has theorized this view in his understanding of the poietic (creation/production), neutral, and esthetic (reception) dimensions of analysis. However, broadening our focus to encompass processes of reception would go beyond the scope of this book.

These tracks represent 21st century music: they are hybrid, digital, and globally connected.

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In summary, this book examines the culture of sampling in experimental electronica. The basic goal of this study is to shed light on the techniques (how) and reasons (why) behind processes of sampling in experimental electronica. On the basis of the case studies, I want to illustrate how political sampling material is processed in experimental electronica, and how seemingly “neutral” or non-contextual sampling material is politicized. I am particularly interested in analyzing the strategies behind these tracks: what attitudes, intentions, motives, and motivations are decisive?

A few core interests led the present research, separated into a first set of general (1–3) and a second set of more specific (4–6) issues. This study seeks to

- (1) **shed light on the understudied field of the culture of musical production.** How is music produced? What kind of choices, decisions, and musical strategies shape the creative process?
 - (2) **unlock narratives.** The research seeks to reveal what I call the “seismographic substance” behind popular music: what can we learn about the world when we study popular music? The insights gained through this approach reveal some of the complexities of the world we live in. Andreas Wittel (2000) has argued that “ethnography is about revealing context and thus complexity.” As a consequence, this study does not invest in the question of how popular music *changes* the world, which would be another highly important question.
 - (3) **enhance the understanding of sampling.** At a time when sampling has become a ubiquitous studio technique, and the academic literature has predominantly focused on questions of copyright and authorship, this study wants to show further nuances in the culture of sampling and its heterogeneous functionalities and modes of application.
 - (4) **identify a range of strategies behind the appropriation and processing of pre-existing sonic material.** This range reaches from the hidden processing of sampling material on one end to obvious sampling on the other. This includes, in particular, an examination of the reasons for sampling. Hence, this qualitative study identifies neither a single strategy preferred by producers in the field, nor a set of strategies that can be considered as representative. The range presented here illustrates five potential sampling strategies in experimental electronica and could serve as an orientation grid for further studies, which could add other strategies within or even exceeding this range.
- The last two core interests can be conceived of as methodological “side effects”—albeit significant ones—of this study.
- (5) The first is to offer an overview of the various typological at-

I want to illustrate how political sampling material is processed in experimental electronica, and how seemingly “neutral” or non-contextual sampling material is politicized.

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tempts undertaken by other scholars to classify the parameters of sampling. This overview will help to identify further gaps in the research and to develop two new tools for the analysis of sampling processes.

- (6) As a consequence, this study also becomes a methodological investigation of the analysis of sample-based popular music. It finally makes a suggestion as to how processes of sampling could be fruitfully analyzed with a close focus on popular music tracks.

In each case study, the research question is divided into further sub-questions. A brief overview of the key conclusions from the five case studies gives a further impression of what the reader can expect in the following pages. Thus, amongst others, the case studies will reveal

- how specific subcultural identities and lived experiences are articulated or reflected through processes of sampling.
- how sampling is used as a tool for the communication of political ideas, concepts, and thoughts.
- how processes of sampling reflect habits of media consumption and how important these media are for the production of music.
- how hidden processes of sampling are meaningful both for the producer and the musical product.

This study will deploy qualitative research methods. By examining the previously outlined core interests, I will combine methods ranging from musical analysis to anthropological fieldwork (semi-structured interviews and direct observation) and the method of case studies.

I want to make one more remark before closing this introduction. As core interest (4) illustrates, this study also highlights a highly delicate issue: that of intention. This issue might provoke further methodological and epistemological questions.

Excursus: The Problem of Intention

Maria Alvarez wrote that “questions that ask for reasons, and in particular, reasons for action, are among the commonest questions humans have” (Alvarez 2016). Related to sampling, it was Johannes Ismaiel-Wendt (2011a, 50) who emphasized the importance of this endeavor. He said that we need to ask why a particular reference is presented in popular music, and what experience the popular music track transmits through it. However, despite this claim, research has not much concerned itself with this question with regard to the

→ Case studies of Vika Kirchenbauer, Lara Sarkissian, Mauro Guiz Bejar
→ Kirchenbauer, Guiz Bejar

→ Sarkissian, Ian McDonnell, James Whipple

→ Whipple, McDonnell

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production of popular music.¹⁵

This may be related to the considerable analytical and methodological challenges this focus presents: is there such a thing as an original intention? How can we identify reliable motives and intentions? How can we identify something as *the* intention behind a particular action (see also Aristotle on causality)? While keeping these critical questions in mind, let me first justify why I consider it important to care about sampling motivations at all.

First and foremost, I’m interested in knowing what people are doing and *why* they are doing it. Translating these foci to music, I want to know why something sounds the way it does and what went into its creation. Again, these questions do not tell us much about how the world is affected or even changed, but they do tell us something about the world as it exists, and about humanity. Questions like these are at the core of the anthropological endeavor itself.

Second, the understanding of authorial positions can lead to more informed debates around controversial issues. How can we, for example, effectively discuss the accusation of cultural appropriation regarding the processing of certain samples, or understand satire and irony as stylistic devices, without knowing anything about the potential intentions behind an artistic object? Certainly, such debates always need to consider positions of reception too, but they should not be restricted to them. I am convinced that by knowing more about authorial intentions we can contribute to these controversial debates more precisely. In summary, knowing and discussing the artistic positions behind processes of sampling is one step on the way towards a thorough and in-depth examination of musical phenomena. Finally, this leads to a “more informed listening experience,” as Robert Ratcliffe (2014, 98) claims.

Of course, we must always be careful not to take the position of authors as absolute. Most of all because we cannot “access the intentions of musicians” but only “their reports of those intentions” as Allan Moore (2012, 208) thoughtfully notes. Secondly, because reception will always add its own, and often contradictory, readings. Roland Barthes’ (1977) dictum of the “death of the author” perhaps signaled the death knell for authorship’s elevated position.¹⁶ In this regard, Richard Dyer also points to the problematic aspects of the concept of “intention”:

I want to know why something sounds the way it does and what went into its creation.

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Intention is a notion that has made cultural theorists twitchy for at least a century. Intention acquired a bad name because it was often used in a strong sense, to refer to the biography or inner life of the artist, in ways that both are hard to prove and privilege such intention over what the art seems manifestly to be. However, we do not need to throw out all notions of intention just because of such problems. (Dyer 2007, 2)

To avoid getting caught in the trap of speculation (how can we know about authorial intentions?), this study is broadly based on anthropological research. In artist interviews I tried to fathom the reasons for the processing of particular sampling material as far as possible. I then tried to verify the acquired information whenever possible through other channels. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the focus on political sampling material significantly raised the chances of accessing definable intentions. Finally, perhaps the most important point to make here is that my analysis of reasons for sampling always considers multiple motives and intentions. Thus, I analyze them as a complex entity of various reasons, motives, motivations, and intentions instead of identifying singular, exclusive intentions.

Let me return to the beginning of this introduction: “It’s sharing your narrative. That’s what it is.” This is one of several motives behind the sampling practice of electronic music producer Lara Sarkissian. However, as I should have made clear in this introduction, on my way to an in-depth analysis of sampling processes, I will not only concern myself with the obvious strategies: the ones by which someone is intending to *share* something. Hence, this book wants to present a broad range of artistic expressions. To understand these expressions, we need to take the intentions behind them seriously and listen to these narratives. This book is a step in this direction.

Structure and Case Studies

This book could be approached in two ways. Readers who are interested in concrete analyses of popular music should start directly with the case studies. Readers who are interested in how I approached these analyses, in a more general discussion of the analysis of sample-based music, or in an examination of reasons for sampling in experimental electronica should continue on after this introduction. However, no matter how you decide to read it, each part of the book makes reference to the other parts, allowing you to jump back and forth as you see fit. The glossary explains key terms and concepts in a condensed form.

→ Chapter 6

→ Appendix

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¹⁵ Only a few researchers show interest in an investigation into authorial intention in processes of sampling. Chapman (2011) and Déon (2011), for example, emphasize sampling as a result of considerable artistic choices. In the broader field of music studies, musicologist Leigh Landy (2007, xi) concludes that “a tendency in the artistic scholarship of the latter half of the twentieth century concerns the step away from the study of an artwork’s construction and, where articulated, an art maker’s intention toward the experience of the recipient.”

¹⁶ Although it should be said that Barthes’ essay does not state that there is no longer any authorial intention or that it is of no importance. Instead, Barthes points to the fact that there is no “original” or “fixed meaning” and thus meaning is primarily created by the reader.

In Chapter 2 I will introduce and clarify the terms and concepts most important to this study. Starting with an extensive definition of “sampling” from three angles (field-based, literature-oriented, and personal), I will continue by discussing “the political” and the two cultural concepts of “meaning” and “material.” Another concern of this chapter will be the description and characterization of the field of research, experimental electronica, and a short definition of my understanding of “popular music.” The second part of this chapter is dedicated to a discussion of my methodological approach, including a suggestion for a new field of study, trackology, focusing on the analysis of tracks.

Chapter 3 once again discusses the academic literature on sampling. Here I assemble a broad range of typological attempts so far made by scholars to describe various parameters of the sampling process. In doing so, I will identify crucial gaps in the research, including the little-studied focus on questions of the “why.”

Chapters 4 and 5 will introduce and develop two analytical tools: the fader of visibility (FOV) and the spider of sampling reasons (SSR). These tools are based on the preceding discussion of the literature alongside data from my own anthropological research. Both tools aim to facilitate the analysis of sample-based music, and will be applied in the case studies which follow. Chapter 5 also addresses, on a broader level, the question of why artists sample in experimental electronica.

Chapters 6 to 10 form the core of this book. These chapters offer detailed analyses of five sampling strategies by laptop producers of experimental electronica. Each analysis aims to deliver a detailed description of the respective sampling process and a thorough discussion of the sampling reasons involved.

In the interlude, I approach the core interests of this book from yet another angle. Having analyzed the sampling processes of released tracks, I here focus on a direct observation of a musical production in the making. This will offer further insights into the creative choices of a particular sampling process and allow a well-grounded discussion of sampling as a multilevel process, as I have defined the term before.

To close this book, I will finally present a few conclusions and an outlook in Chapter 12. I will compare the case studies, illustrate the range of the sampling strategies examined, and offer some concluding perspectives on sampling in experimental electronica. I will discuss sampling as a substitute for the voice, as a deeply personal project, and as a digital experience that is shaped and influenced by media. In the second part of the chapter I will look beyond this study, summarizing its value for a multi-perspective ethnography of sampling.

Although the case studies will be analyzed at length in Chapters 6 to 10, I will refer to them in other parts of the book wherever

appropriate. As such, it is useful to first offer a short introduction to the five analyzed tracks and their producers. For a more detailed introduction, see the respective case study chapters. All tracks can be accessed via online platforms (SoundCloud and/or Bandcamp). Note that throughout the book, artists presented in the case studies are referred to by their full names rather than their pseudonyms to illustrate my relative closeness to them during my research. Further artists not represented in a case study, with whom I had more superficial contact, are referred to by their pseudonyms.

COOL FOR YOU: “STABILIZED, YES!” (2017)

→ Chapter 6

The brain behind the project COOL FOR YOU is German interdisciplinary artist Vika Kirchenbauer (*1983), based in Berlin. Kirchenbauer has so far released two EPs: *GIVEN YOUR CONVENIENT ABSENCE* (2016, self-released) and *MOOD MANAGEMENT* (2017 on Creamcake). In spring 2019, she released her debut album *COMMUNAL MESS* on Creamcake. On all three releases she exclusively processes material from the Northern American Sacred Harp tradition, a religious choral tradition stemming from a colonial context. The track “STABILIZED, YES!” comes from her second EP and had received 2,800 plays on SoundCloud by June 2019 (Creamcake 2017b).¹⁷

Lara Sarkissian: “kenats” (2016)

→ Chapter 7

Lara Sarkissian (*1992) is an electronic music producer based in Oakland, California. She further acts as a DJ (DJ FOOZOL), filmmaker, party organizer, and label owner (Club Chai). Sarkissian is of Armenian descent, and grew up as part of an Armenian diaspora community. This Armenian heritage is a strong influence on her compositional practice, including her sampling strategies. “kenats” was one of her first published tracks. Released in January 2016, the track had reached 3,512 plays on SoundCloud by July 2021 (Sarkissian 2016). Sarkissian released her debut EP *DISRUPTION* on her own label in 2018. In the same year, she contributed to the Hexadome project from the Berlin-based Institute for Sound and Music (ISM), at the invitation of research platform Norient. In this context she undertook a four-week artist’s residency at the Center for Art and Media (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany, where I had the chance to observe her production process.

The author of this book is also part of Norient. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the author’s involvement.

→ Chapter 11

Moro: “Libres” (2016)

→ Chapter 8

The next case study focuses on a track by Argentinian producer Mauro Guz Bejar (*1993). To date, Guz Bejar has released two EPs: his first, *San Benito*, through NON Worldwide in 2016, and his second, *Irrelevant*, through Janus in 2018. In 2016, Bejar moved from

¹⁷ The display of the plays was disabled after June 2019.

Buenos Aires to Berlin. In his track “Libres,” from his first EP (NON Worldwide 2016), he sampled a sound of a chain from an online database. No statistics on clicks or plays are accessible for this track.

Eomac: “Perversas” (2017)

→ Chapter 9

Eomac is the pseudonym of Irish-born electronic music producer and DJ Ian McDonnell (*1979). Since 2010, he has released a range of singles, EPs, and albums on various labels, including his own Eotrax. McDonnell is part of other projects, such as the duos Lakker and noeverything, and the solo project EeOo. In 2014, he moved from Dublin, Ireland, to Berlin. On his track “Perversas” (Candela Rising 2017), he sampled a clip from a documentary on people who maintain sexual relations with animals (the practice of bestiality). The track was released as part of the compilation *Elephant Road* (2017 on Candela Rising). No statistics on clicks or plays of the official track are accessible. A non-official YouTube upload had reached 1,177 views as of July 2021.

M.E.S.H.: “Methy Imbiß” (2015)

→ Chapter 10

M.E.S.H. is the artist James Whipple (*1985), who was born, grew up, and was educated in various places in the U.S. before moving to Berlin in 2009. There, he co-founded the Janus collective, which organizes club nights and releases electronic music. Since 2011, he has released singles, EPs, and DJ Mixes on various labels, though mostly on PAN records. Whipple published his first album *Piteous Gate* in 2015 and his second album *Hesatix* in 2017. The track “Methy Imbiß” (PAN Records 2015) forms part of his first full-length album and contains a hidden sample of war sounds from the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014. Unofficial uploads on SoundCloud and YouTube reached 4,121 plays and 7,135 views as of July 2021.

Having introduced the production method of sampling, the focus of the present study, and the tracks and producers examined in the case studies, I will now continue by defining the terms and concepts most important to this book, introducing the field, and explaining my methodological approach.

