

International Conference on Exhibiting Sounds of Changes

Date: Monday 11th of June – Wednesday 13th of June 2018

Venue: The Finnish Labour Museum Werstas

Väinö Linnan aukio 8; 33210 Tampere, Finland.

Session abstracts

Tuesday 12.6.

Speaker: Jörg U. Lensing (GER)

Abstract: *Re-Enactment for Soundscapes*

Soundscapes are influenced, if not even completely formed by human activities, comparably to most sceneries of landscapes. Working landscapes are determined for nearly 100% by workflow processes, suitable looking and sounding like that. These working processes are determined by the tools and technical possibilities of their time.

Museums try to preserve these "working sceneries" in fragments. Tools, machines, or places of work are issued; seldom they operate in function. A Re-Enactment of historical working worlds, processes of changes, or re-Building-Activities of these Places for museums mostly are only to see in movies which reproduce historical working worlds and social environments around a story. Shooting conditions for such "historicizing" films are determined by silence, because usually the priority for shooting sound is focussed on human voices. Contemporary witness's reports give clues on how the place of work looked like and on how the work sound scenery could have sounded. Mostly the portrayals are relatively imprecise stories about „infernal noise“ or „codes by groggy bells“ or about the mixed languages or the songs of the workers.

Because single objects, tools, machines or places of work are preserved as much as possible authentically, they absorb sounds if one may pursue them again in their function. But also these sounds remain single sounds and do not illustrate the complex sound scenery as it might have sounded in function of hundreds of working people with accordingly as many tools and machines. The more astonishingly is the achievement of film-sound designers in movies and TV-films of the last 30-40 years, who re-produced over and over again impressive sound sceneries of „historic working places“ for us.

Unfortunately before 1975, there are hardly to find good authentic multi-track recordings of active working worlds. In 1975 the first German nuclear power plant started to work and with that also started the death for the formerly on coal massively oriented industry in Germany. With the introduction of Dolby in 1975, the Audio-CD in 1979 and above all with the DAT in 1988 and Dolby Digital in 1992 recordings became increasingly high-resolution, more dynamically and multi-channel. Unfortunately these technologies, which

flowed typically in digital Fieldrecording and Digital Audio Workstations (DAW), came too late to record large parts of former industrial sceneries still adequately tonally in function.

However, if one wants to give an impression about historical working sceneries in connection to their soundscapes, one has to do a virtual re-enactment of these soundworlds. For that no operating workers, or running machine parks are necessary to be installed in museums, but sound installations which simulate an immersive impression of these working soundsacpes for periods of limited time.

Sound designers are the ideal creators of such immersive sound sceneries: Today they bring also the know-how for the mobile recording methods which are needed to record the single "actors", as to reproduce creativity whole multiple sound sceneries from these single sounds. These immersive Soundscapes with moving soundobjects can be experienced in museums within a multi-channel multiple loudspeakersystem. The Faculty of Design of the University of applied sciences and Arts in Dortmund is actually working for the LWL-Museum Zeche Zollern on such an installation.

Speaker: Ari Koivumäki (FIN)

Abstract: *How to Solve the Point of Audition?*

Lots of sounds and soundscapes that emerge during work and action have not been documented. However, they create an important part of our acoustic heritage. How to find the right sounds? How to solve the point of audition, where the microphone set up should be placed? Figure versus ground is in use in sound design when using sound effects. Basically the distinction is borrowed from visual perception. According to the gestalt psychologists, the figure is the focus of interest and the ground is the setting of the context. The figure and the ground cannot be perceived simultaneously.

R.Murray Schafer writes in *The tuning of the world* (1977, 152) that the figure corresponds to the concepts of signal or the sound mark and the ground to the ambient sounds around it, which often refers to the keynote sounds and the soundscape itself. The concepts of signal, sound mark, keynote and soundscape Schafer coined in his seminal book. How do the Schafer's concepts benefit for the work of a sound designer?

However, we do not experience the world from the outside or in front of us, but through it, in accordance with it, as part of it. The sound world is full of meanings which are interpreted depending on the situation we face and the objective we have at the moment. This is the way we attend, control, and understand our environment. This is also the reason why we perceive different issues in our environment and why we give them various meanings - which are in turn colored by our personal sensations, emotions, and memories. My conference paper will explore these questions based on Finnish soundscape projects.

Speaker: John Kannenberg (UK)

Abstract: *Hearing Culture: Exhibition Strategies at the Museum of Portable Sound*

Museum practice has gradually evolved over the past few decades to embrace intangible cultural heritage – including human-centric oral traditions, social customs, languages, and ceremonies. Subsequently, in recent

years philosophers have proposed an object-oriented ontology, one that attempts to empathise with the experiences of objects themselves. One way to study the experiences of objects is through the sounds that they make, and as a sound artist and phonographer (one who collects field recordings), I have collected sounds of industrial heritage, displaying them as museological objects within my own institution, The Museum of Portable Sound.

This paper will explore the collection and display practices I have utilised via this experimental institution in an attempt to exhibit the sounds of industry that I have collected as objects of human culture. An examination of the taxonomies and didactic strategies that I have applied to sounds relating to post-industrial practices such as modes of public transport and street crossing signals for the visually impaired will, once examined, point towards an expanded notion of intangible cultural heritage that includes mechanical as well as human soundings. In turn, these exhibition strategies may help begin to explore new uses for multisensory content within the museological display of industrial heritage.

Speakers: Outi Penninkangas & Lila Heinola (FIN)

Abstract: *Sound Museum*

The Rupriikki Media Museum, Cultural Education Unit TAITE and media artist Matti Niinimäki have been developing since 2010 in collaboration a unique device called Sound Museum. At this moment eight Sound Museums are used by elderly people. In addition one device is designed for the babies. Source materials for the Sound Museums have been collected from national media archives, open data archives and from the museum collections. Each device is slightly different, for example Work with Sounds archive is used in the Sound Museum version 5.0 where every day sounds are divided into three categories: home, office, and cottage.

During the process of designing the technology and content of the Sound Museum it was taken into account, that they are used by elderly people and staff in non-museum settings such as nursing homes, hospitals, day centres and district groups. Using the Sound Museum is easy, no special training is needed. The topics of the Sound Museums are interesting and versatile, which helps to create reminiscence sessions where old people can share and discuss together. Loan service has made it possible to use the Sound Museum in several places free of charge.

The Sound Museum is a good example how meaningful sounds and soundscapes of our everyday life and history are for our memory and reminiscence. Sounds helps us to catch lost moments and share experiences with others. The Rupriikki Media Museum and Cultural Education Unit TAITE are motivated to study and develop sound based tools and methods for museum pedagogical services.

Speaker: Marina Sahnwaldt (GER)

Abstract: *Klangsport project*

As a director and cultural scientist, I explore the background noise of sports disciplines. The focus is on standard situations, which can be attributed to body techniques and practices that go back far into the

history of sports disciplines. The lay-up in basketball, the athlete's turn around his own axis, when he gets momentum for the throw of the discus etc.

The auditory legacies in sports have so far attracted little attention. *Klansport* approaches them with archaeological accuracy. In an audio-visual process, the acoustic traces are recorded and separated from the cacophonous environment of their making. Currently, the material is inventoried according to the guidelines of the Deutscher Museumsbund and added to a sound database (under construction). With the re-contextualization, which takes the material from the sports hall into the museum, it moves into the cultural attention, creating a context of meaning, which is explored here, initiated and stimulated by a transdisciplinary dialogue.

In practice, musicians are invited to get involved with the sound material and translate the tracks of specific disciplines into a musicality. So far Stefan Leisegold developed a jazz tune with loop station and synthesizer from the discipline of the long jump (Sep. 2017, Hildesheim, Germany) and Teresa Doblinger interpreted the jumps of three rope skippers with a bass clarinet (Nov. 2017, Ghent, Belgium)

Speaker: Pekka Virtanen (FIN)

Abstract: *Noisy nature*

I worked 15 years in The Finnish Forest Museum LUSTO and after that (2006-) as a freelance curator. My main job in Lusto was exhibitions and until now I have worked with over 200 exhibitions (cultural history+art). At the moment I am writing an article about music and museums.

Sounds are interesting part of exhibitions and there were some successful experiments also made in the forest museum. One soundscape (20 min) was made for the whole exhibition area including all kinds of sounds and it was heard for many years daily from the opening to the closing time (loop). In Tampere I can concentrate to that project and bring along some thoughts of other experiences I have seen (heard) in other museums. My presentation does not have to be very long, but I think especially the mentioned "20 min soundscape" (I can take samples of it) can give new ideas to many.

Speaker: Frank Meyer (NOR)

Abstract: *The Sound of Norway. Farm Bells and Big City Cacophony*

In June 2018, the edited volume of *The Sound of Norway. Farm bells and big city cacophony* (Norges lyder. Stabburklokker og storbykakofoni) will be published. The anthology will include eight scientific articles on a range of sound studies. Four of the articles are dedicated to the description and analysis of urban soundscapes, i.e. the changing soundscapes of the countryside (For whom the bells tolls - village and animal bells and the soundscape of farmers, farm workers and shepherds); Narvik (the northernmost railroad city of Norway); Bodø (airport noise in urban planning); and the sound of superdiversity in Grønland, Oslo. In addition there are two articles related to noise abatement and noise protection; and one about sounds and social distinction related to long case clocks. In addition there is one article about the history of Norwegian sound media, and my introduction about the history and uses of sound studies.

Wednesday 13.6.

Speakers: Kathinka Engels & Konrad Gutkowski (GER)

Abstract: *Sounds as cultural heritage – The EU-project “Sounds of Changes” and how sounds can revive memories*

Changes accompany our everyday life and influence our actions. We constantly recognize the many forms of change: technological progress transforms the way we work and communicate. Climate change and limited resources force us to change our use of energy, mobility and consumption. Structural change transforms entire landscapes and communities.

We can not only see these changes. We can also hear them. Smartphones use endless possibilities of acoustic signs to draw our attention to new messages. The sound of electric cars needs to be enhanced digitally, because they are too quiet for pedestrians to hear. And the noise of former factories gives way to clicking keyboards. However, sounds are ethereal and escape our memory easily, if they are not preserved by thorough and lasting documentation. When we allow the sounds to fade away, potential documents of our perception of the world disappear.

There are many archives for pictures and sound as spoken word or music. Yet, there are hardly any systematically and thoroughly documented archives for sounds as such. Creating such an archive is the task six museums have set out to accomplish in the project “Sounds of Changes.” “How does the change in Europe sound like?” is the guiding question for recording and documenting 800 sounds up until September 2019. The sounds will be archived in a digital database and made accessible for free use online. The result allows comparisons of the acoustic change between European countries and regions.

Drawing on the example of “Sounds of Changes” the presentation will discuss the status of sounds as digital and immaterial cultural heritage. Why can and should sounds be classified as cultural heritage? Why should we preserve them?

In a second step we will take a closer look at the possibilities sounds open up for mediation in museum contexts. Since hearing and listening are an important part of our perception, sounds can be means to wake memories. We will focus on how sounds can be utilized when working with elderly people. As such they have been used in the travelling exhibition “Ganz schön viel Maloche,” which has been developed for retirement homes by the trainees of the LWL-Industriemuseum. The sound module as well as the entire exhibition aim at reviving memories of past working lives and have been adapted to the requirements of elderly people.

Speaker: Søren Bak-Jensen (DK)

Abstract: *That reminds me of.... The importance of visitors sharing memories at the Workers Museum in Copenhagen*

The Workers Museum in Copenhagen tells stories of the everyday life of working class people in Denmark. This is done on the basis of historical and ethnographic research that guides the production of exhibitions aimed at creating a multisensory, authentic experience of moving through homes, work places and public

spaces as they may have looked at different points in time. The use of sounds to recreate auditory aspects of specific environments is an important part of the exhibitions, and often a quite large part of any exhibition budget will go towards developing this particular part of the experience. The same is true for the collecting and presenting of interviews with people relating their personal experiences of living or working in particular environments.

Yet one important category of sounds cannot be supplied by the exhibition itself and can only be added later – the sound of visitors being inspired to tell their own stories. The ability of the museum visit to bring out memories and the interest in sharing them is an important indicator for whether we are succeeding in creating the kind of museum experience we would like. In this presentation, I will put forward our reasons for focusing on visitors sharing their own stories and on how we try to make them an important part of our knowledge development around the historical issues and periods we deal with. And especially, I would like to share some of our concerns over what it takes for visitors to become inspired to telling their own personal experiences when visiting an historical museum.

Speaker: Kimmo Kestinen (FIN)

Abstract: *Sounds in silence - Use of sound in Finnish Labour Museum Werstas exhibitions*

At the beginning of the 20th-century people were mesmerized in cinemas of the moving pictures. But something was missing. The sound! Soon the film performances were incremented with live music which helped the audience to appreciate more the story, but to "hear" the actors the audience had to read the title cards. Only after few decades, the talkies were born.

Museums are still more or less in the silent era. By adding sound, we could achieve more and give our audience better understanding of what we are trying to say.

The Finnish Labour Museum Werstas has a long history of using sounds and other recordings in its exhibitions. In my presentation, I'll explain some of the problems and solutions we have learned with practical examples.

During the 1990's the buzz word was multimedia, and Werstas was among the first museums to try it in Finland in 1996. In this first ever multimedia program we used a digitized speech from a 78 rpm phonograph record. With multimedia we could break the physical dimensions of the exhibition space, and could a little later to show even videos in a same small box. Since then, the sound has been recognized as an element, which we have in our tool belt.

A sound is a powerful tool in exhibitions. One of the lessons we noticed early on, was that letting the music play on constantly is really annoying. At the same time, we learned also, that it is almost impossible to keep sound in one place because the sound waves will travel through the air all over the exhibition, if not planned carefully.

However, if we use sound, which is not music and in fact not even a human voice, but some sort of environmental or natural sound, then the sound is far less annoying. There is a reason behind this. A well known perceptual psychology fact is, that if the visitor hears spoken words or any kind of music, the brain activates more "layers" and the visitor cannot help but concentrate on what he/she is hearing. This means

that visitors focus shifts from visual exhibition to aural experience. Natural (or other environmental) sounds do not have the same kind of effect, so these sounds work better as atmospheric sounds, as the visitors might not even register what they are hearing.

When we need to keep the sounds in the bay, we have relayed on technical solutions. Usually, it is better to let the visitors start the sounds by themselves. A simple trick is to use infrared triggers or for example hide the player device in telephone so that lifting the handle starts the sound recording. We have also used new speaker technology called sound shower and have found out, that sound shower does not create a "sound spot", but rather a "sound line".

One important aspect of creating sounds for an exhibition, that one has to take into consideration the exhibition as a whole, including the sounds the visitors make while they visit the exhibition. There might be no point in putting a lot of effort in small nuances if the sound is hardly audible in the actual listening situation.

The most important thing to keep in mind all the time is that sound is not actually a technical issue but rather it is more to do with what one wants to achieve with it. And not all exhibitions need a sound track.

Speaker: Ivan Pavlovich Petukhov (RUS)

Abstract: *Sounds in the exhibition "The Empire on the Ways of Modernization. Russia in the 19th - early 20th centuries"*

New exhibition of the State museum of political history of Russia (St. Petersburg) "The Empire on the ways of Modernization. Russia in the 19th – early 20th centuries" (opened for visitors in February 2018) is dedicated to the long and complicated path (or even paths) of the nation towards modern institutions (civil rights, political system, judicial institutions and others). The exhibition reflected internal and external reasons made the authorities to reform the system of government and social relations, to develop agriculture and industry. The understanding of the modernization process would be incomplete without considering the activities of the political opposition and the emergence of the first political parties. The Museum exhibits and multimedia content also inform visitors of different classes of the population and situation in the Empire regions.

Visitors are helped by sounds to perceive a large and varied information and get involved in the spirit of the times. There are few ways of using sound technology in the exhibition:

- significant music compositions of the epoch (Glinka, etc.);
- recreated speech acts: the Tsar's Emancipation Manifesto of 3 March (O.S. 19 February) 1861, speeches on the most famous and important political trials in the Russian Empire (widely publicized trial of Vera Zasulich, the trials of the 50 and the 193 in 1877 – 1878).

The exhibition is designed for a long time, so it is possible to add some sound effects in the future according to the experience of its work and visitors' feedback.

Speaker: Heta Kaisto (FIN)

Abstract: *"Did you hear the explosion?"*

In 1976, Lapua Ammunition Factory faced the biggest post-war disaster in Finland when a part of it was destroyed in an explosion and 40 people died in the accident. People still ask of each other: "Did you hear it?"

Lapua Ammunition Factory started its cartridge production in 1923. It was located at the very heart of a small town of Lapua. Only the factory workers could see inside the high walls surrounding the factory and its secrets, however, the factory was very much present for people outside through its soundscape: there were huge machines roaring and pipes howling, and firing drills at noon.

Today, the old factory has been transformed into a cultural center. As a part of renewing our Lapua Ammunition Factory Museum, I am trying to find the best ways to approach and present the complex history of the factory. Sound is a part of a large system of meaning-making, folding from it, operating upon it, with it and through it. Sound interferes the typical signifier - signified opposition, because it is very much lived: unlike visual image or text, sound rather turns inwards than outwards, and as Marie Thompson and Ian Biddle say, sound rests somewhere between the signifying and sublime because of its affectivity. For a museum, this could mean new ways to address knowledge and memory.

In this presentation, I will present our museum's plans of renewing our exhibition starting with a sound: What could sound mean as a way to think and present difficult past? What could sound mean for the community as a way to approach its own memory?