

## *Sound Culture [NMDS 5327 - Fall.Online]*

15-weeks online - graduate seminar  
The New School for Public Engagement | School of Media Studies  
[MA Media Studies; MS Media Management]

**Online Instructor:** Joan Schuman, PT Assistant Professor

*The eye seeks; the ear can only wait. –R. Murray Schafer*

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

While sounds have been explored by both listeners and au(di)teurs for as long as humans have been using their ears, it is only within the last century that mediated technologies have offered artists ways to produce work that leaves an archival, sonic trace. In this course students gain a foundation of how sound has entered the artistic landscape historically as well as by contemporary artists who "ensound" media for presenting audio-based creative work across numerous genres. These may include: site-specific, gallery and public loudspeaker installations; radio and podcasting; Web-based installations and performances; international sound-art festivals; darkened-space cinematic airings; LP/CD anthologizing; online sound maps and social networking; and sound walks via portable technologies (cell phones, WiFi networks, GPS tracking). Understanding the historical-contemporary contexts of sound art, soundscapes, acoustic ecology and the noise-silence continuum allows students to question their own individual relationship to sound as a mode of communication, its use in creative productions, social networking/mapping projects exploring the sound environment and scholarly work around sound culture, aesthetics and theory. Students conduct listening exercises alongside academic research and critical explorations of both the historical and contemporary sound art geography. The class culminates in contributions to sound culture discourse via a curating project.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students work independently and in groups to discern ways in which sound impacts not just a listener, but also an audience. By exploring various genres that artists approach using sound, and by listening deeply in both familiar and new ways, students comprehend the realms of sonic culture in the broader context of media studies. Additionally, a focus on organizing such artistic practice allows students to begin considering curatorial roles in sound-alone or hybrid mediated platforms.

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

Please purchase the following book from Barnes & Noble New School or elsewhere:

Salomé Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*, Continuum, 2011

**Note:** Additionally, throughout the semester, you will be directed to reading and listening assignments located online. All links are located in the Modules section of class in the Weekly

Discussions Assignments folder.

## **COURSE PROJECTS**

### • MATERIAL SOUND

Students individually apply theoretical concepts to a material object and interact in a smaller class group, leading discussions and responding to submissions by group members.

### • SONIC RESPONSES

Three listening exercises and audio sketches invite students to hear how silence, chance, the environment and the voice sound to their ears.

### • APEXART JURYING

Real-life selection process allows participation in determining which submitted curating proposal ideas succeed in becoming exhibitions that the gallery presents in its upcoming season, both for the Manhattan exhibition space and locations around the world (in tandem with apexart Executive Director visiting our class online discussion space).

### • SEMESTER PROJECTS - CURATING SILENCE | CURATING NOISE

Students program the content and design a multi-artist sound presentation for the final course project.

## **At a glance: Summary of assignments, due dates, content**

Our attention is spread across these activities throughout the term:

**General Weekly Discussions** [all-class participation]

**Material Sound** [class is split in half; dialogue across two multi-week spans]

**Sonic Responses** [three deep-listening experiences]

**Jurying apexart** [10-day span of jurying]

### **Week 1: Orientation & Introductions**

-Student Orientation & Class Materials Review

-Class Introductions (begin Thursday)

### **Week 2: Sonic Metropolis**

-*Sound & Fury: The Politics of Noise in a Loud Society* / Garret Keizer -artist interviews/articles (Kubisch, Neuhaus, Basinski, DeLaurenti)

-*Times Square* / Max Neuhaus

-*Electrical Walks* / Christina Kubisch

-*Disintegration Loops* / William Basinski

-*Fit the Description (Ferguson, 9-13 August 2014)* / Christopher DeLaurenti

### **Week 3: What is Sound Art**

-*Listening Is Making Sense* / Andreas Bick

-*What Does Sound Art Mean to You?* / EAR ROOM artists

-*Radio Art & New Media* / Magz Hall

-*Here-Ings* / Steve Peters

-*4 Rooms* / Jacob Kirkegaard

-*Voice Piece for Soprano* / Yoko Ono

#### **Week 4: Listening & Noise**

-*Listening to Noise & Silence* / Salomé Voegelin

[read Chapter 1 ("Listening") & Chapter 2 ("Noise")]

-*Sound & Listening: Beyond the Wall of Broadcast Sound* / Eric Leonardson

-*Listen* / R. Murray Schafer

-*On the Machair* / Cathy Lane

-*Langue Etude* / Susan Stone

-*Records 1981-1989* / Christian Marclay

-Springboard video / Eric Leonardson

#### **Week 5: Bodies Vocalizing**

-*Some thoughts on Voice and Modes of Listening* / Kate Callaghan

-*A Tool is a Tool* / Pamela Z

-*Field Recording: The Practice & Its Possibilities* / Mark Smith

-*HMMM* / Kathy Kennedy

-*Voci* / Pamela Z

-*Unlearning Sound Etiquette* / Christine Sun Kim

*Sonic Response #1 - Soundwalk (due TUES before 11:59 p.m.)*

#### **Week 6: Story as Walkabout**

-*Story as Walkabout* / Third Coast conference panel

-*Forest (for a thousand years)* / Cardiff & Bures-Miller

-*Core Sample* / Teri Rueb

-*Material Sound (Group A)*

#### **Week 7: Listening to Silence, Time & Space**

-*Listening to Noise & Silence* / Salomé Voegelin

[read chapter 3 ("Silence") & chapter 4 ("Time & Space")]

-*Living Sound and Sound Character* / Maryanne Amacher

-*Chernobyl* / Peter Cusack

-*Harmonic Bridge* / Bill Fontana

-*I am Sitting in a Room* / Alvin Lucier

[statement about silence/music / John Cage]

-*Material Sound (Group A)*

#### **Week 8: New Media for Sound**

-*Curating Immateriality* / Joasia Krysa

-*Sounding New Media : Immersion and Embodiment in the Arts and Culture* / Frances Dyson

-*Following You: Disciplines of Listening in Social Media* / Kate Crawford

-*She Launched Channel Zero* / Mendi + Keith Obadike, Third Coast 2007 panel

-*ya heard* / Rhizome Artbase (Obadike curating)

-*Big House/Disclosure* / Mendi + Keith Obadike

-web sites: Sounds Like Noise; Everyday Listening; Sensing Cites; Cities and Memory

#### **Week 9: Curating Media Art**

-*The Art of Curation: Hans Ulrich Obrist* / Stuart Jeffries, Nancy Groves

-*Is the Pen Still Mightier* / Alex Farquharson

-*Code Switching: Artists & Curators in Networked Culture* / Eduardo Navas,

-3 winning curator proposals - apexart

-apexart director / Steve Rand - [online guest]

**Week 10: Touch the Sound**

- Touch the Sound* / Evelyn Glennie
- The Three Listening Modes* / Michel Chion
- A Conversation with Walter Murch* / Gianpaolo D'Amico
- Aesthetics and the Art of Audio Field Recording* / Steven M. Miller

apexart jurying opens

*Sonic Response #2 - Touch the Sounds* (due TUES before 11:59 p.m.)

**Week 11: Now Sounds, Ephemeral & Concrete**

- Listening to Noise & Silence* / Salomé Voegelin [read Chapter 5 (“Now”)]
- Sound Maps* / Annea Lockwood
- The Artist is Present* / Marina Abramovic
- A Record of Fear* / Louise K. Wilson

apexart jurying continues

-Material Sound (Group B)

**Week 12: Apexart Jurying**

- deconstructing your apexart jurying
- apexart essay due by 11:59 p.m. (ET) on Tuesday
- Material Sound (Group B)

**Week 13: THANKSGIVING WEEK - enjoy the break!**

**Week 14: Voice with a Capital V**

- Lowlands* / Susan Philipsz (plus article/interview)
- Hiroshima* / N.B. Aldrich (plus interview)
- Sonic Responses #3 - Voices* (due TUES before 11:59 p.m.)

**Week 15: Ensounding Art**

- *Ice Books* / Adding sound to Basia Irland's sculpture

**Week 16: Curating Earlid**

- Final Projects due TUES before 11:59 p.m