Extended Phonography: Experiencing place through sound, a multi-sensorial approach

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In this article I propose the use of *extended phonography* as an integrated practice which offers the opportunity to overcome the fragmentation of the senses inherent in field recording. I outline how listening across practices empowers both recordist and audience to experience a richer engagement with the recorded environment. Furthermore, I introduce new forms of articulating the experience of place and its relationship to sound, by highlighting the conceptual framework of two of my contrasting works, the site/context-specific projects *Moving Still: 1910 Avenida Atlântica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil* and *X Marks the Spot*. These works, both artistic and discursive, are a direct outcome of my practice of *extended phonography*. Through them, I attempt to address the need for a vocabulary that mirrors the new aesthetics arising in sound art and further expand the practice of field recording.

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary practice of field recording and its ongoing evolution has been shaped by various concepts. There is a growing need to seek new perspectives that reshape everyday experiences into profound and stimulating listening situations that transcend the standard preoccupations with objectiveness and reality (English 2014: 2). This move is partially grounded in the increasing acknowledgement that sound is not an aural reality segmented from the environment and, therefore, context (Chion 1994: 108; Ingold 2007: 10). Capturing the experience of place involves weaving together social, acoustic, cultural, historical and natural elements – the character of a place. These perspectives inform the way I use field recording to create interdisciplinary engaging experiences using sound, image and text in a non-hierarchical dialogue. My practice, both artistic and discursive, seeks to answer the following questions: What does it mean to record in the field? How can the dialogues with the location, through sound, image and text, be combined to create engaging experiences? And how does the presentation space contribute to shape the final experience? In this article I attempt to answer these questions while critically reflecting on the vocabulary relevant to my practice.

2. BEYOND LANDSCAPE AND SOUNDSCAPE, MOVING TOWARDS CONTEXT

Sound encompasses a high level of intricate information, as it embeds the acoustics of landscapes, constituted from the sounds of organisms (biophony), the elements (geophony), and those caused by humans (anthropophony) (Pijanowski et al. 2011: 204). In the past century, the information provided by sound played a fundamental role in re-shaping practices such as music, acoustics, geography, urban planing and architecture, triggering the potential of field recording as a powerful tool used to investigate and articulate urban transformations. The gesture of selecting, amplifying and archiving sounds present in the environment is a tool that allows recordists, from their experiences, to create memories and consequently transform spaces into places (Lippard 1997: 8). As argued by the composer, artist and precursor of the use of field recording in composition, Luc Ferrari, 'To incorporate the social within sound, to capture the voice of people talking on the street, the metro, the museum … we are like wandering ears stealing sound in the same way you would take a picture … These sounds represent an image, a memory; they are objects that take part in creation' (Caux 2012: 36). Nonetheless, sound is a tantalising phenomenon for it simultaneously discloses and hides vast information about its origin (Demers 2010: 114). When listening, the perception of the surrounding environment is enhanced by information acquired through other senses working in tandem with hearing, thus influencing the construction of the experience (ibid.: 39). Recognising the strengths and weakness of recorded sound is an underlying aspect to consider when communicating the field recordings to an audience. A friction arises when this experience is communicated through sound alone. When presented to an audience, although immersive, the sound recordings can provide for a fragmented experience as they only convey one aspect of the recorded moment, the sound (Lasse-Marc Riek interviewed by Angus Carlyle in Lane and Carlyle 2013: 177).

The struggle with incompleteness is not only inherent in field recording. As highlighted by artist David Hockney,

incompleteness is also an essential aspect of photography: there is an intrinsic difference between producing the split-second record from a fixed viewpoint captured by a camera and the experience of actually looking and being in the landscape (Cox 2014: 25). Similarly, text has been used as a tool that generates meaning by selecting and articulating the environment and the experience of place. Dependent on the recordist's decision-making, text can evoke the landscape, the sounds in the environment or the social experience, for example. Consequently, to supplement field recordings with an interdisciplinary dialogue that also includes photographs or text is a move adopted by a growing number of artists, as these recording practices have particular similarities. Transcribing the experience of place through sound, photography or text usually requires an awareness that surpasses the mere brief insight. It demands a direct involvement of the recordist as an active part of the environment. A combination of techniques and durational experiences can then allow artists to articulate an evocative suggestion of the experienced event.

3. MEDIATING EXPERIENCE

To record is to become part of a narrative and to articulate the recorded event is to construct a new narrative. In both situations – the act of recording and its (re)articulation – the recordist is always present through their decision-making. Through the use of different recording approaches the narrative can be shifted to shape different experiences. Below I will describe two approaches that are commonly used in field recording practices.

Compositional decisions, such as the choice of microphone(s) used to capture the aural environment, or the chosen duration of the final piece compared to the duration of the full recorded experience, are important elements of the construction of experience. Moreover, the ubiquity and rapid evolution of recording equipment has provided field recordists a wider scope of the environment, triggering different modes of listening. This has expanded recordists' perception of the surrounding environment providing them with a broader understanding of place, to include non-human-centred perspectives – for example, signals that other animals can hear but lie outside the human hearing range. The first approach is focused on capturing the environment using sound, whilst empowering the audience to construct their personal experience. Although the recordist is always present through their creative decision-making, this approach is often criticised for generating a sense of disconnection and being untrue to the recording act; the editing process takes on a fundamental role as it allows recordists to remove traces of their 'presence' during the second stage of the composition, which takes place in the studio.

To include other elements in the act of recording such as speech, footsteps and breathing of the recordist can reinforce a sense of presence. This second approach is focused on capturing the recordist as a performer experiencing the environment. It offers the audience a guided listening, carrying information about the environment but also – intentionally or not – information about the recordist such as identity or gender for example, embedded as a footprint of the recordist. The use of voice contextualises the sounds and gives clarity to the listening experience, narrating and guiding the event. Nevertheless, both strategies simply adjust the listener's perspective, rather than provide further details about the context. In addition, any act of recording is choosing and framing one perspective over other. It is an act of selection and the first step in composition making.

A similar parallel can be drawn between recording sound, image or text. The recordist is always present through their decision-making and personal accounts, thereby adjusting the viewers' or readers' perspective. The still camera, like the microphone, is used as an instrument. The choice of lens, aperture and speed, for example, can be adjusted and combined to create contrasting narratives. Through the use of text, the recordist will need to search out the right tone for each project, adjusting the use of language to the narrator's voice and style to engage the audience.

Time is another underlying concept in the construction of a narrative. This includes a wide range of practical and conceptual details: the time spent listening in the field; the duration of the entire experience; time taken to record the scene; the time available on the memory card of the recording device; the time necessary to annotate the event with text and its juxtaposition with the duration of the event; the time it takes to construct the suggestion of the event to an audience; the time that exists between the recording and its (re)articulation, and the time the audience will choose to spend experiencing the event.

In photography, meanwhile, duration brings into dialogue the similarities and oppositions between still image, moving image (cinema) and sound. Despite their differences, there are numerous affinities between still and moving image. The history of photography and cinema are intertwined, and they have informed and influenced each other. They bring forward different aspects of temporality and therefore they have different influences on narrative. Still images, moving images and sound recordings are reproducible and thus allow the event to be repeated endlessly. A photographic still, in particular, allows the viewer to linger over a single split-second moment. This is unlike both film and sound, which are experienced as continuous flows in time. As the artist and curator David Campany writes:

> away from cinema we can see that photography has always had its own complex engagement with time and

movement. Think of the 'decisive moment', the pregnant moment, the constructed tableau, flash photography and the long exposure, to name a few of its different temporalities. To these we could add all the procedures of assembly so central to the development of photography: the album, the archive, the diary, the photo-novel, the photo essay, sequences, juxtapositions, montage, collage, the slideshow and all the new modes opened up by electronic technologies. (Campany 2008: 18)

Hiroshi Sugimoto's photographs of Art Deco movie theatres and drive-ins across North America are an example of an attempt to defy stillness in photography. Through these photographs, he tries to progress towards movement in time as film and sound do, while also hinting at the surrounding context. In these works, a single photographic take encompasses the whole duration of a film though long exposure photography. Sugimoto sets his large-format camera at the back of each cinema, leaving the shutter open during the film's projection. Unlike the human eye, the camera lacks the capacity to register the flickering moving images, instead, it captures all the light they transmitted through the film resulting in a bleached-out screen of over-exposure. While this gesture allows the viewer to think about photography, cinema and light, durations, speed and motion, the very same light illuminates the movie theatres to reveal every architectural detail of the space. As such, apart from the technical mediation, his photos also offer a sociological impression of the country's cinema culture (Campany 2008).

Throughout the history of filmmaking, the use of durational takes has been recognised as a powerful tool to reveal and explore the everyday. Discussing *Jeann Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles,* the 1975 film by the Belgian filmmaker Chantal Akerman, the scholar and writer Ben Singer notes:

> with the result of fixed framing and distended temporality, we study the smallest detail of the material mise-en-scene. Our eye caresses the outlines of objects. It is an intimate and tactile sort of vision – we synaesthetically 'feel' and manipulate objects. (Singer 1989: 61)

Similarly in sound recording, extended takes allows the recordist to perceive a fuller aural perspective and immersion in the ever-changing rhythms and dynamics of a place.

For the past century, sound, image and text have been combined leading to the possibility of negation and meta-commentary. An image can be offered as evidence and then subverted precisely due to its fragmented nature (Sekula 1978: 871). Similarly, the relation between text and image in photography has slowly been transformed through time, from reduction to amplification. In the past, images illustrated text to make it clear, whereas today, images become charged by text (Barthes 1977: 26). The use of written text also gives the audience an active role. It has a different

nature to spoken word, for it has its own temporality and is not shaped by cultural information that a voice might carry.

Text makes narrative, and it has been widely used in a parallel dialogue with photographs, as for example, in the work *One and Three Chairs* by the conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth. The work consists of a chair, a photograph of a chair and the dictionary definition of chair enlarged and placed on the wall. The artist instructs the exhibitor to choose a chair, place it against the wall where it will be exhibited, photograph the chair and then enlarge the photograph so the photographed object has the same size as the original chair. The three objects are exhibited side-by-side as one single gesture. In sound practices, text has also been used – with very different intents and outcomes – as a tool to reveal, vocalise, suggest, describe or contextualise specific places by artists such as Luc Ferrari, Francisco Lopez, Peter Cusack, Alvin Lucier and Felicity Ford.

Due to the pervasiveness of visual language in contemporary culture, we cannot avoid using words and analogies from the visual world to describe sonic phenomena. This has constrained our language, conditioning the way we address sound (Cox 2014: 25). An interesting conundrum, brought forward by the American film editor and sound designer Walter Murch (Amirkhanian, Krause and Murch 2013), is that the human ear can perceive, in the case of normal hearing, a much larger bandwidth in the acoustic domain than sight does in the electromagnetic domain (about nine octaves compared to one). Therefore, despite the pervasiveness of sight-oriented language, the human body responds to a wider range of sound frequencies, including physical vibration below the threshold of pitch perception.

Notwithstanding the intricate information that the recorded image, the recorded sound or the recorded text can provide regarding a context, they still fragment it such that one aspect over the other may prevail in field recording. Can sound be the key to interdisciplinary practice approached through less hierarchical interventions? If so, can the multiple recorded materials be combined to compose engaging multi-sensorial approaches?

4. *EXTENDED PHONOGRAPHY*: A MULTI-SENSORIAL APPROACH

Extended phonography aims to strengthen the links between the act of recording, audience and context through a dialogue connecting two spaces and times, that is, the recorded event and the presentation site. The term plays on the direct relation between photography and phonography, while also referencing extended techniques in musical practices. Like such

techniques, *extended phonography* emphasises the need to go beyond the given understanding of an instrument or practice and its potential use. This gesture is a clear reflection of my need to critically expand what is constituted by the act of recording in the field and push forward the aesthetics of the everyday.

Extended phonography results from the combination and extension of sound recording (field recording), photography and text, enveloped in newly designed situations. I combine and attempt to extend the recordings to communicate the experience of place and its relationship with sound. The frame allows me to cut into space, the microphones allow me to capture space through time, and text gives me a voice and places me in a context; shaping my presence through diary-like narratives that help the event to come together binding sound and image.

'What does it mean to record in the field?' is the first question this article sets out to answer. As mentioned in the previous section, photography and written text can be understood as methodologies used to record, engage and understand urban transformations, the same way that sound can. I begin by introducing how each of the practices can contribute to articulate and contextualise the environment, while also suggesting how field recording can be extended through their combination.

The second key question is 'How can the dialogues with the location, through sound, image and text, be combined to create engaging experiences?' Altering the scope of field recording to include other practices – photography and text – can augment both the experience of place and its communication. As I maintain throughout this article, this move can enhance the recordist's understanding of place, but more importantly, can allow them to enhance its (re)articulation and thus the audience engagement with the recorded context.

The combination of sound, image and text is not unusual. However, it is more common for one element of these three to be the primary medium, while the others provide support or context. *Extended phonography* attempts to develop a more horizontal dialogue, where each medium has an equally essential role; no hierarchy is assumed. Being a site-and-context-specific practice, *extended phonography* is focused on developing the relation between the recordist and the recorded context, and also between the audience and the presentation space and context. Therefore, its strongest contribution lies in the translations of the mediated experiences into composed situations that respond both to the recorded environment and to the presentation spaces.

Once the recordings are completed, shaping how and where they will be communicated is what allows me the opportunity to engage the audience and generate awareness of everyday sounds and their impact on daily life. The answer is encountered through designed situations rooted in site-specific and design practices. They emerge from in-depth reflection on the various natures of *site* – the recorded and the presentation. The composed situations link the two spaces by negotiating a contextual dialogue between the recorded materials and the presentation space.

5. PRACTISING *EXTENDED PHONOGRAPHY*

In this section I will introduce two works that are direct outcomes of *extended phonography* in practice. They are two durational and contrasting experiences that address the above questions through practice. *X Marks the Spot* and *Moving Still: 1910 Avenida Atlântica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil* articulate the role of time and of technical mediation in the construction of place. They result from an in-depth reflection on each of the *sites'* contexts, materialities, characteristics and affordances – in recording and presentation. The negotiation of these aspects is decisive in shaping each of the projects' final outcome. Being a site-and-context-specific practice, *extended phonography* focuses equally on both sites. As such, the composition of each designed situation was fundamental for a true dialogue between the two.

5.1. *X Marks the Spot* (2012–ongoing)

X Marks the Spot[1] is a durational and site-specific sound map that initiates different types of connections and collaborations. As a platform, it seeks to explore the different enriching aspects that each of these levels of interactions and collaborations can bring to the project. It attempts to transform sound mapping into a shared experience of the city by exploring the relation between sound and everyday life, while enhancing the potential of field recording as a tool to investigate urban transformations.

The project is manifested through three different modes: an online web-archive (mode 1); a graphic design intervention in public space (mode 2); and *Off-Site*, a series of collaborative reinterpretations of the project (mode 3). Each mode provides not only a different experience of the work, but also a different type of access to the project and a different form of listening. Since it is unlikely that most people will experience all three modes, each one was designed to stand on its own.

The map slowly grows through the tagging of specific telecommunication boxes, those producing an audible drone. The sound of these ordinary objects, part of the invisible fabric of most cities, is embedded into the city's cycles and rhythms. By initiating a different way to engage with Belfast, walking routes can be designed to incorporate the drones as

[1]http://xmsbelfast.com

part of one's experience of the city. Searching out telecommunication boxes emitting an audible drone can become an alternate way to connect two locations. As the author of the project, I am naturally more willing to change the way I move about in the city in order to listen out for the drones. As such, the first findings presented in the web-archive are my own. I started mapping places closer to me, places I pass by daily and therefore have a closer relationship with. By inviting other people to participate in the process, this activity is designed to spread throughout Belfast creating a stronger connection with the city, as it propels me to discover parts of the city I wouldn't otherwise get to know.

An initial invitation was sent out in September 2012 in the form of an email to the Queen's University Belfast, School of Creative Arts email database. Everyone was invited to take part in the project by tuning in with the surrounding space, helping me to find more locations and report back to me via email. This action initiated a word-of-mouth network and more boxes were added to the web-archive. Gradually the contributors expanded to include people outside of the School, creating multiple networks of participation.

The tagging process is systematic and strongly informed by the work of Bernd and Hilla Becher. The Bechers create photographic inventories of buildings, transforming them into sculptures and thus allowing for their work to transcend photography. This project attempts to incorporate their systematic and democratic approach to a subject by reframing a location using sound, image and text. In *X Marks the Spot*, each location is analysed through the same parameters, maintaining consistency throughout. Consequently, when the results are displayed collectively in the web-archive, the uniformity of the information provided allows for the individuality of each location to stand out. The web-archive (mode 1) materialises various parts of the project's physical process. The entry for each box in the web-archive includes a personal account of how, when and where the box was found alongside a photograph and a short sound composition. The materials are obtained through a systematic process. It starts by involving the participation of other people (1) and then continues in a series of tasks I undertake:

1. Identify a telecommunication box emitting an audible drone.
2. Record its sound using a contact microphone.
3. Use an induction coil pick-up to search for the changes in the magnetic field generated by the box. Then choose and record a short sample.
4. Analyse the contact microphone recording to note the main frequencies and amplitudes that compose the sound.
5. Design an A2 poster including a small selection of the most prominent frequencies and amplitudes, and a QRcode that will give access to the

web-archive. The poster mimics visually these scales of intensities.
6. Print a black and white poster.
7. Paste the poster onto the telecommunication box.
8. Photograph the result.
9. Use the results from step 4 to undertake an audio analysis/resynthesis (supercollider analysis/resynthesis by Miguel Negrão).
10. Create a short composition that explores a sonic identity of the box using the recordings of step 2, 3 and 9.
11. Upload to the web-archive the photograph, the short sound composition and a small text indicating how the box was found and/or the personal relationship with the place.

I start the process by cycling to the identified telecommunication box to record its sound with both a contact microphone and a coil pick-up. Then, informed by the text and my first visit to the location, I start a short sound composition. The sound recorded with the contact microphone enhances the acoustic properties of the box. It captures the drone while shaping the surrounding soundscape through the materiality of the box. The sound captured by the coil pick-up is imperceptible to the naked ear, but even though this sound is often missed, when heard it makes for a strong presence in the box's sonic identity. The synthesised sound, on the other hand, is an idealised sound of the drone when all other sounds are excluded. As Negrão indicates, 'through the open source digital audio workstation Audacity, a list is generated containing all the peaks in the spectrum of each sound. A list of the highest twenty and their corresponding amplitudes is selected to be rendered by SuperCollider. Each peak is assigned a sine oscillator with the corresponding frequency and multiplied by its amplitude and then summarised and recorded to a sound file' (Negrão 2014).

Each composition of a box's sonic identity starts with the contact microphone recording. When listening with headphones, the sound of the box slowly emerges until it overpowers the surrounding soundscape moving it to the background. The box becomes the focal point. By adding the other two recordings, a dialogue is constructed providing a more conceptual perspective, slowly shifting the attention from the macro-environment – surrounding space – to the micro-environment – the box.

Once a composition is complete, a provisional page is created on the web-archive including the text and sound. Meanwhile, a Quick Response Code (QRcode) is generated and incorporated in an A2 poster composition. The simple black and white poster graphically mimics the main frequency and amplitudes of the sound. It presents the frequencies in a sequential order and with different font thickness depending on their

Figure 1. Photo of Annadale Embankment location as presented on xmsbelfast.com.

amplitude. Moreover, the ephemeral A2 poster now pasted onto the box is another mode (mode 2) (Figure 1). The very simple nature of the poster is designed to draw the attention of passers-by to the box and its particular sound. Also, the more curious users who will scan the QRcode will be forwarded to the web-archive connecting physical and digital spheres and amplifying their experience of the location. The link will take the user to the precise location they are facing, introducing the photo of the box, the text description of who found the box and the short sound composition.[2]

Once the analysis process is completed and the graphic and sound compositions are ready, I revisit the location to paste and photograph the poster. Lastly, the photograph is uploaded to the web-archive, completing the process. *X Marks the Spot*'s photographs are digital colour photographs taken at different times of the day and seasons. And while the telecommunication boxes are the central character, the photographs also bring to life patterns of the Belfast urban fabric, conferring to the photograph a mood that it is not present in Bernd and Hilla Becher's approach to place.

The project begins with sound. It then moves on to incorporate a graphic image that attempts to mimic the very structure of this sound. Next, a photograph introduces the object that produces the sound. Finally, a text reveals human presence and allows for a combination of everyday events to construct a wider narrative. The three recording methods – sound, image

and text – complement each other to present a new perspective of specific locations spread throughout Belfast. While the project encourages people to zoom in and focus on the micro events brought about by these ordinary objects, and question the way we move through the city and why, the web-archive zooms out and collects other forms to look at the city. The web-archive becomes a key tool. As such, both contents and layout need to be shaped to respond to the web-demanding user and the displaying device – desktop or mobile phone. Although this is brought about through the suggestion of a dialogue between the physical and the digital facilitated by the use of mobile technology, the project does not hinge entirely on specific technologies.

The last of the three modes is the *Off-Site* part of the project. As mentioned previously, *X Marks the Spot* is a platform that initiates different types of connections and collaborations. More importantly, with this work I seek to explore and understand what each of these levels of interactions and collaborations can bring to the project and how they also reframe it. The aim of *Off-Site* is to open up the project to processes not envisioned initially, promoting sound art as a critical platform to reflect on the urban space. This mode (mode 3) also allows me to collaborate with academic researchers focused on expanding the connection between sound and daily life. It also enables me to take a step back, transfer authorship and fulfil a different role. The first intervention was *48Hz*, an installation by Miguel Negrão. It was made possible through the collaboration with PLACE Northern Ireland and the Recomposing the City research group based at Queen's University Belfast. *48Hz* was presented at Platform

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[2]The sound will trigger automatically on Android-based devices but not on iOS, as the autoplay function is disabled as data must always be initiated by the user.

Figure 2. *48Hz* by Miguel Negrão, installation view, Platform Arts Belfast, March 2014.

Arts Belfast in March 2014, bringing *X Marks the Spot* for the first time into a contemporary art gallery context (Figure 2). This move introduced the project to another audience, thus extending the network.

Negrão created a small and intimate environment in a large industrial gallery space. An array of eight speakers surrounded a black carpet with pillows and blankets inviting the listener to fully immerse in the urban drones:

> The sound installation attempts to unveil and present to the listener the inner world hidden in the drone of the telecommunication boxes … Each drone, with a fundamental frequency close to 48Hz, is unique and presents different sonic characteristics … The three-part composition progresses from a more 'objective' perspective towards a more 'subjective' one. Firstly, it introduces the original recordings. Then, each individual frequency composing the drone is presented through a partially random selection and accumulation algorithm. Finally, the same material is played at different octaves with phase-shifted envelopes. (Negrão 2014)

As expected, the building played a prominent part in the way the installation was perceived as the space's reverberant nature shaped the engaging sound composition. In parallel, as Platform Arts is located at the heart of the city centre, ghosts of the active surrounding soundscape were now filtered by the interior space, colouring Negrão's composition.

Off-Site will continue to stimulate debate and share both expertise and research through the playful encounters with the everyday urban environment, where my participation is that of mediator between the artists and the local groups.

5.2. *Moving Still: 1910 Avenida Atlântica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil* (2013–2015)

Moving Still: 1910 Avenida Atlântida, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil is a sequential, first-person narrative that communicates an environment over the course of one day by means of recording. In this work, I address the need for a vocabulary to mirror new aesthetics arising in sound art. The work expands my research in this field by elaborating on the use of *extended phonography*, as introduced earlier, a practice that introduces new forms of interpretation regarding the experience of place and its relationship with sound.

Our sensory experiences are fragmented in field recording practice. In *Moving Still*, I propose a way of transcending this fragmentation. I accept the friction of the unrepresentable present, and make use of it to reveal the recording process as a creative act in its own right.

The project resulted from a two-month research residency at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) in Brazil and was funded by the Santander Mobility Fund. From May to July 2013, I walked the streets of Rio de Janeiro, focused on listening and recording as strategies to encounter and articulate (the project was documented on website rio.matildemeireles.com). *Moving Still* was recorded towards the end of the residency, as a durational and reflexive experience. This grounding activity allowed me to experience the city from above, watching and listening to its flow and separating its rhythms throughout a day. What better (or safer) place to realise this work than the homely space of my friend's apartment?

In *Moving Still* an attentive observation of a specific place within a specific time frame – from sunrise to sunset on 11 July 2013 in Rio de Janeiro – unfolds through an *extended phonography* of the acoustic, the visual and the social sphere. A connected set of recordings, assembled and presented as a composed environment, suggest, rather than represent, a reality.

Before sunrise, I set a tripod in front of the window of my friend's living room, on the 10th floor of an apartment building in Copacabana. Outside the window are backyard buildings, an immense wooded area and, in the distance, the statue of Christ the Redeemer. I place a still camera on the tripod, which will document movements in the landscape and the transitions of sunlight from day to night. A sound recorder placed in front of the still camera will capture the ever-changing soundscape. Lastly, I write short texts throughout the day: I will slowly fill my notebook with descriptions of the landscape and the kind of contextual information that neither sound nor images recordings could capture. The recording process begins before 6.30am and lasts for ten and a half hours until after sunset.

The work is presented in a gallery, where the recorded space, removed temporarily and geographically, is evoked through a composed environment (Figure 3). It makes a dialogue between the two spaces which allows new meanings to be attributed to the recorded moments, and a new event is shaped. There are two screens, both two metres wide, as we enter the gallery space, one on the left and one on the right (Figures 4 an 5). They are positioned facing each other, suspended from the ceiling at eye level.

In between, there are six chairs, three facing each screen. It is clear from the screens' positions that the two projections are related, but displayed without hierarchy. Nevertheless, a choice needs to be made: it is not possible for the visitor to experience the two perspectives at the same time.

Moving Still references the experimental filmmaker Michael Snow's project *Two Sides to Every Story* (1974). Snow projects two films of the same event simultaneously into a double-sided screen hanging in the middle of the projection space. The event is filmed by two cameras placed opposite to each other and facing the scene. Since both projections cannot be viewed simultaneously, the viewer has to make choices about how and when to view them. *Moving Still* unfolds not two but three interchanged perspectives of the one event, rendered as equal. Image, sound and text complement each other by introducing different perspectives of the event. The act of field recording becomes expanded.

The two projections start. There is no sound. On both screens, in white text on a dark background, diary entries narrate the recording process. At 1:40 there is a shift. A click of the camera shutter triggers both the surround sound and a sequence of photographs on the screen to the left. On the screen to the right, the flow of white text on dark background continues, introducing another perspective of the event.

The visual frame locates me, the recordist, in Rio de Janeiro, and at the same time, it hints at the scale of the city. The sound complements the image and mirrors the recorded space: from the left, the sounds from the city outside, and from the right, the same sounds
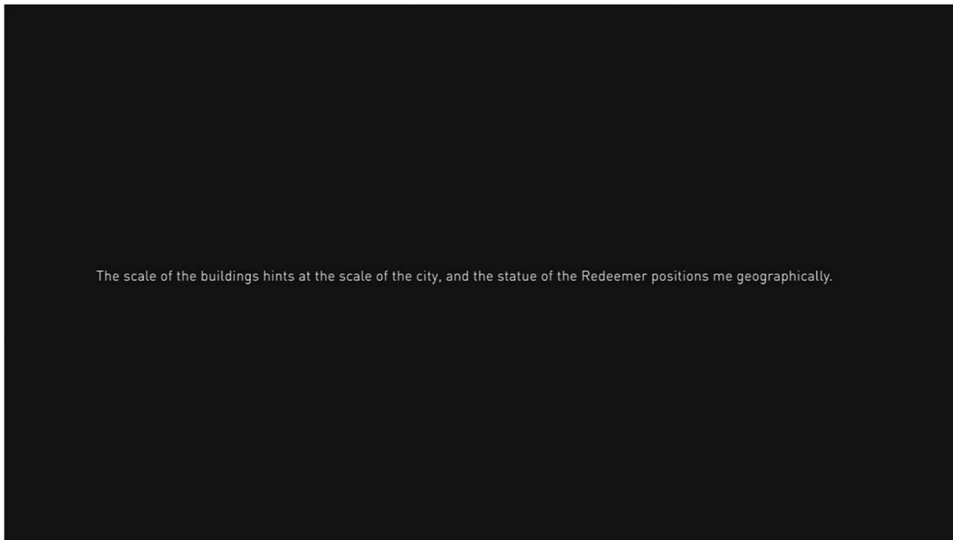

Figure 3. *Moving Still: 1910 Avenida Atlântica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*, installation view, *The Present Instant*, Platform Arts Belfast, November 2015. Photo by Simon Mills.

Figure 4. *Moving Still: 1910 Avenida Atlântica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*, still from the left screen video.

The scale of the buildings hints at the scale of the city, and the statue of the Redeemer positions me geographically.

Figure 5. *Moving Still: 1910 Avenida Atlântica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*, still from the right screen video.

filtered by the living room of the apartment. The sound anchors the visitor to a sequence of moments in time whilst unifying and synchronising the two projections.

The presence of the recordist blurs the public space (left) and personal space (right). I am not seen but at times I am faintly audible. My presence is revealed through the text, the technical choices and my compositional decisions: the height of the tripod, the choice of the photographic frame, the choice of the microphones and the recorder that captured the sound. The transitions, rhythms and gestures throughout the project were accentuated in the editing process: photography, audio and text are all directly connected with the subjective experience of place. The dialogue between public and personal spaces recurs throughout

the timeline. From 7:46, another shift takes place. The two spaces start to diverge slightly as, through the sound, indoor activity is slowly registered and brought to life on the right-hand side.

Time is a key aspect of the project and it unfolds in six different ways. First, ten-and-a-half-hours were spent recording in this location. Second, there is the duration of each still photograph (left) and the transition strategies chosen to move from one still to the next. This is achieved through two different editing processes where image and sound try to keep up with each other. On one hand, there is the flow of photographs and how they dissolve one into the other. These durations vary throughout the project as they are directly connected with the number of photographs taken within each

chosen section of recorded sound. Sometimes this flow is interrupted: a sudden cut is triggered by the sound of the camera shutter click, and a new still suddenly replaces the previous one.

Third, there is a subjective time connected to the personal challenge inherent in durational field recording – it allows for a stronger engagement with the environment. The sound of the school bell – a *sound signal* that sets the rhythm of the micro-environment and marks the passage of time – is used as a metaphor; it personifies the viewpoint of the recordist and portrays this challenge. I start by using the unfiltered recorded sound. With time, the sound of the school bell slowly shifts from the left-hand side to the right-hand side and, through a subtle time-stretching sound manipulation, the sound drags on until it is transformed into a drone that blends in with the other urban drones – helicopters, traffic, ocean waves, ventilators and sounds of construction.

The fourth aspect is the connection between image recording and time. Contrary to the sound recording process, the image recording process was not continuous. A total of 83 photographs were taken at irregular intervals. They are directly triggered by changes in the landscape. In the final 17 minutes and 43 seconds, the still images defy their temporal nature by occasionally stretching in time, attempting to accompany the flow of the sound.

The fifth temporal aspect of the work is an allusion to another time and another space, the one offered to the visitor. As in any installation set-up, the visitor is free to stay, leave or wander around as they please, allowing for a different type of interpretive freedom. Lastly, there is a less obvious layer of time that is not directly visible in the project's outcome, the break in time between the recording and editing processes, from July 2013 to July 2015. The use and combination of these three rendering techniques – sound recording, photography and text – allows for a multimodal and vivid interpretation of the event. It empowers one to feel directly present in the past, both in the composition process and when experiencing its outcome.

6. CONCLUSION

Throughout this article, I have introduced alternative ways of experiencing place through sound by means of multi-sensorial approaches to field recording. Through a closer look at some of the paradigms that strongly inform the evolution of field recording, I have proposed the use of interdisciplinarity as a form of expanding field recording. This has allowed me to overcome the inherent fragmentation of senses in field recording when presenting the recorded event to the audience.

I have addressed the need for a vocabulary that mirrors the new aesthetics arising in sound art through two of my works introduced in this article, *X Marks the Spot* and *Moving Still: 1910 Avenida Atlântica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.* They are direct and contrasting outcomes of *extended phonography.* Through them I have demonstrated how *extended phonography* can be modulated to adapt to, and emphasise, each presented context and site – whether the recorded event or presentation site. This has been achieved through both a durational site-and-context-specific sound map that introduces different forms for deploying field recording as a tool to investigate and articulate urban transformations and a sound installation in a gallery.

Extended phonography has provided me with an alternative multi-sensorial form of (re)articulating specific contexts, while consequently suggesting a new approach to field recording more generally. The photographic frame extends the way I see the world, the microphones extend how I listen to the world, while the written text allows me to transcend the limitations of the other two practices, and to translate each specific context. Through critical reflection on questions of how we experience place through sound, I was able to develop composition and presentation strategies, that negotiate each project's materials with the presentation site, making them inextricably linked. The exercise of critically thinking and exploring what is *site* – its role, materiality, context, strengths, weaknesses – has allowed me to articulate new artistic methods for engaging audiences with recorded events. The final outcomes are still anchored in sound; yet by bringing in other nuances of the recorded event through a less hierarchic dialogue between sound, image and text, the designed situation envelops the audience in multi-sensory experiences that transcend the notion of recording as merely a tool for representation and veracity.

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