

# SOUND ART MATTERS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON SOUND ART

JUNE 1-4, 2016  
AARHUS UNIVERSITY, DENMARK

The current art field is full of sound: audible and inaudible, infrasound, ultrasound, sound machines, sound installations, field recordings, digital sounds, biological sounds, sound walks, sounds from instruments, voices, nature, sonifications of data and so on. Sound art comprises a wide range of different artistic practices in which sound is a central element. It occurs in a variety of formats and contexts, crossing conventional boundaries between art genres and institutions. Despite this abundance of sonic expressions, sound art is still, as Christoph Cox noted in 2011, 'profoundly undertheorized'.

## OBJECTIVES

This conference wants to focus on 'sound art matters': on how sound art matters, how sound in art matters, and on the matter of which sound art is made. Instead of seeking to categorize and define what sound art *is*, the conference seeks to develop a more precise understanding of the terms, ontologies and epistemologies we operate within. How and why does sound and sound art matter within artistic and academic discourses ranging from a focus on materiality to contextual meaning, from technological media to embodied experience?

The conference also wants to bring together researchers and practitioners in order to investigate the state of the art of this field, and potentially to open it up further. We therefore encourage perspectives that go beyond the exclusive theories of art, and also embrace a broad spectrum of cultural theory, media theory, philosophy and practice-based experiments. As a secondary goal we wish to establish a more formalized network between European researchers working with sound art that can serve as a platform for future collaborations.

## CONFIRMED KEYNOTES

Wolfgang Ernst (DE), Frances Dyson (AU) Cathy Lane (UK) Brian Kane (US),  
Jeremy Woodruff (US/DE)

# CALL FOR PAPERS

Paper presentations can refer to, but are not limited to, the following headlines:

## **Phenomenology and post-phenomenology**

We invite papers that expand and challenge the existing thoughts and methodologies of phenomenology (in theory and art) in different ways. Papers could reflect on questions such as: How does the technological dimension, which is so predominant in sound art, challenge the phenomenological approach? Do Cyborgs listen with their ears? Is sound art a form of bio-aesthetics?

## **Materialities and objects**

Various ideas for a new 'materialist philosophy' or 'object-oriented ontology' have entered the theoretical discourses on sound art. We invite papers that address the philosophical and aesthetic implications of such approaches, involving both a materialist focus on sound as process and differentiation, and – in a largely opposite perspective – an emphasis on the autonomy of the (sonic) object from a non-idealist perspective.

## **Para-, inter- and contextualities**

Some scholars argue that the most important feature of sound art is not sound in itself, but the intertextual, symbolic matrix that the specific sound art work is inevitably part of. We welcome papers that address the para-, inter- and/or contextual aspects of sound art, including topics within socio-cultural discourses, performativity, gender, language, urbanity, and intertextuality.

## **Media archaeologies/technical media/data aesthetics**

What characterizes the specific uses and understandings of media and technology in sound art? Does sound art change our conventional conceptions of what "media" are? How is the present digital culture reflected in sound art? How do specific works approach the technological cultures of past, future and "imaginary" media? How does sound art relate to questions of 'data', 'bit data' and 'data aesthetics'?

## **Post politics**

What are the political perspectives and potentials of sound art? In what ways does sound art address topics in contemporary society? How does sound art still matter in a global perspective? What is the status of post-colonial, post-historical, and post-cold war perspectives in matters of sound art? What are the specific potentials of sound art with regard to such cultural narratives?

## **Discourses and borders**

Even though the debate concerning categorization is not the main issue of this conference the question of the generic status of sound art is still a theme we would like to debate. Is there such a thing called sound art? Is the discourse on sound art based on 'musicphobia' as some claim? And why is the performance aspect so neglected in the literature on sound art? What are the performative functions of such borders between the art forms?

## PAPER PROPOSALS

This conference wishes to bring together original scholarship from a variety of disciplines and locations that together represent the breadth of current thinking and research on sound art in a globalized context. We welcome both practice-based and theoretical presentations, and we support alternative presentation formats that involve sound in various manners. All proposals will be submitted to a review process. After the conference, selected papers will be considered for a full publication.

Please submit your abstract of max. 400 words and a short bio (30 words) no later than February 1, 2016 via the Easychair conference management system, **SAM16**

Online paper submission: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=sam16>

## REGISTRATION

Registration via the conference webpage:

<http://conferences.au.dk/soundart2016/>

Here you will also find further information regarding the venues, accommodation, fee and transport.

## ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Morten Søndergaard, Aalborg University  
Sanne Krogh Groth, Copenhagen University,  
Ulrik Schmidt, University of Southern Denmark  
Thomas Bjørnsten, Aarhus University  
Anette Vandsø, Aarhus University

## CONTACT

Post doc Anette Vandsø, Institute for Culture and Communication,  
Aarhus University, email: vandsoe@dac.au.dk, +45 30226732

Sound Art Matters is supported by the Danish Council for Independent Research (DFR) *Sapere Aude, Young Elite Researchers Grant*.