SOUND ART AS MEDIA ART LEGACY: DOCUMENTATION OF AN ENDANGERED PRACTICE

by

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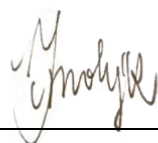
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ABSTRACT

The subject of this academic research is the documentation practice related to the interactive sound art installations and sound art environments. In this thesis sound art is analysed from the media arts perspective. In terms of preservation and theoretical contextualization, sound art is considered to be an endangered practice and this study aims to identify which elements of the practice are at risk and why.

To approach the subject, first, the research aims to define what elements differentiate sound art installations and sound art environments from traditional visual art and music. Secondly, the study aims to identify what elements of sound art installations need and can be preserved by the means of documentation. Several possible strategies are analysed and compared. Selected works of art are examined in parallel as to give the problem more practical approach and context.

This research uses a mixed methodology that combines a bibliographical research, comparative artwork analysis, case studies of chosen documentation strategies proposed by art institutions (1), festivals (1) and independent curators (2). The bibliographical research is based on a media and sound art curators' publications, interviews, articles, texts originating from the exhibition catalogues.

The results of the study reveal that due to the use of the digital and electronic technology, and more specifically, due to the eventual obsolescence of hardware and software components, utilized in sound artworks, some of its elements are at the risk of disappearing. This factor brings the necessity of artwork documentation. The practices of documentation, however, are various and curators are still experimenting with its formats and methodologies. Hence, one single efficient documentation model, that suits all needs, couldn't be identified. Sound art and media art, however, could use similar models. The research also shows that the use of the Web and the Internet are seen as prevailing, both, in the context of discussed institutions and in the practice of independent curators.

Keywords: Sound art installation, media art, documentation, contextualization, endangered practice

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1.1.   Sound Art as Niche Art Genre

Sound art, as an evolving art practice is still in the early stages of the dialogue with the visual art institutions, though is far from being a new topic in the art discourse. Sound art's relationship to music, visual art, and technology is discussed by scholars, curators and is constantly addressed by various artists. In the academia, sound is being approached from the sound, cultural, postcolonial, gender, and environmental studies. The output of these discussions can be observed in numerous international sound art exhibitions[1], festivals, conferences[2], recently initiated educational programs and last but not least – through the artworks themselves. However, the inclusion of sound-based artworks into otherwise silent visual art spaces is problematic. In the visual art discourse sound art often maintains the status of an "under-recognized tradition" (Ouzounian, 2008, p. xix), is perceived as too "medium-specific" (Cluett, 2014, p. 110) or "niche" art form (Jackson, 2014, para. 9).

Traditionally, visual art museums and galleries are seen as propagating silent, contemplative, visual perception (Candlin 2008)[3]. In parallel, the aural perception is predominant in the concert halls, theatres or churches. Until recently, encountering sound in a visual art gallery or museum space was unusual. It is true, that sound art, as an artistic practice, shares strong ties with Western traditional, also with experimental and electronic

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[1] Numerous consecutive early sound art exhibitions were initiated by curator Morten Søndergaard working at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Roskilde (DK): "RADAR Sound Festival", Roskilde Festival / MFSK, 2000/2001, "SeeSound Festival" MFSK Roskilde, 2002, "Under Cover – Sound/Art in Social Spaces" MFSK Roskilde, 2003. Søndergaard, M. (2018). Email correspondence 19-06-2018.

[2] http://z33research.be/2014/05/sound-art-in-visual-art-the-symposium

[3] "Until recently, the museum or gallery visit was predominantly a unisensory visual experience". In Lacey, S., & Sathian, K. (2014). Please DO Touch the Exhibits! Interactions between Visual Imagery and Haptic Perception. In N. Levant & A. Pascual- Leone, *Multisensory Museum: Crossdisciplinary Perspectives on Touch, Sound, Smell, Memory, and Space.* (pp. 3). New York: ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD

music – they both use sound as it's essential material. However, on the conceptual level, sound art is influenced by the artistic avant-gardes, such as Dada movement, Italian futurists, John Cage and Fluxus (Kahn, 1999; Kelly, 2011; Weibel, 2012b). Diverging from music, sound art has developed a specific vernacular and a particular approach to audible phenomena, at different levels explored in sound installations, sonified sculptures or sound-based environments, also in sound performances and sonic poetry, radio art or auditive net art (Seiffarth, 2012, para. 1). Furthermore, it merged with the visual art practices, essentially with conceptual and minimal art, architecture and sculpture. Thus, as argued by Alan Licht, Christoph Cox and Laura Maes, unlike music, sound art does not belong to the concert hall (Cox, 2011; Licht, 2007b), and is more likely to inhabit the visual art museums, art galleries or public spaces (Maes, 2013, p. 214). However, as noted by Marshall McLuhan, in the culture where the visual perception is predominant, the "acoustic and visual space structures may be seen as incommensurable" (1970, p. 71). In other words, though above-mentioned theoreticians are convinced that various sound art forms belong to the context of the contemporary visual art museum, the presence of sound, as suggested by McLuhan, is challenging this traditional framework.

Seth Cluett believes that the silence, prevailing in the visual art institutions, shapes the way sound art works are created, presented, preserved and later theorized (2014, p. 109). According to the theoretician, such terms as "sound art", though have positively affected the understanding of the practice itself, but also contributed to the "ghettoization" or exclusion of sound art practice from much wider art historical discourse - limiting the practice to the discussions within the borders of conceptual art and music (Cluett, 2014, pp. 109–110)[4]. Consequently, sound as an ephemeral medium and time-based material of art often stays underrecognized and, often times, underexplored. The lack of appropriate theory maintains the practice in its proper niche.

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[4] "Whether highlighting the coded acoustics of the place of reception, the figuring of listening in representational practices, or the evocation of the acoustic-imaginary in conceptual art and music, sound can be worked as material, developed as medium, and can also function as support".

In addition to the fact that sound art practice is simultaneously rooted in two different discourses, that of the music and the visual arts, this art form develops as a natural response to recent technological developments, such as, invention of loudspeakers, microphones, headphones, sound recording and playback devices, to list a few. As Christiane Paul notes, since the last decades of the twentieth century, due to creative engagement with the technological tools, sound art, together with other cross-disciplinary art forms, such as experimental film and video art, is regarded as "new media art" (2008, p. 7). If understood as such or as a "hybrid" (Maes, 2013) form of art, sound art today turns into a complex artistic discipline, that "poses a number of challenges to the traditional art world, not least in its presentation, collection, and preservation" (Paul, 2008, p. 23).

While the hybridity and multidisciplinary character of sound art practice is evident, the preservation and collection of this hybridity is a very complex issue. The question of documentation of sound artworks often becomes evoked. But what is here to document about sound art, and why the audio recording is not sufficient? And how the documentation practice could contribute to the developing theoretical discourse of sound art? These questions constitute the main focus of this research.

1.2. Recent History and Unstable Terms

The establishment of William Hellermann's Sound Art Foundation[5] in 1982 in the U.S. is widely associated with the emergence of the term "sound art" (Licht, 2009; Maes, 2013). The foundation contributed to sound artwork production and presentation at the

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[5] "The SoundArt Foundation was erected to provide a framework for three activities: the calendar for new music, a monthly publication listing new music concerts in NYC, the DownTown Ensemble, a chamber ensemble dedicated to performing not often played works by experimental composers and SoundArt exhibitions" (Maes, 2013, p. 57)

Sound/Art (1983) exhibition in New York at Sculpture Center[6], where Hellermann acted as curator of the show. Mainly sound sculptures, installations and audio artworks were presented at there[7]. In the essay written for *Sound/Art* exhibition catalogue in 1983, Don Goddard states that visual elements of sound exploring artworks were considered by Hellermann as significant, for "hearing is felt as another form of seeing". Goddard expands:

> "Hearing a recording of any one of these works could produce meaning, through imagination, but it is the actuality, the action of the work that has ultimate, useful meaning. The conjunction of sound and image insists on the engagement of the viewer, forcing participation in real space and concrete, responsive thought rather than illusionary space and thought" (as cited in Maes, 2013, p. 57).

Belgian sound art researcher Laura Maes (2013) highlights that the term "sound art" has been used even earlier than 1982. A New York based magazine *Audio Transart Inc*. named itself the first magazine for sound art in 1979[8]. Contributing international artists[9] (at that point coming from the field of video-performance art, now – also renown in other artistic fields) were providing a six minutes long sound piece on avant-garde art. The magazine was issued as an audio cassette, with a goal to constitute an archive for a developing artistic practice related to the usage of sound in art (Hoffberg, 1980, p. 15).

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[6] "The same year *Sound/Art* exhibition was also presented at Manhattan and the Brooklyn Arts and Cultural Association (now Brooklyn Arts Council)" (https://monoskop.org/Sound_art#Catalogues).

[7] Participating artists included Vito Acconci, Connie Beckley, Bill and Mary Buchen, Nicolas Collins, Sari Dienes and Pauline Oliveros, Richard Dunlap, Terry Fox, William Hellermann, Jim Hobart, Richard Lerman, Les Levine, Joe Lewis, Tom Marioni, James Pomeroy, Alan Scarritt, Carolee Schneemann, Bonnie Sherk, Keith Sonnier, Norman Tuck, Hannah Wilke, and Yom Gagatzi. (http://sculpture-center.tumblr.com/post/37037203282/from-the-archives-soundart-1984)

[8] http://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/umbrella/article/viewFile/1833/1775.

[9] Volume 1, Number 1 contained the work of Relly Tarlof (Israel), Hank Bull (Canada), Federica Marangoni (Italy), Gary Willis (Australia), Marshalore (Canada), Terry Fox (New York), Fujiko Nakaya (Japan), Sam Schoenbaum (NewYork), Barbara Smith (Los Angeles) and Nan Hoover (The Netherlands).

Andreas Engström and Åsa Stjerna (2009) tend to associate the emergence of the term "sound art" with Canadian curator, artist and writer Dan Lander, and specially with his book *Sound by Artist*s published in 1990. The book in question is an anthology, a collection of 35[10] essays written by artist-practitioners, art curators, critics, composers and writers. Artists represented in the publication were diverse, mostly active in the field of radio, audio, video, performance, installation or visual art. The book comprises a suggestive, 21 pages long, "listening list", linking to existing audible artworks. From the number of cited works and contributions to Lander's publication, it could be noticed that before the 90s sound was an accessible and broadly used artistic medium.

As Dan Lander (1990) and Alan Licht (2009) observes, sound art is not a result of any particular art movement, artist initiative or a specific event, nor is bounded to a particular geographical location. This explains why the terms denominating sound art are, as Mandy-Suzanne Wong remarks, fluctuating, or adapting to specific cultural contexts and are mostly dependent on the artist's approach, making it a problematic practice study and to tackle within the limits of an art institution. "Some believe that the term "sound art" is misleading and superfluous, denying any real distinction between sound art and experimental music or multimedia art" (Wong, 2013, p. Introduction).

In fact, a variety of sound-based artworks were created before the term "sound art" itself began to operate in the exhibition context, scholarly literature or was employed by the artists. Harold Schellinx believes that once the term was established "the use of sound in art could no longer be considered to be merely incidental"(2013, para. 10). Schellinx, thus,

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[10] Contributors; Daina Augaitis, Bruce Barber, Max Bruinsma, John Cage, Kevin Concannan, Moniek Darge, Suzanne Delehanty, Jack Goldstein, Graf Haufen, Ihor Holubizky, Douglas Kahn, Richard Kostelanetz, Christina Kubisch, Marysia Lewandowska, Annea Lockwood, Alvin Lucier, Christian Marclay, Donal McGraith, Rita McKeough, Gordon Monahan, Ian Murray, Mystery Laboratory, Maurizio Nannucci, Max Neuhaus, Godfried-Willem Raes, R. Murray Schaeffer, Stelarc, Rod Summers, Bill Viola, Hildegard Westerkamp, Gregory Whitehead, Caroline Wilkinson. Retrieved 15 Apr. 2018, from http://blackwoodgallery.ca/publications/SBA.html
Some of the works can be listened to: https://vimeo.com/66170100

suggests, that the birth of the term gives solid grounds to consider sound as an artistic material and not as a secondary element appearing in the works of art.

It is also significant to notice, how contemporary sound art counts several synonyms and can interchangeably be referred to as sonic art (Cox, 2011; Kim-Cohen, 2009), sound-based art (Eckhardt & Costa, 2016) or sound-related art. Theoretical investigations, contributing to a deeper understanding of this practice and its relationship to the art historical context, are still being written. As when it comes to the context of this academic research, the term *sound art* is used interchangeably with sonic, sounding, sound-related or sound-based art, as these are considered to be the synonyms, making references to the similar artistic practice. In the later chapters, the terms media art and time-based art are also used to refers to sound art practice.

1.3. The Rationale for the Study

Sound art is far for being absent in the contemporary art institutional context, though permanent sound artwork collections and archives are still very few. Such events as exhibitions and festivals largely contribute to the visibility of sound-related art. As pointed out by a curator Caleb Kelly, large-scale exhibitions ""*Volume: Bed of Sound*" (The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2000), "*Sonic Boom*" (Hayward Gallery, London, 2000), "*Bitstreams*" (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2001), "*Art>Music*" (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2001), "*Sonic Process*" (Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2002), "*Sounding Spaces*" (I.C.C., Tokyo, 2003), "*Her Noise*" (South London Gallery, London, 2005), and "*See This Sound*" (Lentos Art Museum, Linz, 2009)"(2011, p. 14)[11] shed an international light to the practice of sound art. These multiple worldwide and local events instigated the rise of the awareness about the practice, inasmuch as it created a confusion of how to

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[11] There are more important international exhibitions that could be added to this list.

define sound art (Maes, 2013, p. 1) and raised questions of how to contextualize this practice within contemporary art discourse.

A closer analysis of the above-mentioned exhibitions reveals that curators understand sound art in diverse ways. The exhibition "*Sonic Process: The New Geography of Sounds*" (2002), curated by independent curator Christine Van Assche, reflected on the processual nature of hybrid, audio-visual forms of artworks. With references to John Cage, sound there was explored in relationship to the experimental electronic music that merges into the visual arts. The works commissioned for the exhibition mainly pointed to the direction of sound performances, paying tribute to the genre of post-rock[12]. And thus inevitably, sound was understood as the continuation of music, moving into the image space.

Differently from what initially the title of "*See This Sound: Promises in Sound and Vision*" (2009-2010)[13] would suggest, the curator of the exhibition Cosima Rainer and artistic and scientific directors, Dieter Daniels and Stella Rollig, proposed to understand sound art in the light of media art. Placing media technology as the common reference point for both visual and aural traditions, the organizers of the event argued about the exhibition's intentions to bring sound and image to a mutual dialog, which they considered to be lacking. The exhibition and parallel related events evoked issues about the lack of sound-related culture, especially in the discussions of the humanitarian sciences[14]. The role of sound was investigated through experimental and expanded film, interactive art, computer

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[12] "The main aim of Sonic Process. A New Geography of Sounds is to underline the breaks and the continuities that appear in recent works using electronic sounds and images, by artists like Doug Aitken, Mathieu Briand, Coldcut, Flow Motion, Renée Green, Rupert Huber and Richard Dorfmeister (TOSCA), Mike Kelley, Gabriel Orozco, Scanner and David Shea, with respect to experiments in sound performance, the so-called post-rock attitude", para 6. (https://macba.cat/en/exhibition-sonic-process Last accessed on 28/03/2018)

[13] (http://www.see-this-sound.at/en.html Last accessed on 27/03/2018).

[14] "See This Sound" Information Sheet. (2009). p.11. (https://www.aec.at/humannature/wp-content/files/2009/05/PK_STS_Presseunterlage_en.pdf Last accessed on 27/03/2018)

games, software art, as well as through traditional media, such as painting and photography[15].

Whereas curators Caleb Kelly (White Chapel Gallery, London) and Peter Weibel (ZKM, Karlsruhe) propose to understand sound as a medium utilised within the visual art practices (Kelly, 2011; Weibel, 2012b), Jim Drobnick presumes that the presence of sound in art has multiple layers. In his book *Aural Cultures* (2004) he articulates the general interest in the sonic culture as the "sonic turn". The sonic turn, however, suggests more than creative deployment of sound, writes Drobnick. In similar fashion to Jacques Attali's[16] investigation of the politics of noise, he claims:

> "A phrase such as "sonic turn" – referring to the increasing significance of the acoustic as simultaneously a site for analysis, a medium of artistic engagement, and a model for theorization – self-consciously echoes W.J.T. Mitchell's articulation of a "pictorial turn" a decade ago."(Drobnick, 2004, p. 10)

That is to say, such theoreticians as Drobnick suggest that the analysis of the sonic culture deeply resonates with and helps to expand the understanding of the previous, visual perception regimes[17]. In this sense, sound culture does not exist in a conceptual vacuum, but participates and continues previous artistic traditions. But as he defines it, sound also opens novel perspectives towards the understanding of technology, society and not to mention, interrogates the visual and text-based culture.

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[15] Compendium related to the event explored the forms of sound through following topics: abstracts film, animation, architecture, expanded cinema, colour organs, film score, interactive art, interactive art, sound art, light shows, painting, performance art, software art, video etc. (http://www.see-this-sound.at/en.html Last accessed on 27/03/2018)
[16] *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (1977).
[17] "What is specific to our moment is exactly this paradox. The fantasy of a pictorial turn, of a culture totally dominated by images, has now become a real technical possibility on a global scale". In Mitchell, W.T.J. (1994). *The Pictorial Turn*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. p.15.

1.4.   Problem Definition

And thus, is seems that while talking about the sonic culture and sound art works one faces a plethora of possible approaches, that extend over from the musical to visual and media art discourses. While for recording music and collecting visual artworks, art institutions have established and long-lasting practices, the field of media art, however, still searches for appropriate preservation, documentation and archiving models. As delineated by the Smithsonian Institution, kinetic works, performances, audio and video-based works, digital artworks, art installations and various types of media artworks could all be situated under single umbrella term: time-based media. Christiane Paul and Carole Nevers refers to such artworks as "endangered media"(Nevers, 2010; Paul, 2012). From the issues related to the technology, which quickly becomes obsolete, to the immaterially of the processual nature of these artworks, their documentation becomes one of the possible collectibles, objects, worth acquiring for the archive and institutional collections. A researcher from Tate, Marc Kosciejew, argues "documentation studies can help account for the contextual contingencies that help imbue meaning to the information which in the case of art include institutional frameworks <...> as well as the critical discourses that surround them"(2018, para. 6).

To better understand what encompasses the notion of *documentation,* Smithsonian Institution suggests using the metaphor of artwork "life cycle". From the moment the artwork enters the art museum or art institution, it has a predefined life cycle within an art museum, which accordingly is divided into different phases:

- *Installation, display and access* (creation of conditions for the artwork to be viewed/experienced; museum's role is to provide technical care and safety);
- *Acquisition* (purchasing of an artwork for a collection, which often assures the maintenance of the artwork's functionality);

- *Documentation* (gathering of the essential information related to the artwork in question, such as artist's instructions, recording of a work, interviews, set-up plans)
- *Preservation* (long-term maintenance of an artwork, which includes regular re-installation, emulation and migration of software and data, if necessary)(Nevers, 2010, pp. 6–11).

A document is, hence, understood as a record, which contains information about the author and the artwork; describes the latter's formats, used materials, describes processes and applied concepts, affordances the work introduces, produces, mediates or implies. A document contextualized the artwork and seeks to relate the practice to an adequate, specific art historical and general socio-political context (Kosciejew, 2018, para. 8).

According to Carole Nevers, the Director of Smithsonian Office of Policy and Analysis, documentation of non-traditional, time-based media artworks is a fundamental and current issue. Whereas the institutional documentation practices are still in the developing stage, the risks, that such works would stop functioning or would be otherwise irrecuperable in the near future are extremely high:

> "Appropriate documentation is crucial to all aspects of time-based art conservation and accessibility. However, specific documentation standards for time-based art do not currently exist, and the major collections management systems now in use are geared toward works in traditional artistic media, and do not explicitly reflect the needs of time-based art."(Nevers, 2010, p. 7)

1.5.   About the Research

While major Western art museums strive to established successful and fruitful documentation practices that respond to the needs of their adequate collections, the aim of this research is to investigate how the question of sound art documentation is tackled by

independent curators. One of the main premises of this research is that media or sound art curators, throughout their practice-based activities, acquire the crucial understanding of the field and of its main concerns. They are, thus, more likely to propose valuable solutions to this problem.

Based on the considerations expressed above, this research examines a contemporary phenomenon, the developing strategies of documentation of sound art installations, sound environments and alike. This academic project aims to understand how sound and media art curators in particular investigate this issue, through theory and practice, and what type of solutions are currently proposed to tackle the problem of non-standardized documentation.

Finally, the main goal of this research is to contribute to the understanding of importance and usefulness of the artwork documentation. This thesis does not investigate any technical issues related to the practice of collecting software or hardware of such works, nor it addressed the problems, related to the collection or maintenance of the material objects, as these issues are tackled by the institutional conservation departments. In similarly manner as curators, the artists, are considered to be the best advocates of their practice, however in the scope of this research the study of artworks is used to provide concrete examples, why the documentation of such artworks proves necessary. In this thesis, artistic approach to the subject is not investigated in detail.

Essentially, this research mainly focuses on the documentation related to the sound art installations, which sometimes take shape of the sound environment, or sound sculpture.

The relevance of this study is three-fold. As not many sound artists consider themselves as taking part in the media art discussions, they might not always be familiar with the issues, concerning the importance of documentation of their own artworks. Hence, this research seeks to contribute to such understanding, and encourage the awareness about the issue.

Secondly, this study might also contribute to the curators, willing to work with the sound and media artworks, and thus could help them to develop better documentation models. Lastly, future researchers could also make use of this investigation.

1.5.1. Research Objectives

Focusing on the English-speaking Western academic discourse, the main objective of this research is to:

- a) define what elements differentiate sound art installations and sound environments from musical and traditional visual art practice (painting, sculpture, photography) and b) indicate an efficient documentation model which could be adapted by curators, artists and art institutions working with the medium of sound.

The specific objective is to:

- specify and determine if media art work documentation models can be equally be applied to the sound art installations and sound environments.

1.5.2. Methodology and Structure

This thesis is based on qualitative research method and is combined with:

1) Comparative analyses of the sound art definitions, proposed by Dan Lander, Christoph Cox, Alan Licht and Laura Maes;
2) Bibliographical research (in order to identify the issues and challenges of the field, the study of anthologies, monographies, scholarly articles, texts belonging to art curators working with sound and media art, exhibition catalogues, online resources was used);

3) The analyses of chosen sound artworks and case studies of selected documentation practices.

This academic investigation first focuses on the study of sound art definitions, seeking to identify what elements of sound art installations are the most fragile and endangered, and how to differentiate sound art installations from musical and visual art practices. Selected sound art definitions are discussed and analysed in the (2) chapter. It is suggested that considering sound art only as musical or visual practice is not sufficient as these definitions do not question the impact of technology to the practice of sound art. The following (3) chapter considers sound art as part of media art practice. It discusses the necessity of documentation, analyses and compares already existing documentation practices. Chapter (4) discussed the potentials that the Web 2.0 brought to the individual cultural producers – possibility to act independently from renown art institutions and museums and initiate independent curatorial projects which foster documentation of sound art. Section (5) summarises the acquired results.

1.6.   Literature Review

Many difficulties rise while trying to situate sound art as distinct art practice. Since the term "sound art" is very recent and has multiple origins and artistic appropriations, it is problematic to situate it within one field of study. As a result, different documentation models could be applicable for sound art installations or sound environments.

For the present day, numerous anthologies are available on the topic of sound in the contemporary art or music context. The study of following authors established the basis of this study. *Sound by Artists* (1990) by Dan Lander (ed.) reassembles variety of texts and audible documents, originating from practitioners working with sound, as to draw the attention to emerging independent artistic practice – sound art. *Audio Culture: Readings in*

Modern Music (2004) by Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner (eds.) delineates different conceptual turns (such as liberation of sound) in the music of twentieth century, introduces its main concepts, employed by the artists, working in the field of sound and new experimental music. Alan Licht's texts *Sound Art: Beyond Music, Between Categories (2007)* and *Sound Art: origins, development and ambiguities (2009)* are both, extensive, informative texts on the state of the sound in the arts, mostly discussed through the intersection of experimental music and visual arts. An important anthology *The Sound Studies Reader* (2012) by Jonathan Sterne (ed.) situates sound-related and audible culture in relationship to visual culture. Sterne differentiates artistic practice, that is engaged with sound, and sound studies, an academic practice. Sterne often refers to Jacques Attali's alerting philosophical speculations on the role of noise in the society. *Sound: Documents of Contemporary Art* (2011) by Caleb Kelly (ed.) draws a vast cartography of current topics related to the cultural presence of sound in art and in the gallery. Historically important and influential texts by pioneers of the field are contextualized according to currently dominating themes, such as noise, silence, listening or space. In this sense, Kelly's book's structure is similar to Cox& Warner's book. The companion to the exhibition *Sound Art: Sound as a Medium of Art* (2012-13), that took place at the ZKM Centre for Art and Media, is yet to be published in 2020[18]. As stated in the announcement online, the editor of the book, Peter Weibel, "considers the history of sound as media art, examining work by visual artists, composers, musicians, and architects alike"[19]. The book will provide texts of prominent curators and theoreticians that engage in the practice of media art, sound art, as well as artists, active in the field[20].

From a historical point of view, an important study, concerning sound art presentation in the art institutional context, is accomplished by Seth Cluett. In his text *Ephemeral, Immersive, Invasive: Sound as Curatorial Theme, 1966–2013* (2014), the author presents the

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[18] https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/sound-art
[19] Ibid., para. 2.
[20] Contributors: Dmitry Bulatov, Seth Cluett, Christoph Cox, Ryo Ikeshiro, Caleb Kelly, Brandon LaBelle, Christof Migone, Tony Myatt, Irene Noy, Adam Parkinson, Bernd Schulz, Carsten Seiffarth, Linnea Semmerling, Başak Şenova, Morten Søndergaard, Alexandra Supper, Atau Tanaka, David Toop, Peter Weibel, Dajuin Yao, Siegfried Zielinski.

analysis of the history of sound art exhibitions in the United States of America during the period of 1966-2013. This study proposes to consider sound art exhibitions as important part of the study of the sound art practice itself, specially, for what concerns the development of the medium and medium specific language. The study of this research helped to understand that sound art is a rapidly evolving art form.

New Media art curator Lina Dzuverovic investigates the culture of sound and its representation in the visual art institutions. In her provocative text *Love Affair Between the Museum and the Arts of Sound* commissioned by Axisweb in 2007, the author highlights several developing curatorial, or as she frames - engagement models related to the arts of sound - that she considers to be ephemeral - and the visual art musuems. Dzuverovic's text's first intention is to critically investigate the benefits and constraints of these engagement models. She aims to draw the attention at the rare numbers of sounding artworks in the institutional collections. Her collaborative project Her Noise Archive seeks to exemplify how sound art curators can respond to the existing gaps in the preservation of the field.

Another important research for this thesis was recently published by Belgian researcher Laura Maes. In the PhD research, *Sounding Sound Art: A study of the definition, origin, context, and techniques of sound art* (2013)*,* she examined large number of exhibitions, curated in Western Europe and North America, as to analyse the socio-cultural context of sound art, it's reception and possible definitions. Maes proposes to consider that technology plays a crucial role in some sounding artworks. Her definition of sound art is promising as it creates tools to analyse sound art in the context of media art.

PART 2. POLARITIES OF SOUND

The creation of a novel medium evokes challenges to set the boundaries and the limits of its use and influence. The most challenging is however to understand what makes the medium unique and special and how to address this in both, theory and practice. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the artistic appropriation of sound and the presence of the sonic elements in art is a relatively new and contemporary phenomenon. Sound is an evident and immediate medium, but also ephemeral and short-lasting.

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the literature related to the definitions of sound art. Artworks are examined in parallel to the theoretical discourse as to propose more contextualized view over chosen theory. Only the English-speaking Western context is taken into consideration here. The intention of this chapter is to analyse how sound art can be differentiated from the discourse of music and the visual arts and identify what elements of the practice make it similar media art practice. As it will be investigated here, in a rather short span of time, the impact of the technology became a crucial and constituting element of the sound art practice. Acknowledging this impact, provides insights on why sound art practice is perceived by some, earlier mentioned theoreticians, as endangered.

2.1. Liberation of Sound

Defining sound art as a separate artistic practice proves to be a difficult task. Teaching sound art in art schools and academies is a recent phenomenon[21]. Consequently, the

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[21]The calls for European Postgraduate program in Arts in Sound were announced in 2016 (https://www.worldsoundtrackawards.com/en/projects/european-postgraduate-in-arts-in-sound/16). The University of Arts of London recently (2017) established master's degree program in Sound Art.

generation of trained sound artists is yet to arrive. On what concerns the pioneers of the sounding art or what was at the time called sound installations, sound sculptures and sound environments, they began the experiments with sound departing from their domains of artistic practice, often without a special school training related to sound. Thus, architects (Bernhard Leitner), composers (Bill Fontana, Man Neuhaus, Christina Kubisch), engineers and designers (Harry Bertoia, Baschet Brothers), visual artists (Stephan von Huene, Max Eastley) shaped the field of the art of sound through their practice, sometimes even without particular, agreed sound art definitions in mind.

The cultural definition of *sound* naturally makes references to musical expression and the sound made by the instruments of music – thus, musical sound. However, in the early XX century Western musical tradition was undergoing enormous inner changes, and the art of sound is one of the bi-products of the inner transformations. The artistic practices of the European and American avant-garde movements of the early and mid-XXth century (Kahn, 1999; Kelly, 2011; Weibel, 2012b) had contributed to the creation of novel musical vocabulary, conceptualized the notion of silence and integrated non-musical, environmental sounds (previously known as noises). Minimal, experimental, improvised music begins to form at this moment. According to Christoph Cox, the invention of sound recording, playback and sound generating techniques, and instruments such as synthesizers, microphones, loudspeakers or headphones, resulted in the breaking of the "status quo" in music, and contributed to the emergence of electronic experimental music, and such styles as rock, heavy metal or dance music (2004, pp. 5–6). Deployment of the possibilities provided by aforementioned technologies are of equal importance to the practice of sounding arts.

Such concepts, as liberation of sound, formulated by Edgard Varèse, reflect the influence that the technological developments of twentieth century had on the artistic practices

related to music. French composer Edgar Varèse[22] believed that electronic music merges both, art and sciences[23], and very often used various tropes, such as "oxygenation", "journey in to space", "sound-masses" to describe his music, as the previous musical vocabulary did not contain words nor concepts that could describe unprecedent, electronic music experiences. He has also famously said, in regard to his musical activity, "I decided to call my music "organized sound" and myself, not a musician, but a "worker in rhythms, frequencies and intensities""(Varese & Wen-Chung, 1966, p. 18). His proposed reformulation of music had a tremendous influence on the later generations of musicians and provided conceptual ground for the so called "liberation of sound"(Varese & Wen-Chung, 1966) in music. Liberation of sound gave composers, musicians and artists (without any previous background in music) a novel possible framework for integrating sound as a material (noise, silence, non-musical sounds) in to their practice.

2.2.   Sound as Artistic Material

As discussed in the previous chapter, Dan Lander is considered to be one of the first theoreticians, in the English speaking Western discourse, to coin the term *sound art* (Engström & Stjerna, 2009, p. 14). Though Lander acknowledges the broad spectrum of possibilities for working with sound in art – from tape recordings, sound maps and

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[22] 1883-1965, France.

[23] According to Jerrold Levinson, the definition of music generally depends on the cultural tradition. Despite the point in history, music is undistinguishable from the usage of sound. But the essential features of music, such as expression of emotions or aesthetical pleasure largely depend from composer's intentions and creative pursuits (Levinson, 1998, para. 2). Levinson, thus, suggest, that the main characteristics, differentiating music from other forms of artistic practices is a figure of the composers. He believes that it is a composer who creates the meaning in the classical music, by organizing sounds made by instruments and orchestrating the actions of performers in a given time frame.

Levinson, J. (1998). Music, aesthetics of. In *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. Taylor and Francis. Retrieved 20 Mar. 2018, from https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/music-aesthetics-of/v-1. doi:10.4324/9780415249126-M030-1

soundscapes to radio and installations - he is convinced, that this practice is very different from music. As he accentuates, there's no paradox if one assumes the similarity between the two - "the terms experimental music and sound art are considered by some to be synonymous and interchangeable" (1990, p. 10). Both practices pay attention to the audible phenomena. Yet for Lander, the differentiation between the musical sound and the rest, the sound as noise, is a necessary step towards the understanding of sound as an artistic material and sound art, as different practice. Such conceptual separation, even if it gives music "useful limitations", as Lander states, often leads to the incomprehension of possibilities and potentials that the noise[24] provides to the art. Hence, referring to Varèse, Lander underlines his understanding of the liberation of sound and how this concept helps to form the identity of sound artists, represented in this book *Sound by Artists*:

> "The stripping away of meaning from the noise of our world constitutes a refusal-fetishizing the ear, while ignoring the brain – to engage ourselves in dialogue with the multiplicity of meanings conveyed by the sounds we produce, reproduce and hear. If a critical theory of sound (noise) is to develop, the urge to 'elevate all sound to the state of music', will have to be suppressed. It is this content that constitutes any possibility for an art of sound." (1990, p. 11).

> "If a sound liberation is to occur it will mean confronting the meaning(s) of the noise we produce, challenging the context of its reproduction and transmission, and engaging in an active, rather than passive, investigation of sound recording technologies". (1990, p. 14)

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[24] Traditionally, all non-conventional, non-musical sounds in classical music where considered to constitute noise. Thus, natural, environmental, traffic sounds. R. Murray Schafer proposed to understand noise in 4 categories: unwanted, unmusical, too loud and disturbing. Lander refers to the noise as to sounds that are produced by individuals, groups of societies. As he frames if – "noise that we produce"(Lander, 1990, p. 14).

Aiming to differentiate sound art from musical practice, he also stresses the engagement which the majority of sound artist express towards the recording and sound reproducing techniques. He perceives them as actively[25] investigating and questioning them and in fact, finds it crucial to the practice. Max Neuhaus' attitude towards the usage of sonic material could be a perfect example, illustrating what Lander tries to portray.

One of the pioneers in the field of sound art in the United States of America, Max Neuhaus, comes from a background in classical percussion (drums). His thinking trajectories, from the beginning of his career as sound artist, investigated the possibilities to bring sound outside of the musical context (Cox, 2009, p. 118). One of his early public sound art installations *Drive In Music* (1967-68) used wireless microphones and 20 radio transmitters that were situated in the trees of the Lincoln Parkway avenue (New York.). The antennas of the transmitters created radio waves on the same frequency range that could be captured by the car radios. The cars, if equipped with the radios, moving down the avenue could drive directly into the sonic space and hear the different sonorities of that environment at any time of the day.

> "The sounds were synthesized by home-made equipment on the spot and changed according to what was going on around them. As the transmitters were all tuned to be received on the same frequency, people driving by heard different sets of sounds according to speed, direction of travel, time of day and weather conditions."
> (Föllmer, 1996, pp. 216-218)[26]

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[25] As opposed to recording of a sound and it's playback.
[26] Golo Föllmer, *Töne für die Straße* in: Akademie der Künste (eds.), Klangkunst, Munich 1996, pp. 216–218. Retrieved from http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/drive-in-music/
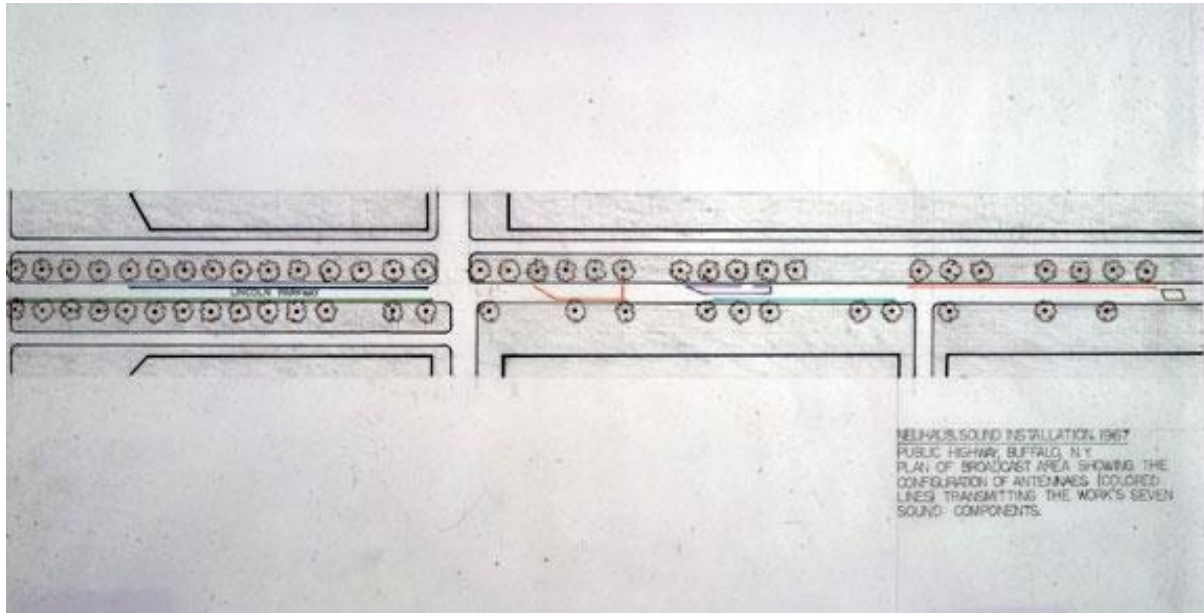
Figure 1 Drive In Music, 1967, Plan of broadcast area. The coloured lines illustrate the areas where sound is transmitted. (@Neuhaus)

Neuhaus made the listeners active participants of the sound environment and as very often explored the possibility to blend the sounds into the surroundings without them being disturbing (Maes, 2013, pp. 34–35). No musical instrument was used to create the sonic material. And as Lander suggested, the mode of sonic production and related technology is actively explored here. So is the environment, equally explored through the medium of sound.

In the similar line of thinking as Lander, Neuhaus, in the text *Sound Art*? published as an introduction to the *Volume: Bed of Sound* [27] (2000) exhibition catalogue, criticizes intentions to consider sound art as a pure continuation of a musical tradition:

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[27] Exhibition "Volume: Bed of Sound" was curated by Alanna Heiss (founder and director of MoMa P.S.1) and Elliott Sharp (composer and musician) at the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, in 2000.

"With our now unbounded means to shape sound, there are, of course, an infinite number of possibilities to cultivate the vast potential of this medium in ways which do go beyond the limits of music and, in fact, to develop new art forms."(Neuhaus, 2000, p. 1)

Instead of tying sound to music, Lander and Neuhaus, notice the potential of sound to merge into various other forms of arts. According to Cox, what attracted Neuhaus to the visual art at that time was mostly the notion of space, which music somehow disregarded (Cox, 2009, p. 119).

Among the different approaches to sound, Douglas Kahn, a theorist, who has been investigating media and sound arts for several decades now, in his seminal book *Noise, water, meat: a history of sound in the arts (1999)*, proposes to understand sound as "raw artistic material". From sounds of musical instruments to sounds of the world, from the accidental recordings of voice or intended noise – all of this could be seen as potential creative material. For Kahn, it is through artistic manipulation, virtuosity and skilfulness, that sound (or any other) material gets to be refined into something conceptually, socially, politically, aesthetically or poetically meaningful (Kahn, 1999, p. 15). Kahn's conceptualization is useful, as it allows to move from the previous debates and focus on the artistic ideas more.

However, as Caleb Kelly remarks, describing sound simply as a medium or material of art is similar to describing a painting as "oil painting", meaning that the term "oil" only refers to a form, but not to a content of the work (Kelly, 2011, p. 14). Kelly also identifies this as a main reason why critics and theoreticians tend to give less importance to the sound in the arts - they regard the practice of sound art from a very general perspective, instead of investigating individual artworks more specifically. Since the aim of this chapter is to identify how the understanding of sound art influences the way sound art practice is

documented and later contextualized, the closer attention is focused on how theoreticians define this practice.

2.3. Sound Art: Rapid Evolution

Though some scholars and art practitioners disagree that a clear-cut definition of sound art practice can and should be given, understanding the main elements constituting this practice are necessary, if the problems of the field are to be tackled later on. For this reason, in this research three definitions of sound art are taken into consideration. Namely, sound art, as understood by Alan Licht, Christoph Cox and Laura Maes. These definitions provide tools to approach the variety of existing sound artworks and to understand how they fit in the discourse of visual and media art.

2.3.1. Withdrawing from the Concert Hall

In his article *Sound Art: Origins, Development and Ambiguities* (2009) Alan Licht considers sound sculpture to be the oldest example of sound art. The art works of Luigi Russolo's *Intonarumori*[28] (1910-1930), collaborative work by Marcel Duchamp and Walter Arensberg *With Hidden Noise* (1916) and Robert Morris's *Box with the Sounds of its Own Making* (1961) are the most prominent earliest examples of this genre. The dates when these artworks were created, also indicate that sound has been present in the art institutional context for a little more than a century now, which is rather short amount of time, compared to literature, painting or sculpture (Farrow, 2018). In this perspective, this

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[28] Painter and composer Luigi Russolo invented a series of devices, which had for a goal to produce sounds as "abstract materials". Russolo is the author of the futurist manifesto "The Art of Noises" (1913) http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/intonarumori/

study is relevant, as it seeks to widen the understanding around the current state of the sound art practice.

As seen in the *Drive In Music* example, Neuhaus investigated the possibilities to bring sound out of the traditional musical listening space – the concert hall. Acknowledging that artist investigate and change territories of their activities, in his text of 2006 *From Music to Sound: Being as Time in the Sonic Arts*, art theorist, philosopher and curator Christoph Cox identifies "sound artworks" as "works of art that focus attention on the materiality and transmission of sound, and that are presented in galleries, museums and public spaces (2011, p. 83). Author explains, that "withdrawing from the space of the concert hall and renouncing the rituals of musical performance and musical listening, sound art affirms the idea of sound as an impersonal flow"(Cox, 2011, p. 83). In *Drive In Music*, sounds were captured with the microphones and transported to the radios of the passing cars. In that sense, Neuhaus was not performing his music, nor orchestrating instruments, but allowed the environment to perform itself. Consequently, Cox points out, that the context of audition, also where the sound art work is being perceived, plays a significant, if not crucial role for this art practice. Another sound art projects of Max Neuhaus' *Time Square* (1977-92, 2002-) or Christina Kubisch's *Electrical Walks* (2003-) are pioneering examples how artistic potentials are applied for the context of the city or specific urban area and are investigated through the medium of sound. "As such, it[sound – I.C.] draws attention to the total field or situation rather than directing it to a thing or a set of things"(Cox, 2009, p. 123). Jacob Kirkegaard's utilization of audio recordings, brought from Chernobyl for the piece *Four Rooms* (2006), illustrates the possibilities of evoking the sonic presence of distant fields, places and memories. Kirkegaard has meaningfully combined the symbolic message of silence with the recordings of empty rooms, allowing his listeners to access this double meaning through listening[29].

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[29]Cox discussed these examples in more detail in his article: https://www-cambridge-org.zorac.aub.aau.dk/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/9320561F9E945F708CAB6342295209D9/S1355771809000041a.pdf/sound_art_and_the_sonic_unconscious.pdf

However, Cox's definition is not providing more criteria of identification, as when it comes to the visual form or the sonic content of sound art works, leaving the definition of sound art opened for further interpretations. To some degree and having in mind that sound is immaterial and ephemeral in its nature, and therefore, it is not an object *per se*, the materiality, that Cox refers to, suggests its relation to the visual materialization or embodiment of sound. In terms of Neuhaus, however, most of his artworks are invisible, and as Maes suggests, it is the surrounding environment that brings the visual aspect to his works (2013, p. 79).

2.3.2. Merging with the Visual Arts

Experimental music theorist and practitioner Alan Licht in his book *Sound Art- Beyond Music, Between Categories* (2007) has formulated the definition of sound art precisely in the direction which establishes a much closer relationship of sound to the visual art practices. By the same token as Cox, Licht points out that sound art practitioners make use of various contexts and spaces, starting from the artist studios, natural or urban environments, ending at the visual art museums and galleries, for the creation and the presentation of their artworks. The space or the context, thus, is of crucial importance in the framework proposed by Cox and Licht. For Licht, sound art does not only moves outside from the concert hall, but incorporates the influences from the outside into itself (2007b, p. 74). Licht's definition of sound art develops through its direct linking to the visual art, in particular, by acknowledging that sound is equally explored by musicians, composers and visual artists:

1. An installed *sound environment* that is defined by the space (and/or acoustic space) rather than time and can be exhibited as a visual artwork would be (*Dream House* (1963) by Marian Zazeela and La Monte Young, *City Links* (1967-1981) by Maryanne Amacher);

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2. A *visual artwork* that also has a sound-producing function, such as a sound sculpture (*Cloud Chamber Bowls* (1950-51) by Harry Partch);

3. *Sound* by visual artists that serves as an extension of the artist's particular aesthetic, generally expressed in other media (*Guitar Drag* (2000) video work by Christian Marclay) (2007a, pp. 16–17)(2007b, pp. 75–77).

Figure 2 Cloud Chamber Bowls (1950-51) by Harry Partch (@Harry Partch)[30]

Licht's emphasises that sound can be easily transposed or extended into other media, analogue or digital. For example, the iconic Christian Marclay's work *Guitar Drag* (2000)[31] exceeds the boundaries of sound and installation art, as it includes the use of the video and

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[30] "Cloud-Chamber Bowls are large Pyrex gongs with a beautiful and complex sound. Partch initially discovered the Cloud-Chamber Bowls at the University of California, Berkeley, where portions of Pyrex carboys were discarded by the Radiation Laboratory. Over the years, he would cut countless new Cloud-Chamber Bowls to expand his set or replace those which had broken" - https://www.harrypartch.com/instruments
[31] The audio recording on UbuWeb: http://www.ubu.com/sound/marclay.html

performance elements. Moreover, the piece is deeply rooted in the history of destruction of musical instruments[32]. It is therefore impossible to disregard any of these elements, that constitute the piece. In is light, the artists working in the field of sound art are not considered as exploring the specificities of sound as pure medium (as it is often thought), but are regarded as junction makers between music, fine arts, performance or even design and architecture.
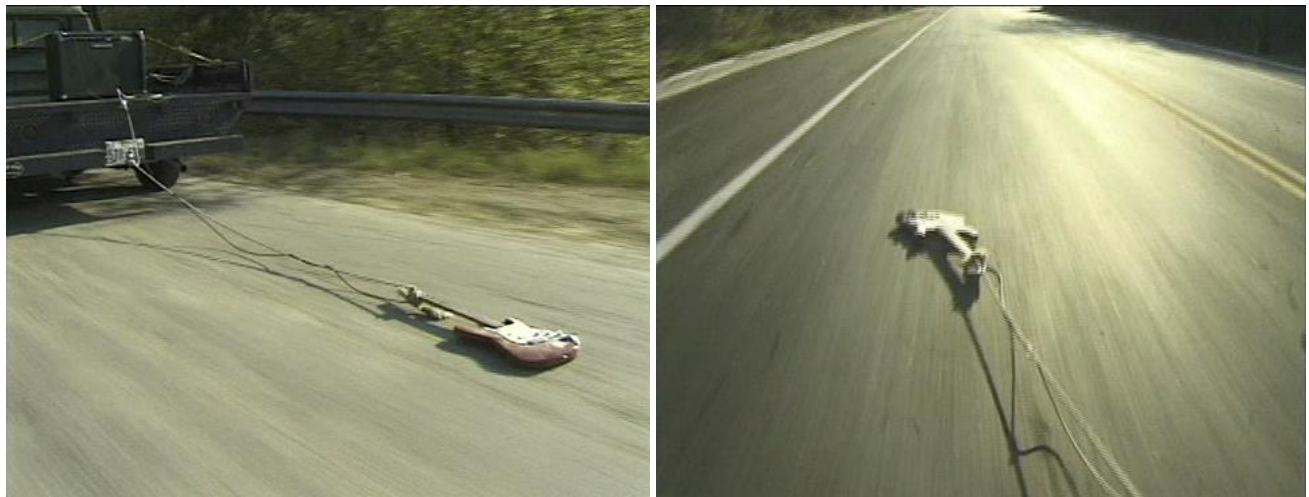
Figure 3 Screenshots from the video "Guitar Drag", filmed on 18th of November 2000 (@Christian Marclay)

Licht's definition is particularly relevant in today's contemporary art context, as his overarching description suggests the possibilities to integrate digitally-born, virtual, internet or app-based artworks as equally belonging to the sound art genre.

Even though both theoreticians, Licht and Cox, seek to contextualize sound art practice within the visual art, the main components of these works, such as the role of technology,

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[32] Snippet from Marclay notebook (2001): "Guitar Drag has many different layers of references, it alludes to the ritual of smashing guitars in rock concerts, it recalls Fluxus and its many destruction of instruments."

http://www.multimedialab.be/blog/?p=1259

it's use, and constraints, are not investigated any further. Needless to say, in the example of *Drive In Music*, it is evident that from very early on Neuhaus explored the notion of interactivity and public participation. The passers-by seated in the cars explored the possibilities of attuning to the sonic environment with the help of their radios. The generated sonic material in this piece was a direct outcome of the ever-changing surroundings – no listener experienced the piece in the same manner (Maes, 2013, p. 79). Laura Maes addresses these topics more specifically and brings the understanding of sound art practice closer to the media art discourse.

2.3.3. Shifting Towards the Media Arts

Sound art is a specific art form, which explores the artistic and aesthetic possibilities of utilizing sound in time and space. The practice is essentially based on the use of technology in order to produce, generate or transmit sound. As technological means change and develop quickly, the ways in which artists use sound also follow this trend and evolves rapidly. This feature distinguishes sound art from the traditional fine arts, such as painting, sculpture or photography and brings the practice in question closer to the performing arts, experimental music and new media art.

In her PhD dissertation *Sounding Sound Art: A study of the definition, origin, context, and techniques of sound art* (2013), Laura Maes examines large number of exhibitions, curated in Western Europe and North America, as to analyse the socio-cultural context of sound art and its reception. The researcher proposes to merge existing and above discussed definitions of sound art and to consider it as a hybrid form of art, that merges visual arts and musical elements and which tends to focus on production, muffling or reflection of sound forms (2013, p. 74). She considers the last element as departing point of any sound art work. In general, she continues, sound art works are not based on narrative and story-telling structures (such as piece of composed music), but instead they are open works (time in these works is used differently, as there's no beginning nor the end of the work). Often,

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sound art works call for interaction (sound can be activated by visitors that walks into/near the work; automated sensors; nature; external outputs and techniques). Sound art is also described as being absent of professional performer (unlike, in music). According to Maes, technology plays an integral part of the practice, and often requires artists to adapt and invent the technology/techniques/software for particular needs of the artistic project. Very often, sound art works are seen as site-specific and relating to the exhibition space. Finally, Maes concludes, sound is generated electronically, electro-acoustically and/or acoustically (as opposed to sounds, made by instruments) (2013, p. 74).

Figure 4 Handphone Table at the exhibition "Art or Sound" in 2014 (@Fondazione Prada)

An interactive sound art installation *Handphone Table* (1978) created by Laurie Anderson, could be one of the many examples of such hybrid works. Presented as a normal wooden living room table, with the multichannel, custom made electronic sound system hidden

inside of the table, the installation is activated by touch of the elbows. The visitor of the gallery is asked to sit at the table, place her elbows in round-shaped holes and get in the contact with the wooden dots. The visitor is then asked to place the palms on her ears. In this situation the bones act as a conductor, allowing the sound to travel through the body and enable the listener to hear the audio tunes recorded on the tape (Maes, 2013, p. 273). This seminal work challenges and expands the notion of art installation, rethinks the role of human body and questions the experience of listening (Li & Lai, 2013, p. 355). Though pre-recorded sound allows less spontaneity in terms of sound activation, it is the visitor, who controls the interaction with the installation. In a similar manner as Neuhaus's artwork, the *Handphone Table* gives a total freedom for the audience to participate and interact with the piece. No musician is present to perform the sound material or to set the time limits for the listening activity – the artwork is automated and responds to the external inputs, originating from the visitors. The technological setup is built as to provide a full autonomy for interaction. Without the technological element, the table would be a static sculptural piece. Hence, as Maes suggests above, the installation focuses on electronic production of sounds in real-time.

Initially, Maes agrees with Cox and Licht, that sound art is not present in the traditional music context and as such, belongs to a contemporary art discourse. "Most sound works are temporary and they will rather be found in public space, alternative locations, museums and galleries than on the stage of a concert hall" (Maes, 2013, p. 74). However, just like Christine Paul, who states that besides computational nature, "descriptive adjectives commonly used for characterizing new media art are process-oriented, time-based, dynamic, and real-time; participatory, collaborative, and performative; modular, variable, generative, and customizable" (Paul, 2012, p. 4). Maes' proposed definition of sound art allows to situates this practice within the limits of media art, as she considers the interactivity, participation, integration of technology and software as constitutive elements of the majority of sound art works. Consequently, in the next chapters this research will refer to Maes' definition of sound art, but nevertheless, will consider it as a hybrid form of art. Merging music and visual art in various forms, sound artists are perceived as using

technological tools to produce or generate sounds. Drawing on such definition, the practice of sound art will interchangeably be referred to as time-based art, or media art.

Though Maes does not expand on the importance of documentation, recordings and collection of such material, her research depicts a crucial characteristic of sound-based art: it's ephemerality. Any site-specific, technology-based, interactive sound artwork are perceived as temporal. Sound art installations, sound environments and sound sculptures, that are created for the specific events, such as festivals or exhibitions, according to her, often face twofold temporality: time element and duration is addressed and explored within such artworks, simultaneously, the work itself is also ephemeral - "[w]hen the exhibition is dismantled, the works of art disappear"(2013, p. 173).

The previously discussed Neuhaus' sound environment *Drive In Music* or sound installation *Handphone Table* easily fall into such category. Neuhaus' piece is created for the specific avenue, and if disassembled, it ceases to be an active, functional artwork. Though a photograph and concept description of a *Handphone Table* can give insights about the functionality of the installation, Neuhaus's artwork can hardly be depicted and understood through an image. At this point, the necessity of artwork documentation becomes more evident, both, for understanding of an artwork, and for its later preservation.

PART 3. THE MECHANISMS OF ENDANGERED PRACTICE

The overall aim of this chapter is to provide the context that helps to understand why sound and media art is an endangered practice and why the documentation of the related artworks is understood by the curators and theoreticians as a fundamental and sustainable tool, providing the means to preserve the ephemeral artworks. Using the analyses of Christoph de Boeck's artwork *Staalhemel* as a framework, the chapter investigates how time-based sound artworks, in fact, challenge the visual paradigm of arts and question its materiality, and often, as a result, find themselves in media art context. This examination opens two parallel discussions and interrotages, firstly, why the preservation of material objects and hardware is not a sustainable practice for media arts. Secondly, it seeks to identify which artwork elements are considered crucial for the documentation. Christiane Paul's and Sarah Cook's theoretical texts will serve as the basis for later analyses.

3.1. Challenging the Materiality of Art

Traditionally, visual art institutions and art museums, in particular, engaged with art objects in three following manners: artwork acquisition into permanent collections, maintenance (preservation), and communication to the public (mainly through exhibitions) (Smithsonian Institution, 2001, pp. 2–3). Managing artwork collections suggested collecting documents and information about art objects and artwork origins, measures, value, locating the work within a collection and knowing how to store, handle and display the work (Matassa, 2011, p. 9). Situating the work of art in relationship to art history, political, social or cultural setting, indicated its contextualization and historicization. Eric Lagendijk,

a member of Network of European Museum Organization (NE-MO)[33], believes that one of the main missions of art institutions is to contribute to the dissemination of growing societal knowledge about cultural artefacts and their significance. This is achieved through contextualization, or what Lagendijk understands as connecting value, that art institutions create in relation to the works of art and the public:

"The connecting value epitomises museums as a link between their collections, the public and other interested parties, as well as their role in building a bridge between the past, present and future". (2001, p. 4)

Ursula Frohne considers that contextualization or rethinking the socio-cultural and historical status of works of art is a continuous process. In this sense, once the work of art enters the art institutional context, through the exhibition or the collection, it's meaning is subjected to further development:

"When a work of art enters a museum its defined position within history is manifest. <...> Functioning somewhat like the electronic memory of a computer, it arranges and re-arranges works of art according to a museological plan and – itself transformed with each new installation it devises – repeatedly offers scope for new interpretations". (1997, p. 49)

From the point of view of Frohne and Lagendijk, art institutions play a meaningful role in the art world, as they establish the links between the society, it's cultural heritage and grants the artwork a possibility to remain present in the art history. What is not explicitly addressed here is that traditionally, visual art institutions have developed a range of strategies, that helped to deal with the material and tangible fine art object.

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[33] http://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/NEMONews/nemoNews_1-11www.pdf p.4

The visual paradigm, that for a long time was predominant in these institutional circles and shaped the way the artworks were showcased and preserved. As Michael Rush claims, a painting was the most privileged medium of art until the twentieth century[34] and so was the perception of vision. Hence the presentation modes, such as the development of "white cube" framework, shaped the majority of museum gallery spaces – they were conceived to foster quiet contemplation of art. The strategies that are not always applicable to the new generation of media artworks (Paul, 2012, p. 167).

It is during the last century that the horizons of the art world expanded almost exponentially. Christiane Paul writes that the omnipresence of digital and computer-based tools (in terms of hardware and software) entirely changed the landscape of art making and art appreciation (Paul, 2008, p. 7). Rapidly evolving digital technologies created possibilities for hybrid, mixed media artworks to appear. These hybrid works equally make use of surrounding spaces, generate sounds, experiment with the video or film elements. This lead art pieces to develop complex and dynamic relations and dependencies to technology and bring new narratives into the context of contemporary art[35]. Often times, media art works are based on time, they integrate external processes, they are immersive, interactive or demand active participation from the audience. Paul states that finally, the digital revolution completely changed the way we experience art today (2008, p. 7). As such, these artworks do not necessarily and immediately fit into the visual art discourse and, thus, the representation of media art in visual art institutions is still occasional and their preservation and contextualization is a complicated topic. However, Paul suggests that media art field utterly depends on the art institutions and museums: "Artists usually have neither the time nor the money to engage in long-term preservation of their work, and institutions or tools developed by preservation initiatives could fulfil an important function in this type of context preservation"(Paul, 2012, p. 34).

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[34] Rush, M. (2005). New Media in Art. Introduction, p.7.
[35] Ibid., p.7

3.1. Artworks-Events: Staalhemel (Case Study)

Figure 5 Staalhemel at the Art Center STUK in Leuven, 2009 (@Christoph de Boeck)

Belgian artist Christoph de Boeck recently created an interactive sound environment *Staalhemel* (Eng." steel sky") (2009-). The artist considers this piece to be an immersive sound art project, which essentially seeks to create a bridge between the visual and sonic experience[36]. The sound environment consists of 80 steel plates, suspended high above the floor. One visitor at a time can interact with the environment by using a portable headset with EEG brainwave scanner, that De Boeck has developed with the help of research

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[36] http://www.staalhemel.com/about-staalhemel

company IMEC. 80 small hammers, each connected to an individual steel plate, directly respond to the brainwaves of the visitor by tapping onto them, thus creating a rhythmical response, audible in the whole space. The environment mirrors visitor's mental processes. The more relaxed and concentrated the visitor is, the more possibilities to control the environment. The visitor here is experiencing her own mental states expressed through the immersion into sound.

This sound environment falls into category of hybrid artworks, as set out by Maes in a previous chapter. Though the visual elements of the piece (hanging steel plates) are constantly present and visible, the main focus of using these plates, however, is set for the purpose of sound making. Similarly to such pieces as *Drive In Music* and *Handphone Table,* the sonic composition of *Staalhemel* is not of a fixed, predefined nature, but is in a changing state, dependent from visitor's interaction with the piece. The environment, thus, does not require musicians or performers to be present, nor it calls for intervention of a musical instrument, which would create sounds. The production of sound is automated and depends on the input, provided by the audience - the customized EEG brainwave scanner here plays a major role in the visitor's interaction with the installation set-up.

In *Staalhemel,* there's no specific narrative to follow, it has an open form (Maes, 2013, para. 64), with a clear reference to the influential Umberto Eco's text *The Poetics of the Open Work* (1959). Eco claims that the creator of the *open work* withdraws from the meaning-making process which concerns the artwork, allowing the viewer or the visitor of the art piece to explore the work from the personal perspective.

The *open works* could be defined as the following: "works of art that call upon performers, readers, viewers, or listeners to complete or to realize them"(Eco, 1959, p. 167). The intentions of the visitor, serendipitous exploration of the artwork and the eventual questioning of it, thus lays the foundations for the formation of the individualised point of view towards the piece. Presumably, individual visitors will have varying experiences of

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the same piece, or as Eco frames it: "Hence every reception of a work of art is both an *interpretation* and a *performance* of it, because in every reception the work takes on a fresh perspective for itself"(1959, p. 169).

Specially developed hardware and software offers only a context for the experiences of the visitors of the piece, and thus is not a final art object *per se.* Within this framework, the visitor is granted a complete freedom to explore the possibilities of the sonic environment, by walking in it or controlling and thus performing it. The visitor does not only walk through the space but hears her own mental states expressed through sound and can reflect on them individually. The artwork highly relies on the participation and is performative and time-based in its nature. Media art curator and theoretician Ryszard W. Kluszczynski calls these type of artworks "artwork-events":

> "An interactive work of art, both in theoretical aspect, and also when looked at from phenomenological approach and from the perspective of its experience, inevitably takes on the shape of an event. An artist does not make a final, completed piece of art, instead produces an area of activity for the receivers, whose interactive actions bring to life an artwork-event"(2010, p. 2).

To put it differently, such works as *Staalhemel* are fully understood only if they're functional and can be experienced by the audience. Hence, is it not enough to showcase the skeleton of the installation (hardware) or to provide the conceptual or instruction-based description of it – ideally, the work necessitates participation, interaction. Yet, the permanent presence of similar artworks in the exhibition context is impossible to guarantee. That is why, Paul believes that, the documentation of alike installations and performances, can provide means to keep such works alive in later cultural discourse (2008, p. 25). The discussed constitutive elements, hence, should be depicted in the documentation of a sound artwork: how and why technology is used? what is the meaning

of a used sound? how does the artwork function? and for what type of interaction and participation does it call?

Finally, as seen in the example of *Staalhemel*, such interactive environments, or artwork-events, do not only use technology as a creative tool, but as Paul suggests, they change the way we react to these artworks, instead of looking at them, we participate, interact or influence the processes of the art piece. Unlike traditional sculpture, painting or photograph, these artworks disrupt traditional behaviour patterns of the audience, require different presentation modes (they require the whole, isolated room for themselves), consistent technical maintenance and integration of medium-specific concepts, that would enhance the critical understanding of these works and their later contextualization.

3.2. Entering the Media Art Context

Art theoreticians and curators agree, that the acquisition of an original artwork to the permanent collection assures its preservation, maintenance, and existence in the art discourse. The initiatives to acquire sound art works in the institutional collections, however, are few and still rare. In her PhD thesis of 2013, Laura Maes suggests only a list of five permanent sound art collections (2013, p. 523)[37] in Europe. Lina Dzuverovic indicates the presence of sound-related installations and performances in the collections of TATE (UK)[38](2007, para. 5). Neither Maes nor Dzuverovic, mentions or closely analyses other currently existing collections that include sound art pieces, recordings, sound objects or

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[37] Non-exhaustive list included: 1. Klankspeeltuin, Muziekgebouw aan 't Ij, Amsterdam, NL (1999-present); 2. Klangpark im Kurpark, Vlotho, DE (2000-present); 3. Klankenbos, Neerpelt, BE (2005-present); 4. Sound Factory, Bruges, BE (2011-present); 5. Spielhörplatz, Brandis, DE (2012-present).
[38] Janet Cardiff's 'Forty Part Motet' (2001), Angus Fairhurst's 'Gallery Connections' (1991-1996) and Trisha Donnelly's 'Untitled' (2003).

related material: ZKM museum's collection (DE)[39], Centre George Pompidou (FR)[40],

Roskilde Contemporary Art Museum (DK)[41]. Some other museums are also known to hold

several pieces of installations which also produce sound[42]. Compared to the visual art

collections, however, the number of collections related to sound is still relatively small.

This pressures curators and artists to think of other preservation strategies, related to the

sound art field. To propose such strategies, however, implies understanding the

functioning of the visual art museum, and why and how the works of art are acquired for

the collections.

Media art curator Sarah Cook believes that in order for an artwork to enter into art

institutional collection, the artwork must first acquire enough exposure and be

recognizable in the adequate field or practice (2014, p. 216). As Museum Policy and

Practice expert Freda Matassa suggests, the "exhibition" and the "museum" are one of the

most important keywords in this process. She states that exhibitions and displays are

perhaps the most crucial means granting access to artworks (Matassa, 2011, p. 201)[43].

Exhibitions, in this perspective, provide means of acknowledgment of a specific artistic

practice and the surrounding narratives. The medium or the format of the exhibition grants

possibilities for the (mostly) visual art institutions to communicate their collections to the

public, also increase the visibility of the artworks.

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[39] 45 items show up in the search results in the institutional collection under the category "klang" (en "sound").
Mostly interactive media artworks are listed in this category https://zkm.de/de/sammlung-archive .This excludes the
search in ZKM Institute for Music and Acoustics.

[40]Centre Pompidou in total comprises 635 artworks, categorised as "nouveaux médias/oeuvre sonore (en. "new
media/ sound work"). Most of these works are studio, performance recordings in audio formats, LP, CD's, sonic
poetry, editorial documents, music.
https://collection.centrepompidou.fr/#/artworks?layout=grid&page=0&filters=tree_domain_all:Nouveaux+médias
Oeuvre+sonore (last searched on June 26, 2018)

[41] Collection holds 12 works related to sound (video, sound installations, sound objects) source:
http://samling.samtidskunst.dk/en/ .The Sound Archive contains a collection of LP, CD with the recordings of new
musical compositions.

[42] TATE, London, England, MS2 Lodz, Poland.

[43] For example, touring collection "*Artist Rooms*" initiated by Tate Museum in 2009 now counts 40 million visitors.
Retrieved on 11 May 2018 from www.tate.org.uk/artist-rooms

Peter Weibel, the current CEO of the Center for Art and Media (*ZKM*) Karlsruhe, emphasizes that contemporary art institutions have a role to reflect the contemporary situation of the world through art. As to him, ideally, it is necessary that art institutions widen the scope of the presented artworks, and function even beyond their collections:

"All exhibitions on contemporary art should include all media, all genres, and all disciplines, from Sound art to Performance art, from installation art to painting, from sculpture to Net art, all temporary forms of time-based and space-based art, because contemporary artists have expanded their vocabulary in all directions and into all media. The equality of materials and media is the artistic equation."(Weibel, 2013, p. 25)

This is indeed noticeable in the current cultural programs of main contemporary art institutions in European countries (*Tate*, London; *Centre Georges Pompidou*, Paris; *Center for Art and Media* (*ZKM*)*,* Karlsruhe). The integration of photography, video, film, various forms of performances and mixed media installations became a norm in many museums, art centres, and even commercial galleries. In spite of that, in the interview for Digitalarti Mag Weibel also reveals that:

"Most museums are still afraid of media, they follow the logic of the market, they always show the same artists, which are market artists (…). Therefore, we need more and more biennials and festivals. It's the only platform where media art can be shown, unfortunately"(Weibel, 2012a, para. 9).

In addition to that, another tendency can be observed in some recently established contemporary art institutions – the absence of the institutional artwork collections[44] - which also creates difficulties for the preservation of the media art practice.

Christiane Paul and Wong Mandy-Suzanne share beliefs that unstable and fluctuating media art terminology could be an additional reason problematizing media art's entrance to the established museums and galleries and their collections (Paul, 2008; Wong, 2013)[45]. As already discussed in the previous chapter, on what concerns sound art practice, it is one foot rooted in the experimental music and the visual arts. On the other hand, the integration of evolving electronic technologies results in its interactive and digital nature[46] and inscribes this practice into the new media art list. As Paul observes, new media art practices, including sound art, are not instantly showcased in the recognized art institutions as they are considered to be experimental, as opposed to already established art forms. The artworks in the developing or experimental stage are less likely to be considered for the acquisition in the institutional collections. It is through exhibitions at the conferences, festivals, and symposia, devoted to current media, sciences, and arts, that these hybrid artworks are first presented to the artworld[47]. The following example will analyse how one of the oldest[48] European media art festivals tackles the preservation and documentation questions, related to media art.

3.3. From Artwork Collection to Digital Archive: Ars Electronica

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[44] Recent examples: Contemporary Art Center *Wiels* (Brussels, BE), *Centrale* for Contemporary Art in (Brussels, BE), *KANAL* Pompidou (Brussels, BE), or *STUK* (Leuven, BE), do not own any artworks in their permanent collection.

[45] The parallel with 'digital art' could be drawn. Paul states, that by the end of the century, 'digital art'' had become an established term, and museums and galleries around the world had started to collect and organize major exhibitions of digital work (2008, p. 7).

[46] Manovich, L. (2001). *The Language of New Media*.

[47] Paul, C. (2008). Digital Art, p. As she writes, multimedia or new media art was considered peripheral to mainstream art world.

[48] https://www.mediaartdesign.net/EN_ars11.html

Ars Electronica (AE) (Linz, Austria) is one of such festival examples, which, since the beginning of its existence in 1979, actively fostered the presence of the experimental digital, electronic, new media arts in the contemporary cultural discourse. AE strived to engage in an active conversation with international scientific communities and related industries. With the support of the Upper Austrian regional television company (Schwarz, 1997, p. 32), AE also receives funding from the Creative Europe Programme (EU). A call for submissions in the scope of Digital Music and Sound Art was launched in 1987. According to Veronica Liebl, one of the directors involved in organization of AE Festival Prix Exhibitions, the festival aims to present the invited or co-commissioned projects (personal communication, May 7, 2018). However, since 1979 and 1987 the AE is actively involved in the digital archiving practice related to AE events and artwork submissions.

Firstly, one of the main differences between a visual art museum exhibition and a festival is the artwork collection and the duration of the exhibitions. Though festivals are unlikely to acquire any artworks (nor related hardware or software) in the collection, as they simply do not own one, the advantage of Ars Electronica, as noted by Hans-Peter Schwarz is that this media festival occurs regularly and provides a continuous visibility to media artworks throughout the years. Unlike visual art museum, where the presentation of sound art or media art is sporadic.

> "It is "pure" media art festival. The experimental media art is given preference which, often perched on the extreme boundary between science and art, plumbs the depth of the aesthetic potential of the most advanced media-technological and techno-scientific developments."(Schwarz, 1997, p. 32)

In terms of archiving, Ars Electronica maintains a collection of information about the winning projects – online Ars Electronica Prix Archive[49]. The nominees can be traced on the web, according to a year or a received award. Together with the biographies of the awarded artists, short description of the projects, credits, links to the artists' websites are made available. The archive gives an option to listen to the selected audio files (if any), view presentational videos related to the winning pieces. In general, the archive functions as an online exhibition catalogue (next to the printable catalogue, which is also made available in pdf format). The archive in question provides an option for viewing metadata of all the received submissions, proposed for the festival jury that year, creating a list of currently existing artists, active in the field, related to the festival topic.

Lecture and Talk archive, which started already in 1979, includes video documentation of the symposiums and lectures given by the scientists, researchers and artists. The topics of the lectures relate to AE proposed themes. The festival archive also accumulated a huge archive of the festival photos.

Such art projects as *Not Your World* Music by Dimitri Della Faille, which was awarded for the Golden Nica in 2017, has several audio files available for listening, credits and links to the external sources were made available online. Otherwise, competing art projects, presented during the festival exhibition, and apart from exhibition catalogue information and a description of a concept and photos, do not have individual documentation about the installation view online, nor recordings of the performed pieces. This indeed creates a problematic situation for non-awarded artworks and their later sustainability and contextualization in the field, as such festivals are probably unique possibilities to experience some artworks, meet the artists in person and understand how their works function.

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[49] http://archive.aec.at/prix/
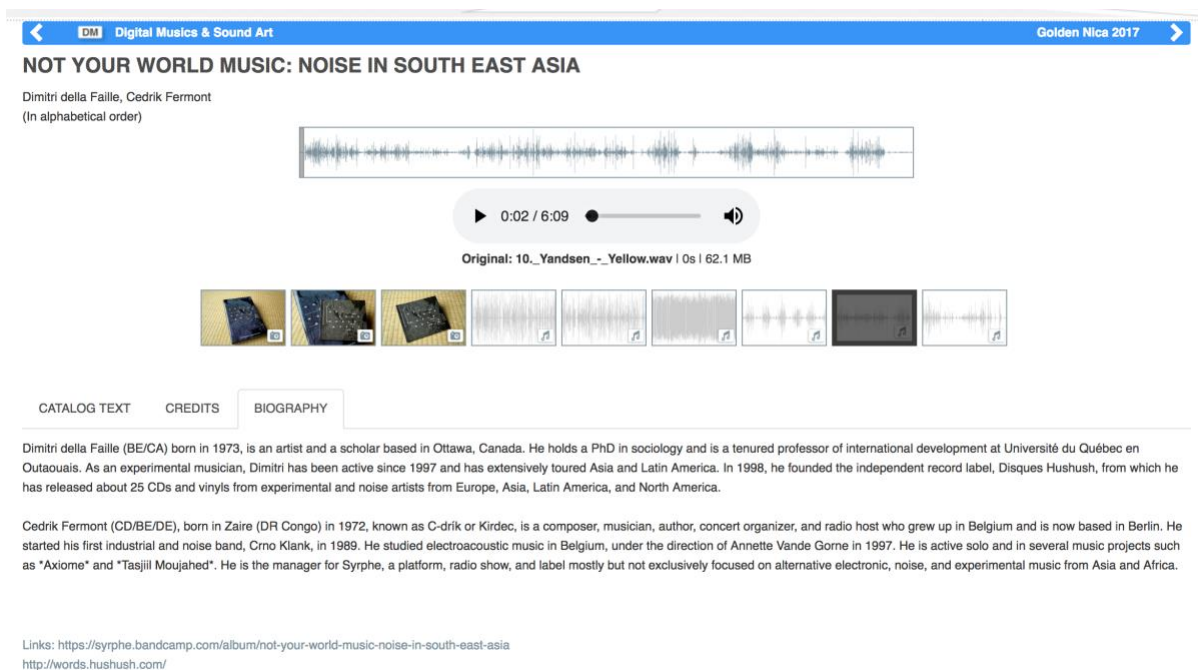
Figure 6 Documentation of the project "Not Your World Music" by Dimitri Della Faille, laureate of Golden Nica 2017 (@AE)

As such, festivals give all the necessary means for the artworks to be visible: the venue, the audience, financial support in a form of awards, commissions and certain type of documentation of the event and art piece. On the other hand, even though such festivals as Ars Electronica create the possibilities for that necessary exposure, suggested above by Cook, the major challenges concerning the preservation of the artworks, are not explicitly addressed within the digital archival practice of AE. According to Cook, tracing the changes of the processes that take place at the earlier or later stages within media art works, each time they are reinstalled and presented during the events, is necessary (Cook, 2014, p. 216). But the information related to the concept of an artwork, does not provide such insights. Even before some of such works are acquired into renown museum collections, this strategy would allow for the curators, theoreticians and even artists, to understand the development of the art piece better. However, a natural question is here to be asked – why is it necessary to trace the changes of reinstalled media art works? What exactly needs to be documented, and which elements of the artworks are the most endangered and most valuable for the future?

3.4. Documenting Immateriality, Ephemerality and Changing States

The radical changes in the art making processes, in particular, the shift from object-based art to digital and electronic culture, affected the life-span of the media artworks, notices Paul and Cook. Both, in terms of presentation as well as the preservation, engaging with media art became a demanding deed for art institutions, curators and artists.

As already mentioned, Laura Maes suggests thinking of such artworks as *Drive In Music* or *Staalhemel* in terms of "temporal" and "ephemeral" (2013, p. 170). She understands the temporality of sound art work as their brief and momentary presence, sometimes as almost a unique occasion of viewing and experiencing them:

> "[T]he dismantling of the Philips Pavilion, Stockhausen's spherical auditorium and Kupper's domes illustrate the ephemeral nature of these projects and shows a parallel with the temporary nature of most sound works which are often commissioned for a specific exhibition on a specific location."(Maes, 2013, p. 157)

By referring to Philips Pavilion, Stockhausen's spherical concert hall and Kupper's sound domes, Maes exemplifies the cases of important sound projects that saw the light of the day only briefly and that never were rebuilt. This grants no chances to experience the works again unless the projects have enough archived information and documentation, that could allow their reconstruction.

The reinstalled artworks, however, are not less problematic. Christiane Paul and Sarah Cook evoke a problem of artwork mutability, by stating that the recreated media artworks, rebuilt installations, upgraded versions of software or hardware might result in updated versions of the same artworks (Cook, 2014, p. 215). The constant changes that the specific work undergoes each time it is remade or reinstalled, influences the artwork to the point

that it might be considered a new version of the work. The example of the artwork *Integration* by sound and light artist Dieter van Doren illustrates this process: each time his interactive installation integrates a new software code, the work is renamed, as thus versions follow the logical sequence *Integration* 01, 02, 03 etc (see figure 7). Once a new code is introduced, the artwork is internally modified and "behaves" differently.
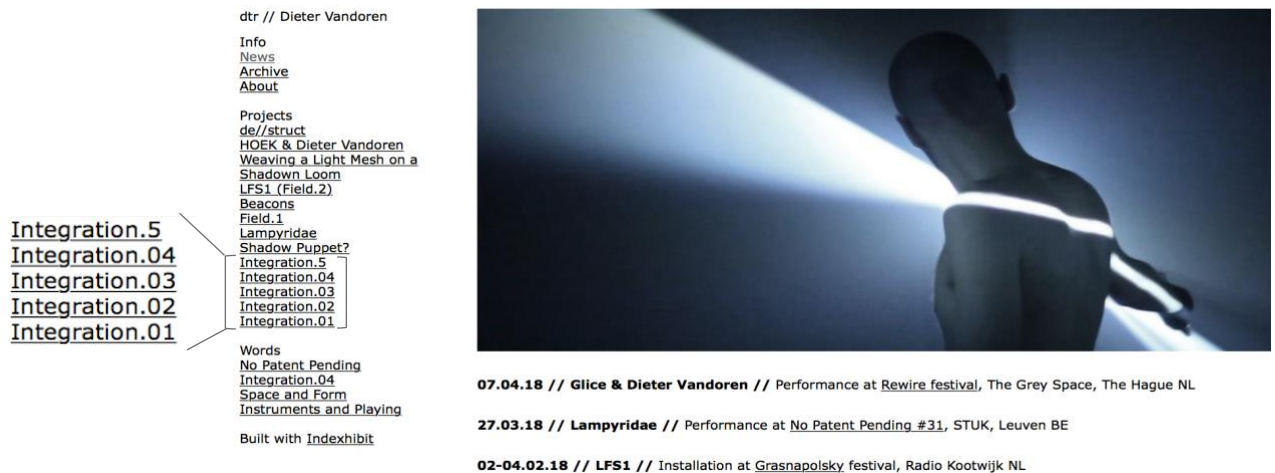
Figure 7 Artwork "Integration" and it's many versions. A screenshot from Dieter van Doren's website (2018)

Christiane Paul discusses another aspect of ephemerality of media art works – their immateriality. According to her text *The Myth of Immateriality - Presenting & Preserving New Media* (2012), there is a symbiotic relationship between the material medium (physical components, hardware) and the digital medium (software, data, algorithms, networks) used in media art works. The immateriality is the connections that are made and instigated by the different material and digital components of the artwork and other systems, networks, audiences, physical sites or virtual spaces. Paul uses the term *immateriality* in the sense proposed by Tiziana Terranova, as "links between materialities" (Paul, 2012, p. 4). The immateriality often refers to a processual, performative, interactive nature of the inner operations within the artwork and the outside and is the most difficult element in terms of documentation of media art works. The interactive, participative artworks with performative elements are challenging to record, as they constantly change.

Though the material components, software or data can be preserved relatively easy, Paul tends to call this preservation strategy "the most inelegant and impractical" as it turns museums into a hardware warehouse, or a "computer museum"(Paul, 2012, p. 30). It is unlikely, she remarks, that certain computers, custom made technologies and programs will be upgraded and will stay functional in the coming decades. Technology becomes obsolete rapidly. The younger generation of technicians might not have the fundamental skills to repair yesterday's technology. Hence, there is a serious risk that many of the discussed artworks will completely lose their functionality. The curator points out, that the current procedures of emulation or migration still allow for the artworks to function in non-native digital environments, even if the operating systems are already out of date and are not available in the market. But this strategy does not grant access to the archives of previous versions of the mutable artworks. Neither it enables to compare artworks, or observe their evolution. The documentation of Internet-based art, for instance, can be achieved through screen-recordings of a running program or software, or screenshot sequences of an active online artwork. Similarly, media art should develop appropriate documentation models, suggests Paul as "any time-based art piece, such as a performance, is essentially ephemeral and often continues to exist after the event only in its documentation"(2008, sec. 25).

As recently highlighted by Harold Schellinx, the coordinator of the European Sound Art Network *Resonance* (2010-2014), many curators and artists are aware that the future generations will only experience sound artworks if enough documentation will be available about them, allowing to reproduce or reinstall them:

> "It will be impossible to 'know' (to experience) these works. It will only be possible to 'know about' them, via the available documentation, whether 'official and intentional' (in catalogues, textbooks, magazines, monographs, via authorized audio and video recordings) or 'unofficial and accidental' (through hear-say, or on the

web, in blogs, YouTube clips, et cetera). In such cases, as some argue, it is the col-lected (or se-lected) documentation, that *becomes* the work." (Schellinx, 2013, para. 6)

To summarize, the main element that puts media and time-based art in danger is the technology that is used to create it. The changes in the hardware and related software result in its ephemerality and changing states. Therefore, the understanding that the hardware will eventually become obsolete, unfunctional and irreparable is crucial for this art practice. The loss of the artwork functionality threatens that the immaterial elements, as discussed by Paul, or the experience of the artwork, as suggested by Shellinx, eventually, will be irrecuperable. This understanding should guide the documentation of media artworks, that are similar to *Drive In Music, Handphone Table* or *Staalhemel*. As suggested by Maes and Schellinx, the ephemerality of the artwork should be taken into consideration. Hence, in case the artwork is not re-installed again, the documentation should be sufficient and allow, if not to reproduce the artwork, to understand how it is built; what are it's main components and how they relate to each other; how is the technology used to produce or muffle sound; what is the origin of the sound; how the artwork should be experienced and how does one interact with it. Cook and Paul evoke the necessity to address the mutability of artworks in their documentation. This simply suggests, that if the previously discussed artworks are reinstalled somewhere else, in new conditions, they should equally be documented in the same or at least similar manner, specially if the hardware or digital components meanwhile were changed and modified, the documentation should reflect it.

3.5. Documentation as Simulation

In his famous critical essay "*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*" (1936) alter Benjamin considers the film to be the first form of art which is completely defined by its own reproducibility (2008, p. 28). For Benjamin, the possibility to replicate the artwork and produce multiple copies of the "original" film, indicates a new state of the mechanically

reproduced art - art without an aura. Media art continues to develop in such a tradition. At least it's digital components, such as codes, software, programs, even if tailor-crafted, can be easily copy-pasted, and thus have countless copies. But what about the status of the documentation? Could an exhibition catalogue, video on YouTube or a performance recording on a mobile phone could eventually become the work of art, as suggested above by Schellinx?

In her recent text "*Murky Categorization and Bearing Witness: Varied Processes of the Historicization of New Media Art*" (2012), curator Sarah Cook essentially agrees with Paul and Schellinx. She acknowledges that while art museums and festivals experiment with documentation and preservation strategies, media artworks are facing the risks of serious damage and eventual disappearing. However, Cook considers that various forms of documentation, such as collections of ephemera, posters, email copies, video and audio recording, LPs, CDs, program files are not lacking from institutional art museums nor from private collections. The Internet, she continuous, host numbers of copies of artworks in various forms. But if the emphasis is shifted from collecting the real artworks, and focused on gathering mediated representations of an artwork, there might not be an issue related to copies and originals in the Benjaminian sense, but more of a question of simulation of an original, as evoked by a philosopher Jean Baudrillard.

Simulacrum instigates a very different type of a relationship to its "copy". In *Simulacrum and Simulations* (1981) French theorist suggests, that one can understand the relationship between the simulacra and the simulation through Jorge Luis Borges analogy of the map and the territory. The map is a representation of a certain territory, an image or a symbol. On a certain degree, the map copies certain features of a territory (it's roads, hills, lakes or its shape), or as Baudrillard suggests, it imitates or simulates the territory. "To simulate is to feign to have what one hasn't"(Baudrillard, 1988, p. 167). The territory is a concept, whereas the map is an abstraction of it. On the other hand, a map is an object of its own right. If one takes the map for granted, the representation might eventually corrupt the

represented and change its initial meaning. According to the philosopher, there are several stages of simulation. First, implies a reflection of reality, second, masks and perverts it, third, masks the absence of reality, and lastly, the representation point to itself (becomes a pure simulacrum) (Baudrillard, 1988, p. 170). Such as – a bad documentation of a poorly installed artwork, might produce irrecuperable flaws in the understanding of the artwork.

Hence, to avoid such possibilities of misinterpretations and abstractions, Cook suggests that the documentation of media art should navigate between the preservation "of the single unique object and a reliance on institutional exhibition documentation (2014, p. 217). This "in between" strategy, she suggests, seeks to contextualize gathered and documented material, and create links to an actual work. Even more, she states, in media art field "the information about the work stands to accrue more value than the work itself" (Cook, 2014, p. 210). The information about the artwork, such as, depiction of its concepts, innovative aspects, description of the novel use of the media tools, codes or interactive processes, analyses of historical, theoretical or geographical origins, according to Cook, could explain the relationship between the artwork and its documentation and avoid imitations of a real artwork.

Variable Media Network (VMK) could be seen as one of such "in between" strategies for acquiring and documenting the information related to the art projects. Artists, whose art installations are acquired for the permanent institutional collections, can use such tools as Variable Media Questionnaire (VMQ) developed in 1999 by the Variable Media Initiative (1999) (VMI) of the Guggenheim Museum (New York)[50]. More institutions joined the initiative which resulted in VMI's transformation into Variable Media Network (VMN).

The VMI introduced a preservation methodology for less traditional, ephemeral, performative, time-based, media artworks, such as various types of interactive installations or net art. As described, by Jon Ippolito, one of the initiators of the questionnaire, the aim of

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[50] https://www.guggenheim.org/conservation/the-variable-media-initiative

this project is to allow the artist to participate in future preservation of their works. As previously discussed, even if the actual artworks, that are currently held in the collections, are still fully functional, the obsolescence or raising technical issues are merely a question of time. The VMQ allows the institutions to know that measures can be taken in order to repair, rebuilt or reconstruct the artwork.

> "We need artists—their information, their support, and above all their creativity— to outwit oblivion and obsolescence. That is why the variable media approach asks creators to play the central role in deciding how their work should evolve over time, with archivists and technicians offering choices rather than prescribing them."(Ippolito, 2003, para. 47)

The VMQ is accessible online on *the http://variablemediaquestionnaire.net*. The creators of the project aimed to design a questionnaire which aims to take a form of an interview rather than that of a survey. The interviewee's answers are stored in the "Interviews" section of the Artwork folder. In principle, the section is destined for the artists, but curators or technicians are eligible to fill in the form, in case the artwork was left orphaned.

The general artwork information contains the biography or information about the artist, project definition and the concept, audiovisual material (records, videos, pictures), information about the used media (hardware, software) and possible or previous gallery displays. There is also a possibility to define custom made materials, describe viewers interaction with the piece, add reviews[51]. These sections are filled by the institution.

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[51] Only the demo version was accessible online, hence, the real artwork information was not available for consultation.
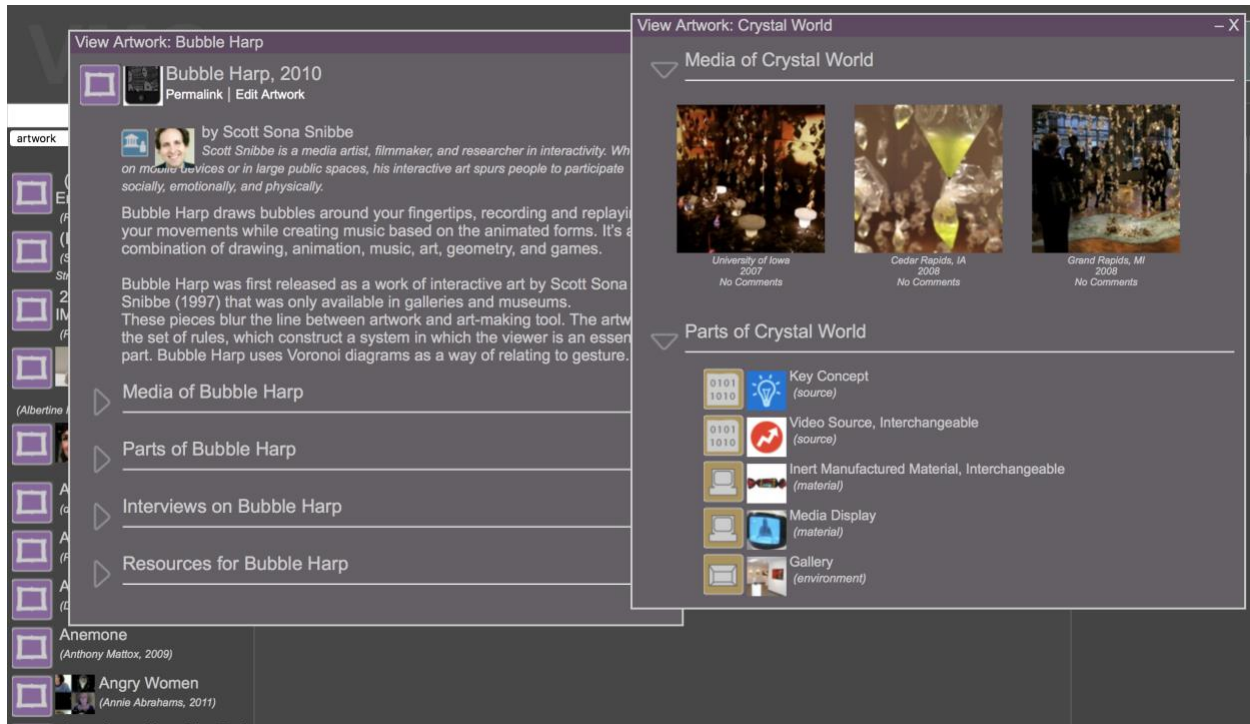
Figure 8 Screenshot from Variable Media Questionnaire @VMQ

As when it comes to the interview, the VMQ suggests several types of questions, that help to identify the adequate strategy, that the artwork would necessitate in the future. The four possible strategies are:

- *storage* (artwork necessitates to be preserved together with the hardware),
- *migration* (the software should be updated),
- *emulation* (the work should be recreated in new digital environment),
- *reinterpretion* (the metaphor, main concept should be preserved) (Ippolito, 2003, pp. 51–52).

Indeed, this questionnaire gained a lot of attention and institutional support from such bodies as Daniel Langois Foundation, Berkeley Art Museum or Rhizome.org. Paul believes, that by "[u]sing the vocabulary of the Guggenheim's "Variable Media Questionnaire", Ippolito develops an alternative to the standard vocabulary of the wall label"(2012, p. 32). However, the main goal of this questionnaire is to take care of already acquired artworks, as it "seeks to define acceptable levels of change within any given art object and documents ways in which a sculpture, installation, or conceptual work may be altered (or not) for the

sake of preservation without losing that work's essential meaning"(Guggenheim Museum, 2018, para. 1). As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, many media artworks are still present in the context of the temporary events or festivals and are not certain to acquire important status soon.

Sarah Cook proposes to consider another strategy, that she separates into three types of information categories. As it was mentioned above, the curator aims to speculate on how the information could eventually create links between the actual works of art and their documentation. The term historicization here, used by Cook, is pointing directly to Edward Shanken's analysis of historicization of media art. Shanken claims that the contextual writing about media artworks should include "a more general analysis of the relationship between technology and conceptual art"(Shanken, 2007, p. 12). In this sense, historicization of media art means accepting the transdisciplinary character of media artworks, and thus integrating the contexts of art history, science or technology in the analysis. Historicization, hence, here refers not to a descriptive, but to a contextual writing about artworks.

1. *Instant historicization*: involves artworks presentation online accompanied by its immediate critique (in a form of online posts, comments, tumblring by other artists, curators, critics etc)(Cook, 2014, p. 213). Such historicization has little to no time delay between the making of the artwork and its presentation and reveals the actual state of the artwork and the ongoing research processes. Audiences can participate in commenting or reviewing the works of art.
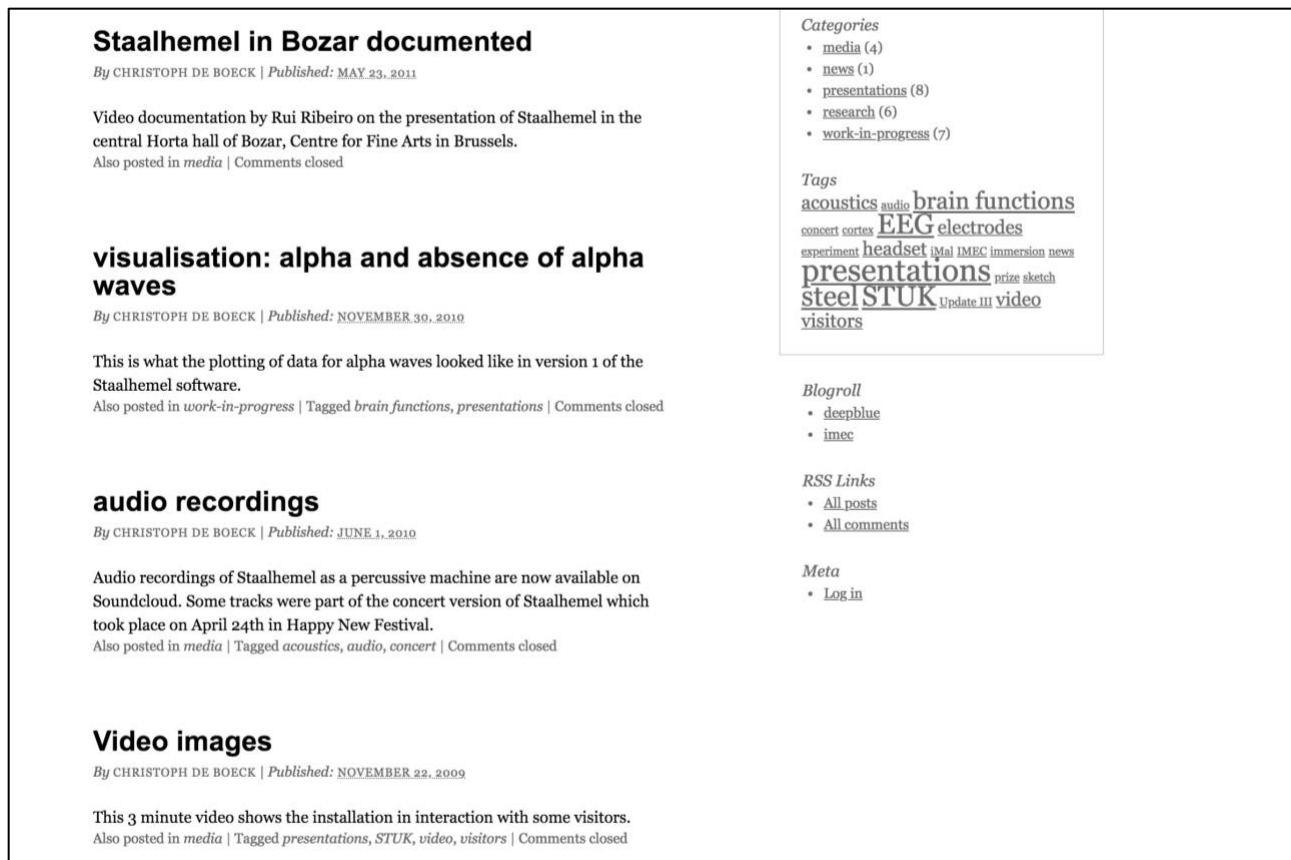
Figure 9 Staalhemel: work-in-progress and it's documentation (2009-2011). Screenshot from artist's webpage

Already discussed project *Staalhemel* could serve as an example for such a case. From May 2009 to May 2011 Christoph De Boeck was running a website *http://www.staalhemel.com* where the information about the sound environment *Staalhemel* was constantly updated and posted online by the artist. The website also functioned as a diary (blog), which served as a documentation of the processes and transformations that the different versions of the same work were going through. De Boeck shared his insights and comments about the ongoing research stages, technical challenges, questions he had at a specific phase of the development, the modifications he made. In other terms, De Boeck was documenting the process of making and contextualizing his project.

2. *Self-historicization*. The self-historicization stands an inch away from the previous mode of historicization. As Cook defines it, in this process the artists are the ones

placing their works or their practice in the art historical context. "In fact, this self-awareness around the historicization process is even manifest in new media art itself "(Cook, 2014, p. 213)

Edward Shanken believes that such artists as Roy Ascott, proves to be valuable examples when it comes to the self-historicization: "innovative artists often established the theoretical foundations of their practice long before it was incorporated into critical, curatorial, and historical discourses" (Shanken, 2007, p. 11). Shanken specifically points to Ascott's book *"Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*" (2003).

3. *Commissioning* of a new artistic work is considered as a far-sighted strategy, contributing to the expansion of the art historical context in which the work is active and present. The strategy is mainly applicable for curators. Together with collection and successful and efficient curating practice, commissioning assures the support for production, interviews, reviews and reports, and thus, provides broader contextualization and documentation of the artwork and the field. "New media art also offers the opportunity for curators and audiences to be involved in the conceptualization, production, delivery, and lifelong maintenance of a work, giving the work a better chance of being remembered"(Cook, 2014, p. 214).

Cook suggests that the strategy of gathering the information and creating interpretations depends not solely on the concerned art institutions, but is dispersed between the artist, the curator and the audience. Hence, there are different angles, from which the artwork can be understood: the perspective of it's producer, the maker, and the viewer. Cook's understanding of the media artworks has strong parallels to Umberto Eco's *open works*, the artworks, that call the viewer for action, for the *"interpretation* and *performance"* (Eco, 1959, p. 169). The VMQ experimented with a possibility to include the artist's perspective

in the preservation of artworks. This strategy is promising, however, it is applicable only for artworks that find themselves in the permanent museum collections.

Finally, as it was discussed in this chapter, the majority of media artworks heavily rely on the creative use of the digital and electronic technology, custom built software or computer code. Christoph de Boeck's art project *Staalhemel,* illustrates what challenges such interactive artworks create for the traditional art institutions, and why the collection and presentation of such works is problematic.

Sound and media artworks are often encountered in biennales, festivals or symposia. These events create contexts for artworks to be seen, however, these institutions do not necessarily engage in the collection or documentation of media art works. Ars Electronica Festival Prix Archive was chosen and analysed as an example illustrating an institutional attempt to create a digital archive, related to the awarded, exhibited artworks and events, linked to the festival topics. As it was noticed, this strategy, though pioneering, is not perfectly responding to the current needs of the mutable media artworks simply because only the awarded artworks are documented.

As argued by Maes, Paul and Schellinx, time-based artworks are ephemeral, temporal and contain a degree of immateriality. Documentation is seen as granting the possibility to preserve such artworks. Schellinx argued, that eventually, the documentation would substitute the original artwork. This idea reflects the reality of the majority of time-based media artworks, but this approach is highly problematic. As evoked by Cook, the strategy that links the artwork documentation with the original artwork is necessary for the future archives.

While Paul's intention is to analyse the potential strategies that could be adapted by the visual art museums, the only art institutions, that have the infrastructure to collect media artworks, Cook suggests that non-institutional documentation practices are, however, of equal importance. For Cook, curators, artists and audience, should be actively involved in the production of contextualized information, which according to the curator, could provide better understanding of both: the artwork and its documentation.

The following chapter will analyse how independent sound art curators participate in the discussion of the documentation of the ephemeral sound art practice. The cases investigate the tools that were used for the two examined projects and seeks to discern which material was documented. The main argument to study these cases is the need to understand what are the possibilities to document and contextualize the works of art, that did not make it to the museum collections, but are eventually endangered.

PART 4. CURATOR'S TAKE ON DOCUMENTATION

4.1. The Promise of Autonomy: Web 2.0

As discussed previously, fundamentally, it is the art museums that are traditionally associated with the collection, preservation and contextualization of artworks. Christiane Paul suggests that the infrastructures of the art museums will eventually adapt to the needs of the intangible, ephemeral and immaterial nature of media art. Meanwhile, the mutable, constantly changing character of media works pushes the cultural producers to develop specific and adapted tools, that help to tackle the urgent questions of the field – the preservation of its evolving states, it's contextualization in contemporary art discourse, even before these artworks are acquired for the institutional collections. The Web 2.0 and the Internet granted various possibilities for independent curators to initiate autonomous projects, related to the documentation and contextualization of sound art practice. This chapter will focus on the analyses of sound art documentation initiatives, that use the online platform as their main documentation medium. The case studies of two projects, *Her Noise* and *SoCCoS*, aims to examine what strategies were applied by independent curators to document art projects, why and how the web platform was used for this goal.

During the conference organized by Media Live International in 2004, Dale Dougherty and Tim O'Reilly proposed a novel vision of the Web 1.0. The idea behind the concept suggested to understand the successor, the Web 2.0, as a dynamic, participatory platform, where the exchange of data and services could be made possible, and where the user would play the main role. O'Reilly claims that "an essential part of Web 2.0 is harnessing collective intelligence, turning the web into a kind of global brain"(2005, para. 10). The main ideals with which O'Reilly and Dougherty associated newly reimagined platform were now:

collective, global and delocalized, decentralized system governed by a user-generated content.

Christiane Paul remarks that the Web 2.0 and the affordable digital technologies, such as the Internet, portable personal gadgets and computing devices, generated numerous potentials for the cultural producers - artists, critics, researchers, curators and art institutions - to increase their audiences, communicate information and engage with otherwise distant communities. "This changed landscape of cultural exchange has a direct influence on the creation, presentation, and reception of art and affects the role of everyone engaged in these aspects."(Paul, 2008, p. 9)

In her text "*Online Curatorial Practice: Flexible Contexts and "Democratic" Filtering"* (2009) Paul suggest that the digital revolution created a framework for the independent "zones of cultural autonomy" to appear. Individuals or communities, with access to the network, are able instigate conversations and collaborations, through newsletters, forums or blogs, created by them and corresponding with their specific interests and needs. Web pages, though situated on the virtual platform, simulate a public space, and as such provide a meeting point for the connected community members.

Though such renown curators as Harold Szeemann and Walter Hopps became independent from the art institutions and art museums already in the 1960s and without the help of the Web, Paul suggests that the reconfigurations of communication and collaboration models supported by the Web 2.0, increased the possibilities for curators to detach themselves from the art institutions. Even more, many independent curators used the Web 2.0 for their advantage, by bringing they curatorial skills and visions online. "Curatorial practice in the online world began to unfold not only independent of institutions—through Web projects created by independent curators and (artist) collaboratives—but also in an institutional context"(Paul, 2009, para. 2). Curatorial projects initiated by Steve Dietz - *Gallery 9* (Walker Art Center, 2000) - Benjamin Weil - *e.space* (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2002) -

or Christiane Paul - *artport* (Whitney Museum, 2001-2006) - are the outstanding examples of a curatorial activity online.

In terms of documentation, Paul believes that Web 2.0 is a powerful medium, and curators might use it as a tool for documentation of ephemeral, performative, time-based artworks. "Curators need to place more emphasis on and develop strategies for documentation of works that are created by multiple authors and constantly develop over time" (Paul, 2009, para. 5).

4.2. Less Official Histories: Women in Sound and Her Noise (2005)

The exhibition *Her Noise* initially took place at the South London Gallery (London, UK), between 10 November to 18 December 2005. Several exhibition related events took place in the Tate Modern and Goethe Institute in England. The two curators of the show, Lina Dzuverovic and Anne Hilde Neset, are also the founders of the Electra organization (2003), which acted as the producer of that specific event. The development of the project started already in 2001, the main motivation for project, according to the curators "was to investigate music histories in relation to gender and to bring together a wide network of women artists who use sound as medium"(Electra, 2005, pt. 1). Eventually, the exhibition created a context for a satellite, long-lasting project – online *Her Noise Archive*.

Initially, *Her Noise* programme[52] consisted of traditional artwork and installation exhibition, live sound performances, concerts, band shows and artist talks. It also included weekly "get togethers", listening posts for radio. The concept of "get together" involved artists, curators and the audience in the discussion related to the topics of how to instigate collaborations, how to produce good sound and eventually, how to record it.

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[52] http://www.electra-productions.com/press_releases/HerNoise2005.pdf Retrieved on 27/03/2018

Figure 10 Installation views of Kaffe Matthews "Sonic Bed"(left), Christina Kubisch "Security" (right) (@Electra)

In her text "*Love Affair Between the Museum and the Arts of Sound*" (commissioned by Axisweb.org in 2007) Lina Dzuverovic revealed that the process of preparations for the yet to come exhibition made her aware how visual art institutions were still facing difficulties to respond to the expanding contemporary art landscape and failed to integrate rapidly developing ephemeral art forms, such as sound-related art, in their regular cultural programs. Even more surprising for her was to realize, that the commissioning, producing and most importantly, preserving and collecting of sound-based artworks was still not a current practice (Dzuverovic, 2007, sec. 5). As a result of such observations, in total, five new artworks were commissioned and created for the exhibition *Her Noise*: *Reverse Karaoke* by Kim Gordon and Jutta Koether; *MiniFlux* by Hayley Newman; *Security* by Christina Kubisch; *Sonic Bed* by Kaffe Matthews; *We're Alive, Let's Meet* by Emma Hedditch. Similarly, to Sarah Cook (2014, p. 214), Dzuverovic was convinced that the commissioning of the artworks, together with production and collecting, is one of the essential tools

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through which institutions and curators can contribute to the emerging artistic practices[53](2007, para. 5).

Concerned with the possibilities to expand the audience reach and broaden the scope of the exhibition project outside of the fixed physical locality in London, the curators aimed to utilize two well developed technologies: the radio and the internet. An artist Melanie Clifford was asked to create audio reports relating to the *Her Noise* exhibition. The extracts from live performances, talks and reading were distributed on-air of the Resonance FM. The idea to create and release six audio series on the London Musicians Collective's radio[54], followed by a documentary[55] for UbuWeb, was inspired by already existing online projects focusing on the research, preservation and dissemination of ephemeral art forms, such as UbuWeb[56], Art Radio WPS1/MoMa[57], Variable Media Network[58], Franklin Furnace Archive[59] and online initiatives of Rhizome.

> "The ease of use of technological tools to create and record sound and the introduction of community websites which enable easy distribution of sonic content has brought a new day-to-day familiarity with the production and distribution of

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[53] Dzuverovic notes that the Massachusetts Of Modern Art in North Adams (MaSS MOCA, US) has acquired and made permanently available several sound art works (mostly the ones that the museum has previously commissioned for its earlier shows): Bruce Odland and Sam Auinger's *Harmonic Bridge*, Water Fandrich's *Music for a Quarry*, Christina Kubisch's *Clocktower Project*.

[54] resonancefm.com

[55] Available on http://www.ubu.com/film/her_noise.html

[56] ubu.com founded in 1996, is an educational online platform, offering many resources on sound, visual and film culture.

[57] This Internet art radio station was a joint project between P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center and Museum of Modern Art which lasted from April, 2004 – January, 2009. It aimed to provide a 24/7 access to cultural programs through streaming.

[58] Initiative originating from Guggenheim Museum, aiming at developing preservation strategies for ephemeral, digital media. http://variablemedia.net/e/index.html

[59] Franklin Furnace event archive provides electronic access to the information about temporary installations, exhibitions, performances funded by the F. Furnace Funds and Grants. http://franklinfurnace.org/online_event_archives/index.php

sound based material, opening up new trajectories for getting sound based work out into the world."(Dzuverovic, 2007, para. 3)

The documentary *Her Noise* was based on the concept, that the non-official, non-institutional context of how artists discover each other, how they perform, and record sound is as important as they final product: the artwork. As Dzuverovic explained in the lecture at the AA Foundation in 2007, the 22 interviews, gathered for the documentary were not guided to fit or respond the curatorial theme. Understanding the influences, motivations and constraints of the field was a backbone of these recorded conversation. The documentary depicted the scenes from the exhibition, but the subjective perspectives about the situation of women artists in the field of sound, were considered of most importance. The documentary is currently hosted on the UbuWeb platform.

The preparations for the exhibition instigated further thoughts and practical questions: how and where get acquainted with sound installations, where acquire the recordings and how to do research in a field which is still developing. The idea of the archive came into being simultaneously. One of the directors of the documentary, Emma Hedditch, explained "the production and the recording of certain women's work was difficult to get"(2007). The exhibition created a context for such recordings to appear and inspired the process of archiving. The archive, however, followed the same logics as the documentary – it was instigated by the artists. "[A]rchive become more than just a collection of objects <…>. We acknowledged that the archive is pretty subjective. The more people would participate in the construction of the archive, the more varied it would become" (Electra & Hedditch, 2007). The Her Noise archive is composed of two different elements: the physical and online. The physical collection consists of zines, self-published artistic ephemera, 50 catalogues and books, around 300 vinyls, CD's and audio recordings. Various objects are continuously acquired to the archive. The physical archive is currently hosted by London College of Communication, University of the Arts. The curators tend to think of the archive

as *living*. Even after the exhibition, the archive kept growing and was made available for travelling exhibitions, which it does on a regular basis.

The online archive contains the discussed documentary, the audio recording of the performances and radio series, exhibition documentation and related programs, video recordings of the interviews with artists, reviews written by the guest curators, literature list. Each time the *Her Noise* project participates at the events or is represented at the exhibition, there is a tendency to document the event and include the gathered material into the online archive, and, thus, continue the conversations started in 2001. Eleven international curators[60] where invited to reflect on the exhibition and contextualize presented performances, installations in a written form. The reviews were later published as blog posts for the *Her Noise* online archive and were made available publicly.

Another outcome of the exhibition project is *Her Noise Map.* In addition to the interviews, conducted with the women artists, recordings, produced for the archive and the documentary, Electra conceived a cartographic, visual representation of the women, that would potentially form a network (also available online). A similar approach was already noticed in the Ars Electronica strategy to collect all names of the participating artists, that were present at the festival that year. However, the *Her Noise* map is not restricted to an official project selection nor it limits itself to the list of awarded artists. On the contrary, the map depicts currently active and known artists (non-official, coming from alternative scenes and already recognized and established artists). Dzuverovic states, that the intention of the map was to "try to connect people who do not connect with each other in any logical way"(Electra & Hedditch, 2007).

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[60] Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski, Lisa Busby, Maximilian Spiegel, AGF, Andra McCartney, Fender Schrade, Greta Pistaceci, Jenny Graf Sheppard, Ain Bailey, Nina Power, Tara Rodgers.
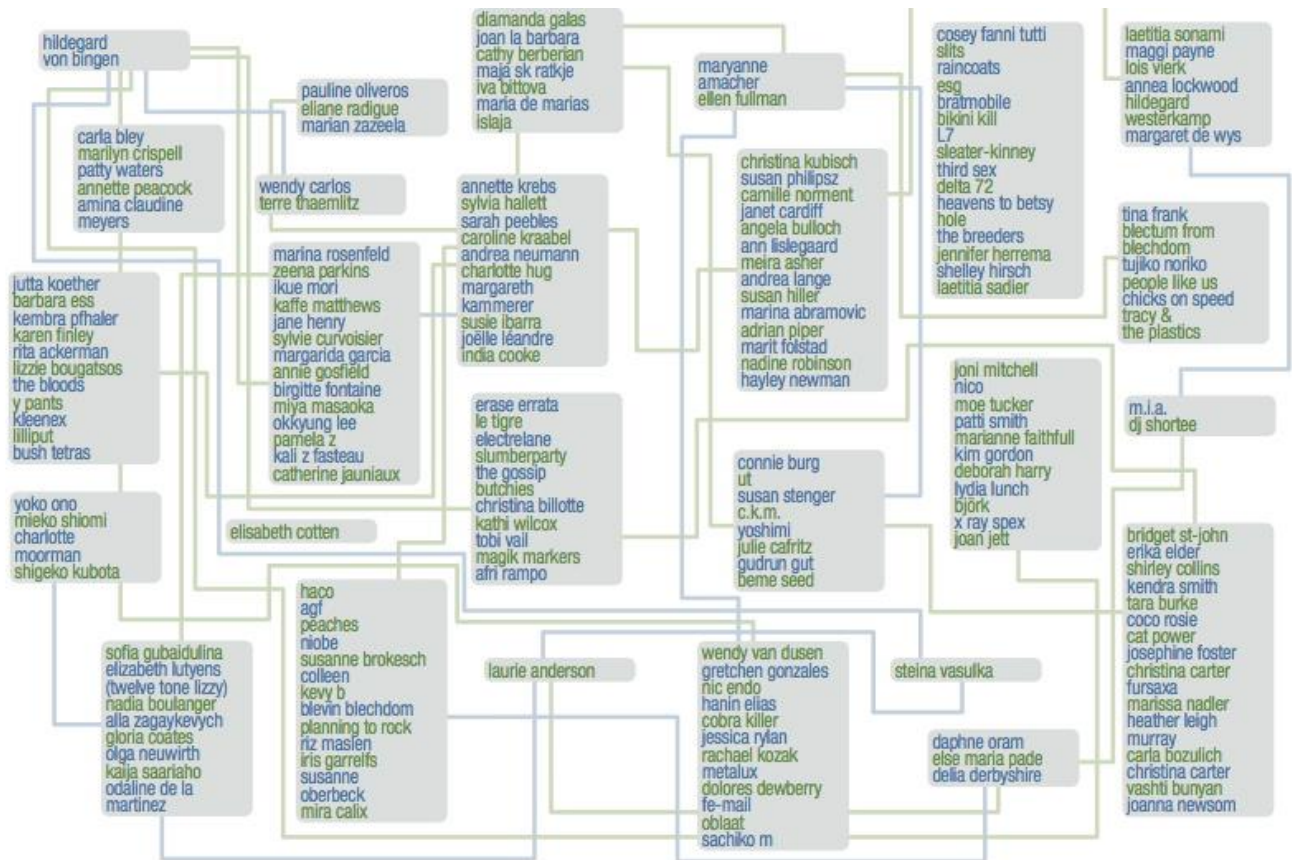
hildegard von bingen

pauline oliveros
eliane radigue
marian zazeela

carla bley
marilyn crispell
patty waters
annette peacock
amina claudine meyers

wendy carlos
terre thaemlitz

marina rosenfeld
zeena parkins
ikue mori
kaffe matthews
jane henry
sylvie curvoisier
margarida garcia
annie gosfield
birgitte fontaine
miya masaoka
okkyung lee
pamela z
kali z fasteau
catherine jauniaux

jutta koether
barbara ess
kembra pfhaler
karen finley
rita ackerman
lizzie bougatsos
the bloods
y pants
kleenex
lilliput
bush tetras

yoko ono
mieko shiomi
charlotte moorman
shigeko kubota

elisabeth cotten

diamanda galas
joan la barbara
cathy berberian
maja sk ratkje
iva bittova
maria de marias
islaja

annette krebs
sylvia hallett
sarah peebles
caroline kraabel
andrea neumann
charlotte hug
margareth kammerer
susie ibarra
joëlle léandre
india cooke

erase errata
le tigre
electrelane
slumberparty
the gossip
butchies
christina billotte
kathi wilcox
tobi vail
magik markers
afri rampo

haco
agf
peaches
niobe
susanne brokesch
colleen
kevy b
blevin blechdom
planning to rock
riz maslen
iris garrelfs
susanne oberbeck
mira calix

maryanne amacher
ellen fullman

christina kubisch
susan philipsz
camille norment
janet cardiff
angela bulloch
ann lislegaard
meira asher
andrea lange
susan hiller
marina abramovic
adrian piper
marit folstad
nadine robinson
hayley newman

connie burg
ut
susan stenger
c.k.m.
yoshimi
julie cafritz
gudrun gut
beme seed

laurie anderson

sofia gubaidulina
elizabeth lutyens
(twelve tone lizzy)
nadia boulanger
alla zagaykevych
gloria coates
olga neuwirth
kaija saariaho
odaline de la martinez

wendy van dusen
gretchen gonzales
nic endo
hanin elias
cobra killer
jessica rylan
rachael kozak
metalux
dolores dewberry
fe-mail
oblaat
sachiko m

cosey fanni tutti
slits
raincoats
esg
bratmobile
bikini kill
L7
sleater-kinney
third sex
delta 72
heavens to betsy
hole
the breeders
jennifer herrema
shelley hirsch
laetitia sadier

joni mitchell
nico
moe tucker
patti smith
marianne faithfull
kim gordon
deborah harry
lydia lunch
björk
x ray spex
joan jett

steina vasulka

daphne oram
else maria pade
delia derbyshire

laetitia sonami
maggi payne
lois vierk
annea lockwood
hildegard westerkamp
margaret de wys

tina frank
blectum from blechdom
tujiko noriko
people like us
chicks on speed
tracy & the plastics

m.i.a.
dj shortee

bridget st-john
erika elder
shirley collins
kendra smith
tara burke
coco rosie
cat power
josephine foster
christina carter
fursaxa
marissa nadler
heather leigh
murray
carla bozulich
christina carter
vashti bunyan
joanna newsom

Figure 11 Her Noise Artist Map @Electra

Guest curator Greta Pistaceci, in the review of the exhibition written in 2013, revealed that the overall *Her Noise* project is unconventional for it did not seek "to canonise" the acceptable artist and exclude the names that fail to fit in the mainstream list. "The Her Noise map does not have a beginning, end or straight story: it instead links together a multitude of contradicting and incomplete narratives"(Pistaceci, 2013, para. 9). For the present day, the network is shared with around 20 other online and physical organizations, archives and initiatives, such as Sem Wiki, CriSAP, Ekho (Women in Sonic Art), to name but a few. This allows artist to get familiar with financial opportunities, join new projects and find collaborators.

Finally, the possibilities provided by the Web 2.0 and radio were carefully analysed and explored by the curators of the project. While artist's perspective dominated the documentary film and the construction of the physical archive, reviews, written by the

invited guests curators contextualized the exhibited artworks and performaces. Apart from that, and similarly to Christiane Paul, Dzuverovic is convinced, that intrinsically, it is the role of the visual art museum to encourage the documentation and historicization of sounding art:

> "Do these practices need to be embraced by museums as a part and parcel of contemporary practice that should be collected, written about and displayed?
>
> Just like there is no single way to define 'the arts of sound', there is no single way to resolve the ideal relationship between museums and diverse sonic practices. Perhaps one can only conclude that institutional engagement with audio culture at large requires a shift of gear and a willingness to commit resources and take risks." (2007, secs 22–23).

Lina Dzuverovic and Anne Hilde Neset are actively commited to the physical and online documention project, hence, it is still fully available for consultation and is still growing and travelling around Europe.

4.3. Mapping the Sound of Europe: SoCCoS

The artistic director and independent curator of the Q-02 sound art laboratory, Julia Eckhardt, was a leading person behind the collaborative *SoCCoS* (2015-2016) project that used the Web as a way to document the current situation of the field of sound art. The distinctive quality of this project is that it is not related to any visual or media art institution collection, exhibition or festival. The project aimed to document existing artistic practices related to sounding arts and artworks that are still in the nascent or development stages.

SoCCoS (Sound of Culture - Culture of Sound) was a European research and network project for sound art, exploratory music and culture. It was active between 2015-2016 and simultaneously took place at several European organizations. Initiated by Q-02 (BE) working space and had four associated partners: Hai Art (FI), DISK Berlin (DE), A-I-R Laboratory (PL) and Binaural/Nodar (PL). All partner organizations are involved in the development of sounding arts in Europe through exhibition and event curation, research projects or support for artists residencies. The project received its main support from Creative Europe Funds of the European Union.

According to Eckhardt, SoCCoS began with an idea that art residencies abroad can trigger the artists to acquire new skills, discover different cultures and expand their existing networks (Eckhardt & Costa, 2016, p. 7). Hence, the main mission of the project was to stimulate the exchange between the curators, researchers, theorists, artists and non-professionals, active in the field of sound art in Europe. More than sixty exchanges are counted. The website was used as the main documentation platform, with the input equally provided by all partner organizations, or as it is stated online "The activities, residencies, artworks and related research will be documented on the website and finalized in a book publication" (SoCCoS, 2015). The backbone of the project is based on the idea, that each organization has its own established artistic community. The project initiated the exchange of individual members of the separate communities, situated in Finland, Poland, Belgium, Portugal and Germany. Antye Greie, the curator from Hai Art organization, states that the aim of SoCCoS was to encourage the decentralization of arts and foster the diversity of existing artistic practices (2016, p. 11).

During the period of two years, the collaborating organizations were inviting the each other's members for short art residencies. The duration of residencies lasted from several days up to a month. The host organizations were in charge to provide the artists with the technical material and advice, accommodation and a small financial contribution (depending on the needs of an art project). The participating artists, theoreticians, curators

or researchers immediately gained the access to the new network (also made available online): were granted the possibility to publicly present their residency or research outcomes to new audiences and receive feedback.
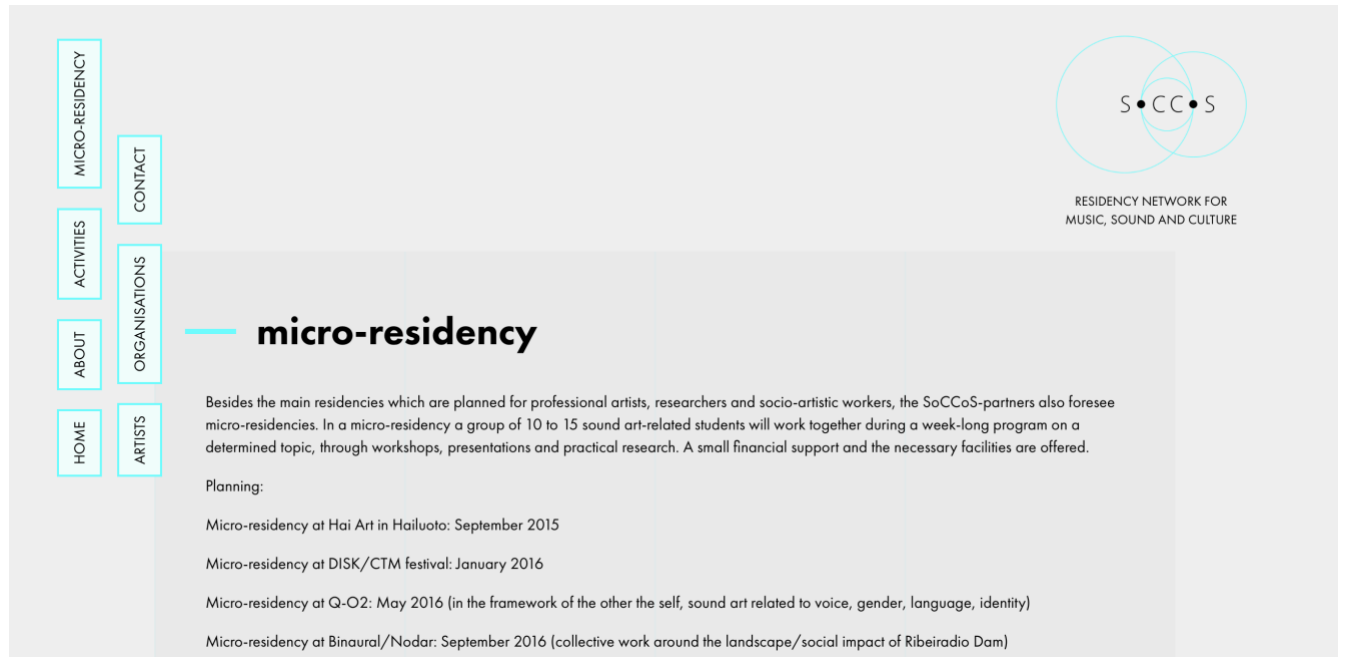

Figure 12 Definition of micro-residency on SoCCoS Website. @SoCCoS

The concept of an art residency is somewhat similar to the process of commissioning or production of an artwork but should be understood as a support for one of the necessary steps in the creation of an artwork. Most often, short art residencies allow an artist to progress with the development of one of the defined goals related to an artist project: collect or produce recordings, define how sound will be applied in a project, discuss and test the installation set-ups, get acquainted with the literature or scientific ideas.

SoCCoS website was maintained simultaneously to the residencies, and information about the ongoing art projects, events and presentations was published online. Each artistic residency was documented in several ways, depending on the project and artist's will to disclose the process: audio recording, photographs, project descriptions, sketches, listening maps, interviews, introspective texts. The participants of the residencies shared the literature they used, or the snippets of the audio material they gathered during the course

of the stay. The blog posts on the official SoCCoS website were used to disseminate the results in a form of "report", including images, texts, pieces of audio and video recordings. Reports were accompanied by curator's or organizer's text. Interviews, texts written by curators and artists and invited researchers, after the end of the project, where gathered for the publication "*Tales of Sonic Displacement: SoCCoS – Sound-based Artistic Residency Network*" (2016)[61].

Sound researcher Leandro Pisano believes that the framework of artistic residency "is an approach that claims the possibility of taking sound art beyond the walls of museum and galleries"(2016, p. 202). He also suggests, that art residency provides the artist with a studio, experimentation and research time. According to Julia Eckhardt, the artistic research is not the initial goal of such residencies, but developed into one: "I think it is only by observing how the artists worked, that I realised this is research. Of course, I also chose them in this way: that I wanted to be intrigued by experiments, new thinking and working methods, etc." (personal communication, May 24, 2018).

Artistic residencies allow artists to expand their network, share their audiences with the institutions (and vice-versa) and in exchange, gain more visibility. Other times, residencies result in the co-production or commissioning of artistic work. Some of the SoCCoS participants eventually gained more support. Kaffe Maffhews' *Sonic Bikes* was granted a financial aid, and Q-02, together with a Belgian Opera La Monnaie became a co-producer of the interactive sonic composition for *Sonic Bikes*, which was named *Finding Song Home*.

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[61] Also made available online.

Figure 13 Finding Song Home in Brussels, 2015. @Kaffe Matthews

Maffhews' *Sonic Bikes* is an interactive sound art project, which uses GPS and online data-mapping technology, that connects the sonic composition to a physical area in the city. During her one month stay in Brussels in 2015, Maffhews spend some weeks in the infamous Molenbeek neighbourhood, where she gathered recording for her compositions. The mapping application allowed Maffhews to link the composed pieces to a precise location in the explored area. Each street has an assigned soundtrack (see figure 14), which is only activated and made audible if the participant is equipped with a specially customized bike, made for that purpose. The *Sonic Bike* carries a black box with a GPS tracking audio system and two front speakers. The very moment the participant enters in the designated area, he or she starts hearing the sonic composition from the bike's speakers. Depending how quickly the participants cycle through the streets, he or she activates different layers of the piece.

Maffhews' project is essentially based on the well known sound mapping technique, primarily influenced by notions of "soundscape" and "acoustic ecology" (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2012, p. 7), terms coined by Canadian composer and theoretician R. Murray Schafer. Shafer, in 1969, became a founder of educational research group "*World Soundscape Project*"[62](WSP). As one of the group members, Hildegard Westerkamp defined it, WSP sought to document sonic environments (they used audio tapes), study the footprint of technology on what was heard and propose acoustic design solutions to improve the listening experience and the wellbeing of the listeners (1991, p. 1)[63]. Field-recordings are very often used in the sound installations and sound environments. Gathering sounds is only a small part in the installation making process. In the framework of *Sonic Bikes*, Maffhews collected recordings that represented the immigrant minority of Molenbeek. The artist manipulated and processed the audio recordings so they would fit the concept of the project. Maffhews interactive composition also resonantes with Dan Lander's ideas, discussed in the very beginning of the second chapter, as she seeks to use noise (chatter, songs, stories) in a creative manner and explore the possibilities of these recordings (Lander, 1990, p. 11).

As suggested by Maes, and in a similar vein as Neuhaus's *Drive In Music*, and de Boeck's *Staalhemel*, *Sonic Bikes* piece had no predefined duration, nor a single narrative that leads the participants in their bike journey. Hence, the participants are completely free to investigate and discover the area, activate sounds (thus interact with the piece). Maffhews reimagined the possibilities of the use of the GPS technology for artistic purposes, and as Lander and Maes suggested earlier, the creative use of technology constitutes the core of

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[62] Group consisted of R.M. Schafer, Bruce Davis, Peter Huse, Barry Truax, Howard Broomfield, Hildegard Westerkamp, and Adam Woog. Retrieved 27 Apr. 2018, from http://scalar.usc.edu/works/soundscape-composition-as-environmental-activism-and-awareness-an-ecomusicological-approach/the-world-soundscape-project-and-the-legacy-of-schizophonia#_ftn5

[63] Furthermore, Shafer was convinced, that natural sounds and soundscapes should not be invaded, and geographically displaced, dislocated as it would cause "schizophonia", the replacement of authentic soundscape by unnatural sounds which do not belong to environment, thus creating dissonance between human being and its habitat. Shafer expressed his critique to developing field of sound recording, transmission, reproduction and storage techniques employed by electroacoustic musicians, and creatives working with sound (Reich, 2016, para. 1).

this piece, with the main medium being - the sound. *Sonic Bikes* also carried a political statement - the project was directly responding to the current political situation of Belgium migration's laws. As reported on the SoCCoS website:

"Through meeting and sharing with often illegal non-European Brussels immigrants, Matthews has gathered a mass of their stories which, intimately told through the voices of the tellers, create a multi-threaded libretto to be revealed by audience cycling the GPS linked sonic bikes through and beyond Brussels centre"(SoCCoS, 2015, para. 4)[64].

Figure 14 Interactive Score for Finding Song Home in Brussels, 2015. @Kaffe Matthews

Coming back to the SoCCoS website, this is where the ongoing, experimental artistic activities were discussed and posted (through blog posts, reports), together with the

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[64] http://soccos.eu/activities/detail/finding-song-home

critical insights from the cultural producers. All member organizations shared their strategies of creating, writing, researching and thinking about the arts of sound. The audience was granted the possibility to glance into the creative processes, participate in the workshops and presentations, give feedback. SoCCoS website, hence, acted as a link maker between various cultural producers from different European countries: artists, curators, researchers and the audience. The publication was ment to finlize the documention of the whole project. According to Julia Eckhardt, the publication "does not represent all activities of the project, but rather takes three distinct perspectives: that of the artist, the organiser, and the outside observer – in this case four researchers deepening the project through related topics"(2016, p. 7). This is also true for the website, only some parts of the project were shared and documented on the web.

In a totally similar manner to *Her Noise* project initiators, who invited eleven guest curators with a demand to write a review for the blog, SoCCoS invited four researchers to reflext on the project in a written form. Pisano, one of the guest researchers, reported that:

> "By focusing on the plurality of the European sound cultures in all their 'new' and experimental forms, SoCCoS implies both the material and immaterial movement of people, thoughts, and ideas towards sonic practices. It contributes toward a definition of Europe that is not only historical and traditional, but also imaginary and diasporic" (Pisano, 2016, p. 202).

SoCCoS, similarly to *Her Noise* also used the medium of the Web 2.0 and explored the potencials to document and share the project with the distant communities, increase audience participations, exchange their networks. However, contraty to *Her Noise* curators, SoCCoS organizational participants were interested in the possibilities to organize themselves, but not necessarily to collaborate with the well known and established visual art institutions. In fact, as Luís Costa, curator from Binaural/Nodar organization reflected in the publication, SoCCoS created "the opportunity to make sound art in a place so

detached from sophisticated art circles" and "produce meaningful art that could eventually go beyond the clichés of mainstream discourses"(2016, p. 13).

4.1. Experimentation and Openness

As pointed out in Art Museum analysis prepared by the Smithsonian Institution, the research in the museums and art institutions is rarely undertaken for the sake of the artworks themselves. If Academia undertakes research in art, it is for the sake of understanding the socio-cultural value and influence of art on society, research in art institutions has slightly different goals. This activity is either directly linked to the collection that the art institution has or is about to acquire or is done in relation to the projects connected to the public presentation of the art works – such as upcoming exhibitions.

> "Art historical discourse within academic circles has moved farther from the physical manifestation of the object and closer to its imagery and social context, while museum curators, driven by the needs of acquisition and exhibition, have maintained their base in connoisseurship and identification." (Smithsonian Institution, 2001, p. 2)

However, some art institutions also create possibilities and infrastructures for artistic research, where institutions act as supportive entities, providing artists with more or less elaborate technical facilities, studio spaces, time and finances for project development. SoCCoS, hence, is a good example of such a case.

As defined by a group of researchers Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén, artistic research stems from the inside-in artistic practice, and encompasses open-ended, historical, context-aware process of perfecting one's artistic skills and vision which leads towards conceptualization

of notions, ideas and processes (Hannula, Suoranta, & Vadén, 2014, p. 17). The artistic research will most often consist of sketches and working plans, materials and data on artwork development, finished art works or performances. Artistic research provides means for the outsiders, public, to get closer to systematic and conceptual understanding of the creative processes effectuated by the artist practitioner while creating the artwork, and sometimes can be understood as documentation of an artwork from the "inside":

> "Thus, the process creates a body of material that can be used as the publicly available record of the phenomena that one wants to talk about in one's research. In reporting on the research, in making it available to others, this material provides means for arguing, showing, detailing, explicating, implying, connoting, being ironical and so on." (Hannula et al., 2014, p. 16)

Though it was not the initial goal of SoCCoS blog, as indicated by the Hannula et al, it has created a framework for documentation of artistic research. The documentation of artistic research, as discussed earlier, is similar to what Sarah Cook named "instant historicization" or "self-historicization" process. If to apply a theoretical scheme, suggested by Cook, *Her Noise Archive* and SoCCoS founders aimed to use three different strategies:

(1) produce the necessary documents and recordings, that reflect the current state of certain artworks and the field in general;

(2) foster self-historicization process, by providing the artist with the framework for contextualizing their activities;

(3) commission artworks; attract a wide range of public online and through radio, invite quest curators or researchers for text and review production (Cook, 2014, p. 213).

Though the two discussed projects, *Her Noise* and SoCCoS, are separated by 10 years, two other tendencies are noticeable in both, it's the experimentation with the medium of the

Web and openness towards a multiplicity of existing artistic practices. It is at the core of both projects to encourage the representation of non-official art practices..

The patterns, observable in both project, as earlier suggested by Paul, is the autonomy, that the individual curators gain to organize themselves, establish and manage exchanges and expand their communities through the use of the Web 2.0. Both projects could even prove to be valuable examples for bigger institutions.

Finally, the blogosphere, as suggested by O'Reilley, show tendencies to suit the cultural producers in their pursuit to spread the knowledge about the field, connect the artists, curators, and researchers and create a framework for documentation of their activities.

PART 5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reviews the key findings with regards to the initial research questions of this academic study. It provides a summary of the results, based on which, the further discussion is developed. The results are contextualized, their limitations are identified and the possibilities for the future research are considered.

5.1. How to Document Ephemeral Art?

The main subject of this study was the documentation practice related to the sound-based art, and more precise, interactive sound art installations and sound art environments. This research aimed to identify an efficient documentation model, that could be suitable for institutions, curators, and artists to use. It also aimed to identify the main elements that require preservation through documentation.

Though sound art practice can be studied from many various angles in this research it was tackled from the perspective of media art, which means that the literature studied here aimed to understand the role and the impact of the digital and electronic technology to the practice and indicate what documentation models are suitable for its later preservation and contextualization in the art discourse.

The subject of study was approached through different questions, both, by analysing the history and the nature of sound art, it's relationship to the technological tool that it utilizes and by differentiating sound art from traditional visual art practice and music. Apart from this, four existing documentation strategies were studied, two, initiated by art institutions (art museum and media art festival) and two, established by independent sound art curators. The central aim was to understand the contribution of the curator into the

discourse of the study subject, hence, the bibliographical research was used as the main method. The study combined artwork analyses, and case study method.

The second and third chapters of this academic research aimed to define the elements that differentiate sound art installations and sound environments from musical and visual art practice, as to identify which of its elements are the most endangered. The analyses of the theoretical texts (Cox, 2011; Lander, 1990; Licht, 2009; Maes, 2013) show that a clear-cut differentiation is difficult to provide, since sound art, if understood as a hybrid form of art, merges visual and musical components. However, there are some elements which can be distinguished. As Lander already proposed, what differentiates a sound artist's approach is the active exploration of the technological tools used for the production of these artworks. Sound artists manipulate and rethink them, as to reflect, transform and produce new meaning of already existing sound (noise) (1990, p. 66). Maes suggests, that sound artists adapt, customize, improve already existing or invent the necessary technological tools, in order to achieve the possibilities to produce, muffle and reflect sound (2013, pp. 73–74).

Though making a clear distinction between sounds, produced by sound art installations and environments, from sounds, used in the experimental or electronic music, was close to impossible, it was argued that the manner in which the sonic material is used in sound art, made that differentiation possible. As already discussed, for Maes, it is the non-narrative, non-structural, interactive sonic composition, that has no clear beginning nor an end, an open time framework, that allows the visitor to decide on the duration of the piece, and the absence of a musician, performing a musical instrument, that constitutes the distinctive elements of sound art (2013, pp. 73–74). For Lander, it is the use and the questioning of a non-musical sound, or noise, that differentiates sound art from music (1990, p. 14).

The context of the audition, or space where sound artworks are exhibited and presented, is an equally important element for its differentiation from music, according to Cox (2011, p. 83), Licht (2007b, p. 74) and Maes (2013, p. 74).

Hence, three main elements could be set out as distinguishing sound art from music and visual art:

1. *The questioning and creative use of sound recording, transmission and generating technologies and techniques;*
2. *Creative use of sonic material (noise);*
3. *Context or space of presentation (excludes the concert hall).*

The comparative study of the *Drive In Music* and *Handphone Table (2nd chapter), Staalhemel* (3rd chapter) and *Sonic Bikes (4th chapter)*, provides a practice-based approach for answering the initial question of this research. As it can be observed, various materials, such as natural or urban environment, tables, steel plates, bicycles or hardware - radio transmitters, sound systems, brainwave scanners, GPS locating systems - are used in the selected sound art works. Visual art forms, such as minimal or conceptual art, could equally utilize such objects. In the fine art tradition, however, the materiality and originality of an art object are of a crucial importance. Meanwhile, the material elements or the hardware, in the examined art pieces, constitute a framework of such projects, the "area of activity" (Kluszczynski, 2010, p. 2), but not a complete artwork. Sound installations and sound art environments in question are not achieved by simple integration and playback of sounding elements in the static material objects. The key element of analysed sound art works is that they call for interaction with the audience, are participative and performative and are more to be understood as "artworks-events".

Consequently, the additional elements that differentiate sound art from visual art were found:

1. *Immateriality (artwork interaction with external elements, such as audience, environment, networks)* (Paul, 2012, p. 33)
2. *Changing digital states* (*due to changes or reconfigurations in software, data, algorithms or codes)* (Cook, 2014, p. 2013)
3. *Ephemerality and temporality of sound art artworks (related to the need to reinstall artwork each time they are showcased)*(Maes, 2013, p. 170)*.

Needless to say, it is precisely the non-functionality of the electronic hardware or digital components that threatens media artworks the most, and why the question of documentation is so crucial.

The second research question tackled in this study aimed to identify an efficient documentation model which could be adapted by curators, artists and art institutions working with the medium of sound. This is discussed in the 3rd and 4th chapters. The common denominator for the chosen cases – Ars Electronica Digital Archive, Variable Media Questionnaire, Her Noise Archive and SoCCoS – was related to the circumstances in which these projects emerged. They appeared in response to the issues present in the field, an acknowledgement that media (including sound art) is essentially an ephemeral practice that needs to find other ways to be preserved. Jon Ippolito writes that "[s]torage, the default preservation strategy for museums from the 18th to the 20th centuries, is proving to be of limited value in the 21st" (2003, p. 51). Similarly to Christiane Paul, Ippolito suggests, that collecting the hardware is not the safest and not the most productive preservation technique for media art.

While Ars Electronica (AE) is one of the pioneering institutions in digital archiving, it mainly represents the institutional record of the artworks. Only the awarded artworks are documented. The lack of documentation of the non-awarded artworks is, however, a serious issue for the sound art installations, or sound art environments, which tend to engage with the audiences, networks or other systems, use environmental sounds or where sounds are generated by the audience. The documentation of alike works seems absolutely necessary. The AE archive is, however, more invested into the documentation of scientific and theoretical discourse: the largest part of the documented material consists of the video recordings of lectures, keynotes, and presentations on the topics, introduced and produced by the AE. On the other hand, archives and detailed documentation of the artworks, shows, exhibitions or festivals, are providing sustainable means for understanding and preserving media works in the long run.

In case of the Variable Media Questionnaire, the documentation practice is concerned with the preservation of the artworks that are already acquired for the institutional collection. The aim to integrate artist's perspective in the preservation practice is highly positive, especially, having in mind, that this initiative emerged in 1999, and that various institutions are keen to adapt and develop this strategy further. However, the independent curatorial projects, such as Her Noise and SoCCoS, illustrate that the field of sound art is extremely diverse and that the documentation and preservation discourse, is able to incorporate the input from the artists, invited researches, and curators. As noted by Sarah Cook, certain types of artworks might eventually disappear - stop functioning, their data might be lost, the networks or systems that they engage with can become non-accessible – and never reach the museum collection. Hence, such independent initiatives are necessary and fruitful. Paul states that it is unlikely, that all the artwork will get to the institutional collections, hence, searching for the "third way" can be observed in such independent initiatives as Her Noise and SoCCoS. It also can be noticed that the documentation and contextualization practice is slowly leaving the institutional contexts, and the Web 2.0 allows to foster decentralized perspectives, where a curator, an artist, and the audience have a saying. The Web seems to be a valuable tool for sharing skills, expanding networks, and eventually leads to unexpected results, such as collaborations or artwork commissioning.

However, within the scope of discussed case studies and analysed artworks, one single model could not be identified as the most successful and most efficient. While independent curators find it important to document the less-official, emerging or developing practices, understand the driving forces of the field, the art institutional perspective seems to be guided by the artworks that are acquired for the collections or that prove to show a certain level of artistic excellence. Hence, the documentation models depend on the inner motivations of the initiating institution or the curator, but most of all, from the needs and specificities of an individual artwork. The specific objective of this study also aimed to determine if media artwork documentation models can be equally be applied to the sound art installations and sound environments. In the analysed research literature related to

media art and used here, sound art is not distinguished as a separate practice. Smithsonian Institution suggests considering media and sound art practices under the umbrealla of time-based media and if necessary, adapt documentation according to the needs of the individual artwork (Nevers, 2010).

Finally, Carole Nevers' (2010) statement, that documentation practices are still in the experimental stages, seems to be the case for media and sound art. As Paul notices, substantial issue of the field is the lack of established standards, categories or methodological approach for coherent documentation practice. "Current vocabularies and tools for describing and documenting artwork hardly accommodate the various mutations new media art undergoes" (Paul, 2012, p. 32). What creates obstacles to establish standartised documentation methods for sound art installations and media art in general? As discussed in the introductory chapter, this is related to the variety of influences that sound art inherited from music, visual and media art. It is difficult to situate the practice within one single field of study. Even more, today, artistic practices became very diverse, and creators do not hesitate to experiment, collaborate or develop personal approaches to their practice. Many sound artists navigate between the fields of visual art, performace, architecture and design, event urban art or classical composition. Therefore, once more, it is the artwork that must be studied, in order to understand which methods of documentation could eventually be applied to it.

The limitations of this study could be addressed to the choice of the literature. Only the English-speaking discourse is represented and analysed in this study, with the intention to understand how curators of the field perceive this practice. Sound art, hovever, is an interationally spread artistic practice, equally present in Scandinavian, Italian, French or German discourses, that this research did not include. Most probably, not all the findings could be applied to all cultures, as the histories and definitions of sound art vary across the globe. Nevertheless, artworks and case studies examined in this research represent only a tiny segment of all possible examples. Any institutions that has a time-based, ephemeral or

sound art collection faces similar issues, related to the preservation and contextualization of such works of art. As mentioned in the third chapter, several art museums in Europe do own sound artworks in their collections. This research did not go further to investigate the situation of documentation in these institutions, but the future research could foresee such study. As Christiane Paul suggests, established art institutions have more financial means and more developed infrastructures to tackle preservation questions related to media art. Here, this was only touched upon very briefly. The future research could also analyse the practice of documentation from the point of view of the creator(s).

In respect to the complexities of the field, this research aimed but to explore the different approaches related to the documentation of sound art works. The interesting observations, that this research allows to do now, is that independent curators tend to practically and theoretically explore, not only the possibilities of the Web 2.0 as a public space, but that of artwork documentation too. This might be related to the curiosity of the cultural producers or their intuition, that not everything can and will be documented, and that the eventual loss of certain elements and certain artworks is inevitable. The examples of Her Noise and SoCCoS could point to different patterns of perceiving the situation of endangered practice, where the exchange of creative skills, knowledge and building networks is perceived as more sustainable practice than an archive. Indeed, both are crucial.

Eventually, even a well established document still risks the dangers of misinterpretation, or, as suggested by Jean Baudrillard, it risks to be perceived as an artwork, instead of being a document of the past. "It is more difficult for us to imagine the real, History, the depth of time, or threedimensional space, just as before it was difficult from our real world perspective to imagine a virtual universe or the fourth-dimension. The simulacra will be ahead of us everywhere"[65].

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[65] Book by Jean Baudrillard Simulations (1983) English edition translated by Paul Foss et al.

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