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## **Ambulatory Sound-making.**

### **Re-writing, Re-appropriating, “Presencing” Auditory Spaces**

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*If movement is itself a potentially transformative activity,  
then moving to sound is doubly so*

Michael Bull (2007: 47)

### **Walking as Embodied Situated Spatial Knowledge**

Walking has featured in sound studies discourses first of all as a mobile, situated and embodied methodology to explore and perceive auditory spaces. In other words, it has been interpreted primarily as a “form of engagement integral to our perception of an environment” (Pink et al. 2010: 3). This interpretation, beyond aligning itself with some recent trends in urban anthropology, is linked to a whole tradition of thought that understands walking as a means to perceive, read and comprehend the environment.

The origins of this tradition are far from recent and are rooted in the late nineteenth century. The *flâneur* – recently back in vogue in a plurality of researches (Tester 1994; D'Souza and McDonough 2006; Elkin 2016, among others) – represents the archetypal figure of this possibility of exploration and observation of urban space from below by crossing it. As Mary Gluck states, the true prerogative of this literary figure, both a symbol and a symptom of the emergence of the modern city, is

[his] radical sensibility and innovative visual practices, which made him distinct from all other social types of his age. The *flâneur's* unique achievement was to pioneer a new way of seeing, experiencing, and representing urban modernity that privileged the everyday perspective of the man of the street over the bird's eye view of the rationalist or the moralist. (Gluck 2010: 272)

It is precisely this ability to observe the new metropolitan landscape from an internal perspective, by walking through it, that characterizes the *flânerie*.<sup>1</sup> The *flâneur's* mobile

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<sup>1</sup> Visual practice is fundamental to *flânerie*. Although in *The Arcade Project* it is possible to

gaze bonds the links between the heterogeneous elements that make up the urban fabric, tracing its fragmentary nature to continuity. This activity has a revealing potential: the possibility to perceive and experience the world outside of any banalizing frame, capturing the aesthetic dimension of everyday life.

If much of the literature on *flânerie* remains focused on visual perception, other contributions insist on the embodied and intersensory nature of walking (Sansot 2000; Thibaud 2008; Thomas 2010, among others). David Le Breton, for example, claims the centrality of the relationship between body and world unfolding through walking in opposition to the erosion of the sensory sphere in contemporary life. The city, for the French anthropologist, is an inexhaustible source of both physical and mental stimuli:

The relationship existing between the walker and the city, with its streets and neighborhoods, whether one already knows them or discovers them on the way, is above all an emotional and bodily one. A sound and visual background accompanies his ambulation, his skin registers temperature variations and reacts to the contact of objects and space. He crosses layers of inviting or repelling odors. This sensory plot infuses the walk along the streets a pleasant or unpleasant shade depending on the circumstances. The experience of walking in the city solicits the body in its entirety. (Le Breton 2000: 14)

In these contributions, immersion and sensorial contact reinforce the *flâneur's* internal, "bottom up" perspective and walking becomes a methodology for "knowing the world through the body and the body through the world" (Solnit 2001: 29): a methodology producing a situated, affective and embodied spatial knowledge.

### **Soundwalking as Auditory Spatial Knowledge**

This situated, internal, embodied and affective methodology to experience space is fundamental to soundwalking. Anticipated in the mid-Sixties by artists and musicians such as Max Neuhaus and Philip Corner, soundwalking has been defined and canonized within the World Soundscape Project (Westerkamp 1974; Schafer 1994) to spread, in the following decades, into a multiplicity of different research and aesthetic practices.<sup>2</sup> What all these practices share is the will to develop often participatory experiences of exploration of space through a perceptual reorientation on hearing (Drever 2009; McCartney 2014). As stated by

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find several observations on sound and the acoustic phenomena characterizing the modern metropolis, Walter Benjamin himself affirms, "the category of illustrative seeing [...] is basic for the *flâneur*" (Benjamin 1999: 419).

<sup>2</sup> See also the contribution of John Drever elsewhere in this Handbook.

Hildegard Westerkamp, soundwalking can be done alone, in groups, with a map, recording, interacting with the environment or simply listening: "No matter what form a soundwalk takes, its focus is to rediscover and reactivate our sense of hearing" (Westerkamp 1974). In other words, soundwalking proposes to cross the environment to "listen" rather than to "hear," defining listening as a way to know and relate to the world.<sup>3</sup>

For Westerkamp, beyond orienting and establishing a dialogue between the walker and the environment, soundwalking has also an aesthetic potential and "reveals the poetics of space" (Westerkamp 2010). However, in the World Soundscape Project, soundwalks are first of all used as a methodology to make a first acoustic cartography of studied sites (Paquette and McCartney 2012) and – in Schafer's pedagogical and ethical perspective – they are thought first of all as "useful educational experiences for everyone" (Schafer 1977: 1), as exercises to refine our listening sensibility and to prepare the field for the development of sound design (Schafer 1977: 82). In continuity with this pedagogical and research vocation, soundwalking is used today as a qualitative *in situ* research methodology in the field of ethnography, sociology, geography, etc. (Pink 2009; Gallagher and Prior 2017 ; among others).<sup>4</sup>

### **Walking as Re-Writing and Re-Appropriating Space**

Yet, walking is not only a practice that allows us to immerse ourselves in space, to know it from the inside, through contact and proximity. Walking – the first anthropic sign of demarcation, appropriation and mapping of territories (Careri 2006) – is also a spatializing practice: a practice producing space (Lefebvre 1974).

This view is particularly important in French literature, where considerable emphasis is put on walking as a way to re-appropriate and rewrite the urban. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau starts the chapter devoted to walking in the city by comparing the view of Manhattan from the World Trade Center with the experience of the

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<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, the role of listening and hearing is often marginal even for the thinkers who have most insisted on the bodily nature of walking. Le Breton, for example, devotes a paragraph of his *Eloge de la marche* to the auditory dimension of urban space but proposing a negative interpretation of it, while he recognizes the centrality of vision in the intersubjective relationships typical of urban experience: "Urban sociability induces an excrescence of the gaze and a suspension or residual use of the other senses" (Le Breton 2008: 162). On the distinction between "hearing" and "listening" see, among others, (Barthes 1982) and (Kassabian 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Moreover, in the same years of the WSP, in France CRESSON began to develop peripatetic methodologies for research on sound effects in urban environments (Thibaud 2001).

passersby. He also underscores the role of the body by emphasizing its exclusion in the view "from above":

To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city's grasp. One's body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law; nor is it possessed whether as player or played, by the rumble of so many differences and by the nervousness of New York traffic [...] His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. (De Certeau 1984: 92)

However, for De Certeau, pedestrians' practices are not only a way to read and perceive, but also (and first of all) a form of *writing* of urban space. In his words, the city becomes "an urban 'text' [passersby] write without being able to read it" (De Certeau 1984: 93). By establishing a clear dichotomy between planners and users and assigning to the latter the possibility of reshaping the spatial order imposed from above, De Certeau interprets walking as one of those resistance tactics through which users can reconfigure the dominant cultural economy. Accordingly, he explicitly refers to the linguistic system by comparing walking to a speech act:

The act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered. At the most elementary level, it has a triple "enunciative" function: it is a process of appropriation of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian [...], it is a spatial acting-out of space [...]; and it implies relations among differentiated positions, that is, among pragmatic "contracts" in the form of movements. (De Certeau 1984: 97-98)

As a linguistic system, the functionalism of urban planning provides a system of use and control of spaces, setting up a number of possibilities, rules, and interdictions. Pedestrians actualize and put this system in use, but they can also redefine, reinvent or deny its rules, thereby creatively re-writing urban space through their personal and social practices.

This linguistic metaphor returns in the writings of several authors and notably in Jean-François Augoyard's *Step by Step*. In this examination of the everyday walking patterns in a newly built borough in Grenoble, Augoyard proposes a rhetoric of walking and describes this practice as a form of interaction between the pedestrian's individuality and the organization of the built environment, as an act of articulation of the urban spatial structure, as a way to read and re-write space:

Walking resembles a reading-writing. Sometimes rather more following an existing path, sometimes rather more hewing a new one, one moves within a space that

never tolerates the exclusion of one or another [...] the succession of steps effectively rewrites the space that opens before the walker, even when done in the slightest of action modes. (Augoyard 2007: 25)

From this perspective, urban spaces are not stable and inert formations, but are activated and actualized by the practices of those who cross them, by the "legs' generative grammar" (Bailey 1992) put in place through walking. Therefore, walking becomes a methodology to read, but also to re-appropriate and re-write space.

### **Soundwalking as Interacting with and Re-writing Auditory Spaces**

Brandon LaBelle translates this process in the auditory realm:

The urban soundscape is itself a material contoured, disrupted, or appropriated through the meeting of individual bodies and larger administrative systems. From crosswalk signals, warning alarms, and electronic voices, the urban streets structure and audibly shape on a mass scale the trajectories of people on the move. In contrast, individuals supplement or reshape these structures through practices that, like de Certeau's walker, form a modulating break or interference. (LaBelle 2010: 92)

This interference, for the walking listener, can take the form of an interaction between her own sounds, those already travelling through the spaces she traverse and the acoustic features of the environment, transforming the city in a space-time multiplicity created and recreated in the contingency of her mobile experience.

By directing our attention to listening, soundwalking always also implies a relational way of experiencing or, better, of engaging with space. Listening provides information not only on the nature of the objects and subjects that inhabit the world but, first of all, on their mutual relationships, their constant becoming, their simultaneity. In other words, from the listening point of view, urban space is never static or inert, but is a field of dynamic, temporary and processual relationships: "a spatio-temporal geography, a dynamic geography of events rather than images, or activity rather than scene" (Rodaway 1994: 90). This geography is never independent of the one who crosses it. As Paul Rodaway writes in *Sensuous Geographies*: "The soundscape moves with the sentient as they move through the environment and it continually changes with our behavioral interactions" (Rodaway 1994: 87). The mobile ear of the soundwalker experiences the city as a continuous series of events in perpetual movement, a dynamic multiplicity that is constantly generated in relationship with her changing positions and behaviors. In other words, she never has an external position but always participates in the soundscape she listens to, contributing to

the ongoing constellation of sound events that is always already there in urban space and interacting with her environment through the reciprocal relationship that always exists between a sound event and the acoustic properties of the space where it propagates. Her own sounds spread through space and are reshaped according to its material and acoustic qualities creating different effects, such as resonance, reverberation, reflection, absorption. From an auditory point of view, then, we always both perceive and interact with auditory spaces as we traverse them. We always read and rewrite them.

### **Playing the City: Acoustic Interactions**

In current acoustic ecology's soundwalks, the most widespread and canonized "format" is the listening walk: a silent exploration of a sonic environment guided by a leader who selects the itinerary and suggests the listening approach (McCartney 2010). However, as Barry Truax's *The Handbook for Acoustic Ecology* suggests, soundwalking can be reinforced through sound-making:

In order to expand the listening experience, sound-making may also become an important part of a soundwalk. Its purpose is to explore sounds that are related to the environment, and, on the other hand, to become aware of one's own sounds (voice, footsteps, etc.) in the environmental context. (Truax 1999)

If we look at the World Soundscape Project's early definitions and related map-scores, sound-making appears to have an even wider scope. In *The Tuning of the World*, for example, after defining the "sound-walk" and the "listening walk," Schafer introduces several examples based on the idea of playing the environment and interacting with the context. He describes a walk where participants were asked to enter a store and tap on the top of tinned goods, thus "turning the grocery shop in a Caribbean steel band" as well as another walk where participants had to "sing tunes around the different harmonics of neon lights" (Schafer 1994: 212-213).

This interaction is further emphasized in several walks published in the *European Sound Diary* (1975): here, we find some map-scores conceived for different cities comprising an itinerary and instructions for listening to particular environments, but also for interacting with their soundscapes or their acoustic and architectural qualities. The *Vienna Soundwalk: Evening In The Old Town*, for example, starts in the St. Stephan Cathedral asking us to listen to its quiet atmosphere and to imagine the sound of its bell, but continues by suggesting to enter a passageway and "move through it playing with your fingers or a pencil on the shop shutters, grills on the floor, elevator grate, metal gate bars" (Schafer 1977: 83), to whistle while traversing an arch, to stomp on the wooden floor of a telephone booth. The instructions for Hildegard Westerkamp's *A Soundwalk in Queen*

*Elizabeth Park in Vancouver* (1974) follow the same direction. Westerkamp invites us to play Henry Moore's metal sculpture, to listen to the sound of our own footsteps or to clap our hands underneath a bridge to try to produce an echo and activate the acoustics of space.

In these early examples, soundwalking – an ambulatory auditory exploration of the environment – was equally understood as a practice of ambulatory sound-making to play the environment, to establish a process of re-appropriation and interaction with sites through action and site-specific sound-making. However, in the World Soundscape Project practice, sound-making is often subordinated to listening, and “playing the environment” while traversing it doesn't become a research or artistic methodology in itself. Conversely, this idea is often central in many ambulatory music and sound projects.

Michael Parsons' *Echo Piece (Canary Wharf)* (2009), for example, is a site-specific ambulatory composition for wind instruments in the homonymous district in London. This open piece is composed of short single notes played by a group of performers with trumpets, horns, and trombones “moving around and exploring the acoustic properties of an open-air space” (Center for the Aesthetic Revolution 2009). Players activate the environment by evoking echoes from the sound-reflective surfaces of the glass buildings in this financial area, developing a performance that becomes also a one-hour walk through it. Thus, *Echo Piece* is based on an acoustic interaction transforming the city's architectural fabric in an expanded resonant chamber.

If *Echo Piece* makes use of traditional musical instruments, several projects use voice to enter in dialogue with the environment. Voice as a vehicle of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, as the primary medium we use to communicate, to express ourselves, to look for reciprocity, to enter in relationship with the others and the world. In Viv Corringham's *Shadow Walks*, for example, the exploration of the environment becomes also a relational practice of vocal improvisation involving its inhabitants (Corringham 2010). For this series, which started in 2003, the artist asks local inhabitants to accompany her on their favorite walk to tell their personal histories and memories on the places they traverse. She records these conversations along the route and then comes back alone on the same path improvising with voice. Her improvisation is based on the acoustic qualities of sites and their soundscapes, but is also the result of her meeting with the inhabitants and their stories, recognizing the polyphonic nature of places. Voice becomes here a powerful way to dialogue with the environment, thanks to its embodied materiality as well as to its “paradoxical topology” (Dolar 2006: 73) between inside and outside, between self and the world. In other words, Corringham's site-specific ambulatory singing brings to the fore the negotiation of the interior and the exterior that is always already embedded in voice. At the same time, it makes use of voice in its “post-linguistic” form: voice beyond language and *logos*, as pure sound, as vibration emanating from the body to diffuse and interact with



space and, as such, as a "sonorous self-revelation that overcomes the linguistic register of signification" (Cavarero 2005: 176).

This acoustic conversation between self and environment is also explored through extra-aesthetic or anti-aesthetic acts and gestures. The sound of footsteps features in many projects exactly with this function (see Biserna 2018). The step – the primary physical contact between the walker and the environment – establishes an embodied relationship with sites made audible through the sound of our footsteps. Generated through the interaction between our moving body and the materials and surfaces of the environment – between feet, ground and the acoustic features of the surroundings – this sound projects our presence in space, activating it through sounding. As such, it continuously re-writes our auditory situation and actively interlaces with the many other rhythms and auditory dynamics taking place in urban space by means of our own personal rhythm, connected to our gait. katrinem's *SchuhzuGehör path of awareness*, for example, is a series of site-specific walks developed in different cities around the world using this sound to investigate their structures and their architectural and atmospheric qualities. Starting from on-site study and observation of local walking patterns and habits as well as from repeated explorations of a chosen area, the artist plans a route – a "path of awareness," as she calls it – designed to emphasize the self-consciousness of the walker with regards to his relationship with space through the interplay between sound events (footsteps) and the surrounding architecture. Through guided walks and site-specific scores inviting the public to wear their most resonant shoes, *SchuhzuGehör path of awareness* articulates a mode of subjective listening based on the acoustic interactions between our feet and the environment. The artist explicitly compares the shoes to musical instruments, asking us to re-focus our attention on our footsteps *as if* we were listening or participating in a musical performance to recognize our dialogue with the city, to carve out an embodied ecology, to locate ourselves in space, and to infiltrate the urban polyphony with our own specific rhythm, along with those of other pedestrians.

### **Walking as Sharing, Reclaiming and Occupying Public Space**

This "amplification" of our presence in the environment and interference with urban space's polyrhythms finds another framework in a large body of works in which walking is discussed against the background of the dynamics of access to and sharing of public space.

In this perspective, walking is, first of all, a way of "being present in the public space" (Gehl 2001: 135) and of reclaiming the "right to the city" (Lefebvre 1996). Secondly, it becomes a way to encounter the "Other," to expose oneself to the social, economic, and cultural complexity of urban life as well as "all the difference of age, taste, background, and belief that are concentrated in a city – and aroused by the diversity around them" (Sennett 1992: 122). It is the "walking 'between'" as described by Franco La Cecla, "the democratic

walking of those who move in the city and meet both known and unknown people" (La Cecla 2011: 76); a way of being in the presence of the unfamiliar, of the unexpected, of the stranger, thus enriching our experience and experimenting with forms of living together as well as of friction and conflict.

The urban condition, here, is understood as a forum of interactions with strangers, a platform for facing, recognizing, and alighting difference and complexity in the public sphere, all interpreted as key elements of democratic life (Jacobs 1961, Sennett 1977, Young 1990, among others). The street becomes a platform for public life and walking a methodology to cultivate and reclaim it. As Rebecca Solnit states: "Walking the streets is what connects [...] the personal microcosm with the public macrocosm. [...] Walking maintains the publicness and viability of public space" (Solnit 2001: 176).

This claim on the street as a primary site for sharing and participating in political life is also at the heart of the (often sonorous) campaigns of several groups fighting for the enlargement of the public sphere, such as Reclaim the Streets or Critical Mass. Their counter-cultural and sometimes carnivalesque street actions often explicitly refer to Situationism for which, through the *dérive*, walking became a dissensual practice aiming at analyzing but also transforming the environment of everyday life through collective participation. For the situationists, walking and drifting were both a method for psychogeographic research and a revolutionary tool, a way to counteract the functionalism, rationalism, and alienation imposed on everyday life and urban planning (Sadler 1999).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The Situationist International (SI), formed in 1957, was an organization composed of writers, artists, intellectuals, and political theorists, and active in several countries in Europe up to its dissolution in 1972. The SI analyzed and organized actions against the alienation and commodification of everyday life under the regime of the Spectacle and the capitalist mode of production. Accordingly, during the SI's first phase, several members worked on notions such as "unitary urbanism," "constructed situations," and "psychogeography" conceived as methods to study and liberate everyday life. Psychogeography, in particular, was first proposed by Guy Debord (one of the founders of the SI) in his *Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography* as "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographic environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals" (Debord 1955). Debord theorized the behavioral and emotional impact of urban space on human beings and proposed to analyze its effects to lay the foundations of a new environment designed according to the desires of its inhabitants. The main tool for this study was the *dérive*, described in the first number of the *Internationale Situationniste* as "a mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances" (SI 1958). Therefore, drifting – walking without an aim or goal, following the attractions and desires arisen by the environment – became a

Their program aimed at the suppression of art into politics by radically transforming the city, its ordering and its power dynamics to finally transform its life.

This permeability comes back very often in the arts, where walking emerges primarily as a privileged means to engage the urban in its many layers, crossing disciplinary boundaries, abandoning institutional venues and infiltrating the everyday. From the first Dadaist excursions in Paris to the many contemporary walking artists, walking is above all an “act of presence” (Ardenne 2004: 88) in public space.<sup>6</sup>

### **Playing the City: Occupying Acoustic Public Spaces**

Playing the city can also assume this role. In several music and sound projects ambulatory sound-making becomes a tool to subvert the urban’s auditory order, to reclaim difference and dissonance in public space, to promote and make audible collective presence and action.

Urban soundscapes reflect wider principles of spatial organization that also correspond to dynamics of power, control, and privatization. The sociologist Rowland Atkinson uses the terms “sonic ecology” to emphasize the power of sound and music to demarcate and connote space according to patterns related to use, to the social, functional, and cultural characteristics of the different parts of the city, as well as to their timing. In this way, the city is organized into “acoustic territories,” i.e. “spaces defined, owned or contested by those who, relatively speaking, control the soundscape of public and private spaces” (Atkinson 2007: 1910). In other words, the soundscape is not only organized, but also “socially organizing” (Atkinson 2007: 1907). Playing the city, making noise, in this regard, becomes a tactics to re-appropriate, activate or unsettle these territories, interfering with these patterns and disrupting the social organization of public space and life.

In the text/score *Suonare la città (Playing the city)*, the Italian composer affiliated to Fluxus Giuseppe Chiari proposes precisely this:

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method to experiment with, register, and understand urban atmospheres and their effects on human behavior and affects, as well as the base of a new cartography and a subversive way to counteract the productivity and consumerism imposed on everyday life through a collective practice of disorientation, an experimental way of inhabiting places, and a different use of space and time.

<sup>6</sup> The literature on walking in the visual arts is quite extensive: O'Rourke 2013; Evans 2012; Careri 2006; Baqué 2006; Davila 2002; Hollevoet 1992; Waxman 2017. Among exhibition catalogues: Arasse 2000; Horodner 2002.

*playing the city is – can be – also playing through –  
in the city  
but playing the city can also be playing (direct object)  
the city. Where the city is the object that receives the action of playing  
where the city replaces the word violin  
in the expression to play the violin  
[...]  
the city as an instrument  
as a musical instrument.  
(Chiari 1976)*

For Chiari, the purpose of this intervention is very clear: he writes it six times in capital letters: “to play out of tune.” The aim is to create interferences, to infiltrate the regulated rhythms of public space to disrupt the order imposed on everyday life and to open spaces for shared experimentation. “To interrupt a concert, a concert of people playing conventionally the same score by heart” (Chiari 1976). A purpose that is perfectly aligned with the refusal of the autonomy of art for direct action in everyday life – or, better, the constant connection between art and life – proposed by Fluxus. In this text and in *Suonano la città* – an action presented at *Campo Aperto* in Como in 1969 – not only Chiari abandons the institutions of music to invest public space and collaborate with the inhabitants, not only he proposes extra-musical gestures (like tapping on shutters, metal gates, etc.), but he directly questions the urban condition in its entirety: its limitations, its codifications, its regulations. Ultimately, playing the city is for Chiari a joyful subversion of the imposed (auditory) order, a contextual act rewriting the urban and its senses and the activation of a collective creativity diluted in social practices. The city, in its physical, social and political dimensions, becomes a context and a material. It becomes an expanded instrument.

Between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, comparable actions were developed in England among members of the Scratch Orchestra. Inspired by John Cage and Fluxus, this collective, founded in 1969 by Cornelius Cardew, Michael Parsons, and Howard Skempton, experimented with improvisation, indeterminacy and openness by further radicalizing the redefinition of the pre-established divisions between composer, performer and public. The collective dimension and the participatory attitude of the Scratch Orchestra lead the group not only to move away from institutional venues, but also to adopt a much more explicit political agenda. In the Scratch Orchestra’s practice, ambulatory sound-making appears in several verbal scores and itinerant projects, but the most striking event in this respect is the *Richmond Journey* (1970), planned by Psi Ellison and Stefan Szczelkun and presented in the general score as “a day long concert as a journey

throughout Richmond". On Saturday 16th May, the collective's members invaded this borough following a path imagined as an allegory of a revolt. The route was divided into eight "nodes" corresponding to different areas and, on each section, a member proposed collective actions in the form of scores or instructions. Stefan Szczelkun recalls:

We began by attempting to break the 'claustrophobic spell of capitalist normalcy': Richmond High Street was to be disrupted! We would then pay respects to our ancestors before climbing up through the residential district – recruiting deadened office workers. Our growing ranks would proceed to the top of the hill, to Richmond Park, to celebrate our connection to nature and reclaim the heights. After a break to eat we would descend through the steep Thames meadows and follow the great river on to our destination – that benign archive of the earth's flora, Kew Gardens. (Szczelkun 2003)

As Chiari's text, the event aimed to infiltrate the neighborhood's life to subvert it through actions such as intervening in Richmond High Street's stores or awakening the residential area by pressing the doorbells, knocking at the doors and so on.

At the end of the 1960s, then, ambulatory sound-making enters music experimentation to expand its contexts and practices. On the one hand, it becomes a paradigm of a wider interest in ordinary – "infra-ordinary" (Perec 1989), I would say – actions that characterizes some of the tendencies of the period, from dance to visual arts. On the other hand, it becomes a way to radically abandon cultural institutions and plunge into the polyphony of the world, claiming public space as a field of intervention and embracing everyday life through actions that could be compared to the situationists' "constructed situations": "a moment of life concretely and deliberately constructed by the collective organization of a unitary ambiance and a game of events" (SI 1958: 12).

This will to intervene in public space, to play the city while traversing it, continues today in a wide range of ambulatory performances, although sometimes with a less utopic tonality than in the projects mentioned before. Francis Alÿs's *Railings* (2004), for example, uses the city as an expanded instrument to be played while walking. For this performance in London resulting in a three-channel video projection and a series of maps, photographs and sketches, the artist reveals an hidden urban rhythm and enters in resonance with space by using a pair of drum sticks to play the railings enclosing the city's squares and buildings. The action makes audible this previously purely visual rhythm and amplifies the subtle threshold between private and public space – between the space of the pedestrians and the space that remains inaccessible – thus investigating and emphasizing persisting power structures embedded in the city's urban fabric.

*Marches* is a performance and series of scores developed by the artist Lawrence Abu Hamdan in 2005 and presented in various cities, including London, Glasgow, Lisbon, and Santarcangelo. As Katrinem's *SchuhzuGehör\_path of awareness*, *Marches* uses the footstep as a means "to exemplify the aural capacity to delineate space, treating architecture like dormant music, awakening it through the act of walking" (Abu Hamdan 2008: 3), but this project intervenes in the city by means of a collective performance. A group of performers meet and disperse in urban space according to the artist's instructions to interact with the architectures of the city and to create reflections, resonances, and other effects. The performers wear special shoes made by the artist in collaboration with artisans and designed to amplify this acoustic interaction. The performers' trajectories are also mapped out according to historical or sociological reasons: Abu Hamdan explored the histories of the cities to find stories of parades, marches, or protests that took place in the same area, thus allegorically echoing these past events. Therefore, the sound of the footsteps – emphasized by the customized shoes – allows the artist to rewrite and occupy the city, playing on its architectural and acoustic features as well as reverberating its cultural, social and political history.

A project by Ligna – consisting of radio, media, and performance artists and theorists Ole Frahm, Michael Hüners and Torsten Michaelsen – charges this collective unannounced presence in public space through itinerant sound-making with an explicit critique to its privatization and commercialization. *The Future of Radio Art* (2005) is an urban intervention that took place for the first time in one of Amsterdam's commercial areas, with several performers wandering around, carrying plastic bags and mixing with the crowd of shopping goers. Yet their bags concealed ghetto blasters broadcasting a radiophonic monologue for one voice. This voice dispersed in public space became a denunciation of its increasing privatization, a commentary on urban space power dynamics as well as a materialization of the potential of radio to connote and rewrite the situation of reception.

If Ligna's project plays on the threshold between radio and public space and between the aesthetic and the everyday sphere, other projects directly transcend art in political organization and action. Take a Stand Marching Band, for example, is a street performance group initiated by Elana Mann in 2017, on the occasion of the Los Angeles Women's March on January 21. The group has joined marches and demonstrations amplifying their voice against Donald Trump's administration with the artist's sculptures "hands-up-don't-shoot-horn" and the "histophone": two prosthetic "instruments for the human voice retooled from musical horns and megaphones in solidarity with social justice movements" (Mann). Cast from the human body, these sculptures cover the mouth of the speakers with one hand, while in fact amplifying their voice thanks to a trumpet, metaphorically and materially counteracting the silencing of people's voice. Playing the city, here, becomes a gesture of collective disobedience recalling a whole tradition of mobile sound-producing and vocal

tactics enacted in demonstrations and parades to interrupt the power structures of public speech, to give voice to those who are usually unheard or to vocalize a radical disidentification with the status quo by being present and audible through public space.

### **“Presencing” Urban Space**

An urban soundscape can be defined as a shared ecology where the city’s material, cultural, social, and political dynamics are audible and always open to multiple individual and collective negotiations and interactions. In this context, the walking body always establishes a plurality of auditory relationships. It perceives and reads the urban becoming and its spatio-temporal multiplicity in a situated, affective, immersive way – such as in the flaneur’s visual practice or in listening walks – but, at the same time, it always re-appropriates and re-writes its structure by interacting with its polyrhythm, its acoustics, its difference, its ordering, its public and private territories and their permeability.

Ambulatory sound-making reinforces this interaction by amplifying a personal or collective presence in public space and becomes a platform for self-representation, agency or transformation. This presence can be harmonic or disharmonic, producing consonances or dissonances. It can carve out an embodied auditory geography, inscribing the body in a conversation with the environment and establishing a dialogue with the city’s architectural fabric and social life. It can project a radical dissent, challenging and subverting urban representations, functions and practices, questioning and disrupting the sonic order or infiltrating and occupying the rhythms of public life. In any case, it is a matter not only of perceiving and knowing but of dwelling and participating: of “presencing” urban space.

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