

## Curatorial > LINES OF SIGHT

With this section, RWM opens a line of programs devoted to exploring the complex map of sound art from different points of view organized in curatorial series.

**LINES OF SIGHT** is a bi-monthly program, which takes its name from the interconnected points of the global resonant space created by radio and other wireless technologies. From out of the extraordinary array of music that plays on this worldwide stage, we will follow threads as diverse as musical notation and non-linear composition, and introduce artists who explore the ideas around transmission as a medium for creative expression.

Curated by Barbara Held and Pilar Subirà.

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**Barbara Held is a flutist, composer and sound artist, whose current focus is the rhythmic relationship between music and video image. She has commissioned and performed an idiosyncratic body of new repertoire for flute by both Spanish and American composers, and was the creator and producer of *Music at Metrónom*, a series of concerts of experimental music that gave special support to collaboration between musicians and visual artists. She believes in the responsibility of artist/curators to take a turn at presenting each other's work.**

<http://www.barbaraheld.com/>  
<http://barbaraheld.wordpress.com/>

**Pilar Subirà is a percussionist, a sought-after performer of new music and frequent member of various orchestras and chamber ensembles. For the past 15 years she has been presenting a daily program in the classical music channel of Catalunya Ràdio.**

You can submit your questions, comments and links to:  
[linesofsight@gmail.com](mailto:linesofsight@gmail.com)

# LINES OF SIGHT #5

## An Orchid in the Land of Technology

Many of the world's traditional cultures believe that we go through a cycle of ages that moves from light to dark; many consider that we live in the Kali Yuga, dark age, age of conflict, age of technology.

When Walter Benjamin wrote *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*<sup>1</sup>, it was 1936 and the world was rushing down a ramp to the horrors that were to come, however his view of our potential is an inspiration. For Benjamin the possibilities of mechanical reproduction of art, with its "withering of the aura" of the unique work of art, marked a change in human sense perception that would shatter tradition, connecting art to the renewal of the great social and political movements of our time. The change in our participation in art and in the masses of participants is reflected in his interest in and creation of works for radio.

John Cage was interested in the unpredictable present moment and he considered "the recording of a performance to be of no more interest than a postcard," (Yasunao Tone, "John Cage and Recording"<sup>2</sup>), but he used prerecorded material and radios to make music. The recording and reproduction of sound has had a major role in the compositional process of what we call *musique concrète*, electronic or electro-acoustic music, works that exist directly on "tape". Yasunao Tone's own "Musica Iconologos" was designed specifically for the CD medium and could not exist until mastered; the entire process of producing the CD is a seamless part of its composition.

A favorite story about the use of records: Salvador Dalí invited the organizing committee of the *Festival de Música de Cadaques* to his home in Port Lligat, and regaled them with "Tristan and Isolde with Frying Sardines", a performance of an ancient scratched LP.

The recording can be a reflection of the thoughts and emotions of a human being (Arthur Russell), memory (see Brandon LaBelle's project, *Phantom Music – Radio, Memory, and Narratives from Auditory Life*), or museum (Edgard Varèse used recordings of the Holy Week procession of the Catalan village of Verges, presented every year since the middle ages, in his soundtrack for a film on Miró). A studio production records one perfect performance, its presence in time and space similar to that of a film. Destructive noise can be transposed into delicate vibrations of a transparent membrane (Juan Matos Capote).

<sup>1</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1936  
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Yasunao Tone, "Cage and Recording", *Leonardo Music Journal*, Volume 13, 2003  
[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/leonardo\\_music\\_journal/toc/lmj13.1.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/leonardo_music_journal/toc/lmj13.1.html)



## 01. Playlist

- 01 Edgar Varèse **"La procesión de Verges"**, 1955. 2:54
- 02 Anne Wellmer, **"needle"**, 2003. 3:00
- 03 Brandon LaBelle, **"Dirty Ear"**, 2007. 8:42
- 04 Richard Garet, **"Précis"**, 2007. 6:00
- 05 Octante **"Untitled"**, 2008. 8:15
- 06 Arthur Russell, **"Home Away from Home"**, 1986. 5:12
- 07 Juan Matos Capote, **"The trembling of my Williamsburg art studio while they were constructing outside"**, 2008. 6:55 (Note: Please cover your speakers with a thin sheet of paper or acetate film to better appreciate the vibrations)
- 08 Roscoe Mitchell, **"Parched Plain"**, 2006. 13:06
- 09 John Bischoff, **"Override"**, 2002. 3:51
- 10 Andres Lewin-Richter, **"Study 1"**, 1964. 3:35
- 11 Matt Davis, **"Rain"**, 2007. 8:55

## 02. Track description

### 01

Edgard Varèse

**"La procesión de Verges"** (Holy Week Procession, Verges)  
1955

From the soundtrack of *Around and About Miró* by Thomas Bouchard.

Tracks of organized sound on magnetic tape, this copy is from the archive of Andrés Lewin-Richter, who was student and assistant to Varèse at The Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center.

Verges is a Catalan village well known for its procession and staging of the Dance of Death for Thursday of Holy Week. This tradition dates from the middle ages, and has been maintained without interruption until our time.

We asked Andrés about the experience of listening to old tapes, and if passing time and ears accustomed to the present state of our technology changed his perception of the music, and he answered that it was like hearing the essence of the person, like the sound of a voice, or a photograph.

More info:

<http://www.accompositors.com/compositores-curriculum.php?idComp=80>

Andrés Lewin-Richter: <http://www.iaa.upf.es/~alewin/>

### 02

Anne Wellmer

**"needle"**  
2003

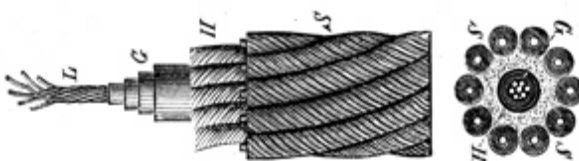
"Fu was a young engineering student from China whom I met during my stay in a student dormitory in Karlsruhe in 2003. At the time I was working on the idea of a radio play about the adventures of a needle that had got lost in a haystack. Fu offered to read from his diary to me, which he had written while traveling in France the previous year. When I recorded Fu's reading, I knew what he was talking about. But now I am not sure anymore whether it was really observations from a beach on the French Riviera".

Software & hardware used to create the work:

- OKM soundman binaural microphone + portable DAT recorder
- Doepfer analog modules
- Sony short wave radio
- Coil to pick up and amplify electromagnetic fields
- Software: Nuendo, Peak, MaxMsp
- Apple G3 Powerbook



4. Verbindung der Drähte.



6. 7. Atlantisches Kabel.

[Anne Wellmer]

Anne Wellmer is a sound artist, born to be angry in Germany in 1966, raised to be wild in America (1970-1973) and educated to be noisy in the Netherlands (1992-1997). Among her work are performances and installations, music theater pieces and choreographies. She performs as an improvising musician, as a composer and as a singer on various electronic instruments, such as the VCS3 EMS Synthi, the ARP 2600, the STEIM Crackle Box and laptops.

More info:

<http://www.nonlinear.demon.nl>

<http://myspace.com/uiuiuiikoo>

<http://myspace.com/nonlinearanalogica>

### 03

Brandon LaBelle

#### "Dirty Ear"

2007

1. "Home" (4:16)

2. "Closet" (4:25)

Expanding on the notion and activity of environmental recording, *Dirty Ear* is a series of audio works composed in relation to imagined spatial or locational settings. In this way, the location functions as a motif or theme as well as a target – each track aims for the imagined setting as a counter-sonority. Distraction, daydreaming, fantasy and sonic (mis)representation become figures in shaping musical fictions. Rather than seek to capture an existing environment with seeming invisibility, or to project a sense of the natural onto the listener, the work actively imagines and interprets environments through hyper-constructions that include aspects of irony and saturation. To do so the works are made up of various audio elements, consisting of downloaded sound effects, self-made field recordings as well as those generated by others, fabricated environmental sounds, and minimal electronics and beat-work, leading the listener through a series of micro-narratives that intertwine environmental reference with sonic imagination.

Brandon LaBelle is an artist and writer working with sound and related cultural narratives. Through his work with Errant Bodies Press he has co-edited the anthologies *Site of Sound: of Architecture and the Ear* (1999), *Writing Aloud: The Sonics of Language* (2001), *Surface Tension: Problematics of Site* (2003) and *Radio Territories* (2007), along with a series of monographs (Critical Ear series) on sound and media artists. As an artist he is active in the fields of sound installation, performance, and public interventions. His installation work has been featured internationally, including the exhibitions and festivals *Sampling Rage* (1999) at Podewil Berlin, *Sound as Media* (2000) at ICC Tokyo, *Bitstreams* (2001) at the Whitney Museum New York, *Pleasure of Language* (2002) at the Netherlands Media Art Institute Amsterdam, *Undercover* (2003) at the Museum of Contemporary Art Roskilde, and as part of *Tuned City* (2008), a festival on sound and architecture, Berlin. In addition he presented a solo exhibition at Singuhr galerie in Berlin (2004), an experimental composition for pirate drummers as part of *Virtual Territories*, Nantes (2005), and his *Prototypes for the Mobilization and Broadcast of Fugitive Sound* was exhibited at the Enrico Fornello gallery, Prato, in 2007. His ongoing project to build a library of radio memories was presented fall 2006 as part of *Radio Revolten*, Halle, Germany and at the Casa Vecina, Mexico City, 2008. He is the author of *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (Continuum, 2006).

More info:

<http://www.errantbodies.org/labelle.html>

### 04

Richard Gareth

#### "Précis"

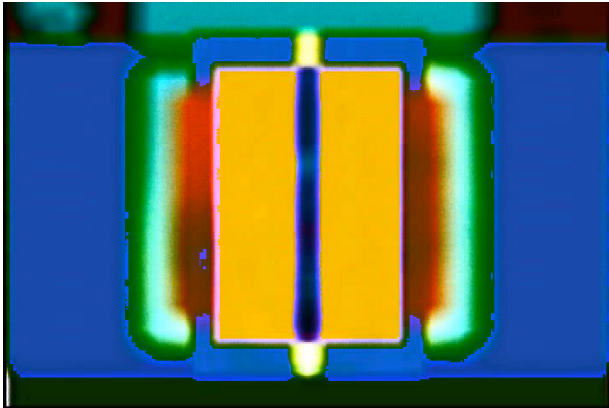
2007

First released on *Extract - Portraits of Soundartists*, May 2007

"This piece is the result of digitally processing the room recordings from two live performances that took place in Brooklyn, NY, during October 2007.



["Prototypes for the mobilization and broadcast of fugitive sound", 2007. Foto: Brandon LaBelle]



[Richard Garet, "Light Field II"]

About my sound work:

My sonic constructions propose that the listener/s engage with the work principally in a mode of active listening. The work usually exists as a stereo or various channel composition, site-specific installation, or performance. My work fits within and has borrowed techniques and methods from traditions such as Musique Concrete, Tape Music, and Process Music. Technically speaking my sonic work combines the use of both experimental electronic music and electro-acoustic music but is created in the computer environment. In the past years my work has dealt with concerns related to the investigation of aural phenomena, environment, spatial listening, structure, natural and evolving processes, and materiality. My interests also have brought me to further explore acoustics, psychoacoustics, binaural beats, different ways of recording sound, and establishing proper methods and techniques to achieving the work. Moreover, my interest also explores how sound creates architectural space, establishes or rejects social space, and how the presence of the body within the piece may change the listening experience and reinvent the sonic output of the work.

More info:

<http://www.richardgaret.com>

**05**

Octante

**"Untitled"**

2008

Margarida Garcia: electric bass

Ruth Barberán: trumpet, objects

Ferran Fages: electronics

Alfredo Costa Monteiro: accordion, objects

Fragment from a studio project that was begun in 2003 as a result of a recording made for *L'innovable*. Recorded in 2008 with Ferran Conangla, the improvisation focused on harmony, space, and dynamics.

More info:

Margarida Garcia: [http://www.creativesourcesrec.com/artists/m\\_garcia.html](http://www.creativesourcesrec.com/artists/m_garcia.html)

Ruth Barberán: [http://www.experimentaclub.com/data/ruth\\_barberan/index.html](http://www.experimentaclub.com/data/ruth_barberan/index.html)

Ferran Fages: <http://www.etuderecords.com>

Alfredo Costa Monteiro: <http://www.cremaster.info>

**06**

Arthur Russell

**"Home Away from Home"**

1986

Arthur Russell, cello and voice

From *Another Thought*, Orange Mountain Music. Reissue of POINT, produced by Don Christensen.

This song is taken from one of the series of CDs released since Arthur Russell's early death. He used the recording studio in his own intimate and subtle way, echo as a way of prolonging and highlighting certain syllables, creating moments of rhythmic intensity effects of illumination. Michael Crumsho spoke of his music as... "less a collection of songs and more a reflection of an actual human being, a representation of the thoughts, hopes, dreams and deep sadness that permeated the hours of everyday life".

More info:

<http://www.myspace.com/anotherthought>

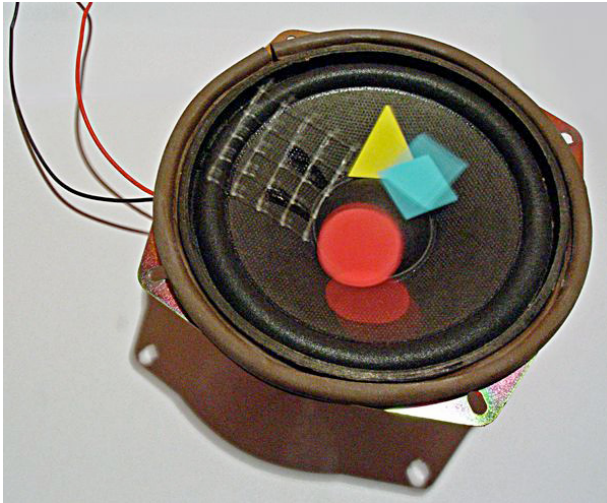


[Octante]



[Ferran Fages]





[Juan Matos Capote, "Visual element of 'The trembling of my Williamsburg art studio while they were constructing outside: speaker, circle, square, triangle and grid'"]

07

Juan Matos Capote

**"The trembling of my Williamsburg art studio while they were constructing outside"**

2008

Note: Please cover your speakers with a thin sheet of paper or acetate film to better appreciate the vibrations.

"'The trembling of my Williamsburg art studio while they were constructing outside' is a piece with one part that is visual and the other sound. The sound is an edited recording of the sounds produced by construction on various buildings near the studio where I lived and worked in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, during my last year in New York. It is a manifestation of the huge and rapid growth of real estate development in that part of the city. The recording consists of the noise of construction machinery, trucks, cement trucks, drills, etc.

These daily sounds, constant and irritating, kept me from being able to work properly in my studio, and woke me up in the early morning. During this period I was working on some paintings with geometric shapes, for which I needed precision and a steady hand. The construction machinery produced, in addition to the noise that invaded silence, vibrations in the building where I was working that made my hand tremble.

In order to take advantage of the adverse circumstances, I decided to record the surroundings in which I was destined to work, and to take advantage of it. My latest works (visual and/or sound) have to do with a reformulating of the experience of place or personal space. This is how the idea of this piece came about.

The visual part happens in the home or in the place where the listener is located. The listener can place a piece of thin acetate or some other similar material (sheet of thin plastic or paper), over the cones of the speakers without their protective covering, so that the low frequency sounds makes the acetate, or other similar material, vibrates. The more powerful the speakers, the more the effect of vibration is perceived, and a subwoofer works even better. In this way, the vibrations that attacked my building in Williamsburg, where I was trying to paint in silence and with a steady hand, are reflected. A variation of the visual element of this piece is to place small pieces of paper with different geometrical forms inside of the cone of the speaker (placing the speaker horizontally on a table). The papers move and vibrate inside the speaker due to the low frequency vibrations".

Juan Matos Capote is an artist from the Canary Islands. For the past 12 years he has lived in New York, and recently moved to Barcelona. He studied at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, where he received a Master of Fine Arts degree, and was recipient of a Fulbright grant. His training and artistic practice was originally visual. Later he began to work with aural elements, using onomatopoeias that he painted or "sculpted" with different tactile materials, interested in the perception and the relationship of our different senses. He began to work with sound in the most physical sense without abandoning his interest in the visual, with no formal training other than the study of circuit bending with the pioneer Reed Ghazala in Cincinnati, Ohio, and techniques of Deep Listening with composer and performer Pauline Oliveros. His latest sound work, *The Subway Aural Recordings*, is a series of compositions based on field recordings made in the New York subway, recently released on CD by Einzelnheit in Munster, Germany. He also performs as part of a duo called Thick Wisps. His work has been exhibited in North America, Europe, Australia and Africa.

More info:

<http://www.myspace.com/juanmatoscapote>

<http://juan-music.blogspot.com>

<http://www.youtube.com/juanmatoscapote>

<http://juanmatos-capote.Neoimages.net>



## 08

Roscoe Mitchell

### **"Parched Plain"**

2006

From Roscoe Mitchell Trio *No Side Effects*, a Rogue Art CD. Roscoe Mitchell, alto saxophone; Harrison Bankhead, bass; Vincent Davis, drums

*Parched Plain* is an improvisation for alto saxophone, bass, and drums with set parameters. Each musician is asked to create an improvisation that maintains individuality and intensity with a time limit of twelve to fifteen minutes.

Roscoe Mitchell's innovations as a solo performer, his role in the resurrection of long-neglected woodwind instruments of extreme register, and his reassertion of the composer into what has traditionally been an improvisational form, have placed him at the forefront of contemporary music for over twenty years.

Through his participation in the establishment of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) and as a founding member of the world-renowned Art Ensemble of *Chicago*, Roscoe Mitchell, composer and multi-instrumentalist was a major contributor to the creation of the body of musical literature that ushered in the post-Coltrane period. He has received numerous awards and grants including the National Endowment for the Arts, Wisconsin Arts Board, Vilas Foundation, University of Wisconsin-Madison and a research grant from Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique Musique (IRCAM) in Paris, France. He founded the Creative Arts Collective (CAC) of East Lansing, Michigan and is the founder/leader of the Sound Ensemble and a co-founder of the trio Space. In August 2007, he assumed the Diarius Milhaud Chair at Mills College, Oakland, California.

## 09

John Bischoff

### **"Override"**

2002

From *Aperture*, released by 23five, recorded and mixed by John Bischoff, Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College, Oakland, California.

Synthetic relations mediated by human agency. These are not natural processes, though they could be said to mirror the depth of musical hierarchy without the feeling of physical causation. Nuance, fabricated down to its very roots. Each piece is a physical presence – a time-based object resonant in air – that unfolds along an axis of reflective intention. Along with periodic error corrections and manual overrides. At each moment there is equal probability of sustaining the current condition or interrupting that condition. A kind of bit-wise synthesis driven by human contemplation.

These pieces were developed using the audio synthesis language Max/MSP. Various techniques – from additive synthesis, to FM, to sample-based processes – were constructed from the ground up by the composer. Each one is guided and altered in performance using a small set of manual controls. Recorded in real time with no overdubbing.

The recording, as memory/archive, as instrument, as transcription of a perfect performance, and as sound art using field recordings.

More info:

<http://www.23five.org>

<http://www.johnbischoff.com>

10

Andrés Lewin-Richter

**"Study 1"**

1964

Like any musical study, "Study 1" sets out to explore new fields that the composer is initially unfamiliar with. This piece discretely explores "instrumental" sounds, such as bells, pizzicati played on a double bass and percussive sounds, using electronic sound generators to generate rhythmic cells of tension and release as well as purely electronic sounds that create continuous bass backgrounds. The material is placed on 6 tracks and 4 synchronised tape recorders with perfectly pre-set entry points. When the piece was performed, it had to be possible to synchronise these during a maximum of 60 seconds. For this reason, the piece is divided into four sections.

More info:

<http://www.accompositors.com/compositores-curriculum.php?idComp=80>

<http://www.iaa.upf.es/~alewin/>

11

Matt Davis

**"Rain"**

2007



[Matt Davis, rain]

"Rain" is a piece made entirely of recordings of rain. Last summer, which was particularly rainy, I made quite a few recordings, and also used some I'd had previously. I was attracted to recording rain as it's a kind of white noise of that particular space. I'm more interested in space(s) than the sounds themselves, so rain is a nice way of capturing the sound of a space without any particulars. It's like the audible silence of a place, and has a kind of stopping effect – something to do with its melancholy perhaps. And each time is different of course. Out of these recordings came an amalgamation that travels through several recordings. You can hear things within it but it's also a dense texture – very much like white noise, although not quite. Playing with something that may or may not have an internal form – which you may just experience as an object of sound, or enter into it as a space in itself. It kind of asks you to stand in two places at once. It is also relevant in that it was made initially as a radio piece (although I know this is a digital transmission), in that the sound very much like radio interference so there's a kind of desire to work within the nature of the medium, using the sound of the medium itself".

Brief Bio:

London, 1970. I first trained as a visual artist but became more and more involved in music, which gradually became my main activity, playing trumpet and field recordings. After establishing firm connections with many improvisers in London in the early ninties, such as Mark Wastell, Rhodri Davies, and Angharad Davies, I relocated to Barcelona where Agustí Fernández was busy establishing the Orquestre IBA. Whilst there I played many gigs with the orchestra, including a concert under Buth Morris's conduction, and also made many longstanding collaborations with Liba Villavecchia, Rosa Muñoz, and Ana Subiana (Tres perros y una cabra); Ruth Barbaran and Alfredo Costa Monteiro (I Treni Inerti); and Ferran Fages. Also in Catalunya I met Constanza Brncic and Carme Torrent, who with Uri Blanch, made up the La Sospechosa dance company – with whom I still collaborate. On re-relocating to London I curated a series of concerts, attempting to including dance, which had the name *Field*. This series, with the help of Chisenhale Dance Space, gradually became a live art/performance research project. I have many longstanding collaborations as well as new published recordings with Rhodri Davies, Samantha Rebello, Bechir Saade, and Matt Milton on the Another Timbre label. Concerts include the last two LMC annual festivals with the Otomo Yoshihide Anode Cathode large group and a duo with Robin Hayward.



More info:

<http://www.f-i-e-l-d.co.uk>

<http://www.myspace.com/mattdavisfield>

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### 03. Additional links

#### **Soundmuseum. Museum for Contemporary Sound Art**

With Soundmuseum.fm, we want to create a place where an audience can listen to unique sound pieces in a peaceful virtual space, free from noise and interruptions; a place that is accessible from anywhere in the world, where people can listen to original works, and where sound can rise above its visual surroundings.

<http://tijdelijk.soundmuseum.fm>

#### **../artesonoro.org**

artesonoro.org was created at SINSALaudio, in Vigo, with the support of the mediateletipos.net team, the Centro de Creación Experimental de Cuenca, the Zemos98 Festival in Seville, the artists' association Alg-a in Galicia, CRC Association in Madrid, Web Cultural in Castilla and Leon, and Radio OndaSonora in Madrid.

It aims to provide access to projects and artists who are working to promote sound art in the Spanish language and make it known to the public. It is also a point of convergence for discussions about the profession and its satellites.

<http://www.artesonoro.org>

#### **25H**

In our network of blogs you will find all the information relating to our activities, and you can also download video, audio, photographs, texts and designs, download self-releases, radio programs and concerts, or create links to the web sites of the radio stations we broadcast from.

<http://25hombres.blogspot.com/>

<http://desconciertos25hombres.blogspot.com/>

<http://1hombre.blogspot.com/>

<http://circulodeamigosdejsavagge.blogspot.com/>

<http://gaddb.blogspot.com/>

<http://1mujer.blogspot.com/>

<http://1hy1m.blogspot.com/>

#### **Exchange Rate: 2008**

"Exchange Rate: 2008" is an international performance exchange organized by artist Elana Mann in response to the 2008 US presidential elections.

<http://exchangerate2008.com>

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### 04. Copyright note

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