



Research > MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH... Kenneth Goldsmith

MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH... seeks to break through to unearth and reveal private collections of music and sound *memorabilia*. It is a historiography of sound collecting that reveals the unseen and passionate work of the amateur collector while reconstructing multiple parallel histories such as the evolution of recording formats, archiving issues, the collecting market and the evolution of musical styles beyond the marketplace.

Each episode in the series is accompanied by an additional programme featuring an exclusive music selection by each of the collectors.

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Music selection by Kenneth Goldsmith. Produced by Roc Jiménez de Cisneros.

Publishers Weekly described the writings of Kenneth Goldsmith as 'some of the most exhaustive and beautiful collage work yet produced in poetry'. Goldsmith is the author of ten books of poetry and teaches at the Centre for Programs in Contemporary Writing at University of Pennsylvania, where he is also senior editor of the online poetry archive PennSound. Goldsmith is also the founding editor of the online archive UbuWeb, a universal source of reference for avant-garde art on the Internet. An underground project that has no institutional backing or budget of any kind, UbuWeb is an exhaustive and also personal repository that reflects the tastes, quirks and obsessions of its creator. A compulsive digital collector, Goldsmith's personal archive extends far beyond the in itself unfathomable UbuWeb. ubuweb.com

Roc Jiménez de Cisneros is an artist. Since 1996 he has been the core member of the computer music project EVOL and his work has been published on internationally acclaimed record labels. His work can be understood as an aesthetic exploration of algorithmic composition and a deconstruction of rave culture under the light of various theories in recent metaphysics. He lives and works in Barcelona. vivapunani.org

MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH...

Kenneth Goldsmith. Part II

A hyperconcentrated collection of bumpers and crazy rants from Kenneth Goldsmith's (aka Kenny G) legendary WFMU radio show, guaranteed to make you turn down the volume and run out of the house. May the best man win.

01. Summary

This is a collection of various strange bumpers that I used on my WFMU radio show, which ran from 1996–2010. Many of them became weekly signature sounds signifying for many listeners that it was time to turn off the radio for the next three hours. My show – known variously over the years as 'Unpopular Music' or 'Anal Magic' – was perhaps the most-hated show ever broadcast on WFMU. I have over a thousand bumpers, but for this podcast, I've selected about 40 of the best ones. Sometimes, I would do three hour radio shows, just stringing together one bumper after another. Most of these clips are of indeterminate origin, grabbed willy-nilly over the course of fifteen years, snagged from various LPs, cassette tapes, CDs and gems plucked from Napster. But let me see if I can try to identify at least a few of them for you:

- In 2005, I brought the great sound artist Gregory Whitehead onto WFMU in the middle of the afternoon to perform one of his scream therapy sessions live on air. Basically, he has listeners call in and scream at the top of their lungs. We did this for three hours; WFMU listeners never forgave me for this. There are bits and pieces of the scream-a-thon included here.
- At WFMU, we love the Nihilist Spasm Band. I love them too, but love their poetic rants more than their jangly improv. So I went in and edited out all their music, leaving them screaming inanities like 'I didn't crawl to the top of the food chain to eat salad. I'm a meat eater.'
- One of the strangest discs I own is by a writer named Richard Grossman called *The Clown Chapters*. I'm not entirely sure what it's all about, but it has Grossman doing eerie serial killer voices such as his screaming, 'I came to rip apart your mom!'
- One of the most commonly grating sounds on the radio is the voices of children and records made for kids. Of course, I used them extensively. There's a whole bunch of them included here such as 'Uh, my name is Gossamer Wump', 'We are very intelligent and we are not Germans', a clip of me having to explain to my son that 'Nobody listens to Daddy's radio show anymore', and clips taken from a kids' production of Futurist radio plays 'Don't turn me off'. Speaking of which, in 2004, my father and mother joined me on the radio station during a fundraiser and sang Gilbert and Sullivan duets. My father cannot hold a tune, hence his wobbly, 'I am the captain of the Pinafore...'
- Finally, there's some bits of sound art tucked in here, in particular the great works by Vito Acconci, called 'Let's Be Suckers', where that phrase is repeated ad infinitum, which I feel was both a comment on me as radio show host, and more so expressed the way my listeners felt every week.

I ended my radio tenure a few years ago. One day I simply got bored and decided that I didn't want to do it any more. Just like that. I had done all there was to do, explored every nook and cranny of annoyance. Radio is ephemeral, yet these shorties now are eternal, floating out there on the network for anyone to use. Please feel free to chop up this podcast and use them as you will. You are guaranteed to alienate and annoy; if you play them on the radio, you'll drive listeners away in droves.

Kenneth Goldsmith, 2012



[Kenneth Goldsmith during the lecture MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH..., 2012]

02. Related links

Ubuweb
www.ubu.com

Kenneth Goldsmith's bibliography
epc.buffalo.edu/authors/goldsmith

Interview with Kenneth Goldsmith, 2007
archinect.com/features/article/59857/ubuweb-vu-kenneth-goldsmith

Interview with Kenneth Goldsmith, 2010
rwm.macba.cat/en/sonia/sonia_kenneth_goldsmith/capsula

'Epiphanies: Kenneth Goldsmith', an article for The Wire, 2011
www.thewire.co.uk/articles/6445/

Conversation with Kenneth Goldsmith on his sound collection
rwm.macba.cat/en/extra/memorabilia_kenneth_goldsmith_conversation/capsula

MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH... Kenneth Goldsmith. Part I
podcast
rwm.macba.cat/en/research/memorabilia_kenneth_goldsmith/capsula

MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH... Kenneth Goldsmith. Deleted
scenes podcast
rwm.macba.cat/en/extra/kenneth_goldsmith_deleted_scenes/capsula

MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH... Kenneth Goldsmith lecture MP3
rwm.macba.cat/uploads/draft/kenneth_lecture.mp3

MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH... Kenneth Goldsmith lecture
teaser
rwm.macba.cat/en/extra/teaser_memorabilia_kenneth_goldsmith/capsula

Kenneth Goldsmith at Ràdio Web MACBA
rwm.macba.cat/es/kenneth_goldsmith_tag

03. Credits

Special thanks to Kenneth Goldsmith, Yaiza Hernández and Yolanda Nicolàs.
Music selection by Kenneth Goldsmith. Produced by Roc Jiménez de Cisneros.
Edited with Sound Studio by Felt Tip Inc.

04. Copyright note

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