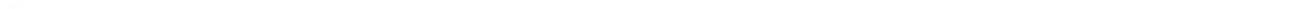


Daria Baiocchi

SOUND ART



SOUND ART

Foreward

1 What is sound art?

2 Sound art goals

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FOREWARD

In a world of art dominated principally by what is seen, I am attempting here to define the parameters that identify a work of sound art; a tricky bet to take on, as no one before has highlighted and codified what this art is. Will I win out? Let's see.

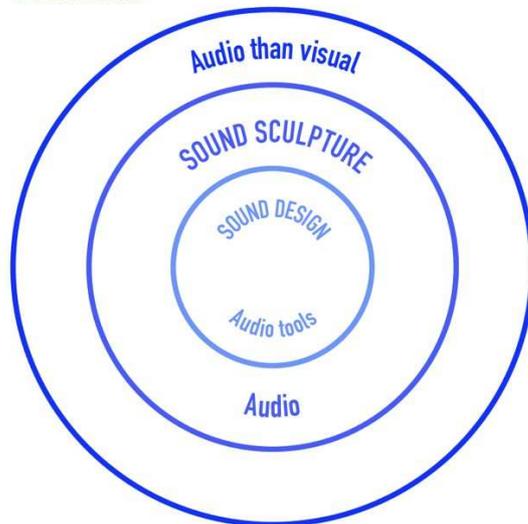
The first questions that come to mind are: what is the essence of sound art, its beating heart? Is it the visual or the acoustic element that is most important? Are the speakers the work of sound art, or the sound that they transmit? Is the disposition of the speakers the real subject, or is it the audio content? Who decides what or where the sound art market is if everything in the world has a sound? Who decides which artists are the best? What value does **signified** or **signifier** have? The signifier has no meaning and is an empty box without the signified while the signified exists without signifier. Sound art is the signifier while pure sound art, that I call sound sculpture, is the signified. The aim of this essay is to explain sound in many ways: artistic, compositive, practical. Everyone is interested in sound but it is often necessary to reflect better on its nature, and its potential.

The first chapter lists the various categories in which sound art can be moved, with particular reference to enviromental sound art, kinetic art and sound machines, new media and sound sculptures. The second chapter talks about compositional practice: sound sculptures as the mother cells of all sound art. This chapter speaks about sound material, macrostructure and microstructure, sound amplitude and sound frequency. The third chapter highlights the aspects concerned with experimental music with reference to programming, the use of the random, the use of noise or waveforms, and the construction of new musical instruments.

This essay, like others I have written, is aimed at insiders: professionals, sound art lovers, sound art critics or curators. I simply have the need to give readers the opportunity to read about what sound art is and what the different fields of its application are.

Daria Baiocchi

SOUND ART



INSTALLATION

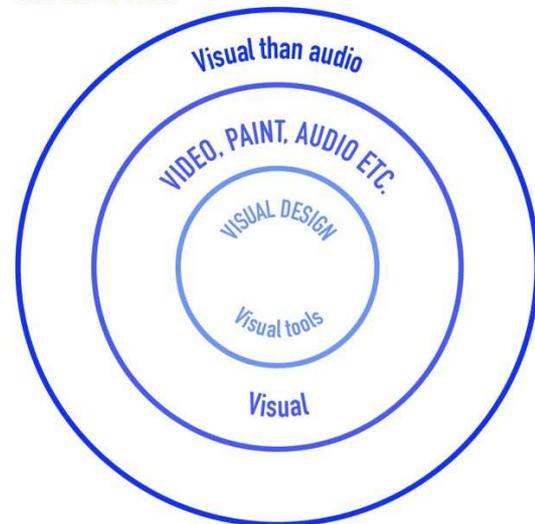


Fig.1.1a. Differences between Sound art and an Art installation with sound: in sound art the main element is audio while in an art installation it is the visual which dominates: audio could be a part of it together with video, paints, sculpture etc..

1

WHAT IS SOUND ART?

Sound Art is an art form which relies on using sound as essential material. Sound artists are usually classical music composers: they are qualified in sound and in audio creation. It is obvious that any person can create an audio file - just think of all our voice mails via mobile phone. If we think of these voices as instruments, they have a **pitch**, an **intensity** and a **timbre**. So, are we all sound artists? If we

2

SOUND ART GOALS

The aim of the artist is to awaken people's minds regarding various types of themes. How can I recognize a sound art work from a sound invention? How can I achieve my purpose exclusively with sound? How should I program the audio file? What sounds do I have to choose? I think it is difficult to go into a detailed description of all the aspects that may concern the variables present in each work of art. The idea is to describe by topic areas all the aspects that can characterize the sound file that is the basis of sound art. Without these aspects I will struggle to create a sound work: the foundations are at the base of buildings. The Colosseum could also be square, but it would have had the foundations anyway.

I N S I D E S O U N D A R T

The main elements of sound art are: sound material, formal structure, **spatialization** and **random**. If you will take care about these aspects they will lead the lis-

3

EXPERIMENTAL SOUND ART

The term experimental has been used in the 20th and 21st centuries to designate an unpredictable music, usually of a random nature, or, I discovered, to designate a type of sound in which white, pink or brown noise is used. Young people often use it when they use **sinusoids, triangular, sawtooth, square waves** or **white, pink, brown noise**.

E X P L O R E S O U N D A R T

When we talk about experimental music, I think we are talking about something that didn't exist before. I believe that comparing this music with something that has already existed makes it already non-experimental. It is quite simply the opposite. The formal structure described in the previous chapter is of a European nature and refers to a modus operandi that leads the listener where the composer wants. The absence of a formal structure leads the listener anywhere. Sound, unfor-

CONCLUSIONS

Sound art is a real art and as such has the need to be studied and understood. In an era of maximum specialization in everything, something that happens for example in talent shows, it is out of time to rely on relative relativism and not on something that actually explains and helps what we want to express. So why shouldn't the sound artist be a professional? In the world, silence does not exist: any being or object produces sound. How can we distinguish ourselves as artists from what exists daily in our lives? How can we create something that takes the listener to new sound frontiers? The difference between a sound artist and an artist that puts a sound in his installation is precisely this: the sound artist paints, shapes and sculpts the sound. For this reason I call the essence of sound art, sound sculpture. The sound sculpture characterizes in a connotative way a work of sound art and it is the focus. Within sound sculptures we can have acoustic instruments, acoustic and electronic instruments, pure electronics. Thanks to sound design tools I can create a sound sculpture that will be the heart of my sound art work. To make a sound sculpture it is necessary to have a formal structure. As in a cathedral, the structure is made up of sections and the sections are made up of micro-sections. The *crescendo* and the *diminuendo* define the shape and these climaxes go straight to the tip of a pyramid, where our audience wants to be taken. Only at the end of

BIO & CONTACTS

Daria Baiocchi owns an MA in Piano, Composition, Electronic Music and in Classical Literature (ancient Greek, Latin, Italian). She taught as Professor: Harmony and Music Analysis in Bologna Conservatorium and Foggia Conservatorium; Composition in L'Aquila Conservatorium; Electronic Music Composition in Alessandria Conservatorium and Sound Design in Milan Academy of Fine Arts. She is actually Professor of Sound Design in Urbino Academy of Fine Arts, Turin Academy of Fine Arts in the New Technologies Department and Professor of Harmony and Music Analysis in Perugia Conservatorium.



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