

3135 L 786: Dienstags, 10 – 14 Uhr (c.t.)

Soundscape Composition as Context-based Creation

Instructor: Barry Truax

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See also: www.wfae.net and soundexplorations.blogspot.com

Soundscape composition, as pioneered by the World Soundscape Project at Simon Fraser University, has become a relatively well-defined genre, combining the artistic with the social, and often characterized as being intimately located to place. Although that may be true in many instances, it can also be understood as a range of approaches within an even broader concept, namely “context-based composition.” One of the aims of this seminar/lab is to provide not only a survey of historical and contemporary examples of this approach and concept, but to think more seriously about how it can be defined, what are its implications and affordances, and what emerging practices seem most fruitful. Special attention will be given to multi-channel reproduction techniques, environmental sound processing and composition.

A key distinguishing feature of context-based composition appears to be that real-world contexts inform the design and composition of aurally based work at every level, that is, in the materials, their organization, and ultimately the work’s placement within cultural contexts. Perhaps most significantly, listeners are encouraged to bring their knowledge of real world contexts into their participation with these works. As such they fundamentally differ from an approach that utilizes sounds related only to each other in an apparently autonomous form. Context-based practice can, among other approaches, range from sonifications, phonographic uses of field recordings, to site-specific installations, and abstracted soundscape compositions based in real-world or even virtual, imagined spaces.

- Oct. 20** Soundscape as concept and terminology: Introduction to soundscape composition, acoustic ecology, sustainability, niche hypothesis
- Oct. 27** Introduction to the World Soundscape Project
Survey of historical documents and approaches to field recording, documentation
- Nov. 3** Approaches to soundscape composition (spatial perspectives)
Found sound (phonography) and abstracted practices and techniques
- Nov. 10** Historical precedents (Ruttman, Schwartz, Ferrari)
- Nov. 17** Text and gender-based approaches as context-based composition
Rubin, Body, Truax, Lane, Cousins
- Nov. 24** Hildegard Westerkamp
- Dec. 1** Barry Truax, multi-channel soundscape works
- Dec. 8** Soundscape and Acousmatic approaches mixed
Risset, Lansky, Norman, Andean, Raimondo
- Dec. 15** Other artists (Feld, Schine, Wagstaff, Burtner, Proy)
- Jan. 5 – Feb. 9** Compositional analysis and mentoring of student projects