

Call for Papers

International Exploratory Workshop des Instituts Experimentelle Design- und Medienkulturen der Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst FHNW und der GfM-AG »Auditive Kultur und Sound Studies«

10./11. März 2016

Critical Media Lab Basel, HGK FHNW

Organisation: Felix Gerloff, Shintaro Miyazaki, Sebastian Schwesinger

Sounding out the Anthropocene. Investigating Sonic Media Ecologies

The past years have witnessed a shift in media and cultural theory towards an ecological understanding of human and non-human media cultures (Fuller 2005, Hörl 2011, Parikka 2015). Man-made technological infrastructures reshaped the planet earth to an extent that geologists are discussing the establishment a new geological era: the Anthropocene (Crutzen 2002). Conversely, this draws attention to non-human actors, perspectives and ecosystems of animals, insects or machines. An ecological and posthuman approach to auditory media cultures (Volmar/Schröter 2013) might then be fruitful in order to develop new understandings of sonic phenomena and contemporary culture and society in their interdependence with their surroundings and geophysical or technological structures. This also involves including sound technologies and sonic media in the ongoing discourse on sustainability and environmentally conscious design.

An ecological approach entails investigations of actors and their interrelations with their respective environments in a rather biological understanding as well as in cybernetic and system-theoretical contexts. The work of Douglas Kahn is pioneering in this area in including sound in accounts of contemporary media ecologies on a global scale. In his recent book *Earth Sound Earth Signal* he investigates the impact of naturally occurring electromagnetism and its sounds on the history of telecommunications, the sciences and arts (Kahn 2013). Jacob Smith's *Eco-sonic Media* applies an ecological critique to the history of sound media technologies with a focus on pre-electronic and non-digital media (Smith 2015).

To this end the workshop will include keynote lectures by proponents of media ecological research perspectives, working sessions on the basis of prior readings and statements of the participants and live demonstrations of media settings at the Critical Media Lab as complements to conventional conference talks.

The workshop welcomes contributions that relate to one or several of the following issues as well as submissions that address traditional issues in our field and approach them from an ecological perspective:

- sonic ecosystems: auditory media cultures approached in ecological terms
- sound and the sensorium: hearing and sound sensors in relation to other senses and sensing devices
- the critical potential of sound: sonically challenged notions of space and time (atmospheres, urban space, rhythmicity, deep time)
- sounds of the Anthropocene: analyses of concrete encounters and experiences with sonic infrastructures or infrastructural sounds

- excavating sonic design practices: case studies of sound design processes that contribute to shaping our soundscape
- broadening the spectrum: how do nonhuman sounds and signals challenge our understanding of sound and hearing?
- transgressing the audible: models and practices of mediation of sound in multisensorial ecosystems
- sonic experimental systems: simulations, modelings, auralisations and their relation to the world

Proposals for talks (~300 words) can be sent to both felix.gerloff@fhnw.ch and sebastian.schwesinger@hu-berlin.de until the 1st of December 2015. Notifications will be sent out by December 18th.

Crutzen, Paul J.: Geology of Mankind, in: Nature 415 (3), p. 23.

Davies, Heather/Turpin, Etienne (eds.): Art in the Anthropocene. Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies, London 2015.

Fuller, Matthew: Media Ecologies. Materialist Energies in Art and Technoculture, Cambridge MA 2005.

Gießmann, Sebastian/Brunotte, Ulrike/Mauelshagen, Franz/Böhme, Hartmut/Wulf, Christoph (eds.): Politische Ökologie, Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften 2, 2009.

Horowitz, Seth: The Universal Sense. How Hearing Shapes the Mind, New York NY 2013.

Hörl, Erich (ed.): Die technologische Bedingung. Beiträge zur Beschreibung der technischen Welt, Berlin 2011.

Kahn, Douglas: Earth Sound Earth Signal. Energies and Earth Magnitude in the Arts, Berkeley 2013.

Miyazaki, Shintaro: Algorythmisiert. Eine Medienarchäologie digitaler Signale und (un)erhörter Zeiteffekte, Berlin 2013.

Parikka, Jussi: A Geology of Media, Minneapolis MS 2015.

Smith, Jacob: Eco-sonic Media, Oakland CA 2015.

Volmar, Axel/Schröter, Jens: Auditive Medienkulturen. Techniken des Hörens und Praktiken der Klanggestaltung, Bielefeld 2013.