

## **Transcript of the spoken thesis**

### **ENHEAR**

**a way of being  
a state of mind  
a field of enquiry**

**exploring the creative and collaborative potentials of sound centric strategies  
in film and media-based contexts**

**by Carolina Jinde**

## PROLOGUE

Hello? Hello!

Welcome! Welcome to the research catalogue exposition of 'Enhear', my doctoral thesis in artistic research. Please allow me a few seconds to explain the set up for this exposition before you move around here on your own.

I will try, as far as possible, to keep this presentation a primarily sonic involvement. By inviting you to experience my thesis mainly through listening to it I introduce you to a central concern of my research, namely using sonic-centric approaches to benefit the conceiving, shaping and manifesting of creative work. In order to reach out to those for whom this sonic-centric invitation is inaccessible the presentation is available as a PDF in the far back of this Research Catalogue exposition. Please feel free to use it to accompany your listening experience. I strongly encourage you though, to try out the sonic-centric format; I offer it as an opportunity to access and understand my work by its own means.

There are certain things that get tricky with this format, particularly regarding the temporality of the experience. Am I speaking too fast or too slow for your taste, emphasising something too often or too little, would you like me to repeat that thought or would you like to think it again on your own? Accessing my

thinking via listening you need to somehow accept the pace, the flow of information, maybe allow things to come and go. This format removes the possibility to skim read and hampers the ability to jump back and forth in the material, obviously it isn't possible to underline in this spoken text and any impulse to pause and digest requires a more intentional action than merely removing your gaze from the words. I know! This format is a bit tricky for this context, yet I insist. Because I am trying to make a point. I am investigating understandings of sonic experientiality, materiality, temporality and rhythm and this encounter is an opportunity to dig deeper into that investigation, both together and each on our own.

Having said that, I also offer you the possibility to personally manage this encounter. You can stop and start my voice at any point and move back and forth in the speech as you desire. You can open the PDF text version and let it accompany our interaction, print my text and make notes and underlines, mark things you would like to research further. Please feel free to choose how to best engage with this exposition for your own purposes and please keep in mind that the on-going-ness of this format is not meant to stress you out or exclude you from my thinking or my proposition. On the contrary I am trying to invite you directly into the experience of sonic on-going-ness, trying to offer you an experience of this research projects aims and its affects.

I encourage you to consider how you best receive auditory information. Maybe you like doodling or knitting while listening. Maybe a more traditional listening posture with relaxed, comfortable seating and closed eyes

suits you or you might prefer walking while listening. Whichever condition you choose, I recommend you use decent headphones for this encounter to best appreciate the sound work. I realise that receiving information via sound like this, requires a different sort of mindset than reading it would. But I also think that by listening to this thesis rather than reading it something essential in the perception of it shifts; different things will linger, different aspects will emerge, other will recede.

Before you move along, I just would like to mention how the footnotes work in this set up. Whenever there is a concept or a word I develop further elsewhere, a computer voice interrupts me saying 'note...' followed by a number. To learn more, look up that number in the sidenotes page. The easiest path to sidenotes is via the list under the heading 'context' at the top left of the page. Any references I mention are alphabetically listed in the bibliography under the headline references, a document also easily accessed via the heading 'context' at the top left of the page.

Now, if you've set up your preferred listening situation, I invite you to hover the mouse over the very light blue text saying enhear. Click on it and you'll be relocated to the full presentation of my thesis.

Hear you there.

## INTRODUCTION

My name is Carolina Jinde. I've been working as sound engineer for more than two decades, within in the Swedish film, television and radio context. But for the past five years, I have been conducting a doctoral candidacy on artistic grounds within performative and media-based practices, based in the film and media department at the Stockholm University of the Arts.

With my research project I strive to give voice to the unsung qualities, capabilities and capacities of the sound engineer, identifying sound engineer expertise as an underutilised creative resource, currently quite unrecognised beyond the confines of the sound studio. My aim is to evolve collaborative routines within film and media-based workflows by championing sonic-centric strategies and aural expertise. In uncovering the collaborative and creative potential of the sound engineer I am interested in situating the sound studio as a significant site for new knowledge. As an artistic researcher I have allowed myself to imagine what an expanded practice of sound engineering might be. In support of these explorations, throughout my doctoral research, I have undertaken a variety of other roles - sound artist, visual artist, friend, film maker, student, teacher, theatre director, script writer and I have operated in a range of different contexts - theatre, film set, radio drama recording, urban environment, youth centre, as well as in a variety of

educational situations - high school, Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels. With the skills of the sound engineer as my foundation I have developed methods and tools generally applicable to all stages of the film making process. They are particularly germane to sound specific work within film making but also relevant to creative work in other contexts. I will unpack my pedagogical work in more depth later, but first I would like to move a bit further into the idea of sound and listening as material and visit outcomes from some collaborative work my research has been part of.

When communicating through sound, and now I am referring to non-speech sound, the imaginative and associative spectra is particularly expansive. Well, I mean, I think we can agree that all perception is partial, but sound is particularly open to interpretation or maybe it's that it allows for many different possibilities to be simultaneously present. Imagine for example the size of a dog you hear barking; try to calculate your distance from it through the resonance of its barks and try decipher the mood it's in, aggressive, playful, scared... So far, your associations might be quite close to reality. Now tell me what colour the dog is or what quality its fur has; soft, curly, coarse.

So, I do understand that there are many things sound can't precisely transmit. But, in a world so forcefully shaped by the visual, I am interested in lingering with the sonic, allowing it to be our main guide for developing impressions, associations and understandings over an extended period of time. Through this research project I have become increasingly aware of how the perception of something through sound is closely conditioned by our commitment to the act and experience of listening. I think that preconceived notions of something might actually be fruitfully overturned if they were re-considered through sonic terms. This is an especially relevant counter-position in the visually dominant context I speak from, the film and media production industry, where ideas and processes are mainly communicated through text and image. But I think that sound's innate ambiguousness supports manifold imaginings, revealing ideas unreachable through strictly visual routes. Because of this, I insist on listening as a way to emancipate imagination.

You will find that the creative outcomes of my research project bounce back and forth, around and between sound installation and sound engineering. The creative works display the very different ways in which my methods and strategies have manifested, transformed by collaborations with different artists and their various practices.

In his book 'Sonic Agencies' Brandon LaBelle discusses sonic practices as a form of resistance.

“...sound works to unsettle and exceed arenas of visibility by relating us to the unseen, the non-represented or the not yet apparent; from beyond spaces of appearance, and the legible visibilities often defining open discourse, voices and music, tonalities and noises may transgress certain partitions and borders, expanding the possibilities of the uncoun-  
ted and the underheard.”

Brandon LaBelle  
*Sonic Agency*  
2018

I am interested in this idea of sonic practice as a form of resistance. Rather than exploring the production of sound, my research explicitly foregrounds practices of listening, exploring how listening practices might be applied in the sound studio, in collaborative artistic processes and in life. Over the course of this research project, I have considered several ways to empower acts and experiences of listening, via the collaborative art processes I have undertaken, pedagogical methods I have developed and through documentations and reflections I share in this exposition.

Together with Norwegian architect and artistic researcher Alexander Furunes and Finnish writer, performing artist and artistic researcher Tuomas Laitinen, I have developed a collaborative project 'Elsewhere'. Through inviting people to tell stories of events that have taken place at the place of telling them, we facilitate live encounters in which sharing thoughts, feelings and stories is the social glue.

Please take some time to visit my presentation of our ongoing collaborative work and let the idea of listening as a sonic practice of resistance linger in your consciousness while contemplating our thinking.

You'll find the story of our work at the 'Elsewhere' icon.

## ELSEWHERE

‘Elsewhere’ is a collaborative project between myself, Alexander Furunes and Tuomas Laitinen. We met at the Society for Artistic Research Summer Academy, which is an annual event where doctoral candidates from across Scandinavia meet, exchange and develop their research projects. The three of us found common ground through a shared interest in artistic research with social relations at its base.

*A letter to Carolina and Tuomas*

*Hi*

*How are you both? Long time no see!*

*Dear Carolina and Alexander,*

*It is raining here and I was taking a walk through the abandoned streets of Stockholm to clear my thoughts. Passing the vegetable market at Hötorget in the city center I came to think of you two and the week we first met. We shared a listening installation at Möllevången, a market square in Malmö somewhat similar to Hötorget. Do you remember?*

*I find that our collaboration has been incredibly interesting and fruitful in a very different way than many other collaborations that I have been part*

*of. Many other things in society is so focused on the output, on the result, on the product where any collaboration is carefully budgeted and necessary outputs have to be determined.*

*There have been times in my life when I have been drawn towards an asceticism of sorts. I would for example live in a tent, walk barefoot late into the autumn, stop the use of glasses even if my eyesight was bad or avoid traveling. These self-imposed restrictions were done for the sake practice but they also had instrumental value, containing a paradoxical promise of a richer life experience.*

*Those moments come back to me now that there is another kind of momentum at hand, one which forces multiple restrictions on all of us, altering the conditions, habits and structures we have grown to label normal. These restrictions are inscribed with negative meaning by default, but like in my naive asceticism, some hope of enrichment can be spotted hovering in the margins.*

*In my field, participation is the inclusion of people in this particular process of defining and giving shape to a specific output (such as a building). But this is constrained by a mindset where we need to be productive*

*(dictionary: production - are able to produce large amounts of goods, crops, or other commodities)*

*My mind travels to when we met in Helsinki, Tuomas town. That memory is stowed with sounds. The loudness of pedestrian crossings in Helsinki,*

*the wind in the trees, the numerous foghorns thundering from sea the day we went to the island and the whole town was covered in mist. More than actual sounds I remember how the three of us were set on listening. Not for sounds necessarily but for each other and our joint thinking.*

*One of these alterations is the way we orient to places, and our bodies inhabiting those places. The meaning of where, there and here is not the same anymore, I dare to state.*

*The only place (if it counts as a place) where we three are able to meet these days, is the space of the internet.*

*because time = money. However time equals so many other values other than money. To invest time in someone should not only be for the sake of productivity, but for the encounter, for the conversation, for the meeting in itself.*

*I find it extremely liberating to have our platform, our place to meet, to discuss and elaborate, without necessarily having to achieve a physical output. Instead I would say that there have been many intangible thoughts, ideas and reflections that have emerged from our conversations.*

*Conversations that in themselves have been a form of elsewhere, an alternative space to share, discuss and meet.*

*Looking forward to speak in bit!*

Alex

*As I stroll along on my rainy morning walk, I wish you were here to take the walk with me. I wish to talk to you about how the sounding town has shifted since the look down.*

*Sound has gotten silhouettes, city bruit is no longer a skyline but pulsating attention seeking noise. It makes me feel tired and exposed.*

*What might it do for the apparatus?*

*Looking forward to talking soon.*

*Take care*

*Best*

*C*

*I have no need to document what is personal anymore. Instead I feel an urgent need to create something to counteract this corporeal distance. Thus the elsewhere has grown to mean something else to me. As the here does not accommodate you, I need a place which could - maybe, possibly, by chance – cast your shadow on my eardrum, whisper your scent onto my retinas, caress my toes with your laughter. This place could be elsewhere. This could be a place we can build, a place which is sensed by all of us, even if it is inhabited by no body.*

*A cheap makeshift shack maybe, but one assembled with love.*

*Yours,*

*Tuomas*

The physical manifestation of this project is 'The Apparatus', a mobile recording device constructed from an old suitcase, including a sound interface, speakers, a microphone, recording software and written instructions for how to engage with the device. 'The Apparatus' is imagined for all kinds of urban spaces and is designed to encourage an enhanced attentivity in relation to both the site itself and the social space it performs. Participants are invited to reflect on the site through a listening practice shared through the set of instructions included in the recording device, the subsequent narratives are then recorded and distributed via 'The Apparatus'. The resulting multiplicity of narratives bring attention to place by sharing the diversities and the commonalities of human existence via the stories of the people who inhabit that particular place.

During the conference Alliances and Commonalities at Stockholm University of the arts in 2020, we shared our joint thinking publicly for the first time under the title 'Elsewhere'.

*Hello and welcome to Elsewhere, my name is Rebecca Hilton, I work at the research centre here at the Stockholm University of the Arts and I will be moderating this session. The artistic researchers have written a letter for me to read.*

*Dear Becky,*

*As you know very well, we are not all sitting in the same room. For this reason, we extend our collective voice toward you via this letter. Are you sitting comfortably so let's rewind a bit. When we started to work as a trio in 2018, there was a sense of something linking our practices, but it was difficult to locate this something. We entered a dialogue of finding common ground and planning something tangible. We circulated around the questions of public space, listening, stories, participation and building something concrete.*

*In 2019 we collaborated in a project of building a community house in Sletteløkka, a multicultural suburb in Oslo. Meanwhile we were planning a mobile device for collecting stories in public places: we imagined a vehicle vaguely resembling a barrel organ grinded at a fairground during the 19th century only updated for the digital age. In our imagination the operational logic of an organ would be reversed - instead of playing tunes we would gather sounds and stories. We were especially interested in the mindscapes that are linked to and create places. Memories, dreams or thoughts that exist under the surface of a material site. This did not yet concretize in Sletteløkka, but we did tap into a sort of social place-making, that was already there. But you know?*

*When the pandemic changed the circumstances of artistic work and research, also these ideas of place, locality and human encounters were halted. We could no longer come together to build a device, with which we would enter sites in real life. Through some steps we ended up reversing the idea. Since we cannot share an actual place, we cannot all be here, maybe we can address this inability. For this, we started to use a term borrowed from a Finnish phenomenologist and a scholar of aesthetics, Harri Mäcklin the elsewhere.*

*Mäcklin uses Martin Heidegger's work as his theoretical stepping stone as he sets out to describe and conceptualize the experience of immersion enabled by an art work. He suggests that an art experience modifies our sense of place: when immersing, the way we are here is transformed and the here is not here anymore. In Mäcklin's terms, it is elsewhere. While we did not venture deeper into phenomenology, this concept seemed to fit our dialogues and ideas well. Hence the title of our small experiment, which is not built from wood and electronics, as we had planned, but from words and internet-mediated services.*

*Would this do as an introduction? Please tell us if there is something urgent that we need to consider.*

*With warmest wishes*

*Carolina, Alexander and Tuomas.*

Due to pandemic restrictions 'The Apparatus' transformed into its virtual analogy 'Elsewhere' ([note 1](#)), a website inviting people to participate using a similar set of instructions. The central idea was that in paying aural attention to one's site and situation, if not in a shared space with others but in a shared time, an experiential connection with, and recognition of one another would begin to emerge. At the Alliances and Commonalities conference in 2020 our website version of 'The Apparatus' met the public for the first time. Here is the result of that meeting.

#### A manifestation of 'Elsewhere'

I strongly believe that transdisciplinary collaboration is fertile territory for artistic research and this work between an architect, a performing artist and a sound engineer has both informed our individual research projects and revealed much common ground. Coming from such diverse fields, with different experiences, references and conventions produced a possibility for dialogue informed by our individual knowledges and energised through our shared interest in social practice. As a result, the discourse evolved in unpredictable yet truly collaborative directions. For me, by providing the opportunity to discuss and broaden my thinking amongst artists outside of my field of practice, my understanding of the specificity of my expertise has become clearer. How, in focusing so significantly on the sonic, I am

constantly foregrounding both the act and the experience of listening, proposing a practice which positively contributes to the actual situation and unfolds generative possibilities for the future in relation to both the artistic and the social realms. This collaboration has given me the opportunity to confidently explore, share and discuss my research and to recognise its potential relevance to other fields of research. To continue the research catalogue exposition, press the icon 'background'.

## Background

Like many of my sound engineer colleagues I was introduced to sound engineering through an interest in music, becoming a sound engineer for film and television didn't even cross my mind when I started out. However, the university where I could get an education in musical sound engineering in Sweden was in Piteå, as far north as you can get in this elongated country, and growing up in the south I couldn't for the life of me imagine living that far north, not even for three years. The alternative, as I understood it, was to go to an equally reputable institution in Stockholm, which only provided an education in sound engineering for film, television and media but was not nearly as far north. At the time the choice seemed easy, it made itself and the world of filmmaking that I was introduced to was fascinating. There was so much to learn, so many different aspects of the creative work to consider, technically, aesthetically, ethically, dramaturgically, socially. Not once did I contemplate or regret the non-choice I didn't make between musical and film and media-based sound engineering. And as I switched my orientation from music to film, I never made the connection between my ongoing frustration and the position in the power structure or the visually steered approach to listening I was inheriting through the education. But now I wonder if my role and understanding of sound engineering would have been considerably different, especially regarding listening strategies,

had I stayed in the music field? I will of course never be able to answer that question but the comparison leads me to thinking about how dominating visual regimes are in the film and media industry, and how maybe there is uncharted creative potential because of this structural imbalance.

My initial research questions for this doctoral project were articulated in the wake of an extensive sound editing assignment, where I was engaged to re-record every single vocal sound for three feature films, a typical sound engineer task called ADR ([note 2](#)) but one rarely employed for whole movies, as it was in this case. I was fascinated by the creative impact the voice work had on the outcome of the films but dismayed by the lack of care for the circumstances in which the work was carried out - limitations due to the facilities, production priorities and time frames. I won't wear you out with details of my critique, but the experience provoked me enough to apply for this research position.

During this education my frustrations with the status of ADR led me to reflect more broadly on the position of the sound engineer in the collaborative workflows of film and media production. As a result, my research has come to explore the particular expertise of the sound engineer and how they might contribute to film and media-based production in ways that are not yet apparent, perhaps not even to ourselves.

My initial research questions emerged from the creative potential I recognised in voice rerecording. During the first year of my doctorate, I scripted a children's book and recorded several different versions of it. I wanted to generate a material that contained numerous versions of the same narrative, creating diverse expressions of the same thing in order to compare the subtexts they revealed. Please take some time to listen to my presentation of that work and its outcomes. You'll find my description of the work at the icon 'The Anteater'.

## THE ANTEATER

I set out to investigate how a singular narrative might be perceived differently when heard through a diverse array of voices. A Swedish author I knew from previous collaborations, Lotta Olsson, sanctioned my use of her children's book 'Meningen med livet' as material for my explorations. At the time the overarching question for my research project was 'The Voice and the Perception of the Story' and my scope hadn't yet expanded into the explorations of the creative potentials of sound centric strategies. In this initial creative work, voice was still the basis for my investigative concerns. I gathered five actors and recorded numerous versions of a simple dramatization of Olsson's book creating a diverse material exploring different dramatic and affective qualities of voice. My focus was on subtle vocal variations, nuanced utterances that might provoke a range of potential subtexts.

It would take me several creative projects to understand how best to navigate the complexity of my position as artistic researcher which incorporated roles of project deviser, organiser and director. Although I lacked directorial experience, as the initiator of this project, I couldn't evade the role. To gather some navigational tools for the task and to get better acquainted with different approaches to vocal

performance, I reached out to colleagues and professionals in both theatre and opera. (note 3)

Meeting the work of other vocal practitioners and researchers helped me recognise that any authority I have in relation to voice emerges from my many years of listening to and managing the amplified voice, recorded or live.

When working with recording and editing voice, from the sound engineer point of view, there are several layers of attention which all need to be engaged with. These include voice pitch, diction, choice of microphone, microphone proximity, background noise, acoustics and volume.

Additionally, in relation to each particular performer, there are considerations of timbre, energy, rhythm, intonation which are all crucial in trying to frame the audience's experience of the voice.

I am attracted to a voice that could be described as unpolished. I savour vocal flaws that might emerge from overwhelming emotions such as nervousness or surprise, insecurity, joy, vulnerability. I am drawn to imperfections, to me they bring a sense of authenticity to the staged voice. But these preferences only became apparent to me much later, they were not consciously part of decisions made for 'The Anteater' recording sessions. For this first project I was simply motivated by exploring the expressive capacity of voice without intentionally applying aesthetic concerns.

I decided to prioritize interaction in the studio rather than opting for the best technical recording conditions. Thus, I recorded with wireless lapel microphones allowing the actors to move around freely in the studio and the lack of energy that can sometimes be heard in the voice of an actor working with a stationary microphone, was not an issue here.

I set up a recording station inside the studio. That way I was able to physically stay with the actors throughout the recording sessions, rather than assuming my usual sound engineer seat in the control room. It slightly hampered my control over what was actually captured 'on tape', since I gave up the possibility to recognise, in real time, the technical quality of what was being recorded. Instead, the set-up favoured the social situation, liberating us from physical and technical boundaries such as intercom communication. Staying in the same room as the actors facilitated an instant and spontaneous dialogue and generated a fluency and ease for discussing the work.

But seeing as the spatial needs of different projects are as varied as the individual understanding of voice, I propose that the sound studio space be flexible, responsive to the needs of all who share it. They need to be adaptable enough to meet the needs of the recording yet stay creatively stimulating and satisfying for all those participating. My suggestion is to rethink the standard sound studio and find ways to implement a flexible format where alternate staging possibilities are easily

accessible. If all participants in a recording session were to take part in a discussion around preferences and expectations prior to the session and reach some kind of shared goal for the session, the sound studio would become a more sustainable workspace.

Addressing the idea of working together to create a place to work together, one creative outcome of my research is a set of prompt cards which I will present at my making public event. The prompts propose specific methods for interaction and communication, in and around the sound studio. Some things can only really be figured out in the context of each project but these prompts support working in a playful and discursive way, which might be helpful. Here is an example.

‘Voice-treat’ prompt,

‘The Anteater’ story contained five characters and I invited five actors to come to work with me: Sten Elfström, Margareta Olsson, Meliz Karlge, Tove Edfeldt, and Magnus Roosman. I figured it would be too much to have all the actors present at the same time, since I was managing the recording session completely on my own. Instead, I invited two actors per day. Each actor interpreted every character in five different versions. All in all, the recording gave me an extensive body of material, 25 unique interpretations of each line.

Within the craft of dialogue editing, voice recording and ADR there is a lot of listening back and listening again. After choosing between different takes of the same line, the work to achieve a crisp and clear dialogue begins. It consists of repeatedly playing small parts of sentences or single words over and over, changing the details of plug-in settings until the preferred sonic quality is gained. The comprehension of intonation and precise emotional and affective qualities in a voice, transforms over time into a kind of tacit knowledge. It becomes automatic, enacted without deeper reflection. (note 4)

Surprisingly, in the editorial work of my recordings of 'The Anteater' I found myself confused by all the different versions. Editing my way through the material generated a sense of numbness rather than the curiousness I had envisioned. I had twenty-five separate lines for every single second of the story and each choice produced more ambivalence in me. Although the lines each had different energy and came from different intentions, in the end I found the different interpretations to be rather alike.

Eager to initiate a discussion on the different interpretations and preferences regarding voice and its affective potential, I presented two versions of one scene at my 30% seminar. I invited the audience to share their first impression of the recordings.

### 'The Anteater'-recordings

But as stated earlier, vocal preferences are as diverse as audience members. The very same voice reminded one person of a safe zone while for someone else it evoked suppression. All associations were individual but everyone had a version they preferred. The obvious conclusion from the feedback was that a preferred aesthetics in voice is a profoundly personal matter and as diverse as the group of people in the room. The discussion at my 30% seminar was slightly discouraging and for a long period of time I abandoned the material. I thought of the project as a dead end, a mistake, a failure.

Two years later, when preparing for my 80% seminar, I returned to the material and found something interesting in the multitude of voices, the flow of the same line again and again in different intonations from different actors. I re-edited the start of the story as a cacophony, each line uttered by different actors with different intentions and interpretations and structured it around my own voice reading from the original book.

### 'The Anteater'-cacophony

My relation to the recordings got new energy but in the re-editing process I realised that my dramatization of the story had robbed it of its warm, humorous, slightly ironic tone, such

a significant part of the book. The name of the book is 'Meningen med livet'; 'The Meaning of Life'. It tells the story about the anteater who suddenly finds himself profoundly depressed. In his endeavours to find meaning, he reflects on the essence of life in a direct and humorous style. The book offers a platform for existential reflection without digging too far into the dark matters of life and death.

I figured that by adding a narrator voice into the work I might solve the problem of the lost irony. The book's author Lotta Olsson accepted my invitation to read her book in a sound studio and we recorded with comfortable seating and standard radio broadcast studio microphones.

I intended to use the format from my 80% seminar presentation, duplicating each line with different voices in a cacophony, intermingled with the narrator's voice. But as I started to edit the continuousness of repetition completely obscured the narrative and although I had enjoyed those aesthetics for shorter portions, when applied to the full-length story, it became annoying. But I also realised now, using the narrator to explain who was speaking, I could shift the voice of any character at any time. Thus I could change actors and versions without rendering the narrative incomprehensible, which meant I could play around with the voices, still producing a comprehensive narrative.

As for the lost humorous tone, adding the narrator-voice was not the ideal solution I had imagined. Sometimes the narrator voice over explained the character's state of mind and information already perceivable in the vocal performance made the narration redundant. Also, the warm and humorous tone of the text didn't always register the same way when spoken. So, I found myself editing out some of the ironic commentary that I had enjoyed so much in the book.

I invite you to listen to the final outcome of my endeavours with 'The Anteater' at the Making Public event of my research project.

And the Research Catalogue presentation continues at the icon 'Background continuation'.

## Background continuation

One of my peers, dancer and choreographer Eleanor Bauer, recommended me a memoir, 'Soul Mining – a musical life', by renowned Canadian music producer Daniel Lanois. In his book Lanois recounts his journey to become and to work as a music producer. He describes his recording studios, sometimes built-in ex-cinema spaces, as spaces for nurturing creativity. He would install a control room and a recording studio and leave a lot of space for hanging out, convinced that the social space was a vital part of the creative space. I strongly relate to this desire for a more inclusive sound studio space, where artists stick around and socialise with the project, the instruments and each other. I crave a sound studio space that invites such interplay, offering an open invitation to create and co-create, to shape and reshape, to think with sound and to realise through listening.

I first learned my way around the mixer table from managing the music for live stages in small bars in Paris. At the very core of what I found there, was listening to the interplay of the instruments and adjusting what I heard to the way I wanted it to feel, sensing my way through listening. In my education studying sound for film, TV and radio, such concepts were rarely discussed, let alone practiced. And to my dismay, the further I advanced in the film industry the further away from sensing my way through listening I seemed to get.

The film industry currently undermines the creative capacity of the experts in sound - the sound engineers, sound designers and sound composers, by underutilizing their knowledge. This exposition explores what would happen if we invited 'sensing our way through listening' into sound studios like the ones I have worked in since leaving the music scene. My sincere hope is that this research articulates and models some necessary yet achievable change processes.

Sound engineer poem

## SOUND ENGINEER POEM

I speak from dim lit rooms  
with soft carpeted floors  
and acoustically adjusted walls.

I speak from diode garnished tables  
with colourful knobs  
and smooth-moving faders.

I speak from holding the microphone,  
pulling the cable  
and rolling out the carpet.

I speak from sound rolling,  
voice recording

and distortion.

I speak from replacing,  
listen again  
and adjusting.

I speak from choosing,  
refining  
and equalising.

I speak from sound effects,  
I speak from foley.

I speak from ambience, walla and music.

I speak from documentary,  
I speak from sports.

I speak from broadcast, podcast and compression.

I speak from rhythm,  
I speak from pace

I speak from fantasy, news and entertainment.

I speak from hyper-sensitivity and magic-making.

When you see that wind,  
sense that vowel  
when you fear the invisible lurking in the shadows

- that is magic from someone like me.
- that is intention aiming for listening.

– that is the interplay of sound as we know it.

Spheric

Eternal

The presentation continues at the icon 'Sound studio'.

## Sound studio

For the sake of clarity, I'd like to emphasise that throughout this exposition when I refer to the sound studio, it is for moving image or broadcast, not for music.

Although individual experiences may differ, the order of command within the production flow of the sound studio is often rather fixed. There is the director or producer in charge, there is the actor or journalist providing the vocal material and there is the sound engineer providing the link between human intentions and technical equipment. However, this research emphasises that sound engineering has much more to offer film and media production than mere mediation. As a sound engineer, attentive and inclusive listening is prerequisite but this expertise is seldom accessed or even acknowledged in collaborative situations in the sound studio. While the creativity of directors, actors, cinematographers and writers goes unquestioned, sound engineers are rarely included in the creative team or conversation.

Filmmaking is a protracted creative process. By the time the project lands at the desk of the sound engineer it has already been shaped, moulded and processed by many people over, sometimes, years. Whilst those who followed the project throughout, the director and producer, might be seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, the sound engineer might be meeting the material for the first time; for them the ideas are pouring out

of the screen and into their ears and hands. This huge discrepancy generates an unfortunate imbalance between the ones entering a project and the ones finalising it. This research project suggests methods with which to concretely address this imbalance. It proposes that inviting sonic elements, sound-centric methods and listening perspectives into every stage of the film making process, from idea development to final edit will positively disrupt and potentially enrich pre-, mid- and post-production conventions. The sound engineer, as the technical, social and creative mediator in the sound studio, emerges as a key figure in this new world order.

Mood-Sphere PROMPT

The Research Catalogue presentation continues at the icon 'Sound engineer'

## Sound engineer

Sound engineers are listeners by profession and through their work they cultivate a unique set of expertise – a hyper refined aural sense, an understanding of sound as affective material, a specific technical and practical know-how and a certain social sensitivity. (note 5)

Truly attentive and inclusive listening requires a sort of openness toward the world, demanding you reach beyond your own sovereignty. It requires a certain vulnerability, a willingness to unravel one's habitual mindset asking you to continuously inspect what you find true or correct or definite. I believe that the kind of profound listening I have in mind is neither taught in educational contexts nor utilised in professional contexts today. The full creative potential of sound engineering will not be unleashed without each individual sound engineer embracing the full capacity of their expertise. I wish to invite and help manifest this transformation.

In an artist talk around the making of 'Memoria' with director Apichatpong Weerasethakul, actress Tilda Swinton discusses the role of sound in future film making with an audience member.

*I'm really struck by your suggestion that sound is the author of Cinema. Uhm, and I... if that's true, and I'm not sure that I believe that's true, but let's say it is, then maybe what Joe's cinema is proposing is really something quite revolutionary an*

*up-ception of what cinema is and it might be to do with our relationship to vision. That there is a tiredness in a kind of montage a kind of cutting and a kind of framing. That we need refreshing and the root to refreshing that is through sound. I don't know, I'm just making that up on the spot but thank you for your question...*

My presentation continues at the icon 'Situatenedness – specifically'

## **Situatedness – specifically**

I am not the first sound engineer to advocate for deeper sonic engagement throughout the filmmaking process as a way to positively and creatively contribute to the final result. My ideas are not ground breaking and I acknowledge both individual and collective efforts to bring attention to sound-centric work in film, as I will point to in this next part of my presentation. However, for some reason it doesn't seem to take root, sound specific routines don't seem to integrate into the habits of the filmmaking industry in any permanent way. Not in Sweden anyway.

In the seventies American film editor Walter Murch coined the term sound designer to recognise the extensive and significant sound work he and his crew did in, for example, the movie 'Apocalypse now'. In the crew was a young Randy Thom, today a highly awarded sound designer and director of sound design at Skywalker production company. Thom has written extensively about how to consider sound strategies early on in production development and why he thinks it is crucial. He describes multiple projects throughout his career where he successfully inserted sound-centric ideas into early versions of the script. From time to time, he publishes texts on his blog.

In an interview film director David Lynch, from the same generation of film creators, discusses his collaboration with sound engineer Alan Splet and stresses how important sound is

to the whole of the film experience. I find his remark interesting in relation to the balance between sonic and visual influence on filmmaking processes, especially since Lynch is such a highly influential artist and role model to many. Here is an extract from an interview with Lynch discussing his collaboration with sound engineer Alan Splet.

Sound is, uhm, I think every director would realize it's 50% of the picture And but, anyway it is for me, and to get it to marry to the picture is the trick. So, it's not just a sound effect for a sound effect it's, it's in that world, it marries to it and you work and work and work till you get that. And Al was, you know because of his, his good ears and his technical ability, he would record things that had, uhm like maximum power maximum power and he just painstakingly get these, you know fantastic recordings and it was really beautiful and I still use some of these Findhorn winds that he got. And that was the best thing about him going to Findhorn, in my book, he recorded these beautiful winds. And they are just beautiful, they just make you, you know, sour out. It's really great.

In Sweden, in both educational and professional contexts, the expression 'make the sound stick to the image' is common. Lately I've begun to wonder if repeatedly confirming visual supremacy in this way enforces the existing power imbalance

between the visual and the aural. If we are ever to dismantle the dominant visual paradigm, we need to be meticulous about how we discuss sonic particularities.

My research advocates for shifts in both language and convention in film production processes. Encapsulated by the term enhear, which I will elaborate on later, my wish is to encourage the development of a sonic-centric aesthetic vocabulary and to offer practical sound-centric methods, applicable for use in both film production and film education contexts. Enhear suggests sonic-centric considerations to be invited into the full spectrum of film making processes. This paradigmatic shift, away from the idea that sound must always adapt to image in film making, is vital if we are ever to enhear a more equal collaboration between sound and vision. As David Lynch points out, it takes a lot of work to marry the sound and the image, and this marriage is a significant part of the filmmaking process. My research contends that this marriage would benefit from actively attending to sound and image in relation to one another from the very beginning and throughout the filmmaking process.

The technological revolution of the past half century has totally transformed routines and workflows in film making. What Murch dreamt of when introducing the concept sound designer to film production flow no longer necessarily incorporates the role of the individual sound engineer. I recently read an interview with

Swedish sound designer Carl Edström about his work on the Swedish TV-series 'Bron', a show I also worked on. In the Swedish context 'Bron' was a large production, 4 seasons of 10 episodes. Edström describes how his ideas for the sound were developed in conversation with the conceptual director. For example, he suggested sharp sonic shifts between scenes to underline a sense of threat and suspense. In order to achieve such effect, my instructions as sound editor sometimes got very functional. For example, the cutting between scenes, from one environment to another, had very specific fade length directives; two frames fading in, two frames fading out. I realise I was only one small part of the sound crew in this production and my assignment was to reproduce an existing format. Yet I can't resist the opportunity to reflect on how the framing of my assignment might have affected my work. The sound designer, apart from being in charge of the overall sonic aesthetic, coordinates the work of each separate sound editor, bringing it all together for the mix. Explaining his role, Edström stresses the significance of keeping a fresh relationship to the material when entering the final mixing phase. In commercial TV production in the United States each sound engineer is specialised in one aspect of the sound edit, dialogue editing for example. This set-up did not apply to the sound crew for 'Bron'. We took care of the full sound edit for individual episodes entailing dialogue editing, ambience design, sound effects editing etc. This diverse sound editing work resembles those you would be offered in a

smaller film production, an environment in which you would also likely have more creative licence. The in between model applied in 'Bron', where the work was diverse but offered limited creative say, avoids the monotony of say dialogue editing for a whole season but at same time it also diminishes a potential to develop a specific expertise, which concentrating on one single part of sound editing throughout a whole season might enable. Each of these workflow models have pros and cons for both the individual sound editors and for the project but none of them cultivate an environment in which every contributor feels integral to and thus responsible for the project at hand. My research proposes establishing new conventions for the sound studio, introducing specialised listening practices into the habitual routines of sound studio collaborations, integrating sound engineer expertise and recognising each sound engineer as a valued creative contributor to the process.

In coining the term, sound designer, Walter Murch invited directors, script writers and cinematographers into an important conversation around sonic strategies for narrative film making. Acknowledging the advancement of technology today, how might we continue the creative conversation all the way down the line to the individual sound engineer? Clearly the sonic elements in 'Bron' were given serious attention, I am certain Edström discussed them in great detail with the director. However, the opportunity to creatively engage never truly reached the sound editors employed to execute the work.

It is an undeniable fact that a sound engineer is an expert in listening, yet within large productions with tight schedules, the role becomes purely functional; manage the sound - make it work. Not only does this approach underutilise the creative capacities of the sound engineer, it undermines their sense of self-worth and undervalues their creative potential. Enhear, as it is framed in this research, contains the capacity to slowly but steadily shift priorities, using attentive and inclusive listening to influence workflows and inspire creative initiatives we can't yet enhear.

In collaboration with my colleague and co-researcher film director Ester Martin Bergsmark, I have investigated ways to disrupt and reframe habitual production flows within film making. In this ongoing research, we explore circular workflows. Instead of adopting the traditional production flow we move back and forth between sound and image, using listening and sound-centric creative practices to influence the making process throughout film production.

You find the presentation of our work at the icon 'feat. Voice Under'.

## Feat. VOICE UNDER

This work in progress is a collaboration with film maker and doctoral candidate Ester Martin Bergsmark and our respective research projects, 'Enhear' and 'Voice-under'. Within this collaboration we search for and create conditions which invite an auditory approach into traditionally visually dominated processes of film making.

Bergsmark and me began our research studies in the same year and have followed each other's work closely from the start. Together we experiment with disrupting and playfully destabilizing habitual workflows within film production. We are committed to exploring how an expanded understanding of listening might contribute to the filmmaking process. Our collaboration has undoubtedly influenced our individual research projects and has provided us both with rich material to think through and with.

Our first joint effort was an unorthodox recording session to produce sonic material for a film included in Bergsmark's research project. Using an odd mixture of ADR, foley production ([note 6](#)) and traditional radio theatre recording, we recorded the actors Louise Löwenberg and Halla Ólafsdóttir gurgling, groaning and making choking sounds, generating creaks, buzzes and purrs with a variety of props and enacting

screaming and howling scenarios. We alternated between allowing the visual material to guide our intentions and working with the sound alone, setting aside any thoughts of how it would synchronize with the image. Later, the recorded material was edited into the sound design of the moving image material and presented as a short film in the context of Bergsmark's research.

### Soundtrack from the short film

Continuing our dialogic research, pursuing Bergsmark's interest in circular workflows and my investigations into the creative potentials of sonic material, we entertained ideas which would allow sound design to have significant influence prior to and during the film shoot. A small team from 'Voice Under' was heading for a filming session in France. Based on Bergsmark's description of the ideas around characters and scenarios for the shoot, I arranged a few sound compositions to be used as a sort of auditory scenography. Bergsmark and the actors used the compositions in several different ways. They listened to them during their preparatory conversations, used them as ambience or as specific scenographic elements and to amplify certain ideas about the site, era or atmosphere of the scene. The compositions were also used almost as a third character in some scenarios, a playful element for the actors to react and respond to.

Within their research project Bergsmark created something they call an audio-visual prototype, in place of the usual written script. After experiencing the prototype at a screening and discussing it with Bergsmark, I created an audio-script, a longer sound composition, to accompany the prototype. At the following film shoot the audio-script was played in-ear for one of the actors to respond and react to. Bergsmark also used elements from the audio-script in the sound design when reediting the audio-visual prototype.

This collaborative project, fuelled by the cross pollination of our respective doctoral research projects, reveals the creative potential a commitment to circular workflows in film making can unearth. Promoting sound-creative work from its usual position and inviting it into the preparatory phases of film production has generated entirely new routines and revealed new perspectives on existing ones. Some of those routines and perspectives inspired me in articulating the six-step- exercises that can be experienced in my research as ‘Enhear prompts’.

‘Audio Script’-prompt

Together, Bergsmark and I enhear a future shift in the practical, aesthetic and ethical relations between imagery and sound in film making; the voice under of our work challenges the traditional position of the image as the carrier of truth. In developing and circulating deeply collaborative ways to listen to images and to see sounds, our research seeks to subvert the long-held dominance of the image, evoke underexamined traditions and challenge outdated norms within film production processes.

My presentation continues at the icon 'Situatdness – Practically'

## **Situatedness – practically**

The technical developments of the past half century have transformed creative conditions in the film industry significantly. I wonder how that development might have affected the sound engineer's aptitude for attentive listening. One major shift in the practice of sound engineering is that historically sound engineers recorded their own sound effects, whilst contemporary sound engineers work primarily with digital sound archives often produced by dedicated sound effect companies; recording sounds on demand or producing archives available and accessible online for a fee. This development has several benefits, you can create almost any environment from wherever you are in the world as long as you have access to a large enough archive. And the process is fast. Accessible sound archives have revolutionised production efficiency in sound editing.

Modern software makes skimming through a digital sound archive simple and quick but it doesn't necessarily encourage one to sense through the sounds. Recording your own sound effects on the other hand captures a sense of subjectivity and intimacy in relation to both the sound and the particular qualities of your recording equipment. Such a process develops in situ personal listening strategies, problem solving capacities and technical capabilities, skills impossible to replicate through selecting sounds from a digital sound archive.

I would suggest that spending time with sound recording equipment demands an openness of ears, heart and mind, a sensitised kind of listening, vital to any mediated sound practice. When teaching, I often use accessible modern lo-fi equipment such as smartphones to introduce students to listening practices through the act of collecting sounds. I will play you a sound strip made by graphic arts students in a work shop during the pandemic. To me it is an inspiring example of how listening can initiate a different kind of creative process, activating an aural relationship to what is usually a visual practice.

#### Sound strip

I remember a workshop with highly renowned Swedish photographer Anders Petersen during my years as a sound engineer student at Dramatiska Institutet in Stockholm. As Petersen is a photographer the focus of the workshop was image but he especially relayed the importance of creating an intimate relationship to the tools and the materials of one's practice. Petersen encouraged us to build an intimate relationship with our tools, to have them with us at all times, even when sleeping. I almost never meet such approaches in professional sound engineer circles. Discussions around new hardware or software features are mostly rather practical and informative, which of course is important for implementing and keeping up with

technical developments in the field. But I propose a different kind of discourse, one built around listening as a tool for deepened understanding, something I believe would develop the singular creativity of each individual sound engineer but also help generate a new community of practice within sound engineering. I anticipate sense-based, felt perspectives being just as valued as technical knowledge and know-how and I imagine concepts such as enhear enabling a more conscious commitment to listening in the sound studio; cultivating a discourse linking the technical to the affective in sound engineering; rendering the sound studio a place to listen in, together and on your own.

In 1986, on the radio show 'Speaking of music', musician and composer Annea Lockwood describes her experience of recording rivers all over the world while making 'the river piece'. Someone in the audience asks her what equipment she uses.

#### *Transcript*

*Sony TCD 5M which Charles has here, they are beautiful. Do any of you work with the TCD 5M a lot of us are using it, very nice analogue cassette recorder... and Sennheiser microphones. Some of the time I had two mics maybe a foot, 2 ft, 6 inches apart, in different little segments of the river, uhm both highly directional, cardioid mics. And sometimes I had two omni-directional mics, mics which will pick up sort of... a little like the configuration of*

*the sound head, heh you know there's a little gap in the font, there is an area where the mic isn't sensitive but through a fairly wide arc the mic is sensitive. And those I would use for both, picking up both river and air sounds – ambient sounds; So, I'd go back and forth between the two mics but it was as simple like that I did a lot of bag packing. Very light equipment, it's very good equipment, it's clean and rugged. Though I think I'm about to buy myself a digital, a little Sony digital tape deck somehow.*

Although Lockwood talks about her equipment rather functionally, mentioning brand and technical capacities, she uses a different vocabulary from the one I encounter in sound engineer circles. She describes *beautiful tape-recorder* and *little gaps in the front* in her stereo rig. Her playful tone makes me curious to hang out with her tape-recorder on those riverbanks. An urge which seldom arises in me during conversations about the frequency span or sound to noise ratio of different speakers at the fika table in sound studios I have worked in.

Recently I attended an online conversation between Lockwood and Canadian sound composer Hildegard Westerkamp. They laughingly shared memories from being young and feeling alienated by the mainly technical discussions of their creative work in electro acoustic circuits. Lockwood articulated that

working with equipment is always intentional, and listening is not and that the practices are different in that way. Westerkamp seemed to agree, listening to something and recording something seemed separate practices for them. They both pointed to discrepancies between intentional listening - a listening to that is for something, and immersive listening - a listening to that is within and with something. And maybe they are right, maybe the attention and management technical equipment requires, limits the kind of listening that can happen while recording. Perhaps to some degree this contradicts my claim that reinvigorating recording practices can cultivate attentive listening.

However, I do insist that building an intimate relationship to the act of recording is essential in developing an understanding of listening as a creative material and maybe if we frame the recording practice as process rather than production my argument seems less discordant.

I used this idea of creative listening through recording sounds, in a work with high school youths in a suburb of Stockholm. Please visit the work-story at the icon 'Danderyd Lyssnar' to learn more.

### **‘Danderyd Lyssnar’** ([note 7](#))

In 2018, ‘Smart Kreativ Stad’ in collaboration with Danderyd municipality, a wealthy suburb of Stockholm, commissioned me and youth pedagogue Fina Sundqvist to construct and conduct workshops in two upper secondary schools in Danderyd. The initiative emerged from a biannual survey conducted by Stockholm municipality which indicated that youths from the municipality of Danderyd consumed more drugs and alcohol and suffered from greater mental health problems than the average Stockholm teenager. Danderyd municipality wanted to initiate a dialogue with the youths in relation to these alarming statistics and ‘Smart Kreativ Stad’ proposed their initiative ‘new perspectives on moving images in the public space’ as a suitable platform. My colleague and I suggested initiating a dialogue with the youths, using listening strategies as a method to generate a wide range of associations in relation to the proposed questions. Bluntly put, the adult world asked: ‘Why do you consume alcohol?’ and ‘Why are you so sad?’ Impossible questions both to ask and to answer, particularly in the school environment where we held the workshops. Instead, we introduced the youths to the notion of being auditory witnesses to their own lives. We encouraged them to listen to their surroundings and initiate narratives from the sounds they found. We listened, recorded, listened again and allowed the sounds to inform the

storytelling. The resulting testimonies derived from the individual teenagers' creative thinking, liberated by a combination of independent and shared listening practices. Working with sound and listening in this way was a new practice for the youths and the seemingly loose framework, with no grading system and no right or wrong answers - a fairly unusual set up for school work - initially seemed to produce an insecurity about what was expected from them. Even though this unaccustomed framework may have been frustrating for some, their stories represented a wide variety of thoughts, dreams, fears and wishes for the future; and maybe the workshops provided momentary relief from performing the role of the smart, confident, polite youth providing expected answers to anxious questions from grownups. In order to detach the stories from specific individuals, anonymise them in a way, we invited youths from other parts of Stockholm to record them.

'En vanlig dag'

Collecting sounds, listening to each other's stories and describing one's everyday life through the sounds of it, generated a diverse anecdotal material that teachers and other adults in the youths' lives wouldn't otherwise have access to. For the municipality these anonymized testimonies brought new light to the biannual survey, helping inform the ongoing

conversation. By breathing life into the statistics, the project also revealed ways that art can affectively and informatively contribute to the exploration of societal issues. For my own research, this work deepened my understanding of the entangled relationship between the ethical and the aesthetic. How might we create safe and sensitive frameworks for respectfully speaking and sharing the stories of others?

### ‘Joggingrundan’

This project coincided with a course I took in pedagogy. Contemplating pedagogy in relation to the experience of working with young adults in their everyday environment directed my attention toward the human brain and how it reacts to long term stress. The youths I met through the ‘Danderyd Lyssnar’ project clearly experienced everyday life as stressful. Many of the anecdotes, generated by our invitation to give aural attention to one’s favourite places, involved stories about places far away from the youths’ everyday life and far away from school.

In his book, ‘Depphjärnan’, Anders Hansen a Swedish psychiatrist and popular TV show host, describes the relationship between long term stress and depression. He describes a particular function of the brain, where first it produces a feeling and then it generates thoughts confirming or fortifying those feelings. These patterns were established

millennia ago and developed in relation to surviving completely different environmental circumstances than today. I recognize that the workshops we conducted with the youths in Danderyd, strongly influenced by my research project on the creative potential of attentive listening strategies, proposed a safe space in which to explore questions of societal expectations, roles and responsibilities. I am curious to explore these approaches in relation to other community contexts in the future, inviting collaborators from the fields of sociology and neurology to join me.

The 'Danderyd Lyssnar' project generated new questions in relation to the use of my research methods in the world beyond the sound studio. The project also inspired me to explore how sound aware practices might be used as guiding principles in pedagogical contexts.

My research has generated tools that are both concrete - focusing on sites, sounds and recording equipment, and conceptual – exploring the social role of listening, imagining via the aural sense. I realise that mindfulness practices are not uncommon in pedagogical contexts these days however the methods I am proposing are not intended to be therapeutic. They are an affective and artistic synthesis of situatedness, sonic awareness and storytelling. I believe it is possible that these artistic research methods might become useable tools

for pedagogical environments in which youths and young adults are experiencing unacceptable levels of stress and depression.

Thinking big, I wonder if enhear strategies could become common pedagogical practice, applied within obligatory education contexts?

‘Radical changes are occurring in what democratic societies teach the young, and these changes have not been well thought through. Thirsty for national profit, nations, and their systems of education, are heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive. If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person’s sufferings and achievements. The future of the world’s democracies hangs in the balance.’

Martha C. Nussbaum  
*NOT FOR PROFIT*,  
2016

'Stress'

My presentation continues at the icon 'Situatenedness –  
Practically continuation'

## **Situatedness – practically continuation**

My relationship to audio equipment has been a constant companion to my thinking throughout my professional life. The sound studio with its soft carpeted floors and comfortable seating, constellations of twinkling diodes and silver lined membranes, has – ever since I first met those rooms - appealed to me as a site for magic making. Yet some of the things I associate with the sound studio environment - repellent equipment, too much technical language, the focus on product rather than process - also pushes me away, even alienates me. I recognise that my attentive listening practice has never fully merged with my relationship to technical equipment. I am not sure they need to but for me the abyss between them is not generative. With this research project my hope is to connect the practice of attentive listening with the technicalities of sound engineering, developing conscious practices which emerge from intangible experiences and vice versa. The concept enhear proposes listening as a synthesis of experience, act, role and tool, simultaneously and continuously attending to the practical, the technical, the spatial, the temporal, the aesthetic, the imaginary, the actual, the personal and the social. And by bringing enhear into consciousness, providing suggestions as how to use it and what to make from the use of it, I wish to generate intangible yet palpable weaves of creator, interpreter,

site and material; bringing sound engineer, sound studio and sound into a more intimate relation.

I first realised the somewhat functional relationship between the sound engineer and their materials when visiting an entirely different environment, the glass studio. I'll soon direct you to the work-story of those endeavours.

In the glass studio the danger of the hot melted glass produces a need to pay close and careful attention, generating an attentiveness that seems to leak into the collaborative processes there, imbuing them with a tangible sense of care. I develop this thinking further in the work story, but thinking of my experience in the glass studio in relation to my own profession surfaced thoughts about how care for a space, a material or a tool might engender a certain quality or state of attentiveness.

The kind of listening that takes place in a recording process requires a specific kind of heightened attentiveness which may seem slow but is in fact deep; giving attention to all that needs to be in place so that the perfect recording of that very moment can happen. My research project 'Enhear', is in part a search for tools which invite a sound engineer to engage intimately and carefully with their sounds via hyper attentive practices of in-real-time and mediated listening. And I believe habituating heightened attentiveness via listening develops one's capacity to care in a broader sense, to listen with care to people, places and

things and to hear things that may be there but may not be said in words. Emphasising the care for the listening situation – what you hear, how it interacts with you physically, intellectually, emotionally; nurturing your personal relationship with the sound through the careful, sensitive and intimate experience of listening; listen through the equipment which you intimately know and sensitively care for – these thoughts came to me while contemplating my experiences in the glass studio.

To get to the work-story of my collaborative work with glass artist Nina Westman, please press the icon 'Glass'.

## **GLASS**

Throughout my research project I have sought information and experience from other artistic forms and practices – theatre, architecture, choreography, sound art and participatory art - looking for practical situations and poetic metaphors that might help me enhear different ways to think through creative collaboration in the sound studio. This collaboration with glass artist Nina Westman is an exploration into the materiality of listening, and how that might manifest in another art form as material, as metaphor and as experience. I have given myself permission to be entirely intuitive in this part of my project, to speculate on the idea of what a visual counterpart to my notion of sensed, sensitive and sensitised listening might be. How might the internal emotional resonances engendered by an experienced sound or non-sound translate into the visual, sculptural, affective material that is glass?

## LECTURE ON NOTHING

I am here , and there is nothing to say ,  
If among you are those who wish to get somewhere , let them leave at any moment  
silence requires . What we re-quire is silence ; but what  
is that I go on talking .  
Give any one thought a push : it falls down easily  
; but the pusher and the pushed pro-duce that enter-tainment called  
a dis-cussion .

Frances Marie Uitti  
*'Lecture on nothing'*  
by John Cage

Every room we enter affects us in some way and our presence affects the room right back. We use language and words for communication but also as filter, to protect ourselves from exposure. Words can be shields and sometimes our voice can't carry their weight. Yet at other times our voice is weaponized by words and we use them to be strong, to be powerful, to insist and persist. I am fascinated by the unsaid in the said. Beyond the words what do I hear; and why do I hear it as I do? The social interaction in any collaborative space leaves behind a trace, an often unsaid sense of what has happened in the space. Even when nothing significant has happened the inter-relational essence of the encounter lingers in those who were

present. For me that essence sometimes shines through in the voice, I enhear it in sentiments revealed in spaces between words, in things left unsaid in conversations, in the tangible yet invisible energy between people.

Or as Jesper Waldersten puts it in his 'Sommar i P1' in 2018:

*'Jag ser allt som möjligheter. Jag lyssnar efter vad någons suckar egentligen väger, bevakar mellanrummen, sprättar upp gamla anteckningsböcker från anus till hals'*

*(I see everything as opportunities. I listen for what someone's sigh actually weighs, I guard the gaps, tear up old notebooks from anus to throat')*

In exercising the skills of listening, I imagine a communication in which the things unsaid strengthen the dialogue. Franz Kafka's invisible creature 'Odradek' is my adopted name for the unseen vibrations beyond the voice. I use Kafka's monster to define the affect that presence, spoken or unspoken, creates in a room. I see 'Odradek', not as the embodied creature that political theorist and philosopher Jane Bennett describes, but as the air filling up the space between all that is solid in a room. I come from a field of storytelling and my primary tool is sound. Or is it maybe the non-sound? Might it

be that my main instrument, instead of being a palette of sounds, is actually the gaps between the sounds? What if I am not actually dealing with sound but rather the non-sound or the in-between sounds? Might I argue that in sound editing - manipulating pace, creating pauses and interrupting rhythm to find the most compelling version of the piece – sound is merely a biproduct of the actual instrument - the silences in-between, the Odradek? The simple response is, of course, that we, as sound engineers are dealing with both, in tandem - the interplay of sounds and silences. But I can't help thinking of the inequitable attention distribution between the two.

Listen carefully, 'Odradek' is comfort, companionship, misunderstanding, rage, despair, joy; the vibrant, breathing and bending, filling the gaps between us. Odradek has no shape. No borders. It is produced and sustained by the circumstances in and of the room, constantly shifting in response to the intangible nature of the relations therein. 'Odradek' has no rhythm of its own, it reacts to ideas and feelings of each of us, interfering with intended or expected rhythm, generating something constantly new. Something unexpected.

From early on in my research education I found myself drawn to the art and material of glass. There are analogies between glass and sound which I strongly sense yet find difficult to

articulate. A voice might crack as easily as a glass vase, it can be sharp or smooth on the edges, firm, fragile, transparent, broken, blurry. Of course, many things might be described by these adjectives, but for me these words create a sense of commonality between glass and voice – an intangible relatedness, a similar set of sensory associations, an understanding connecting them beyond their material limits. That sense of common understanding reminds me of the state of mind that's present when I work within sound design. I work with the ambiguity, or with the balance between the concrete and the ambiguous; with a material imbued with multiple possible associations and interpretations. Yet I negotiate in every step how it is received, how the concrete affect of either the whole composition or the singular sound is heard, navigating it all in relation to the moving image. I listen and look, look and listen and I try to sense and understand the interaction between the sound and the image, the heard and the seen, how the two correlate or not, when they're in tandem and when they contradict and what those contrapositions might bring to the affective understanding of the work.

When thinking of glass art, as both material and practice, I recognise a strong affinity with sound engineering. When trying to articulate this connectivity between affect of listening and affect of seeing with glass artist Nina Westman, our

experiments in the glass studio were attempts to translate something ephemeral into a solid state. How to make voice utterances, sentiments revealed by spaces between words, things left unsaid in conversations, traces of the energy between people, experience-able within a glass sculpture?

Have you ever been to a glass studio? The oven makes it hot. Even though it might be winter outside and the studio might be poorly insulated the room is summer warm. The heat comes from an oven heated to the degree that can produce hot liquid glass. It is very dangerous of course and following directions about how not to get hurt and how not to hurt others is essential. This air of danger generates an intense concentration where communication is everything. One glass artist is constantly acting in relation to another, when the artists know each other well this communication is often wordless. In comparing the glass studio and the sound studio, I wonder what preconditions might bring a similar sense of concentration and care to my domain. The visits to the glass studio directly fed into my thinking around the studio set up. How might such qualities or states of concentration, steeped in mutual concern, careful communication and utmost consideration, be incorporated in the work I do? Can sound material steer the work in the way the hot dangerous melted glass directs the workflow in the glass studio? Can sound material ever give rise to the focussed concern generated by

hot melted glass? What would a similar engagement with the sonic produce in the sound studio?

As part of my 50% seminar, I situated vocal sound works inside glass sculptures blown by Westman and her colleagues, glass artists Yoko Yamano and Reino Björk. I had imagined that the glass-sculptures would start resonate from the installed sound works, generating tones which would interfere with the voices, creating new abstracted sounds. But the small speakers installed in the sculptures couldn't manage to vibrate the thick glass. So, the effect of disrupting or destroying the voices by adding the vibration of the glass, did not happen at all as I had anticipated.

Instead, something else appeared, pointed out to me by my brilliant colleague, actor and doctor in artistic research Stacey Sacks. Something specific was being manifested through the combination of glass and sound elements, a specific quality of concern was produced by the way people were engaging with the fragility of glass sculptures and the barely audible narratives inside them. The need to bend towards the glass sculpture in order to be in proximity to the sound source and the concentration and unspoken communication this required, meant that careful and considerate listening was being embodied, staged and performed by the audience in the room.

In envisioning the exposition of my work, I imagine 'Odradek' taking form. In the same way that certain kind of light becomes visible in smoke. In such a comparison the smoke is the art of listening and the light is the unsaid, revealed both through the voices of the spoken and through the silences in between.

While this project has helped me articulate how enhanced notions of care, consideration and curiosity are prerequisite for the creative, collaborative sound studio I enhear, I am only just beginning my experiments into the material and metaphoric resonances between sound and glass. This work is very much to be continued.

My presentation continues at the icon 'Situatenedness - generally'

## Situatedness – generally

### *Transcript*

*The reason was that it seemed to me that the spectra or the details of what we conventionally tend to think of as a single sound are multitudinous, that anyone sound, it's like looking at a drop of water under a microscope no sound as just one sound every sound is a multiplicity of sounds. And the way these inner sounds within a so-called single sound, like the rod which is vibrating the second sound you just heard, the way these details move in and out, emerge and disappear again; the rhythms of their appearances and disappearances and their different pitches, the patterns they form rhythmic and pitch patterns and dynamic levels uhm many of them are called transients technically but there are many sounds that are not transients who was, formed a wonderful given structure and one of the points I wanted to make with a glass concert and one of the reasons I mean the reason why I would ... insisted upon using just one sound at the time was to seduce people if possible into listening to these single, so-called single sounds as tiny little worlds sound worlds elaborate sound worlds and through that picking up the detail in the sounds and through that come to as it were a sort of respect sound for what it is in itself it seemed to me at the time and it still does in a way only I am little happy with the idea right now, it seemed to me that the time that composition, that aspect of composition which is concerned with*

*structuring sound which is a very seductive aspect of composition there is an element in that of the piece reflecting the composer's intellect of course but the composers mind the way the composers mind is working; one is working with several different things, one of which is the innate way the sound moves its behaviours so to speak or the sounds behaviour and the other is the way the composers mind is moving and I was beginning around the time of the glass concert I was beginning to become interested in sound as an energy, as a power and as a force at which point I wanted to, as it would get my mind out of the way, I wanted to present sound to people in such way that there was no screen between the listener and the sound so that you could then get totally taken up in the sound and experience it and listen to it for its own sake rather than through the filter of my own mind so I was trying to get rid of composition in a way for a while.*

This voice belongs to a young Annea Lockwood, it's an extract from the same radio show we heard earlier, when she was talking about recording devices.

The way Lockwood articulates her work enthuses me. Her words corroborate my relation to sound engineering, which I experience as a constant negotiation of emotional/ephemeral/sensational driving forces, inside its more obvious pragmatic functions; moving fluently between doing and

sensing, between contributing and listening. Lockwood takes listening and sounding seriously and articulates that seriousness without being overly serious; her playful, joyful tone encourages me to stand strong in my quest to enhear the intangible within the practical and join her in exploring the many possible confluences between sound and listening.

Discourse around collaborative process, or within for that matter, provides an opportunity for ways of thinking to 'rub off' on each other. I've experienced this in the company of my fellow researchers in the context of artistic research at SKH. The exchange of ideas, the lingering conversations, the sense of critical intimacy that unearths differences but also reveals commonalities, a way to understand being by being together. Listening to Lockwood talking about her work 'rubs off' on me; inspires me to bring attention to the sound world by sharing what I consider to be the power and potential of the sonic. And to do it slightly differently to the way I learned about it in my education and experience it in my professional practice. Her work is profoundly steeped in the listening experience and in the embodied experience of sound. Her approach to process and to listening is circular; moving from idea to realisation and back again. Similarly, via the practice of listening and listening back, enhear invites this possibility to 'rub off' on each other. Like I said, I will develop this term further later, but right now it might

be helpful to think of it as developing understanding through heightened experiences of listening.

*I'll ask you to listen in several different ways as we're walking. So, first of all, you can think about what are other ways that you listen in your daily life. So, you listen to music and what are the kinds of things that you listen for when you are listening to music? You know, maybe you're listening for melody, maybe you're listening for rhythm, tempo, timbre like interesting sounds. Uhm, you can also listen for what is the environment communicating to you. So, as you walk around this area, for instances I walked into the college earlier today all of the ice trucks were lined up in front of the college, dumping their ice into, uhm into other trucks, so that they could be taken away. And I thought about how that sound really dominates the landscape in Montreal during the winter and even last night you know 2 in the morning there were still the sirens of you know snow clearing equipment. So that's a very, very common sound in Montreal. And every time I teach a sound documentary course at Concordia somebody does a piece about snow removal. You know, because it's often a winter course that I'm teaching, and it's on everybody's mind. So that's a piece of information about the environment and it's also something that really being links it with Montreal. You don't hear that sound in the same way in other cities. Uhm Montreal really does snow removal particularly*

*well. But there are other things that you can hear from the environment. What are the sounds that are, that you hear most, that are in most places? What are the sounds that are the loudest and mask other sounds? Which sounds would you expect to hear and you're not hearing at all? So that's thinking politically and listening ecologically. So, thinking about the sound environment as something that can tell us about the environment as a whole. And what it's, what is our place within that?*

*Andra McCartney*

Sound artist Andra McCartney was an emeritus Professor in the communication faculty at Ontario University Canada. A committed sound walker and field recorder who has written extensively about how various listening intentions steer and inform our understanding of a site. McCartney's field recordings and soundscapes are built from elements similar to those used by sound engineers but there is one fundamental difference. When building a sound background for a scene in a movie every detail is intentionally placed. There is a foundation sound, wind for example, and that sound file contains only wind. Shorter sounds like leaves rattling or branches creaking are added along with say birds, one or two dogs, cars passing and footsteps linked to people populating the image. Throughout such sound work it is possible to move the sounds around in relation to each

other, to other parts of the sound design like the dialogue, and in relation to both the music and the image. Field recordings are not built up in this compartmentalised way. They are recorded as a single composite experience and so they're less controllable in a sense. It doesn't mean they are not purposefully edited or attuned to the aesthetics of the artist, but they are steered by an initial practice of listening to an actual place. Field recordings are complex sound compositions in their own right, it's almost impossible to control them the way sound editing for moving image insists upon - removing and replacing elements that 'doesn't stick to the image'. Film director Gus van Sant challenged conventions in film sound when he invited compositions by Hildegard Westerkamp to score his film 'Elephant', a devastating portrait of a school shooting. Westerkamp's compositions are primarily field recordings, so they are not necessarily understood as music from a traditional movie audience perspective. While elements in her score correspond with elements in the imagery of the film, they are often out of sync. This adds something almost supernatural to the narrative, the sound doesn't match the shifts in imagery and thus distorts the narrative expectation. Metaphorically, this distortion reflects the state of mind of the shooter leading up to such terrible action, but beyond simply representing it, this use of sound helps create an actual sensation of unease in the viewer.

My creative work explores story driven structures based on voice, several of which you can experience in the context of this exposition. Sound artist Janet Cardiff engages with similar elements in her work, yet unlike mine hers often include narration. In her guided sound walks, created in collaboration with her partner George Miller, stories are mingled with carefully edited sounds relating and contributing to the narrative and concrete instructions for the listener on how to orient in the physical place you're in. I have tried a few of her soundwalks and they generate a strong sense of disorientation in me which I find interesting. I visited her permanent installation 'Wanås Walk' at Wanås Konst in Skåne, south of Sweden. It is a poetic sound walk, a voiced narrative animated by other sounds. It disconnects you from the site and sonically relocates you elsewhere yet the route instructions are based on the site you are actually in. I ended up sitting down on a rock instead of following the route instructions, enjoying the story from a still position. I simply wasn't able to both immerse myself in the sonic elsewhere and orient myself in the woods of Skåne, using the instructions from Cardiff's voice. Even though in a certain way I failed the soundwalk and it failed me, I found the experience fascinating. It revealed to me the level of aural information I personally need in order to negotiate everyday life, as well as the potential impact of sound when used as immersive and imaginative material in storytelling and place making.

I adore the auditory intelligence of Lockwood, McCartney, Westerkamp and Cardiff. Each of their art works offer precisely mediated auditory experiences generated via profound practices of sonic attentiveness; Lockwood's scales of play between the human ear and nature's immensity; McCartney's enduring legacy of walking as a devotional listening practice; the rhythmic, multiplicities and sheer magnitude of sounds found in Westerkamp's field recording compositions; the virtual + actual = magical placemaking of Cardiff. The only possible way to truly appreciate these artists is through listening and the more closely you listen the richer the experience of their work becomes.

My presentation continues at the icon 'Listening'.

## Listening

*I mean it's interesting I'm sort of always so interested in uhm definitions of listening and there was something that came to my mind the other day when I was trying to struggle with something and I just couldn't sort of get to the heart of the matter. And so, then once I got there I wrote down: listening is like peeling back the tens layers of life in order to reach the heart, the heart of the matter or one's own heart or the heart of others. And whether it is in a conversation in relationships or whether it has to do with the environment.*

*And that you know in terms of climate change I keep thinking that's the kind of listening we really need now; and where we peel back those layers and get rid of the tensions like which is you know everything that we've imposed and made problematical for the earth.*

Hildegard Westerkamp

I will try to tell you more about my understanding of the practice of listening. Try, not because I don't think you would understand. Try, not because I am not up for the challenge but rather because translating subjective ephemeral experiences into words, when words mean such different things to different people, is a fool's errand. Try, because I don't know who you are and I know nothing of your references, preferences or

experiences. And because I know too much about my own references, preferences and experiences and so tend to take them for granted.

I am using ideas drawn from sound art, sociology, philosophy and anthropology to better understand my own definition of attentive listening, exploring it in relation to my personal artistic and pedagogical practices of sound engineering, and investigating how it might contribute to broadening education for future sound engineers.

Paying thorough attention to someone or something in order to reach a deepened understanding is not a new idea. Mindfulness as a method has been researched and applied in many different fields of knowledge. Have you ever heard of 'Slow Art Day' for example? Each year art museums worldwide dedicate a Saturday in April to slowing down the consumption of art, encouraging visitors to stay with one artwork for a significant period of time. It offers a small resistance to the modern tendency of racing through an entire museum, giving each object only a few seconds of attention. I recognise a mutual concern here; one might even suggest attentive listening as a sonic parallel to slow art in its attempt to deepen understanding by heightening experience. 'Slow Art Day' began in 2008 but the idea of slow art has a much longer history, here is the British anthropologist Tim Ingold discussing it in a lecture at the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow, Scotland.

*I think what we need to do is to bring things back into presence, right in front of us; because only then can we listen to them respond to them, be curious about them and consequently care about them. We have to bring things back into presence. The great pioneer of modernist art, Wassily Kandinsky, wrote a wonderful parody, back in the ... a little essay in the nineteen thirties, about visitors to an art exhibition, and he described this art exhibition and all the visitors coming, and they all had their little catalogue that they were carrying, and they walk around the rooms and there's a duchies and there's a cow in a field and there's a bowl of flowers and there's a woman who doesn't seem to have any clothes on and then there's some flowers and there's another cow in a field and a rustic scene and they all look at and they look at the book and they go around and then they come out at the other end. And Kandinsky said 'what ever did they see?' 'Why did they go?' Because they might then be able to tell you everything about the artists and their work and what the influences were and who said what to whom and why it was that this artists within this period of his life or that period of his life. They'll be able to tell you everything about, about the paintings because they can look it up in the catalogue but they won't actually have seen any art at all. Because by putting everything in its context they basically put it away and they have not actually allowed those paintings to come into their presence so that they can look at them react to them be aware of them attend to them directly.*

*Tim Ingold*

The term 'attentive listening' is used in fields as diverse as psychoanalysis, choreography, religious practice and musical composition but is rarely acknowledged within the craft of sound engineering. To my mind attentive listening encourages affective engagement with sonic material, so the absence of this discourse within sound engineering seems rather baffling to me. Part of the purpose of this research project is to explore how attentive listening, as defined above and embedded in the practice of sound engineering itself, can be more explicitly articulated and introduced into the learning and training processes of the craft. I discuss my research and teaching methods further in the part dedicated to method development in this presentation. Now, let's instead linger in my attempt to unfold listening from my perspective.

I experience listening as a present tense, continual and continuous activity. If you listen with the intention to recount what you heard, to collect it for the benefit of theorising about it or in order to draw concrete conclusions about it, then the act transforms into something else; you are no longer conducting the kind of listening I have in mind. I make an important distinction between listening practices that are immersive or inevitable or reciprocal and listening that is conducted with the specific intention to gain information or to generate product.

I was first made aware of this division when reading sociologist Les Back's book 'the Art of Listening'. Like him I understand listening to be a social tool, however within Back's sociological framework, the listening practice includes the notion of retelling. After listening, you, as the former listener, describe the place or situation you've been listening to. The term listening in Back's context doesn't seem to incorporate a listening back. For me listening inevitably incorporates a reciprocity, an act of alternately and perhaps simultaneously sending and receiving. Listening is an act of communication, mutual and reciprocal above all. You listen to someone (or something) and they listen back. Tim Ingold invokes the same mindset in his lecture talk in Glasgow, talking about ethics and data collection. He perfectly articulates my objection to using listening as a means for making an account of things or people you have observed.

*I wanna begin by exploring the idea of data. Data is a word that has now become so much a part of the currency of our everyday life, we're using it all the time, the data, that we seldom stop to think about what it means or even about what abuses are being carried on in its name.*

*Literally a datum comes from the Latin 'dare' which means to give. A datum is a thing given, it's a gift. The idea of the gift is very central to working anthropology and we write a lot about*

*giving and receiving, about the obligation to accept with good grace what is given and to reciprocate it in kind. We write about how giving and receiving is part of the ordinary give-and-take of social life by which relationships are formed and maintained. But that's not what data means to scientists, mostly. Data is not about receiving what is given in science, but rather about extracting what is not. Data are mined, washed up, deposited, precipitated, dug up, extracted by whatever means they're got at, this data comes in bits, bits and pieces cause they're somehow already broken off from the give and take of life; from their ebbs and flows and mutual entailments. And to science, even to admit to a relation of give and take with the things in the world that we study would immediately disqualify the inquiry which showed that this inquiry is not being properly objective. To do a scientific study you should cut yourself off from any kind of personal relationship with the things that you're studying. And maybe that's why when we think about data, we tend to assume that it is quantitative.*

*That it's stuff that you can count. Because in order to count anything you have to break it off into bits, otherwise how can you count anything unless you first got little bits you can count? So to make the world countable the first thing you have to do is to break it up into little bits and pieces that can then be counted and that means in a sense removing them from the give and take of relationships. However, in my field of anthropology and more generally in the social sciences, we say that 'well we are not*

*dealing with quantitative data, not with the sort of data you can count', we say 'we are dealing with qualitative data'. So, you go and do interviews with people or you do some participant observation and you make notes and you collect all these qualitative data. And sociologists talk about quantitative and qualitative and having a good mix of the two. They even talk about quant/qual methods. I think there is something deeply suspect about the idea of qualitative data. It's like you're talking to somebody, having a good conversation because you say to this person, 'I'm really interested in what you've got to say about this or that'. But why aren't you talking to this person? Not really because you're interested in what they have to say about the world, you're interested in what they have to say, has to say about them. That there's a sort of two-facedness in the kind of interview where you have a conversation with somebody where the purpose is not to learn from them not to learn from what they have to say, as she might have in a conversation with the teacher, but to collect data on them, to find out what is it that what they are telling me says about them. That seems to me to be somewhat hypocritical. It reminds me of when, as an academic, I had to do a compulsory course in how to do staff appraisals. So, we have to appraise members of staff every year and I had to go to this compulsory course where I was told by an expert that when you're sitting in front of this colleague, who's a good friend and you talk with every day, but when you're having the appraisal meeting you shouldn't actually be paying attention*

*to what he or she says you should be looking at their body language, for what it reveals about what they're really thinking. And I remember feeling so angry that I blew up and walked out. Because look, you're having the appraisal meeting you're having conversation with a valued colleague you are not trying to... you are not trying to collect data on them. So, I feel there is something very bothersome about the whole idea of qualitative data. I think it is somehow unethical.*

As a professional listener, I suggest listening strategies as a form of soft diplomacy, subtly dismantling power structures within the film and media production flow. But through my encounters with other contexts, I've realised that the listening expertise I have as a sound engineer, and have gathered together in this research project as enhear, might be of significance elsewhere; useful for other non-sound related creative, pedagogical and social situations.

In teaching contexts, I sometimes propose American musician, sound artist and composer Pauline Oliveros's 'Listening, the Exercise' as a way to explore a singular yet shared state of auditory attentiveness. 'The Exercise' is a meditation practice of sorts; an invitation to listen for a chosen period of time, focusing on imagining oneself as a centre of a larger whole and

continuously listening from and returning to that centre, experiencing oneself and one's environment as a continuum of time and space. 'The Exercise' engenders an enhanced sensitivity to the energy of the space you're in through an auditory approach. Performing 'The Exercise' together in a joint session creates an inter-relational web of attentiveness. There is no one 'centre of a whole', which is the mantra used in 'The Exercise', but endless centres of endless wholes – or as many centres and wholes as there are participants in the room. 'I listen' - when performed by everyone becomes a mutually inclusive commitment, encouraging a singular yet shared state of auditory attentiveness.

For me listening is a fundamentally inclusive act. At the heart of 'Enhear', you will encounter attentive and inclusive listening strategies, formats, tools and methods designed to develop, nurture and enhance communication and creativity, in-real-time, in-real-space and in-real-life contexts.

I invite you to continue listening to my presentation at the icon 'Enhear'

## Enhear

The term enhear emerged over the course of my research, beginning life as an aural equivalent of envision: *imagined future possibilities*. However, now that simple transposition limits what I believe enhear has to offer. The term proposes an activated listening, reciprocal and inclusive, which I believe would enhance any creative process, be it collaborative or individual. Whether as experience, act, role or tool, enhear argues practically, ethically and aesthetically for the inclusion of sonic-centric routines in film making productions. I imagine enhear as a kind of sensorial sanctuary, a place to rest, away from the incessant production and consumption of images.

Enhear proposes a radical reorientation of our relationship to the world, a profound shift from looking to listening. To better understand my concept of enhear it might help to recognise the physical and material qualities of sound. Sound is continuous and continual movement, constantly surrounding us and moving through us. It is spatially and temporally distributed in spherical, multidimensional directions. As we invite enhear into our consciousness, steering our attention toward what is aurally present, the term brings awareness to those spatial and temporal qualities and potentially shifts our perception of space, place and body.

Enhear nurtures a sense of situatedness, acknowledging the present moment and bringing awareness to the shared-ness of space; including all things and people present in that particular time and place, and all histories and possible futures of all things and people in that particular time and space. In this way enhear is a site for collaboration; a tool for developing an idea together and a practice of attending, with awareness and sensitivity, to the present time, space and situation.

The concept was inspired by the Swedish term lyhörd. Lyhörd has three separate yet related interpretations, each associated with listening and attentiveness. According to google translate to be 'lyhörd' is to be responsive, keen or sharp, but that doesn't harness the full meaning of the word. 'Lyhörd' also addresses the acoustics of a place, if walls are thin and sounds from other parts of the building can be easily perceived, then the place is 'lyhört'. But 'lyhörd' can also refer to someone sensitive to the nuances of social interrelation, someone who intuitively notices unarticulated needs of others. This last interpretation relates to qualities of attentiveness, the skill of being able to pay profound attention to one's immediate social environment, being open towards other people's ideas and thoughts and being a good listener, literally and figuratively. In this sense, 'lyhörd' is not related to either sounds or non-sounds. It relates to the capacity of being aware and responsive to the social setting of a room. In the word 'lyhörd' there is also a link to the word hear, höra, something which gets completely lost in translation.

So, enhear was inspired by this Swedish term 'lyhörd' but the two words are not exchangeable. Enhear. It can be a method, a theory, a learning context or a political stance but I understand it best as a state of mind or a quality of being. It insists on giving and paying attention to the sonic world and nurturing understanding through aural experience and awareness.

*My apartment is dead quiet. I discern a faint  
swooshy murmur from distant traffic and a  
lighter equally faint buzz from the refrigerator  
downstairs and the building fan. Not so deadly  
quiet after all. Once in a while I'm struck by the  
sirens from an ambulance passing on its way to  
or from the nearby hospital. Otherwise, no  
sounds. I can't tell if the sky is blue or grey, I  
couldn't tell you about the rooftops being  
covered in a thin grime. Nor would I be able to  
mourn the withered Christmas rose in my  
window or rejoice the budding hydrangea in the  
living room from listening to the sounds of my  
present place. Yet I invite you to attend to the  
place you are in from an aurally informed  
position and experience what enhear has to  
offer.*

Mapping out a plan and inviting collaborators and investors into the early stages of a project is customary within preproduction routines in film and media contexts. Traditionally the communication of ideas at this stage of production is done through text and imagery, so all associations and connotations are dominated by the visual sense. Inviting enhear into conventional preproduction workflows would be one way to develop an idea outside of the typical visual and text-based practices, engaging with the untapped creative potential of listening. Enhear in this sense might be used to imagine or sketch out a future project. I believe that inviting sound into a creative process as a way to “pre-understand” it, might open up an entirely new way to imagine it into being; producing potential new knowledges into the traditional or conventional film making procedures.

Together with two actors and a sound colleague, using methods and tools from my research, I created a narrative using sound only - a sonic theatre, a sound-play, an audio spectacle. Please visit the work-story of ‘Gertrud and Julie’ to learn more about how enhear manifested in that creative process. You will find the presentation at the icon ‘Gertrud and Julie’.

## **Gertrud and Julie**

‘Gertrud and Julie’ is an audio-spectacle. It will be presented on stage for an audience as part of my Making Public event. Initiated as a way to test my enhear research in the context of a creative process from inception to reception, the project invites the audience to engage exclusively with the practice of attentive and inclusive listening.

The play was made in close dialogue with the two actors, Jessica Liedberg and Tove Edfeldt and sound centric methods were applied as integrated aesthetic strategies throughout the process. Boris Laible, a fellow sound colleague, also contributed his expertise.

My intention was to explore and emphasise sonic imaginative potential through sound-only storytelling. Since it is an audio-only piece it’s reasonable to think of it in terms of radio theatre but I have really tried to challenge conventional radio theatre aesthetics and use my experience from film-making to create a sonic narrative especially for the stage. The empty stage is there for the spectator to fill with their own notion of this story shared in sound only. The Making Public event is my first staged production of this audio-play, so how immersive this experience will be remains to be seen, I mean heard.

Early in my research I saw fellow doctoral student and film director Mia Engberg's movie 'Lucky One' – which is the creative outcome of her research project 'The Visual Silence'. Engberg experiments with 'the black frame' and her thinking, following on from the work of film director and author Marguerite Duras, explores the concept of visual overload. In Engberg's movie some of the scenes develops into sound only experiences as the imagery is replaced by the black frame. One such passage generated such vivid images for me that the second time I saw the film I was convinced the scene would appear as I had 'seen' it. When it turned out to be in sound only, I was convinced she had re-edited the sequence between the two screenings. She hadn't of course, and I realised that the forceful illusion was created through the narrator's voice. So, the illusion wasn't made solely by sound but rather by text. The experience inspired my investigations into the capacity of sound-driven narratives and fortified my interest in sound focussed storytelling using a mix of sonic traditions drawn from film, theatre and radio.

My initial intention was to enact the play 'Gertrud' by Swedish author Hjalmar Söderberg. I reached out to theatre director and fellow doctoral student Anna Pettersson. Pettersson is also artistic leader of Strindberg Intima Teater and I asked if I might use her stage for my research project. She agreed with one

specific demand, the play had to be somehow in relation to the Swedish author August Strindberg. That is how the idea to combine the theatre play 'Gertrud' with Strindberg's 'Miss Julie' came about. In the end it has become an entirely new story constructed around a random encounter between the lead characters from each play. In the context of my research, creating a play from scratch produced an opportunity to implement listening strategies and methods of working through sound as inspirational material from the very beginning until the very end of the process.

I drew up an outline for the play, the characters, their backgrounds and when the story was to take place, before inviting the two actors, Tove Edfeldt and Jessica Liedberg to come work with me. In our first workshop we met in a sound studio. I presented an idea for a scenario where the characters meet for the first time and the actors improvised my suggested scenario accompanied by a sound scenography I had prepared.

*It is early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Kings Garden, Kungsträdgården, is crowded. Hjalmar Branting is to make his grand speech later that day. It is spring time, April-weather as we say in Sweden. Meaning the weather is unreliable. Hail, rain, sun. Sudden shifts.*

*When the heavens abruptly open up and rain comes pouring down, Gertrud takes shelter in a café at the corner of Jacobs church. The Café is even more crowded than the square outside. The only available spot is at a table where a woman sits, reading a book. The woman is slightly older than Gertrud. Her name is Julie.*

With the sound scenography I wanted to provide a context for the actors, to both historically situate the encounter and counteract the sense of exposure I imagine improvisation might generate. But the sound scenography didn't work. It seized too much attention and provided too many alternate yet unspecific associations. People and horses gather in a square, thunder erupts and rain starts to fall, you seek shelter in an overcrowded café and... there is the murmur from the crowd in the café. The sound couldn't provide information about how the two women came to sit next to each other since all the other tables were busy, how they were the only women in the café or why the two strangers would begin speaking to each other at all. In dialogue with the actors, I developed a new scenario to address some of those issues and we met again.

This time we met in my office instead of the sound studio. It was a comfortable space, more hospitable. I installed two

speakers under the table so that the actors could experience the sound without the source being too prominent. The characters now meet on a steam-train, a site easily recognisable via sound. The spatial and temporal sonic variations proposed a sense of movement and also allowed for pauses in the improvised conversation. The actors could rest their gaze on the world outside the window, as if it was the window of a train with rural countryside swooshing past. The train environment also triggered a sense of adventure in all of us. A place where you might possibly be more open to fall into conversation with strangers.

In another scene I wanted to create a specific ambience, a relaxed domestic space with a romantic tension to it. It was tricky. The clock ticking and the crackling fireplace just weren't enough so I decided to add a musical element. A few months earlier I had inherited an old portable record player from my grand father-in-law, and I decided to play a 1950's recording of Swedish singer Ulf Carlén as a way to enter the improvisation.

Although gramophones were still a rarity in 1910 and historically speaking the music was incorrect, its materiality was enough to transport us to a by-gone time. We didn't need it to be exact, but we needed to feel 'elsewhere' and the music, with its crackle and 'old time' quality, provided that.

At another workshop, in my living room this time due to pandemic restrictions, we tried using the crowd again as sound scenography. I wanted to depict the opening night of Gertrud's comeback performance as a singer. We met similar difficulty as in our first workshop, the murmuring soundscape felt dynamic but it didn't provide enough of a scenography for the actors to lean on. It did offer us something else to consider though. At one point in the soundscape, a voice saying 'tjena' (hello) breaks through the murmuring. It is not very realistic line, it feels mannered. But rising out of the ambience the specific voice became an object which interestingly interrupted the focus in the improvisation, offering something to react to.

#### The improvisation with the 'tjena'

I wrote a first version of the script based on these improvisations, informed by the many detailed conversations we had during the workshops and by the non-scientific research we did around differences between female lives then and now. We developed the script together through several workshops and produced a listening manifesto that we drew on throughout the work.

#### The manifesto

In planning and recording this work I was partly influenced by the work of director Malin Axelsson and sound engineer Frida Englund. I knew them from the radio drama department at Swedish radio and the radio theatre drama 'Krashen' from 2018, where I had been second boom operator. Axelsson often works with improvisation. In the project I worked on, her method involved the actors using improvisation to develop their characters prior to the recording sessions. Englund records on location with boom microphones in a stereo-rig which is unconventional for radio drama. She incorporates the natural acoustics from the location, the natural movement coming through in the actors' voices (because they are not fixed in front of a microphone) and thanks to her stereo rig, an audible sense of spatiality between the voices comes through in the recording.

For 'Gertrud and Julie' I was interested in exploring ways to produce the spontaneous feel of an unscripted voice yet stay true to a scripted dialogue. And I was still curious about rethinking the studio recording setups I had battled with during my ADR years, which I started to explore in 'The Anteater' project.

”Eftersynk är ju svårt för att då ska man titta på sig själv, och så ska man lägga till rösten som oftast känns... det känns onaturligt på nå’ vis. Egentligen e det en lose-lose situation, för att man tycker att usch va’ hemskt att se sig själv, o det låter konstigt o ja det e svårt att vara avsändare och mottagare på en gång. Så ska man dessutom lägga på en röst på sig själv, som e jävligt svårt alltså, att få det organiskt.”

(Well ADR is tricky because you’re watching yourself, and then you’re adding your voice which often seems... it feels unnatural somehow.

Coming to think of it, it is a lose-lose situation, because you are thinking ‘ouch how awful watching yourself perform, eek it sounds strange and well it is difficult to be sending and receiving at the same time. In addition to it all you are adding your voice to your own performance which is bloody hard, to manage to make it feel organic.)

Magnus Roosman  
in conversation with  
me and Tove Edfeldt

We recorded the script in three steps. For the initial rehearsal we recorded with low-fi audio equipment and immediately

after the reading we listened to the recordings together. The actors were not interested in analysing their performances, it was intimidating enough for them just to listen to their own voices, so we discussed the experience of listening on a dramaturgical level. The listening did provide a good base for developing the material and led to renegotiating some dialogue before recording a second time.

As a second step we recorded in the radio-theatre studio at SKH, using wireless microphones and sound scenography composed from sound effects used in the improvisation workshops. I would be interested in trying this method with more people on set. I felt hampered by having to manage too many professional roles. I made a rough edit of the recordings from this second session and before meeting for our final recording we all listened to the edited material on our own.

In the third and final recording I set up the actors in a fixed position in front of large membrane microphones. The actors now wore headphones and no sound from the sound scenography was leaking into the recordings. To counteract the voice sounding static in this context, the actors explored physical techniques that still allowed them to stay in front of the microphone. Thus, I could record a very crisp and full range dialogue, excellent for sound editing and mixing. From listening to the previous recording, the actors could experience

the tone, timbre and texture of their voices from a mediated perspective. One actor found her voice to be too tense and decided to change it. This self-adjustment changed her characterisation which in turn affected the response from her co-actor.

My aim with this project was to divorce image altogether and to encourage the listener to enhear the world of Gertrude and Julie, to literally imagine it from a listening position. My research has so far not really dealt with how different technological approaches can support or disrupt immersive sonic experience but I think that the material from this part of my work could inform future explorations into the immersive potential of sound narratives.

Together with sound designer Boris Laible I collected sound effects for the recordings and sounds to use in the improvisation sessions. I also entrusted him with the sound design and mix for the sound play. It has been valuable to collaborate with a peer from my field at this stage in my doctoral research, to test and discuss my methods with someone from my community who understands the context I am trying to contribute to.

Moving into the editing and sound design of the play intensified the consequences of both my recording and

narrative choices. During the writing process we had discussed the difficulties of not having a visual body language to aid the narrative. We all agreed that we wished to avoid too much explication. I was also curious about the challenge produced by the decision to not add a narrator voice. Throughout the process the actors and I worked consciously on the expressivity of the voices, in some way reaching back to my initial research questions regarding voice in relation to the story.

I had made conscious choices as to how to record the script. I had opted for the quality of large membrane microphones requiring the actors to be in fixed positions rather than recording with wireless mics which would have allowed them to move around. This choice didn't necessarily aid the editing process. The recorded material carried no spatial guidelines because the proximity between the actor and the microphone membrane was constant, no acoustic shifts, no left or right, no 'off mic', all of which would indicate movement. Although my own understanding of the physical and spatial aspects of each scene was clear, colleagues helping me with the sound design found the material incomprehensible. When does the character get up, where is she going - left or right, approaching or leaving; for how long is she gone and what does the other character do in the meanwhile? While this produced some discomfort in my colleagues, in relation to my research our work became more dialogic, thus more collaborative. How we

listened to both the work and to each other became paramount.

The lack of spatial and physical information was equally confusing when I went to foley artist David Silverin to record foley for the play. Without an image informing the foley artist what the props were made of or the rhythm of movement or the size and physicality of actors, the work felt unfamiliar. The creative initiative was inverted and totally displaced, from the screen to the foley artist.

Throughout the sound editing and mix all decisions seemed interdependent and any change in rhythm strongly effected the interrelations of all of the audio material. We continuously moved back and forth between sound designing and voice editing to find the narrative flow. Never before has why and how the visual dominates the sonic been as apparent to me. The tradition of always starting from a visual understanding of the narrative is so habitual in sound engineer routines that when offered the opportunity to create without it, the scale of choice becomes overwhelming. Instead of giving the sound narrative free reign, the openness generated ambivalence. I think this is a crucial insight into attempting to establish a new balance between the visual and the audible in filmmaking. Even though sound engineers (me included) often complain about how the visual dominates their work - when provided

with an opportunity to rule the world, to steer the narrative, our dependence on visual guidance was revealed.

If we are to find new ways to fully explore the position and possibility of sound in film making not only must the visual professions realise the potential of sonic approaches but the masters of the tools, the sound experts, need to want and to lead such change. In order for sound professionals to become comfortable with the position of creative initiator, new approaches need to be established and embraced both professionally and pedagogically. Training young sound professionals to trust their understanding and appreciation of the sound itself rather than thinking only of how the sound reinforces an image, needs to be implemented early in education contexts. Precise language needs to be developed and exercised alongside enculturated listening practices, establishing new routines for film making in which audio-only creativity accompanies traditional relationships of image and sound. Only then will we be able to understand how filmmaking might be diversified, even transformed with and through these explorations of the sonic and the audible. I look forward to continuing this work in situ as I move back into the professional world of sound engineering.

The Research Catalogue presentation continues at the icon 'Outro-duction'

## OUTRO-DUCTION

“My project is based on deploying sound as a powerful and yet rather immaterial weapon, one that may interrupt dominant orders through an appeal to “vibratory” models of alliance – the coalitional groupings and collectivities made from shared desires, tenuously and potentially aligned according to intensities of rage and love, indignation and hope.”

Brandon Labelle  
*Sonic Agency*  
2018

There are only three parts of this presentation left now, this part - the outro-duction which is my version of conclusion I guess, intermingled with a work-story and then an epilogue. I have really tried to make this aurally structured presentation endurable. I thank those of you who have kept their ears to my work all the way through and I would like to ask you how it was? What you remember from it all? If it was satisfying or frustrating? But I cannot, because this format does not allow for such immediate exchange or interaction. That is ok I guess, since we all knew the set up from the start; it was all part of the agreement. I provide, you receive. As you might already have figured out, it is not my favourite way to interact. Now, I await your response, your voice, your thoughts. My presentation of this research won't be finished until I have it, my research can't

happen without reciprocity, without the listening back. So please, embrace my invitation to share your thoughts on this project, if not to me maybe to your colleague, to your kids at the dinner table, to your dog on the morning walk, to your grandmother at the eldercare centre. Whatever my insistence on staying in a listening posture has provoked in you, please share it with others.

You know what? I wouldn't like this strictly sonic communication to be a permanent condition. Through this research project I have become even more invested in exploring the collaborative potential of sound in relation to image, rather than in exploring sound alone. It is the inter-relational space that intrigues me, the sonic in relation to image, or to text, or to glass, or to public place, or to the classroom; and my suggestion is to try understand inter-relational space, also via experienced sound, through listening. Therefore, I hold on to this sonic-only format, I can't find a louder way to point to my argument.

And something happens right?

Perhaps being in this sonic-only relation to my thinking offers an opportunity for you to understand me differently? Some things you might understand immediately but some of it will not be apparent today or tomorrow, it will linger in you as a not yet realised thought, an experience on the threshold of becoming known.

My research project unreservedly champions the potential of the auditory perspective. I am pointing to the imaginative, creative and social possibilities inherent in listening and my wish is for it to move through the world as a self-generating practice - more mutual listening creating more nuanced discussion creating greater mutual understanding creating more mutual listening... you get the idea. I am imagining a world in which filmmakers, radio creators, theatre makers, sociologists, architects, visual artists are all engaged in attentive listening practices which slowly but surely begin to challenge the hegemony of the visual. Enhear suggests an approach to the world that is comprehensively aural, proposing listening as an ongoing and continuous practice; listening as a way to co-create the inter-relational space we all share, all of the time. In exploring this, I have developed a suite of tools, art experiences and reflections which bring attention to the potential contribution practices of nuanced and inclusive listening can make to a range of creative relations, situations and environments. I invite you to visit a final work-story where I discuss some methods which emerged from enhear - some of the ways I have tried it out, leaned toward it, stepped on it, dived into it, listened together with it.

To my mind, the potential contributions sound design could make to the creative process of a film, from conception to realization, are radically under explored within the film and media industry in Sweden. In my research I propose strategies

that make this potential perceivable, accessible and actionable. Through my teaching practice, I have introduced some of these ideas and approaches to new generations of film makers. To explore my work on methods please click on the icon 'Method development'.

## Method development

“It was the dream of Walter Murch and others in the wildly creative early days of American Zoetrope that sound would be taken as seriously as image. - - -

- - - this dream of giving sound equal status to image is deferred. Someday the Industry may appreciate and foster the model established by Murch. Until then...”

Randy Thom,  
*Designing a Movie for Sound*  
from 1999.

The contribution sound makes to moving-image storytelling is indisputable. Yet the idea of using sound as a creative tool in early stages of film making processes doesn't seem to set root, not on any significant scale anyway. When Walter Murch coined the term 'sound designer' it seemed that sound practitioners might finally be recognized as an equally important creative force in filmmaking alongside image makers. But apart from a few aforementioned exceptions, these dreams of equalisation have simply not come to pass. Reflecting on my own experiences within the Swedish film and media industry, I can justifiably say that sound-centred routines are rarely included in either the creative

preproduction processes or the economic planning of film making. It is my hope that enhear may be useful as both term and tool to introduce and integrate sound-centric creativity into film making processes, from conception, through production, to reception.

A practical contribution to this ambition is 'The enhear collection'; three separate yet connected publications presented at my Making Public event. The collection is designed to be distributed as coffee table content for sound studios and production offices, atypical objects to encounter in such places. It contains three different written materials: 'the Enhear Book' - a poetic take on enhear in book form; 'the Imagine Series' - a collection of 5 mini-books each dedicated to creator/s who have profoundly influenced my research; 'the Enhear Prompts' - a deck of cards, prompting practical methods for working with sound and listening, easily applicable to a range of creative processes at various stages of their development. The prompts were developed over the course of the research as instructions useful for steering creative work toward a listening position. I understand 'the Enhear collection' as a way for me to inject an invitation to attentive listening, offering a twist toward the aural perspective, in a quietly insistent manner.

At its simplest, enhear proposes a radical reorientation toward listening. It suggests that through listening and sound-centric

creative approaches, alternative layers of inspiration and imagination, inaccessible through visual-only sketching, become available to the film making process. It is my contention that this expertise is already present, it is just not yet valued or recognized as something to value. Sound creatives themselves regularly underestimate their worth, and, in the Swedish context, film production companies do too.

In the mid 90's Michel Chion, one of the few sound-oriented theorists in film studies, divided listening into three modes: causal, semantic and reduced. His elaborations provide a template for deconstructing what you have heard in order to activate a more profound understanding of listening. But I find very little in his writings about engaging with the felt experience of sound, something I refer to as a listening through sound. French composer, writer, and musicologist Pierre Schaeffer's term 'reduced listening' describes a way of listening that removes the sound from any of its context and requires the listener to focus on its separate sonic elements. Chion agrees with Schaeffer that in order to reach a deepened understanding of sonic material one needs to systematically unpack its elements, frequency, acoustics, reverberation, timbre, tonality and so on.

“‘Reduced listening’ has the enormous advantage of opening up our ears and sharpening our power of listening. Film and video makers, scholars, and technicians can get to know their medium better as a result of this experience and gain mastery over it. The emotional, physical, and aesthetic value of a sound is linked not only to the causal explanation we attribute to it but also to its own qualities of timbre and texture, to its own personal vibration. So just as directors and cinematographers—even those who will never make abstract films—have everything to gain by refining their knowledge of visual materials and textures, we can similarly benefit from disciplined attention to the inherent qualities of sounds”

Michel Chion  
*Audio-Vision:  
Sound on Screen*  
1994

...and I too agree. Reduced listening is a pertinent method for developing a detailed listening capacity, but this systematic approach somehow detaches me from the felt experience of sound and seems to disregard the prominence of embodied listening practices. Reduced listening is already a habitual practice in sound engineering. Within sound editing, the listening focus alternates between different parts of the sound, addressing each different component independently. In

my experience sound engineering in the Swedish context has embodied reduced listening, it is practiced but rarely articulated. I am interested in cultivating new discourse around felt sound, inclusive of affective and relational experiences of sound as well as exploring its material and technical qualities. I am certain that such paradigm shift would positively influence artistic outcomes but perhaps, and more importantly, it might lead to more confident and more independent sound engineers who are more aware of their value.

An important influence on my explorations into immersive approaches to listening has been American sound artist and academic Pauline Oliveros.

She offers a relationship to sound that is less about reproducing realities or master sonic analysis' and more about leaning into a listening as an experiential and ongoing practice of being in the world. This is not to say that she doesn't offer astute analysis of listening as a practice, as evidenced by her distinction between *focal* and *global* attention. As she explains, "focal attention' is like a lens that produces clear detail limited to an object of attention' whereas "Global attention' is diffuse and continually expanding to take in the whole of the space/time continuum of sound'. And just like reduced listening, Oliveros' definitions are habitual to sound

engineer practices yet are neither articulated nor actively attended to.

My methods, while obviously indebted to Oliveros' *Deep Listening*, work to situate the creative potentials inherent in attentive and inclusive listening within film and media-based production and education contexts. Specifically designed as tools which promote the use of sound as an inspirational point of departure in creative work, my methods are intended to both heighten the presence of sound as a creative force and enhance the role sound design might play throughout the creative process of filmmaking, from conception to realisation. They are designed to fuel creative processes and transform workflows in film and media-based contexts and may potentially offer similar opportunities if used in other creative environments.

In placing my methods in the context of film education my aim is to claim sound as an equal to image, situating it as a creative force throughout the filmmaking process. I tailor the methods in relation to the context at hand but the common directive is to keep sound as both the initiating and the ongoing strategy; to begin the process from sound, to listen, record, listen again, re-arrange and throughout, let the practice of listening inform the process. The main strategy is to explore story via experiences of sound, habitualising

audiolisation as a strategy parallel with visualisation. I introduce tools which assist in imagining the narrative with and through sound, inviting the act of listening into every element and aspect of the creative process.

As an attempt to offer my methods to others in an easily accessible form I have organised them as six-step instructions, or prompts, written on cards - one step per card. They are not designed for random engagement, like Oblique Strategies by British musician and composer Brian Eno and multimedia artist Peter Schmidt, although their work has inspired mine. The prompts propose an orderly sequence of steps, each set is designed to support a particular phase of a creative process. The prompts continually invite you to work from and through listening and deliberately emphasise the act of listening, rather than the production of sound. My wish is to focus on listening as an integral part of the creative process, using sonic elements to enable creativity in film and media-based processes, education contexts and other creative environments. The prompt cards will be on display at my making public event.

The research catalogue presentation now continues at the icon 'Outro-duction continuation'

## OUTRO-DUCTION CONTINUATION

"Anyone who can sit on a stone in a field awhile can see my painting. Nature is like parting a curtain, you go into it .... as you would cross an empty beach to look at the ocean."

Agnes Martin  
MoMA Exhibition 1973

Are you able to identify my expertise in all this? Can you see, I mean hear, the sound engineer in it all? I can, and by insisting on it, I guess I am trying to communicate, perhaps even transfer some of that ability to you. And I do insist, for one reason only and that is to bring recognition to the sleeping beauty that is sound engineering. My sincere wish is for this dissertation to wake others up to the unique and specialised skills of the sound engineer. I am speaking from a previously silent corner and while I don't presume to represent my entire field, I do think that the research context has allowed me to see the potential in our craft from a different perspective. And from this vantage point, I believe that my idea of how the craft of sound engineering can contribute to the creative process might make a difference to future practitioners and researchers, perhaps not only within film making but also in other educational, artistic and collaborative contexts.

My research journey has been far from straightforward. I started out thinking I would find language for understanding voice in

relation to story, and ended up entangled in thoughts about truth, authenticity and sincerity. I moved on thinking I might have something to contribute to research into architectural and material aspects of the sound studio as a site and ended up struggling to figure out how inter-relational collaborative art processes might operate in relation to the practice and positionality of the sound engineer. Eventually I dove into the possibilities produced by shared experiences and exchanges between the various areas of sound engineering, and ended up exploring power structures inherent in both the film making process and the human senses, arguing that aural methods could be as relevant as visual ones within filmmaking if given the chance. And now, on the verge of leaving I find myself reflecting on artistic research as a milieu, not fully comprehending how to belong, how to be relevant or even how to exit.

In summary, I think my research in its broadest sense is concerned with carving out a legitimate space of aurally oriented and sonically focussed creativity in filmmaking processes. In order to do this, I elevate the sonic and relegate the image in relation to the narrative, seeking to make audible to everybody the magical world I experience in, with and through sound. But the next path I stroll down I would like to walk arm-in-arm with image once again. I find myself drawn toward imagining how the gaze of the ear lands in the world and wondering what the eyes hear when listening closely? I am curious as to how that sort of

trans-sense thinking might manifest in film-making. Is it even possible for hearing and seeing to share equal initiative in filmmaking? I feel that my efforts to move as far as possible away from visual narrative have actually led me straight back to the most significant and intimate relation within my field – the one between image and sound.

Funnily enough, when I contemplate my initial questions in relation to the work you have just experienced, I realise that at the very end of this research I have ended up answering the first question I proposed. Not by providing new language for discourse around voice and narrative but through the very manifestation and materiality of my research project. What does the voice do for the narrative, how does the voice affect the experience of what is told from a listener's perspective? You tell me...

Please visit my final part of this presentation at the icon 'epilogue'

## EPILOGUE

There is a short radio program, broadcast early every morning as part of the morning news show on the Swedish public service radio. It's called 'Tankar för dagen', 'Thoughts of the day'. As a break from the news feed, this program invites writers, poets, theatre directors, priests and other culturally valuable persons to give reflections on a topic of their choice, news-related or private, large or small matters in life.

I love this idea of slowing down and contemplating the meaning of life through everyday life stories drawn from different perspectives. I have no way to deliver this epilogue to you at a certain time in your day, but as a roundup of my research project I would like to give you my 'thoughts of the day'.

Twice a year parents in Sweden are invited to their children's kindergarten to discuss their child's progress. Prior to these meetings, the staff interview each child individually, using a standard questionnaire. The answers are then used as a way to structure the conversation with the parents. At least this was how evaluation was handled at my children's kindergarten.

When my kids left the kindergarten to start preschool, they brought all their belongings and creative work home. The other day, while organizing a pile of papers at home, I came across all of the interviews made with my eldest daughter. Eight interviews in all, the same questions asked and answered year after year.

I'll read you a translated extract:

- What is an adult?
- I know nothing.
  
- How should a good adult behave?
- I know nothing.

- Why are you at Kindergarten?
  - I know nothing.
  
- What is good with kindergarten?
  - I know nothing.

You get the point. My daughter instinctively refuses to answer questions when asked to assess and evaluate people she meets and socializes with at the kindergarten. Several years have passed and I've returned to school myself. And although I'm in higher education I recognize this way of evaluating a learning process from my kids' kindergarten. What have you learned?

What did you think you would learn? What would you like to learn?

Short, concise questions, impossible to give short, concise answers to.

And then one day when I'm at my computer trying to write about what my research strives for or what I think it will lead to or how I will get to the next step... I stumble upon a philosopher who inspires something in me.

His name was Jiddu Kirshnamurti. He grew up in India at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century under the care of the Theosophists of Adayar. At the age of 15, they started a cult in his name, '*the order of the star of the east*' and he became the messiah.

However, at the age of 43, Kirshnamurti renounces the role of Messiah, returns all money and benefits he received from the Theosophists and leaves the cult. He continues on as a non-dogmatic religious mystic and encourages people not to believe in any authority, including him. Instead, every human being should see and listen with absolute freedom and clarity and be aware of the nature of thought and the nature of being in the present.

My thoughts wander back to my three-year-old daughter. Sitting in the playroom at the kindergarten with the familiar personnel and the standard questionnaire. She's looking out the window where her friends play, listening to the questions to

which she can find no answers. She persists, politely repeating 'I know nothing'. Not because she is angry or uncomfortable but simply because from her perspective the questions don't make sense.

I think of the power we so easily surrender to words and how easily hierarchical structures arise in their wake. All the occasions where a supposedly common language turns out to not be common at all; and where the point of departure for dialogue is not as neutral or as equal or as shared as one might think.

And then I think of last Saturday morning when I was at breakfast with my family. I was asking if anyone had any preferences for the day. I raised lots of options and suggestions, wondering if I could help set up the day. When I ran out of ideas, I ended by asking my eldest. 'Hello? Are you listening? Would you like to do something?' She lifts her eyes from the apple pieces she is about to form in a beautiful pattern in her yoghurt before eating it. She looks up at me and she says simply:

'I am now'

With those words she rather effectively silenced me and our unplanned day turned out to be quite lovely.