



CREATIVE IN-
TERACTIONS
— THE MOBILE
MUSIC WORK-
SHOPS 2004 —
2008

“rahmenbedingung“- sonification of the poetic act of cycling

klaus filip_nicolaj kirisits_noid_silvia faessler

ABSTRACT

a bicycle equipped with sensors and connected to a sound-computer via wireless device forms the personal musical interface of each performer. the organic data-stream of parameters like direction, speed, acceleration, pedal-speed, pedal rotation etc. is bound to the inner logic of riding a bike - hence we don't want to fall down. the outer logic is the architectural determination of the space, the bicycle path, as well as the position of the audience. these general conditions structure the music, on the other hand we will ride the bike in a musical way which defines our movements in space and evokes a choreography.

<http://to.sonance.net/rahmenbedingung>

BIO

Klaus Filip
<http://lloop.klingt.org/plone/lloop/>

Almost all of Klaus Filip's art projects have been driven by technological possibilities and the social need to change structures. Among them subVoice (an underground tapemagazine), Sigis Bruder (early electronic songs together with singer Sigi Ecker), Christof Kurzmann's Orchester 33 1/3, Zentrifuge, music for short films, theatre, dance, sound-installations. He is the musical and electro-mechanic father of BigBaby, an outstanding intermedial project around a sculpture build by Red White and brought to life by the movements of Cynthia Schwertsik.

Filip is the inventor and never sleeping developer of the open-source software lloop (http://lloop.klingt.org), a musical instrument on the computer to provide open structures for live-improvisation, used by many well-known electronic musicians.

nicolaj kirisits
 architect composer digital artist
 lives and works in vienna / casablanca
 teaches at the university of applied arts vienna

noid /aka Arnold Haberl, *1970, living in Vienna
<http://noid.klingt.org/>

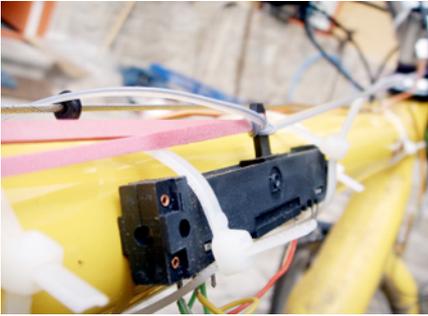
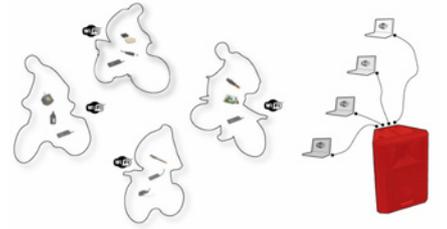
working as a composer, performer and improviser in various constellations

with his music he tries to understand the reality of sound we live in. of course this reality is including imaginations, wishes, dreams and acoustical hallucinations as well as the sound of the fan of his laptop or the wolf-tone of his cello.

his sensual approach, once in a while assisted by structural concepts, can have a wide range of contradictory outcome, that is always to be understood as a concentrate (essence), leaving out irrelevant points. It's up to the listener to extract a digestable dose.

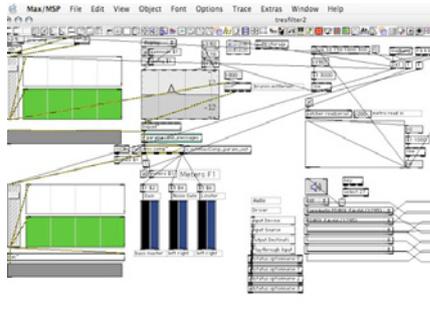
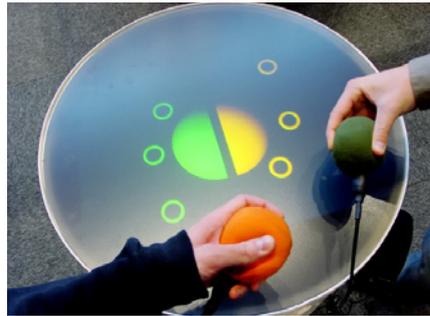
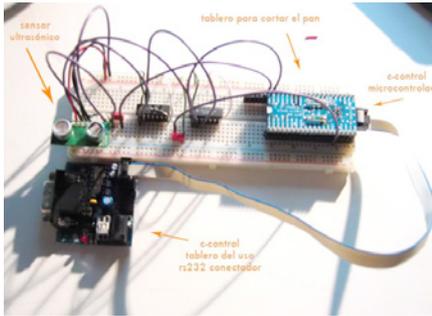
Silvia Fässler
http://gnu.klingt.org/03_releases/00_skylla.html

Works as graphic designer/musician in Vienna. In the 1990s, she switched from drums (the rock trio, 8 Finnen) to electronic music. The many festivals and venues she has performed at include Zeitfluss Festival / Salzburg, Unlimited/Wels, Porgy & Bess / Vienna as well as solo or duo performances with "Silly" (Billy Roisz). She has also collaborated with Cordula Bösze, Klaus Filip, Otomo Yoshida, Arnold Haberl, to name a few.





SPAT_LAB: MMW'08 HOSTS



Spat_Lab

Nicolaj Kirisits

The Mobile Music Workshop's collaboration with the University of Applied Arts began with Spat_Lab's recent projects. Spat_Lab was founded by me at the university's Department of Digital Art. Since then, it has organized research-oriented artistic projects (concepts and ideas: Klaus Filip and Nicolaj Kirisits). The artists developed and implemented their projects by the following two basic guidelines: the use of technological artifacts for purposes foreign to them, and the expansion of the concept of body in architecture. Combining both aspects with sound design is among Spat_Lab's main interests. Technological artifacts are converted into musical interfaces and the characteristics of sounding bodies used to expand the definition of corporeality. What is meant here by sounding body are resonances found in architectural space, that is, spectromorphological content restricted¹ to a volume in the Euclidian system which may not be visible and yet contain all other defining qualities of corporeality ("a body with length, breadth and depth"²) in a geometric sense. This definition of the sounding body must be distinguished from that of a vibrating body, or resonator. The resonator is a visible tectonic body in geographical space whose physicality does not owe to sound but to wood, or metal, for instance. In contrast, the sounding body, however, is invisible, its material is sound itself. Although architecture is comprised of bodies, yet each of these bodies is not necessarily an architectural element. Spat_Lab defines architecture as a spatial notation of socially relevant processes. A material body in geographical space, therefore, becomes an architectural element the very moment it assumes social relevance. Sound that is naturally located in space, i.e., already present without any technical aid and is in itself a natural body, is barely effective architecturally, apart from a few exceptions, like church bells. From an aesthetic or formal point of view, natural sound is a precursor (or exceptional case) of Local-Based Services (LBS), which certainly bear the potential of being architectural elements. In the case of these LBS, digital information is placed at selected spots in geographical space with the help of GPS devices. This information is just as invisible and process-based as sounding bodies but, due to its significance in human communication, this very act of placing turns it into architectural bodies. In architecture, in addition to three basic forms of agency, that is, the tectonic body³,

the body of the in-between⁴, and architectural space⁵, there are the time-based "data bodies," whose materiality comprises in visible digital data.

One of the aims of the Spat_Lab projects is to find new ways of configuring these data bodies with the help of new insights gained from investigating sounding bodies. However, this approach can also be described as a process in which media-related contents are placed in geographic space as sound that is inaudible. This deliberate misinterpretation aims to make the potentials for configuring these new architectural elements better comprehensible.

It can be said that deliberate misinterpretation is the leitmotiv of the lab, especially when working with technical equipment. Sound is once again the common denominator in all projects realized thus far. Interfaces for making music were created by intentional wrong usage. In the course of their investigations, the participants removed devices from their social context and placed them in different contexts after making the smallest possible changes to them. This opened a vast potential for new meanings that would either remain totally invisible or become only partially visible should the devices be used as intended by the manufacturers.

Currently, these two guiding principles of Spat_Lab are interdigitated because we are mainly concerned with the ubiquitous computer and tracking technologies (GPS) as well as with diverse sensory interfaces (mobile telephones, Wii remote controllers, etc). Our long-term aim, however, is to gain enduring insights. Spontaneous absurdities and conscious attempts at getting things wrong serve us to probe limits, whereas sound (in the sense of *musique concrete*), electronic music and configuring new forms in geographic space, or in architecture, can always be seen as contractors for the individual projects.

The above mentioned approaches have led to artistic projects dealing with sound and mobile technologies, albeit the emphasis is not so much on their societal, sociological aspects, nor with new fields of activity concerned with the reception of music but rather on the time- and process-based aspects of the corporeality and architecture that thus emerge. To us this appears to be a major outcome of mobility. Mobility in technology is the logical consequence of a development in which more and more functions are packed into ever-tinier bodies, which people can carry about on them.

A decisive impulse for this development toward architecture came from the breakdown of the virtual, or rather from the failure of the virtuality hype to attain its main aim of replacing geographic space as the sphere of social activity. Mobility, as the consequence of miniaturization, only makes sense when geographic space is intentionally seen as not merely an abstract Euclidian space but also as a field of social activity. Mobility is therefore to be clearly distinguished from virtuality—even when the geospatial network of mobile end user devices lets a form of mixed reality emerge.

Our own body has always been a part of geographic space. Virtuality has not succeeded in dissolving the significance of this space for human action. Music that employs mobile technologies automatically turns the focus on human body design and, consequently, also on the geographic space in which the human being exists. Digital art can no longer deny the ubiquitariness of technological developments and is becoming "body art" in geographic space. The performative character of geographic space must therefore always remain part of the artistic code. Also, and especially, digital art takes mobile technology seriously as a marginal condition of human achievement. Such technological limits influence production and reception, both of which have always been part of an expanded definition of art. The recipient who always carries music around with him, who deposits it in certain places, collects it or passes it on, becomes an agent, and designer in this case, not merely of the musical context with all its "mobile" aspects such as spontaneous network music, music distribution, etc. as investigated in the MMW series, but also—and this seems to be the direction from which Spat_Lab approaches these theme—of the architectural body in geographic space. Mobility is that technology which allows virtuality to be understood as the materiality of a new architectural body.

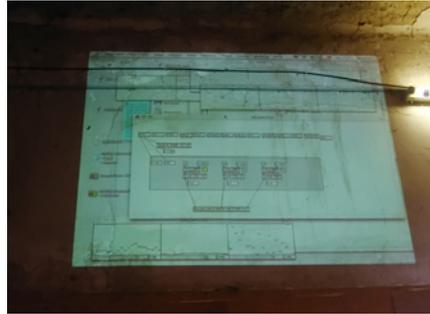
¹ Davis Smalley, *Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes in Organised Sound 2 (2)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 107

² Euclid quoted in *Ostwalds Klassiker der Exakten Wissenschaften, Band 235—Die Elemente*, Verlag Harri Deutsch, 2005, XI, 314

³ Vitruvius, transl. Fensterbusch in Dr. Curt, *Zehn Bücher über Architektur*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt, 1976

⁴ Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künste*, 1860, reprinted in Fritz Neumeyer, *Quellentexte zur Architekturtheorie*, Prestel 2002

⁵ August Schmarsow, *Das Wesen der architektonischen Schöpfung*, in Fritz Neumeyer *Quellentexte zur Architekturtheorie*, Prestel 2002.





The Handydandy

The bluetooth rock 'n' roll band *The Handydandy* (B. Bauch, L. J. Gross, N. Kirisits, G. Savcis, J. Staudach, F. Waldner), founded in 2005⁶, is an example for the way this principle was applied. Here, their starting point for artistic action was to use mobile phones as musical instruments. The mobile phone was reinvented as interface for a music performance whereby its bare technical structure (Bluetooth, keys, etc) and not the sound generation options implied by the producers were used. Questions about application, which were never raised originally, now surfaced. A new genre of art, Bluetooth Rock 'n' Roll, was born, triggering a debate about wireless music interfaces, the social significance of mobile telephones, and forms of performance. *The Handydandy* was part of NIME 06 (Ircam, paris) and MMW 2007 (Steim), amongst others.

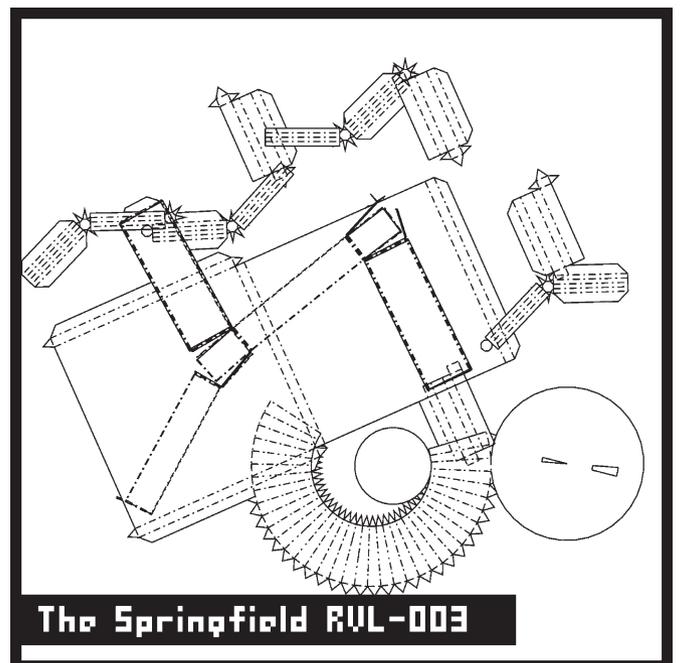


⁶ Speakers, Kleyehof, 2005 (Klaus Filip & Nicolaj Kirisits).

The Springfield RVL-003

Yet another example of Spat_Lab's activity is the band *Springfield RVL-003*, founded in the course of a workshop in 2007⁷. Jan Perschy developed an instrument with a Wii remote controller during the workshop and later evolved a musical concept for it with Robert Mathy and Merlin Wyszka. *Springfield RVL-003* will be part of this year's MMW 2008 concert program.

⁷ *Ferngesteuert* [Remotcontrolled], Kleyehof, 2007
(Klaus Filip & Nicolaj Kirisits).



Transit

Klaus Filip, Nicolaj Kirisits
Bernhard Bauch, Philipp Lammer

ABSTRACT

*Transit*⁸ was an attempt at creating a sculpture with nothing but the bodies of data previously described. *Transit* employs strategies for the speedy settlement of new land used since the days of Hipodamus von Milet; this settlement of geographic space with bodies of data can be compared with the development of new land. A basic element (a cube measuring 1 m x 1 m x 1 m) was used to create a 20 m long, 20 m wide and 20 m high grid. There was, however, no master plan; only the construction rules were predefined—the sculpture was based on these rules, the volume available and the content produced by the settlers. Each settler was given eight cubes and had the freedom to select a site for them. Twenty percent of the volume could be filled communally or altered as desired by the settler. The rest of the volume had to remain free; the aim was to leave 60% of the area undeveloped. Each cube could be filled with text, sound, video material or simply program codes. Neighboring cubes could network with each other, exchange data or forward it. Filling the cubes worked as follows: each digital artist, equipped with a computer and a GPS device, could go to the site of the cube and “load” his / her content into it. In this way, the artists worked on their digital concepts in geographic space the way a sculptor would. Recipients could experience these digital sculptures produced with the help of GPS devices in the course of settlement; their playback devices were filled with digital content at one of the many points where the content had been previously positioned. In contrast to the settlers, the recipients were not permitted to alter the sculpture.

The project was made possible through the financial support of Podspot (Prof. Tom Fürstner).

Presentation of the project at the Mobile Music Workshop 2008.

The following artists were invited as settlers:

Alev Özdemir
Andreas Haider
Bernhard Bauch
Bernhard Lutz
Bernhard Garnicnig
Daniel Kauer
Ella Krampfl
Georg Novotny
Gordan Savicic
Gottfried Haider
Julian Palacz
Julia Staudach
Kathrin Dörfler
Leo Peschta
Lucas Czjzek
Luc Gross
Mario Fischer
Mischan Gholizadeh Toosarani
Milos Paripovic
Nina Kataeva
Perktold Martin
Peter Scharmüller
Peter Tilg
Philipp Lammer
Sophie Wagner

⁸ *Transit*, Kleylehof, 2006 (Klaus Filip & Nicolaj Kirisits).



Digital Claiming

Media rush in 20 geo-tagged claims on Plocica Island (Croatia)

*Digital Claiming*⁹ is Spat_Lab's most recent project. The Croatian isle of Plocica, with no other building on it but a lighthouse, was rented for the project for a week. Twenty artists were invited to mark their Claims on the island with the help of GPS devices. "A Mining Claim is the claim of the right to extract minerals from a tract of public land. In the United States, the practice began with the California gold rush of 1849. In the absence of effective government, the miners in each new mining camp made up their own rules, and chose to essentially adopt Mexican mining law then in effect in California. The Mexican law gave the right to mine to the first one to discover the mineral deposit and begin mining it. The area that could be claimed by one person was limited to that which could be mined by a single individual or a small group."¹⁰

The material found in each Claim (acoustic, visual, haptic, body-time, etc) served as raw material for linear/non-linear and/or algorithmic compositions. Pieces composed with audio, codes, or film material were "tagged" with the site. In these Claims the task was not about digging for tangible spatial bodies in the sense of gold or other metals but rather for objects that become corporeal because they represent a site (length, breadth, height).

What emerged in the process was a geography of transformations, land surveyed by producing its time-based representatives. The perception of space based on data collected by precisely measuring and recording within the Cartesian system is hence replaced by a typology of interpretations. The map of the island drawn out in the course of this project comprised a series of individual installations and unveils the discrepancy between a seeming objectivity and the unquestionable supremacy of earth survey via mobile Global Positioning Systems (GPS), and process and time-based entities of body and space.

The works will be presented at the Mobile Music Workshop 2008.

⁹ *Digital Claiming*, Plocica, Croatia 2007 (Klaus Filip & Nicolaj Kirisits).

¹⁰ Wikipedia, HYPERLINK "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_claims" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_claims

Tim Blechmann

Untitled

The primary source material for my Claim was the rushing sound of water, which I recorded at different places and at different times. These field recordings were made to undergo several transformations in order to dissolve temporal structures.

This altered material is the basis for a three-channel video installation with a sounding floor. An acoustic environment was to be created via indirect sound, which resembled the shores of my Claim on Plocica.

This piece is an acoustic sketch of the installation.

1: N 43.03067° - E 16.81772°

2: N 43.03065° - E 16.81765°

3: N 43.03102° - E 16.81710°

4: N 43.03105° - E 16.81713°

Kathrin Dörfler

Untitled (Fig. A)

"The composer becomes a cartographer if he lets himself be guided. If one wants to allow tones and stillness time then the task of the composer no longer lies in searching for their expression but rather in allowing them "to be" what they are [...] This is why I mean that stillness is a state that is free of intentions." (Daniel Charles on John Cage)

A taut cord runs along the interstices between the blocks of stone at the shores of Plocica. The crevices form various resonance spaces in which binoral microphones are placed at several points for recording the sounds.

The different resonance spaces correspond with the different filtered sounds. The soundscapes in these in-between spaces ultimately become sounding bodies, which produce a multi-perspectival projection of the incessantly breaking waves.

1: N 43.03098° - E 16.81578°

2: N 43.03099° - E 16.81589°

Klaus Filip

Sonoplocica

impressions of the stony surface on a/my "claim" on plocica, a couple of plants, a couple of animals, some water. the photos were arranged in the chron

ological order of the time when they were taken. the analysis of the image produces the sound emerges, whereby the mappings of the frequencies of a sinus bank are encoded over the image matrix. the volume of each partial tone is defined by the brightness of a pixel; play at medium volume.

1: N 43.02962° - E 16.81925°

2: N 43.02970° - E 16.81951°

3: N 43.03002° - E 16.81868°

4: N 43.02992° - E 16.81852°

Andreas Haider

Klangbild [Sound Pattern] (Fig. B)

Klangbild is the attempt at depicting sounding bodies visually. In acoustic space, it is only possible to hear bodies that either produce sound or reflect it. Sound is the prerequisite for acoustic perception just as light is for visual perception.

When sound is absent, no acoustic image or sound pattern of a space can emerge. The fact that we describe even acoustic experiences in images proves how visually dominated our perception is, a phenomenon that Klangbild examines and questions. If visual perception is absent and we can only perceive our world acoustically, the mind conjures corresponding homogeneous images of sound, body and space. These are visual representations of acoustic perception.

The sound patterns of waves on a stony shore are examined with the help of an audiovisual composition for which hydrophones were installed on rocks at the key points of wave refraction and recorded synchronously with the image. In the composition, the levels of the recorded sounds determine the level of visibility of each sound image (waves, rocks). The higher the sound energy produced by a sound object, the more concrete and clear its visual representation.

The visual part of the work is a composition and interpretation of the visual data.

The perceivable acoustic space is variable and dependent on the user, who can "sound surf" in via self-navigated positioning. This can be done by selecting various sound tracks —three positions are possible within the setting and three outside it.

1: N 43.03221° - E 16.81570°

2: N 43.03184° - E 16.81573°

3: N 43.03199° - E 16.81602°



Gottfried Haider

[Im Nebelmeer über Plocica /
Sea of Fog over Plocica](#)

Starting point for the investigation was the striking absence of the island we were about to set foot on, from Google Earth satellite imagery. This deficiency was initially met by flying a camera-equipped helium balloon over this remote isle.

The balloon, attached by a string to the artist, formed a prosthetic extension of his body in a physical as well as sensory sense, as the camera images were also instantly transmitted to the ground. Walking a preconceived path this way, the tiny strip of land gained an unexpected orbital dimension. But also the joining with the balloon itself, the rhythm of its tumbling motion and inert shift of gaze developed a surprising dynamics in the course of the performance.

Back on land, the video footage obtained this way is being used to claim land by means of a projection device. This is archived by translating the images into a spherical coordinate system, thus connecting back to the logic of Google Earth.

No GPS Data

Claudia Larcher

[472](#) (Fig. B, C, D)

Temporary installation
White balloons

The number 472, also the title of the installation reflects the number of balloons used by the artist as material for her intervention in the landscape. The artist filled the balloons with either air or water and carefully placed them in the crevices and holes in the rocks. In order to ensure that every gap was filled she had to treat each balloon differently so that it fitted perfectly.

This seamless lining of cracks and crevices in the rocks with balloons formed a white line, like a fine drawing in the landscape that was reminiscent of the contours or traces of an unknown, unidentifiable creature.

- 1: N 43.02835° - E 16.82132°
- 2: N 43.02845° - E 16.82133°
- 3: N 43.02842° - E 16.82143°
- 4: N 43.02837° - E 16.82138°

Robert Mathy

[PLING!](#) (Fig. A)

A found stone/picked up on the shore/ was dropped every 20 meters from the same height above sea level. This procedure was repeated until the area was covered completely. The grid of sound samples resulting from the acoustic recordings made during each step of the process served as a positioning map for a motor-operated loudspeaker, which reflected each sound at its respective position.

The terrain's topology led to variations in the length of the recordings while acoustic differences were caused by the surface of the ground. The aim was to inspire the recipient to imagine the conditions at the recording site.

- 1: N 43.02954° - E 16.81932°
- 2: N 43.02957° - E 16.81931°
- 3: N 43.02958° - E 16.81922°
- 4: N 43.02952° - E 16.81920°

Jan Perschy

[random walk](#)

Interpreting the structure and characteristics of the ground through one's own environment inspired me to press this record. The piece of wood swirling through the stones and thereby altering the ground of the claim is a basic measure; it is also the unit of measure in my survey. The record of a moment in time made in this manner was reinterpreted and given form through my own subjective impressions. The ground as data medium is stored on disc with the help of a personal codec.

Values inscribed on the record, layered over the sound produced by it, allow it to interpret itself.

- 1: N 43.02948° - E 16.81839°
 - 2: N 43.02944° - E 16.81842°
 - 3: N 43.02948° - E 16.81851°
 - 4: N 43.02950° - E 16.81852°
- M : N 43.02945° - E 16.81842°

Leo Peschta

[Wavesynth 1.0](#) (Fig. A, B, C)

The coastal area is a constantly changing environment. Every moment is the arrangement of stones and water in it differently, never the same. By the force of the impact of water on the banks a wide set of different sounds is generated.

For the installation "Wavesynth" relevant areas of the bay (optical: where is water when; acoustical: where does the it sound interesting) have been equipped with sensors. In the water there was a small current initiated (5V, 20mA). Every time it got in touch with one of the sensors, the current level of the sensors output was changed. As sensors tense resistance wires have been used, which produce different values depending on the position in which they get in contact with electrical charged water.

A computer continuously measured this values and routed this data to an audio application, which used it to reinterpret the real time sound of the bay. The transformed Sounds have been played back on-site vis speakers and therefore mixed for the listener with the ambient sound of the island.

- 1: N 43.03156° - E 16.81580°
- 2: N 43.03163° - E 16.81582°

Peter Scharmüller

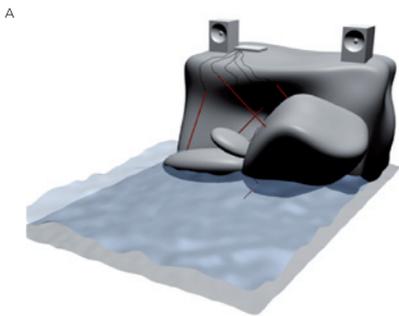
[plocica – grenzgang//uferdiskussion
\[walking the line//shore discussion\]](#)

This representational video by the media artist Peter Scharmüller raises the omnipresent question about the switch between media. Try to imagine the masses of water and rocks incessantly crashing against each other. Each wave is a reason for removing every rock that protrudes from the water.

The solidity of the rock is the antithesis, corrosion being the manifestation of synthesis.

When the gaze switches from one medium to the other, the mass of air solidifies into a quicksilver mirror that hurls the spindrift back into the water.

- 1: N 43.03061° - E 16.81645°
- 2: N 43.02772° - missing



Laura Skocek

Dusk Dawn / Island Maps (Fig. A, B, C)

Series of photographs

Movements on 3 plateaus on Plocica were observed and snap-shots of the island were recomposed into a sequence.

The series Island-Maps was taken from three different positions. These photographs were pieced together into three maps, the photographer being the center. A "false" image of Plocica's geography thus emerges from the subjective representations of the brief visitor on the island and her arbitrary division of zones.

Nina Tommasi

Imaginary fusion of acoustic location

(Fig. D, E, F)

The main idea was to make a site comprehensible as a dynamic network of sound objects. (The definition of this fusion between interdependent corporealities can only be comprehended as process-based; it defies a priori total representation because of its complexity.

The survey, the time of day when this is carried out and the process itself of surveying are used for deliberately reducing and manipulating the site's complexity. In this way, the conditions of the site are reorganized in order to perceive the whole site in a different light altogether.

This reduction aimed at producing added compositional value, which would make the site perceivable by means of audiovisual impressions of it and processual changes to it and thereby generate new possibilities of representation.

The survey procedure is not to be seen as the record of geographic-tectonic data in a precise Cartesian system of coordinates but rather as a kind of "nestling" against the form, so to speak.

While cords marked the rocks and produced new architectural spaces/points of reference for the sound recordings, this geometric expansion of the site and its subjective sensory perception lent the site an immanently changeable individuality. The tectonic, visible body, along with all its peculiarities, was variously linked with other surrounding "bodies" which, analogous to the cords, "nestled" against it, formed and defined it and its in-between spaces.

Important constants that lent the site its individuality and generated the possibilities of recognizing it, such as sounding bodies or "wind bodies," originated from places outside the staked out claim.

This body/site/object can only be seen in the context of its geographic surroundings and the point at which each respective body is linked with the other. Sound recordings were made along the fixed line, representing the "points of reference" for the other "corporealities" surrounding the rocks.

Although the content of these sound files served as reference to the geometric space and for the moment in time when it was surveyed, the morphing spectrum of sound turned the site into a constantly changing "setting."

1: N 43.03097° - E 16.81576°

2: N 43.03094° - E 16.81590°

Sophie Wagner

brzina hodanja (Fig. G)

equipped with my actioncam i moved along the borders of my claim, capturing images and sounds above and under the water.

the rhythm of the images was determined by the conditions of the claim, such as the movements of my float or of a stunt kite.

each sequence is an instrument for the music band for which the visitor can compose new pieces of music using the sounds i gathered on my walks along borders.

1: N 43.03118° - E 16.81582°

2: N 43.03106° - E 16.81579°

3: N 43.03112° - E 16.81570°

4: N 43.03117° - E 16.81570°

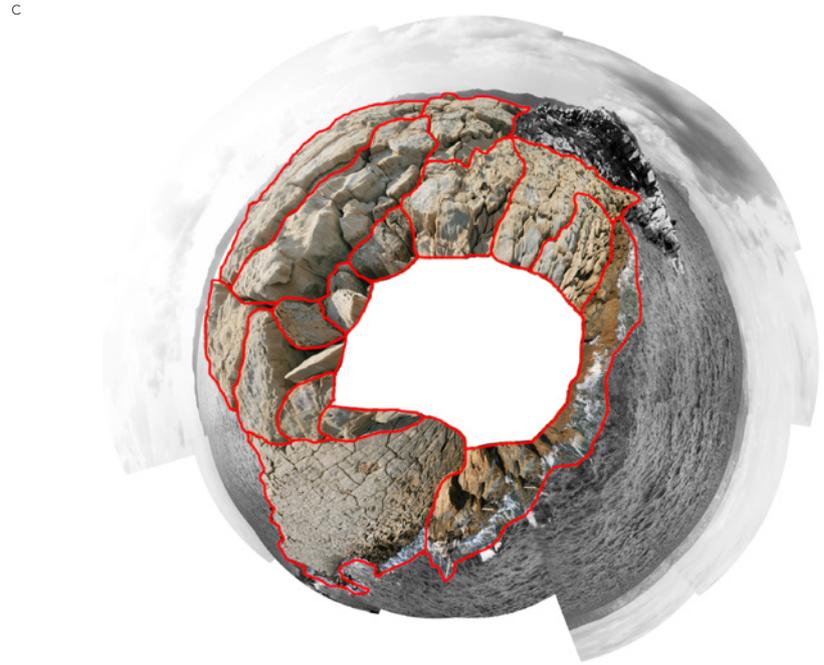
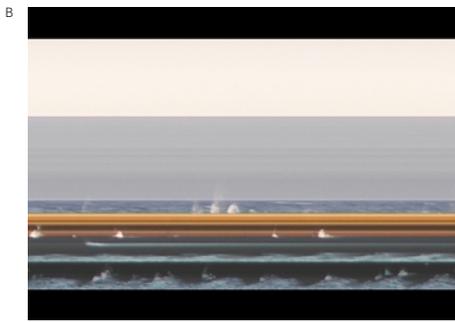
Florian Waldner

Wave Lands

The stones on the Plocica island show patterns that are formed by the tide over a long period of time. Photographs of these patterns are reduced to two-dimensional graphical lines. Audio recordings taken at the same place are analyzed concerning their spectral composition. The data resulting from that analysis is used to animate the graphical lines in three dimensional space. Such that movement of the abstracted patterns is dependent on the sound of the sea.

1: N 43.03093° - E 16.81575°

2: N 43.03094° - E 16.81591°



Craving

Bernhard Garnicnig, Gottfried Haider

*Craving*¹¹ is in fact a special case because it was not made during the Spat_Lab workshop (but at the Department of Digital Art, University of Applied Arts Vienna), but it must be seen as a part of it because of the theme it addressed.

The final version of *Craving* can be heard at its original site at MMW 2008.

INTRODUCTION

In *Craving* Bernhard Garnicnig and Gottfried Haider aurally stage a text inspired by the late Sarah Kane's play *Crave* in public space. It unfolds while members of the audience individually wander a high-rise area, wearing headphones and a mobile computing device.

PROCESS

The audience is escorted from the Mobile Music Workshop venue in Vienna's city center to the site of the production. Once arrived, they have the opportunity to explore the location two at a time. Equipped with a Wearable Computer and headphones the recipient is immersed in sound surroundings he can physically navigate. The path they chose is in no way - auditory or visually - predetermined, thereby allowing the audience to let themselves be guided by aspects of the place itself such as its architecture while experiencing the production.

TEXT

The text used in *Craving* draws on *Crave*, a play by British dramatist Sarah Kane (1971 - 1999). In it, four sparsely drawn characters weave a tapestry made up of quotations and fragments, the cloth of which are their individual traumas, loves, grieves and resignations. Plot and signs indicating temporal developments are reduced to a minimum. It is in repetition and the final defeat of communication of internal landscapes that we come full circle to the *urbane Wüste* (the urban desert) in between the towers of the Donaustadt.

Kane's text, which is filled with elements of subjective meditations on urban surroundings, but devoid of

stage directions has been rearranged and expanded using pieces of everyday conversations to work with individual clusters according to the demands of certain places.

METHOD

The selection and spatial and temporal distribution of sound elements require a detailed study of text and conditions of the space such as architecture, flow of movements and rhythms. The technology (GPS, etc.) framing the production obviously plays another, very important role.

As environmental influences such as weather or social interaction surrounding the participants or their personal movement patterns cannot be foreseen, the sound design is not geared towards constructing a linear narrative. It aims, rather, to create individual, but loosely-connected scenes. To archive this, acoustic elements are placed on street corners, on wide, open spaces or in lively passage ways as they relate to a sensation and meaning created by their architecture or the human beings inhabiting it. In order to do this the artists have developed a software, which enables a composition of temporally and spatially dynamic acoustic scenes.

Sound fragments such as spoken language or music are grouped together, following an internal temporal logic. These groups are distributed all over the area and linked through the recipient's perception as he moves through the space.

Applying their other senses and their feeling for the specific place the participants then put the perceived sensations into a larger context. This ability to freely associate intentional design elements through reflection accepts the spectator in the temporal and spatial complexity of his cognition.

TECHNOLOGY

The participant is equipped with a wearable computer and headphones. Custom software determines his position via GPS, tracks his head- and body movements through a magnetometer. Based on their results the computer renders the audio composition in real-time. Through a simulation of binaural hearing, sounds previously affiliated to certain places now become audible from their specific direction. The software incorporates a real-time virtual acoustic environment rendering engine. It is based on head-related transfer function (HRTF), describing how a

given sound input (parameterized as frequency and source location) is filtered by the diffraction and reflection properties of the torso, head and pinna before reaching the eardrum and inner ear. These location-specific filter effects provide the human neural system with enough cues to properly locate a sound's source. Through the realistic simulation of these effects it is now possible to place sound emitting "props" into the listener's environment.

SITE

Craving was envisioned for production in Vienna DC, a modern complex of commercial and residential buildings in the city's Donaustadt district. This most preeminent area is defined by a branch of the river Danube in the south and the United Nations building in the north. Vienna DC was conceived entirely on the drawing board after plans for a World Fair in this location had been vetoed in a referendum in that same year of 1991. Nevertheless, ten years after its opening, the area is still *urbanity in progress*, as various vacant lots create a layered surface, whose heaps of dirt contrast with the spotless facades otherwise dominating the view. Vienna DC houses numerous multinational corporations and information technology firms in office skyscrapers, but there are also vivid residential zones in between. One can literally walk around a corner to see the number of suits diminished and people leading their lives in a slower and more informal way. There is a bizarre city within, whose 4.000 inhabitants have adopted to the given system of open spaces and the spatial logic of the complex. For them the architects envisioned a church, a museum exhibiting works of an Austrian sculptor, a bilingual school and kindergarten, a supermarket, a number of cafés located in the lobbies of skyscrapers, and a restaurant. Other unique architectural features also strongly influence the way in which the space is perceived: a wide flight of stairs leading up to nothing, surveillance cameras places at eye level, deserted children's playgrounds, a vast empty space whose floor is covered in glaring white paint. This microcosm allows the artists to use the space's emotional tectonics and possible associations while breaking with the normal patterns of movement, perception and interaction with the environment and other people.

¹¹ *Craving*, Bernhard Garnicnig & Gottfried Haider

