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MUSICA
IMPULSCENTRUM
VOOR MUZIEK

Symposium Locative Media and Sound Art

Abstracts & bio's

Saturday 10th of May 2014
Budafabriek, Kortrijk

An initiative of Musica, Impulse Centre for Music, and Flanders Festival Kortrijk

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Content

Frauke Behrendt

University of Brighton

The Sound of Locative Media

This talk presents a sonic perspective that pays particular attention to the temporal, situated and embodied aspects of locative media. It introduces the concept of 'Placed Sounds' for a detailed analysis of locative sound experiences. This framework for analysis considers how locative sound engages with the auditory aspects of our spatial perception and how immersion operates for locative media and sound. Furthermore, it considers the role of situated experience, the role of walking as remixing, and how agency and exclusion operate in locative sound. The concept and this talk draw an extensive archive of examples of locative sound from art, design, education and industry.

http://www.smart-ebikes.co.uk

www.fraukebehrendt.com

http://mobilesound.wordpress.com/

Frauke Behrendt, Smart e-bikes

Geert Vermeire

noTours, augmented aurality

noTours is an open source and freeware project by a collective of international artists and developers that allows editing a place with sounds. This means that you can attach sounds to a territory and that later, when you go physically to that place you can listen to them. The trick is using our noTours Android Application that detects your location (via GPS) and plays your audios exactly in the place where you decided. Our project makes it possible to listen to and to walk in spaces, experiencing an augmented acoustic reality. This alters the perception of space by superimposing new layers sounds to a territory, allowing the creation of parallel realities and connecting the real space with the collective memory of its inhabitants.

noTours proposes a sound-walk through a defined territory, a historical and acoustical journey narrated by protagonists of the territory. noTours incorporate to this journey sound elements relative to the area where the visitant is located as well as sound art works or other sound elements in relation with the concrete space where the walker is. Departing from work-shops with residents and using collaborative creation processes this project aims to turn the process that allows some social expressions to be considered cultural heritage upside down, by offering society a tool to participate in the process.

Geert Vermeire – noTours (SMAK, Ghent)

Inspired by the situationist 'dérive' and evading from the city-panorama model, usually thought as an eminent visual, pan-optic and geometric model, delineated by urbanists and cartographers, it appears for us the necessity of elaborating new sensible itineraries that could question the urban lay out, usually considered as an univocal space. Using the extended format of touristic audio guides, understanding them as devices giving us information about spaces cataloged as relevant or for the public interest, this project would like to question their real value as well as the official discourses that contain.

Our objective is the deconstruction of this old-framed format for designing a new one opened to the collective memory of the inhabitants and connected to the real time situation of the city involved. Between fiction and reality, our focus is the intervention on strange or familiar territories and converting them into mutant spaces. Touring them under the effects sound will reveal us a hidden city filled with personal stories and interferences.

http://www.geertvermeire.be/

http://www.notours.org/

Pieter Verstraete
Bilgi University Istanbul / University of Exeter

Locative Media of Dispossession: The Secret Theatre Revisited

This presentation aims at rereading Shuhei Hosakawa's influential essay, 'The Walkman Effect' (1984), in which he describes the influence of the Walkman (or as Michael Bull proposed, the 'personal stereo') on the relationship between the individual, 'self-enclosed' listener and urban space, in its construction of a 'secret theatre'. With the rise of personal stereo users in public spaces through the introduction of iPod and other mp3-players, including mobile apps, on the market since the beginning of the 2000s, the effects of these secret theatres for the ears to our listening modes and spatial relations have been subject to many artists, among which Janet Cardiff has been perhaps the most researched since the end of the 1990s.

The presentation of Pieter Verstraete will focus on new works with smartphones, iPods and mp3-players, such as Dries Verhoeven's *Niemandsland* (2012) or Judith Hofland's *Like m*e (2013), which particularly highlight individual experiences of the self in relation to a new sense of sociability that materializes into real-time urban encounters with places and people. Different from traditional audio-guided walking tours à la Cardiff, these audio theatre pieces turn the privacy of the highly-individual experience of the secret theatre into a feeling of submission to a technology, a network, a system, a bodiless or disembodied voice.

Judith Hofland – Like me (2013)

Verstraete will expand on the voyeuristic desires of the ear ('ecouterism') in these audio walks until the proverbial 'acousmatic' curtain drops down and reveals the theatricality of the final cut, its investment in the imagination's deceptively homogenising workings of the listening act, as well as the drama of the listener's own dissociation, dispossession and *difference*. Verstraete regard the latter as one of the fundamental human experiences of listening that produces the (modern) self but that also allows us to see ourselves in relation to sounding/listening others in new social contexts. As such, these performances with new locative personal stereos help to debunk some of the myths of Hosakawa's secret theatre of the 1980s and see them in a new light of collective, relational experiences that open our ears and eyes rather than shut them off.
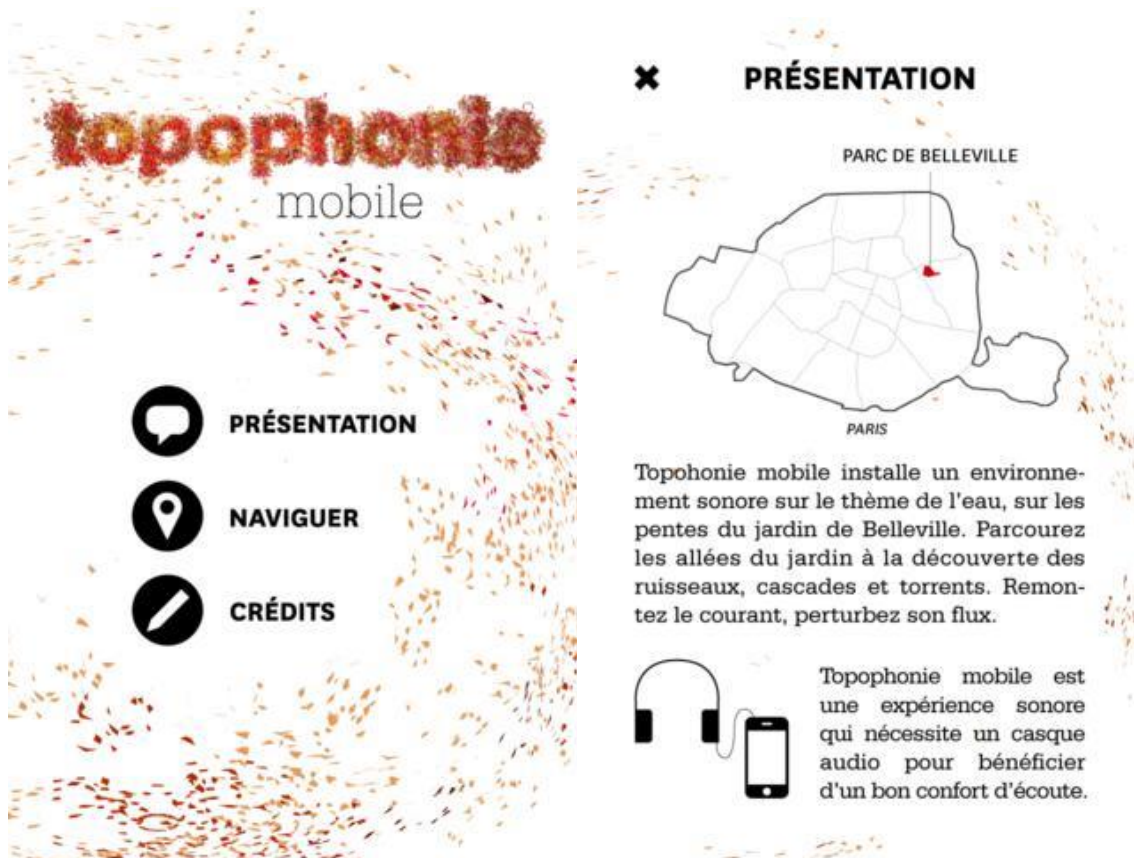
Roland Cahen

ENSCI les Ateliers - Orbe.mobi

Topophony as new form of sound art

Topophony literally means a place of sound, in other words sound spaces, which can be real, virtual or augmented. For example, in real life, sound sources are distributed around us: some are fixed, other are mobile. As listeners, we evolve in a space and constantly mix the sources that surround us. That experience is what we call sound navigation.

When transposing this experience to a virtual world or a video-game, a certain number of questions arise, such as how to represent these sound sources: are they continuous or triggered, punctual or grouped, etc.?

Roland Cahen – Topophonie (Parc de Belleville, Paris)

In most actual editing tools for interactive sound source distribution, the sound sources are punctual. We are with other kinds of architectures in order to create more complex and composed topophonies. We also use ground organization, Sound Level of Detail, continuous variations, different shape surfaces, orientations and sensors to enrich the scenario and the user's experience.

The aim of the Topophonie research project which was developed between 2009 and 2012 at ENSCi les Ateliers with our partners LIMSI/CNRS, Ircam, Orbe, UserStudio and Navidis was to explore new paradigms and methods of navigation in audio-graphic clusters.

Among the various projects and applications developed within Topophonie, Orbe (Xavier Boissarie) Ircam (Diemo Shcwarz and Norbert Schnell) and ENSCI (Roland Cahen) have developped "Topophonie de l'eau", also called "Topophonie mobile" which proposes an audio augmented navigation in the "Parc de Belleville" (Paris-France).

Topophonie de l'eau' settles a poetic soundscape in a location of the urban space in order to modify the visitor's perception and reading. This soundscape complies with the topography and the functions of place. The piece invites visitors to an exploratory wandering and to perceive hidden dimensions of a familiar urban space. 'Topophonie de l'eau' works in Belleville Square in Paris. A free app for accessing the experience can be freely downloaded from the app store under the name 'topophonie'.

The slopes of Belleville in Paris evoke the sinuous water up to the names of the streets: rue des Cascades, street gutters, rue de la Duée. Two realities overlap in this area: a mineral surface and a liquid invisible space, consisting of springs and underground aqueducts.

'Topophonie de l'eau' proposes to raise this liquid space up to the surface by staging a spatialised navigable soundscape. Visitors wander freely in liquid auditory streams, can go down or against the current, altering the sound. Sensations of gravity due to the slope combine with sound expression.

Water runs down the steep slopes, stagnates in ponds and rushes into the openings, trickles down the slopes. This soundscape is heard throughout visitors' ambulation.

Through their movements visitors disrupt the flows, create eddies and whirlpools. The device is conceived for smartphones and programmed with Unity software, enriched by components developed within the framework of the Topophonie project: The PointCloud is a structure of data defining a detailed sound map, as well as the sound IAE library developed by Ircam, which generates infinite textures of lively water sounds, from a reduced corpus of water samples. In addition, the device modifies the sound behaviour according to various terrain parameters, such as gradient, stream size, direction and speed of the visitor's movement in the stream, etc. As the sound generation is dynamic it changes all the time along the ambulation, just as if one was walking along a real stream.

'Topophonie de l'eau' displays three sound grounds: distant, intermediate and close. The produced soundscape offers a polyphonic and immersive experience. Equipped with an open audio headset, the visitor perceives a mix of outdoor sounds and those generated by the application. A cartographic interface indicates the visitor's position as well as the perimeter of the experience.

The users feedbacks of "topophonie de l'eau" shows the importance of Augmented Reality Audio as a new paradigm in auditory experience and allows to imagine new artistic objects and contents, but also brings many questions. Beyond the technical issues the authoring tools and the design of such experiences are one of the most challenging question. Topophony creation is strongly related with users experience and therefore depend on the context and circumstances. Architecture and composition, activation modalities, access to contents, guiding and navigation, interactivity and users inputs, interactions and sharing between users, locative media edition are some of the main points we would like to discuss.

We believe that topophony is a new art form that is searching for it's marks. We are looking for new opportunities to explore new scenarios and challenges.

Topohonie de l'eau is winner of the Grand Prix de l'Innovation de la Ville de Paris Mention Design

http://www.topophonie.fr/

http://roland.cahen.pagesperso-orange.fr/

http://www.ensci.com/

Séverine Janssen & Flavien Gillié

BNA-BBOT

Sound the Maps

A great diversity of soundmaps were developed around at the beginning of the 21th century. Precise, collaborative, artistic, political, interactive or not, what are their specificities, their use and utilities? Complementing the spatial geography with a sonic dimension, soundmaps allow for a convergence of crucial information, ideologies and technologies. We propose a reading and a collective listening of various sound maps.

http://www.bna-bbot.be/
http://www.bna-bbot.be/brusselssoundmap/
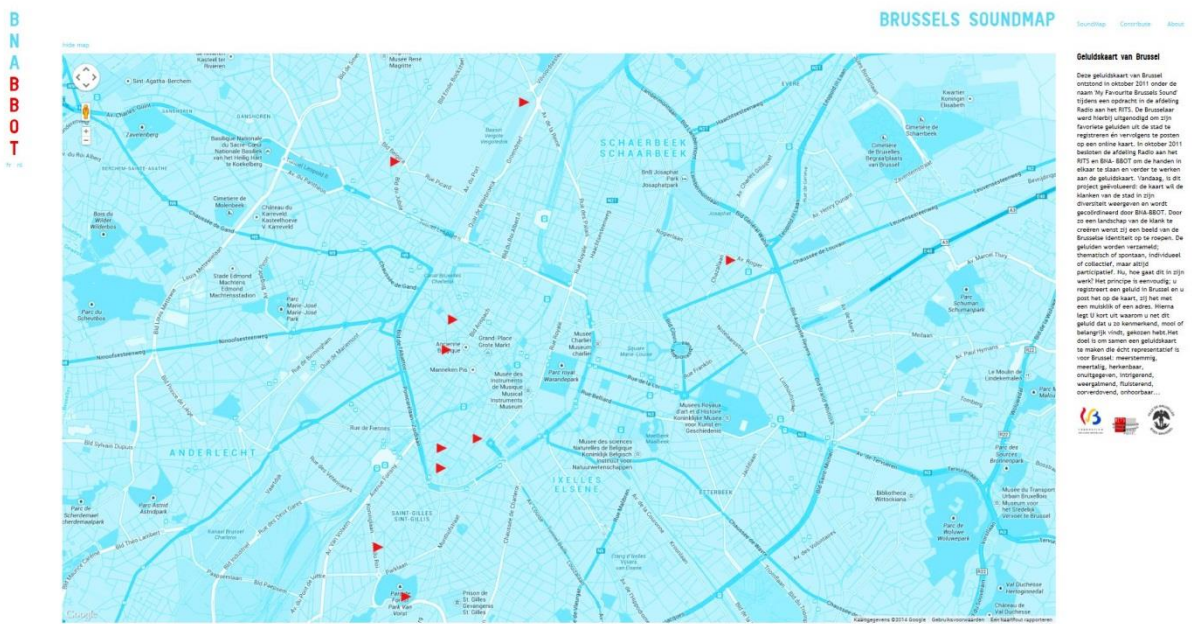
BNA-BBOT – Brussels Soundmap

Daniel Belasco Rogers

Plan B

A Personal History of Locative Media

Daniel Belasco Rogers will lay out a personal history of locative media from his position as an artist who has worked with locative media since 2005 and who continues a daily practice of collecting everywhere he goes with a GPS which he began in 2003 and his wife in 2007.

Belasco Rogers will use some of the locative projects he has made in Europe (including Kortrijk) as well as his GPS collection practice to illustrate various aspects of locative media as his thinking about it has changed since the days when the equipment was rare, exotic and expensive to today when many of us walk around with locative media devices in our pockets.

Dan Belasco Rogers – Into the light door

http://planbperformance.net/

http://belasconew.com/

Yvan vander Sanden & Zimcke Van de Staey

Mute

Pushing location based media art to the limit: technical challenges and solutions

The current use of location based sound art for mobile devices is quite straightforward. Honorable exceptions not withstanding, projects often go no further than linking predefined zones to one or more sounds. While this approach is certainly interesting because of its low entry barrier – even the most casual listener will instantly understand the correlation between position and sound – it will not aid us in sustaining interest in this art form for very long.

In the presentation of Mute, a few alternative approaches to sound/location mapping with more surprising and varying results will be discussed. This can be attained by indirect interpretation of the GPS signal itself – as Mute has done in their LineWalk application – and also by combining GPS with the multitude of readily available sensors.
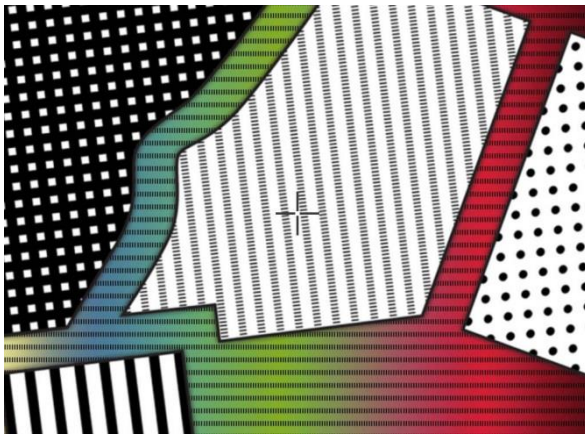
Curvices, audiovisual app (Musica, 2013) software design by Mute

Of course there are some hurdles to be expected: implementing sensor based interaction is no small task for the digital artist. And to add to our challenges, the mobile market is still highly fragmented. It's not enough to write your software just for Android or iOS. This is why Mute proposes to piggyback on the game industry: game developers use the same means for a different outcome.

While more general software development continues to struggle with delivering Android, iOS and Windows phone versions of their software, cross platform mobile development in particular is already quite mature within the gaming industry. And as far as sensors and interface programming go, there are several game engines available that make it possible with ease.

However, there is one thing missing: imaginative audio support. It would be a shame to go the extra mile when it comes to being creative with interaction, while at the same time being limited by a sound interface that will do little more than play sounds at certain locations.

In this matter, the options are limited. LibPD for one can be a useful tool, but it feels a bit like programming your interface directly in openGL. A more high-level sound engine – preferably one that combines a 3D positioning system, DSP processing, software synths and composition tools – would be welcome. Yvan vander Sanden and Zimcke Van de Staey will finish their presentation with a modest proposal in this direction.

http://mutecode.com/

Stduio ookoi

Harold Schellinx & Peter Mertens

Stduio ookoi is the Future of Popp

In hun bijdrage aan het symposium Locative Media and Sound Art zal Stduio ookoi uitgebreid aandacht besteden aan de diverse wijzen waarop de (in deze tijden al meer en meer flexibele) noties van tijd en plaats, en het spel daarmee, een centrale rol spelen in ookoi's werk.

Inclusief de functie en het gebruik van technologieën die het nu mogelijk maken om dat spel met en voor een luisterend publiek via met name iPhone-apps te spelen. In het achterhoofd doemt daarbij steeds de vraag: die technologieën zijn dan wel nieuw, maar hoe zit het eigenlijk met de ideeën? Ondertussen en tot slot maar niet op zijn minst, licht Stduio tipjes van de sluiers van de toekomst tellen ze af of op naar een volgende stap, ergens naartoe.

Stduio ookoi

http://www.ookoi.nl/