

MASTERCLASS OF SOUND RESEARCH

THE SOUNDS OF VAL SENALES

Val Senales (IT), 31 August - 4 September 2024

"Sound is a localized mode of existence. Sound is a tool of knowledge, including knowledge of the place where you are and how this place fits into the experience."

Steven Feld, *Acustemology*, 2010

1. Introduction.

Any natural or anthropic landscape can be perceived and known through its sound dimension. In 1969, Raymond Murray Schafer coined the expression "*soundscape*" to designate those elements that shape or compose a landscape from an acoustic point of view, not only aesthetically but also historically, geographically and culturally, promoting a new ecology of sound.

Just as sight can reveal a place, so our sense of hearing can perceive a place as a composite landscape unit, a "phonosphere", which becomes a privileged access key to the sound imagery of a community and, consequently, of its social interactions and its profound cultural elements. The possibilities of listening to this reality appear very different based on factors such as the morphology of the landscape, the listening points, the distance of the listener from the sound manifestations and the degree of his interaction with them.

In recent decades, such approaches have been embraced by a great diversity of disciplines in the fields of natural sciences, humanities and artistic practice, becoming a truly multidisciplinary field of experimentation.

The sound research masterclass "The sounds of Val Senales", scheduled in Certosa from 31 August to 4 September 2024, will be a specialized and collective context of reflection, research, listening, recording, and sound composition starting from the natural and cultural landscape of Val Senales, in South Tyrol: villages, bells, churches, farms, agricultural and livestock activities, pastures, irrigations, streams, lakes, paths, woods. From a sound point of view, the places of relationship with transhumance and with the probable path taken by Ötzi, the man of the Similaun, in his ascent to the Giogo di Tisa more than 3,000 years ago will also be explored.

The masterclass is directed by Luís Costa (Binaural Nodar, PT), with the coordination of Gianfranco Spitilli.

2. Objectives

1. To develop methods of recognition of places and contexts from a sonic perspective
2. To practice different forms of sound recording, depending on the locations, contexts, and type of recording required, and use different types of microphones.
3. To develop field written recording and cataloguing practices for each sound recording, using metadata.
4. To share sound editing techniques, reflecting on creative ways of producing sound narratives, depending on the desired results.
5. To encourage co-creation and knowledge sharing among masterclass participants.

3. Detailed program

The masterclass will last a total of 27 hours with the following program:

August 31st. Afternoon, 15.00-18.00

Introduction. Presentation of the masterclass, the participants, the proposed activities, the evaluation standards of the action, the objectives of the action. Anthropological dimension of the work context. Soundscapes: Definitions, origins and basic concepts. Specific approaches to sound in different scientific and artistic fields. Collective discussion according to the experiences of the group.

September 1st. Morning, 9.30-12.30

Field Recording Techniques # 1. The organization of field work material. Active listening. The selection of sound recordings. The choice of listening points in the acoustic space.

September 1st. Afternoon, 15.00-18.00

Field Recording Techniques # 2. Digital sound formats and parameters. Types of microphones and their uses. Types and characteristics of digital audio recorders. First listening experiences with different recorders and microphones.

September 2nd. Full day, 9.30-12.30/15.00-18.00

Sound Project Work #1. Sound project work, consisting of a series of field recordings in specific locations using the concepts and techniques learned in the previous modules.

September 3rd. Morning 9.30-12.30

Sound Project Work #1 (continued). Sound project work, consisting of a series of field recordings in specific locations using the concepts and techniques learned in the previous modules.

September 3rd. Afternoon, 15.00-18.00

Creative sound editing and processing software. Techniques for organizing and cataloguing audio files. Storytelling concepts and techniques to transform recordings into sound narratives. Listening to examples of sound documentaries.

September 4th. Full day, 9.30-12.30/15.00-18.00

Sound Project Work #2. Creation of a collective sound documentary/podcast, using screenwriting techniques (topic / voices / tone / transitions etc.) and editing software and creative sound processing.

4. Recipients

It is intended for students, teachers and professionals in the cultural-scientific sector (social sciences, environmental sciences, creative sector, anthropology, ethnomusicology, etc.).

5. Language of the masterclass

The language is English, with the possibility of immediate translation into Italian, Spanish, French or Portuguese.

6. Number of participants, applications and selection

10 participants is the maximum number allowed. Those interested must send an application e-mail to info@binauralmedia.org by 15 August 2024, indicating their motives and attaching a curriculum vitae. The selection, curated by Luís Costa, Gianfranco Spitilli and Eltjana Shkreli (Tramontana Network) will take place by 20 August.

7. Costs

The masterclass is free, while the selected participants will have to bear the costs of food and accommodation. Overnight stays, at a discounted price, are provided at the Hotel Rainhof in Madonna di Senales (single room at € 60 per day, breakfast included): www.rainhof.com.

8. Equipment

Participants must bring a laptop and headphones, as well as any sound recording equipment.

The organization of the masterclass will provide participants with the following equipment:

- Two Zoom H4n recorders with wind protectors
- One Zoom F8 recorder with eight input channels
- Eight mono lavalier microphones with wind protectors
- A Zoom H8 recorder
- Ambisonic microphone capsule for the Zoom H8 recorder
- Two Leaf-Audio piezo microphones
- An Aquarian hydrophone
- Two pairs of Soundman binaural microphones
- Two Rode NTG2 shotgun microphones with zeppelin and wind protectors

9. Biographies

Luís Costa (Lisbon, 1968) has been working since 2004 as a curator/programmer of contemporary artistic practices, as a sound and media artist and as a sound educator and cultural animator in rural contexts. President of Binaural Nodar, a cultural organization that runs Lafões Cult Lab, a place of artistic research through the hosting of artist residencies in the rural territory of Viseu Dão Lafões, which has already hosted more than 175 sound and media artists and social and environmental researchers. Coordinator of Binaural Nodar Digital Archive, a research, cataloguing and sound and audiovisual mapping project of the collective memory of Portuguese rural territories which is part of the European Tramontana network, awarded with the Grand Prix Europa Nostra - European Cultural Heritage Prize in the research category in 2020. He is the author/editor of twelve books dedicated to artistic creation, especially sound and media, in rural contexts, rural ethnography and ethnomusicology, including the catalogue *Three Years in Nodar: Context-Specific Artistic Practices in Rural Portugal* (2011), the book *Tales of Sonic Displacement: SoCCoS*, a sound-based artist residency network (2016), and the book *Memoria Tramontana: Changes in rural Europe as seen by its inhabitants* (2019). Since 2007 she has developed an intense activity of sound and media creation in rural contexts, through which he reflects on the natural, cultural and social specificities of places. Of particular importance are *Sound Villages* (2007-2010); *Sound Memory of Cork* (2014-2015); *Perennial Bridges on Temporary Waters* (2018-2019), and *Fresh Water, Salt Water* (2024), a sound and audiovisual artistic reflection that brought together "water cultures" of three areas of the globe, the Paiva River in Portugal, the Yaguarón River in northern Uruguay and the island of Salina in Sicily, Italy.

Gianfranco Spitilli (Teramo, 1975). PhD in Ethnoanthropology, he is currently a research fellow at the Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education of the University of Molise, professor of Cultural Anthropology at the Department of Communication Sciences of the University of Teramo. He carries out research in the field of visual and sound anthropology, religious ethnology, anthropology of Christianity, in Italy (Apennines, Alps), in Belgium (Wallonia and Limburg) and in Romania (Transylvania). He has created numerous sound and audiovisual documentation that has been used to create documentaries, museum installations, record productions, digital archives and portals. In 2009 he won the "Nigra Prize" for anthropological research. Among his latest publications: (with A. M. Zocchi, ed.) *Images and social research. A dialogue between sociology and anthropology* (2020); *L'ascolto e la visione. Don Nicola Jobbi and the Central Apennines of the twentieth century* (2020); (with G. D'Autilia, ed.) *Sono tutta negli occhi. Sebastiana Papa photographer (1932-2002), exhibition catalogue* (2023); *Pandemic soundscapes. Collaborative Ethnographies and Multimodal Approaches to the Coronavirus Soundscape*, *EthnoAnthropology*, 11 (2023); "Grass roads". *Anthropology, mobile pastoralism and knowledge*, in Don E. Bettini, D. Tondini (eds.), *A new renaissance for Europe: the role of research and training* (2023); *Sound ethnography and communication: sound as a cultural system*, in C. Corsi, P. Coen (eds.), *The professions of communicating: past, present, future* (2023).

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PanSpeech

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