

e-music

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Magnetoceptia, audio rituals with wearable antennas

Patrizia Ruthensteiner presents a series of Magnetoceptia performances and installations. These are named after “magnetoception”, defined as the sense, or ability that enables an organism to “detect a magnetic field to perceive direction, altitude or location”, making them audible through electronic sounds. The artist builds wearable antenna receivers that pick up specific electromagnetic frequencies, making them audible. These are subsequently used during performances that are inspired by a local context or particular history. Some, for example, were inspired by the ancient Qing Dynast’s tremendous hairdos or guided by elements of the Estonian Native Calendar. These performances have the aesthetic structure of a ritual, as they use tools manifesting something that previously could not be seen through a series of prescribed gestures. The costumes and antenna’s materials, then, reinforce a modern way of collectively dealing with the invisible, and the unknown.



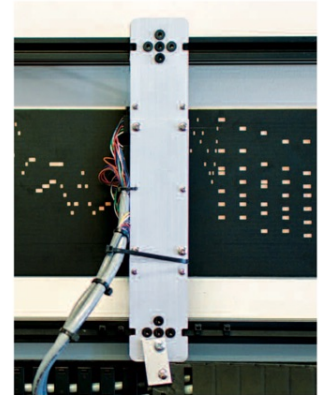
Syncness, speak to me human being

One of the legends about Saint Francis is that he was able to literally speak to animals and be perfectly understood. The legend describes a dialogue beyond mere empathy and beyond any pretence at recognising the cause and effect of gestures or eye contact. Instead it describes mutual understanding through a shared language. “Syncness” by Saša Spačal and Slavko Glamočanin is an artwork scientifically addressing the same topic. It comprises a wooden structure with integrated speakers hosting house crickets (*acheta domesticus*). A microphone in front of the structure allows a human to have his/her vocal frequencies filtered to match the cricket’s chirping footprint based on tempo and rhythm. The matched percentage of this dialogue is then broadcast to outer space. “Syncness” critiques the anthropocentric domination of human sounds (anthrophony) in research into life beyond earth, therefore, but it also questions the artificial construction of languages, and the infallibility we attribute to machines.



Daily Waverings II, accumulating and releasing time

Bécharud Hudon mentions two concepts that inspire his Daily Waverings II installation: the Planck time and the Zero time. The former is the smallest temporal unit (10 elevated -43 seconds), while the latter is a conventional reference to observe any change with respect to time. Starting from here, the artist built an installation that takes the form of a temporal cone, made by fishing rods, door springs, bicycle wheel, coloured wire connectors and wood. This slowly rotates on itself, accumulating tension as the rods start to intermingle, until, at some point, it suddenly releases this tension with a bang. Contact microphones and loudspeakers amplify the kinetic sculptural process. The sound produced testifies to the regularity of passing time but also to the increase and release of energy in the structure. In the constructed loop, spectators are observers, but the installation also transforms them into revolving entities, drawn into synch with the installation.



Adeus, epic audio failures

Small failures are part of our quotidian existence, but when they happen in music, they immediately assume a different meaning. In his “Adeus” installation, Brazilian artist Joao Costa uses two metal plates, one made out of brass, the made out of other of copper, with musical notation expressed as etched dashes. The represented song is “Valsa de Euridice” (Eurydice’s Waltz) by the famous Brazilian poet and musician Vinicius de Moraes. An array of electronic sensors scan the plates, reading them and playing the song. When they reach the end, they move backwards and then back again. At some point the sensors begin to fail; however, these gradually fall back into sync after a while, creating a long, less predictable loop. The whole mechanism paraphrases the failures and culminating moments of the original story of Orpheus and Eurydice, but it also formulates a system whose failures and self-repairing beauty can be understood to be as universal as the story that inspires it.