

NO SOUNDSCAPE PROJECT

Understanding the open space of an urban railway area in transition as a discontinuum of sonic and vibrational possibilities determined by more actants than human sounds, encouraged a revision of dominant sonic approaches, method and tools used in the urban design process as we know it.

What happens when we consider urban sound as physical as well as informational **AFFECT?** The Ph.D. project considers the production, transmission and mutation of affective tonality of a transforming Brussels railway area space. It explores how urban transformation can be listened to but also felt, and speculates about possible non-human experiences via design research. It searches for repetitive affective tendencies of sound and how they unfold in urban context.

By tracing how sound sets bodies in motion by propagating affect in space, it aims to produce a cartography of how sonic affect exercises power in a context of transforming railway space as a basis for urban sound design.

From a questioning of the ontological turn in sound studies the research project elaborates upon the following positions and propositions:

1. Human and non human actants co-constitute a discontinuum of sonic and vibrational possibilities
2. We need an a-disciplinary rethinking of sonic forms and methods for urban sound design
3. (sonic) vibrations as design material opens up to a (re-)negotiation of urban transition

A decentering of the human sense and perspective seems to have implications for the urban design it constrains. Building on Goodman's [1] theoretical work on sonic warfare, we adopt Augoyard and Henri Torgue's sonic ecology [2] for a practice-based research project on a critical sonic urbanism.

CRITICAL SPATIAL PRACTICE

Studio_L28 is conceived as an urban practice for counteracting situations in the L28 planning process where sonic awareness and sound design strategies are limited to noise control. To break free from prevailing modes of urbanism we constitute an a-disciplinary working practice exploiting the productive encounters between different disciplines. While being about a network, Studio_L28 represents itself as a networked practice in itself. Following Miessen's idea of the crossbencher [3] Studio_L28 departs from the first person singular:

the individual practitioner. Building on the notion of self-responsibility our model of practice acknowledges an interconnection between the designer, multiple disciplines, their languages and tools, the urban contexts and actors involved. Design strategies that a practitioner employs we understand as a result of these interconnections.

Studio_L28 provides a testing ground for phenomena, methods and tools we consider as elements of the transdisciplinary framework we deploy. Artistic practices, concepts and aesthetics of making organized sound inform the construction of a language that seizes its own methods and tools, and thereby manifests itself. Besides contributing to a new body of work, which assembles around the notion of Sonic Urbanism [4], Studio_L28 explores how hyper contextual practice can inform existing disciplines such as architecture and urbanism.

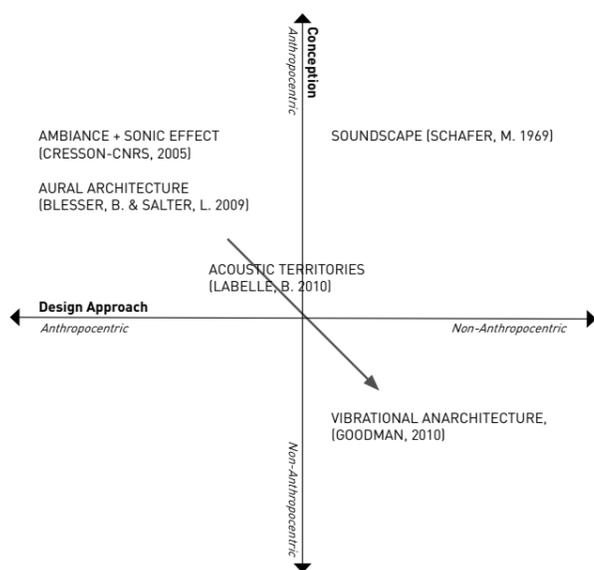


Fig. 01 Theoretical Positioning: The move towards a Non-Anthropocentric Design Perspective

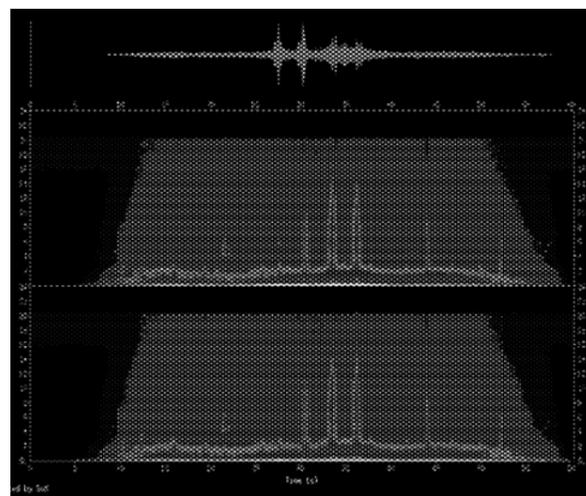


Fig. 02 ARCHIVE Sound Wave + Spectrogram Field Recording (sonic) Vibrations, L28 Railway Space, Beekant, Brussels

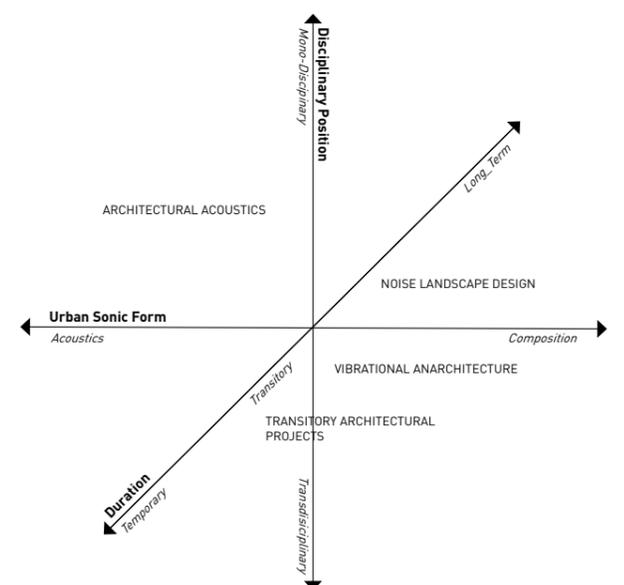


Fig. 03 Preliminary Urban Sonic Design Typology

As Master Design Studio, **Studio_L28** functions as a platform for critical learning in action rather than an educational program.

The studio concentrates less on formalistic urban architecture then on a possible intervening in the agency, the experience of formal-mechanic dimensions of urban sonic vibrations as a source for a re-negotiating of urban transformation. By re-negotiation we mean a re-purposition of sonic spatial relations that are capable of getting new socio- (political) encounters off the ground.

Rather than demanding students to use a ready-made formalistic approach to the design process,

emphasizing physic acoustics, the exercise is about the search for, and the amplification of tensions between intuitive, sensible and semantic components of urban sound and the disinterested, de-semantified and purely formal elements of urban architecture or urban design on the other.

Urban architecture is understood as an articulation of these relations through the development of a method and tools for urban architectural design, hereby facilitating a possible (re-)negotiating urban transition manifested in new sonic forms.

On the basis of the outcome of the first masterstudio_L28, we

identified four types of design approaches in relation to the disciplinary position and urban sonic forms.

Urban Sonic Design Typology:

1. **Vibrational Anarchitecture (Human / Non Human)**
2. **Noise Landscape Design**
3. **Transdisciplinary Projects for Transition**
4. **Architectural Acoustics**

References:

1. Goodman, S. *Sonic Warfare : Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear*. Cambridge (Mass.): MIT. Web. 2010.
2. Augoyard, Jean-François, and Torgue, Henry Skoff. *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds*. Reprint ed. Montréal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2009. Print.
3. Miessen, Markus. *Crossbenching: towards a proactive mode of participation as a Critical Spatial Practice*. Diss. Goldsmiths, University of London, 2017.
4. Adhitya Sara, Nathan Belval, John Bingham-Hall, Caroline Claus, Burak Pak, Alexandra Lacroix, Marta Gentilucci, Frédéric Mathevet, Sharon Phelan, Richard Sennett, Justinien Tribillon. "Sonic Urbanism." Edited by & beyond *Theatrum Mundi*. *Sonic Urbanism*, 2019. <http://theatrum-mundi.org/library/sonic-urbanism/>.