

## NOTES:

- 1 etymonline.com
- 2 Mersch, Dieter. Epistemologien des Ästhetischen, Diaphanes. English: Epistemologies of Aesthetics, Translated by Laura Radosh, Diaphanes, Zürich 2015, p. 24.
- 3 Borgdorff, Henk. Die Debatte über Forschung in der Kunst, in Rey and Schöbi, eds., Künsterische Forschung, p. 25.
- 4 s. Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research, 2020, and the response to it: What Is Wrong with the Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research? by Florian Cramer, Nienke Terpsma, 2021, open Academy, file:///Users/gk/Downloads/What%2015%20Wrong%20with%20the%20Vienna%20Declaration%20on%20Artistic%20Research%20.pdf
- 5 Hornuff, Daniel. Praxis Dr. Kunst geschlossen, FAZ, 17.5.2015.
- 6 Hauenstein, Hanno. Unerforschte Gefilde: Wie Research-Vibes die Kunstwelt fluten, Berliner Zeitung, 6.5. 2023.
- 7 Steyerl, Hito. Aesthetics of resistance? Artistic Research as Discipline and Conflict, maHKUzine. Journal of Artistic Research, Utrecht School of Arts, 8, 31-37, Winter 2010. German: Ästhetik des Widerstands? Künsterische Forschung als Disziplin und Konflikt, pp. 2-4, translated by Birgit Mennel, transversal texts 01/2010.
- 8 At documenta 15 (2022), for example, a wide variety of collectives used scientific-artistic methods to bring hitherto unnoticed perspectives of global communities into the field of vision of the Eurocentric art canon.
- 9 Steyerl, op.cit. p. 35.
- 10 Independent History Work Association. Incidentally, it was not until 30 years later that a memorial was erected next door.
- 11 See more in Text Book transition, Saarbrücken, 2002, and the documentation at [https://www.georgklein.de/installations/001\\_transition\\_e.html](https://www.georgklein.de/installations/001_transition_e.html)
- 12 Mersch op.cit. p. 28/29.
- 13 The German term "Künstlerische Recherche", in contrast to the English "artistic research", offers a distinction to the term "Künstlerische Forschung", in English also "artistic research". "Forschung" is strongly connected to science, while "Recherche" is more various and methodologically open and might better be translated as "investigation".
- 14 The visitor situation in public space and thus the perceptual situation is completely different from that in a concert or gallery context, which sometimes leads to surprising experiences.
- 15 Mersch, op.cit. p. 25/26
- 16 Recorded with young people from Marl, see Deutscher Klangkunstpreis 2002, ed. Uwe Rüh, Skulpturenmuseum Marl, and documentation at: [https://www.georgklein.de/installations/002\\_MarlMitte\\_e.html](https://www.georgklein.de/installations/002_MarlMitte_e.html)
- 17 Guy Debord: Théorie de la dérive, Les Lèvres nues n° 9, décembre 1956 et Internationale Situationniste n° 2, décembre 1958. Translated by Ken Knabb.
- 18 Hauenstein, Hanno, op.cit. p. 8.
- 19 Mersch, op.cit. p. 26.
- 20 Steyerl, op.cit. p. 5. "At this point it must be emphasised that this also applies to so-called autonomous artworks, which do not claim to carry out any kind of research."
- 21 Wikipedia, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recherche#Journalistische\\_Recherche](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recherche#Journalistische_Recherche)
- 22 Mersch, op.cit. p. 170.
- 23 autonome a.f.r.i.k.a.-gruppe, Luther Blissett, Sonja Brünzels: Handbuch der Kommunikationsguerilla, Hamburg, Berlin, Göttingen, 1997.
- 24 Published on twitch, who deleted the video relatively quickly, but it can still be found on the darknet.
- 25 Kracher, Veronika: CN: Mord, Antisemitismus, Facebook comment on Oct. 9, 2019, reprinted in: Klein, Georg: HATERS, exhibition brochure, Errant Sound, 2021.
- 26 See Khamis, Sammy. Der Soundtrack reichten Terrors - NS-Propaganda reinsten Wassers, Deutschlandfunk Corso, 25.10.2019.
- 27 "Mask off": <https://azlyrics.biz/f/future-lyrics/future-mask-off-remix-lyrics/> "Power Level": <https://azlyrics.biz/m/mr-bond-lyrics/mr-bond-power-level-lyrics/>
- 28 Klein, Julian. "Was ist künstlerische Forschung?" (What is artistic research?), Gegenworte 23, Wissenschaft trifft Kunst, Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften: Akademie Verlag 2010, S. 25-28.
- 29 Mersch, op.cit. p. 169.
- 30 In his concluding chapter, "Epistemic Practices of the Arts", Mersch offers a lucid description of further features of "aesthetic thinking", which I can neither adequately summarise nor comment on here.
- 31 Mersch, op.cit. p. 160.
- 32 Mersch, op.cit. p. 162.
- 33 See Klein, Georg. Site-Sounds. On Strategies of Sound Art in Public Space, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

## ALESSANDRA ERAMO

# ROARS

# BANGS

# BOOMS

## SEVEN VARIATIONS FOR VOICE AND ONOMATOPOEIA PERFORMANCE, 2013 – 2015

*The variety of noises is infinite. If today, when we have perhaps a thousand different machines, we can distinguish a thousand different noises – tomorrow, as new machines multiply, we will be able to distinguish ten, twenty, or thirty thousand different noises, not merely in a simply imitative way, but to combine them according to our imagination.*

Luigi Russolo, "The Art of Noises: Futurist Manifesto," 1913

In his manifesto, the futurist artist Luigi Russolo classifies six noise families in order to be performed on *Intonarumori*: For producing a broad spectrum of modulated, rhythmic sounds similar to those made by machines, the *Intonarumori* are audio devices, considered the first mechanical sound synthesizer. *Thunder*, *Whistles*, *Booms*, *Grumbles*, *Snorts*, ... These onomatopoeic words recall the different sounds of the modern industrial landscape. As part of the Manifesto of Futurist Music "The Art of Noises" by Luigi Russolo, this onomatopoeia is the starting point of my performance work: from his intuition projected into the

future about the importance of noise in music, 100 years later I have written seven variations for human voice in which noise not only becomes a leitmotiv in music, but it also turns into musical material itself.

Onomatopoeia became one of my main interests, and, from a contemporary perspective, I focus on the interpretation of onomatopoeia and its extension with my voice and other media such as drawing, movement, gesture, field recordings and text. Onomatopoeia has become so enchanting for me, probably because I am immersed in multilingualism in my daily life in Berlin, it is a kind of Babylonian sound poem that resonates in me – I don't think I could live without this great linguistic chaos anymore, I love it! – that makes me perceive some words as pure sound, in a mental exercise in which the onomatopoeic word forms an idea of sound, an image of sound. Interestingly in German, the word Onomatopoeia is called "Lautmalerei," which is the composition of the two words "Laut = Sound" and "Malerei = Painting."

My mouth tries to express a noise through a word that at the same time is already sound in itself. It is an image of sound, turning into a vocal gesture in which the signifier and the signified are playing in unison. And how many images emerge in the listener's mind when they hear, for example, the Italian word "Scricchiolio" – in English, "Creaking"?

Since onomatopoeia differs from one language to another, I adapted my performance variations "Roars Bangs Booms" to different European languages and performed it in different versions in Germany, Czech Republic, Austria and Italy. I embody these noises, I hear them, I perceive them as urban soundscapes of the present, I transcribe these sounds in drawings and interpret them with my voice and with my body, revealing the beauty of these noises, while playing with the audience's expectation, fancy, and imagination. Onomatopoeia is an exploration of phonic figures consist-

ing of a kind of imitation of a noise through the creation of a new word. Onomatopoeia can be primary ("tic-tac," "boom-boom") or secondary (word of onomatopoeic origin: "ticking," "booming"). The sounds have the archetypical quality of a pre-linguistic state, as when a child repeats sounds it has heard, the babbling of a child who is learning to speak, while it is trying to name and give a voice to events, things, sounds, people, the world around by imitating the noises.

The number seven of the work's variations of course was chosen on purpose: seven is a sacred number, and I wanted the sense of the sacred to accompany me on this journey while exploring the world of noise and onomatopoeia. An important recurrent element in the performance variations are small paper sheets with onomatopoeic words from the Manifesto of Futurist Music and the reading instructions on it for the audience.

The first live-performance took place on 24th May 2013 in the Haus am Lützowplatz Gallery in Berlin. There was an almost sacral atmosphere, in the middle of the exhibition "Streitobjekt Arbeit" with early 20th century art works, including paintings and prints by George Grosz and Käthe Kollwitz, treating the themes of industrial landscapes, exploitation of workers in the dawn of industrialization and first labour unions that gave voice to workers in early capitalism. The people depicted in these paintings probably heard the same, new industrial noises that Luigi Russolo heard and that inspired him to write his manifesto.

Paper sheets with onomatopoeic words in Italian (*thunder, whistles, booms, grumbles, snorts, ...*) are handed to the audience, which is asked to read them aloud. While doing so, most of the people don't know the meaning of the word they are reading, as many do not

know the Italian language. So I perform every onomatopoeic word as a distinctive but also very subjective vocal expression. Through my voice and gesture, the audience is imagining the meaning of each word and is associating it with their own noisy incidents or experiences with noises. An idea, a memory becomes voice.

I was always particularly interested in the more mysterious aspect of noise, the one related to both individual and collective memory, so I wanted to investigate this "mystery" in my artistic work. Reading Luigi Russolo's Manifesto of Futurist Music, that was written 100 years before "Roars, Bangs, Booms" I was amused and immediately felt at ease. Russolo, in his artistic research, dealt with themes of the occult and mystery, and as he wrote in his manifesto, ancient cultures always attributed sound to the gods, so sound itself was considered sacred and therefore reserved for priests or shamans for their healing rituals in which contact with the non-human was sought. God, Divinity or Saints were often contacted through the use of dance and music, such as altered voices, singing, speaking in tongues, noises and repetitive rhythms, all those sound elements served primarily to lead the participants into a trance-like state. In this sense, sound can be understood as a separate entity, distinct and isolated from everyday life of human beings. Luigi Russolo in his manifesto states that ancient life probably was silence most of the time, or rather the noises were primarily from nature, animals, humans and some rudimentary machinery. The life of us modern humans instead is full of noise. He probably refers to the rural Italian soundscape before industrialization, especially the Padanian plain between Venice and Milan where he spent most of his life – which today is one of the most densely populated and industrialized regions in Europe. Furthermore, Russolo, exploring the origins of human-made sounds, states that noise essentially first came into being as a result of the invention and use of machines in

the 19th century, hence the evolution of music must be synchronized with the evolution of machines that interact with humans with all positive and negative side effects.

There is not always a clear reason why we artists develop a particular interest rather than another for our projects. In artistic research sometimes reason can be happily surpassed by intuition. Artists certainly follow their own sensibility and worldview. Yet in the creative process of "Roars Bangs Booms" I wondered where this deep interest in exploring aspects of noise and onomatopoeia came from. I think it probably stems from the "noisy" places in southern Italy I listened to as a child, and which I listened to again as an adult.

For the live-performance variation on 1st February 2014 at Echo Bücher in Berlin, I've chosen a more profane setting with a great number of pecorino-cheese cubes on a stainless steel plate, decorated with handmade Italian toothpick flags. Many small paper sheets with the onomatopoeic words were handed to the audience, who is asked to freely interpret the words when indicated. While the audience interprets the onomatopoeic words aloud, we're all immersed in a soundscape, based on field recordings I collected between 2008 and 2013 in the industrial city of Taranto, the city where I was born. At the end of the performance, I offered to the audience the delicious sheep milk cheese to eat together. Savouring this first quality cheese is the happy and cathartic conclusion of the performance, as a way to remind and transform a traumatic event which Tarantinians and myself have experienced in 2008: a mass slaughtering of thousands of sheep in the polluted Taranto area because of the high dioxin level found in their milk.



#### **SOME FACTS ABOUT THE INDUSTRIAL CITY OF TARANTO TAKEN AT RANDOM AND IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER**

In 2013, I curated “Correnti Seduttive” (*Seductive Currents*), a sound art, interactive performance and audio-visual art project in Taranto, dealing with the city’s biggest issue: the pollution caused by the industry and the military base. I invited a group of internationally renowned artists living in Berlin: composer, visual and sound artist Georg Klein; performer and video artist Steffi Weismann; field recordist and sonic journalism pioneer Peter Cusack, all members of Errant Sound and artistic director of Corvo Records Wendelin Büchler, to participate with me in a three-week residency at the Aragonese Castle in the Old Town in Taranto to build an anthropology of the sounds of Taranto and present the developed works in an exhibition in March 2014. The main questions were: “How do the human, visual and sonic landscape of Taranto present themselves today?” and “Which aspects and features of the Beauty/Danger dichotomy can be illuminated through observation and research in the field?”

Taranto, the city of two seas, once known as the pearl of the Ionian Sea and Magna Grecia owns a vast maritime culture heritage like the production and trade of sea silk, an extremely fine fabric that is made from the long silky filaments or byssus that grows in certain types of pen shells like *Pinna nobilis*, a large (120cm) species of Mediterranean clam. The cultivation of the rare, and valuable fabric was one of the main economic factors and reason the Taranto area became very wealthy since the 1st century B.C.

In 1965 one of Europe’s biggest iron and steel complex ILVA (now ArcelorMittal group) became operational in Taranto, employing 5,000 workers at peak time and later occupying an area more than twice the size of the city. Apart from being a major center of the European

steel industry, Taranto is also an important NATO base. It’s a place of social tension, high emigration and disastrous environmental problems. Toxic dioxine and red oxidized iron powder, released by the steel industry and covering parts of the city, are the main health threats.

In 2012 local prosecutors ordered the partial seizure of ILVA because of abnormally high cancer incidence, linked to the pollution. The closure dramatically and suddenly brought the underlying conflict of interests between health and employment in the city out into the open. Taranto’s circumstances clearly demonstrate the limits of European capitalism but, so far, little has changed on the ground. The steel plant is still working and the pollution continues. Today, in 2023 tourism is increasing. And there are cultural associations like the multidisciplinary performance/architect group “Post Disaster Rooftops” operating on marginal territories and aiming to decentralize the production and sharing of knowledge: The association organizes experimental music shows, performances and actions on the roofs of the inhabited or abandoned and precarious buildings of the Old Town, a place of great beauty but extremely fragile and symbolic of the “disaster” of Taranto, just between the sea and the immense steel plant. Also, the famous traditional easter procession in Taranto, showing statues of the Holy Virgin full of grief, has become a tourist attraction, broadcast live on prime-time television – just like the weekly demonstrations of Tarantinian mothers, who lost their children to leukemia, covered even by the New York Times. Taranto is certainly a very interesting place whose noises evoke contrasts and confusion.

Russolo realizes the importance of noise in music; he states that noise, coming to us irregularly from the unpredictable confusion of life, never reveals itself entirely to us: Noise is mysterious, it provides us with many surprises. Indeed, every manifestation of our life is accompanied by noise, like the sound of a mother’s breathing when the baby is still in her womb, or the sound of



birds chirping that marks the beginning of spring. Noise, although mysterious, has something familiar to our ears and has the power to immediately call us back to life, to our memories and emotions. Music that includes noise from the real world enchants me, as it can be mysterious and superimposed on the real, therefore this music can be sacred.

For the live performance on 3rd May 2014 at the old project space of Errant Bodies in Berlin Prenzlauer Berg, I am standing blindfolded in the room in front of the audience. Wearing headphones, I'm listening to my own vocal interpretation of the onomatopoeic words from the Manifesto of Futurist Music. With my body and through gestures, I interpret the recording of my voice. The audience cannot hear what I'm listening to, but can imagine or guess each noise/onomatopoeic word just by observing my body in movement: sometimes as if electrified, sometimes fluid, sometimes crawling, sometimes heavy as lead, sometimes light as feather, the movements are genuine, in a kind of a silent, bizarre dance with a focus on voice moving between inside and outside. Exploring oral and written phenomena in sound, I exhibited also my large-format drawings as graphic transcriptions of the onomatopoeic words: each drawing is a gestural interpretation of one noise. In this work I explore a new space between sound, voice, gesture, writing and drawing. A drawing that becomes onomatopoeic word, a dance that is noise. Finally, after my performance, the audience is invited to hear the original recordings at a listening station in the gallery space.

"From Luigi Russolo's Manifesto to industrial soundscapes of today" is the title of a lecture/ performance, precisely another variation of "Roars Bangs Booms" I presented on 3rd March 2014 in Taranto at the Ex-Caser-

ma Rossarol, University of Taranto. As part of my live performance, I read aloud a letter addressed to the ghost of Luigi Russolo. While listening to my lecture, the audience is immersed in the noise of the city's industrial soundscape that mingles with the onomatopoeic words read aloud and the sounds of daily life in the Old Town of Taranto.



"Dear Luigi Russolo,

I am at the University of Bari – Campus of Taranto, in a former church now used for meetings, symposiums and conferences. I know that you and your colleague Francesco Pratella provoked the masses with your call for emptying the conservatories, colleges, universities and academies to determine the closure and celebrate their funeral in order to give absolute freedom to musical studies. I'm sorry to tell you that after 101 years here in Italy, music continues to be taught the same way as before – if it is taught at all – because I heard that recently music education, as well as visual art education, was definitely eliminated from programs in public school. But I'm glad to tell you that your intuitions, your ideas and your work have been very, very useful for the renewal of Italian music. You brought some fresh air and your ideas have also built the base for the international avant-garde music from the 1950s to today. Your spirit is here with us today and I know you can hear us, as you have been able to listen to the new sounds of your time, the sounds of the new Italy from the early 1900 just in the beginning of the new industrial era.

I welcomed your enthusiasm and that of your Futurist colleagues – female and male artists, poets, dancers and composers – for your rejection of passivism and love for the new. You, a painter, a multifaceted artist, a composer, revolutionized Italian classical music. I had to smile at first when I read some of your statements that were as ingenious as they were necessary, rightly so, for example when you said that "We must break this narrow circle of pure sounds – referring to orchestral timbres – and we must conquer the infinite variety of sounds-noises." And I fully concurred when you stated that "In the age of technology we need to turn to 'the throbbing of valves, the comings and goings of pistons, the screeching of metal saws, the rattling of railways, spinning mills, printing presses, power stations and railways'." Or when you said that "the already heard sounds are boring, and classics like Beethoven and Wagner have 'shaken the nerves and the heart'." "Now we are fed up with them," you then stated radically, "and we enjoy much more ideally combining noises [...] than hearing again, for example, the Eroica or the Pastorale."

I have read in history books that especially the first performances of your Futurist Music punctually triggered brawls between audience and performers, which were eventually quelled by police intervention. I hope the same does not happen today, as I, unlike you, reject all forms of violence. However, I would like to tell you today that I particularly liked the manifesto you wrote on 11 March 1913, "The Art of Noises," where you state that music must be made predominantly of noises, not only based on tonality. In particular, I liked your idea of using the noises of everyday life in composition, because they are living, real sounds.

By creating the Intonarumori, these incredible musical instruments which are noise generators, you have enriched listening with sounds unheard before. Convinced of the new aural sensitivity of contemporary man and convinced that in the 19th century, with the invention of machines, noise would triumph and dominate human's sensitivity, you wrote your Manifesto classifying all the possible noises of the modern era: howls, rumbles, crinkles, gurgles, hisses and buzzes. You ranked them one by one. An all-Italian genius. You launched the seeds of the European musical avant-garde.



I can confirm that your intuition, namely that noise can be considered a component of artistic expression, has deeply penetrated into the poetics of musical exploration of sound in the 20th century. The beautiful audience here with me in this room and also myself know very well the sounds and noises you have been talking about 101 years ago. In this sense we are already experienced with the Futurist Music. We find these sounds every time we open the window, pointing our ear to the outside, when we walk on the streets, listening to the noises, to nice noises, to ugly noises and to unsupportable noises that surround us. In this city of industry. Or the industry of the city ... depending on the point of view, the perspective, the experience or the geographic location. We have learned to listen also thanks to your Manifesto.

While I am writing you this letter, I am immersed in a multi-faceted soundscape: my fingers typing computer keys, a navy helicopter is flying over the buildings, a man shouts "SIGNORAAAA!" (Laaaadyyy!) and he answers himself "Whaaaaat?". A car was just parked, an illegal parking assistant comes closer and shakes the change coins in his hand, a scooter has just passed an elderly lady walking, the red and white chimneys of the steel plant are blowing smoke in the air, the neighbor's tv is playing the latest songs of Sanremo Festival\*, a group of seagulls are screaming while flying over the sea, a small truck loaded with vegetables is stuck in traffic, a man sings neomelodic songs from Naples, and then he sneezes. It all sounds pretty interesting, all worthy of a possible composition of Futurist music. But I wanted to ask you if all these sounds can be considered "futurist sounds" or "sounds from the industrial city." Would you say that these sounds belong to any given place? Or are they perhaps special sounds, unique, specific sounds from an industrial city? Maybe one of those beautiful industrial cities that you and your Futurists colleagues were deeply fascinated by?

So I take this wonderful opportunity to let you hear an 11-minute composition I made, which is based on the sounds of Taranto that I recorded between 2010 and 2014. The sounds you will hear are all original and not manipulated.

Dear Luigi Russolo, if you will allow me, I would like to pay homage to you by kindly asking the beautiful audience present here to participate in the musical performance, interpreting with their voices the onomatopoeia from your manifesto "The Art of Noises." You conceived these onomatopoeic words as a list of noises that the musical instrument you invented, Intonarumori, could reproduce. Considering the voice as an exceptional and eternal instrument, I would therefore like our audience here and now to interpret the list of noises with their own voice, freely and as they see fit. We are about to distribute to the audience the paper sheets with the words, so we'll create a chorus of noisy onomatopoeias together.

I hope you will appreciate.

A noisy greeting, Alessandra Eramo

\*The man is called Aldo. All Tarantinians know him as the most famous homeless and heroin addict begging for money and screaming around weird insults against the Holy Virgin in the city center.

\*\*Most popular music Festival contest in Italy, dedicated to "Canzone Italiana" (Sanremo Italian Song festival)

Let us begin from the body.

We are body listening in a landscape. A body that is born in that landscape. It knows it and is familiar with it.

A landscape that is an environment made of air, earth, sun, sky, colors, architecture, nearby shapes, distant shapes, smells, and voices and noises.

Human noises and non-human noises. Industrial noises.

It is now 2023, ten years after the realization of my project "Roars Bangs Booms," and the sky of Taranto is still red with the smoke from the chimneys of the huge steel plant, towering in the landscape of the industrial city, a seagull's cry mingles with the symphony of the industry that hardly stops, while nato planes and helicopters are training for war over our heads. Their deafening noise shakes everything, the windows of our homes are vibrating, the sea churns in small waves as the helicopter passes, we would like to faint for a moment, absent ourselves, stop breathing, or shout at the top of our lungs that we do not like the logic of war and the war industry. Then we remember that this big factory needs laborers, and the laborers work in it while being poisoned, while getting sick,

and killed. For 70 years. 70 years ago peasants enthusiastically left the countryside and much of their economic misery to live in the industrial city, many became laborers in the biggest factory of the South.

In the pink-red landscape of this South, the noises remind us that we are not alone. We even start to become attached to these sounds.

We are not alone; animated and unanimated creatures and things are all around us.

Let us imagine that we are bodies immersed in the landscape, listening is like breathing in the landscape, with moments of apnea, and moments when we resume breathing strongly and decisively, and let's imagine that we are breathing heavily, a sweeping movement of arms open, chest out, the body expanding and becoming part of the landscape a hiss of larynx - it is the sound of air passing through our throat - we taste the landscape, it passes through the cavity of the mouth.

But the landscape poisons us. Because the air is poisoned here. We are left with a strange taste of rust and iron on our palate. We blow the air through our nose - strongly, vehemently.

Here's the sound, it's a kind

of puffing, a clanking roar, screeching of train tracks, squeaking of machines and pulleys, harsh, shrieky noises, a gentle rumble, beating heart, pressing rhythm of venous flow. Mouth of metal, taste of steel. I become poison.

The sunset over the Taranto sea is a shattered mirror of dazzling light. Let us try to listen to this fiery red sunset,

red in the evening  
red is the light

red is the dust of iron red is the tar We breathe red - the smoke of smokestacks

contemporary industry - past and present and future wrecks of warehouses, buildings and crumbling tracks among the red-pink eucalyptus trees and the sea shaped like a wide-open smile.

Engines and mopeds whine in the night - in those deserted streets,

while mothers in their beds continue to hope for a sleep,

they get disturbed by the perennial nightly rumble of the plant which was built next to the

apartment buildings, the mothers close their windows, fall asleep, in their beds of sheets embroidered with byssus silk,

the sea silk, the memory of a glorious Magna Graecia past, of an ancient economy and wealth of

this part of the Mediterranean. The mothers have sour dreams of a better future for their children, other than the one spent in the bed of an oncology ward. Hoping mothers, in tristetza siderurgica (steel sadness), dreaming mothers in this poisoned South, today still die hoping. Pink-red dust settles everywhere, on the balconies, on fallen leaves, on the sidewalks, on the graves in the cemetery. In the city the fragments of light dazzle the eye, it is infinite beauty, changing, iridescent, the marching band passes by playing the symphony of scrap metal in the Easter procession of pathetic music where Mother Mary searches for her holy son. Post-Disaster. The cameras are on, the world is watching us, the world is listening to us. Pietas. Perhaps it is like a thud that

deafens us for a few seconds, tinnitus that whistles in our bodies, and does not leave us, lingers in our ears, tinnitus colored red, purple, pink, iridescent, we are deaf as if overwhelmed by too much life, a hyper-oxygenation from too much baroque poison. While the sea is a caress. The sea-cemetery of new emigrants. The joyous sea of dolphins and inflamed sunsets. We shall return one day to this sea – we who have emigrated – to rediscover all this light. In the delirium of the future, in the catastrophe, our bodies absorb every vibration, reproduce it through a timid voice, the voice soon learns to rise to the clear sky full of stars and smoke, an intonarumori voice rises, it incorporates spirituality in an ecstatic dance, it appropriates the industrial, familiar noises, futurist architecture that marks the dif-

ficult coexistence of humans and nature. The voice accommodates in its larynx the crackling of lava, interpreting words that are sounds, dancing, leaping, the body cannot sit still, the body registers every belly movement, every lips smacking, spitting out saliva that expands, like a snake's tongue, spits out venom that becomes sound, and is transformed into beneficial elixir, a new music for our ears. These noises are screeching of steel, they are rumbling of engines expanding and vanishing, roars, – bangs – booms – they are tumult of sea waves, sound of a mother's cradle at the passing of the last fisherman's boat returning home, smiling, hunting seagull's cry, endless echo tracing the horizon of smokestacks reaching for the sky, the great mystery of the industrial sky. – what sound does this sky make?

HOLGER SCHULZE

# What do Sounds need, what do we grant them or not?

## A FEW CONSIDERATIONS ON THE AFFORDANCES OF THE SONIC

Sounds don't want anything. Sounds are there; or they are not.

To assume that sounds have intentions, desires, needs, suspicions or dislikes would be a serious categorical error.

Sounds are not actors.

Or ... are they?

In the year 2015, on September 9, one could attend a performance by sound artists Mendi + Keith Obadike, at the Ryan Lee Gallery in New York. In this performance, both artists sit across each other, at a rather small table. On the table one can detect an assortment of rather historical tape machines, a mixing desk, older, heavier headphones, and – most importantly – brochures with long lists of

numbers as it seems. “009, 383, 010, 277.” They read these numbers in a very focused, neutral, but at times also grave manner. “013, 167, 014, 409.” Alongside with reading those numbers in alternation – one sequence read by Mendi Obadike, another sequence read by Keith Obadike – peculiar feedback sounds emerged from their readings. They resonated, now and then pretty painful-

### LIVE PERFORMANCES OF ROARS – BANGS – BOOMS:

Haus am Lützowplatz Gallery, Berlin, 24 May 2013

Echo Bücher Berlin, 1 February 2014

Chiesetta San Francesco c/o Ex-Caserma  
Rossarol, Taranto, 3 – March 2014

Errant Bodies Berlin, 3 – 11 May 2014

Museum FLUXUS+ Potsdam (Germany),  
29 November 2014

MuseRuole Festival, Innsbruck (Austria),  
24 May 2014

Geh8 Dresden (Germany), 23 April 2015

Školská28 Prague (Czech Republic), 24 April 2015

“Neue Musik St. Ruprecht” St. Ruprecht Church  
Vienna, 3 May 2015

www.correnti-seduttive.com