

Call for Papers - The Role and Position of Sounds and Sounding Arts in Public Urban Environments

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Call for Papers for the Conference to be held on November 29th and 30th at Leiden University and coordinated by Prof. dr. M.A. (Marcel) Cobussen, involving Keynote speakers Salomé Voegelin, Gascia Ouzounian, Holger Schulze, and Jean-Paul Thibaud.

Sound is among the most significant, yet least-discussed, aspects of public spaces in urban environments (Hosokawa 1984; Kang and Schulte-Fortkamp 2016). Architects, engineers, and urban planners invariably stress the visual and tactile aspects while (re)designing urban environments but often pay less attention to the aural consequences of their interventions; sound tends to be considered mainly as an inevitable byproduct of industrial areas, traffic, commercial centers, and/or human activities. If sound attracts the attention of policy makers and users of public urban spaces, it is often in a rather negative context: as noise pollution which should be avoided by somehow reducing the amount of decibels (Devilee, Maris, van der Kamp 2010; Elmqvist 2013; Kamin 2015).

In contrast, this conference aims to increase the attention to the role of sound, sound design, and sounding art in urban spaces – with sound considered both as an epistemological tool and as an aesthetic instrument.

Sounds in urban spaces – including the “omnipresence” of music – (co-)regulate our behavior, attract specific groups that give a space a specific identity, call for certain actions, make us nauseated, etc.; sounds thus have social, political, ethical, and economic power. Reflections on everyday urban soundscapes - their features as well as the way they are used and experienced – could lead to a new theory of *sonic ecology*.

Furthermore, sounding art has the potential to contribute directly to an improvement of city soundscapes, while a more fundamental and scholarly attention to sounds in public urban spaces can lead to a concrete contribution to already existing discourses in urban studies, history, anthropology, and philosophy.

In this conference three questions will play a central role:

1. How do sounds in general and sounding art in particular contribute to the general atmosphere of a public urban space?
2. How do users of that space - dwellers, tourists, people working in that neighborhood, passersby - experience its sonic qualities and how does that influence their behavior as well as the function of that space?
3. How can we, on a theoretical level, develop a new *sonic ecology*?

Keynote speakers: Salomé Voegelin, Gascia Ouzounian, Holger Schulze, and Jean-Paul Thibaud.

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Abstracts: Abstracts of no more than 250 words should be sent to Gabriel Paiuk
(acpa@hum.leidenuniv.nl) before October 1, 2016. Submitters will be informed before October 15.

Conference dates: 29-30 November 2016

Location: Leiden University, the Netherlands

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