

**OTHER LUNGS**

Readymades on Visual & Aural Presences

THE PYTHAGOREAN CONCEPT of sound conceived the universe to be an immense monochord, with its single string stretched between absolute spirit and at its lowest end absolute matter. Along the string were positioned the planets of our solar system. Each of these spheres as it rushed through space was believed to sound a certain tone caused by its continuous displacement of the ether.<sup>1</sup> Here is a paradox: two things touch but only one sound is produced. A ball hits a wall, a drumstick strikes a drum, a bow scrapes a string. Two objects: one sound.<sup>2</sup> Another case of 1+1=1. One visible living being, containing within itself all living beings of the same natural order.<sup>3</sup>

Perception does not give me truths like geometry but presences.<sup>4</sup> Hearing does not occur in continuity. The ear listens in brief slices, and what it perceives and remembers already consists in short syntheses of two or three seconds of the sound as it evolves.<sup>5</sup> There is no silence for the living. We have no earlids. Sound plunges below the surface. Sounds are verbs. Thus there can

written in response to a request for a manifesto on music, 1952 } instantaneous

nothing is accomplished by writing a piece of music " " " " hearing " " " " } and unpredictable  
" " " " playing " " " " } our ears are now in excellent condition<sup>12</sup>

be no science of sound, only sensations, intuition, mysteries.<sup>6</sup> OCEAN DRUM/HOUSE OF SUN.<sup>7</sup> The phenomenology of the imagination demands that images be lived directly, that they be taken as sudden events in life. When the image is new, the world is new.<sup>8</sup> Sometimes the house grows and spreads so that, in order to live in it, greater elasticity of daydreaming, a daydream that is less clearly outlined, are needed.<sup>9</sup> Form is dissolved into an energy field, one of great density and delicacy.<sup>10</sup> Every sound commits suicide and never returns.<sup>11</sup>

We may hold the projection of recorded sound as an act of reanimation and transplantation. Sound born and born-again into fresh time and space, experienced anew at the moment of reception. The sonic artist regarded not as taxidermist master of slight-of-hand illusion, rather vivisectionist master over life and death, time and space. When sound is electroacoustically dislocated from its autochthonal habitat – no longer *in situ* – transported to alien locations, it is recontextualised, physically and semantically transformed, creating different dialogues between itself and its surrounding resonating and signifying environment.<sup>13</sup>

George Mantor had an iris garden, which he improved each year by throwing out the commoner varieties. One day his attention was called to another very fine iris garden. Jealously he made some inquiries. The garden, it turned out, belonged to the man who collected his garbage.<sup>14</sup>

Take a hacksaw to your speakers to improve their distortion capabilities.<sup>15</sup>

Compiled by Nina Canell & Robin Watkins

<sup>1</sup> Ken Hollings, 'The Solar Myth Approach' in *Undercurrents: The Hidden Wiring of Modern Music*, Wire & Continuum, 2002

<sup>2</sup> R. Murray Schafer, 'I've Never Seen a Sound' in *S:ON*, Ed. Nicole Gingras, Artexes, 2004

<sup>3</sup> www.plato-dialogues.org

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *The Art of Light and Space*, Ed. Jan Butterfield, Abbeville, 1993

<sup>5</sup> Michel Chion, *Audio Vision: Sound on Screen*, Columbia University Press NY, 1994

<sup>6</sup> Schafer, Op.Cit.

<sup>7</sup> An album title inspired by Yamataka Eye's fantasy of 'people who live in the sun, using the sea as a drum'. The intention was to create a field recording that would interlock their physical rhythm attack with the natural pull of the planet, *Boredoms, Seadrum - House of Sun*, Warner, Japan, CD, 2004

<sup>8</sup> Gaston Bachelard, 'House & Universe' in *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, 1969

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Josep M. Munoz, 'Calculation and Hallucination' in *Force Fields*, Museu d'Art Contemporani

de Barcelona, 2000

<sup>11</sup> Schafer, Op.Cit.

<sup>12</sup> John Cage, 'Manifesto' in *Silence: Lectures & Writings*, Marion Boyars, 1968

<sup>13</sup> John Levack Drever, 'Sound Fetish Tendencies' in *Noisegate*, Ed. Collins & Gambardella, No: 12, 2004

<sup>14</sup> John Cage, 'Indeterminacy' in *Silence: Lectures & Writings*, Marion Boyars, 1968

<sup>15</sup> Nuna Moosy, '25 Recordings: On the Art of Self Recording' in *Noisegate*, Ed. Collins & Gambardella, No: 12, 2004



Nina Canell, *Airplant*, 2004

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**ALL MODELS ARE WRONG, BUT SOME ARE USEFUL**

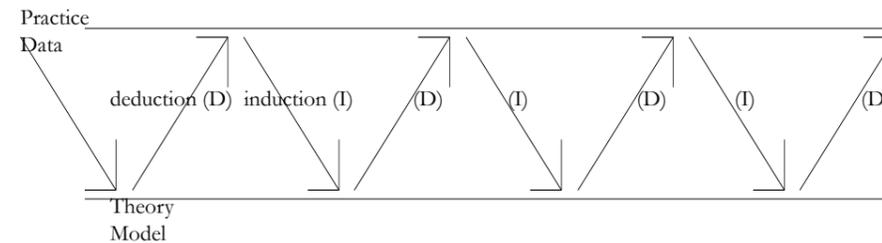
-George E. P. Box-

THEORETICAL AND STATISTICAL models play an important part in many disciplines. [To test the validity of a statistical] model once it has been carefully formulated, it can be confronted with empirical data, and, if all assumptions hold, various techniques can be used to test if the model is consistent with the data. If the model is rejected by the data, one must determine what problem(s) exist and how the model can be modified for better data fit. If the model and data fit together, one cannot assume that this is the "correct" or "best" model. Many other equivalent models may exist that can fit the data better or equally well.

After developing and testing a statistical model, the decisions regarding whether the model is "useful" or "wrong" come into play. The need for models that fulfill their specific purpose and expectations for which they were created is largely

must decide what the core aspects of the theory are. As a metaphor for this worry selectivity concept, Box relays, "It is inappropriate to be concerned about mice when there are tigers aboard" (1976, p. 792).

In order for the researcher to know what aspects to focus upon and what aspects to omit for the creation of a parsimonious and worry selective model, the iterative process of model building must be followed. Data from the indirect measurements of the theory's hypothetical constructs are shaped into a model which is continuously tested against the data in order to further refine the model, see figure below (Box, 1976 & 1979).



# THINGS TO DO: # 07.05

Theresa Nanigian, *46 missed manicures*, (Videostill), 2004

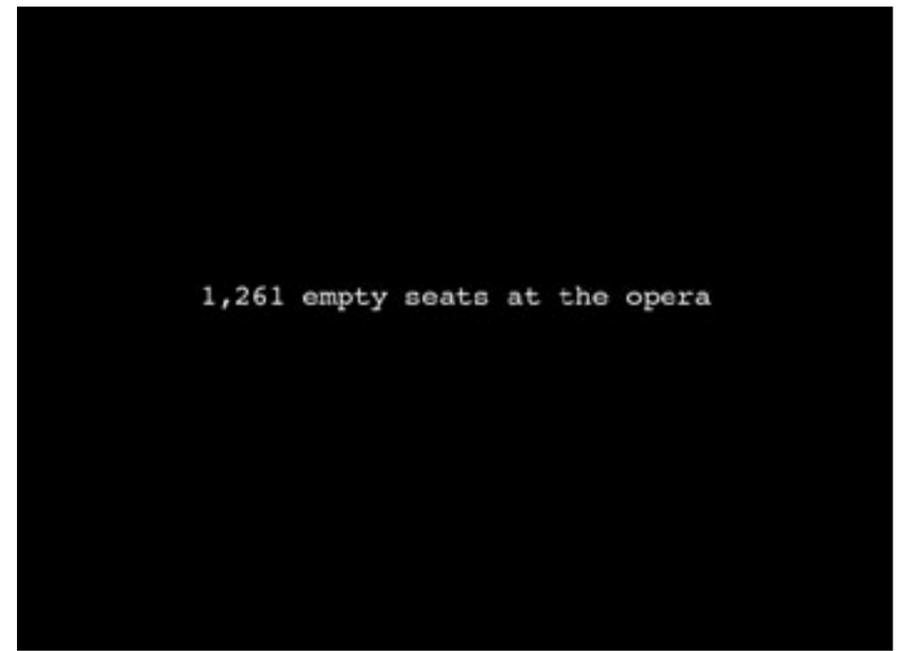
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connected with simplicity through the concepts of parsimony and worry selectivity. *Parsimony*. Because all models are "wrong" in the sense of being unable to duplicate reality, excessive elaboration of models cannot create a "correct" model. One important measure of simplicity is the number of parameters contained in the model (Box, 1979). A model is said to be parsimonious when the number of parameters contained in it is small. Box elaborates that parsimony is desirable for three reasons. First, simplicity illuminates and complication obscures when "important aspects of the truth are simple" (Box, 1979, p. 202). Second, parsimony is frequently followed by an increase in precision. Third, indiscriminately elaborating a model in any case is both impractical and endless.

*Worry Selectivity*. Because models are inevitably "wrong" researchers must make appropriate decisions about what is importantly wrong (Box, 1979). As representations of reality, models cannot possibly duplicate all aspects of a theory. In choosing what is *importantly* wrong, a researcher

Iterations between the data and the model can find discrepancies between the two and help the researcher decide what to omit and what to worry about for a parsimonious and worry selective model. These discrepancies can then help create a modified model, or in some cases, the discrepancies can lead to the creation of a new, different model and theory.

The statistician George E. P. Box's often-cited quote "All models are wrong, but some are useful" encapsulates the many aspects of statistical models from development to testing. Because a model is meant to be only a representation of reality, "All models are wrong" is literally wrong. A model can be "right" for a specific purpose if it completes its implied definition of serving as a simplified representation of reality. In contrast, some models are, indeed, "useful". Before measuring usefulness, expectations and a context for which to measure the model against must be defined. Box's quote contains a fair degree of rhetoric through its semantic redundancy and use of the word "wrong" as a trigger in "All models



“BLOOD IS A GREAT THING” Woland said gaily, with no obvious point, and added: “I see you’re interested in my globe.”

“Oh, yes, I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“It’s a nice little object. Frankly speaking, I don’t enjoy listening to the news on the radio. It’s always reported by some girls who pronounce the names of places inarticulately. Besides, every third one has some slight speech defect, as if they are chosen on purpose. My globe is much more convenient, especially since I need a precise knowledge of events. For instance, do you see this chunk of land, washed on one side by the ocean? Look, it’s filling with fire. A war has started there. If you look closer, you’ll see the details.”

Margarita leaned towards the globe and saw the little square of land spread out, get painted in many colours, and turn as it were into a relief map. And then she saw the little ribbon of a river, and some village near it. A little house the size of a pea grew and became the size of a matchbox. Suddenly and noiselessly the roof of this house flew up along with a cloud of black smoke, and the walls collapsed, so that nothing was left of the little two-storey box except a small heap with black smoke pouring from it. Bringing her eye still closer, Margarita made out a small female figure lying on the ground, and next to her, in a pool of blood, a child with outstretched arms.

“That’s it,” Woland said, smiling, “he had no time to sin. Abaddon’s work is impeccable.”

“I wouldn’t want to be on the side that this Abaddon is against,” said Margarita. “Whose side is he on?”

“The longer I talk with you,” Woland responded amiably, “the more I’m convinced that you are very intelligent. I’ll set you at ease. He is of a rare impartiality and sympathizes equally with both sides of the fight. Owing to that, the results are always the same for both sides. Abaddon!” Woland called in a low voice, and here there emerged from the wall the figure of some gaunt man in dark glasses. These glasses produced such a strong impression on Margarita that she cried out softly and hid her face in Woland’s leg. “Ah, stop it!” cried Woland. “Modern people are so nervous!” He swung and slapped Margarita on the back so that a ringing went through her whole body. “Don’t you see he’s got his glasses on? Besides, there has never yet been, and never will be, an occasion when Abaddon appears before someone prematurely. And, finally, I’m here. You are my guest! I simply wanted to show him to you.”

Abaddon stood motionless.

“And is it possible for him to take off his glasses for a second?”

Margarita asked, pressing herself to Woland and shuddering, but now from curiosity. “Ah, no, that’s impossible,” Woland replied seriously and waved his hand at Abaddon, and he was no more.

“What do you wish to say, Azzello?”

“Messire,” replied Azzello, “allow me to say – we’ve two strangers here: a beauty who is whimpering and pleading to be allowed to stay with her lady, and with her, begging your pardon, there is also her hog.”

“Strange behaviour for a beauty!” observed Woland.

“It’s Natasha, Natasha!” exclaimed Margarita.

“Well, let her stay with her lady. And the hog - to the cooks.”

“To slaughter him?” Margarita cried fearfully.

“For pitie’s sake, Messire, it’s Nikolai Ivanovich, the ground-floor tenant. It’s a misunderstanding, you see, she daubed him with the cream...”

“But wait,” said Woland, “why the devil would anyone slaughter him? Let him stay with the cooks, that’s all. You must agree, I cannot let him into the ballroom.”

“No, really...” Azzello added and announced: “Midnight is approaching, messier”

“Ah, very good.” Woland turned to Margarita.

“And so, if you please... I thank you beforehand. Don’t become flustered and don’t be afraid of anything. Drink nothing but water, otherwise you’ll get groggy and it will be hard for you. It’s time!” Margarita got up from the rug, and then Kuroviev appeared in the doorway.

Mikhail Bulgakov: “The Master and Margarita”, 1966-67. (English translation, London 1997, p. 258 – 260)

Selected by Stephen Brandes

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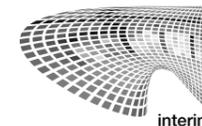
I was just think about how there is so much beauty in the world, and how hard it is for me, to have lived as long I have, and not seen any of it. How fortunate are the children who were able to see all this from their first years, and can still see it. I am already so old. I still have to learn what children have ~~already~~ already know for so long. I wish I had never come out of my cage. ~~who ever put me there~~ whoever put me in should have left me there. for then I would have known nothing of all this beauty and would have not missed it, and would not be so miserable over the fact that I was never really a child, and have come into the world so late.

Kaspar Hauser, Spring, 1831,



Alex Rose

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interim.projekte

THINGS TO DO: # 07.05

zu der Ausstellung:

LIVE

STEPHEN BRANDES, NINA CANELL, THERESA NANIGIAN, ALEX ROSE

18. Juni 2005 - 31. Juli 2005

interim.projekte

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Mittwochs und Sonntags von 15 bis 19h, u. n. V.

LIVE

THE DRIVE FOR AUTHENTICITY continues to be mirrored in diverse forms in the mass media. No matter whether it is the death of the Pope, the aftermath of a tsunami, the goings-on in a Big Brother box - everything can be experienced close up. Through visual news and Web cams, this unfiltered, direct live transmission of visual facts has long since become a part also of everyday culture. All these images and facts are perhaps authentic, but are they also real? How much information can images carry on at all? How strongly is reality in general shaped by our kind of perception? Isn't this perception already an active process of interpretation and not merely a taking-in of sensuous impressions? The exhibition *live* is dealing with these classic questions of the arts in general on the basis of four artistic positions from Ireland. In addition the participating artists were asked to select a short text in relation to both, their art practice and the subject of the exhibition, for this accompanying *Things to do* leaflet.

Whereas the mass media works with obvious images and strong, clear messages the four artists in the exhibition discover a fragility behind images and facts and offer other perspectives on the so-called “reality”. In contrary to mass media, where the image is certainly the main form of representation, text becomes in the exhibition at least as much important. Even the only artist in the exhibition working in the classical field of the image, Stephen Brandes, interfuses his drawings with words and short statements. His images are not the ones from television jumping out to the viewer. Brandes images function more like a text; one has to come closer and read in it.

The part from Mikail Bulgakovs novel “Master and Margarita”, selected by Stephen Brandes, is literally a view behind the scenes of the world. In the dark and sarcastic novel a second world exists and the devil pulls the strings. The drawings of Stephen Brandes are less pessimistic, but as fancyful as the writing of Bulgakov. The map-like landscapes on floor vinyl show strange dream or nightmare worlds and thus perhaps come closest of all the artists to reality. The portrayed desolate islands seem to have arisen from fairy-tale or

children’s books, but in detail they turn out to be a dreary, urban perspective. Brandes’ artistic works are influenced by such diverse sources as European folklore, American comics and Czechoslovakian animated films of the 1960s.

In Theresa Nanigian’s video *46 missed manicures*, the event disappears behind a multitude of facts. Without image and context, static statements line up behind one another and leave it open as to what they are referring. The question whether everything can be presented in facts and figures crops up repeatedly in the artist’s work. Her text contribution deepens the subject with a text on statistical models, a representation of the world in numbers.

Whereas Theresa Nanigian is reducing the event and the image to the statistical number of facts, Alex Rose presents a psychological and quite personal perspective on a mass media phenomenon. He shows for the first time correspondence with the English serial killer, Dennis Nilsen, that started in 2003. The terrible acts of the murderer who killed out of loneliness have been comprehensively described and investigated on the internet and even in a book (Brian Masters, *Killing for Company*), but they are put to one side in the letters. Whereas the reality of the acts describes a disgusting monster, the letters suddenly provide a view of a person. The project can thus be understood as a kind of portrait, with which Alex Rose engages also in his photographic work, and at the same time the questioning of this portrait. His selection of a quote Kaspar Hauser takes up the subjects of loneliness, inclusion and confinement again. The identification with the character happens here through rewriting the statement in the artists hand-writing.

The inherent properties of material and immaterial forms function as a sort of testing ground in the sculptural works of Nina Canell. Combining and juxtaposing found and custom-built objects with sound, light and magnetism, Canell creates hybrid formations which interpret the expression “live” from a sculptural and sonic perspec-

tive. Through the composition of objects and elements balanced meticulously in equilibrium, objects take on nomadic traits and the abstract fragility of sound attains a visual and tactile component. The loose compilation of quotes stresses in an interesting way the relation between her main material, sound and all-day-life objects. Although the main forms of description and representation of reality were always text or image, the mixture of quotes suddenly suggests hiddenly a perception of the world as sound. The ancient competition between text and image (or literature and visual arts) seem to be replaced by a competition of sound and image.

René Zechlin

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