

The Ecology of Place:  
A spatial-sound cinema program  
16—18.06.2017



- 3 *The Ecology of Place* is a series of spatial-sound cinema programs curated by Madelynne Cornish, Matthew Berka and Byron Huang-Dean, under the banner of the Bogong Centre for Sound Culture (B—CSC).

This program bridges the B—CSC's interest in site-focused sound culture with the sonic inquiries of moving image practices. The artists featured in this series were curated to generate audio-visual dialogues between these separate but overlapping fields of practice. How does the acousmonium relate to the history of the cinematic auditorium and vice versa? How are places represented in such diverse areas as experimental film and documentary, ethnography, acoustic ecology, electroacoustic composition, photography and how can these areas be experienced in relation to each other?

The following works provide a divergent set of responses to how these artists experience, engage, and represent environment across such areas of artistic practice.

H.M.V.S. (2017)

Super 8mm transferred to 2.5K video,  
stereo audio, 07:00

At Half Moon Bay a film crew is setting up to shoot a scene from the Australian drama 'Holding the Man'. The scene overlooks the last colonial breastwork monitor battleship, the decommissioned HMVS Cerberus. In 1993 the Cerberus suffered a major structural collapse after rusting deck supports and stanchions gave way. Razor blades were used directly on the film negative, removing layers of emulsion and further eroding the Cerberus from material existence.

(Fig.1, 2)

Negative Space (2017)

HD video, 5.1ch audio, 14:00

*Negative Space* is an audio-visual work that examines the relationship between time, memory and place.

Set in Bogong Village located in North East Victoria. This purpose built village was established in 1939 as field headquarters for the Kiewa Hydroelectric Scheme. In the 1940s, it was a thriving town with facilities to support 300 workers and their families. Over ensuing decades, the town's focus shifted from an industrial hub to a holiday destination. Today, Bogong is a remote community comprising of a few permanent residents and limited infrastructure, with its primary use being seasonal holiday accommodation.

*Negative Space* reflects on the impacts this transformation has had on the village. It uses fading and disintegrating imagery to underscore the crepuscular space of a still village inhabited by nocturnal creatures and atmospheric effects cast by streetlight and moonlight to convey the sense of dislocation, isolation and emptiness wrought by the decentralisation of the villages population and industry.

(Fig.3, 4)

Dit lip hue hng (2017)

Stereo audio, 25:00

Credits: Lysianassa Dauby 澎科萌 (Voice) and  
Yung-Chieh Chang 張詠捷 (chinese lute  
Nanpa)

The title of this piece is borrowed from Nanguan, an ancient music style from Southern China. The song, "直入花園 *Entering the Garden*", part of a Taoist ritual, describes a journey into an other-worldly and colourful garden. The condition of the plants and the pavilion seen on the path would reflect the participant's future.

I have been visiting Penghu archipelago, Taiwan, since 2004. Its islands, surrounded by blue-green water and battered by wind during winter, present a unique landscape of basalt structures, prairies and houses made of coral blocks. However, the most precious environments are underwater. In 2008, a cold water stream (a consequence of climate change) destroyed large parts of the reefs. Overfishing, drifting garbage, abandoned fishing nets and construction projects constitute huge pressure on these natural habitats. Visiting these underwater gardens and observing their condition might give us a hint about our future.

This year I have begun a more systematic sound documentation of the area in collaboration with marine biologists, experimenting with recording techniques and initiating a sound archive and bioacoustic survey.

Wandering Through Two Cities (2017)  
4.1ch audio, 18:30

*Wandering Through Two Cities* is a composition that maps fragmentary listening experiences across urban environments. Comprising of field recordings taken in July and December of 2016 in Beijing and Tokyo, the work investigates relationships between sonic perspectives of disparate spaces. Dialogues are explored between the urban centre and fringe, and between static and performative responses to sites within both cities.

Sounds

In Beijing – distant reflections of a suona ensemble across the banks of the North Canal in Tongzhou, four binaural perspectives of walking the 2nd Ring Road, drains in the hutong of Dongsì and a chairlift to the lookout of Xiangshan Gongyuan. In Tokyo – wind activating built structures and debris amongst paths and alleyways in Shinjuku and Shimokitazawa.

For Audience (2017)

Stereo audio, 27:02

Credits: Composed at the DAAD Residency studio in Berlin, March 2017. Mastered by Taku Unami.

*For Audience* includes field recordings of concerts on occasions throughout 2015–2017. Sounds were generated by audience members and their surrounding environment. Portable recorders, smart phones and hydrophones were used, with no post-transformation of recorded material.

Recently I'm interested in the concept of the audience. How do we join identities with the collective (dissolving from one individual into a group)? What is the relationship between the audience, artist, artwork and object?

In contemporary society we interact with the world through consumption. We also consume the authority to obey and rebel against this way of living. In this instance I actually don't want my audience to think too much about this somehow popular topic. I hope there's an opportunity to listen, rather than the exchanging and consumption of symbols of knowledge. When I'm at an event I enjoy listening to the audience around me. I hope you do too. Perhaps at those moments you're not sure and you don't care about being a part of the collective audience.

WIFILE (RELENTLESS) (2017)

4ch audio, 25:38

EMF (a general term that includes frequencies along the electromagnetic spectrum) is generated in the RF/EMF radio-frequency bands by popular wireless devices such as: cell phones, cordless phones, baby monitors, tablets, Wi-Fi enabled computer equipment, cell phone towers/antenna arrays, radio/television broadcast facilities, among others. Some of these sounds, particularly wifi devices, form the basis for this composition, making audible these 'hidden' frequencies. Recorded in an urban school, they exist as part of the wider sound ecology. The health effects of EMF are currently under scrutiny. *WIFILE* was composed in January-February 2017.

Original sounds were collected during 2016 using electromagnetic detector Electroschuch 3 and Sound Devices 722 with microphone Rode NT4.

## Euphonia (2017)

4.1ch audio, 17:40

In my composition I am working with several field recordings from different environments and living organisms that I have recorded over the past years. For this piece I wanted to put the main emphasis on sonic details that are inherent in the soundscapes and noises that we are exposed to in natural and built environments. These details more and more get lost through our changing cultural progression and the increasing filtering of our sensual perception due to infobesity in our everyday life. As additional material for the work I am using sounds that are synthesized from the phonographic recordings by spectral analysis and the mapping of the obtained data onto electronic sound generators (e.g. sine waves, filtered noise, etc). Thereby I am accentuating the tonal quality and spectral relations within the material. As the composition is conceived to be played on a multichannel sound system, I am utilizing different sound-trajectory methods and spatial projection techniques in the piece.

Field recordings in order of appearance  
Bumble bee (Czech Republic), shore (New Zealand),  
harbour (Slovenia), charcoal (Austria), market square  
(Slovakia), birds (Australia/New Zealand), waterpipe  
(Australia)

Over The Horizon (2012-2017)

HD Video, stereo sound, 20:19

Credits: Direction, production and camera by Emily Richardson, sound composed by Chris Watson. Made with support from Arts Council England. Special thanks to the National Trust.

Over The Horizon takes its name from the failed radar system developed on the site of Orford Ness on the east coast of England during the Cold War. The film explores, through photographs and sound the memory of this place, the remnants of its history and evidence of stories true or rumored with an eerily haunting soundtrack composed from recordings by Chris Watson.

(Fig.5, 6)

The Blizzard (2017)

5.1ch audio, 21:00

Credit: Acknowledgements to the Australian Antarctic Division and Creative Victoria.

*The Blizzard* is a multi-channel composition comprising sound recordings made on February 15, 2016 at Casey Station, Eastern Antarctica of katabatic wind gusting up to 185 KPH. Katabatic wind is a low gravity wind that gains force as it travels down elevated slopes. When the cooler temperature of a katabatic mixes with the warmer temperature of the onshore wind, a very unstable weather system emerges. Katabatic wind is notable for the way it shapes the behavior of sound within the built and natural environment. Its trajectory can push sound away or draw it closer. Its intensity can mask sound and its absence can heighten it. At its most ferocious it simply obliterates everything in its path. A collision with the built environment of Casey Station transforms katabatic wind into an intense series of ascending and descending pitches - a supercharged aeolian harp. Inside the braced steel framed and insulated panel buildings pervades a silence that imposes a profound sense of isolation from the immediate environment. Outside the volatility is expressed through a variety of resonances emitted by miscellaneous surfaces and materials undergoing tremendous stress.

Between Two Suns (2016)

4K video, 5.1ch audio, 17:00

Credits: Supported by the Helsinki International  
Artist Program

*Between Two Suns* is an audio-visual research project that considers militarised landscapes, history and ecology through practices of data gathering and storytelling. Created during a three month Australian Council Residency in Finland, the project explores the restricted military outpost of Vallisaari Island, a location that has been abandoned as an environmental exclusion zone for half a century. Littered with ruined buildings and discarded artillery from the 1808 Russian-Swedish war, Vallisaari's restricted zones exist as a contaminated post-war site that have also become the richest ecosystem in southern Finland. The work investigates these layered ecologies and histories mapped within the landscape via field recording and video documentation. Through this framework the project explores what it means to move, look and listen in contested environments.

(Fig.7, 8)



## 15 Running Times

16–18 June, 2017  
RMIT SAB Cinema,  
Building 80, Level 1, Room 2,  
445 Swanston St,  
Melbourne

### FRI 16

6:00pm – DOORS OPEN

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6:10pm – Daniel Lercher, *Euphonia* 17:40

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6:40pm – Polly Stanton, *Between Two Suns* 17:00

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7:10pm – Philip Samartzis, *The Blizzard* 21:00

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7:45pm – DOORS CLOSE

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### SAT 17

2:00pm – DOORS OPEN

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2:10pm – Yan Jun, *The Audience* 27:02

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2:50pm – Matthew Berka, *HMVS* 07:00

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3:10pm – Slavek Kwi, *WIFILE (RELENTLESS)* 25:38

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3:45pm – DOORS CLOSE

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### SUN 18

2:00pm – DOORS OPEN

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2:10pm – Emily Richardson, *Over The Horizon* 20:19

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2:40pm – Byron Huang-Dean, *Wandering...* 18:30

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3:10pm – Madelynne Cornish, *Negative Space* 15:00

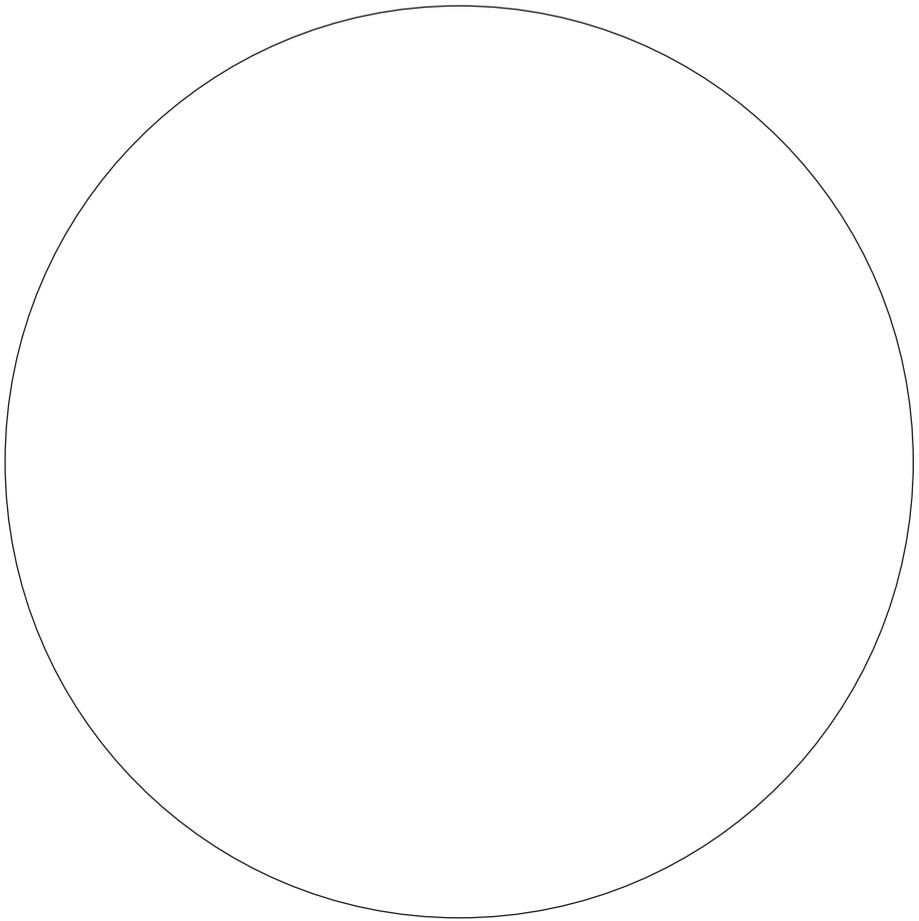
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3:35pm – Yannick Dauby, *Dit lip hue hng* 25:00

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4:15pm – DOORS CLOSE

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1. Slavek Kwi  
WIFILE (RELENTLESS)  
10:17

5. Madelynne Cornish  
Negative Space  
9.44

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2. Yan Jun  
For Audience  
9.53

6. Byron Huang-Dean  
Wandering Through Two Cities  
7.34

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3. Yannick Dauby  
Dit lip hue hng  
8.02

7. Matthew Berka  
H.M.V.S  
7.02

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4. Daniel Lercher  
Euphonia  
9.58

8. Philip Samartzis  
The Blizzard  
7.34