

# LISTENING INTO PLACELESSNESS. UNTRAINING THE EAR

LISTENING STATIONS IN JUNE & JULY 2020

WITH Martyna Poznańska with Peter Cusack Bani Haykal Shanti Suki Osman with Marlo de Lara  
ONLINE & RADIO EVENT Online streaming via SAVVY'S website on SAVVYZΛΛR<sup>2</sup>,  
as well as on BERLIN 88.4 FM / POTSDAM 99.7 FM

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung  
CURATORIAL TEAM Jasmina Al-Qaisi Kamila Metwaly Mahnoor Lodhi Ola Zielińska  
CO-CURATION Marcus Gammel Jan Rohlf  
MANAGEMENT Lema Sikod Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock  
COMMUNICATION Jasmina Al-Qaisi Anna Jäger  
VISUALS Ola Zielińska  
LAYOUT Juan Pablo García Sossa

UNTRAINING THE EAR is a project by SAVVY Contemporary in collaboration with  
Deutschlandfunk Kultur and CTM Festival, supported by Musicboard Berlin.

Listening Stations are aired on SAVVYZΛΛR radio, a part of 24/3 Radio Network Berlin together with  
Reboot.fm, Cashmere Radio, WEAREBORNFREE! EMPOWERMENT RADIO, BLN.FM  
and RadioMobil – airing every Friday to Sunday on 88.4 Berlin and 90.7 Potsdam.

**SAVVY CONTEMPORARY**  
THE LABORATORY OF FORM-IDEAS

 **Deutschlandfunk Kultur**

 CTM  
FESTIVAL

 MUSIC  
BOARD  
BERLIN

SAVVY Contemporary: The Laboratory of Form-Ideas Listening Into Placelessness: Untraining the Ear 28.06.–12.07.2020

LISTENING TO PLACELESSNESS.  
LISTENING STATIONS

“The word place has psychological echoes as well as social ramifications. ‘Someplace’ is what we are looking for. ‘No place’ is where these elements are unknown or invisible, but in fact every place has them, although some are buried beneath the asphalt of the monoculture, the ‘geography of nowhere’. ‘Placelessness’, then, may simply be place ignored, unseen, or unknown.”

Lucy R Lippard<sup>1</sup>

Listening Stations refers to a mode, a type of listening with our body as a station, irrespective of adjunct tools, a body which receives and processes sound. Rather placed than searching, rather stationed, we presume to have more attention to the unknown elements that every place has. We ask ourselves how we can grasp these elements, and is what we are now able to listen to rather anew than new to our ears.

The current reordering of times, changed several aspects of our lives: speed, touch, focus. While being subjected to restrictions, our closeness is being reorganized. This time may as well correspond to another change: reconnecting with our senses, closer to the unknown, to the invisible or the presumed to be inaudible.

Performing listening is a shift which has been made possible by listening technologies. More precisely, that phenomenon which Roshanak Kheshti calls “domestication of listening.”<sup>2</sup> From the invention of the phonograph to several decades of recorded voice letters on cassettes, we think of the implications of both recording and reproducing. Of multiplying voices and spaces, of the physicality of sound and various geographies overcome by people who used these technologies for liberation, not only to possess. We are searching for what shifts communication<sup>3</sup>, what arouses it in a given time, probably an element stripped of geography, which domestication expanded rather than settled. We imagine to sense within what Lucy Lippard calls “placelessness”, but also into a place fullness, into shifting presences, shifting knowledges.

“‘Times have changed’ means: ‘this or that is no longer possible.’ And what a particular state of things readily presents as impossible is, quite simply, the possibility of changing the state of things.”<sup>4</sup>

Beyond interdiction, we continue the premise of Jacques Rancière neither as pessimists, nor as conformists. But rather as those who take these times as a chance to reflect upon a reorganization of known forms of communication in both what is listened and emitted. In that process of reorganization of time among other elements, we re-engage with radio as a tool of real time re-distribution. Spinning the real to reel, not opposite to the imaginary, but alternative to it, we think of time and space as something to be listened to. Choosing this perspective is hopefully allowing a critical inquiry into possibilities of manipulation of times and its iterations. Its repetitions that are never exactly the same. Time is an elemental feature of sound production through recording, playing, re-ordering and cutting, compressing, stretching and more; what is then real-time and where are we in it? This real time we try to reform. And we here are neither pessimists nor conformists, but this kind in search for imagination.

Rather no-placed, we multiply our philosophies emergent from the implacability. Namely the current impossibility to be together in the physical space of our njangi house in Wedding, Berlin. The way we envision radio in FM and online for Listening Stations, is a radio that knows “how to receive as well as to transmit, how to let the listener speak as well as hear, how to bring him into a relationship instead of isolating him.”<sup>5</sup> 88 years later, we still like to question this.

The move from Listening Sessions in the physical space of SAVVY Contemporary into LISTENING STATIONS on radio waves happens through acting around our devices both as emitters and listeners. In that placefulness we encourage artists and audience to imagine the lines of time and language, to liquify them, as well the edges, the norms of the spaces they inhabit; and to curiously listen to communication as it unravels. Thus, to try this two-way communication over waves and streams in our terms. The physical distance between us – listeners, performers, organizers – allows for a particular crossover, giving the placelessness/fulness the potential of crossing in which irrespective of everyone's devices, we can engage with what is broadcast. Domestication and democratisation are being just gates to waywardness out of normativity of listening bodies.

<sup>1</sup> Lucy R. Lippard. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multi-centered Society* (New York: New Press, 1997, 4). We came across this quote reading “The Spatial Politics of Radio: Anna Friz's Critical Utopias” by Gascia Ouzounian  
<sup>2</sup> In: Roshanak Kheshti. *Modernity's Ear. Listening to Race and Gender in World Music: “The domestication of the practice of listening to recorded music shifted the labor from musical performance to performative listening.”*  
<sup>3</sup> We are thinking of the work by Lewis R. Gordon and the notion of *Shifting the Geography of Reason in an Age of Disciplinary Decadence* through communication on radio.  
<sup>4</sup> Jacques Rancière. *The State of Things*. (Office for Contemporary Art Norway, 2012). The quote continues: “That impossibility thus works as an interdiction: there are things you can no longer do, ideas in which you can no longer believe, futures that you can no longer imagine. ‘You cannot’ clearly means: ‘you must not.’”  
<sup>5</sup> Bertolt Brecht. “The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication”. (“Der Rundfunk als Kommunikationsapparat” in *Blätter des Hessischen Landestheaters Darmstadt*, No. 16, July 1932).

SAVVY Contemporary: The Laboratory of Form-Ideas Listening Into Placelessness: Untraining the Ear 28.06.–12.07.2020

We are giving another premise to the consequence of displacing the performative being: to sense together this impermeable, unpredictable state of art to be listened to. With this shift we are reaching back and forth to audiences via streaming and radio, envisioning collaborative feedback and feedforth, dreaming of engaged ensembles coordinating. A momentarily network of listening is transcending geographical restrictions imposed onto our bodies.

We invite artists to be in conversation with the audience. Artists are encouraged to work with modalities, suggesting nearly instructions tackling the uses of senses, to build up towards a space for communication of touch with audiences; suggesting modes of listening, from body posture to mind postulates. Sound artists and musicians are invited to produce a 40 minutes piece each to be live broadcasted in a meeting of streams of data across local and international radio initiatives.

The sound works will be audible by online streaming, in Berlin on 88.4 FM and other radio and streaming spaces. The works will be followed by a discussion between the artists and the UNTRAINING THE EAR team. This exercise suggests listening in-between radio frequencies and between frequencies, the lines of time and language.

Streaming is a practice which **S A V V Y** Contemporary has embraced a good while back, in the name of accessibility and geographical reverberance. This shift from the Listening Sessions in-person to the Listening Stations in-streaming is a change in the physicality of the interaction, central to the **UNTRAINING THE EAR** instances we have hosted so far. We invite the participants to ponder over this change and to actively engage with their senses, through machines over frequencies.

By Jasmina Al-Qaisi

# P R O G R A M M E

## 28.06.2020

## 17:00 & 19:00

## TCA TCA TCA TCA

## T H E R E

## H E R E

**W I T H** Martyna Poznańska, with participation of Peter Cusack

Martyna Poznańska (in Berlin) will respond with a complex imagined soundscape traveling from the smallest beings to human body and the environment. Her piece is a spatial constellation of diverse earthly sounds, often unnoticed, or mistaken, sometimes inaudible, or fleeting, regularly eliminated, occasionally rejected, hardly ever desired but always present and frequently taken for granted. It is a journey for you to take with the entirety of your body and imagination. It begins in the undergrowth through amplification of the choreographies of movements produced by the tiniest cohabitants of the planet. It gradually takes off into the air corridors, bushes, flowers, and tree branches where trillion of encounters between insects and birds takes place, it lands softly in the soil examining the textures of different mosses, and it continues visiting the sonic narratives of different bodies. It creates an imaginary soundscape characterised by intensified and more concentrated audibility of the environment, that surrounds us. It juxtaposes various sonic territories encountered in our everyday life with a premise to influence our perception when listening more attentively but moreover post-humanly decentralising ourselves and agreeing for more equality, respect and communality with all living beings.

**M A R T Y N A P O Z N A Ń S K A** is a transdisciplinary artist working primarily with multimedia installations. Intrigued by the processes of transformation and decay she has been exploring the

symbiotic relations between human and non-human beings during her fieldtrips to the 'Puszcza Białowiecka', the last primeval forest in Europe, attending to her own body as a connective tissue from within the environment. Poznańska has exhibited and performed internationally: at Akademie der Künste (DE), Aperto Raum, (DE), Konsumverein Braunschweig (DE), Unsound Festival (PL), HKAPA (HK), Dance Bridges Festival (Kolkata, IN), Art Sonje Centre (Seoul, KR) and has worked with renowned artists such as Hans Peter Kuhn, or Peter Cusack. Martyna holds a magisterium degree in Spanish Philology (JU, Krakow, 2010), she completed a Sound Art course at the University of the Arts, London and studied with prof. Hans Peter Kuhn at the Universität der Künste Berlin obtaining a Master of Arts title in 2016. Martyna lives and works in Berlin, Białystok and London.

**P E T E R C U S A C K** is based in London and Berlin. He is a field recordist and sound artist/musician with a long interest in the sound environment. In 1998 he initiated the "Favourite Sounds Project" to discover how people interact with the soundscapes of the places where they live. Starting in London it has since travelled to other world cities including Beijing, Prague, Manchester, Taranto, Hull and Berlin. His project 'Sounds from Dangerous Places' investigates the soundscapes of sites of major environmental damage such as the Caspian oil fields, the Chernobyl exclusion zone and the Aral Sea, Central Asia, and asks the question, "What can be learnt about dangerous places by listening to their sounds?" In 2011/12 he was DAAD artist-in-residence in Berlin.

# 05.07.2020 17:00 ISOLATED FUTURE #4

W I T H Bani Haykal

Bani Haykal (in Singapore) will respond with a speculative fiction piece through sound travelling with imaginary communities. As part of an ongoing series of field reports on various communities around Singapore, isolated future #4 looks into a community of machinic dukuns (a Malay term for shamans) residing in the abandoned estate of Tengah. Machinic dukuns, often misidentified as hackers, have offered services to augment machine behaviour, intelligence and processes at the interest of protecting various communities at risk. this field report, published with permission, looks into the various strategies, spells and communities they've worked with as a means of surviving the troubles.

B A N I H A Y K A L is an artist, composer and musician who considers music (making / processes) as material and his projects investigate modes of interfacing and interaction with feedback / feedforward mechanisms. Manifestations of his research culminate into works of various forms encompassing installation, poetry and performance. In his capacity as a collaborator and a soloist, bani has participated in festivals including MeCA Festival (Japan), Wiener Festwochen (Vienna), Media/Art Kitchen (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Japan), Liquid Architecture and Singapore International Festival of Arts (Singapore) among others.

# 12.07.2020 17:00 A PERFECT FIT

W I T H Shanti Suki Osman with the participation of Marlo de Lara

Shanti Suki Osman (in Berlin) will present A PERFECT FIT, the third piece in her loose trilogy of live listening and sound performances concerning privilege and bias (*The Hearing Test*) and microaggressions and rage (*Chipping Away*). Combining storytelling, pre-recorded sounds and intermittent instructions for the listeners, this extended piece for radio, shifts the focus to questions of balancing power from a marginalised perspective, problematising “one-size inclusion fits all” and calling more attention to voices in unwanted spaces – listening to contradictions in occasional discomfort. The two other pieces of this trilogy are: *The Hearing Test* presented at EXP(L)O(RE) (The English Theater Berlin, 2018), an interactive sound performance based on instructions asking the audience to scrutinize habits in their auditory perception and unravel what may lay behind our tendencies and tastes; and *Chipping Away*, a radio piece presented at I A M N O T A F O R T U N E C O O K I E, (ACUD, 2018) centering the dangerous normalisation of many forms of discrimination causing an endemic of insidious racist behaviour in apparent “safe spaces”.

S H A N T I S U K I O S M A N is a Berlin-based artist and educator working with song, sound and radio, exploring the topics of identities, privilege, anti-racism and feminisms. She is research associate and teacher for Musicology at Humboldt University and doctoral candidate for Music Pedagogy at The Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg focusing on women\* of colour, sound-making and space-making. In Late Nights In Squat Bars she writes and sings feminist electro-pop with Dafne Della Dafne, and curates festivals and group shows – including the sound art exhibition and event series Hearing Now (Berlin June 2018). She was co-director of Die Remise (2019), a critical race and historical school project in Berlin founded by Carmen Mörsch, which was part of the preliminary programme of 11th Berlin Biennale (2019-20).

Residencies, and song and sound performances 2017–2020 include: D I S T R I C T B E R L I N

Studio Grant 2017–2018; Hidden Stories (2016–2018); Sonic Cyberfeminisms Residency and Launch, (Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge 2018, London 2019); The Hearing Test (English Theater Berlin, 2018); Hidden Library Stories: Magret und Nasreen (sonntagsbureau, 2018); SenseUs (London College of Communication, CRiSAP, 2018); Chipping Away (I A M N O T A F O R T U N E C O O K I E, ACUD), which was featured in Radiophrenia 2019; An Ode to Usha (Songs We Taught Your Mother, ausland, 2018); My Radiophonic Spaces (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2018) Future Sounds (Akademie der Autodidakten, Ballhaus Naunynstr, 2019); Die Remise (2018–2019).

M A R L O D E L A R A ' S artistic practice works within the realms of sound performance, visual distraction, and film. Working under the moniker “marlo eggplant”, her sound works are textural compositions which develop from microscopic tone landscapes into dense and expansive states of noise. Her works aim to blur the definitions of the (un)intentional and the myth of permanence. She received a PhD in the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds and an MA in Psychosocial Studies at the Centre of Psychoanalytic Studies at Essex. She recently was at an Artist in Residence at the 2019 CalArts Summer Institute and a nominee for the 2019 Oram Awards PRS Foundation.

MORE INFORMATION

[savvy-contemporary.com](http://savvy-contemporary.com)

[facebook.com/savvyberlin](https://facebook.com/savvyberlin)

S A V V Y Contemporary – The laboratory of form-ideas is an art space, discursive platform, place for good talks, foods and drinks – a space for conviviality. S A V V Y Contemporary situates itself at the threshold of notions of the West and non-West, to understand and deconstruct them. S A V V Y Contemporary has realized a kaleidoscope of art exhibitions, performances, film screenings, lectures, concerts, readings, talks, dances. S A V V Y Contemporary has established a participatory archive on German colonial history, a performance arts documentation centre, a library, a residency program, as well as educational projects with schools. The art space engages in its neighborhood's history and socio-political realities which are entangled with the reflections and discourses of the project.

S A V V Y Contemporary is Elena Agudio Antonia Alampi Jasmina al-Qaisi Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Bona Bell Marleen Boschen Federica Buetti Pia Chakraverti-Wuerthwein Onur Cimen Olani Ewunnet Sagal Farah Eirini Fountedaki Billy Fowo Raisa Galofre Juan Pablo García Sossa Monilola Ilupeju Ahmed Isamaldin Anna Jäger Kimani Joseph Manmeet Kaur Laura Klöckner Cornelia Knoll Kelly Krugman Mahnoor Lodhi António Mendes Kamila Metwaly Wilson Mungai Arlette-Louise Ndakoze Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung Abhishek Nilamber Jeff Obiero Elena Quintarelli Jörg-Peter Schulze Lema Sikod Lili Somogyi Elsa Westreicher Ola Zielińska

D E S I G N Juan Pablo García Sossa  
F O N T S Grow (through a generous partnership with DINAMO Foundry, [abcdinamo.com](http://abcdinamo.com)) Neutral ([carvalho-bernaeu.com](http://carvalho-bernaeu.com))  
S A V V Y Contemporary e.V. Amtsgericht Charlottenburg (Berlin) AZ: VR 31133 B Gerichtstraße 35 13347 Berlin