

PRESS RELEASE



ESCOITAR.ORG

Audiolab

9th March – 13th May 2007 **ANNEX SPACE**



WHEN

9th March – 13th May 2007

WHERE

Annex Space

(Square at the back of the museum)

OPENING TIMES

From Tuesday to Saturday (including holidays), from 11a.m. to 2p.m. and from 5 to 9p.m.

Sunday, from 11a.m. to 2p.m.

FREE ENTRANCE

PRODUCED BY
MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea

de Vigo

proyecto-edición

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

Taking the workshop *Paisaje Sonoro de Vigo* as a starting point, the group Escoitar.org continues their work to find the sounds that identify the city, and builds at MARCO's Annex Space an **Audiolab (Hacklab)** as a place for open and public experiments, where to undertake investigation and dissemination projects, as well as other parallel activities. Considering the **experience of sound** as a means of gathering information, they aim to reflect upon the acoustic forms of sociability, rethinking the urban landscape and social relationships. On this occasion, the core of the project consists on getting to know **Vigo's soundscapes** by means of **other people's ears**, as an exercise of strangeness that is articulated around interaction with **groups of immigrants**.

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PROJECT LEADERS

Chiu Longina (anthropologist), **Juan-Gil López** (musicologist), **Julio Gómez** (cultural agent), **Horacio González** (artist and software developer), **Berio Molina** (artist and software developer), **Xesús Otero** (engineer), **Carlos Suárez** (musicologist).

COLLABORATORS

This main group will be supported by different collaborators throughout the project, some of which already took part in the workshop *Paisaje Sonoro de Vigo*, organized at MARCO in November 2006.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

This project turns the Annex Space into an open and public workshop where every single person or association may participate, as long as they are interested in experimenting with audio. The members and collaborators of Escoitar.org will work in the Audiolab every afternoon from Tuesday to Friday, but everybody is invited. All the space and technical

equipment is at the visitor's disposal, including a portable recording system for those who wish to collaborate to map Vigo's sounds. Besides, every Friday there will be special activities open to the public —concerts, showcases, performances, conferences, seminars, workshops— that will be scheduled and announced every week. The rest of the time, during opening times —morning and afternoon—, the staff of the Annex Space will be available to answer any information request.

Open workshops

- Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 5 to 9p.m.; Friday from 5 to 7p.m.

Parallel activities

- Every Friday, from 7 to 9p.m. Free entrance. Limited capacity.

Schedule for next Fridays

- Friday 16th March, 7p.m.
ARDUINO WORKSHOP, organized by Horacio González, Berio Molina and Alberto Ariza
- Friday 23rd March, 7p.m.
CONCERT of Durán Vázquez, sound artist

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND EDUCATIONAL CENTRES

The project includes a schedule of visits and workshops for groups of schoolchildren over 12 years old (secondary education, professional training, university, school of sound, etc.) in which they will experiment with audio and learn to listen actively.

- Opening times for educational visits: Tuesday to Thursday, from 5 to 9 p.m.
- 20 participants per group (maximum)
- BY APPOINTMENT calling 986 113900/11 (extension 307 or 314)

OPENING

For the opening of the Audiolab, the Centro Coreográfico Galego and FestivALT.o7 will collaborate interpreting an electro-acoustic work written by the musicologists Juan-Gil Rodríguez and Carlos Suárez, members of Escoitar.org. This work, called "CadraVigo", is composed of soundscapes of the city and will be played in the street in quadrasonic format. The dancers will be wearing working clothes designed by the artist Montse Rego, which will also be the outfit of the members of Audiolab.

THE PROJECT: PRESENTATION AND CONTENTS

Audiolab (Audio Hacklab Escoitar.org)

The term *hacklab* is the combination of the words *hacker* and *laboratory*. The hacklab is a physical space where people gather to investigate, discuss and disseminate —from a social point of view— topics related to the web, new technologies, audio and civil rights in these fields. A *hacklab* is usually characterized by cooperative learning and organization, and it uses free software.

Escoitar.org turns the Annex Space into a temporary *hacklab* open to any person or group interested in the phenomenon of sound (artists, groups, cultural associations, individuals, etc.). Its contents are directly related to the topics discussed by Escoitar.org since its establishment: the acoustic forms of sociability, the need to incorporate sound to the history of places, the new media for the publication and distribution of audio, the availability of public sound files to everybody and the composition of the intangible cultural heritage of places, among others.

Objectives

The understanding of the contemporary city requires the articulation of new strategies that overcome a quantitative approximation: “we must learn to judge a society more by its sounds, by its art and by its festivals, than by its statistics” (Jacques Attali).

In this context, and taking the experience of sound as a means of gathering information, Escoitar.org suggests —in parallel with the audiolab— a reflection upon the acoustic forms of sociability, rethinking the urban landscape and social relationships. The urban context, more and more heterogeneous, is shaped by a process of cross-culture and trans-culture favoured by immigration —one of the key factors of population growth nowadays—, and becomes a useful source to **understand the place where we live by means of other people's ears.**

The project launched by Escoitar.org consists on working with immigrants and investigating their perception of the most common or significant sounds of the city, using surveys and other means. This approximation to an impossible objectivity will be compared to the opinion of the citizens of Vigo and will help define the city's acoustic identity starting from the difference. Thus, the project becomes an exercise of “strangeness” that seeks to revive, as far as possible, an innocent way of listening to the soundscape where we are immersed, establishing at the same time a dialog between cultures.

The transformation of the Annex Space

The outside

The objective of the outside transformation is to achieve coherence between the image and its contents and functions as Audiolab. Several elements are used to this aim:

- The **sign** identifying the place as *Audiolab Hacklab Escoitar.org*

- The covering of the side parts with self-adhesive vinyl imitating two **giant loudspeakers**.
- “**Hearholes**” —the acoustic version of “peepholes”— as a means for listening, located on the sides. Moving the ear closer to these little symbols, different sound works based on Vigo’s environment will be heard.
- The glass pane of the façade as **loudspeaker**: using technologies to turn any flat surface into a vibrant and sound-generating element, the Annex Space’s showcase becomes an audio transmitter that may be used for certain demos and actions.

The inside [**see MAP OF CONTENTS in pdf file*]

The inside is an open and public laboratory where the members of the project will work for nine weeks —that is, the length of the exhibition. It is a room fitted with the audiovisual equipment and instruments required to investigate, experiment and undertake scientific or technical works, all of them related with the phenomenon of sound and listening.

As such, the lab is also equipped with measuring, processing and collection instruments required to work with audio, and offers adequate and controlled environmental conditions to make sure that experiments or measurements will not be altered and guarantee that experiments may be repeated in another laboratory to obtain the same result: normalization.

Computers connected to Internet at the visitors’ disposal

Two computers connected to Internet will be at the visitors’ disposal to work with audio software and check Vigo’s sound map in Google-Map-Escoitar. One of them will be connected to a printer and a DVD/CD burner to reproduce documentation related to the project, available to everybody.

Projection room and TV set

This room will be used for the screening of works related to soundscape, free software, copyleft and videos licensed to allow their public projection at no cost. In the morning, the interactive map of Vigo’s soundscape will be projected with Google-Map technology. The room will also be used as TV set for the recording of the interviews to which the participants in the project were subjected.

Auditory Attention Chamber (AAC)

Chamber or audition room with quadraphonic equipment. It is a dark room lit by a small light, where the visitor will enjoy the sound flow as if it was a functional machine or a decorative object. Vigo’s soundscapes will be played here in quadraphonic quality, but it will also act as a test room for the sound experiments undertaken in the lab.

Working clothes

In accordance with the idea of reproducing the ideal conditions of a science lab, the artist Montse Rego has designed working clothes specifically for the Audiolab, which will be worn by all the leaders and collaborators of the project.

Screen with news about Phonography

As if it was a noticeboard, the outside glass pane will be provided with a plasma screen with dynamic information, such as news and headlines about phonography.

The process: working with associations of immigrants and foreigners

The development of Escoitar.org's project at the Annex Space will carry on within the framework of Proxecto-Edición, co-produced by MARCO, CGAC and Fundación Luis Seoane. The starting point is the city of Vigo, but it will also travel to Santiago de Compostela and A Coruña. The work with associations of immigrants —common to these three cities— is the main action line that will be adapted to the coordinates defined by the specificities of each city.

Documentation

The aim of the first stage of the project consists on documenting and classifying audiovisual material, which will be taken into account when publishing the final results. Groups or associations of immigrants and foreigners adapted to a new life will be contacted and invited for a few minutes to *Hacklab's* set, where they will be subjected to an audio and video-photography recording while answering a series of questions.

In parallel to this work with associations of immigrants, and in order to provide data as complete and true as possible, information will also be gathered interviewing the man in the street, especially illegal immigrants passing through the city and residents of Vigo, who will express their opinion and help define the acoustic nature of the city.

Surveys

In the case of the **immigrant population**, the main way of gathering information was an interview about the city of Vigo in two steps. It aims to document the soundscapes of Vigo and their mother country:

1st part: survey (answers in Galician or Spanish)

1. Name and place of birth
2. Reason to come to Vigo
3. What was the first thing that you heard when you arrived?
4. What is the last sound that you remember hearing before leaving your mother country?
5. What does Vigo sound like?
6. What sounds do you remember from your mother country?

7. What sound of Vigo would you take back to your country?
8. What sound would you take from your country and like to listen in Vigo?

2nd part:

1. Reproduce a sound of your mother country or, if you cannot, a song
2. Conjugate in Galician any tense of the verb "sound" [*soar*] or "listen" [*escoitar*], for example: *eu soo, ti soas, el/ela soa, nós soamos, vós soades, eles/elas soan. Eu escoito, ti escoitas, el/ela escoita, nós escoitamos, vós escoitades, eles/elas escoitan.*
3. Conjugate in your mother tongue any tense of the verb "sound" or "listen" (the one that you did not choose on the previous question)

In the case of the **local population**, it has been used an anonymous survey about Vigo's acoustic nature, with questions referring to memories of sounds, the sounds of Vigo, acoustic ecology and the definition of noise.

The results: the publication

Participants and citizens will work to define the city's soundscape in the Annex Space, and the resulting publication will be a proof of their experiments and will be used as teaching aids. Their work will be focused on sound and its social representations, and it will be an approach to the way citizens listen to the urban space, identifying and documenting the soundscapes that need protection or criticism in order to share a new way of relating to the acoustic society of the 21st century.

For further information:

www.escoitar.org

www.proxecto-edicion.net

www.marcovigo.com

TEXT BY ESCOITAR.ORG

Emigration: a loudspeaker for the 21st century

"One of the main concerns in contemporary society, already noticed by the investigator Murray Schaefer in the seventies, is how easy it is for man to lose touch with the reality of sounds that surrounds him. We are so "contaminated" by the dominance of vision and the technological speed of the industrial age that our vital environment —even in the privacy of our homes— is walking towards darkness, towards the shadow of virtual silence. This is

an isolation from sounds that intends to hide fake acoustic paradises while we incite, provoke and contaminate the most valuable thing: soundscape. This leap in the dark suffocates us before our inability to be aware of the precious value of nature. As long as we are incapable of exercising our rusty and wrongly called secondary senses —hearing, among them— we will not be ready to fight a battle whose worse enemy is not the decibel, as it is commonly believed, but the homogeneity of sounds that consumer society has marketed for us.

This declaration of principles —based on the work of important researchers such as Barry Truax— explains why in today's society one of the most reliable values to approach soundscape is particularly marked not in the natives of a city, but in those that for several reasons have been compelled to travel towards us and share this paradise of sounds. IMMIGRANTS, working men and working women coming from every corner of the world, are undoubtedly the most reliable means to know what we sound like.

There is nobody more suitable than immigrants to portray and photograph our acoustic reality. This is why we want to work with them to define the local soundscape of each city, without ignoring one peculiar feature of today's acoustic society: sound miscegenation. We know there is a cosmopolitan society where colours express a chromatic diversity as a result of the constant mixing between individuals of different races. However, this is another clear sign of the extent to which vision prevails over the identity of sounds: we can talk about the miscegenation of races and cultures, but we are incapable of admitting that the sound of the language in which these people communicate is the first identity sign of immigrants when they try —with great difficulty— to adapt to the language of their destination country. Language miscegenation is the first identity sign of our contemporary society. It is a giant puzzle or collage of sounds in which languages and accents produce new textures of sounds”.

REQUEST FOR GRAPHIC MATERIAL

EXHIBITION

“ESCOITAR.ORG”

GRAPHIC MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS:

CD including texts and photographs of the exhibition in different formats.

IF YOU WISH YO RECEIVE DOCUMENTATION, PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND IT BY E-MAIL, FAX OR MAIL POST TO:

MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo

Rúa Príncipe 54

36202 Vigo (Pontevedra). Spain

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We would appreciate if you could send us an issue of the report you publish to our Communication Department.

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MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo.

MARCO FOUNDATION: Ayuntamiento de Vigo, Xunta de Galicia, Diputación de Pontevedra, Caixanova, Ministerio de Cultura

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