

Audio-visibility

A conference on the experience of audio-visual art, artefacts, and media texts

May 26-28, 2011

Call for papers

Please observe Call for Paper with Extended deadline March 4, 2011

To get more proposals focussing on the problems addressed in the 4 Tracks (themes) of the CFP we have decided to extend the deadline for proposals to March 4, 2011.

Especially we would like to have more proposals for Track IV and II - but also I and III .

The proposals which we have already recieved will be taken into account together with the extra ones that we will recieve no later than March 4.

Sound is one of the most overwhelming and omnipresent 'interferences' in modern life – and at the same time one of the most volatile and transient [human] experiences. Each individual can – with mobile media like the iPod – be accompanied by her own individual soundtrack, and thus 'score' the experience of everyday living. Sound as such normally cannot be seen but both heard and felt, which makes it fundamentally multi- or synaesthetical. Our multi-sensuous reality, appealing to all the senses, is being reduced to exactly an *audio-visual* culture in (and?) what could generally be considered its electronically mediated version. In relation to the massive amount of *audio-visibility* we can state that research and the broad field of *sound* discourse are still inadequate when it comes to the qualitative exploration of aesthetic reception, theoretical and epistemological questions, dimensions, and themes. We are still hesitant and insecure in our knowledge on how an *audio-visual* phenomenon or a work of art may influence us, how we experience it and (inter)act with it, and what kind of experience, knowledge and understanding a predominantly *audio-visual* and multi-sensory culture facilitates and how it ?engages us in as late modern human beings. We imagine that the relations between sound and “a good experience” can be explored through genealogies of sound and listening and through reflections on the interactions of sound, listening/hearing and other sensory experiences.

By emphasizing but not separating the *audio* aspect, the aim of the conference is to develop and strengthen audio-visual studies as a multi-faceted interdisciplinary field drawing on disciplines such as acoustics and sound studies, musicology, film- and media studies, anthropology, geography, cultural and urban studies, digital and audio design studies etc. The conference will be organized in four parallel *tracks* (themes) as follows:

Track I: Sound Styling in Film and Television Genres
Track II: Strategic Communication
Track III: The Audiovisual exhibited – Sound in the (fine) Arts
Track IV: Mobile Mediated *Audiovisuality*

I: Sound Styling in Film and Television Genres

Genre is of central importance in any field involved with questions of aesthetics and communication. In film theory fictional genres in film and television series are usually defined by content and visual features and sometimes also by their intended effect on audiences (e.g. comedy and thriller). But what does a film or TV genre sound like? Is genre marked by particular soundscapes and/or musical stylings? How do the various elements of the soundtrack and their audio and audiovisual interplay contribute to the conventionalisation or transformation of specific film and TV genres and our perceptual engagement? What are the relationships between sound, music and film/TV genre?

We invite papers that address the importance of sound and music to questions of film and TV genres in general, to the discussion of specific genres, or to the reading of a genre specific work. These themes may be addressed in relation to the specifics of different sound forms such as music, sound effects and vocal dialogue, or in relation to broad questions of narrative forms and strategies in film and TV series. Further, we welcome papers that deal with questions of style/genre interactions between music and film/television, e.g. are there any limits to which musical styles can be used in specific film/TV genres?

Keywords:

- Feature films and television series.
- Genre and sound styling
- Music, sound effects and vocal dialogue
- Genre and narrative form/strategy
- Interactions between musical style and media genres

II: Strategic Communication

Sound considered as a semiotic resource for meaning-making in strategic communication (such as TV advertising, radio spots, web ads and music for shopping) represents an emergent field of research and analysis. Numerous private corporations brand themselves externally as well as internally through sonic means striving for powerful emotional links between a product and the stakeholders involved; but also public organisations have followed suit due to an increasing competitive situation where previously monopolised public services are contracted out and the citizens are free to choose between public and private services.

However, the documentation in the field of research is rather fragmented and spread out among different disciplinary areas with few or no mutual references. This is mainly due to historical boundaries between disciplinary areas resulting in distinctive focal points as well as diverse terminologies and paradigms. For instance, the study of music and speech is traditionally considered a matter for musicologists and linguists respectively while the study of other sonic phenomena does not have any particular disciplinary “home”. Additionally, there seems to be a paradigmatic divide between, on the one hand, hermeneutic and qualitative approaches to media and communication research (with affinity to social semiotics and discourse analysis), and experimental and quantitative

approaches in the subfields of advertising research and market communication with special focus on consumer behaviour.

By any means, sound in strategic communication are often integrated in *co-textual* formations and *contextualized* (in discursive and social formations), thus contributing to an overall emergent, multimodal whole. Consequently, the meaning of music, speech, sound effects and the like is not only determined by their apparent sonic quality, but certainly also by inter-organizational relations to simultaneous and co-operating semiotic sources, and a synthesized whole which “causes downward”, i.e. qualify the meaning of the parts.

The aim of this conference theme (track) is to bring together research contributions from different scientific paradigms and institutional practices which concentrate on the textual, co-textual and contextual study of sounds as strategic communication in multimodal genres and settings which appeal to more than just one sense. Individual presentations may be built for example on the following concerns:

- 1) To discuss strategies in marketing, advertising and branding for integrating and synthesizing sound with other sense modalities, including comprehending the relation between the semiotic potential of sonic sources and an emergent, multimodal whole.
- 2) To narrow the gap between the qualitative-interpretative and quantitative-experimental divide.

III: The Audiovisual Exhibited - sound in the (fine) arts

The exhibition of audio-visual works and the use of sound as artistic material in the (fine) arts has developed during the last decades both in practice and in theory. This situation raises a number of different questions and discussions as outlined in the following:

Methodological and theoretical: How does the concept of the audiovisual relate to inter-art and intermedial studies – in history, and in historiography? What kinds of definition and genre problems do we face when (visual) art discourses expand into the domain of the auditory – and vice versa. What happens in that exchange? Might it be wise to differentiate between *sound of art*, which is the use of sound in different art forms, and the *art of sound* where the material specificity of sound touches, transposes, and interferes with the different art forms and art genres? Here one might also consider the upcoming of new types of art educations including 'sound' programmes.

The field of multisensory art: In what way should we understand the increasing interest in the audiovisual in a broader “multimedial” and multisensory sense, which is not necessarily attached to media theory and analysis (media discourse, digital aesthetics) but relates to interdisciplinary examinations such as “sensory history” and “the visualization of sound”. This calls for both adequate description, discussion and, possibly, new theoretical frameworks, which may also be compared to the many recent exhibitions involving the theme of, for instance, ‘visualizing’ or making sound ‘visible’.

The audio-visual art practice and the museum: How do museums practise their exhibition of sound/image (visuals) in new constellations, within the framework of classical museum buildings. And how is this practised in up-to-date architectural settings such as, say, the *Hamburger Bahnhof* in Berlin, *Kiasma* in Helsinki, or *The Museum of Contemporary Art* in Roskilde? Many of today's sound artists operate in the field between sound and image – not only in *video art* (by now a historical category?), but also by exploring the digital technologies, in which sound/image relations are synthesized and combined freely as code. How can we describe and understand those practices?

IV: Mobile mediated audiovisuality

Keywords: mobility, audiovisuality, mp3-files, mobile telephones, lap tops, experience, soundwalks. We naturally associate sound with the source that produces it. We instinctively look for a bird when we hear chirping or for the truck when we hear its roaring, and we are in some sense aware of the orchestra playing the concert we are enjoying whether it is live or recorded. Since the invention of the phonograph in 1877 the area of sound reproduction has been subject to comprehensive transformation. Digital mp3-files have made it easier than ever not just to share and distribute sound but also to carry 60 hours of sound with you wherever you go. These possibilities seem to have a direct influence on several different aspects of music, sound and audio-visuality: How we listen, what we listen to, and where the listening takes place.

The mobility of audiovisual experiences is not limited to music and sound. Using the mobile phone we can log on the internet to write e-mails or read the newspaper. We can watch movies, and listen to the radio or to music from our private collections. Using these audiovisual media players is already second nature to a lot of people. They become tools for navigating both in and between the realms of private and public spaces. These mobile audiovisual devices are right at hand in everyday situations and thus they affect our social interactions and the experience of our surroundings.

This conference theme (track) will focus on the implications of the mobility of audio- and audio-visual media. We will focus on questions such as how does mobility affect audio- and audio-visual experiences, expressions, productions and consumption? Furthermore we want to ask which terminologies and methodologies are available for analysing this mobile trend and how are these related to other approaches to audio- and audio-visual experience?

There will be 4 keynote lectures (one for each track), plenary roundtables, individual presentations of papers with respondents, and evening arrangements. We aim for around 20 papers and 20 respondents. Papers will be sent out to respondents one week beforehand.

Proposals for presentations (20/10 min) must be submitted to the conference organisers by

March 4, 2011 as an email attachment (rtf/pdf/doc/docx) to **audiovisuality@hum.au.dk**

Please include the following information: Paper abstract and title (max. 200 words), name, affiliation, e-mail, and technical equipment required.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent no later than March 15, 2011.

Keynote speakers are Dr Annette Davison (University of Edinburgh), Dr Claudia Bullerjahn (Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen), Professor Steven Connor (University of London) and Dr Caroline Basset (University of Sussex).

The official language of the conference is English. The conference fee is 1.000 D.Kr./ €135

Please contact the organizers in case you need more information.

The conference is organized by the collaborative research project “**Audiovisual Culture and the good sound**” sponsored by the Danish State Research Council for the period 2009-2012

<http://www.ak.au.dk/en>

in collaboration with the Department of Aesthetic Studies at Aarhus University, Denmark, where the conference will take place.

<http://www.aestetik.au.dk/en/>

On behalf of the organizational committee

Ansa Lønstrup, associate professor and Head of research project