

Sound Methods for a New World

University of Birmingham, April 11-12 2024

Doing Sonic Geopoetics – On Counterpoint and Collaboration, Wavelengths and New Worlds

Tom Western

This talk offers some ideas on doing sonic geopoetics – or the practice of making new geographies in sound. At a time when (to borrow a line from Gramsci) the old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born, the talk seeks sound methods that can be channelled into these transformations. It centres on, and extends out of, a radio experiment produced collaboratively in Athens in 2023. Titled "[Mediterradio](#)", this soundwork was made out of recordings from Alexandria, Nablus, Damascus, and Athens, and was conceived as a sound-cycle, an intercity symphony, a feedback loop, a fugue. The piece hears the Mediterranean sea as a radio, a space of counterpoint and circulation, where song and sound constitute a set of relations, building geographies that point beyond the colonialities and the bordering of the sea and the cities that surround it.

Expanding from this project, the talk gathers sonic-spatial imaginations that build co-creative futures: the harmolodics of Ornette Coleman's records; the planetary sonorities of protest marches; the counterpoint writing of Edward Said; the turbulence and pulse of Asher Gamedze's drumming; the worldly listening practices of Lynnée Denise, Jessica Ekomane and Urok Shirhan. And from this, I'll sketch some methods through which collective efforts to use sound as a form of spatial resistance come into earshot – things that make new geographies and new worlds possible.

Some resources to share

Colectivo Lastesis, 'Listening Political Sound Global' – <https://rec-on.org/lastesis.html>

Lynnée Denise, 'Sound Systems of the Diaspora' – <https://worldwidefm.net/episode/strut-records-lynn%C3%A9e-denise>

Jessica Ekomane, 'Music of Anticolonial Resistance', *Open Sources* on Cashmere Radio – <https://cashmereradio.com/episode/open-sources-27-music-of-anti-colonial-resistance-old-and-new-sonic-imaginations/>

Asher Gamedze, *Turbulence and Pulse* – <https://www.intlanthem.com/releases-3/asher-gamedze-turbulence-and-pulse>

Ale Hop, 'De-Westernized Sonic Practices and Technologies' – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFRFzXWRBLo>

Fil Mishmish, 'Anticolonial Solidarity Mix'. Radio Alhara – <https://soundcloud.com/jessikahazrik/fil-mishmish-anti-annexation-anti-colonial-anti-racist-solidarity-mix-radio-alhara>

Radical Sounds Latin America – <https://radicalsoundslatinamerica.com/>

Urok Shirhan, 'Lovesong Revolution' – <https://backtalks.city/project/lovesong-revolution/>

Syrian and Greek Youth Forum, 'Citizen Sound Archive' – <https://citizensoundarchive.com/>

Bio

Tom Western is a writer, researcher, and artist. His work builds creative geographies that seek to imagine futures beyond the colonial past and present. Tom works primarily in Athens, where he's involved in various forms of creative and collaborative research and movement building. He is currently finishing his first book – titled *Circular Movements* – about Athens and the Mediterranean, written in circles and circulations, gathering imaginations of the city and the sea, and mapping ways out of the linear histories and geographies of empire. Tom regularly produces spatial art-research pieces that seek to make new maps of Athens and its Mediterranean relations, gathered together on the site [Undercartographies](#). He is based at UCL as a Lecturer in Social and Cultural Geography.