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This practice-led research explores how personal identities shape listening experiences in the context of sound art discourse. The research aim is to develop a contextual approach to sound art practice informed by personal experience of listening to place. These challenges are summed up in pieces of performance art that also highlight the interdisciplinary nature of sound art.

Research questions

1. How do personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place, and how does this form of listening specifically inform approaches to sound art?

2. How does the acknowledgment of context through the intrusion of place-based, identity-based approaches challenge the field of sound art?

3. How can an artist negotiate the interdisciplinary challenge of music versus visual art approaches in sound art?

4. How and in what ways can performance art practice expand strategies of making, in the field of sound art practice?

The critical literature review recognises the interdisciplinarity of sound art discourse (visual art, electroacoustic and soundscape composition), where compositional approaches (Chion; Schaeffer; Schafer) foster material-oriented tendencies in the field, shifting attention from the contextual, and personal, aspects of listening. The work of geographers (Rodaway, Massey and Tuan) forwards multisensory, contextual and migrant perspectives in this inquiry. Contemporary sound art theorists such as LaBelle historically map/scope the field, and Voegelin's concept of pathetic trigger and timespace is expanded and critically discussed.

The research methods include soundwalking, field recording, taking photographs and interviewing selected residents in four places: Banchory and Aberdeen in Scotland, and Maglaj and Sarajevo, in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

The research shows through the range of personal narratives, that personal identities shape the experience of listening to place, through mechanisms of autobiographical memory, informed by the context and history of places. In this process, the author's experience of growing up in post-conflict Sarajevo, along with her experience of migration to Scotland, offers contextual and personal insights. Sound art practice takes the form of performance art pieces in this work. This is a practice embodying histories and knowledges of place, acquired during the research and experience of soundwalks, while revisiting the contribution of performance art to sound art discourse.

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Contents:

1. Introduction to the Research

> As a listener I uncover new layers of profundity in sound and I weave them all together in the surface of my inscape: all the strata of words, sounds, memories exist in the same place as I write them. After I've deambulated, descended, reached the edges, I pack layers of reference on the surface of my words, I draw the lines of my inscape. (Cascella 2012 p. 103)

Daniela Cascella, an author on sound based in the UK, offers a glimpse into an approach to research that is interested in the individual experience of listening. This focus on the experiential and the personal, reflects the central position of the listener in *soundscape* (Rodaway 1994). This research takes this aspect of listening, the feeling that we are always in the centre of our sonic world, and positions the individual, in the central place of this PhD, by sharing the intimate ways in which sound can affect us.

The research works with these experiences through narratives that will be presented in this thesis. Hence it will establish a conversation, not just between authors on sound and the various, often personal, listener experiences collected through interviews, but it also attempts to set a balance between subjective and objective voices in the text. As this central position of the listener is not just acknowledged but is a focus of this research, my voice is present throughout the work, in establishing a dialogue.

My position as a migrant from Bosnia and Herzegovina, a contextually challenging part of the world, has sensitised me to the ways in which places are portrayed, and resident perspectives treated, in arts and humanities disciplines. This sensibility initially directed my attention towards the individual's listening experience of place; however, the literature review revealed the tendency in sound art discourse towards the exploration of the material qualities of sound, and less to the personal and contextual aspects of listening.

For instance, the practice of *reduced listening*, which informs the tradition of *electroacoustic music*, is also prevalent in sound art discourse. As Chapters Two and Three show, this encourages the detachment of sound from its context, or even the cause, of sound stimuli (Chion 2016). Strategies that aim to train the ear and enable a hearing of the sound event, identifying various sonic characteristics, unburdened by cultural and emotional connotations, discourage sound art discourse from the exploration of contextual aspects of place.

Hence, this research aims to point out these tendencies in sound art discourse; it also challenges them with contextual and historical insights into place that can alter dramatically the ways we perceive them, by revealing, for example, traumatic pasts.

Moreover, the thesis shares the recollections of lay participants collected through interviews, consequently opening up fertile ground for theory and practice that allows these multiple layers to play and inform the work. In this case, interdisciplinary methods used in this research, from *soundwalking*, to interaction with literature, interviews and conversations with local residents, made it possible for me to discover existing inconsistencies in the work of authors in sound art that I have been looking at, specifically the author and sound art practitioner Salomé Voegelin.

Thus, this work seeks to learn how we create meaning and make sense of the world through listening. It is interested primarily in listening to actual places *in situ*, by drawing on the multisensory and performative qualities of *soundwalking*.

In the process, this research opens up a range of questions: how is it possible to work with personal experiences of listening to place, if the causes and the contextual aspects of that sound are not taken into consideration? How is it possible to listen to an audio *field recording* of a place of trauma and memory, detached from its history and emotional dimensions?

The implications of such questions have a political dimension, as they raise issues of agency and power, relating to those who collect sounds, who listen to them, and who introduces them into academic discourse. Hence, if this research privileges one voice over the other, then the voice of the visitor is secondary to the voice of the resident in a place. This resident often lacks musical training but possesses a deep and enduring relationship with place. Informed by the experience of all other places, his or her occupation and background, the resident opens numerous layers of context, established through accumulative experiences of listening to a place, and understanding of local histories and perspectives.

As the research acknowledges the listener and his/her background, my personal history also impacts on this research expressed in what is to me, a foreign language, English. Hence, Sarajevo is present throughout this thesis, and maybe more so than other places (Maglaj in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Banchory and Aberdeen in Scotland). As Sarajevo is a city I know most intimately, it is also the city that has formed my many identities. I will share some of my own experience of

listening to Sarajevo, but I will also illustrate how Sarajevo is always in the background, in listening to other places.

The choice of other places has also been made in the light of my relationship to them. Aberdeen is a city in which I have been living since summer 2016, and Banchory and Maglaj are smaller towns that have been unfamiliar to me before this process began. Both have small art organisations that supported this research, Gallery AB in Maglaj, and the Barn in Banchory. They are also some parallels between the two towns in local geographies and rivers that run through them.

My research will show that personal identities "composed of narratives we construct based on our personal history", and memory (Monk et al. 2017 p. 55) play an essential role in shaping listening experience. This work focuses on these personal identities, and to a lesser extent national, religious or ethnic group identities. Consequently, I will also highlight the importance of varying resident and visitor perspectives on place. Our memories of and relationships with the place in which we live, is a significant component of personal identity. By focusing specifically on the listening experiences of residents, at certain points I shall demonstrate that there is a potential for a deeper engagement by sound art authors such as Peter Cusack, Salomé Voegelin, and the *soundscape* composer R. Murray Schafer, in the contextual depths of the places they are listening in as visitors.

The overall function of this research is to be sensitive to the contextual and personal dimension of listening, in order to open up space for more inclusive creative practices. In the last chapter, I will also share the ways in which my *performance art* practice considered here as a form of sound art, is composed by enabling listening *in situ* through the medium of performance, and therefore drawing upon both sound art and visual art traditions.

1.1. Creative Practices

The research employs the differing creative practices of writing, *soundwalking*, reading, and performing as a means of embracing the central position of the listener, and this has allowed me to develop the methods of work that give it shape. All of these creative practices have been shared with the public in various ways, through events, conversations, in galleries and public spaces.

The research emerges from these creative practices, and some are also methods used in this PhD, such as *soundwalk* and *field recording*. These methods and creative practices combined were

driving the research forward, solidifying my practice under scrutiny from these research questions. The ways this interaction happens between methods and practice is illustrated throughout the chapters, through dialogue, comparisons, experiences of walking, references to *field recording*. They all informed my *performance art* pieces, and that is why the chapter tackling *performance art* is the last chapter of this thesis.

The text also uses different aids, including maps and charts that at times helped me to illustrate and organise my ideas. This derives from my educational background in communication design, video and animation.

1.1.1. Soundwalking

"A soundwalk is any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment" (Westerkamp 2007).

Soundwalk is a crucial method of this research, for the different ways in which it can inform the listener about the environment and the self, which are tackled in various chapters of this thesis. Some of these include multisensory and performative aspects of *soundwalk,* awareness of the body, focusing attention to sound and previously overlooked aspects of place.

Soundwalk has become a generative force of the research as it embraces listening *in situ*, or listening in the present moment, whilst embracing past experiences simultaneously. This aspect of the work refers to, and tests in practice, approaches to listening devised by the sound artist and author Salomé Voegelin, specifically her notion of *timespace* and *pathetic trigger.*

Soundwalk has enabled me to engage with places of interest to this research: Sarajevo, Maglaj, Aberdeen, and Banchory. Despite the geographic and historical differences, these places are brought together through my experience of *soundwalks* and enriched by voices of residents of these places.

Performed *soundwalks* with and without sound recording equipment and numerous captured *soundscapes* are referred to in the thesis and available in appendices organised by place, for example in the folder on Sarajevo there are three sub-folders available: interviews, *field recordings* and photographs.

1.1.2. Reading

My aim was to bring relevant literature deep into the work by testing the material while *soundwalking*.

Emerging issues and questions were tackled through *performance art* practice and writing. The key authors are sound artists and authors: Salome Voegelin, Peter Cusack, Brandon LaBelle; *electroacoustic* and *soundscape* composers: Pierre Schaeffer, R. Murray Schafer, Michel Chion amongst others.

The literature has been influential as it informed my understanding of place to start with (Massey 2001; 2005; Tuan 1977), and further concerning the field of sound art and *electroacoustic* music, in making familiar key approaches such as *reduced listening* (Schaeffer 2017; Chion 2016). The range of authors informed my methodology (interview, *soundwalk*, photography, *field recording*), in challenging particular approaches to sound art, highlighting the importance of contextual and personal experience of place.

The emerging points of friction with the literature, through either intense personal experience of place, or its overall historical context, emerged from the practice of *soundwalking* and recording my experiences, which are discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

1.1.3. Writing

The thesis presents different concerns emerging from the listener's central position in the work. This is informed by the work of geographers interested in place, concerns of *performance art* practice, and personal and historical contexts. It regularly negotiates different voices, my own as well as those of interviewees and different authors that will be cited. Consequently, the literature review is spread out in all chapters, although some chapters are more informed by an analysis of the discourse than others.

The thesis aims to disseminate the ways of working developed as part of this research, for interdisciplinary sound art practitioners, in sharing methods of creating *performance art* works, introducing the fundamental concepts and concerns of sound art discourse, which could be difficult to acquire for artists coming from a non-musical background.

1.1.4. Performance Art Pieces

The ephemeral and embodied aspects of listening inspired me to compose all the information and experiential knowledge acquired during my *soundwalks*, in new pieces of *performance art*.

Although in the planning stages of my research I envisaged my creative outputs taking the form of audio-visual installations, utilising my passion for digital animation and video, the medium of performance enabled a layering of numerous meanings and contexts developed through *field recordings,* problematised by the contexts of the performance site. These works have built on the practice of *soundwalking* that has been transformative for me as an artist. The embodied qualities, multisensory aspects, and experience of listening in *soundwalking* became central to the work, and led me towards performance.

Creating installations became secondary, as I wanted passionately to bring the experience of accumulated listening over time, into the gallery and beyond. The experience of listening became deeply personal, and it opened a new way of making for me. Multiple methods and creative practices deeply informed the *performance art* pieces I am presenting, they are multi-layered, and they reflect my experience of place, walking and hearing. The pieces are not conclusive, and various adjustments and improvements are possible to make. They are performed live, and many were impossible to rehearse. Also, every *performance art* piece is to some degree site-specific, and it is a result of months of negotiation and work with the galleries and partners involved. For each *performance art* piece delivered, there are many ideas developed to some degree that have been left on the drawing board because of the challenges of logistics and venues. This shows that the practice I have developed emerges organically from the process of research, at times, it is an integral part of the research, and it is generative. It continues to negotiate and produce ideas beyond the timeframe of the PhD.

The term *performance art* piece in the case of this research is a broad marker of the medium, such as installation or public intervention, and in this case is utilised towards the exploration of sonic phenomena.

These pieces represent the results of accumulated experiences, and they create visceral encounters with the members of the public. The works were composed with the aid of powerful symbols and actions that transformed the initial experiences of listening in the place, to pieces that are highly condensed, opposing linear narratives or interpretations.

These following pieces were developed as an integral part of the PhD research process and outcomes:

Hold in/Breathe Out (2016)[1] performed as a part of the *Sonada* festival in the Anatomy Rooms in Aberdeen, explored the memory of a place, specifically, of Sarajevo. The performance involved diving in and out from a giant fish bowl filled with water. With each dive, I would trigger a stream of *field recordings* from Sarajevo accompanied by distorted photographs of locations in the city that are of significance to me. The stream would stop with me diving out, and the space would be shrouded with silence interrupted with the sound of water dripping from my hair.

Grains of Sound (2016)[2], performed just a few weeks after *Hold in/Breathe Out*, explored displacement. In this piece, I "woke up" in this, for me, strange place called Banchory. I was covered in over a tonne of soil in the large space at Woodend Barn before the audience entered, and I emerged from the soil during the piece. Mixed, *field recordings* captured during my *soundwalks* in Banchory were also used in the work.

Thousand Pomegranate Seeds (2017)[3], performed for the International Womens' Day on the 8th of March, as part of the *3 Generations of Women Perform* programme at Horsecross in Perth, dealt with the history of my country through charcoal drawing, soil and the destruction of pomegranates. All the sounds were acoustically created by interaction with the materials, and the live performance was captured with several microphones. My aim was to present the audio recordings with and without accompanying visual documentation, consequently problematizing the interpretation and experience of the actual event, audio-visual documentation and just audio documentation in the future.

The only *field recording* used in the piece depicts the sound of Christian church bells ringing simultaneously with Muslim call for prayer.[4] This sound was played as I was leaving the space.

Silencer (2018)[5] was performed in London as part of the *City Sonic Places* symposium at University

[1] Available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces/Hold in-Breathe Out
[2] Available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces /Grains of Sound
[3] Available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces /One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds
[4] Available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces /One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds/Media files used in the performance
[5] Available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces /Silencer

of the Arts London (UAL), and, later, in Aberdeen during the WorM *Open* programme, under the auspices of Peacock Visual Arts. *Silencer* consists of a *soundwalk* performed in a sound-absorbing suit, in which I also wore noise protective headphones and earplugs.

Silencer represents not a costume, but an art object that can be exhibited as a sculpture. When brought to life by me wearing it, *Silencer* imagines some possible implications of the use of sound absorbing clothes in public space in the context of *acoustic ecology*. Moreover, it is a vehicle of research that can help the individual to sense the world differently, almost in complete silence.

Upper left: *Hold in/Breathe Out* (2016), The Anatomy Rooms, Aberdeen. Photograph.
Upper right: *Grains of Sound* (2016), The Barn, Banchory. Still from video by Denholm.
Lower left: *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017), Horsecross, Perth. Photograph.
Lower right: *Silencer* (2018), Elephant and Castle, London. Photograph by Hall.

By not producing any sound, concealing my gender and appearance, this work allows me to stay silent and not to share or reveal my identities. It questions who has the agency to share their story and narrative at times when the 'other' poses a threat, and the spaces for narrative of the 'other' are diminishing. In these times, public space was turned to a silent film set as experienced by *Silencer*, offering an opportunity to break new ground in making space for drastically different experiences that don't require programme notes, contextual insight, concentration or time to engage with.

1.2. Sound Art Context(s)

The contexts of sound art, from the point of view of this research, are deeply fragmented. Writers and practitioners from musical and visual backgrounds are prominent, but we also encounter perspectives from ecology, geography, anthropology, ethnography, and other arts and humanity disciplines.

Not all of the authors I bring into my research position themselves as sound art authors and not all of them discuss sound art as a discipline or definition. The difficulty and lack of consensus as to what sound art is and what it could be, reflects the nature of phenomena of sound, as sound floats in the space, moves freely through walls and crosses borders. Every action creates ripples in the air detected as vibrations, and these vibrations can be sensed as sound. The ephemeral aspect of sound and its invisible nature creates further difficulties when it comes to descriptions and definitions.

However, in this research I have learned about the contexts of sound art from several authors, such as Brandon LaBelle (2015; 2018), and Seth Kim-Cohen (2009), artists such as Max Neuhaus, as well as resources such as the *Routledge Companion to Sounding Art* (2017) edited by Marcel Cobussen, Vincent Meelberg and Barry Truax.

Brandon LaBelle, a sound artist and author based in Belgium, recognises the cross-fertilisation between visual art and music by differentiating between the works of artists, alongside and in opposition to the works of composers in his book *Background Noise-Perspectives on Sound Art* (2015). He also draws trajectories of development since the mid-20th century, since the emergence of *musique concrète,* and the work of John Cage, Fluxus and many other performance artists most often discussed in canons of visual art such as Japanese group Gutai, Vito Acconci, Bruce Nauman,

Alvin Lucier amongst others. He points out that the development of installation art in the 1960s and the 1970s has been crucial for the development of sound art and in its interest in space and environments, as he sets out below:

> In bridging the visual arts with the sonic arts, creating an interdisciplinary practice, sound art fosters the cultivation of sonic materiality in relation to the conceptualization of auditory potentiality. While at times incorporating, referring to, or drawing upon materials, ideas and concerns outside of sound per se, sound art nonetheless seems to position such things in relation to aurality, the processes and premises of audition, and sonic culture. (Labelle 2015 p. 151)

LaBelle here privileges 'sonic materiality', in order to open up the broader contentions on audition and sonic culture. This has been a tendency in the sound art field in general, although the field has been opening up even further towards a wide variety of practices that don't necessarily focus on material of sound, or even, they don't reproduce or create sound at all.

> ...sounding art refers to those artistic expressions that use sound as material, medium, and/or subject matter. This does not mean that sounding art has to consist of sound per se: music is a form of sounding art, just as soundscape may be listened to as if it were music; but, since silence can also be potentially very telling, artworks that remain silent, yet still are about sound or the absence thereof), are considered sounding artworks as well. (Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax 2017 p. 3)

Positioned in this way this research aligns with the term *sounding art* not just according to the sound artists and authors Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax (2017), but also Seth Kim-Cohen (2009) uses the term sound art in a similarly inclusive manner. As this broad approach has been just recently marked by a term *sounding art*, and there is still no consensus on differences between sound art and *sounding art* terms as discussed in Chapter Two, this research will continue to use the more established term sound art throughout this work.

I highlight here my intention to focus on the phenomena of sound; specifically *in situ* listening, or listening to the actual environments, and developing creative practices that are inclusive of other forms of expression as well, such as writing and performing. The interest in the phenomena of sound, beyond its material aspect, or sound as a medium, opens up the field towards consideration of the contextual, political and other relevant aspects of sound. These aspects are concerned not just in determining the shape and frequency of sound phenomena at hand, but also how that sound is perceived, inclusive of the emotional aspect of perception.

According to the Collins dictionary, "the context of an idea or event is the general situation that relates to it, and which helps it to be understood" (Collins. English Dictionary 2019b). However, in this thesis, the term context has a broader meaning that draws from visual art and art history

discourses. In this case, context still helps in the understanding of phenomena but also extends beyond the 'general situation' of the event (referring to the definition above) by including the cultural context informing the creative practice, as well as the personal history and experience of the viewer i.e. his/her personal context. Such an approach to contextuality in sound studies resonates with the work of authors such as Jonathan Sterne (2003) and David Hendy (2014) who point out that the human attitude toward soundscape, especially noise, has been changing throughout history. Consequently, our attitudes to recorded sound are a result of social processes, opening up a discussion on context in which social processes are a constituent part. Hence, as my research tackles the role of personal identities (or personal contexts) and contexts of place (social, historical) for listening, it has been necessary to extend the notion of context (as defined above) beyond the circumstances of a sound event that helps the listener to identify particular sounds (Schafer 1994). This is discussed in the second chapter.

My use of the term context in this expanded way, in relation to listening *in situ*, emerges from the interdisciplinary nature of the work, drawing from sound and visual art disciplines. However, it is also the result of an approach to *soundwalking* as a creative practice, enabling the experience of soundscapes *in situ* to be recognised as a sound piece (artwork) by a listener.

Throughout the thesis, I engage critically with the work of soundscape composer R. Murray Schafer who recognised the importance of context in emerging soundscape studies. Schafer, as discussed in the second chapter, introduced the concept of a sound event to identify "individual sounds in order to consider their associative meanings as signals, symbols, keynotes or soundmarks" (Schafer 1994 p. 131). However, this PhD research develops this line of inquiry further by referring to contexts that shape these meanings, through memories and a deep understanding of place.

Hence the discussion on contextual aspects of sound is a result of a creative shift that recognizes sounds experienced *in situ* as sound pieces, as well as an interdisciplinary discussion in which the meaning of context incorporates both places and the listener. Such a strategy in art historical discourse reveals that context does not have a 'closure' and it is impossible to "establish 'context' in the form of a totality" (Bal and Bryson 1998 p. 248). Moreover, an art historian discussing the context and the artwork is "always present in the construction she or he produces" (Bal and Bryson 1998 p. 243). While these notions are important to keep in mind, the contextual approach to my literature review and listening to place is a crucial critical aspect of this research, from which I build the case for increased awareness of social and political agency of sound, and sound art discourse. In this case, context is not a 'fixed ground', finite and simplified (Bal and Bryson 1998), but it is

indefinitely complex as indicated by residents of places, further complicated by my personal context which brings to the fore some deep insights into an often exoticized part of Europe. In this way, by discussing contextuality, along with the sound phenomena that we experience, the aim of this research is to offer an transferable approach to sound art research that is more self-aware of it's own politics and colonial tendencies.

Recent publications by Brandon LaBelle, *Sonic Agency* (2018) and Salomé Voegelin *The Political Possibility of Sound* (2019) are just two amongst several recent books that illustrate this interest in sound as the crucial sensory stimuli that announce change and uncover human agency. As our ears stay attentive even while we are asleep, sound brings this ever-changing and unstable world of movement and action to the intimate space of our body through perception. These publications are opening up the political aspects of listening and implications that listening has in bringing these unstable and open to interpretations aspects of the world, to our consciousness.

These developments in the field open up sound art discourse to untrained listeners and a wider public, and they represent the context in which I have developed this research. The continuous response to an emerging literature, and new work in a rapidly evolving field, has been challenging for this research, as well as stimulating.

This work is precariously placed in an interdisciplinary space, although sound art draws from traditions of music versus visual art (Kim-Cohen 2009; Kelly 2011; LaBelle 2015; Licht 2007). By accumulating experiences of listening from numerous *soundwalks*, informed by interviews and conversations with residents, the emerging *performance art* pieces challenge the conception of sound art as primarily an installation-focused medium.

1.3. Research Questions

The research questions were shaped during the research process:

How do personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place, and how does this form of listening specifically inform approaches to sound art?
I address this question by collecting a range of narratives from listeners from various backgrounds who live in places of interest to me. These are referenced and explored in many different ways throughout the thesis. The second part of the question relates to sound art discourse regarding

theory and also creative practices. By juxtaposing what I have learned from sound art authors with the recollections from the interviews, an often-overlooked creative space opens up that recognises the potential of autobiographical narrative to shape listening experience. This potential is then utilised in a *performance art* practice that works directly with the experience of listening shaped by memories and contextual layers of a place, integrating listening *in situ* and occasionally, *field recordings*.

How does the acknowledgment of context through the intrusion of place-based, identity-based approaches challenge the field of sound art?

This is a slightly broader question that looks closely how the context of place is tackled in some approaches to sound art, as well as in *electroacoustic* music. Whilst *field recording* and *soundwalking,* both common methods in these disciplines, are situated in place, their focus is often on acquiring exotic new sounds, without further contextual involvement with the place (Norman 2004). The knowledge of place acquired over longer periods of time, inclusive of personal histories challenges current practices of *field recording* that often focus on material aspects of sound. This discussion will highlight different approaches to sound art as an interdisciplinary practice, that is informed by visual art and *electroacoustic* music traditions. These differences affect how the contextual and more individual, identity-related issues are tackled within the field, bringing different definitions of sound art practice in the process.

How can an artist negotiate the interdisciplinary challenge of music versus visual art approaches in sound art?

This question responds to the practical challenge of this research that is based at Gray's School of Art and supported by the Sonic Arts programme at the University of Aberdeen. This specific infrastructure of the support is reflected in the overall design of this research, and the particular aspects of the interdisciplinary challenge, relating to terminology, and approach to making. These discussions and concerns have been highlighted in the thesis, as well as the other forms of my creative practice.

How and in what ways can performance art practice expand strategies of making, in the field of sound art practice?

Inspired by the long tradition of *performance art* in ex-Yugoslavia as well as international performance artists of the 1960s and the 1970s, I have aimed to revisit *performance art* practice as

and in relation to sound art. The use of my body and performative practice would establish a relationship with the audience through the sharing of intimacy and feeling of empathy. Emerging from a *soundwalk* as an inherently performative action, I have aimed to build on that experience and create multisensory environments in which the audience would have the opportunity to experience some of the effects of the original experience of listening to the place, by simultaneously accommodating different levels of engagement. Not all audience members have been familiar with my background or context, hence the work created exists at multiple levels, and numerous readings and interpretations of the work are possible.
All the recollections, *soundwalks* and experiences in relation to these places have contributed to the development of the pieces.

This work also represents my creative response to the questions related to what contextually informed sound art practice could embrace, and what forms could it adopt. My aim is not to present the only option, or the only approach, however, the performative body responds, creates, embodies and works with sound in countless ways. This practice is inclusive of my gender and background, it allows me not just to be the body on stage that triggers the sound event, but it creates the experience together with the audience, inclusive of site-specific characteristics of locations as well.

1.4. Research Methods

As already indicated, this research is concerned with the complexity and depth of our relationship with the world, specifically the listening process through the multiple layers of our personal identities. Hence the methods that it relies on are forms of creative practice, as well as a means of gathering experiences and obtaining information.

1.4.1. Soundwalk

In drawing on the tradition of the World Soundscape Project founded in Canada in the 1960s and led by *soundscape* composer R. Murray Schafer, *soundwalk* has become one of the most prominent methods used by *soundscape* composers, as well as sound artists amongst other disciplines such as anthropology, ethnography, and geography. Despite some differences in approach and definition, it is broadly understood as a performed walk during which attention is focused on listening (Westerkamp 2007). It can be applied in rural and urban environments, outdoor and indoor spaces.

It can be performed in a group or alone; it sometimes includes commentary in writing, sound made accessible via interactive maps, planted sounds in locations, or various forms of scores and guides.

This research embraces the *soundwalk* method, having been mostly performed alone with and without recording equipment. I focused also on urban environments in Sarajevo, Maglaj, Banchory and Aberdeen. The majority of sites I walked in are accessible by foot from the town and city centres, as accessibility has been important in my exploration of the places. Sometimes, this would mean kilometres of walking, as I have visited Scolty Hill near Banchory, Borik near Maglaj, and the Trebević mountain near Sarajevo, which represented significant sites for the residents in the proximity of the city and town centres. In the case of Trebević Mountain, I used a cable car from the Ottoman part of town to the mountain which has re-opened in 2018 for the first time since the war (1992-1995).

Differing aspects of the *soundwalk* are tackled in different chapters of the thesis, a brief background and history of method, as well as how *soundwalk* informs about place are developed in Chapter Two, the potential of *soundwalk* to evoke memories is discussed in Chapter Three, the performative aspect of the walk is discussed in Chapter Four along with some historical considerations.

The performed *soundwalk* has also enabled me to record my experiences through note-taking, drawing, and remembering. I have been recording sound, and I would occasionally take photographs.

1.4.2. Audio Field Recording

Although this research explores mostly *in situ* listening, I have captured numerous audio *field recordings*, in rest of the thesis referred just as *field recordings*, during my *soundwalks.* These audio files are available in the portfolio.

These recordings allow readers to experience some aspects of *soundscapes* in the places that I have been exploring. All the recordings have been made with a hand held microphone. I didn't use tripods, and I used mostly my Zoom H5 recorder and a stereo boom microphone. Mobility is of special importance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where I had to be on the move continuously and try not to attract attention, as *field recording* there represents a threat for my own security and that of my equipment.

As someone who didn't have experience with *field recording* prior to this research, my use of microphone was based on trial and error and reflects a fascination with amplification, improvisation and a spontaneity of approach. This is one of the numerous approaches described by sound artist and author John Drever in *Field Recording Centered Composition Practices* (Drever 2017 p. 73).

Despite this fascination, I have been aware that the microphone introduced to a *soundwalk* alters the perception of the environment around the listener completely, as it amplifies sounds. It is most often directional and consequently, selective. With the microphone, a new world opens up, and that world experienced through headphones alters our perception. As the *soundscape* composer Hildegard Westerkamp describes, a *field recordist* is in "their own sound bubble and hears the place completely differently from everyone else in the same place" (1998 p. 59). Moreover, composer Katharine Norman introduces the comparison of the *field recordist* with the hunter who often goes out "into the wild", employing the language of the hunter- "on safari", "capturing sound" (2004 p. 61).

Hence, as a result of the very complex and multisensory effects of *soundwalks* that can't be captured by a microphone, my *performance art* pieces have become more elaborated and more abundant with symbols and sounds created *in situ*. However, some of the recorded sounds, such as the sound of a pistol in the centre of Sarajevo[6], the Muslim call for prayer heard simultaneously with church bells[7], or steady hum of the paper factory Natronka in Maglaj[8], are powerful records of these places and they are discussed in different chapters of the thesis.

1.4.3. Photographs

During the research, I have taken numerous photographs that represent visual records of these places. My aim was not to filter the visual impressions of the place. A photograph of a bridge can be taken from various perspectives, to create visual interest, fascination, to turn it to a more or less exotic site or one of conventional beauty.

Thus, my photographs are heavily descriptive, and they often show the site or an object from the point of view of a *field recordist* or a *soundwalker* depicting the source of the sound of interest, or

[6] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/gun shot-River Miljacka-Ambassador's Alley
[7] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/Religious calls -Dobrinja neighbourhood
[8] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/Car Park of the 'Natronka' Paper Factory

object in relation to a particular sound. They often depict visually uninteresting objects or architecture. The photographs available in the portfolio[9] have been selected to accompany *field recordings* and the thesis, although some of them have been used in the performances.

1.4.4. Interviews

The role of interviews in this research is to bring additional resident voices into the work. These voices allowed me to learn about the place if I was unfamiliar with it initially. If I had some knowledge already, they provided additional and varied perspectives. While it is possible to notice some patterns in the answers, for example generally people who grew up in urban environments tend to speak more positively about urban noise and focus less so on specific sounds of nature, this research doesn't aim to build arguments based on in-depth analysis of the responses. The interviews contribute to the work through their diversity, and enrich understanding of the individual perception of sound in relation to place. Although most of them are fascinating records of the individual's experience of sounds of place, interweaving the past and present through the recollection of autobiographical memories, due to the length and the form of the thesis, I have brought just some examples in the main body of the writing.

The interviews are semi structured, so while some questions were fixed and asked in each interview, others were made in response to the answers. Some interviewees didn't necessarily have a formed awareness of *soundscapes*, but through conversation, all of the interviewees realised that there is much more to sound experiences then they noticed previously. In this way, the interviews raised awareness of *soundscapes*, and how they inform deep connections with the place.

In Aberdeen and Sarajevo, due to my familiarity with these places, it has been much easier to find interviewees amongst my acquaintances that had different educational backgrounds and were of varying age. The majority of my interviewees had some experience in arts or education, and that made them more understanding of my research process. For example, in Aberdeen, I included a recent PhD graduate in anthropology Marc Higgin, a mature MA student of Sonic Arts, Ed Steel, and emerging visual artist Donald Butler.[10] In Sarajevo, due to many years of my residential status in the city, I had access to more extensive networks; hence I interviewed with an architect Mensur Demir, an activist and photographer Jim Marshall, and university lecturer Adla Isanović.[11]

[9] Available in the portfolio: Places/(name of the place)/Photographs
[10] Available in the portfolio: Places/Aberdeen/Interviews
[11] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Interviews

In Maglaj and Banchory, I have initially relied on the art organisations supporting this research, AB Gallery in Maglaj and the Barn in Banchory. Hence I interviewed the curator and owner of the gallery in Maglaj Admira Bradarić[12], and in Banchory, Bertha Forbes[13], a volunteer who attends numerous events in the centre. After the initial interviews, the interviewees would recommend other potential interviewees - this way of developing samples in qualitative interview method is known as a snowball technique (Edwards and Holland 2013).

The majority of these interviews are tackled in Chapter Three, with semi transcriptions and recordings of the interviews available in the portfolio.

With interviewees from Bosnia and Herzegovina who use English fluently, I used the term *soundscape* in the same form as in English. Occasionally, I have used an explanation of the word *soundscape* as 'a sound of every day life', or 'sound experienced around us in daily life' due to a lack of a viable translation of the term in the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language. This is due to Slavic heritage of the term landscape 'krajolik' where the root of the word 'kraj' means physical and conceptual end, hence it is difficult to apply it to *soundscape*. Moreover, *soundscape* composition is not widely practiced in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The aim of the interviews was the gathering of information about soundscapes of places, and only during the interview process, I discovered that, for most interviewees, it was natural to share them in the form of a personal narrative. While recognising that personal narrative and autobiographical memory play an important role in these interviews, which are also traits of oral history practice, these interviews were not a means of conducting oral history.

The personal aspect of the interviews and the intimacy of memories shared, contribute towards the discussion on personal identities in sound art discourses.

Lynn Abrams, an expert in oral history theory, points out that "qualitative research which may collect data via an interview can be a close cousin of oral history but may not have the distinctive character of specifically "engaging with the past" (Abrams 2010 p. 2). Similarly, Abrams argues that an oral historian is interested in four things during an interview: "what happened, how they felt about it, how they recall it, and what wider public memory they draw upon" (Abrams 2010 p. 78). The focus on the past, and on the in depth analysis of interviews, seek to contribute to history i.e.

[12] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Interviews/Admira Bradarić
[13] Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Interviews/Bertha Forbes

the study of the past as a discipline. The aims of this research are different in that the personal aspect of the interviews and the intimacy of memories shared, contribute towards the discussion on personal identities in sound art discourses.

Although the quotations drawn from the fieldwork point out that interviews in this work were not used to learn about the past, I have still employed some of the knowledge of oral history while conducting them. This is reflected mostly in my awareness of the intersubjectivity of the interview method (both parties, interviewee and myself are subjective and interacting), and of the importance of narrative that often draws on autobiographical memory (Abrams 2010).

The way autobiographical memory enters the interviews in this research is not provoked by questions about a particular event or period of life, but it is related to its role in the construction of personal identities. For instance, Abrams points out "Memory is key to our identity; without our memory we have no social existence" (Abrams 2010 p. 82). And, while oral history is interested in notions of 'subjective' and 'objective' in the study of history raised by autobiographical memory, this research embraces its 'imperfections' (Abrams 2010) that bring a range of responses to this study.

I have also encouraged interviewees to form a narrative on their own, by asking open-ended questions, which aligns with contemporary approaches to oral history in moving away from the 'questionnaire-style oral history' (Abrams 2010).

However, what oral history has influenced the most, is my awareness of the interview process, where I was a facilitator, giving clues. The following quotation illustrates my approach well, but instead of being interested in recollections of the past, my interest was in the sound of place:

> (...) we ask questions, provide prompts or cues, demonstrate interest and empathy, all in order to encourage a respondent to access their memory and convert their memories into a narrative. Some respondents achieve this with ease, seemingly possessing memory stories that are easily accessible, stories they have told a number of times." (Abrams 2010 p. 104)

Hence, by drawing from oral history, I learned from the interview method, which is also reflected in the interview questions composed of the following sections:

Personal and professional background

In this section I ask interviewees what is their name, date of birth, occupation and where do they live.

The relationship with the place

Here I ask what brought them to the place where they live now, how long have they lived there, and what is their connection with the place.

This section opens up the interview by looking for information regarding the resident perspectives that can be quite complex due to migrations. The perception of place is also affected by educational, social backgrounds, and other factors that open up specific insights into the place.

This section is concluded by the question: How would you describe the place you live now to someone who has never been here?

Sound of the place

This section starts with the question: Is there something that you could identify as the sound of the place (Aberdeen, Banchory, Maglaj, Sarajevo), a specific *soundscape* or noise?

While the idea of the *soundmark* (Schafer 1994) can be problematized, and it is not strictly the concern of my research, this question has helped the interviewees in thinking about place and sound. This question is followed by: Do you pay attention to sounds in your everyday life? - If yes, I would ask more about them, if not, I would ask: Do you find any interesting sounds in your everyday life? - Something that is relaxing or annoying?

In this stage of the interview, various autobiographical memories in relation to sound, place, and different events in their life would be recalled.

Sound of the river

All four places are on rivers; Banchory lies on the River Dee, Aberdeen; Sarajevo on the River Miljacka, and Maglaj on the River Bosna. The sound of water is usually perceived with attention, and I aimed to encourage interviewees to share their experiences with me by asking: Could you tell me something about your relationship with the river? Do you often go there? Do you listen to it?

Sound and memory

The following question has been difficult for some people to answer: What do you think, how do the sounds of our environment affect our sense of self and belonging, maybe memory?

However, even if the interviewees have found it difficult to answer this question, in most cases I had already some recollections recorded. The role of this question was to raise awareness of the link between the sound and personal identities. This question is followed by the much more tangible question: Do you ever recall some specific sounds of the place or your home or the place (Banchory, Maglaj, Sarajevo or Aberdeen) when you are away?

Identity

The last question is: What do you think the relationship is between sound and identity? This is a difficult question in an interview situation, but it allowed me to collect different reactions to the term identity that is usually assumed to signify group identities such as national, ethnic and religious. Although by this point I had plenty of material on how personal identities and memories of childhood, of different events and maybe traumas, shape listening experiences, this question provoked various answers and showed that the majority of my interviewees from Bosnia and Herzegovina were repelled by the term identity which is extremely loaded and overused in the local context. As described at the end of this chapter, the matter of religious, ethnic and national identities, all interlinked, has been in the core of societal conflict. In contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina, public discourse is often divided along ethnic lines, reflecting the separations at every level of governance.

On the other hand, interviewees in Scotland were not critical of the term identity, but would often focus on well-known markers of group identities such as anthems and traditional music.

The portfolio of the thesis contains the audio recordings as well as semi-transcripts of the interviews. The approximate duration of each interview is 55 minutes, and I would let the recollections occasionally drift as a relatively slow-paced approach was supportive to the interviewees and mutually rewarding. The duration of the interviews and their variable focus are the main reasons for the use of semi-transcription.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis negotiates between the different methods (interviews, *soundwalk*, photography and *field recording*), the creative practices of *soundwalking*, performing and writing; and in the process, it constantly refers and draws from the documentation. This documentation is available in the portfolio, but it is an essential component of the work.

In order to keep the performative aspect of the research in the thesis, I use my subjective voice in the form of creative writing. These sections are formatted in italic font, and they open up every chapter of the thesis after the introduction. While the introduction of each chapter outlines the contribution of the chapter to the thesis and the research, specific research questions and methods in which they will be tackled, these italicised sections remind the reader of the subjective quality of the work. I also use the same formatting when sharing my memories in chapter three, as well as when introducing each *performance art* piece in chapter four.

1.5.1. Introduction

This chapter introduced the main framework of the research, by pointing out differing creative practices explored during the PhD, such as *soundwalks*, interacting with literature through reading, composing the experiences in the form of the thesis through writing and *performance art* practice.

Next, it introduces some main aspects of sound art discourse in which this research is positioned, as well as the research questions.

The methods are briefly introduced and developed throughout the thesis. This is especially the case with *soundwalk*, but also sound *field recording*, photographs and interviews. This chapter presents the interview questions that are also available in the portfolio.

Finally, this chapter offers some contextual information about the places of this research by introducing the two countries, as well as specific information about the towns and the cities of concern for this work.

1.5.2. Chapter 2 - Here and There: Listening in Place

The chapter presents a significant section of my literature review. I introduce the work of geographers Paul Rodaway, Yi-Fu Tuan and Doreen Massey who help me to recognise the importance of bringing many voices into the research, as well as in understanding the multisensory experience of *in situ* listening. This husbanded my methodology towards the use of interviews, which bridge the experience of listening to place towards personal identities, inclusive of the broader contextual and historical aspects of place. This section formed the research question on how personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place.

However, during the research process, the following question emerged which is central to this chapter: How does the acknowledgement of context through the intrusion of place-based, identity-based approaches challenge the field of sound art?

I found it difficult to tackle these personal identities without engaging with authors who could be reluctant to consider the context and history of the place in which the sound *field recordings* are captured, or even recognising the cause of sound stimuli while listening. As the research focuses on listening *in situ* through the methods and creative practices of *soundwalking* and interviewing, there is a strong presence of *electroacoustic music* and practice, specifically *reduced listening*, in contemporary sound art discourse that tackles place. This fosters the material focused approaches as opposed to contextual. In this regard, I recognise that the practitioners from musical backgrounds are more likely to promote such approaches, which highlights the complex interdisciplinary nature of sound art. Influences of visual art and music co-exist simultaneously and as a practitioner, I am expected to navigate through these. In this chapter, I discuss the work of sound artists and authors Salomé Voegelin, Brandon LaBelle, Seth Kim-Cohen, as well as composers Michel Chion, Pierre Schaeffer and R. Murray Schafer amongst others.

The context-sensitive research process developed through learning about the history of place, engaging with residents, along with *soundwalks* and *field recording* sensitises the reader while I also point out that material focused tendencies in sound art move researchers away from the contextual dimensions of listening experience. The chapter offers a contribution to the field by means of discovery of these tendencies within contemporary sound art discourse, while also offering alternative approaches and ways of creating dialogue.

1.5.3. Chapter 3 - Now and Then: Listening in Time

This chapter is interested in the rich potential of personal experience in listening to a place that is contextually and historically informed. It aims to open up this space by indicating depths that are often overlooked in material and form-driven approaches to sound art. In this process it recognises, and learns from composers such as Katherine Norman and Hildegard Westerkamp, whose work indicates the inclusive potential of *soundwalking.* The chapter builds on this potential while also learning from the notion of *timespace* and *pathetic trigger*, critically looking at Voegelin's work. In this way, it tackles thoroughly the research question on how personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place, and how this form of listening specifically informs approaches to sound art.

The chapter offers personal recollections and shows that autobiographical memories shape the listening experiences acquired today, by simultaneously contributing and negotiating a range of personal identities- our sense of self. As a mechanism at work with both untrained and trained listeners, this provides material for the development of future sound work. The chapter also indicates the ways in which sound art authors and practitioners could engage with sites of memory and trauma by integrating and working with individual experiences. The chapter tackles Sarajevo as a case study in which a traumatic past dramatically alters the way we perceive locations within the city. This case study aims to sensitise the reader to recognise the sources of sound when listening, as well as the place where are they are coming from, and how they might be perceived from the perspective of residents. By opening up this vantage point, I demonstrate the significant creative potential in this inclusive approach that the reader could practice in places familiar to them.

1.5.4. Chapter 4 - Time and Space: Performing Listening

This chapter aims to recognise the performative, multisensory qualities of *soundwalking* that accumulated over time, and informed my *performance art* pieces: *Hold in/Breathe Out* (2016), *Grains of Sound* (2016), *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017), *Silencer* (2018).

I also acknowledge the long tradition of interdisciplinary *performance art* practice that is discussed within visual art and sound art histories. The performances of Vito Acconci, Alvin Lucier, as well as the strong tradition of *performance art* in ex-Yugoslavia informed my pieces in their foregrounding of themes of sound and listening, intertwined with contextual and personal issues of personal identities. These are multi-layered practices that communicate in a non-linear fashion.

In the second section of the chapter I illustrate and map the ways in which I have developed my *performance art* pieces built on knowledge and experience of this sound art research. They explore what we learn about the world by listening to places filtered by our personal identities. The emerging practice is exploratory and it allowed me to bring into the work a range of meanings and layers, histories and memories evoked through practice of *soundwalking,* which enabled a link between the place and myself.

The research question on how and in what ways can *performance art* practice expand existing strategies of making in the field of sound art practice has been tackled through examples of my work and their development. Here I acknowledge the already mentioned long tradition of performance discussed by sound art authors such as LaBelle (2015), Licht (2007) and Seth Kim-Cohen (2009).

The chapter works with rich and layered information and experiences that I gathered during the research and which I develop in the text of the thesis. In the context of sound art discourse, it contributes by revisiting *performance art* practice as a strategy of creating contextually aware, theme driven sound art that can embrace different artistic mediums within itself. The *performance art* piece negotiates site specificity of place, delivers for the specific audiences and in the form it takes has aspects of installation, a staged concert, performative action composed rigorously, and responsive by means of improvisation.

1.5.5. Summary and Conclusions

Every chapter contains a summary in the conclusions that revisits the main arguments of the chapter. The Conclusions of the Research offers an overview organised in three broad themes of the work that are discussed through the lens of sound art theory and practice: contexts of place, contexts of disciplines and personal identities. Within these, I also highlight the main contributions of the research and the areas for future work.

1.5.6. Portfolio and Glossary

The glossary contains the key terms used throughout the thesis. These terms are indicated in the text in *grey colour and italic font*. This formatting shows that the explanation of the word is available in the glossary, although some of the terms are also tackled in depth in the main text of the thesis. For the convenience, the glossary is available in digital form on the usb along with digital portfolio, as well as after the bibliography as part of this hard copy of the thesis.

Next, the portfolio is organised in folders. One contains the materials referring to places, and the other one is called 'Performance Art Pieces'.

In the folder 'Places', the information is organised in four sub-sections: Aberdeen, Banchory, Maglaj and Sarajevo. Each of these contains audio recordings of interviews, as well as semi transcriptions of interviews. Photographs and *field recording* can also be found in these folders.

In the folder called 'Performance Art Pieces', the documentation is organised in four folders titled the same as the pieces. These folders contain the video documentation of performances, media files containing *field recordings* played in actual events, photographs and programme notes.

When referring to a specific recording or documentation in the text of the thesis, I will use footnotes showing the exact location of the file on the usb in this format: Places/Banchory/Field Recording/birds-River Dee.

This is a graphic representation of the content from the usb:

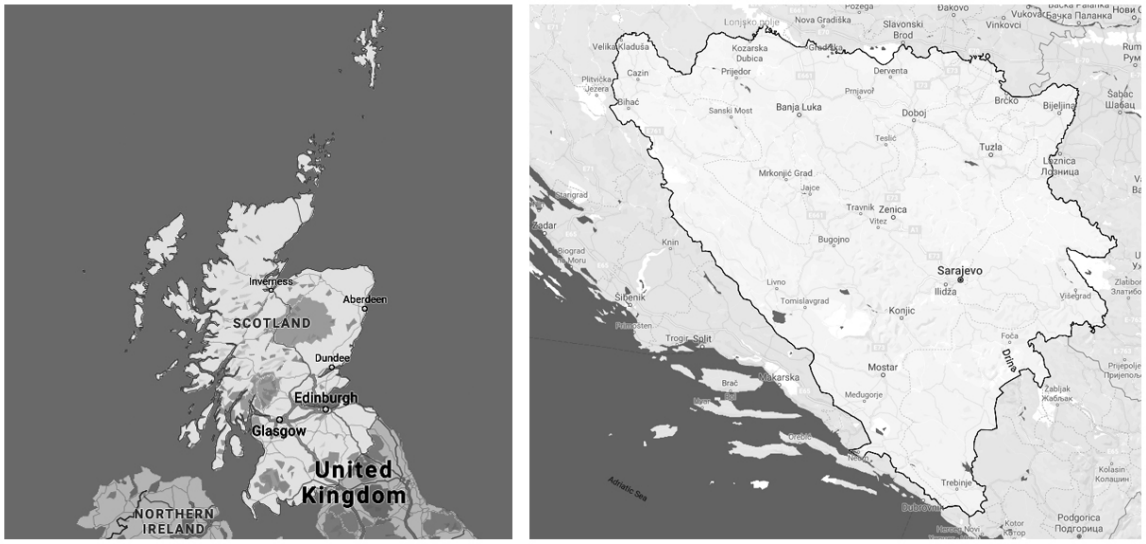
Glossary		
PLACES	*Aberdeen*	***Field Recordings*** *[audio files]* ***Interviews*** *[audio files and transcripts]* ***Photographs*** *[images]*
	Banchory	***Field Recordings*** *[audio files]* ***Interviews*** *[audio files and transcripts]* ***Photographs*** *[images]*
	Maglaj	***Field Recordings*** *[audio files]* ***Interviews*** *[audio files and transcripts]* ***Photographs*** *[images]*
	Sarajevo	***Field Recordings*** *[audio files]* ***Interviews*** *[audio files and transcripts]* ***Photographs*** *[images]*
PERFORMANCE ART PIECES	*Grains of Sound*	***Documentation of the performance*** *[video & images]* ***Documentation of the process*** *[images]* ***Media files used in the performance*** *[audio files]* *Programme note [PDF]*
	Hold in-Breathe Out	***Documentation of the performance*** *[video & images]* ***Media files used in the performance*** *[audio & video files]* *Programme note [PDF]*
	One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds	***Documentation of the performance*** *[video, audio & images]* ***Media file used in the performance*** *[audio file]* *Programme note [PDF]*
	Silencer	***Documentation of the performances*** *[video, audio & images]* *Programme note [PDF]*

1.6. Two Countries, Four Places

Scotland and Bosnia & Herzegovina are brought together in this research through my relationship with the two countries. I was born in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 1987, and I have lived there until the start of this research, in 2015. This research was conceived in 2014 and 2015, very turbulent years in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Scotland. Protests, referendums and public debates in both countries offered the initial impulse for this work. Subsequently, I have been witnessing the increasing debates in Scotland related to its status within the United Kingdom and the European Union.

In the core of these debates, are questions of identity. The obvious is concerned with national and ethnic identities: Scottish, British, European, Bosnian and Herzegovinian, Croatian, Serbian or

Bosniak. The issues of migration, the relationship with diaspora, economic crisis, concerns regarding public services and infrastructure, such as the NHS, are relevant to these debates in both countries.



Scotland and Bosnia Herzegovina (Google Maps 2019a; 2019b).

As Bosnian and Herzegovinian, I have been acutely aware of these markers of group identities since a young age, through numerous alterations to the school curriculum, alphabet and language during my education. As a child born in 1987, I have realised that from the 1990s onwards, my surroundings, from school friends to teachers, had a peculiar interest in my family history, names of my parents and my birthplace. My secular name doesn't reveal my religion, hence even today I face these questions, and not just in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also other countries of ex-Yugoslavia. This awareness of group identities as constructed or imposed has been also raised by my interviewees from Sarajevo Adla Isanović and Jim Marshall, have led me to focus on my personal identities formed by my intimate relationships with people and places I know though autobiographical memories. In this regard, sound plays a crucial factor in forming these memories but also, memories shape the ways we experience contemporary sound stimuli today.

Personal identities also help in establishing the common ground or the dialogue across different cultures, as some memories are universal, despite the language barriers, some other are shaped by particular events and encounters. This particular level of personal history is sometimes also affected by national or even global events and developments.

I acknowledge that this section of the thesis is long, but I aim to introduce a general context of Bosnia and Herzegovina and specific places of this research to highlight some national and more local contexts that influence this research by affecting the personal experiences of listening.

1.6.1. Bosnia and Herzegovina

Positioned in South-East Europe, in the area of the western Balkans, Bosnia and Herzegovina neighbours with Croatia on the west and north, and Serbia in the east. The population of Bosnia and Herzegovina is 3.5 million according to the census in 2013 (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina.Information about BiH 2019).

The name Bosnia appeared for the first time in the 10th century, and according to some records, it derives from the Roman ward for river 'Basana' as the country is rich with rivers. This also relates to one of the longest rivers[14] in the country called Bosna flowing in the central and the most populated area of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Clancy 2017).

The country is well known for its diverse landscapes, numerous rivers, mountains and wildlife. The central Bosnia is mostly mountainous, while flat planes feature the areas on the north and the west. Herzegovina is the southern region of the country with the biggest city, Mostar. The warm climate with very little rain in summer creates a dry and barren landscape of Herzegovina, in stark contrast with high mountain peaks and rich green forests of central Bosnia. This research is placed in central Bosnia, hence occasionally only a term Bosnia will be used in this thesis. The abbreviations Bosnia & Herzegovina, or B&H will be used occasionally as well.

Throughout history, various stronger armies have conquered this area of the Balkans, although the Bosnian Kingdom achieved independence for a period in the middle ages, during the 13th and 14th century. From the mid 15th century until the late 19th century the area of contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina was part of the Ottoman Empire (Malcolm 2002). This long period of Bosnian and Herzegovinian history has left numerous valuable material and cultural remains in the country such as mosques, public baths and libraries. Notably, one of the most famous historical buildings in Herzegovina is the Old Bridge in Mostar built in the 16th century, destroyed in 1993 and reconstructed in 2004 (The City of Mostar. Tourist Portal 2019).

[14] The river Bosna is 271 km (168 miles) long (Clancy 2017 p. 248).

In 1878 Bosnia and Herzegovina fell under Austro-Hungarian rule. This period in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina was marked by the development of the infrastructure and education. It ended with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28th of June 1914 in Sarajevo, which sparked the First World War (Malcolm 2002).

Between the World Wars, the country was part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which was occupied during World War Two by the Axis powers. Through the Second World War, Bosnia and Herzegovina was a theatre of significant partisan resistance in collaboration with other resistance movements in Yugoslavia. With the end of the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina became one of the six republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Throughout this thesis, SFRY will be referred to just as Yugoslavia.

The collapse of Yugoslavia brought wars and conflicts to the region in which Bosnia and Herzegovina was heavily affected. The war lasted for four years (1992-1995) and in great part targeted civilians. The first genocide in Europe after WWII was committed in July 1995 in Srebrenica (The Hague Justice Portal 2008).

Following the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina was split into two 'entities' and one district, a self-governing administrative unit: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Brčko district. The complex system of governance makes Bosnia and Herzegovina one of the most dysfunctional political systems in Europe. This cumbersome system was shaped by the Dayton agreement in December 1995, the meeting that ended the war and it ensured that the three ethnic groups are represented in the government led by Presidency consisting of three members elected through a complex electoral system.

The ethnic groups represented in the government are Bosniaks (in local language Bošnjaks), Serbs and Croats. The ethnic identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are closely linked with religious identities (Muslim, Orthodox Catholics, and Roman Catholics).

In a country which had been largely secular for a fifty year period before the war, where many marriages were mixed, most people had very complex ethnic and religious identities, governance based on the disclosure of one's ethnic and religious background in official documents, in places of decision making, created many situations of unforeseen complexity. The significant Jewish and Roma community, as well as many citizens who don't find ethnic markers appropriate, are not

represented in an exclusive system of governance that recognises and represents only three ethnic groups, spoken for by political parties founded and developed to defend their perceived interests.

Contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina struggles with the highest unemployment rate in Europe, widespread poverty and lack of prospects. Street protests are a regular occurrence. Estimates show that almost half of the citizens who originate from B&H, nearly two million people, live abroad now (Kovačević 2017). A significant flow of refugees from B&H has been triggered by the war and followed by political and economic uncertainties afterwards.

The census from 2013 showed that 50.1 % of the population are Bosniaks, followed by 15.4 % of Croats, 30.8 % of Serbs and 3.7 % of others (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016a).

This result is highly contested in the country, as the census form offered just four ethnic categories (Bošnjak, Serb, Croat and other). This prevented people from choosing nationality (Bosnian and Herzegovinian) over the ethnicity, a choice that could potentially used to challenge the existing political arrangements and constitution.

The census was highly politicised, and people were urged to identify themselves with three dominant ethnic groups, consequently strengthening the existing segregation of society. The complexity of the task at hand and possible implications of the census saw a three year delay in the publication of the data, that was finally announced in June 2016 by the State Statistics Agency, after significant public and international pressure (Ahmetasević 2016). The troublesome political context of Bosnia and Herzegovina highlighted through the example of this census should also be compared with the example of more democratic approach of census in Scotland discussed in the following section of the chapter.

Bosnia and Herzegovina formally uses two alphabets, Cyrillic and Latin; and three languages: Croatian, Serbian, and Bosnian. As an aid in reading of this thesis I am also presenting a guide originally published in *Sarajevo-A Biography* (2006) by Robert Donia a historian based in Michigan.

Like Donia, I will use the Latin alphabet.

> (...) all letters are pronounced in the order in which they appear. Vowels and consonants that are pronounced differently from English and consonants with diacritics are listed below).
> a *a*, as in far
> c *ts*, as in bats

č	*ch*, as in touch
ć	*ch*, softer than *č*, between *ch* in chew and the first *t* in astute
dž	a hard *j*, as in judge
dj/đ	a bit softer than *dž*, between the *j* in judge and *d* in duplex
e	*a*, as in bay
h	gutteral, as the *ch* in Scottish loch
i	*ee*, as in cheese
j	*y,* as in young (Jugoslavia equals Yugoslavia)
o	*o* (long), as in open
r	*r* as trilled
š	*sh*, as in shush
u	*u* (long), as in lute
ž	*zh*, as in leisure

(Donia 2006)

1.6.2. Scotland

Positioned in the north of the United Kingdom (UK), Scotland is well known for its pristine nature and landscape. It is surrounded by the North Sea in the East, and the Atlantic Ocean on the West. From its 790 islands, Shetland and Orkney are probably the most well known to people outside of the UK.

The population of Scotland is 5.3 million people according to the census conducted in 2011 (National Records of Scotland. Scotland's Census 2011a). The majority of the population live in the so-called 'central belt', the area around Glasgow and Scotland's capital Edinburgh.

For the purpose of comparisons between the two countries, the demographic information in Scotland from the census in 2011 that allowed a wide array of answers compared to the one in Bosnia and Herzegovina, shows that the majority of people in the country declare just their Scottish identity (between 42 % and 72 % depending from the area), compared to British identity only which is declared by between 7 % and 12 % of population (National Records of Scotland. Scotland's Census 2011c). The statistics for religious identities are more varied in different regions, with most people not declaring their religion (37 %), followed by 32 % of participants choosing Church of Scotland, 16 % Roman Catholic church, and 6 % declaring another Christian backgrounds (National Records of Scotland. Scotland's Census 2011d). Aberdeen City scores the highest per cent in "No religions section", 48 % (Ibid.). This is also reflected in the ethnicity data, where total 84 % of Scottish population declares as White-Scottish (National Records of Scotland. Scotland's Census 2011b).

These statistics show that in both countries of concern for this research, national identities and religious identities are non-uniform. In the case of Scotland this brings attention towards its position within the Union.

The political union between Scotland and England was signed in 1707. Scotland has kept some aspects of independent status to the present day, with the St. Andrew's cross flag being the most visible symbol to visitors. Scotland revisited its status in the Union in 1979, and again on 18th of September 2014, through separate devolution referenda. The latter one I followed closely while working my PhD proposal.

The referendum question was "Should Scotland be an independent country?" The referendum failed with 55.3% of voters choosing to stay within the United Kingdom (Gov.UK 2014).

The narrow margin in the polling caused debates that have also influenced the debate on the EU referendum that won with 51.9 % of voters deciding to leave the EU from the whole of the United Kingdom. However, if data is analysed locally, it is clear that Scotland voted to remain in the EU with the 62 % of votes (The Electoral Commission 2018). The profound constitutional questions surrounding "Brexit", have yet to be resolved during the write up of this thesis.

The discussion regarding Scottish independence and the position of Scotland within the EU has marked my time here, since I arrived in 2015. While Bosnia and Herzegovina struggles on the path towards the EU membership, the UK on the other hand, votes to leave it. While people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are supportive of joining the EU, public opinion in Scotland is divided. These political developments also show that group identities are contested in both countries in relation to broader socio-economic and political concerns.

1.6.3. Rivers: From West to East, and South to North

All of the places that this research is focusing on lie on the rivers hence they are present in many of my *field recordings*, many *soundwalks* were performed by them, and my interviewees often mention them.

In Scotland, the River Dee flows from West towards East and on its path it goes through Banchory and Aberdeen. South from Aberdeen city centre, the River Dee flows into the sea, and north from the city centre, the River Don also joins the sea.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the river that goes through Sarajevo is called Miljacka; it is one of the tributaries of the River Bosna that emerges from the mountain Igman near Sarajevo and flows north towards the River Sava that would eventually join the River Danube. Maglaj, a small town in central Bosnia lies on the River Bosna too.

The river Dee in Scotland, and the river Bosna in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Google Maps 2019a; 2019b).

Hence in Scotland, the River Dee connects Banchory and Aberdeen, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is the River Bosna flowing from the south towards the north that connects Sarajevo and Maglaj.

In the summer of 2014 a natural disaster struck the area of southeast Europe causing major floods in Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia. In Bosnia, over 100 000 houses and 230 schools and hospitals were rendered unfit to use, and over a million people lost access to clean water supplies, due to these floods (Samenow 2014). The majority of houses and significant local infrastructure in Maglaj was severely damaged. In Maglaj and the area around the town, 70 landslides were initiated by the floods, and the total estimated damage was 85 million euros (OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015).

Major problems in the area were also caused by landmines planted during the war in 1990s, which moved from marked areas due to these landslides. These have posed a significant danger to local people and prevented roaming in the broader area around the river for years after the flood.

The following year, in winter 2015, Banchory was also affected by flooding that inflicted significant damage. My interviewee in Banchory Bertha Forbes describes the sound of the river during the floods (Forbes 2016)[15], while in Maglaj, Admira Bradarić describes damage caused by the flood to her house and the gallery (Bradarić 2016).[16]

Flood-stained facade, Maglaj. Photograph, 2018.

1.6.4. Sarajevo

Sarajevo is a city of 275 524 people in the central part of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the capital city of the country.

The town has developed around both banks of the river Miljacka that flows through the middle of the city, and its architecture represents a visible timeline of the city. In the most eastern point, old Ottoman houses are stacked on hills, and as the narrow roads descend down the valley towards the river the Old town presents itself with its pedestrianized cobbled streets, numerous shops selling crafts, small cafes and restaurants. This is Čaršija, the traditional place of trade since Ottoman times, in which the sound of urban traffic meet the sound of craftsmen's tools making decorative copper coffee sets and various other goods. Follow the river downstream, and this architecture of shops made of wood of roofs and windows opens up to wide streets and boulevards built in the time of Austro-Hungarian Empire. The buildings are tall and decorated with columns, with narrow, tall windows and doors.

[15] Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Interviews/Bertha Forbes
[16] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Interviews/Admira Bradarić

Left: Ottoman part of town called Čaršija, Sarajevo, photograph.
Right: Titova Street, Sarajevo, photograph.

Further down the river the architecture changes to high modernist tower blocks approached by a car through a maze of one one-way streets which also reveal parks surrounded by these multi-storey buildings. Children playing outside between the tall buildings mark the *soundscape* of this part of town. A majority of the population lives in tall buildings as the town has developed in a relatively small geographic space surrounded by mountains. Many of the most architecturally 'brutalist' areas have been built to accommodate the Winter Olympics in 1984 that completely transformed the city and turned the four mountains, all in half an hour drive reach from the city centre to contemporary sports facilities. Ironically, the mountains crucial for the Olympics as Trebević, Bjelašnica, Igman and Jahorina have created a death trap during the war allowing the 4 years long siege of the residents of the city. The siege lasted for 46 months or 11825 days, the one of the longest siege of the city in the history of warfare (Cerkez 2012).

Sign at the main bus station depicting Vučko, mascot of Winter Olympic Games covered with bullet holes, Sarajevo, photograph, 2016.

During the war, the majority of the infrastructure such as hospitals, transportation, electricity and water supplies, schools were heavily damaged or destroyed. Many of the residential buildings were also considerably damaged, and 11541 citizens including 1500 children lost their life.

Such devastation and the nature of warfare in which civilians are threatened 24/7 and targeted in cues for international aid, bread and water, left many scars in the city which in every corner marks names of people who have died during the siege. The plaques are on the walls of schools, of public and resident buildings, on markets, parks, and bridges. As these events are still fresh in the memory of people, their role and impact for residents have been profound.

Sarajevo today is a popular tourist site for international visitors. It is often called the European Jerusalem due to its multi-religious and multi-ethnic profile and numerous religious buildings and schools. The other description for Sarajevo is that it is a place when West meets the East.

Tourists are drawn to Sarajevo by its rich history, culture, and the beauty of surrounding nature. Although environmental awareness in B&H is still at a low level, smog is a major problem in winter months, many rivers are polluted, there are remote locations and beauty spots which are still home to bears, wolves, lynx, boars and many other birds and animals. In summer, cafes and bars open

their beer gardens and music, the noise of traffic and people flood the streets. The elderly socialist-era trams are not sliding through traffic as in other European cities, but as beasts, they shake and roar making the Austro-Hungarian buildings vibrate and tremble.[17]

Left: Tatra K2 tram, built in the 1970s, in service in Sarajevo, photograph.
Right: Medieval *Stećak* (tombstone) in front of the 49 000 m^2 shopping mall and the office tower SCC, Sarajevo, photograph.

The gentrification of the post-war period is taking over the parks and public spaces. Hotels and expensive flats are built in every corner, and massive shopping centres such as SCC in the Marijin Dvor area of the city are discussed in the interviews. As part of these contemporary developments, private museums, 'war hostels', and other forms of monetisation of the past are taking over and often presenting one-sided narratives of the conflict.

In summer, the streets of cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are flooded with life, with indoor life coming outside. Numerous restaurants, bars and cafes open their doors, windows and move tables outside. This opportunity to hear the most intimate conversations, children shouting and crying around a meal occurs especially in Sarajevo's old part of town, where passers-by walk between the tables and public and private life is blurred. That is where friends meet, and deals are made, especially in the time of Ramadan.[18] Loud music coming from cafes would also surprise a visitor, and it blends with the sound of traffic, pedestrians, and street sellers especially in the city centre as the custom is to go out for a walk in long summer evenings when the heat is subsided. In the peak

[17] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/Tram - City Centre
[18] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/Baščaršija - time of Ramadan

of the summer, thousands of people are on the streets, walking and meeting friends, chatting with other passers-by while enjoying some ice cream or a warm pastry during the walk.

1.6.5. Maglaj

This town in the central Bosnia is 2 hours drive north from Sarajevo. The meaning of word 'magla' is fog, which suits this city as it is positioned in the valley of the river Bosna.

Maglaj is in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, very close to the border of Republika Srpska. Although this border is administrative, it still influences the town that had an ethnically mixed population before the recent war, but in 2013 census recorded the population of 6099, consisting of 90.5 % of Bosniaks (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016b).

The river Bosna divides the town between Old and New Maglaj. Old Maglaj is positioned on the sides of the hill called Jandroš and Gračin Brijeg.

Left: A view from the fortress, Maglaj, photograph.
Right: Old town captured from the base of the bridge, Maglaj, photograph.

Maglaj dates from 14th century when the fortress on one of the hills over the Maglaj valley was built. During the Ottoman period, the fortress was developed further. In the 17th century, the clock tower was built next to the fortress (Općina Maglaj 2017).

In the 1878 the Austro-Hungarian empire built the train line connecting Sarajevo and Maglaj which still represents the primary connection between the two cities by train. Nowadays the train station is in poor condition, and parts of it are derelict. Despite this, I have managed to take some

photographs and capture some of the sounds of the station including a cargo[19] and passenger train.[20]

Contemporary Maglaj attracts a significant number of tourist visitors that climb the steep path to the fortress. The other interesting objects are mostly religious in nature, Jusuf-Pašina mosque, one of the most beautiful mosques of Ottoman period in B&H (Općina Maglaj 2017). The mosque was built in the second half of 16th century (Ibid.). The other local religious building is the shrine of Holy Leopold built in the 1970s.

Maglaj and surrounding area has lost almost half of the population since 1990. The biggest employer is the paper factory Natron-Hayat known as 'Natronka' positioned on the edge of the town. The textile industry is also a significant employer.


Left: Paper factory Natron-Hayat, Maglaj, photograph.
Right: Truck carrying wood under the bridge with graffiti "Tito we love you", in proximity to the factory next to both Yugoslav and contemporary sign boards.

The paper factory attracted my interest as it is mentioned often in conversations of people and it plays such an essential role in the city. I managed to approach the factory, and I documented it in photographs, with numerous trucks coming in and delivering wood for paper production. I have

[19] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/cargo train - train station
[20] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/passenger train - train station

also made a sound recording of the factory from my car parked nearby the facilities.[21] The steady noise coming from the factory can be contrasted with the *field recording* of the factory I have made from the hill and holiday site 'Borik' surrounded by forest.[22]

For me, the *soundscape* in Maglaj is underpinned by the sound of the river, calmness and tranquillity of the town's streets as Maglaj does not sit on a major road and traffic moves slowly through it. The sound of bicycles and the slow pace of life shapes the unique atmosphere in a town in which most residents know each other.[23] The natural sounds of the river, wind in treetops, and chatter of passers-by are contrasted with the constant hum of the factory coming from outskirts of the town, and the sound of old trains passing through the station a few times a day. The train station is in poor repair, and the underpass, taking passengers to the opposite platform, feels eerie as it is rarely used.[24]

1.6.6. Aberdeen

Aberdeen is the third largest city in Scotland. It is positioned in the North East of Scotland, around three hours drive from Edinburgh and Glasgow. Although the Gaelic language has a very small presence in the city, the local dialect Doric is occasionally referred to as the language of the North-East (Aberdeen, Gaelic and the Gaels: BBC Alba 2018).

Aberdeen is usually described as a city of business, in recent decades named as the 'Oil Capital of Europe'. The presence of the oil companies is noticeable in the city centre, as well as in outskirts of the city through architecture and infrastructure. As this research has been developed during the downturn in oil prices, it has witnessed the local business and value of properties decreasing significantly, which also led to some changes in the cultural landscape of the city.

The city's population is 227,560 people (Aberdeen City Council 2018). The city is surrounded by a wide hinterland of agricultural and commuter towns forming Aberdeenshire, one of the 32 council areas in Scotland. This area is often referred in conversations as the 'Shire'.

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[21] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/Car Park of the 'Natronka' Paper Factory
[22] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/Paper Factory & (illegal) loggers - 'Borik' Picnic Site
[23] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/'Lilies' promenade
[24] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/underpass - train station

The relationship between the city and the 'Shire' has been often described in the interviews as very close, as the residents of Aberdeenshire take part in daily life of Aberdeen. Moreover, the tourist attractions of Aberdeenshire often take visitors and tourists away from the city towards surroundings hills, long sandy beaches, woods and castles.

As a business-oriented city, Aberdeen is a home for people from various parts of the world who work in the oil industry, and it's supporting infrastructure, administration, agriculture, and education. The city is home to two universities, Robert Gordon University (RGU) and the University of Aberdeen (UoA). Both universities are in the outskirts of Aberdeen.

The University of Aberdeen is positioned in Old Aberdeen, a town founded in the late 16th century with the King's College at the time, in its centre. Old Aberdeen was administratively independent until 1891, although it's now integrated with Aberdeen, it's intimate architecture, cobbled High Street[25], high walls and narrow corridors still set the area apart from the architecture dominant in the rest of Aberdeen (Fraser and Lee 2000 p. 479).

The two rivers are the Dee and the river Don. The river Don flows near Old Aberdeen and the University of Aberdeen, north from the city centre, while river Dee flows south from the city centre along the campus of Robert Gordon University and Gray's School of Art. Both rivers flow in direction west to east.

Left: Aberdeen beach, photograph.
Right: The River Dee near Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, photograph.

[25] Available in the portfolio: Places/Aberdeen/Field Recordings/High Street-Old Aberdeen

Aberdeen has the nickname 'The Granite City' as the majority of the buildings are made of granite, which in the past was quarried in and around Aberdeen. This gives Aberdeen's other nicknames such as the 'Silver City' and the 'Grey City'. Granite buildings give the city the grey impression, although, in sunny days, granite looks bright and the shiny crystals in granite will attract the eye. As Donald Butler, one of the interviewees who live in Aberdeen, describes, granite as a material doesn't age, no patina is created, hence it is difficult to determine the age of the buildings. In time, dirt from the polluted urban air gives the buildings a darker shade (Butler 2017)[26]. For Butler, the decorations of the buildings, especially the columns and facades, lack in detail because granite is a tough material to work with; hence these carvings give the city a look of a drawing or a comic (Ibid.).

Up: Rose Street and Union Street, Aberdeen city centre, photographs.
Lower centre: Marischal College, Aberdeen, photograph.

[26] Available in the portfolio: Places/Aberdeen/Interviews/Donald Butler

Granite used to be excavated in Aberdeenshire as well as in the city, for example, the Rubislaw quarry in the west end of the city started operation in 17th century and represents one of the biggest human-made holes in Europe. Nowadays access to the quarry is not permitted, and the hole is filled with water, creating the lake (Rubislaw Quarry 2019).

Aberdeen has not just recently been perceived as a city of the industry as the example of Rubislaw quarry shows; granite has been one of the major industries in the past, along with ship building, paper making, textile, soap and candles making, leather processing, fishing and trade. In 20th century in a period between the world wars and in post WWII years, Aberdeen represented one of the most popular tourist resorts in Scotland (Fraser and Lee 2000).

Ferry for Orkney in Aberdeen harbour, photograph.

Aberdeen harbour is still very important for the city, and the ferries for Orkney and Shetland are visible even from the city centre. The hum of these ships represents a sound that I relate to Aberdeen, together with seagulls in the distance.[27] The call of seagulls is replaced with the sound of crows and pigeons in most cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Specifically, seagulls are heard by most residents in central B&H only when going to the Adriatic seaside, a traditional destination for summer holidays, as the saying goes 'there is no holiday without seaside at least for a week!'

The sound of the sea[28] and the harbour is a fascinating feature of Aberdeen, although the majority of my interviewees point out that the sound of heavy traffic is the most prominent sound of

[27] Available in the portfolio: Places/Aberdeen/Field Recordings/Harbour
[28] Available in the portfolio: Places/Aberdeen/Field Recordings/sea waves-beach

Aberdeen.[29] This is especially the case in the city centre, which also allows numerous underpasses and corridors that allow contrasting experiences of Aberdeen. From the noise and rushed pedestrians and traffic of Union Street, to the cold atmosphere and humming suggested by the sound of dripping water in the areas under Union street towards the Aberdeen Market,[30] and the music club Tunnels, this route takes the walker though the unsettling back alleys underneath the shops towards the train station. These areas of the city are where different domains of business, travel, poverty and homelessness, as well as expensive high street shops meet, passing under and over each other. The somewhat vertical, multi-layered nature of architecture in Aberdeen caused me to lose my way many times, and it drew me towards its dark core built in granite.

1.6.7. Banchory

Banchory is a town in South-West Aberdeenshire, 40-minute drive from Aberdeen. According to the census in 2011, its population is 7278 people (Aberdeenshire Council 2011).

Banchory is known as part of a broader area around river Dee, called Royal Deeside, featuring parks, large estates and several natural and heritage sites. This has been linked to the selection of "Balmoral as a royal residence in the 1840s" (Jamieson and Wilson 1999 p. 3). According to Jamieson and Wilson, the site was attractive for the Royal family due to stunning nature and the high number of sunny days in the area even during the winter (Ibid.). The development of the Deeside railway that operated between Aberdeen and Banchory from 1853 to 1960s increased the popularity of the area with tourists (Ibid.).

The other significant feature of Banchory is a golf course that opened in 1905 (Jamieson and Wilson 1999). The site is positioned next to the river Dee and nowadays, on its fringe the walkers and runners following the river, encounter golfers. There are signs along this area warning walkers of dangers of the golf balls as well a notice not to enter the premises of the golf course. Parallel walking trails at times just 30 cm apart with the fence between them divide these different groups of users of this site.

[29] Available in the portfolio: Places/Aberdeen/Field Recordings/Crossroads - Aberdeen Arts Centre
[30] Available in the portfolio: Places/Aberdeen/Field Recordings/underpass behind the Market

Footpath next to the golf course in Banchory, photograph.

Amongst the natural sites in Banchory and its proximity is the Bridge of Feugh[31], which allows the up-close experience of wild water of the one of the smaller contributors to the river Dee, the Water of Feugh. Although it is an excellent site to see salmon leaping, I didn't manage to witness this myself.

The landscapes surrounding Banchory were those I experienced most often, while climbing to the Scolty Hill[32] whose trails take walkers through the forest and barren hills to a tower with metal stairs. The tower was erected in 1842 in memory of General William Burnett, a founder of Banchory Lodge Estate in the first half of 19th century (Jamieson and Wilson 1999).

Left: River Dee downstream, Banchory, photograph.
Right: High Street, Banchory, photograph.

[31] Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Field Recordings/The Falls of Feugh
[32] Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Field Recordings/wind - Scolty Hill

Tower at Scolty Hill, Banchory, photograph.

The other significant site in the proximity of Banchory, Crathes Castle Estate and Gardens features a 16th century tower house surrounded by a garden. The house was home to Burnett family for over 350 years, and the family "had roots in the area dating back to 1323 when Robert the Bruce granted them nearby land" (National Trust for Scotland 2019). The house is surrounded by wildlife including roe deer, red squirrels, woodpeckers amongst others.

The *soundscape* in Banchory is dominated by a busy road, which goes through the middle of the town. Compared to the other places of my research, I have spent the majority of my time in Banchory in the exploration of the river Dee[33] and Scolty Hill. The sound of tall evergreen trees rubbing against each other is one of the most surprising sounds I have ever heard.[34]

In the summer of 2016 I camped in the wild garden of the arts organisation *The Barn* for three days. This residency enabled me to reflect a bit more on the *soundscapes* of gardens[35] which often create relaxing visual experiences, while the sound continues to reveal the high intensity of human activity such as the noise of aeroplanes or road traffic.

[33] Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Field Recordings/birds - River Dee
[34] Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Field Recordings/Evergreen Trees - Scolty Hill
[35] Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Field Recordings/Rain - the Garden of the Barn

2. Here and There: Listening in Place

2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I have indicated the context of this research in relation to geography, as well as sound art discourse. The short overview of the research methods aimed to provide an insight into how this research has been developed, while the questions provide some directions as to what has been explored.

This chapter emerges from the following research question:

How do personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place, and how does this form of listening specifically inform approaches to sound art?

This chapter aims to map and discuss discourses of sound art initially informed by geographers such as Yi-Fu Tuan, Doreen Massey and Paul Rodaway, tackling resident perspectives of place, and multisensory processes of perception. These authors made me aware that places can be perceived through different lenses dependent on our status, background and position within the place. Here, the duration of our relationship with the place is of special significance, so I differentiate between visitor and resident perspectives throughout the work.

This aspect of the research has urged me to collect semi-structured interviews and integrate my experience of place in my work. The work of Doreen Massey, in particular, has empowered me to recognise my background and my migrant status as a contributing factor in this work.

The interest in place doesn't just emerge from my interest in personal identities, it is also a common subject in sound art research that often works with the method of *soundwalk* and *field recording*. The treatment of places as mere locations of sound to be used in compositional practice is common, however, as this chapter shows this practice struggles to engage with multiple contexts and complex narratives of place. In this regard, I recognise that sound art discourses are influenced by the traditions of *soundscape* and *electroacoustic* composition observed in the work of sound artists and authors such as Alan Licht (2009; 2007), LaBelle (2015), Kim-Cohen (2009). This forms my second research question that is in the centre of this chapter:

How does the acknowledgment of context through the intrusion of place-based, identity-based approaches challenge the field of sound art?

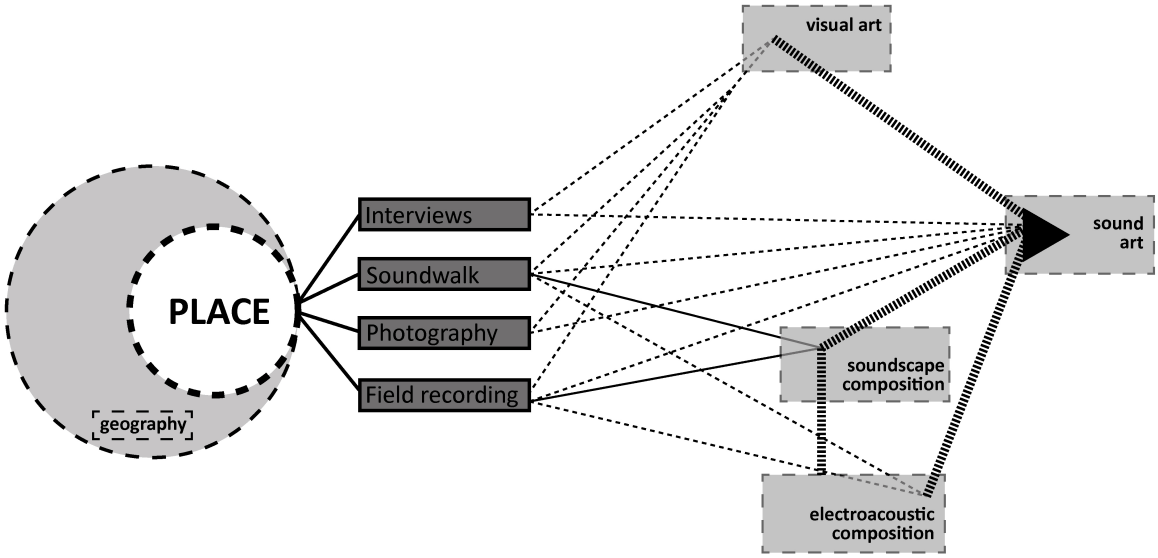
The discussion of 'material' focused approaches as opposed to the contextual in sound art discourse shows that the field is interdisciplinary, inhabited with practitioners from both visual art and music backgrounds, with their differing approaches to place. Here, the notions of *reduced listening*, that derives from the French *electroacoustic* tradition of *acousmatic music*, encouraging 'material' focused listening detached from the contextual aspects of its source, is of interest (Schaeffer 2017). This attitude can be also observed in the work of sound art authors such as Salomé Voegelin. Hence, the critical engagement with the work of sound art authors like Voegelin, as well as Michel Chion, Pierre Schaeffer and R. Murray Schafer amongst others, has deepened my understanding of the field.

This also led me towards a revisiting of discussions on what sound art may be, by building on the knowledge acquired throughout the chapter. In the 2.3. Sound Art: Discipline and Theme section of this chapter, I will show that material focused approaches in sound art don't just influence the ways in which artists engage with context of place or personal identities, but this focus on materiality brings other perspectives to bear on what sound art could be. The chapter will end with a consideration of the medium, and sound as a theme of exploration by tackling the following research question:

How can an artist negotiate the interdisciplinary challenge of music versus visual art approaches in sound art?

By engaging with different points of view, acquiring terminology deriving from *electroacoustic* music and learning about different approaches in making sound art I acquire ways to understand different approaches and negotiate them. This will be practiced further in the third chapter where I will embrace *soundwalking* and learn from composers such as Katherine Norman and Hildegard Westerkamp.

Hence discussion on interdisciplinary aspects of sound art in this chapter is concerned with the ontological and epistemological approaches in sound art in relation to treatment of ideas and materials in art practice.



Place-methods-disciplines, illustration.

The illustration depicts the framework of this chapter.

'Place' signifies actual places (Sarajevo, Maglaj, Aberdeen and Banchory). The awareness of multisensory experiences of places, resident and visitor perceptions was informed by geography. This exploration encouraged me to use a range of methods (interviews, *soundwalks*, photography and *field recording*).

Soundwalks and *field recording* are primary methods of *soundscape* composition, which in turn inform the broader arena of sound art. Although sound art as a discipline can draw from many methods, the knowledge of *soundwalks* and *field recording* is also 'filtered through' the discipline of *electroacoustic* composition. In this way, specific compositional approaches (*soundscape* and *electroacoustic*) continue to inform sound art as a discipline. The relationship between *soundscape* composition and *electroacoustic* composition is indicated in the illustration although it is beyond the scope of this research. As I am drawing from both compositional approaches, it is useful to differentiate that R. Murray Schafer is a Canadian composer and by discussing his work I introduce *soundscape* composition, while Michel Chion and Pierre Schaeffer are French composers and authors, key figures of *acousmatic music* and *electroacoustic* composition. Also, the term *musique concrète* is commonly used when referring to Schaeffer's approach by authors such as Brandon LaBelle.

Next, visual art can utilise a wide range of methods, however, even when practising *soundwalking* or *field recording*, visual artists might not draw from traditions of music composition. Equally, sound art can draw from methods informed by a broad range of disciplines such as ethnography, anthropology or oral history. Depending on the artist's background, they might utilise *field recording* in different ways compared to those practitioners with experience in composition.[36]

The relationship between *electroacoustic* composition, sound art and visual art can be extremely vague, and this is often debated in the field, as for example when a sound piece becomes a piece of music or an installation? Of particular interest is the relationship between visual art and sound art which does not just open a gate towards audio-visual and contextually informed approaches[37], but also specific media, such as installation, performance, and audio-visual work; inclusive of video art, internet art or interactive works. This connection also informs site-specific and socially engaged practices.

The illustration aims to indicate how different disciplines shape sound art discourse in the context of this chapter, and not necessarily how sound art influences other disciplines.

The landscape of sound art is fragmented; inhabited by composers, musicians, installation artists and many others. It is interdisciplinary, and its porous boundaries shift and move, they are continuously negotiated and re-thought. In order to navigate this landscape, I have focused on authors who helped me to understand the landscape of sound art, thus informing my work. They also helped me in developing listening skills and overall criticality in my creative work.

Moreover, valuable discussions with colleagues from *electroacoustic* and musical backgrounds have shown that the major challenge of interdisciplinary research lies in the terminology of the field, and approach to practice. Although I will not be able to discuss in detail every aspect of this challenge in

[36] For instance a PhD in arts titled *Recounting Skopje, Skopje 2014-Symbolic and Citizens' Narratives* by Ivana Sidzimovska, based at Bauhaus University in Weimar, develops a research methodology based on documentation (in written, visual and audio form). She interviewed citizens while walking in Skopje (Macedonia), and her primary creative output was audio-guided tours that users can access from their phones. The work has been developed without reference to the methodology of *soundwalking*. It presents an example of research using the method that artists with a music and visual background treat differently by drawing on different sources (Sidzimovska 2019).

[37] For example socially engaged works often emerge from particular social contexts, for instance artists such as Allan Kaprow and Suzanne Lacy. In these works activism also often plays a role. In ex-Yugoslavia, artists such as Lana Čmajčanin, Jusuf Hadžifejzović and Adela Jušić create critical work across the media of performance art and installation.

this thesis, I will focus on the issues that shaped this research. Hence, this chapter will discuss different modes of listening, *soundwalk* methodology and the different attitudes towards memory, emotional and personal aspects of listening. Some practical concerns regarding the role of the audience, interaction with the audience, and the conceptual underpinnings of my work will be tackled in the final chapter.

The interdisciplinary challenge also occurs in sound art literature in which different approaches, backgrounds, and terminology is constantly being negotiated. The fragmentary nature of the field at times has proven difficult to navigate, hence the role of this chapter is to offer a reading of it from the perspective of this research.

Moreover, the body of literature available on sound art documents a possible shift from media focused approaches, to a more subject-focused approach. The media focused approach would represent works that contain not just sound, but explore also the compositional, spatial and aesthetic characteristics of sound in a composition, piece or installation. On the other hand, a subject-focused approach develops the work tackling sound as the theme of exploration including embodiment, perception, recognition, social and personal aspects of listening. In this form, the work could be a composition or a sound piece, but also a performance, drawing, or a sculpture. These two approaches don't necessarily have to oppose each other.

However, they show that the medium doesn’t have to be a message, necessarily, referring to McLuhan's (2008) notions of the medium as a focus of the exploration. This shift comes from the research of sound as an experiential phenomenon, and works about sound not necessarily reproducing sound.

This approach is important for the understanding of my practice, and it is informed by Seth Kim-Cohen's writing on *non-cochlear* sonic art. Kim-Cohen is an Associate Professor in art history and theory at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Additionally, Marcel Cobussen, Vincent Meelberg and Barry Truax (2017) develop the argument about this shift towards a theme-focused approach further, by proposing the term '*sounding art*'. Brandon LaBelle in *Background Noise, Perspectives on Sound Art* (2015) offers a wide range of approaches to sound art, including numerous *performance art* practitioners and artists who have been placed traditionally within the canons of visual art. This discussion will be presented in more depth in the second part of this chapter.

Sound phenomena and the act of listening as a theme of exploration can highlight the complexities of our relationship with environments, including the ephemeral and invisible aspects of sound. As an invisible entity that penetrates and possesses the objects, sound highlights issues of agency and power, embodiment and intimacy. Specifically, sound as a powerful agent of memory and remembering has been the focus of my research, as my interest lies in personal identity in relation to *soundscapes*.

However, in a discussion on how memories shape our listening experience, I have come across the notions of *reduced listening*, or listening detached from the cause of sound and the contextual aspects of sound, repeatedly. *Reduced listening* assumes a focus on the material qualities of sound such as pitch and intervals as "an inherent characteristic of sound, independent of the sound's cause or the comprehension of its meaning" (Chion 1994 p. 30).

Although the concept derives from the tradition of *electroacoustic* music, precisely *acousmatic music* developed in the 1940s by French composer Pierre Schaeffer, the approach of *reduced listening* still influences the sound art context as this chapter will conclude. *Reduced listening* was introduced in the *Treatise on Musical Objects* (2017), originally published in 1966 as *Traité des Objets Musicaux*. The importance of the tradition of *acousmatic music* for this work is linked to the treatment and perception of sound recording which was the focus of Schaeffer's interest, however, as this chapter will suggest, the approach to listening devised by Schaeffer has bled beyond this particular frame and often is applied to listening to any sound stimuli, recorded or otherwise.

Pierre Schaeffer doesn't define or describe *reduced listening* directly but he uses a set of analogies, comparisons and graphs in which he introduces new terms that are dependent on each other. For example he makes a point (a) defining the *sound object*:

> ...the distinction [between] sound object - musical object, as far as a difference of nature goes-collapses as soon as the sound object is defined theoretically: everything that can be heard in reduced listening. The former contains the latter. Musical objects, phonetic objects, industrial sounds, birdsong, and so on are sound objects. (Schaeffer 2017 p. 274)

He continues by presenting his point (b) which is concerned with identification and description of sound objects:

> Where identification is concerned, very general rules have been suggested, which would enable objects to be articulated in the sound universe independently of the pertinent characteristics of each source. If such a general, even if not precise, approach to sound objects is successful, it will be applicable to the musical object in particular. (Schaeffer 2017 p. 275)

In point (d) Schaeffer focuses on "musicianly invention" (2017 p. 275) in the following way:

> (...) this should create sound objects varied enough to extend the study of sonorities while limiting their varieties so that, later, they can be found suitable for a musicality yet to be defined. (Ibid.)

He concludes, lastly, in point (e):

> All of this finally pins down the term musicianly listening, which has been becoming gradually clearer: it is doubly restricted, then, on the one hand because it is not asked to explain all the sound structures of the object, but only the structures that identify it (point b); on the other hand, because informed by it, we choose suitable objects (point d) for it. It is through these two restrictions that makes 'reduced' listening into a 'speciality'. (Schaeffer 2017 p. 275)

The framework presented in this series of quotations shows that Schaeffer is interested in the identification of sound objects; however, this shouldn't be based on the "characteristics of each source" (2017 p. 275). If the sound is not identified based on its source, such as a car horn, or hum from an industrial facility, then an alternative identification based on the material properties of sounds had to be developed. For such a process to take place, specific training would be necessary which is assumed by the "speciality" that Schaeffer refers to when explaining "musicianly" listening in the point (e) of the quotation above (Schaeffer 2017 p. 275). This leads to the assumption that Schaeffer is not necessarily interested in the perception of sound of untrained listeners, the conclusion that brings issues of access and education into the work. This specifically problematizes the 'material' focused approach in the field and the consistent reference to *reduced listening* in the work of sound art authors such as Salomé Voegelin which I will tackle in this and the following chapter.

Michel Chion, who is one of the most well known interpreters of Schaeffer's writing, defines *reduced listening* comprehensively in the following way:

> …[a] mode of listening that deliberately and artificially abstracts from causes-and I would add from effects-and from meaning in order to attend to sound considered for itself and not only with regard to its sensible aspects of pitch and rhythm but also of grain, matter, shape, mass, and volume. (Chion 2016 p. 267)

The awareness of the *reduced listening* approach has been helpful in my practice, improving my listening skills in respect of the material quality of sound. The focus on sound properties as Chion (2016) describes it within the capability of my non-composer's ear, increased my general appreciation and awareness of *soundscapes*.

On the other hand, my attempts to practice *reduced listening* in everyday circumstances have been challenged constantly by the intrusion of my mind while listening. Here, the remembering process and contextual dimension of the place in which I am listening offered an immense emotional dimension that I could not ignore. Specifically, listening to Sarajevo has been saturated with the memory of the siege, war, and post-conflict realities. In that sense, Sarajevo acts as a case study that brings the intensity of memory over and over again to reality, and I carry it everywhere I go. Moreover, the precariousness of my non-EU status in the UK, from an immigration / visa point of view, has increased my feeling of displacement and made me more sensitive to issues of personal identities and belonging.

How can I listen to the fireworks at New Year in a purely aesthetic way, without being reminded of the beautiful, glowing shells, the streams of perfectly aligned dots moving across the night sky, and hitting the glass surfaces of a building? On impact, they would create small explosions of colour, just like in video games. I was five years old, and I watched the scene of the shelling of the two UNITIC skyscrapers, landmarks of Sarajevo, from my grandma's house. My mum, sister and I stayed with her for almost a year at the beginning of the war while my father was isolated in another part of the city, cut off from any communication with the outside world.

The listening experience of New Year fireworks represents listening in the moment, the listening to *soundscape* "*in situ*" (Chion 2016 p. 139). In this case, I am influenced by the context of the place in which I am listening, through the lens of my previous experiences of other places.

2.2. About Place: Geographer, Sound Artist & Resident

I have navigated the fragmented landscape of sound art as a walker in the Scottish mountains, relying on the skills and knowledge acquired prior to this research. I listened to the authors and the creative practitioners, and I learned from them. As an artist with a visual art background, I knew how I might navigate this path from reading maps and a compass, but learning the local topography, wind patterns and movement of the stars have taught me to walk in pace with this landscape. The place that I arrived at felt different from what I imagined. The paths that took me to the other side of the mountain were negotiated along the way thanks to crucial texts which toughened me up, challenged me, and made me change my course at times. The route I am

mapping in this chapter might seem odd and unlikely, but I am mapping it for myself and other artists who may travel in this landscape in the future.[38]

This section of the chapter is informed by the work of several geographers. I find the writing of Yi-Fu Tuan, a Chinese-American author, important as it urged me to think about the place where I am recording, walking and listening. In the following quotation, he invites us to pause our movement in other to learn about the environment, consequently turning space to a place, a more specific concept endowed with value of that location for us personally.

> From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place. (Tuan 1977 p. 6)

The authors of *humanist geography* rising in the 1970s have focused on "the idea of place as a meaningful component in human life - a centre of meaning and field of care that formed the basis for human interaction" (Cresswell 2004 p. 57).

The following premises of *humanist* and more generally, human geography have informed my research as they drew from "Marxism, feminism and cultural studies" (Cresswell 2004 p. 57). The following quotation presents their approach:

> Seamon, Pred, Thrift and Massey have insisted that places should not be thought of in terms of stasis and boundedness but are instead the product of processes that extend well beyond the confines of a particular place. (Cresswell 2004 p. 57)

This group of authors have attracted my attention as they speak of flux and movement, adjectives used often to describe sonic phenomena (Voegelin 2019b; Labelle 2018), but they refer to the perception of place. Specifically, the work of Yi-Fu Tuan and Doreen Massey problematize the fixed notions of place. Tuan focuses primarily on the poetics of place and home, whilst Massey introduces feminist points of view in relation to home, place, and the idea of mobility.

These authors have been significant for my initial literature review because they address how our relationship with place shapes our perception of it, a key component of this research. Consequently these insights shaped the research methodology towards the use of interviews, and the practice of continuous note taking and recording.

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[38] As discussed in section 1.5. I have used my subjective voice in a creatively written form, formatted in italic font. This writing opens this chapter.

My research is focused on four places in two countries; Maglaj and Banchory were unfamiliar to me prior to this research. Due to this unfamiliarity, and informed by Tuan's approach, I have become aware of my position as a visitor in Maglaj and Banchory. The awareness of the different perspectives shaped by our relationship with the place, led me to focus on residential perspectives, integrating autobiographical memory, and my and my interviewees' personal experiences of listening.

For example, according to Tuan, the consequence of revisiting a place, or spending more time at a specific location, changes space, as a more open concept, to a place as more specific (Tuan 1977). With every visit to Banchory and Maglaj, I have become more familiar with these places. I have learned to navigate their streets and parks; I have become aware of the distances and locations of the main landmarks.

I came to Maglaj for the first time on a very warm summer's day. The temperature was over 30 degrees, and I decided to climb up the steep hill to the fortress. This caused me great distress and a mild heat stroke. I remember the climb and the sound of a call for prayer mixed with the sound of crickets. I remember the heat of the day, the burden of heavy recording equipment and a feeling of thirst. The fortress became a specific place and Maglaj's fortress is still associated with that first visit to me.

Yi-Fu Tuan states that

> the visual quality of an environment is quickly tallied if one has the artist's eye. But the 'feel' of a place takes longer to acquire. It is made up of experiences, mostly fleeting and undramatic, repeated day after day and over the span of years. It is a unique blend of sights, sounds and smells, a unique harmony of natural and artificial rhythms such as times of sunrise and sunset, of work and play. The feel of a place is registered in one's muscles and bones. (Tuan 1977 p. 183)

This quotation reveals the multisensory nature of perception sensed through the body, such as weather, but also patterns of work and play.

For example, during my first visit to Maglaj, the paper factory "Natronka", situated in the outskirts of the town, wasn't working at full capacity, due to an industrial accident the day before. As a result, I was not aware of the specific hum of the factory.[39] This noise was brought to my attention in my interviews with the residents. They also described the sound of the occasional sudden

[39] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/Car Park of the 'Natronka' Paper

emissions of factory gases released during the night. My interviewees noticed the releases during long summer evenings spent outside (Bradarić 2017). For instance Mirza Bradarić says:

> I think that is the first, that essentially can be heard the most, beside that hum [of the factory], but also in combination of all of that, it is a zen-like, it is peaceful, around 2 o'clock in the morning you can simply hear that hum. You can hear the hum of the water, you can hear the hum of the factory which is somehow "folded" into that sound which simply stays there, present inside of any person which is there longer then five or ten years. (Bradarić 2017, 23 min 50 sec)[40]

As a non-resident, I didn't have an insight into this aspect of the social life in town, a sound that some of my interviewees found important. Similarly, at first, I was not aware of the sulphurous smell of the factory gases, but after this was mentioned in the interviews I was able to recognise it in the surrounding area of the factory (Bradarić 2017).

During the following visits to Maglaj, I recorded the *soundscapes* from the Borik picnic site just above the Maglaj valley. This is a hill with picturesque hiking trails through the forest. During the *soundwalk*, I accidentally picked up the sound of the factory chimney with my microphone. This surprised me as trees obstructed the view of the valley. I wondered how could I hear this sound in my headphones? Then, I realised that although I was on the hill in the forest while the factory was down in the valley, the factory' chimney was high enough to be in relative proximity to the hill I was walking on.[41] This example also shows the interesting aspects of sound amplification as in this case, trees obstructed my visual field, but the humming sound revealed the presence of industry from the valley bellow.

[40] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Interviews/Mirza Bradarić
[41] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/Paper Factory & (illegal) loggers - 'Borik' Picnic Site

Paper factory Natron-Hayat from the holiday site 'Borik', Maglaj, photograph.

From this experience, I learned that I should visit Maglaj numerous times in order to develop the humdrum experience and degree of familiarity that Tuan was writing about. However, even after several visits, residents of Maglaj would reveal a much richer relationship with the town. They would often nostalgically describe pre-war Maglaj. One interviewee, an owner of the gallery in Maglaj, Amira Bradarić described a rich pre-war cultural life in the city, with a deep sense of loss (Bradarić 2016). She described art residencies and art commissions often founded by the factory. This is because many factories in period of Yugoslavia were managed by workers through "workers councils" practicing the concept of self-management through the idea of the commons (Tomašević et al. 2018 p. 61). Practically, the workers local to the place could make a decision to support the local creative communities impacting the cultural scene in the town.

The memories of childhood would often be raised in the interviews, or descriptions of social relations in Maglaj, in comparison with Sarajevo. This reveals that besides the autobiographical memories that shape listening, an understanding of local history, customs and language, was important for the whole research process. Insight into many aspects of the local context allowed an intimate bond with my interviewees in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the UK I lacked an understanding of the local context to begin with, therefore, I compensated by studying local and regional history. I have learned from residents and read local newspapers. In this process, the conversations with people from various backgrounds based in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire have also informally contributed to my research by informing me of various concerns of citizens in North-East of Scotland.

For example, the interviewee Bertha Forbes from Banchory provides the valuable insight into the local context and politics of a small place in fascinating way:

> Would you believe that there are still people in Banchory's indigenous people, rather than the other residents who have never come to the Barn?[42] They have all sorts of excuses. "It's too far out. I don't have a car." That sort of thing is for them, it is not for us. Still very "them" and "us" aspect. Mostly older generations. (Forbes 2016, 9 min 36 sec)
>
> (...) And then of course with the explosion, if you like, of the oil industry, then the place was inundated with people from all over the world. So, the indigenous population thought of them as "them" and "us", and it was as if they still wanted to live in their own safe little cocoons of Banchory is for "us". And, anything that was being instigated like The Barn for instance, you know "what do we need that for" you know, that's for them. (Forbes 2016, 10 min 26 sec)

This quotation provides an insight that the visitor might become aware only if he or she becomes a resident. Forbes' voice reveals the passion about the subject.

It was difficult to keep talking about *soundscape*, as interviewees would constantly refer to the past and present, to other places they visited, to stories about their family and childhood. Additionally, my interviewees in Sarajevo and Maglaj would also constantly compare the pre-war and post-war periods. In these interviews, the present is often associated with lack of security, stability and overall uncertainty.

In Maglaj, residents shared strong feelings about the river Bosna that flows between the old and new part of town. Bosna is the most polluted river in the country, and as such, is avoided by some residents, while for others it offers a place to rest. The condition of the river reflects the overall poor socio-economic conditions in the country. The source of the river Bosna is on the outskirts of Sarajevo, and it is so clean there that visitors can drink from it. However, on its course towards Maglaj, the river passes through several industrial areas that direct their waste into the river. One

[42] The Barn is a multi-arts venue that offers a wide range of workshops encouraging sustainable and community-oriented practices 1.5 miles from the center of Banchory. As a resident artist of the Barn in summer 2016 I camped in its wild garden, conducted interviews and performed *Grains of Sound*.

of them is Arcelor Mittal Zenica with production capacity of nearly one million tonnes of steel per year. The Arcelor Mittal group, present in 60 countries all over the world, manages this steel factory (ArcelorMittal. Zenica 2019). In the privatised landscape of B&H economy, there is no political desire to pressure international companies to invest in ecologically friendly technologies. Consequently, some of the citizens of Maglaj feel powerless (Bradarić 2016). However, despite the pollution, both Mirza Bradarić (2017)[43] and Admira Bradarić (2016)[44] don't mind the local paper factory, and they point out that the sound of the facility is the one of the most prominent in Maglaj.

Although I was practising *soundwalks* throughout my research, I didn't completely ignore the other senses. I took many photographs, I would often stop and listen while observing the environment, or I would listen with my eyes closed. The recognition of multisensory aspect of the *soundwalk* has been central to my practice. Tuan, Rodaway, Massey, and the anthropologist Tim Ingold have informed this approach.

Most sound art authors, who often focus solely on the experience of sound or *soundscape*, by ignoring the other senses, do not embrace multisensory approaches. In some cases, they are even antagonistic towards visual sensory experiences. For example, Salome Voegelin points out her engagement in the socio-political practice of sound as follows: "aesthetic, social and political realities that are hidden by the persuasiveness of a visual point of view" (Voegelin 2019a).

In her book *Sonic Possible Worlds* she argues that

> … listening opens a paradise of sonic possibilities, free not only from ontological restraint but also from the truth and necessity that a visual logic demands. Sound, when it does not simply interpolate a source, does not obey the necessity and truth of an object but generates a thing thinging, and thus this thing can be illogical, contradictory, and untrue in relation to the idea of an object, but not in relation to its own materiality. (Voegelin 2014 p. 33)

This quotation implies that visual sense has a particular logic, however, Voegelin doesn't offer the premise of such logic. The statement that the visual somehow depicts the "truth" of the object is also tenuous, especially if we test this in an unfamiliar place of another culture. In this case, we might struggle to understand the purpose or connotations of the objects that surround us, if that is the 'truth' Voegelin had in mind. As this chapter will discuss, the meaning of what we see is shaped by our relationship with objects. For passers-by, Marischal Square in Aberdeen could just be some

[43] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Interviews/Mirza Bradarić
[44] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Interviews/Admira Bradarić

interesting architecture, while for me it is a building behind which is my studio and it is part of my everyday routine, where I recognise individuals who work there. I know how that building looks like in different times of day, the play of colours on its facade, the changing rhythms of the water fountain in front of the building, and it's daily rhythms. There are numerous 'truths' of the building; some noticeable to my trained eye, while some are shaped through repeated encounters. Sometimes it is difficult to compare and contrast the importance of senses: do I notice the rhythm of the fountain due to sound or due to its visual appearance?

My work embraces sound as a resonating, generating power, it embraces some illogical and contradictory aspects of listening, but at the same time, it embraces multisensory experiences. All perceptual attitudes are psychological insights and as such are open to personal experience shaped by our history and life experience. Equally, Voegelin's perspective on the visual as ontologically restrained, is informed by her life experience.

The psychological aspect of perception is foregrounded by the geographer Paul Rodaway, and his book *Sensuous Geographies* (1994) is still a widely referenced work on how different senses inform us about the world, our navigation of it. Rodaway describes two different connotations of everyday perception that do not necessarily exclude each other:

> 1) perception and the reception of information through the sense organs associated with sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell; and 2) perception as mental insight, or a sense made of a range of sensory information, with memories and expectations. (Rodaway 1994 p. 10)

If we adopt the attitude that in the process of perception, expectations play an important role, then as a consequence, if visual sensations seem fixed and persuasive, it is because our experience of them is fixed, not because visual perception as such is fixed.

Thus, Rodaway recognises that an effective “geographical understanding” should recognise “perception as a sensation” and “perception as cognition” (Rodaway 1994 p. 11). Here, Rodaway stresses that perception is a key for establishing a relationship with the world in the first instance, and in terms of cognition, perception involves “remembering, recognition, association” as culturally mediated (Ibid.).

Perception as sensory experience enables us to feel ourselves as part of the world, not just as observers of the world. It implies a dynamic, performative and unstable relationship with the environment. Perception as cognition also evokes the memories that compose our personal identities. The ontological 'certainty' of visual perception described by Voegelin is dependent on

culture and personality. In this process, the understanding of seen and heard phenomena is very rarely problematized in the context of different cultures in sound art discourse. Hence, sound art authors rarely acknowledge their position within Anglophone culture, nor is the possibility of different interpretations and experience of sounds in different cultures acknowledged.

My aim is not to analyse listening experiences across different cultures, but mainly to point out that listening experience is dependent on autobiographical memories, as well as insight into local culture and customs. It appears obvious that culture, although a widely problematized term, consists of and contributes to the already mentioned aspects of autobiographical memories shaped by personal histories, as well as local language and customs amongst others.

Alipašino Polje, Sarajevo, photograph.

For example, visitors could perceive the multi-storey buildings in the Alipašino Polje neighbourhood in Sarajevo negatively, due to their concrete, architectural style of social housing. However, these buildings have never been social housing, they are home to writers, artists, pensioners, families, people of differing social class and backgrounds. I am informed by my personal experience of the neighbourhood, while a visitor is informed by their own experience of neighbourhoods featuring visually similar architecture in the UK. A more contextually aware visitor might lack the emotional links to such a neighbourhood, but the acquired perception of it would be still very different from a visitor who both lacks personal and contextual knowledge of it.

Consequently, our differing experiences of the same building are problematized. Our experiences, feelings and associations related to what we see and hear depend on our background, our

understanding of context, or in other words as Rodaway articulates "perception as cognition" (1994 p. 11).

In differentiating visitors and resident perspectives, Tuan points out that a visitor, and as he says "native", will focus on different aspects of the environment.

> We may say that only the visitor (and particularly the tourist) has a viewpoint; his perception is often a matter of using his eyes to compose pictures. The native, by contrast, has a complex attitude derived from his immersion in the totality of his environment. (1974 p. 63)

Tuan continues that the visitor can easily express his attitude, while the native can find it difficult to express himself and he/she often does this through "behaviour, local tradition, lore and myth" (Ibid.).

In the context of this research, it is important to recognise that the listener's status as a researcher, academic, migrant, tourist or a resident can affect and shape perception. The complex attitude of a resident towards their environment represents a rich creative field in which folklore and myth, real and imagined, autobiographical and communal, play shared parts.

However, the recognition of the duration of the relationship with the environment we are listening to, and record in, is often not acknowledged in the domain of sound art. For example, Peter Cusack, a *field recordist* based in the UK, who focuses on particular places, asks in the *Berlin Sonic Places* (2017) project "what is your favourite sound of Berlin, and why?" (2017 p. 85). In doing so, Cusack recognises the importance of including multiple contributors in his research. He visited some of the places mentioned by respondents, and included participants and his descriptions of these places, as well as their *soundscapes* in the publication. The potential gap in his research is that it is not clear what is the relationship of his participants with Berlin. Although short biographers of participants are included in the book, in the case of Pascal Amphboux (CH), Max Dixon (UK), Anna Friz (Can), Fritz Schluter (D) their relationship with Berlin is unknown. This information would enable us to understand why the particular locations were chosen, and what they offer for different types of listeners. Such information could help us learn more about how residents would perceive the location, as opposed to tourists. Moreover, all the contributors are sound experts, so this affects their observations and responses. The implication is that while these locations might be of interest to experts, what would be the choice of untrained people and what that could uncover about Berlin, people and sounds of Berlin? If we acknowledge the approaches of human and *humanist* geographers, that people create places through interactions and relationships, that places don't

exist independently from people (Cresswell 2004), then the question of whose Berlin we are encountering is as important as the name of the location tackled by the project.

Beyond the division between residents and visitors in this type of research, it would be beneficial to acknowledge that not every traveller or migrant is equally empowered by his experience of travel. In the case of Peter Cusack, he also asks some of the contributors: "Why is Berlin noticeably quieter than other European cities such as London, Paris or Brussels?" (2017 p. 89). Cusack doesn't uncover reason why is he choosing these cities. He doesn't ask about Sofia, Belgrade, or even Istanbul. This reveals a certain affinity to one part of Europe, as opposed to another.

If I ask myself the same question about London, Paris and Brussels, I have to point out that Paris and Brussels are cities that I have never been to. My perception of these cities is shaped by stories of Bosnian refugees during and after the war. Due to my life experiences, my perception of Brussels, London or Paris would probably also be very different from that of Cusack.

This shows that not only the reasoning behind choosing the particular cities is unclear in the case of the project *Berlin Sonic Places* (2017), but also that the perception of the project changes if we look for contextual and historical links. For example, is Cusack interested in listening to contemporary cities which have a significant colonial past? What would be a place of Berlin amongst these cities? Alternatively, is the choice of places made by a more extensive geopolitical influence of these cities?

My perception of these cities is coloured by their hard-to-reach locations. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina is geographically in Europe, some cities are more easily reached than others due to visa requirements and expense associated with travel to these locations. Not every visitor can afford to visit them, and not every visitor would be permitted to enter these countries based on the passport they hold.

I relate here to the feelings of thousands of migrants from the Middle East, as B&H is part of their "Balkan route" hoping to enter the EU from Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018/19. They struggle to pass the Croatian border while dreaming of a better future on the other side of the fence. This is occurring over 25 years after the war in Bosnia, during which 2 million people were forcibly displaced, from which half a million fled the country altogether (UNHCR.UK 2004).

Hence, migrant status or control over human movement influences our human perspective of places. My interviewee from Sarajevo, Mensur Demir describes some of his experiences as a Bosnian refugee in Germany that profoundly changed his perspective of German society. In the interview he says that he perceived himself as a cosmopolitan who has limited leave to remain in Germany and after years of education in the country, he was forced to return to Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mensur 2016, 1 hour 36 sec). He felt like a cosmopolitan who has returned to a war devastated country from which he couldn't travel without a visa that he couldn't obtain without sufficient financial savings and a letter of invitation.

This insight exemplifies the perception of place from the perspective of a migrant by Doreen Massey, who points out that degree of movement and communication, and the degrees of control are key factors in developing a sense of place (2005 p. 4). She addresses the individual's capacity to control their own circumstance vis-a-vis the control exerted by authorities over individuals. There is an increasing public awareness of the latter, in relation to surveillance, in which the interests of large companies and governments overlap.

Massey is a British geographer; her work on space and place includes political and feminist perspectives. Her work made me aware that my method of listening is embedded in my experience of history and my background. Her approach to place made me conscious of the importance of different individual perspectives in the discussion on experience of place, and consequently on perception of place. As such, the importance of personal history should be acknowledged as a starting point. Her work has empowered me to speak up and share some of the complexities of my relationship with Sarajevo, in order to open up the conversation from the point of view of a resident.

In this quotation, Doreen Massey is focusing on who has agency over the movement:

> Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it. (2001 p. 149)

Here, Doreen Massey discusses the position of a migrant from whom agency is often taken away, and who is not “in charge” of the movement and migration in the same way as for example, a travelling academic (Ibid.).

Hence, as a listener who is a migrant from a post-conflict country practising listening in the UK and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, my listening is shaped by my status and circumstances. In the context of this research, my migrant status, my problematized ethnic background as a Muslim or Bosniak, which I don't accept but is legally imposed on me by the B&H constitution, my Bosnian and Herzegovinian nationality, my personal history, is summed up in the form of multiple personal identities. I am a wife and a sister, a survivor of the Sarajevo siege, a Bosnian with a distrust of religious institutions and religious identities. But, as soon as I mention my last name in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia, I am a Muslim. [45] I am also an artist, a PhD student, and I like the 'open' skies of Scotland. These are just some of my personal identities that form part of a juggling game of markers being assigned, rewritten, by others and me in social interactions.

When I listen to a call from the seagull at the long sandy beach in Aberdeen, I am breathing through all my identities. I enjoy the wide sky as it is very different from the claustrophobic geography of Sarajevo surrounded by high Olympic mountains. The city is squashed between them drowning in smog in winter. The wide skies of Scotland make my breath deep. The wind moves the particles of sand composed of crushed mountain peaks. My perception of Aberdeen is shaped by Sarajevo and all other places I have been. By sharing these perspectives, enriched by the multiple voices of my interviewees and their experiences, this research presents the richness of a multi-layered, dynamic and complex relationship with the world, and specifically *soundscape*. Listening *in situ,* brings all these experiences together, simultaneously.

In order to work with these experiences of listening, I had to unfold some of them, to narrate them, to share some contextual, historical and personal aspects, in order to compose them back to a form of an artwork.

And because my identities are complex (Sarajevo is unknown to most people, Bosnia and Herzegovina difficult to remember) I find Massey's notions of the world in flux and movement perceived through the prism of our status and experiences, important. These ideas shaped my *performance art* pieces, but in the centre of them was the listening process that allowed me to slow down, open my ears and eyes, and listen to myself.

[45] The affiliation of someone's name and last name with the religion has become a common practice in post-war B&H. My last name is widely perceived as Muslim, while my name doesn't have any religious affiliation in the local context. Hence, my identity is often problematized and I am occasionally faced with questions related to my ethnic background.

Even an act of *field recording* can be different in different countries. While *field recording* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I was often worried for my safety, and the safety of my equipment. However, frequently in the same locations, I felt threatened, strangers would approach me pointing to my equipment and asking: "Is that a gun?" They have asked me whether I was carrying a gun to assure themselves I was safe to approach directly. From their experience, my gesticulations and appearance didn't look threatening, so they felt I was safe to approach. If my behaviour had been different, or maybe, if I had been a man, I wonder how they would have reacted. Would they have become violent?

This example describes a possible interpretation of a cultural code that brings certainty or takes it away. This process is not about something being seen, being fixed and resolved as being seen, versus listened to (referring here to Voegelin's ontological certainty of the visual sense), this is about perception as cognition and engaging with meanings constructed through relationships with other people. As a Bosnian, I understand the lack of sense of security as many people carry guns despite the law.

Moreover, a similar situation happened to me near a small football stadium at Otoka, the one of the neighbourhoods of Sarajevo. I arrived just as the game was starting. I parked the car, grabbed my boom microphone and hurried towards the stadium. My intention had been to stand nearby and record some of the cheering from the parking lot, as I knew it would be very difficult to get inside with the recording equipment. As I approached the stadium, a police cordon watched me closely, and then their laughter made me stop. A group of men, in heavy, black, police armour with riot shields and helmets, laughed at me, and one of them said loudly "I also thought she is carrying a bomb!" Then, I realised that they were laughing at themselves.

No amount of analytical listening to background and foreground sounds, and their *pitch,* could convey the rich layers of information revealed by this situation. To discover it, knowledge of the history of the place, geography and the individuals involved would be necessary. Some of the layers would deal with the stereotypes of gender and patriarchy such as the one of a football fan, or a female sound technician. The others reflect the experience of violence and a wide access to illegal weapons.

This social situation unfolded around the physical presence of a microphone in public space. However, a similar interpretation is possible when focused on listening. For example the sound of most neighbourhoods in Sarajevo on Sunday morning would be marked by the sound of plastic

bags carried by children sent to a shop to buy bread. Meanwhile, from windows of multi-storey buildings, the sound of cleaning, of vacuuming and washing could be heard.

The experience of these sounds carries rich contextual potential. Plastic bags reflect a low level of ecological consciousness, simultaneously revealing a central European preference for fresh bread for breakfast. After breakfast, women would spread clean linen on balconies to dry, consequently revealing a traditional division of labour. After breakfast, the streets would be filled with the laughter of children playing, riding bicycles and running. Besides these identifiable sounds, there would also be sounds that are difficult to calibrate. The neighbourhoods in Sarajevo have specific acoustic properties, for instance, the reverberation created by tall buildings is one of the most memorable acoustic phenomena in the city.[46]

These examples illustrate the uncertainty of the image contrary to Voegelin's notions of the "philosophical persuasion" of the visual (Voegelin, 2014 p. 86). In *Sonic Possible Worlds* (2014) she reveals that "vision nor the visual" are not at fault here but "the heritage of religion and humanism that ties materiality to its philosophical persuasion and determines its language in a teleological or material idealism" (Ibid.). In terms of the theological, she refers to the Catholic reference that "communion is about the visible and how we believe in it" (Voegelin, 2014 p. 85).

The reference to Catholicism, in terms of perception as a psychological process, is part of cultural heritage, and provokes the questions “whose theology?” Is it equally applicable everywhere in the UK and to a listener of different cultural, geographic and religious backgrounds? Is Voegelin's insight as applicable in the UK as in Bosnia and Herzegovina? What could be the role of Islam, calligraphy and arabesque in B&H? Moreover, the discussion could be developed on how multi-religious and multi-ethnic identities shape the ways we hear and see. Additionally, in a B&H context, transition from socialism to neoliberalism, redrawing the borders, as well as nationalism on the rise could play a role in this discussion.

The post conflict situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is marked by a distrust of all forms of sensory information. The precarious conditions in B&H in terms of education, healthcare, jobs, inter-ethnic tensions, and the ongoing threat of renewed conflict, create an atmosphere of anxiety and distrust of what is seen or heard. They also create a deep awareness of one's identity and what constitutes that identity.

[46] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/playground - Alipašino neighbourhood

Adla Isanović, one of the interviewees from Sarajevo, firmly states that there is no single identity, there are multiple identities we could talk about (Isanović 2016).[47]

Thus, the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina shows the necessity for a conversation inclusive of perceptions informed by different points of view, shaped by different experience of geography and culture.

The experiences of places bring an emotional dimension that my work embraces through writing and art works. As Tuan argues

> …most people function with the five senses, and these constantly reinforce each other to provide the intricately ordered and emotion-charged world in which we live. (Tuan 1977 p. 11)

Additionally, Paul Rodaway points out that multisensory perception generates a "sense of place" (Rodaway 1994 p. ix). The emotional aspect of perception, as well as its contribution in creating a sense of place, affirms the link between sensory experiences and personal identities.

For residents of Maglaj, the river Bosna provokes different feelings; there is a tense relationship with it that implies a lack of agency and power due to pollution. For example, while my interviewee from Maglaj Admira Bradarić[48] avoids the river due to its smell and appearance, Mirza Bradarić[49] often cycles next to it and spends a lot of time on its banks (A. Bradarić 2016; M. Bradarić 2017). In 2015 the council of Maglaj built a new walking trail along the river to encourage people to go to it, but to date they have not dealt with the root causes of people wanting to stay away- the dirt, pollution and smell.

Hence, the relationship of citizens of Maglaj with the river Bosna will affect their encounters with other rivers. Similarly, Jim Marshall in his interview in Sarajevo, stated that the river Miljacka that runs through the city is not a river, he doesn't even perceive it as a river. His experience of rivers is informed by river Clyde in Glasgow and the Miljacka compared to the Clyde is small and timid (Marshall 2016).[50]

[47] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Interviews/Adla Isanović
[48] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Interviews/Admira Bradarić
[49] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Interviews/Mirza Bradarić
[50] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Interviews/Jim Marshall

When it comes to remembering, Tuan notes that

> Attachment of a deep though subconscious sort may come simply with familiarity and ease, with the assurance of nurture and security, with the memory of sounds and smells, or communal activities and homely pleasures accumulated over time. It is difficult to articulate quiet attachments of this type. (Tuan 1977 p. 159)

Still, most of my interviewees during our conversations managed to articulate and describe some of the sounds they found interesting. In doing so, they would constantly refer to different places, although my questions focused on the places in which they currently reside. Some of the interviewees like Bertha Forbes lived most of their lives in one place. However, most of the interviewees have lived in numerous places, and they would mention them during the interviews.

The difficulties of articulating "quiet attachments" (Tuan 1977 p. 159) were overcome to some extent by the semi-structured nature of the interviews. By interviewing people in the spaces they found comfortable, not necessarily sound studios, but spaces they had suggested, such as their home, or a familiar cafe, interviewees felt comfortable to relax and sink deeper into their memories. In this sense, they would regularly say after the interview that the conversation brought many realisations about *soundscapes* and places that they had not been aware of previously.

Soundscape, a central term for this research is defined by Paul Rodaway in the following way:

> The hearer, or listener, is at the centre of the soundscape. It is a context, it surrounds and it generally consists of many sounds coming from different directions and of differing characteristics. It is the sonic equivalent of landscape. (Rodaway 1994 p. 86)

Two aspects of this definition are of interest. The first is that the listener is at the centre of the *soundscape*, and the second, is that *soundscape* is the sonic equivalent of a landscape. The first implies three-dimensionality, as we are aware that sound events take place behind us, on our left and right sides, above and under us, and in front of us.

> Although we 'know' that the visual world is all around us, our actual experience is of an image in front of our eyes and not behind our backs. (Rodaway 1994 p. 91)

The experience of sound teaches us that sound events take place everywhere around us. Compared to vision, we cannot close off our ears. We remain alert to sound even during sleep. This aspect of sound makes us aware of the events and actions beyond the confines of our vision. For example, as I am writing this chapter, I hear someone passing by behind the doors of my room. I can also hear construction workers outside the building. I hear distant buses and traffic, and car doors being shut in the parking lot nearby.

The second aspect of Rodaway's definition presents *soundscape* as the sonic equivalent of the landscape. This notion can be problematized, having in mind Ingold's notions of landscape. Tim Ingold, an anthropologist based in Scotland, points out that “the environments that we experience, know and move around in, are not sliced up along the lines of the sensory pathways by which we enter into it” (Ingold 2011 p. 136). In the context of this research, his remark regarding "slicing up" landscape to various "scapes" promotes the multisensory aspect of perception. Ingold encourages us to move and surrender to sounds in movement (Ingold 2011).

Salome Voegelin also opens the discussion of Ingold’s approach to *soundscape*. And while she agrees that *soundscape* in the etymological sense is not scenery to be looked at from a distance, she stills positions her argument in the relationship of sound versus visual:

> Ingold's meteorological identification of sound as wind and weather avoids the surface of the scape, the visual paradigm that holds sound in place, but also avoids the relevance of the heard. (Voegelin, 2014 p. 11)

This reveals Voegelin's concern about the relevance of the sound, which I find problematic. At a fundamental level, all senses help us in navigating our environment. Concerns over relevance, and a fear of certain senses being overlooked, motivates duality and separation, which is not what Ingold and even Rodaway stand for. Despite the comparison of *soundscape* with landscape, Rodaway points out that focusing on the identification of particular senses "can lead us to overlook the important inter-relationships between the senses and the multi sensual nature of geographic experience" (Rodaway 1994 p. 25).

Consequently, if the geographic experience is multi-sensual, then Voegelin's fear of sound as of less relevance in broader interactions with the environment, is open to question. These other types could include walking as a methodology in different types of practice-led research, including sound art. For example, for Tuan the key senses for navigating and determining the exact positions of the objects in our environment are touch and sight. In this regard, kinaesthesia, movement in space, movement of our limbs, is key for determining our position in space and our relation to neighbouring objects (Tuan 1977). However, Tuan also recognises that hearing, taste, smell and touch as “essentially non distancing senses greatly enrich our apprehension of the world’s spatial and geometric character” (Tuan 1977 p. 12). On the spatial and temporal aspects of senses, Rodaway warns us that some senses could be more referred to as spatial or temporal, but such distinctions should be made with care (Rodaway 1994).

Although this thesis uses *soundscape* as a term, being mindful that it is useful to focus on listening in order to became aware of the ways in which listening shapes our experience of the world, the research overall, embraces multisensory aspects of perception. I learned about the importance of different senses and some of the complexities of a discussion where we try to separate them from the geographers as Tuan and Rodaway. Ingold has made me aware of the dangers of duality and separations, as well as historic and contemporary meanings of the particular terms as landscape and *soundscape*.

While scenery implies an illusion of theatre, magic and the scene, landscape until the 16th century referred to the "real world". "In its native Dutch, 'landschap' designated such commonplaces as 'collection of farms or fenced fields, sometimes a small domain or administrative unit'" (Tuan 1974 p. 133). According to Tuan, only when the term was brought to England, did it begin to be used in the context of art (1974 p. 133). From that moment onwards, landscape became heavily associated with the image perceived from an often privileged point of view. An overview of landscape available from the top of the hill, a house on the beach, top of a skyscraper offer examples of such view. Hence landscape shouldn't be associated just with the visual by default as Rodaway does, as historically, the other readings of it are possible.

It is of interest that the term landscape in the contemporary use relates to a privileged point of view, while *soundscape* positions the listener in the centre. Although some places could offer more interesting *soundscape* experiences than others, we rarely have to position our body in any specific direction to 'observe' *soundscape*. We are immersed in it continuously. Thus it is important to take into consideration specific traits of *soundscape*, and not to take any comparison with the landscape lightly.

This doesn't mean that sound art discourse doesn't privilege some approaches to listening over others. In the next section of the chapter, I will focus on sound art practitioners and *soundscape* composers, to see how the terminology used in these fields privilege particular points of view in relation to context, and personal aspects of perception.

2.2.1. Soundscape Composition and Place

> The soundscape is any acoustic field of study. We may speak of a musical composition as a soundscape, or a radio program as a soundscape or an acoustic environment as a soundscape. (Schafer 1994 p. 7)

I step into the *soundscape* literature with a deep appreciation of both sonic and visual worlds. However, sound art literature is saturated with specific terms, some of which are crucial for my methodology and work.

The majority of the authors discussed in this section are sound artists, and *electroacoustic* and *soundscape* composers. Their work offers keys to opening up sonic art worlds, and as I have learned a lot from them, I find it important to discuss their work. As I tackle different aspects, such as *soundscape* by R. Murray Schafer, or different modes of listening and the idea of *acousmatic* listening by Pierre Schaeffer and Michel Chion, I will introduce some key terms and present how the work of these authors contributes to a discussion on the contextual and personal aspects of listening.

As I have practised sound walks and audio *field recording*, as well as focusing on different techniques of listening, the work of R. Murray Schafer[51], a Canadian composer and one of the founders of the World Soundscape Project (WSP) is of central interest, offering a historical perspective on the methodology I have used. Also, many *soundscape* practitioners today refer to these methods developed since the 1960s.

The WSP was based at Simon Fraser University and

> …grew out of Schafer's initial attempt to draw attention to the sonic environment through a course in noise pollution, as well as from his personal distaste for the more raucous aspects of Vancouver's rapidly changing soundscape. (LaBelle 2015 p. 195)

In this quotation, Brandon LaBelle sums up decades of work in one sentence, as someone who records the development of sound art ideas and approaches. He is a professor of New Media at the University of Bergen, and his comprehensive mapping of creative practices across different geographies, times and themes has provided a continuous reference for my work.

[51] in the following section I refer to 'R. Murray Schafer' in the text (rather than 'Schafer') to avoid confusion with Pierre Schaeffer whose work I also discuss.

WSP has organised countless workshops, lectures, and presentations to draw attention and raise awareness of *soundscapes*. Their influence has been recognised in Europe since 1975 as they toured the major cities and conducted research in the villages in Sweden, Germany, Italy, France and Scotland (The World Soundscape Project n.d.). Some of the composers involved in the project were Hildegard Westerkamp, Bruce Davis, Peter Huse, Barry Truax, and Howard Broomfield (Ibid.).

LaBelle points out that WSP's interest in noise pollution and constantly changing *soundscapes*, was termed acoustic ecology. He also points out that acoustic ecology "promotes active listening, environmental awareness, cultural practice sensitive to questions of place, and location-oriented musical education" (LaBelle 2015 p. 195).

There are two aspects of WSP's practice of interest to this thesis. The first is its attitude towards noise and acoustic ecology, and the second is R. Murray Schafer's approach to *soundscape* with regard to methodology and collection of sounds.

R. Murray Schafer's definition of acoustic ecology is

> the study of the effects of the acoustic environment or soundscape on the physical response or behavioural characteristics of creatures living within it. (1994 p. 271)

This definition includes non-human inhabitants of the environment, but it is unclear how such a definition can be put into practice. This is because behavioural aspects depend on the individual, genetic, cultural, educational, and many other factors. WSP have focused on recording and preserving sounds, as well as on recording noise levels in the urban environments and changing *soundscapes* around the world. And although the levels of noise might affect the behavioural patterns of living creatures within the environment, it is likely, that the research misses on depth and richness on experiences of listening on an individual level.

Regarding the approach to *soundscape*, R. Murray Schafer focuses on recreating an impression of a *soundscape* by recording sounds as an analogy of landscape photography:

> it is less easy to formulate an exact impression of a soundscape than of landscape. There is nothing in sonography corresponding to the instantaneous impression which photography can create. (Schafer 1994 p. 7)

Although it is arguable that two-dimensional photography creates the impression of a three dimensional, multisensory landscape, R. Murray Schafer makes a parallel between a microphone

and a camera, in which the microphone captures details, while the camera is capable of "aerial photography" (Schafer 1994 p. 7).

He concludes:

> to give a totally convincing image of a soundscape would involve extraordinary skill and patience: thousands of recordings would have to be made; tens of thousands of measurements would have to be taken, and a new means of description would have to be devised. (Schafer 1994 p. 8)

Thanks to new developments in *binaural recordings* and *ambisonics*, sound artists can capture and recreate more convincing three dimensional *soundscapes*. It is still arguable that such creations are fictional, similar to virtual reality, as the creative possibilities of such technologies remain unknown.

R. Murray Schafer was interested in recreating, describing and imitating the sonic characteristics of *soundscape*, comparable with photographs, maps or architect's drawings (Schafer 1994). He was concerned that only highly trained experts could read scores and sonic maps even if it was possible to create them (Ibid.).

The focus on creating a descriptive and illustrative impression reveals a particular attitude towards creative practice that is focused on descriptive and illustrative qualities. R. Murray Schafer is trying to recreate a very complex environment, without actually discussing what the environment will be composed of, and how the audience will experience it.

Photography, at a fundamental level, captures the light in front of a lens on a photosensitive medium, but this has little to do with our immersive experience of the world. In particular, the "frozen in time" aspect of photography is probably the most celebrated feature of that medium, as it allows a very different experience of the environment, as opposed to the "real world". Hence the assumption that photography is somehow closer to the real compared to the sound recording is tenuous.

This approach of describing *soundscapes* and recreating them as well as the attempt to overcome the restrictions of the medium, links to R. Murray Schafer's attitude to listening. He encouraged

listeners to listen analytically, to differentiate between hi-fi and lo-fi sounds[52], gestures and textures, figure and ground (Schafer 1994).

The tendency towards the analytical and measurable aspects of *soundscapes* is visible in the guide that R. Murray Schafer designed and proposed to his students to use while listening to and recording *soundscapes*.

The guide requires answers on the following:

> estimated sound's distance from the observer; estimated intensity of the original sound; how distinctly sound is heard; texture of ambience (hi-fi, lo-fi, natural, human, technological); isolated occurrence or how often sound is repeated; environmental factors including presence of reverb, echo, drift and displacement. (Schafer 1994 p. 135)

However, R. Murray Schafer was concerned with the contextual aspects of sounds, as contributing to soundscapes, in relation to the circumstances of the situation in which the sound was experienced. For instance, the sound of an alarm bell wouldn't encourage a listener to "'drop everything and run' if the listener knows that the alarm has just been tested" (Schafer 1994 p. 149).

The importance of context highlights the difference between R. Murray Schafer and Pierre Schaeffer, as R. Murray Schafer points out that Pierre Schaeffer's *sound objects* are "laboratory specimens", while a sound event, a term proposed by R. Murray Schafer, is inclusive of associative meanings of sound. In order to highlight this approach, R. Murray Schafer quotes that context is implied in the definition of the event that stands for "something that occurs in a certain place during a particular interval of time", while also addressing that sound events are studied in community (Schafer 1994 p. 131).

In order to develop this approach, R. Murray Schafer then develops the classifications of sounds according to their referential aspects, which allows the study of the "functions and meanings of sounds" (p. 137). Sounds are classified in categories, for instance, 'natural sounds' where the sounds of water, air, earth, fire, birds, animals, insects, and seasons are grouped. There is also a category called 'Sounds and Society' in which there are general descriptions of rural soundscapes, town soundscapes, city soundscapes, and similar. This particular classification is used by R. Murray

[52] Hi-fi usually signifies high frequencies, while lo-fi, low frequencies. However, Schafer generalises "A hi-fi system is one possessing a favourable signal-to-noise ratio. The hi-fi soundscape is one in which discrete sounds can be heard clearly because of the low ambient noise level. The country is generally more hi-fi than the city; night more than day; ancient times more than modern" (Schafer 1994 p. 43).

Schafer to learn more about descriptions of soundscapes from "literary, anthropological and historical documents" (Schafer 1994 p. 137).

However, such an approach to the context of experienced sound, although valuable for this research, does not necessarily allow for a more personal evolution on the level of individual residents of a place whose memories allow a deep experience of a particular sound. The notion of context is broad, and it is up to individual researchers to create the contextual frames.

In the discussion on sounds studied in communities, R. Murray Schafer occasionally generalises. For example, he says that machine sounds were not liked in Canada, Switzerland and New Zealand. Consequently, he concluded, "technological sounds are strongly disliked in technologically advanced countries, while they may indeed be liked in parts of the world where they are more novel" (Schafer 1994 p. 147).

When he attempts to tackle some culturally based specifics of the *soundscape*, R. Murray Schafer says:

> Why do the voices of South Europeans always seem louder than their northern neighbours? Is it because they spend more time outdoors where the ambient noise level is higher. We recall that the Berbers learned to shout because they had to shout over the cataracts of the Nile. (1994 p. 64)

Even if we set aside the racially loaded generalisation of R. Murray Schafer's statement, as communities living in various regions across Europe utilised shouting for communication, as well as his misunderstanding of European geography and position of the river Nile, the quotation reveals that he is interested in the form in which sound appears. Moreover, he doesn't open up discussion on his perception of it in relation to his personal history, versus locals utilising shouting. What is of interest here is that sound is louder compared to somewhere else, without any involvement of the subjects who produce the sound.

While the work of R. Murray Schafer opens the conversation on the contextual aspects of listening, compared to the *reduced listening* devised by Pierre Schaeffer, it is still possible to recognise that both composers develop techniques that prioritise training the ear within the tradition of *electroacoustic* music.

Despite being mindful that the first edition of R. Murray Schafer's book *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* was published in 1977 in less culturally sensitive times

and in a different intellectual context, this (my) research both learns from the practices of the past, and seeks to open up a range of responses to sound based on a wide range of personal experiences. As a consequence of the singular and individual nature of experience itself, it is difficult to make generalisations based on research in the two countries at the core of this thesis, Scotland and Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Hence, the notion of the contextual in sound expands R. Murray Schafer's sound event that recognizes the importance of a particular time and place of experienced sound (Schafer 1994 p. 131), to embrace discussions on the political and social agency of sound. For example, Jonathan Sterne in his book *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (2003), writes a history of sound emphasizing that "sound reproduction is a social process" (2003 p. 219). This process includes technology, technicians, musicians and the public who since the 19th century were adopting their speech and music 'for the machine', while listeners were adopting their listening techniques (Sterne 2003). This study also touches on the idea of '*acousmatic*', the separation of sound from the source that is usually discussed along technologies for recording and reproduction of sound. In this case, Sterne studies the marketing campaigns of early sound technologies and concludes that this separation is not a result of technologies used, but "the idea that sound-reproduction technologies separated sounds from their sources turns out to have been an elaborate commercial and cultural project" (2003 p. 25).

Therefore listening as a social process (Sterne 2003) opens up practice towards the contextual, which opens contemporary sound art up to the potential of including audio-visual work, photography, personal and historical narratives. This thesis explores this potential through my own *performance art* practice across two socio-political contexts: Scotland and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

More precisely, I will discuss a few sound art projects that explore the methods of *field recording* and archiving, and more or less successfully offer also a historical or personal perspective. One such project is the *London Sound Survey*. The project gathers different sound maps: a general sound map, sound collected from along London's canals and rivers, and recordings made in Estuary of the Thames, edge lands following the river to the far reaches of Essex and Kent. The project also presents a few maps offering sounds of street life in different areas of London, maps composed by other sound artists, and an interactive map asking website visitors to guess the location of the recording by listening to it (Rawes 2019).

London Sound Survey project represents an enormous feat of archiving by Ian Rawes. He worked as a storeman in the British Library Sound Archive that used to be called the National Sound Archive. By taking this heritage on board, as well as the title of the book *A Survey of London* by John Stow (1598) a name of the project *London Sound Survey* came together. According to Rawes: "The historical aspects of sound can be as interesting as its present-day manifestations, sometimes more so" (Rawes 2019).

In conversation with Rawes, Cathy Lane and Angus Carlyle composers and academics, point out that his map is essentially "about the historical" (2016 p. 144). This interest is linked to his background and work in the archive, and his fascination with the sound of the past. For Rawes "recording rebuilds a mental model of the whole environment the way the various elements are arranged in space" (Lane, Carlyle 2016 p. 144). Rawes also adds that sound does this better than video (Ibid.).

This excerpt confirms that in Rawes' case, sound helps us to orientate in space. Referring to Schafer's frustrations in regard to sound recording versus photography, it reveals that sound is a powerful tool in working with place and history. Specifically, in the interview, Rawes points out that he needs someone to speak authoritatively about the archive, someone with a degree, as he doesn't have an undergraduate qualification (Lane, Carlyle 2016). This reveals that *The London Sound Survey* project was informed by Rawes' impulse to capture London as he experiences it, unaware of other sound maps or *field recording* practices (Lane, Carlyle 2016). Consequently, his project has been developed intuitively, not burdened by traditions of the *electroacoustic* discipline through education.

Other sound maps offer much more limited information about the location in which sound has been recorded. These include the sound map of the British library, MoMA Studio Sound Map, a sound map of the project Aporee, Montreal Sound map, Aberdeen Soundsites, and many others. With regard to other approaches to *soundscape*, the work of Peter Cusack is of interest as discussed in the previous section. In *Berlin Sonic Places* (2017), Cusack doesn't introduce even a brief perspective of the history of Berlin, nor does he touch upon any of the consequences of the historical divide between West and East. However, some of the sites which he records are historical, for example, in the case of Teufelsberg, he says that it was the highest point of former West Berlin, a hill constructed from World War II rubble. He points out that "during the cold war it was the site of a major US electronic listening station, not derelict and graffiti covered" (Cusack 2017 p. 63). Next, he offers us the description of the building and sonic characteristics of the place (Ibid.).

From the perspective of this project, it is interesting that Cusack doesn't introduce more layers of history and narratives related to the place. Moreover, Teufelsberg is one of the rare sites in which divide and conflict is mentioned at all.

Cusack's project has been a valuable resource for this research as it embraces text and image beside sound recordings. The project provides space for different contributors, hence it makes an essential step towards the recognition that context in various forms shapes the listening experience. However, Cusack doesn't utilise this potential, but stays on a descriptive level of architecture and major traffic patterns in the places he records.

The design of the project reflects Cusack's perspective of Berlin, which in its lack of additional information, is divorced from the emotional consequences of the divide to East and West. In attempting to create a project about sound of the contemporary city, he creates the specific rendering of the city that is stripped of its past and exists just in presence. As the next quotation shows, Cusack is in theory opening towards multiple perspectives and memory, but fails to depict them in the work:

> Perception is multi-sensory, so information from all our senses is important. What is seen, the temperature, humidity, the atmosphere of the moment and many other factors, including memories from previous visits and any prior expectations all potentially affect our experience of sonic places. (Cusack 2017 p. 5)

This quotation shows that sound artists with a background in music are opening up the field towards personal and contextual. However, as my analysis of Cusack's work shows, there is still space for development towards a recognition of the sound *field recordist's* position in the project. The choices made when it comes to selection of contributors, locations and other aspects of the project actively shape the research and are important to acknowledge in detail.

2.2.2. Electroacoustic Composition and Place

As an emerging field, sound art is still negotiating its relationships to visual art and music, and specifically, *electroacoustic* composition. In order to develop this point, I will touch on the work of some key *electroacoustic* composers whose work fuels this discussion, thus clarifying the specific position of advocating contextual approaches. These can open up the field beyond the confines of the sound medium towards performative practices embracing an embodied listening experience.

Of special interest to this research is a work of French composer Pierre Schaeffer, mentioned in the beginning of this chapter who founded *musique concrète,* along with Pierre Henry and others in Paris. Their research group the *Groupe de Recherche de Musique Concrète* was founded in 1951, and renamed the *Groupe de Recherches Musicales*, or GRM in 1958 lead to "establishment of electroacoustic music" (LaBelle 2015 p. 25).

LaBelle points out that *musique concrète* harnesses "sound's intrinsic ambiguity or malleability so as to create distinct auditory experiences abstracted from an original source, beyond or in spite of material reference" (2015 p. 25).

A detachment from the original source is at the core of *musique concrète,* and it informs a whole range of terms used in *electroacoustic* composition such as *reduced listening, acousmatic* ***situation***, *sound object*, and various modes of listening.

Understanding these terms have helped me to engage with different authors and practitioners of sound art and *electroacoustic* composition. The majority of these insights were gleaned from the work of Michel Chion, for whom James Steintrager in the introduction of *Sound-An acoulogical treatise*[53] says that is "profoundly informed" by Schaeffer's work and is distrustful of considerations of the cause of the sound (2016 p. XIV). "To really listen to a sound entails ignoring or bracketing, insofar as possible, where that sound comes from, what makes, and why it exists at all because such inferences tend to prejudgment, distraction, and distortion" (Ibid.).

The attitude that the source of sound may require bracketing, owing to the possibility of prejudgment, is foreign to most sound artists who have backgrounds in visual art. By being trained to research in-depth the context of what they see as part of visual art degrees, these artists have often acquired an understanding of political, social, and economic factors, drawing inspiration from what is behind the visible. For example Susan Philipsz, trained as a sculptor, won the Turner Prize in 2010 for the work *Lowlands*. Three versions of a 16th century Scottish lament were played under

[53] "With Schaeffer, acoulogy- a term that he invented-designates the study of the mechanisms of listening and of the properties of sound objects with respect to their potential for music within the perceptual field of the ear. In this sense, it voluntarily puts to the side anything that concerns modes of listening other than reduced" (Chion 2016 p. 210). However, Chion has a slightly different take on acoulogy: "Acoulogy which aims at becoming a science, would then be the science of what one hears considered from every angle (whereas for Schaeffer it concerns sound exclusively from the perspective of reduced listening for the purposes of conceiving an overarching music). There is no reason not to be interested in causal and figurative listening, in the identification of causal schemata and so forth" (Ibid.).

three bridges over the river Clyde in Glasgow (Tate 2010). The work draws power from the contextual depth of the site, encouraging remembrance and reflection. If *reduced listening* would be applied to such a piece, it would assume that we don't take in consideration the historical aspect of the lament, and the context of the river Clyde and Glasgow.

There is a tense relationship between notions of "the sound itself", or *sound object*, on the one hand, and, or acknowledgement of the sources of sound, on the other. This relationship is problematized in theory as well as in composition practice. As my thesis is looking at personal identities, which are composed of personal memories, experiences of places, historical context, the encounter with the theories of Chion and Schaeffer was inevitable. What drives my interest is the question: if we are wary of acknowledging the source of the sound, how is it possible to talk about the context of that sound, personal aspects of listening, or accept the multisensory aspect of perception? Additionally, in the case of Salome Voegelin, how is it possible to talk about sound and memory, without acknowledging that sound and visual sensory stimuli are interwoven and both are important for forming these memories?

As a contemporary author who engages with sound art practice and theory, Voegelin is drawing upon various traditions of the past. Voegelin's standpoint on sound as an overlooked phenomena compared to the visual, links her work to Schaefferian approach to the *sound object* and *reduced listening*. Schaeffer aims to 'liberate' sound from the persuasiveness of the visual, but in the process he also detaches sound from the cause of sound, and any contextual meaning.
Defined by LaBelle, *reduced listening* "repositions the listener away from an interpretive and culturally situated relation so as to direct attention to the phenomenal, essential features of sound and the musical work" (2015 p. 27).

These tendencies towards phenomenal expressed by Voegelin are illustrated by the other sound art author, Seth Kim-Cohen in following way:

> Between Pierre Schaeffer's overt Husserlianism and McLuhan's inadvertent phenomenological affinities, engagements with sound remain rooted in a perceptual essentialism. (2009 p. 94)

Establishing these links across literature, and the recognition that Schaeffer's and Chion's ideas still shape the contemporary discourse not just in composition, but also in sound art such as work of Voegelin, encourages me to explore them in other to understand these tendencies.

From Chion's perspective, the source of sound reveals three listening possibilities where sound could be identified and defined as visible or *acousmatic,* depending on the situation.

Acousmatic is defined by Chion by drawing on work of Pierre Schaeffer as a "listening situation in which one hears a sound without seeing its cause" (Chion 2016 p. 265). This is slightly different from "identified" listening that is accompanied by "nonsonic supplementary information (vision, verbal indication, familiarity with the context, etc.)" (Chion 2016 p. 113). These two can be differentiated more easily through three possibilities offered by Chion:

> 1. Either the cause is visible and the sound confirms it or rather does not contradict its nature, all the while bringing to bear supplementary information about it (identified/visualized) listening.
> 2. The cause is invisible to an auditor but identified by the context, by knowledge or by logical supposition with regard to it (identified/acousmatic listening).
> 3.The cause is simultaneously neither named nor visible (acousmatic/unidentified listening). (Chion 2016 p. 113)

The focus on listening modes in relation to identifiable cause, visible/invisible, and subsequent discussion on *sound object* or "sound itself" brings Schaeffer's attention towards defining the myriad of *sound object* types and forms. LaBelle, referring to Chion's work points out that *musique concrète* is "targeting the event which the sound object is itself (and not to which it refers) and the values which it carries in itself (and not the ones it suggests)" (LaBelle 2015 p. 27).

In doing so, Schaeffer and Chion are not engaging in depth with the listening modes available to the untrained listener. Their focus is on training the ear, as well as on composition technique. When tackling the listening of an untrained person, Pierre Schaeffer states that by "natural listening we mean the primary and primitive tendency to use sound for information about the event" (Schaeffer 2017 p. 87). This type of listening he calls natural, because it is applicable across different geographies, and can be applied to humans, as well as animals. For instance, he describes that individuals who lack specialised training have a "subjective" mode of listening, not because they hear "anything and everything", referring to the accuracy of the note a violinist is playing for example, but because "aural perception (ouïe)" and the ear are not refined (Ibid.).

Here Schaeffer is drawing a clear line between those who are trained and those who are not, by also adding: "The ordinary ear, however untrained it is, has, however, the merit of being able to be open to all sorts of things that would be closed to it by later specialization" (Schaeffer 2017 p. 87).

Therefore, Schaeffer reserves the openness to "all sorts of things" (Ibid.) to those who are untrained, and the implications of such an attitude are apparent. As then how would it be possible for a composer to engage with the contextual weight of sounds of Sarajevo? Also, why is there a need to engage with a particular place at all?

This set of questions could possibly come just from an outsider, who, like me, has the role of an interdisciplinary researcher. However, Francis Dhomont, a French / Canadian *electroacoustic* composer in his statement about the piece *Lettre de Sarajevo* (1995-1996) reveals that the questioning of the discipline comes from inside when faced with the theme which is difficult to divorce from its geographical and historical placement.

Francis Dhomont, created *Lettre de Sarajevo*, or *Letter from Sarajevo* during 1995/96, and as he says, he wanted to speak about emotions of horror and shame that he felt concerning the fate of the city. He refers here not just to shame caused by the inertia of the international community, regarding the siege of Sarajevo, but also, a particular shame that he felt as an *electroacoustic* composer:

> What can be said about Sarajevo that has not already been said? Faced with a deluge of triumphant cynicism, I was unable to content myself with the formal, aesthetic games that are so dear to the composer. Perhaps this musical narcissism, this elegant disengagement, and this haughty ignorance (deceitful, surely, but this shouldn't surprise) now appear quite derisory compared to the anguish we witness daily; ridiculous and, finally, untenable. And so, naively, I wanted to speak about the horror and the shame. (ElectroCD. The Electroacoustic Music Store 2019).

Dhomont refers to the tradition of his compositional discipline, and with a range of adjectives, describes his emotions. There is a tension between the compositional method that implies an exploration of aesthetic qualities and play; and anxiety about the purpose of this composition as a narrative about Sarajevo.

His emotional investment is apparent in the composition, and my attention follows his struggles through gestures in sound. As the piece unfolds in time, I have an impression that this piece could be about any place and any conflict. Indeed, Dhomont dedicated this composition to "To victims everywhere: the dispossessed, the sacrificed, the forgotten" (ElectroCD. The Electroacoustic Music Store 2019).[54]

[54] Some of the other artists and academics who frequently visited the city and developed projects during the siege in Sarajevo are the writer Susan Sontag, operatic tenor Luciano Pavarotti, composer Nigel Osborne, academic Bill Tribe, amongst others.

While feeling powerless, he did not create the piece for Sarajevo, as what Sarajevo needed at that time was not a sound piece, but international legal, military and humanitarian interventions. He wrote a piece on behalf of Sarajevo, which assumes a deep investment with the situation in the city. Potential queries regarding the right to a French composer to make a piece on behalf of Sarajevo are overwritten by the urgency to react in times of conflict with whatever means are available to the individual, in this case, an *electroacoustic* studio. Otherwise, if no one has right to speak up, agency, means and power, as Susan Sontag says "if there is nothing 'we' can do (...) and nothing 'they' can do either - then one starts to get bored, cynical, apathetic" (2003 p. 91).

Having in mind the rich tradition of *electroacoustic* music, and the emotional effects of listening to music, it is difficult to believe that some practitioners and authors struggle to acknowledge the profound effects of music on listeners as a form of learning about the world. I wonder how is it possible to block one's whole sense from narratives on the world, war and peace, the emotional and intellectual aspects of life?

Chion points out that Schaeffer “would clearly refute the illusion of a supposedly natural narrativity of sounds”. He quotes Schaeffer: "Does sound inform us about the universe? Hardly" (Chion 2016 p. 110).

Chion supports the argument by referring to the multisensory experience of the world; sound on its own does not necessarily co-ordinate with the visual impulses we receive. He uses the example of Las Vegas as an overwhelming city dominated by neon signs. However, at the street level, what someone hears does not match what they see. The vivid, lively and colourful neon landscape is matched by “a rather sparse and peaceful sound of automobile traffic” (Chion 2016 p. 110). He adds that once the trip is over, the impression we have been left in memory is colourful, noisy, a lively place even in regard to sound (Ibid.). By contrasting sound and visual stimuli in this way Chion forefronts the visual, he assumes that sound should match what we see. By comparison, if we change the logic and foreground sound, then we could conclude that the visual doesn't match sound.

This logic that sound should match our visual sense is deeply engraved and in Chion's case could also refer to his significant body of work on the perception of sound for cinema (1994). For instance, in the book *Audio-Vision Sound on Screen* (1994), he tackles on and off screen sounds as well as non-diegetic sounds such as narration and music.

However, listening *in situ* is not comparable to the cinematic experience, and it is interesting to observe that Chion and Schaeffer expect sound to have a similar narrative potential as vision. This is contrary to Rodaway, who states that each sense does certain tasks well (1994 p. 25). Also, it is very difficult to draw clear lines between the senses. The alternative approach would be to learn from this superficial discrepancy between the two types of sensory stimuli, and instead of opposing them, to appreciate the potential gap between them as a space of creative exploration.

From this point of view, it is not that the sonic and visual impression of Las Vegas are different, as Chion argues, but sound and vision are more attuned to one sensory information over the other. The sound of neon light at night creates a unique atmosphere, and contributes to personal sense of place. This sound in its observable attributes might not be of equal intensity as it's visual presence, but through that dissonance, we inevitably learn about the world, and the contrasts dissonance brings to our awareness. The differences between visual and sonic impressions encourage our sense of discovery.

Also, the divide between different sensory stimuli is not clear-cut, and as Rodaway points out, there is an "overlap between tactile consciousness of vibrations and auditory experience" (1994 p. 25). Sound bleeds through objects and informs us about events behind the walls, borders and fences. The sound of automobile traffic in Las Vegas can imaginatively 'take us' to other places, to residential areas where visually, a very different landscape prevails.

The uniform sound of traffic could be closer to the experience of the city from the perspective of the resident, compared to a tourist. It could possibly reflect the repetitive nature of contemporary life, and long commutes. It is more likely that the sound of neon light will be noticed by a night security guard doing his rounds in a deserted shopping centre, than a shopper during the day. For the security guard, that sound could be closely associated with experience of long hours. Disharmony between sound and visual experience could connote, for instance, feelings of alienation and loneliness.

These examples could seem arbitrary, but they open a range of creative possibilities.

For instance, Yugoslav-era tower blocks dominate some parts of Sarajevo, like Alipašino Polje. Visually and from a distance, these parts of the city seem hostile, not fit for a good quality of life. However, if we walk between the buildings, we could discover that every street has a public

playground, and that the voices of children are echoing in this space.[55] Specifically though, the sound of a football being hit against the tower block wall results in specific low frequencies. I have never experienced this in the UK. This sound uncovers a lively community life inhabiting these playgrounds. In order to experience these places, we need to walk inside the settlement and follow the sound. Like in a termite house, the buildings seem fixed and threatening from far away, and only when inside, can we uncover the buzz of everyday life.

Alipašino polje, Sarajevo. Photograph.

In the example of Alipašino Polje, visual and aural sensations are not necessarily matched. We don't necessarily see the child playing behind the tower block, but by listening, we are transported there and across the space. As the sound reverberates, bouncing off from the high tower blocks, the attention of the attentive listener could go up towards the sky and across the space. We can learn from this experience and inform ourselves, but the information gathered is different. While tower blocks seem static and fixed, sound reveals life. If we explore the area while walking, we would eventually find the spots where people play chess in the shadows of tall buildings, small shops, and elderly ladies selling handmade woollen socks while chatting with their peers. By following the sound, we could reveal these pockets of life much sooner and more easily.

My perspective as a resident in Sarajevo, as I grew up in similar sites of 'brutalist architecture' allows for this interpretation to take place. Consequently, I don't perceive them as 'brutalist' in the

[55] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/street football - Alipašino neighbourhood

cultural or the architectural sense, as they are studied and perceived differently in my country compared to the UK.[56]

This short discussion of Alipašino Polje can potentially open up a space for creative and theoretical exploration. It questions the listening experience of specific sounds not just in relation to visual sensory inputs, but also through the integration of personal experience, opening up discussion on memory, history and sense of place. The creative practice that I have developed to bring some of these complexities to the surface is multisensory and engages with the performative body, different materials and objects.

Although the tendency to listen analytically and detach the causes of sound and context is present in the practice of Michel Chion and Pierre Schaeffer, the differences between listening to the actual environments, versus recorded sounds via loudspeakers, are often blurred. Similar techniques of listening are advised to a listener in order to train the ear in both situations. In order to distinguish the two, R. Murray Schafer, uses a term schizophonia specifically for "packaging and storing techniques for sound and splitting of sounds from their original contexts" (1994 p. 88).

In case of *acousmatic music*, great emphasis is given to the *sound object* that according to Chion's Interpretation of *Treatise on Musical Objects* (2017) by Schaeffer is: "it is clear in effect that there can be no sound object per se without it being subject to repeated listenings, subject to observation, and thus, implicitly, fixed" (Chion 2016 p. 149). Chion also remarks that even in the case of recorded sound, the sound transmitted through loudspeakers "lack sonic frame" and inevitably also blends with other *in situ* sounds (Ibid.).

This lack of "sonic frame" blurs differences in listening to recorded sounds, and to the sounds of real environments. The blurred difference between the two also can be perceived in Schafer's definition of *soundscape* as "actual environments, or to abstract constructions such as musical compositions and tape montages, particularly when considered as environment" (Schafer 1994 p. 7).

[56] A significant international interest in modernist architecture of Yugoslavia has led to the recent exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948-1980* (2018-2019) at MOMA. The exhibition foregrounds a key contextual aspect - the specific geopolitical position of Yugoslavia as a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, affiliated neither to the capitalist West nor the socialist East during the Cold War of 1945-90 (MOMA 2018).

Therefore, I have been writing about sound by referring to both listening situations. This is not just because the literature on sound often fails to differ between the two, but also because numerous examples of site-specific installations use actual sounds of environments, and add pre-recorded or composed sound through reproduction via loudspeakers, which are hidden from view, such as installations by Max Neuhaus's *Times* Square (1977), or Kathy Hinde's *Luminous Birds* (2016).

There are also numerous examples of *soundwalks* that also utilise planted, pre-recorded sounds while also encouraging listening *in situ*. *Soundwalks* can be conducted with or without any specialist equipment; with headphones integrating pre-recorded sounds or voice-based narratives. These walks often incorporate the use of GPS maps and smartphones.

Electrical walks (2004) by Christina Kubisch represents another variant of a *soundwalk*, utilising specially-designed headphones that turn various electro-magnetic signals in the environment, such as ATM's, into sounds that lie within the average hearing range of the human ear.

Although the difference between listening *in situ* at the very moment, and listening to a sound recording, is often blurred, or sidelined, Chion points out that listening *in situ* changes the “sound’s very essence” (2016 p. 139). He points out that listening *in situ* requires “reflexive or conscious” selection (Ibid.).

Chion recognises three aspects of *in situ* listening:

> - the first presents a “unique and ephemeral character of perception;"
> - the second is “the influence of the global sensorial and material context that identifies a given sound and that provides it with a particular meaning and effect" (Chion 2016 p. 138).
> - a third is the "impossibility of apprehending simultaneously the different, proximate and distant sonic planes in a single, fleeting act of listening" (ibid.).

Chion recognises here that by listening *in situ*, the ephemeral nature of sound is apparent. When he mentions the contextual aspect though, he has in mind the context that identifies the cause of sound, not personal or historical contexts of place, or the location where we are listening. In other words, it is the context that identifies the sound in the first place, and then it provides sound with a particular meaning and effect. This meaning and effect are secondary to Chion, and is rarely discussed. Hence, in respect of the tradition of *acousmatic music*, Chion, in regard to *in situ* listening recognises "the global sensorial and material context", but he doesn't go further in discussing meanings and effects (Chion 2016 p. 138). This discussion, from his perspective, is outside of his discipline.

The context that this thesis is aiming for is deeper because it recognises the specificities of the geographical location and personal history of the individual listener. When a person perceives sound, memories and emotions are triggered, and this represents a creative space for research, as well as creative work.

In opposition to listening *in situ*, Chion presents listening to sound recording by following traits: "It decontextualizes the sound, in particular by making it '*acousmatic*'". Next, "by making an object repeatable, the perception of which can be formed and rendered precise because of the 'depositing' of successive, memorized impressions". Finally, "by constituting as a composed tableau that which in situ is but a sequence of events that the ear pecks at more or less haphazardly" (Chion 2016 p. 139).

All three traits are compositionally focused. Compared to the first set of traits, there is no space for emotional involvement or contextual aspects of listening. In these traits, the focus is given to the property of the sound recording that enables repeated listening, consequently making the listener more focused and attentive. In other words, repetition allows for analytical listening. The third trait mentioned *in situ* listening as "pecking haphazardly", which reveals that the disadvantage of *in situ* listening according to Chion is lack of control over attention, which consequently affects the analytical capacity of the trained listener.

Accordingly, by investing just limited energy in discussing listening *in situ*, a significant, experiential aspect of listening stays under-researched. Although *soundwalking* is an important practice in *electroacoustic* & *soundscape* composition, as well as sound art, they are usually performed to broaden the awareness and appreciation of *soundscapes* in general, to train the ear and collect interesting sounds as compositional material. The *soundwalking* is less commonly directed towards exploration of *in situ* aspects of listening, which also assumes performative, multisensory, or contextual dimension of listening.

During this research I have conducted numerous *soundwalks* with and without recording equipment. During the walks I would focus on the perception of sound, but I wouldn't dismiss the other senses. I would also embrace remembrance. For example, during long walks on the banks of river Dee near Banchory performed in summer 2016 I would often think about my father fishing and remember long holidays with him. From time to time I would stop and close my eyes, and listen in order to recognise the quality of different sound textures.

Accordingly, it has been important to recognise that the everyday perception “involves a myriad of different stimuli from various sources reaching the different sense organs. This includes sensuous abundance, ambiguity and redundancy” (Rodaway 1994 p. 11). These traits are especially prominent in situations of *in situ* listening.

These *soundwalks* in all four places, gradually revealed that I am more fascinated by the experience of *soundwalking* and listening in *soundscape* as part of the environment, than in the recorded sound and manipulation of it. Hence in an unconscious way, in my interviews, I recreated some of the walks, and my interviewees were mentally re-visiting specific locations from their towns and cities. More often than not, they would also draw comparisons with other places they had travelled to or lived in, and this for me showed that my tendency to recall Sarajevo in some of the walks undertaken, related to Rodaway’s concept of perception as cognition (Rodaway 1994).

When it comes to *soundwalking* practice, R. Murray Schafer differentiates between listening walks and *soundwalks*. A listening walk according to Schafer is a walk "with a concentration on listening" (Schafer 1994 p. 146). He points out that walkers should be spread out in the area. On the other hand, he points out that a *soundwalk* implements a score as a guide. He also adds that a *soundwalk* could include a number of "ear training exercises" (Schafer 1994 p. 212-213). Here, he suggests comparing "the pitches of drainpipes on a city street", "different harmonics of neon lights", and similar (Ibid.).

Nowadays, the term *soundwalk* is applied to both approaches, for a guided walk, improvised walk, walks allowing amplification with the help of microphones and sound recorders, different GPS maps, internet maps allowing additional sonic, contextual, historical information. They are usually performed outdoors, but what happens when they are performed indoors?

As Schafer's definition of the *soundscape* is quite broad and includes any sound that surrounds the sentient, regardless of its source, can *soundscapes* inherent in an art gallery represent a piece created by an architect due to the materials used and the layout of the space, or by curators and artists in arranging the pieces in an exhibition? This raises the issues of creative ownership.

The *soundwalk* as the methodology of *soundscape* research opens up the world for a composer; it is embodied, it allows interaction with sonic, visual, haptic and olfactory senses. However, this

multisensory aspect of listening, as well as the individual experience of listening integrated with personal memories, often escapes not just *electroacoustic* composition, but sound art in general.

In the following section of this chapter, I will discuss some of the dominant divides within the discipline related to my research topic and my creative outputs. In the process, I will utilise some of the terms and approaches illustrated up to this point.

2.3. Sound Art: Discipline and Theme

> 'Sound Art' seems to be a category which can include anything which has or makes sound and even, in some cases, things which don't. (Neuhaus 2011 p. 72)

This chapter until now has shown that sound art discourse doesn't exist in a vacuum. The ideas of sound art authors such as Salome Voegelin and Brandon LaBelle are often influenced and informed by concerns of *electroacoustic* music, as well as *soundscape* composition. Here, the work of R. Murray Schafer from Canada has been discussed, as the World Soundscape Project was instrumental in increasing the awareness of *soundscapes* in different parts of the world.

Additionally, Pierre Schaeffer created a compositional approach focused on 'sound itself'. As such it is still widely explored and researched, and is commonly referred to as *acousmatic music* in contemporary literature.

In the next section of this chapter, I will introduce a few other authors and artists who problematize, and seek to define sound art, as a discipline. Moreover, there are numerous approaches and interpretations of sound art; hence I will tackle a few arguments that are relevant for this research.

One of the key authors in this section is sound artist, performer and author, Seth Kim-Cohen. His work has been of interest to this research because he also operates in an interdisciplinary manner, and has a deep comprehension of the canons of visual art.

Seth Kim-Cohen recognises that there is a dynamic relationship between sound art, music and what he calls "the gallery arts" (Kim-Cohen 2009 p. 151). This dynamic relationship is often tense as the approaches and concerns in these three clusters don't necessarily overlap. In this regard, it is

essential to be aware of the "universe of the terms" of all three areas according to Kim-Cohen (2009 p. 157).

As this thesis shows, these opposing approaches are revealed through focusing on the material properties of sound, that often don't encourage contextual or personal aspects of listening.

For instance, Kim-Cohen points out that:

> Distinguishing sound art from music and the gallery arts depends upon distinguishing its universe of terms and understanding how these terms establish fields of opposition within their cultural lifeworld. (Kim-Cohen 2009 p. 157)

The mapping of these fields has been essential for my work as my research question focuses on personal identities shaping the listening experience. These have challenged some of the approaches in sound art informed by music composition. In the second part of the quotation, Kim-Cohen mentions the "cultural lifeworld". This refers to an approach to creative practice, development of ideas, the form and medium of the artwork, or in other words, the contexts in which the artwork emerges and is experienced in. Most importantly, as the term relates to culture, it concerns how the work communicates or interacts with the audience. The universe of terms interacts with the notions of the artwork's cultural lifeworld, and this interaction informs the idea development, artwork production and process of disseminating the work.

Regarding the form, or the medium in which sound art could "present itself" Kim-Cohen states that "non-cochlear sonic art presents itself in any medium, photography, books, lines on walls, mirrors, sculpture, as well as performance, speech, choreography, social practice, and so on" (Kim-Cohen 2009 p. 157).

The idea that the piece of sound art could employ any medium, is deeply contested within the discipline. By proposing such a diverse range of mediums, Kim-Cohen urges sound art to move beyond rigid conventions, challenging McLuhan's notion that the "medium is the message" (2009 p. 94).

The term sound art initially refers to the medium. What is often overlooked regarding this argument is that the medium of video art, print, photography, painting, offer a myriad of approaches as forms of visual art. These forms refer to media and techniques of often contested and shifting boundaries; students often study integrated programmes using techniques across the

field. In other words, while painting is a medium, sound is both medium and umbrella term for a sensory stimuli of auditory perception.

In the case of sound art, the term is often used for a range of creative practices or mediums addressing sound as a sensory stimulus. Due to the reference to the sensory stimuli, a closer parallel to sound art, as a term, is visual art. However, the term visual art could also be perceived as dated, as it now includes the highly ephemeral practices of socially engaged art and performance.

From this point of view, if sound art deals with different contextual, historical, perceptual, emotional aspects of sound as a sense, we can question the role of the term ‘sound art’. The American sound artist, Max Neuhaus, expresses his frustration regarding this issue by listing different 'forms' of sound art.

Sound art exhibitions often include:

> music, kinetic sculpture, instruments activated by the wind or plays by the public, conceptual art, sound effects, recorded readings of prose or poetry, visual artworks which also make sound, paintings of musical instruments, musical automations, film, video, technological demonstrations, acoustic re-enactments, interactive computer programmes which produce sound, etc. (Neuhaus 2011 p. 72)

By listing these different approaches, Neuhaus questions the term sound art in relation to the medium used and the message. Consequently, he points out that “in art, the medium is not often the message” (Neuhaus 2011 p. 73). This insight into an internal discussion concerning the definition of sound art, suggests that a medium-focused approach might not always provide an answer. This is because, despite the use of the sound medium, these works do not have a lot in common concerning their approach to sound, treatment of the materials, and explored subjects or themes. This type of work can explore a wide range of topics, from social issues to acoustics, space and spatiality, mental health issues, engagement, sexuality, body, and many others.

In order to support his argument regarding sound art as a discipline, Seth Kim-Cohen makes a parallel between sound art and another historical art forms that are troublesome to define, namely sculpture. Sculpture is traditionally perceived as a three-dimensional object that focuses on the exploration of characteristics of space, but it has been contested by installation, architecture, performative practices, and sometimes, even painting.

Therefore, Kim-Cohen brings forward the importance of sound and sonic experience as a subject matter by quoting Rosalind Krauss, an American art critic, who struggled in the 1970s with the relationship between material and sculpture. Finally, she concluded: "The definition of sculpture is a product of how we talk about it and think about it" (Kim-Cohen 2009 p. 152).

By following the same analogy, we can see why sound art is so difficult to define. “How we talk and think about it” can be very different related to two different research cultures: music versus visual art. Thus by discussing the literature from the point of view of a practitioner with a visual art background this dissertation aims to overcome disciplinary barriers, to serve the reader from both disciplines.

From the point of view of 'visual art', the categories, especially those concerning the specific medium can often seem overly traditional. For example, The Guardian published an article in 2010 titled: *Turner prize: Susan Philipsz may be a worthy winner, but don't call her a sound artist*. The author of the text, Jonathan Jones, an art critic, points out that art categories are obsolete, and Philipsz is an artist, even though she “does look a bit of a specialist” (Jones 2010).

Here, art categories are presented as obsolescent in a contemporary understanding of visual art. The primary concern of the handling the specific aspects of the medium, such as colour and composition, is regarded as formalist and ahistorical. In terms of art historical approaches to visual composition, we would have to go to the beginnings of abstract art, for example, De Stijl founded in 1917 by two pioneers of abstract art, Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg. However, De Stijl provided just one approach amongst many towards the formal characteristics of visual composition. 20th-century art history represents results of cross-pollination between disciplines arts: visual, music, theatre, and literature; in relation to social and political factors. While De Stijl explored rigid form and structure in the division of a canvas in surfaces covered with saturated colour, Cubism has already broken the compositions by illustrating perspectives from multiple points of view, and depicting different points in time. Parallel to De Stijl, Dada artists were rethinking the role of object making, hence they developed highly conceptual ideas.

Hence, Seth Kim-Cohen refers to this tendency of visual art to focus on conceptual ideas when he states: “(…) sound is bigger than hearing. The gallery arts have put eye in its place. Why this recalcitrance of the ear?” (2009 p. 167).

When Kim-Cohen pleads that sound is bigger than hearing, he refers to concerns beyond the aesthetic, and engages with conceptual and contextual aspect of creative practice. The opening up of the sound art field to issues of context, even politics and engagement has been done to some extent by sound artists coming from various backgrounds, but theory is often slow to catch up as this chapter shows.

Leigh Landy, a professor of contemporary music at Leicester Media School argues that sharing a practice and its mirror, in theory, is too rarely done and this stands in the way of a *sounding art* paradigm to function holistically. He recognizes *sounding art* as an interdisciplinary field, and asks

> Why can't musicians learn from the communicative experience, the dramaturgically founded intention/reception loop, that is second nature to most sound artists, and why don't sound artists engage more with the tools of electroacoustic composition than they do? (Landy 2017 p. 23)

Landy mentions tools, not necessarily ideas or concepts, but Kim-Cohen's remark about the ear reveals possible answers. Would it be possible to say that visual arts by "putting an eye in its place" (Kim-Cohen 2009 p. 167) have also deprioritised the craftsmanship of making? In other words, the necessity of mastering the materials has long been questioned in visual art discourse. If that is the case then many sound artists would feel less compelled to engage with the compositional tools and techniques of sound manipulation. On the other hand, the tools of *electroacoustic* composition can be very useful in the development of the communicative experience that Landy mentions.

However, the terminology of the field and overall approach to listening is often in conflict with the concerns of sound artists with a visual art background, as they seek the communication and integration of contextual material.

This integration is central to sound art from Kim-Cohen's perspective, and he points out that music has been perceived for a long time as an abstract art form, not burdened by mimetics. He positions music as "self-referential and self-justifying" (2009 p. 157). On the other hand, he points out that sound art "can't help but signify" (Ibid.). It is important to note here that sound art as Kim-Cohen sees it, is heavily dominated by practitioners who find the contextual aspect of sound to be of primary importance. However, as this discussion of the importance of extra-musical information for sound art is often perceived differently, depending on the background of the author or practitioners, in sound art there is a discussion whether it should be open to contextual information or not. This discussion has been the primary motive for coining of the new term, *sounding art*.

In *The Routledge Companion to Sounding Art* Vincent Meelberg interprets *sounding art* in the following way:

> Human-made artistic and/or aesthetic applications of sound (…) are human expressions that use sound as material, medium and/or subject matter. These sonic applications are always active, vibrant, in the sense that they have the potential to affect listeners, even if the sounding art-work is about the absence of sound. (Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax 2017 p. 2)

This research inhabits the space of sound as a subject matter by employing different media that are always active, dynamic and have an active relationship with the listeners. Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax (2017) use "*sounding art*" as a phrase that implies duration, compared to sound art, in stressing that the unfixed nature of sound is experienced in the moment, and is gone in seconds.

This opening up of the field to works not just focusing on the aesthetic and formalistic quality of sound used but performative, experiential, embodied and personal aspects of listening are crucial in my work, and central to this research. *The Routledge Companion to Sounding Art* (2017) shows that this PhD research is timely and that the emergent practices of sound art are opening themselves to a variety of approaches, inclusive of discussion with artists from different backgrounds, about what sound and *sounding art* could be.

A sound makes us listen not just to what is around us, but also what is in us. As Marcel Cobussen adds "playing with conventions, its relational aspects, making audiences aware of, for instance, time and spaces" are important values of *sounding art* (Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax 2017 p. 2). From his perspective, *sounding art* is always "social, political, differential, ecological, etc., besides being aesthetical (or anti-aesthetical)" (Ibid.).

By expressing that he is cautious of "sound in themselves" attitudes, as possibly "old fashion materialism" (Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax 2017 p. 2), Cobussen admits that the approach to sound, specifically to listening, filtered through disciplines of *electroacoustic* and *soundscape* composition are influencing the discourse, and can't be ignored, confirming the argument of this chapter. Moreover, by making such argument without presenting sources and references, he also assumes that reader would be familiar with such tendencies and their histories that could be exclusive for artists with non-musical backgrounds.

Sounding art according to Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax, is open to considering the causes of sound including the personal, social and political. The term *sounding art* is still relatively new, and it

remains to be seen if it will be widely accepted. The *Routledge Companion to Sounding Art* (2017) is composed of essays that present and question different approaches to *sounding art*, despite the authors still using the term sound art in their work.

Sound art to begin with, is vaguely defined and the introduction of the new term '*sounding art*' was inevitable. Besides Cobussen, Meelberg, and Truax, Katherine Norman used the term *sounding art* as the title of her book: *Sounding Art: Eight Literary Excursions through Electronic Music* (2004). As the title suggests, she tackled different approaches of composition through writing. She used the term in relation to her own practice, focusing primarily on compositional techniques. Her aim was not necessarily to propose a new definition or alternative approach to sound art.

As an example of a material focused sound art informed by *electroacoustic* music concerns, and in opposition to authors propagating contextual and thematic approaches to sound art, I will discuss the work of Laura Maes, a Belgian sound maker, and Marc Leman, Professor in systematic musicology at Ghent University. They went to great trouble in defining sound art "as an art form that is distinguished from compositions, and even from the term '*sounding art*'" (Maes and Leman 2017 p. 27). They forwarded 13 criteria of sound art:

> concept, perception, space, site specificity, open form, interaction, production of sound, performer, narrativity, implementation of techniques and technologies, visual component, endurance, and place of presentation. (Maes and Leman 2017 p. 36)

Specifically, Maes and Leman stress that sound art artworks most often have no beginning and end, and the spatial component of sound is more dominant than the temporal. The authors call this property the "open form" (Maes and Leman 2017 p. 31). Next, the site specificity in their research matrix refers to acoustic and physical properties of the location, not its contextual positioning. Accordingly, narrativity refers to the absence or presence of the musical structure. According to their analysis narrativity is rarely present in sound art works. Moreover, the concept refers to the production of the work, described as "the production, muffling, or reflection of sound typically forms the starting point" or intended goal of the work (Maes and Leman 2017 p. 29).

Although Maes and Leman defined sound art as a "hybrid form of visual arts and music" (2017 p. 35) it is difficult to identify what methods of visual art making are employed in such productions. In terms of production, sound art often has a visual component, it often incorporates image, objects and light. However, what is absent in their approach is the contextual, political or social content of sound art. What is concerning is that by describing sound art as a hybrid of visual arts and music, a reader could easily fail to recognise the contextual aspect of visual art as well.

Maes' and Leman's criteria are formed by the analysis of "a considerable number of artworks" (Maes and Leman 2017 p. 38). These artworks, although not presented in the chapter I discussed, are tackled in the PhD dissertation of Laura Maes *Sounding Sound Art- A Study of the definition, origin, context, and techniques of sound art* (2013). Maes forms her analysis of sound art based on the case study of the four artists: Ulrich Eller, Max Neuhaus, Bernhard Leitner and Felix Hess. Ulrich Eller, educated as a painter in Berlin, is well known for creating the visualisations of different sounds (Maes 2013 p. 30). Max Neuhaus, a classically trained musician from the USA, according to Maes, often transmits sounds from the speakers that are hidden in the environment and there are no "visual elements placed in front of speakers" (2013 p. 34). She concludes that "visual elements here often arise from the production of sound or are less explicitly present" (Maes 2013 p. 34). The other two artists are Bernhard Leitner and Felix Hess. They explore sound art through installation, in the case of Hess, by exploring movement and making it audible through installation; and the relationship between the sound and acoustic properties of space and spatiality in Letiner's work, where a background in architecture was significant (Maes 2013).

Maes overlooks the potential of contextual, geographical and political discourses of sound art works. For example, Max Neuhaus' work *Times Square*, originally installed in 1977 and operating from 1977 to 1992, and 2002 to present day, is site-specific; it only exists on the specific pedestrian island on Broadway between 45th and 46th streets in New York. The work picks up hums and noises under the street and amplifies it by using loudspeakers beneath the metal grid on the ground level. The loud speakers are invisible, but the work is completely dependent not just on the sounds and vibrations of passing traffic, but also the visual backdrop of the busy streets of New York. The experience of the installation is dependent on the experience of the crossing, and element of surprise is key to this site-specific work.

By contrast, *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961) by Robert Morrison for Laura Maes is not a piece of sound art because it consists of the reproduction of sounds recorded during the production of the box. "The concept– briefly summarized by the title of the work - is of primary importance, not the quality of the sound nor its spatial image" (2013 p. 89).

The approach to sound art that Maes describes closes off the field from conceptual and contextual approaches that explore sound socially or personally - like memories, for instance. She suggests that works of sound art should focus on purely sonic properties of sound stripped from the contextual content. Maes' work refers in the narrowest sense to the notion of exploring sonic

phenomena through a sound art piece. In this way it builds on tradition of music as the one of the least mimetic mediums of arts.

On the other hand, there are successful, socially informed sound pieces that offer a very differ perspective of sound art. For instance, the sound art piece *The Way Earthly Things Are Going* (2017) commissioned in 2017 by Documenta in Athens and exhibited in Tate Modern in 2017 and early 2018 actively engage with the contemporary issue of economic migration. The work, created by Emeka Ogboh, uses "sound to bring to the table issues of entitlement, nationalism, xenophobia, and racism" (Documenta und Museum Fridericianum gGmbH 2019).

Ogboh, from Nigeria, and the work *The Way Earthly Things Are Going* used the lyrics of Bob Marley's *So Much Trouble in the World* and the Greek *When I Forget, I'm Glad*, both expressions of sorrow. The piece is played over twelve speakers, creating a polyphonic installation in the tank section of Tate Modern, a circular and highly reverberant space. A 25 meters long strip of red, green and blue LED displays is the only light source used in the installation. The display shows live-streamed stock exchange data of companies based all over the world. Displays are positioned on the wall above the audience's eye level. The work tackles the economic crisis in Greece and it is a highly immersive, emotive piece.

This work was created for Documenta in Athens as a response to the Greek economic crisis. Referring to the work of Laura Maes and Marc Leman, it is hard to believe that physical or aesthetic properties of the piece were the conceptual basis for this work. The power of the piece lies in the realization that those displayed data cause pain, migration and broken families across the globe. While looking at data, the listener can feel the emptiness of the space, uncertainty, and the voices and feeling of people who are facing uncertain futures. The audience feels powerless and small in the massive space of the gallery. The installation successfully uses visual and aural means in tackling the personal and emotional consequences of displacement.

The Way Earthly Things Are Going (2017) is a form of sound installation with performative, voice-based elements. Brandon Labelle stresses that sound installation played a key role in the recognition of sound art as "indefinable practice". Labelle describes sound art as a bridge between sonic arts and visual arts that embraces "sonic materiality" and "conceptualization of auditory potentiality" (LaBelle 2015 p. 151). This relates to the potential of sound art installation to engage with space, and the acoustic properties of sound. However, LaBelle continues:

> While at times incorporating, referring to, or drawing upon materials, ideas, and concerns outside of sound per se, sound art nonetheless seems to position such things in relation to aurality, the processes and promises of audition, and sonic culture. Sound, in this case, creates a "narrative, amplify and unsettle meanings and invade space. (LaBelle 2015 p. 151).

The sound in *The Way Earthly Things Are Going* (2017) invades our body and the gallery space. The air trapped in the space between bare concrete walls trembles with life. The installation embraces the potential of sound to evoke memories and feelings; it takes us across space, closer to ontological uncertainty of a migrant. The work is emerging from urgency to tackle economic migration, but through creative use of space, sound and visual elements act at numerous levels of our being. To strip down such a piece of its extra-musical elements would take away agency away from the work. However, equally, it would be difficult to position in any other way except a piece of sound art, or alternatively an audio-visual installation.

2.4. Conclusion

Of central importance to this chapter are the ways in which contextual aspects in place-based, identity-based approaches, challenge the field of sound art, shaped during the literature review. The compositional approaches influential in sound art discourse reveal the tendency to focus on the material properties of sound and analytical listening. The work of *electroacoustic* composers Pierre Schaeffer and Michel Chion illustrate the concept of *reduced listening*, which propagates de-contextualisation regarding sources of sound, consequently taking the discussion away from personal and historical aspects of place. These tendencies and approaches are still widely present in the field of sound art that authors Kim-Cohen (2009), LaBelle (2015), Maes (2013), Cobussen et al. (2017) define differently.

Although an engagement with these authors is essential for my understanding of the field, the chapter indicates that challenges emerge not necessarily in compositional discourse, outwith the scope of this thesis, but when these attitudes shape sound art discourse, whilst still claiming interdisciplinarity, as in the work of Maes (2013). This discussion is also of value for practitioners of sound art who sometimes find it challenging to work across different sound art platforms attuned for practitioners of a particular background, hence contextualising practice differently; from gallery-based sound art, to radio and concert formats, as well as site-specific practices and sound art in public space. Moreover, sound art is nowadays studied at art schools and music programmes and in conversation with other colleagues across the UK, the interdisciplinary challenges come to the fore.

Although I have tackled the work of a number of authors in this chapter that were chosen from a more extensive literature review, I am aware that in the attempt to present different voices, I have not always been critical in all areas of the inquiry. In this regard, the research questions have been instrumental in guiding my critical engagement. Hence the chapter continually works with the research question on the negotiation of interdisciplinary challenges in sound art, and, in the process, makes a record of some observations helpful for other artists. This approach draws from my experience of working with artists from different disciplines where I learned that discussing various methods and concerns while making, acquiring new terminology enables dialogue and moves projects forward.

Although my initial research question didn't focus on the contextual aspect of sound but more specifically on how personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place, and how this form of listening specifically informs approaches to sound art, I found it challenging to work with interviews and recollections of place without tackling the broader issues on the treatment of context in the field.

Moreover, the thread that connects the work of *electroacoustic* composers Pierre Schaeffer, Michel Chion and contemporary authors such as Voegelin, is a reference to phenomenology. Terms such as *reduced listening* and *acousmatic* situation are evidence of that. Specifically, Schaeffer's *reduced listening* and *sound object* refer directly to phenomenological reduction, although according to author and composer Suk-Jun Kim, Schaeffer did not apply entirely a phenomenological method:

> (...) while Schaefferian phenomenology rightly-and timely-recognised the acousmatic situation, or more accurately, acousmatic attitude, as the phenomenological attitude under which our listening experience can be investigated phenomenologically, it misunderstood the workings of phenomenological reduction and employed only part of it. (Kim 2011 p. 123)

My position within this research does not align with Schaeffer's work, as indicated throughout the thesis in my discussion of the contextual aspects of listening. However, as Kim differentiates phenomenology 'proper' from Schaefferian phenomenology, there is a question regarding the position of this (my) research with phenomenology 'proper'.

Although there are numerous approaches to, and interpretations of phenomenology, this work doesn't align with phenomenology 'proper', despite its interest in the phenomena of sound and

experiential and subjective aspects of listening, traits commonly associated with phenomenology. This is clarified as follows:

> (...) the phenomenological reduction (...) begins with epoché, whose only goal is to suspend our commitment to our natural attitude towards the world. But then the reduction proceeds with its phenomenological investigation by returning to, but not assuming, the natural attitude because it is in this natural attitude that our experience to things in the world is situated, and also because only by returning to it can we examine things in the world and our intentionalities to them. (Kim 2011 p. 130)

As presented in Kim's article based on an analysis of the work of Husserl as well as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty amongst others, the practice of phenomenology assumes the adoption of a phenomenological attitude and method. Hence, acquiring an understanding of phenomena is a consequence of the application of the phenomenological method, which differs from the intention of this research that is concerned with experiences of ordinary listening (Chion 2016). Moreover, a consequence of (phenomenological) method-oriented approach is that scholarly attention is given to a method practised by a scholar who consequently moves away from the actual experiences of a larger number of people and their social contexts as they experience it.

Hence this thesis doesn't generate knowledge about sound as an object, not in terms of physical and spatial characterises of sound, although *field recordings* in the appendix enable this analysis, but it focuses on sound as experienced by people. These already formed experiences of listeners are contextualised (history of places, biographical details of the listeners is juxtaposed) in order to offer some clues about how contexts affect them.

Moreover, in this research, knowledge is already in place with its residents, and the work is just revealing it, allowing it to interact with literature. It is not that a particular method of listening generates a more in-depth insight about phenomena, as in the case of phenomenological reduction.

The contribution of this chapter is in sensitizing the reader towards context-sensitive approaches, mindful of the perspectives of residents and migrants for example. It also suggests that the antagonism against visual stimuli in Voegelin's work, drawing upon the *acousmatic* situation used in concert settings that allows us to listen to sound without seeing its cause, can be problematized in the situations of *in situ* listening. Here, there is a possible pitfall in some of the contemporary sound art literature, especially the work of Voegelin, where sound is tackled as a phenomenon, without considering the circumstances in which we encounter it. By drawing from compositional approaches and applying them to our everyday experience of sound there is a danger of

overlooking how an untrained listener engages with the sound world. This is important for me as a researcher and an artist who has a need to engage with audiences, and while these aspects of my practice are indicated in this chapter, they will be explored further in the following chapters by means of multiple interview excerpts and autobiographical narratives.

3. Now and Then: Listening in Time

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter offered a critical literature review that informs this chapter regarding some relevant approaches in the field of sound art regarding the context of place listening *in situ*. The critical engagement with the literature revealed that the field is interdisciplinary and that material focused approaches are often drawing from the tradition of *electroacoustic* music. The terminology and concepts discussed previously will allow more in-depth engagement with the following research question in this chapter:

How do personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place, and how does this form of listening specifically inform approaches to sound art?

This chapter will focus on this question by looking into personal identities and histories that shape the experience of listening to place tackled through my and interviewees' narratives. At the beginning of the chapter the focus will be on the concept of *timespace* (Voegelin 2010) and *pathetic trigger* (Voegelin 2006) concerning memory and the experience of sound. In the second half of the chapter, some context-specific narratives will be shared tackling the relationship between personal and group identities. The chapter will create a dialogue between sound art authors and resident of places, and, in the process, illustrate that the experiences of listening are shaped and dependent upon personal identities. The work on *soundwalking* of composers Hildegard Westerkamp and Katharine Norman will be tackled in relation to outlined themes. Peter Cusack's work in Chernobyl will be used to illustrate the power of personal narrative in place of trauma and catastrophe. Hence this chapter also tackles the acknowledgement of context, predominantly through listeners' experience of listening. By often sharing overlooked personal and emotional narratives of sound experiences, the chapter aims to build a case for future research, by referring to discussions in the previous chapter.

However, I am aware of the discrepancy in terms of work that is interested in listening *in situ*, and interviews conducted in indoor environments with those not necessarily familiar with *soundwalking*. The interviewees would tell me about the sounds they experience daily, and in the process, they would acquire a new appreciation of *soundscapes* of their proximate surroundings. Most of my interviewees recognised that the interview process helped them to uncover the importance of sound in acquiring a sense of place, and how that sense of place also helps them to recognise specific sounds, the relationships they were unaware before. Nonetheless, I understand that going for a walk with interviewees to places they are familiar with could bring even more details into the research. Although such a method would probably not be feasible across four places in two countries in the timeframe of this PhD, future research might explore this direction by mainly focusing on specific locations over a more extended period.

The chapter will also tackle the following research question by means of narratives:

How can an artist negotiate the interdisciplinary challenge of music versus visual art approaches in sound art?

The storytelling, integration of emotional and personal aspects of experience through writing offers one of the means of negotiating the interdisciplinary challenges in this research. By explaining my motivations and by providing plenty of examples, I aim to work towards the consideration of these narratives as valuable records, and as a means of acquiring knowledge and understanding of sound in light of the observations made in the previous chapter.

The personal identities that this chapter is interested in are "narratively constituted" and informed by our experiences (Lindemann 2014 p. 4). "They are, that to say, narrative understandings formed out of the interaction between one's self concept and others' sense of us" (Ibid.).

Defined in this way, personal identities foreground narratives informed by our experiences, with autobiographical memories as a driving force in this process.[57] In other words, autobiographical memories are "critical for our sense of who we are" (Monk et al. 2017 p. 55).

[57] This chapter is developed from the conference presentation *Sarajevo: Encountering the Past by Listening Today,* at *The Sound of Memory Symposium: Sound-track/Sound-scape,* 22-24 April 2017 at Goldsmiths and Whitechapel Gallery in London.

With the help of narrative we contextualise events, we place them within sequences and make causal and symbolic links (Monk et al. 2017). According to the authors of the book *Reconstructing Identity-A Trandisciplinary Approach*, the narratives don't just help us to understand the world around us but they "do the same with the world within us, where the construction of identity is paramount" (Monk et al. 2017 p. 246).

By drawing from these notions, I will focus in this chapter on the personal recollection of sound of a place, triggered by specific sound events, and more complex and layered *soundscapes* as well. I will introduce quotations from my interviews that inform this research, and show us that for the untrained listener it is difficult to even talk about sound without reference to past experiences, and personal biography, which illustrates the importance of this discussion for sound studies in general.

Experiential dimensions of memory that constitute personal identities, link to Voegelin's concept of *timespace* and the *pathetic trigger*, the main ideas of concern in this chapter. Both concepts are tied to the memory of place, and provide the theoretical framework through which my experiences of listening to place, as well as those of my interviewees, will be positioned. This frame is not rigid and allows fluid movements in time and space, reflecting the subjective and particular ways in which sound affects us. The range of recollections from different people aims to present the personal and emotional aspects of listening, mindful of *timespace* and *pathetic trigger*.

Voegelin (2006) uses the term *pathetic trigger* for sound materials that trigger memories. The emotional power of often-intimate recollections illustrated in my work, add a new dimension to Voegelin's concepts. As I will present in this chapter, it is often unclear, in following her approach, how concepts such as *timespace* and *pathetic trigger* should be applied in different listening situations. In this regard I will refer to the previous chapter and notions of *reduced listening* and tradition of *electroacoustic* music.

The opportunity of sharing different voices in this research from interviews is of primary importance, as it will show that autobiographical memories, along with a contextual awareness of place, shapes the listening experience in profound ways. Although Sarajevo as a site of memory offers potent materials for research, by bringing in recollections from Maglaj, Banchory and Aberdeen, it will become clear that listening to place is shaped by our past experiences across different geographic territories.

In this chapter, I will also revisit *soundwalk* as a methodology, and by referring to the work of female composers such as Hildegard Westerkamp and Katherine Norman, point out that *soundwalk* inherently embraces the idea of *timespace*. *Soundwalk* performed *in situ* encourages multisensory interaction with the environment by drawing on various autobiographical memories. This is often overlooked as an aspect of the *soundwalk*, and as such contributes to the discussion in this chapter.

References to Sarajevo and some specific locations in the city such as the Markale market and the Trebević mountain will be foregrounded in what follows. This slightly more prominent role of Sarajevo in this research, resulting from my perspectives as a native of the city, is shared throughout this thesis. Hence, Sarajevo acts as a case study, and illustrates the power of memory over *soundscapes* experienced in the present. Moreover, Sarajevo can also demonstrate the differences between the listening perspectives of a resident and a visitor to the place. This argument responds to the question on the importance of acknowledging context in sound art research, as well as the position of the researcher concerning the place he/she is researching. Hence the research question on how the acknowledgement of context through intrusion of place-based, identity-based approaches challenges the field of sound art, will be tackled in this chapter by focusing on the personal aspect of listening.

The specific context of Sarajevo as a place of traumatic conflict, the siege that is still engraved in memory of its citizens, shapes listening experience, as will be discussed along with Cusack's project *Sounds from Dangerous Places* (2012). Cusack's *field recordings* in Chernobyl, another European site of trauma, are still loaded with references of the nuclear disaster compared to the sounds of Sarajevo, where it is difficult to recognise the sonic presence of the conflict in a contemporary *soundscape*. Sarajevo is a living city, and sounds of open markets, traffic, cafes and bustling street life of the city dominate the *soundscape*.[58] The relationship between the *soundscape* of the present and the *soundscape* of the 1990s conflict, carried in memory of the residents, divides the citizens of Sarajevo between those who experienced the siege, and those who did not.

Finally, the example of the call to prayer, and church bells, being heard simultaneously in Sarajevo underlines the overlapping spheres of individual and religious identity, sonically saturating public space. By offering different interpretations of these sounds, I will highlight the importance of context even further.

[58] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings

3.2. Narratives of Listening

During my research, I walked in parks, streets, near rivers and sea. I would stop from time to time and close my eyes; I would compare what I saw and heard. While listening, I would notice smells, details on buildings, the intricate play of shadows, light and darkness. I would listen to continuous flows of sound, hums and rumbles, the chatter of people, birds, wind and rain. I would try to forget the source of the sound I am listening to, and I would focus on different textures, a play of sounds, and unexpected events. The immersion into the environment let me sink deeper and deeper to my being, totally content with the condition of the present moment. I would feel a sense of belonging as anything could be turned into a subject of fascination such as the sound of leaves under my feet, or rain on my jacket.

By the time I learned the rhythm of tides of my new home, I realised that I am a foreigner in all of my places, by passport, or by a status of diaspora. In the attempt to untangle this, I sank deeper into my memories, and I found just random recollections of "good" and "bad" times.

Memories are now stacked on top of each other, without any order or timeline, in the room shrouded in darkness. Then, a light emerges after days without power during the war, and I am fascinated by it. This light doesn't come from outside, but it emerges from the wire in the ceiling, triggered by a switch on the wall. I imagine armies of people struggling to keep this power on, pushing giant levers on mountains surrounding the city.

A single, warm, glowing light bulb radiates amber colour light on the ceiling of the heavily bombarded building in which I live now. I am lying on the bed, and I stare at this artificial miracle of light, my star glowing just for me, on the ceiling of this dark room. This is an extraordinary moment in the normality of war. I am entirely in the present, as there is nothing to recall from the past which my parents say used to be shrouded in light. Through half open eyes, I can see a glowing wire inside of the light bulb. [59]

The windows of the room are darkened, covered with heavy cloth and sandbags, so don't worry; we are safe from unwanted attention.

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[59] As discussed in section 1.5. I have used my subjective voice in a creatively written form, formatted in italic font.

During the long listening sessions while walking, I intended to put into practice Voegelin's approach to listening. While I don't agree that experience of sound is necessarily "chased away by the certainty of the image" (Voegelin 2010 p. xii), as discussed in the previous chapter, the next quotation reveals why her approach to listening resonates deeply with this research:

> Philosophy of sound art must have at its core the principle of sharing time and space with the object or event under consideration. It is a philosophical project that necessitates an involved participation, rather that enables a detached viewing position; and the object or event under consideration is by necessity considered not as an artefact but in its dynamic production. (Voegelin 2010 p. xii)

Firstly, as the introduction of this chapter implies, listening is not a theoretical project for this research. This research is interested in the experience of listening and being in the world. Hence, although I find Voegelin's work fascinating, some issues related to the application of her approach in different listening situations in different geographic contexts, will emerge.

The quotation implies subjectivity and the merging of subject and object, through the active engagement of a listener in the listening process. This is important for this research as Voegelin here opens up to subjective experience, which is interesting from the point of view of sound art discourse, as discussed in Chapter 2.

This thesis is looking at what happens next, in the form of writing, and the research develops a method on how to capture this relationship between sound event and listener. I have tried to listen and practice what Voegelin is saying in her texts by *soundwalking*, and through conversations with people.

By letting sound pass through us, and often, overwhelm us, a powerful world of emotions, memories spanning numerous places and experiences will emerge. These subjective worlds seem so different and varied initially, that a lack of pattern and structure could be intimidating. However, in their diversity, they represent a potent record of human engagement with the world that is sometimes difficult to position within theoretical frames.

In 1993 I lived in a derelict building in a part of town called Dobrinja. The building was exposed to shelling and sniper fire daily. In this period, my parents managed to obtain a piano for my sister who was passionate about playing.

My sister Mirsada is eight years older than me, and she would often play the piano for five or six hours a day in the front room of our flat. Beethoven's Für Elise is especially memorable, in its famous phrases and gestures have been engraved in my mind deeply. Her practice of the piece and repeating sections, again and again, to get the time right, to achieve the right pressure on keys, counting the time, missing the keys from time to time, represents a soundtrack of that time for me.

It is impossible to focus just on sound, and ignore the emotional aspect of this memory when listening to that piece now. Along with it, also comes to a remembrance of my sister's birthday in summer 1993 when one of her school friends was killed in a flat just a few floors underneath ours, in her front room.[60]

Confronted with such memories, Voegelin's notion of *timespace* comes to mind. Voegelin removes the dash between time and place, and claims that

> listening produces such a monistic value similarity between time and space, whose differences are worked out in a signifying practice by the 'inhabiting' subject. (Voegelin 2010 p. 125)

The inhabiting subject here is a listener who creates the link with the experience of the place from the past. In this case remembrance of the place and awareness of the past comes together while being simultaneously immersed in the present moment of listening.

By listening to the piano, specifically, listening to Beethoven's *Für Elise* in the present moment of listening and the past; the concert in our time and the front room of my memory all come together. It is almost impossible to distinguish of what time and space we are discussing, and "that time" takes me to "that room", while simultaneously allowing me to listen in the present. Voegelin doesn't offer many examples of *in situ* listening showing how this process takes place; hence I am using my subjective memories to 'practice' her writing in order to understand her work, but also, more importantly, to become aware of experiential processes of listening.

However, faced with examples of listening that trigger memories spanning times of peace and of conflict, some inconsistencies in Voegelin's approach are revealed. For instance, she claims

> it is not that sound changes anything on the objective consciousness of time or space, but that it introduces another time and another space that it sounds together as timespace. This is the timespace of the phenomenological subject who performs a reduced listening which does not hear a place but produces its own. (Voegelin 2010 p. 163)

[60] As discussed in section 1.5. I have used my subjective voice in a creatively written form, formatted in italic font. This writing is used to share my memories.

Although it could be claimed in line with the tradition of *acousmatic music*, that in detaching the sound from it's cultural connotations and original source, by applying *reduced listening*, the listener renders their own place in the process. This place would be described through the symbols and methods of *acousmatic music*. The resulting *timespace* would reflect a specialised training, generating memories of other places and times when a listener encountered similar sound properties.

However, the issue arises from a notion of objective time and space because the rigorous method that Schaeffer devises in *Treatise on Musical Objects* (2017) aims to render a more objective perception of sound not based on the emotional and cultural impacts of listening, but based on the inherent characteristics of the *sound objects* (Schaeffer 2017). As discussed in the previous chapter, Schaeffer points out that the one of the advantages of ordinary listening is overall intuition and universality which is lost with specialisation characterised with "the intention to hear this and not that" due to training (Schaeffer 2017 p. 87).

Voegelin does not tackle these issues of specialisation and training in her work. On the one hand she gives the impression that merging of time and space occurs naturally while listening, and it is accessible to all listeners, while on the other hand she also stresses the idea of *timespace* emerging from *reduced listening*, a highly specialised approach to sound that in the discourse is associated with Schaeffer's work.

In other words, Voegelin claims that there is an objective consciousness of time and space, and the one produced by *reduced listening* without tackling objective *timespace* and simultaneously, she doesn’t recognise specialised training but approaches *reduced listening* as if it was accessible regardless of expertise and training.

By bringing forward *reduced listening* and not discussing training, and also by differing objective and subjective, the questions emerge on who can practice her *reduced listening*? This is left unclear. Is this *reduced listening* to be practised by trained listeners, or can it be accessible to a broader audience? If that is the case, how does her *reduced listening* differ from that of Schaeffer? Is it more likely that the untrained listener will embrace *timespace*, embedded in a context of place, as well as autobiographical memory?

The inconsistencies in her argument regarding the accessibility of the *timespace* concept, are visible in the previous quotation. This deals with a listener who has an active role in shaping the

experience of listening, and she is not mentioning this objective vs individual's perspective (Voegelin 2010). Equally, when tackling the work of Massey when it comes to migration, she recognises that perception of place depends on the status and condition of the listener:

> here and now is dependent on the *who* of its practice, and at the same time, the place (the here and now) thus produced *is* the practice of a subjective and contingent perception. (Voegelin 2010 p. 139)

In the same section, she argues that different listeners render their own 'places' informed by their social condition (Voegelin 2010), which confirms the findings and approach of this research. However, *timespace* is a trait of listening regardless of training, and that the only rendering of the world we have access to is - subjective. The only way we experience the world is through our past experiences; hence this subjective experience can be formed by autobiographical memory through training, or various previous experiences, cultural and contextual factors. A trained *electroacoustic* composer might recognise a similarity between a steady hum of the traffic, and sea waves heard from some distance experienced in other time and space; equally as a fisherman who hears the sound of waves may be reminded of a different time and an event from his past. The difference between these usually very attentive listeners is in the language they use to tackle their experience. A composer uses specialised and standardised vocabulary, however, the inner workings of perception navigate and negotiate time and space because even while formally analysing sound, the listener inevitably retrieves and compares examples and experiences from the past.

Voegelin in her texts embraces subjectivity and the emotional dimension of listening, which also doesn't align with Schaeffer's approach to *reduced listening*.

The one way to resolve her quotation regarding the phenomenological subject producing it's own world through listening is to recognise that in *Listening to Noise and Silence* (2010), a work in which she introduces her key concepts, she doesn't make clear the difference between listening to the recorded sound and *in situ* listening. For example she discusses Cathy Lane's work *On the Machair* (2007) and recognises:

> The Island on the Outer Hebrides of Scotland that the recordings are from is, in its composition, not a place as a certain geographical location, a dwelling place, but a fictional place produced in my innovative listening. It 'things' in that it produces, it maps out sketches, draws and models people, work and nature, past and present in the space of my imagination. (Voegelin 2010 p. 21)

Arguably, if Voegelin were familiar with the Outer Hebrides then this imaginative approach would be very different. What makes the difference is the familiarity with the place and how these sounds are experienced, in the actual locations, or from the comfort of the studio or living space.

However, even when she describes *in situ* situation, the approach is similar, for example she describes listening to Waterlow Park as she is in the park of her "own listening". It is the reality of her inter-subjective self and it carries a "residue of past hearings". She says: "Listening here does not enhance but produces the park". (Voegelin 2010 p. 14)

Thus Voegelin doesn't clarify what kind of listening renders the time space objectively, nor is she precise regarding *reduced listening*. For instance in *Sonic Possible Worlds* (2014) she moves beyond duality by saying that listening "generates a plurality of sonic *timespace* environments that include memory, anxiety, and sentiment" (Voegelin 2014 p. 24).

Besides uniting the spatial and the temporal through the concept of *timespace*, Voegelin also unties different temporalities by embracing subjectivity.

> Sound demands the vis-à-vis and sounds the now as a complex duration of past and present continued together in the action of perception. (Voegelin 2010 p. 170)

She continues by saying that this is extensive and inter-subjective "…permanently and only here on my body which generates its *timespace* through the complex effort of my listening, which I extend into my contingent speech as sound again" (Ibid.). Here Voegelin points out that listening is a process and action, in which the past and present come together. However, she also involves her body actively, and the body becomes a generator of *timespace* through the attention and effort of listening. She closes the loop and says that this effort is extended through the body into speech as sound.

The potential of sound to focus our attention on the past and the present simultaneously is central to this research. Moreover, through her acknowledgement of body and speech, Voegelin makes sense of the interrelationships between all the elements of this research together as activities integral to the listening process, interviews, performance, and *soundwalking*. In the interviews, we often lose the impression that the interviewees describe events and experiences from the past, but instead, they experience them again while describing them. This vivid aspect of remembering, even away from sound stimuli, is a feature of all my interviews.

For example, Jim Marshall, a Glaswegian living in Sarajevo, explains that there are not many sounds that would remind him of Glasgow in Sarajevo. Then, almost at the end of an hour-long interview, he says: “I like when it rains very heavily here, and I like when it's windy here because It does transport me back to being a kid. So, that I do like" (Marshall 2016, 49 min 58 sec).

In this case, the experience that Jim Marshall describes is not just linked to any past, it transports him to a particular time of childhood. This short remark is loaded with emotion, and it links to the multisensory experience of heavy rain and wind. This remark came almost accidentally during the interview, as he repeated several times that Glasgow and Sarajevo barely have anything in common prior to this statement.

Specifically, this recollection could present the example of "*pathetic trigger*" described by Voegelin as the potential of sound to trigger an “emotional and sentimental involvement with the work” (Voegelin 2006 p. 13). This response doesn't create "nostalgic experience in the sense of a recognition of the past, but a current production of sonic material in a continually present perception" (Ibid.).

In the Collins dictionary, the meaning of pathetic is related to the expression of sympathy and pity, but also the obsolete use of the word is of "affecting the feelings" (Collins.English Dictionary 2019d). Voegelin borrows the term from John Ruskin, an art critic of the Victorian era, who uses it for strong and even violent feelings (Voegelin 2010). This helps Voegelin to employ the *pathetic trigger* as a key mechanism of listening experience that "generates the truth as an experiential truth for me" (Voegelin 2010 p. 177). Hence, through the mechanism of the *pathetic trigger*, Voegelin opens up towards the emotional aspect of listening, although she does not offer numerous examples of this process.

In her article from 2006 *Sonic Memory Material as 'pathetic trigger'*, Voegelin focuses specifically on the potential of sonic artwork to trigger an emotional response. In this case, she doesn't predict that sounds of actual environments could trigger memories. For example, she points out that "radio broadcasts, records, feature films, the television, etc." are "sonic memory material" at an artist's disposal (Voegelin 2006 p. 15). She also suggests that the processing of such sonic material should be avoided, as well as known recordings such as Martin Luther King's 1963 speeches. These activities could hinder the creative process of remembering and more "generative engagement" (Ibid.). She argues that "more generic and unspecified material that remains materiality rather than becoming a signifier, is what is needed" (Ibid.).

The outlined specification of sounds is broad, and it is difficult to determine precisely what kind of sonic 'memory material' Voegelin had in mind. The following quotation will illustrate why this is the case:

> If, as I suggest, memory triggers the production of the now in such an audience-centered way, then the introduction of memory material into a sonic artwork provokes a listener-based production of the work and challenges the critical conventions of modernism and its visual' discourses, which favour a distanciated perspective. (Voegelin 2006 p. 14)

As discussed in Chapter Two, in creating an antagonistic attitude towards the visual, Voegelin is not just drawing a line between visual and sonic perceptions, if that is at all possible, but she also uses that antagonism to strengthen her argument. The outcome of such a strategy is questionable, and broadly, visual art was never distanced from the emotional aspect of the experience of the artwork[61], nor was it as Voegelin claims, "drained of any real emotional production" (Voegelin 2006 p. 14).

However, I aim to focus on the first section of the quotation in which Voegelin points out that the introduction of memory material into sonic artwork creates this shift in the first place. From the experience of this research, any recognisable sound, or sound that is processed and turned to something less recognisable, but still has potential to remind us of something that we have experienced before, could act as a *pathetic trigger*. The ways in which specific sound could act as a *pathetic trigger* is based on the personal experience of a listener, and it is difficult to predict.

My interviewee from Banchory, Bertha Forbes says that she is afraid of water, and she never walks next to the river Dee. Still, during floods in 2015, she went to the river to listen its “thundering noise” (Forbes 2016, 33 min 19 sec).

The quotation shows that Forbes avoids a sound that is often regarded as relaxing and enjoyable, such as the sound of a river, probably due to traumatic memories. Thus a short remark expressed by Forbes underlines the diversity of our reactions and perceptions of sound. It is also interesting that she was almost attracted by the river during the floods, to listen to it.

On the other hand, Karl Revel, a fishing gillie, a Gaelic term for a fishing guide, in Banchory reveals a very intimate relationship with the river Dee in the ways he introduces people to it:

[61] Even in the case of abstract painting which emerged from modernist ideal, from Malevich' Black Square (1913), Pollock’s action paintings, Rothko's large planes covered with saturated colours, the audiences the argument over distance between artwork and audience, have been contested by emotional responses from the audience.

> We try to encourage people to sense and to feel the environment they are in. Because, what I find is that sound affects you, you physically. No it's something you hear but it's got the physical effect on you and that for that reason, there are some sounds there are obviously more irritating than others. But the sound of running water is something that I really love. That's why I prefer fishing on a river to fishing in a reservoir or a pond type fishery. (Revel 2016, 28 min 28 sec)

Revel reveals in the interview many details about the river and surrounding landscape, he points out that the mother duck eats out of his hand and speaks with him. She is warning her chicks all the time and "It's the great sound and, you know when she does that, I look around myself to see has she seen something" (Revel 2016, 21 min 03 sec).

These examples show how Revel is immersed in the environment, and this is reflected through recognition of behaviours of wildlife, weather and river. Such intimate relationships unfold in time through narration.

He also describes one of the most common sounds in the North-East of Scotland, evocative of Shetland, where he grew up:

> Gulls. People say there is not such a thing as a seagull but we all call them seagulls. They say there is no such a thing as a sea gull because they're herring gulls and this and that. Just let's call them seagulls. When I hear a lot of seagulls making a racket, and you get them here in Banchory although more than 20 miles up, they would come up, but I just shut my eyes. And I'm not in Banchory anymore. I'm on Lerwick Harbour. Way up in Shetland, just a memory. Yes, and you're just thinking about it. You're almost getting almost getting the smell of the sea and everything at the same time. It just evokes a memory that you had from when you were very, very young. (Revel 2016, 38 min 35 sec)

One of the most potent recollections I have encountered during this research is the story of Ed Steel, an Aberdeen based sound artist whom I interviewed in autumn 2017. In this interview, Steel describes the every day sound event, in this case, a sound of metal gate, as a powerful *pathetic trigger*:

> My family, we lost my young sister when she was 10 years old from leukemia and I remember this one night coming back from the Scouts and I'd come in the back door and came into the house and my mother was crying on the phone and immediately I was a bit taken back and I remember then the doorbell going and I opened the front door and my father was standing at the gate and I remember the sound of the metal gate. You know the sound of the gate the rusty gates. And I remember him walking towards me only a short distance from the gate he'd obviously been pacing back and forward and as he walks it walked towards me. He broke down crying. And I remember that. And I remember the sound of the gate and that sound. All I always associate with that. I always associate with that particular time and the bad news that that was when I was obviously away out Scouts living the young boy's life and they'd been informed by the hospital that she was going to die. Yeah. So yes, I suppose there are particular sounds that I do sounds of pain you know

> sounds of joy like rolling Easter eggs and things like that. -that you do when actually go into the fabric or the fabric of your memory. You begin to remember. (Steel 2017, 37 min 47 sec).

Alison Catherine Mary Steel (1967 - 1977), Photograph.

This interview presents the emotion, depth, and intimacy of a recollection that is linked to specific sound. It also reveals that it is difficult to predict an individual's responses to sounds, and overall depth of the experience is difficult to contain. Moreover, the recollection demonstrates that such responses can bring important awareness to sound artists; being material that informs the work or even directly contributes to the piece.

Following the interview, Ed Steel wrote and shared some additional information regarding the experience of interview and triggered memory to in our research social media group in Sonic Arts:

> The vastly powerful thing that came out of it for me (and I don't think I had ever shared this with anyone else) was the metallic noise of the gate on the hinges that the gate made in our house in Duthie Terrace, Mannofield in the 70s. It was a noise (and I haven't stopped thinking about it since the interview on Thursday) that for me, is strongly associated with trauma and memory. The specific noise was made by my Father who had come through the gate one night in October / November. It was dark and after 9pm (I had just returned on my bike from the Scouts). And when I got in to the house my mother was crying on the phone and the doorbell rang. I heard the noise of the gate 'clang' closed as I opened the door to find my father standing there also crying. It sounds dramatic - but that sound of the gate is one which changed my life. My mother and father had just been told by the doctors at Aberdeen Sick Children's Hospital, Foresterhill, that my kid sister, Alison, had leukaemia. To cut a very long story short, as is the case in many of these tragic circumstances, the stress was unbelievable for the family as the doctors battled, over two years, to save her. And the upshot was that my parents divorced, the family split, I completely failed at school, and when she was ten, my beautiful kid sister, Alison, lost the fight. I was sixteen when she died. (2017)

This recollection has been written with care, there are many more contextual details and a clear timeline compared to the recollection from the interview.

While Ed Steel was describing the situation during the interview, I imagined the sound, and I have been creating my own memory of conversation and the situation he was describing.

The interview with Ed Steel has raised attention to a link between autobiographical memory and sound. I have looked up examples of similar research in psychology, but most of the recent studies have focused on familiar music used to trigger autobiographical memory. For instance, the recent work of Professor Michael Pickering, a social scientist, focuses mostly on familiar music used to trigger memories. Thus music in his work is used as a mnemonic tool, or technique that aids remembrance for patients with dementia (Pickering and Keightley 2015).

The studies focusing on *soundscape* and memories are rare in psychology, because of the significant difficulties in creating sound stimuli sharing common characteristics, thus allowing for comparison and quantitative approach to data analysis. This applies to experiments with other senses such as odour.

One of the helpful examples I found is a study published in 2005 by Lorna Goddard, Linda Pring and Nick Felmingham. The study was interested in "effects of cue modalities on the quality of personal memories retrieved" (Goddard, Pring and Felmingham 2005 p. 79). The experiment focused on odour, visual image and word labels as triggers of memories. Although sounds were not involved, the works shared some interesting points about autobiographical memories.

Autobiographical memories can be categorised in two main groups. The first refers to a specific event, usually a particular day. The vivid memory recalled by Ed Steel is such an example. The second group of memories can be categorised as general, within which categoric and extended memories can be observed. These refer "either to repeated events" or "to extended periods of time" (Goddard, Pring and Felmingham 2005 p. 80).

Dr. Jasna Martinović, a lecturer in psychology based at the University of Aberdeen Psychology department, developed an experiment, with her undergraduate student Kinga Glama that used some elements of the research focusing on *soundscapes*. The title of the study was *Autobiographical Memories Differences Caused by Cueing with Close or Distant Sounds* (Glama 2019).

I supported the study that aimed to create a pilot experiment that could inform further research in the future, as similar experiments are extremely rare.

Professor Pete Stollery and I provided the sound cues for the experiment. The sounds I have chosen come from our archives, and they are mostly sounds captured in the area of Aberdeen and

Aberdeenshire. A few *field recordings* captured in Maglaj and Sarajevo made into a final selection such as the sound of the old train and crickets. The other cues included the sound of sheep on the field, cows, traffic, a car passing a cobbled street, birds, rain, sea waves and similar.

The sound cues were 20 or 30 seconds long, and each sound had two versions, one sounding like the sound source was nearby, and the other that appeared further away. The set of sounds that appear further away from the listener was created from the original sound by changing volume, EQ, and effects such as reverb. The experiment used relatively recognisable sounds, that were originally captured from close by. An effort was made to exclude other ambient sounds and textures. For example, in the sound cue of crickets or birds, the sounds of distant traffic were eliminated. In the clip featuring a football game, more different sounds, as the sound of the ball and voices were left, hence the characteristics of sound clips differed.

During the experiment that approximately lasted around 75 minutes, participants were asked to describe any memories triggered after listening to sound stimuli verbally. Participants generally recalled more specific memories (276) then general memories (189) when the cue was a close sound. The experiment showed the same number of general and specific memories (248) when distant sounds were used (Glama 2019).

Close sounds were generally rated as more emotional and evoked more vivid memories. The retrieved memories overall were positive, in an experiment that lasted 75 minutes on average.

I suggested the use of closer and distant sounds for this research, as a feature that is specific to sound stimuli, and it is difficult to recreate with other sensory modalities. This has been derived directly from this research and my experiences of *soundwalking*.

Although more research should be done in this direction, this small pilot study has confirmed that sound is a powerful trigger of memory. It has also shown that recognisable sounds are more likely to trigger vivid memories, aligning with the other experiments done with other cue modalities such as the study done by Lorna Goddard, Linda Pring and Nick Felmingham (2005).

In the context of this research, this study showed that the sensory abundance of *in situ* listening offering a range of sounds with different properties and distances, as well as recognisable aspects of these sounds, would likely trigger a variety of autobiographical memories. Moreover, the study has shown that the use of familiar sounds in creative practice engages a lay audience. Such creative

practice would render a range of responses, differing according to the listener's backgrounds, in relation to the context of the site.

3.3. Timespace on Site - In Situ Listening

As discussed in the previous chapter, *electroacoustic* composer Michel Chion recognises that sound experienced *in situ* is ephemeral and featured by our limited capability of identifying different sonic planes simultaneously. As it is not feasible to listen to something over and over again *in situ*, our attention focuses on particular sounds of our interest. Moreover, Chion acknowledges the multisensory aspect of perception and that listening *in situ* is influenced by context, both material and "global sensorial" (Chion 2016 p. 138). In this process, he points out that this context provides a particular meaning and effect (Ibid.).

This section of the chapter aims to develop the recognition that the context of place doesn't just inform the listener on what they are listening to, but shapes the overall experience that emerges from the individual personal history, and memory. Listening also engages the whole body, which is especially visible in recounts of Donald Butler and Marc Higgin, residents of Aberdeen who described the sound of the traffic in the city.

Donald Butler points out that the sound of "congested traffic" marks Aberdeen for him (2017, 22 min 32 sec). The other adjectives he used include: "constant flow of traffic", "engine noise", traffic "murmuring away" in the background, "constant hum" and similar (Ibid.). He continues with a full body experience of sound in the city:

> I think you've kind of learned to block it out to a certain extent, but, because of the type of sound that is, the weight of a vehicle for instance is interesting that sound has a certain physical weight to it…So, it's not just a sound so it's almost like a physical environment against your body as well that you kind of have to adjust to a certain extent, especially since Aberdeen is …quite congested like you are always not far from a very busy road… (Butler 2017, 23 min 37 sec)

Similarly, Marc Higgin, an anthropologist based in Aberdeen, describes in the interview the sounds of his home with triple glazed windows. He lives in King Street, one of the busiest streets in the city that links the city centre and its northern outskirts.

> Sirens and other things do come past and you hear voices, and but generally, it's very muffled, but this is kind of constant a bit like waves crashing on the beach, and this kind of constant low rising and falling hum of traffic but also, actually the, the noise of the street translates in lots of different things upstairs. The whole house kind of shakes, there's a

> certain point in the road, I've not quite worked out where, but where lorries come past, the whole, various, various points in the house start vibrating, there's a point just by the sink in the bathroom that's like, it feels like being on the end of a long plank and when a lorry comes past, you can feel the ground shake, and if there's water in a cup or anything that vibrates it's kind of a very particular spot in the house. (Higgin 2017, 4 min)

This example shows an intimate bonding with the place, and sense of place, through the sounds of everyday life. These experiences are embodied and intimate in different ways. They also differ slightly from the experience of a *soundwalking* which offers a novel perspective to a place, either familiar or not, as it allows us to focus our attention on sound. *Soundwalks* are often practiced by *field recordists* who capture some of the interesting sounds, but less so their own experience of the walk. Capturing this experience would require the introduction of additional methods such as note taking, drawing, creating graphical scores, or similar. This also represents one of the reasons why the *soundwalk* method attracts researchers and artists from different disciplines. It represents a framework and creative practice that can inform research and provide a platform for various forms of documentation.

In one of the rare examples of this extended approach to *soundwalks* that focus on experience, Hildegard Westerkamp, an *electroacoustic* composer based in Canada, documented a series of experiences and recollections of participants in her *soundwalks*. In 2016 she lead a *soundwalk* at Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre (BMSC), located on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The groups of students attending the workshop were from various interdisciplinary backgrounds.

The recollection from Lucinda Johnston reads:

> … “we” were no longer a group of individuals listening to the soundscape we were moving through; rather, “we,” as a cohesive whole, were creating the soundscape as our “entity” moved through it. We were no longer passive aural receptors, but were actively engaged in the sonic milieu … This experience felt powerful … almost ecstatic. (Westerkamp 2017 p. 156)

Or the next one is from Lydia Toorenburgh:

> … my learning and my understanding of my own listening and listening processes did not arise out of gravel crunching or birds singing but of a series of 'deeply personal' sensitivities and emotional reactions to somewhat minute things. (Westerkamp 2017 p. 157)

It would be interesting to know what kind of deeply personal sensitivities Toorenburgh had in mind, but this hint implies that *soundwalks* can be a deeply emotional and transformative experience for some listeners.

One of the most precious records of a *soundwalk* captured through writing comes from a composer, writer, and a sound artist based in the UK, Katherine Norman, in an interview with Hildegard Westerkamp. The interview was captured during the *soundwalk*, and the formatting of the text reflects the natural rhythms of the conversation. The location of the walk is Lighthouse Park near Vancouver, a place with which Westerkamp is very familiar with and a place where she recorded materials for her piece *Talking Rain* (1998).

> HW: I notice that in Europe, for example, you have rain...but don't have the kind of continuous rain that you have here.
> KN: No, I associate that very much with North America.
> HW: Yes-I mean it just doesn't stop, right!? And, on the West Coast here, you can gave just continuous rain for days and days and days. And so you have a type of lushness that you just don't get in Europe. And, in Europe, I notice, it's very much that a day will be interrupted with certain rhythms of rain showers. And I remember as a child that I knew that I probably would need some kind of rain cape during the day. I had to take it with me even though the sun was shining. Or you'd have to stop your bike ride...and you'd just have to....
> KN: Yes, yes...be prepared! (Norman 2004 p. 78-79)

Norman's text is formatted in an unconventional way by using multiple columns, so the transcription of the interview is accompanied with descriptions of the sounds Norman and Westerkamp have experienced, and Norman's comments. One such comment is:

> We are foreign bodies in this landscape. Two intrigued non-natives exploring a different place (although she has been here quite a while) and finding it somehow essentially different from the paths we knew before. And yet, it's hard to put your ear to the difference-the wind, the overhead hum of the seaplanes, and high treetops occupied by small birds of an unknown breed. We make comparisons between a place we remember and a new place. (Norman 2004 p. 79)

Norman in this section points out that the walk they perform currently deals with the place, in relation to a place from their memory, and a new place they are discovering in the present. By following different sounds Westerkamp and Norman repeatedly discover some new details of the familiar route. Their attention wanders off as they are captured by sound, or by other details that they encounter during the walk, and they even lose their way several times.

It is also evident throughout the interview that there is a friendship between the two female composers and that their understanding of each other's past and background makes its way into the conversation. The reference to childhood re-occurs naturally, as well as different anecdotes and autobiographical details.

The importance of this interview lies not just in the intimacy of the conversation captured by Norman, but also the observation that even trained listeners experience sound through the concept of *timespace*. This process is often in play but rarely acknowledged directly. Here, they are not practising listening detached from context or source of the sound. Although they recognise the sonic qualities of the experience, they don't resist in making parallels with not just what is a theme of the interview, a sound piece *Talking Rain* (1998), but also a place of the walk, experiences of previous walks and other places.

Their conversation is recorded on the site by microphones but also transcribed in writing. There is a great deal of creative input from Norman in the ways that she extracts the moments of the interview and intervenes with descriptions:

> HW: Yes, when we were recording sounds for *Talking Rain*-when it stopped raining we went to waterways...and I can hear some sound right now...
> (sound of feet in water)
> KN: Here you go.
> HW: Mmm, there it is. A little waterfall.
> (Sound of waterfall and KN moving a microscope over it)
> KN: I'm learning!
> HW: Yes, you go really slow. You can just really go very, very close...
> (sound of very close mic'd water) and if you move like a little bit...(sound of water and overhead plane too, in distance). (Norman 2004 p. 81-82)

As Westerkamp and Norman are discussing the piece *Taking Rain* (1998), they encounter a waterfall, and they decide to step into the water to capture the sound from close range. While doing so, they are listening to the sound, and Westerkamp describes a technique that she calls "searching microphone" (Norman 2004 p. 82).

The composers' attention shifts depending on the conversation, but also on the sound and visual cues surrounding them. This selective nature of *in situ* listening Michel Chion describes in the following way: "In situ listening is characterised by a selection-be it reflexive or conscious-of relevant components and the repression of others, which remain unconsciously 'heard'" (Chion 2016 p. 139). The recollection also reveals the physical aspect of the walk, improvisation and discovery through movement of one's body in space, getting lost and finding the way again. It is a fascinating example of the multifaceted values of *soundwalks* that allow bonding, sharing and learning.

Westerkamp occasionally includes her voice in her compositions, and in *Kits Beach Soundwalk* (1989) she uncovers the illusionary nature of compositional technique to the listeners. She makes

the sound of distant traffic disappear from *field recording* by narrating about it during the piece. This consequently breaks the illusion that the piece represents somehow a result of unaltered document of a place.

She also describes what we hear during the piece, and by doing so, she uncovers some visual characteristics of the place. She carries her *in situ* experience of the site to our ears through recordings and narrative.

By drawing from Michel Chion, and from composers and *field recordists* such as Lockwood and Westerkamp, we can see that composers recognise the traits of *in situ* listening, but there is a gap in the writing about ephemeral aspects of *soundwalks*, multisensory experience and listeners' involvement with the place. One possible reason for this lies in the interdisciplinary nature of *soundwalks*. *Soundscape* composer and sound artist John Drever says that its multiple identities can find "itself at the periphery of more established cultural forms" (2009 p. 6). This doesn't just suggest that *soundscape* composition is slightly niche in relation to the discipline of music composition, but also various performative practices building on the rhythmic aspect of walking, while engaging with multisensory sensations, are likely to explore new methods of making, taking practitioners away from particular disciplines. That is where the work of many sound artists could be situated, fuelling the discussion on what sound art could be, tackled in the previous chapter. Moreover, the multifaceted nature of *soundwalks* is difficult to address with *electroacoustic* and *soundscape* composition alone.

Drever also points out that in relation to place, specifically, the role of *soundwalks* in shaping the sense of place, "one of the underpinning goals of *soundwalking* is about circumnavigating habituation, in a process of de-sensitization and consequently re-sensitization, in order to catch a glimpse (un coup d'oreille) of the 'invisible', silent and unspoken of the everyday" (2009 p 4).

Whilst everyone who has experienced a *soundwalk* can remember the perception of details in the environment, un-noticed prior to the walk, this silent, unspoken and 'invisible' interiorises the listener, and it opens up space and time.

For me, the most striking experiences of this phenomena happened in Sarajevo, in the city I know very well from the dual perspectives of sometime resident, and researcher. The extent to which *soundwalking*, or my role as a researcher in contemporary Sarajevo, has shaped my experience of the city is difficult to determine.

It was a warm and sunny day, and I performed a *soundwalk* through Sarajevo's city centre, and the sound of a young male voice made me stop. The young man was shouting repeatedly:

> (...) Our dear Ivo Andrić is a boy from Sarajevo who unfortunately became ill from a metabolic condition. Dear citizens, help our dear Ivo Andrić so this boy can continue his medical treatment.[62]

A young man was collecting money for his sick family member, or a friend, in front of the Catholic cathedral. The site is packed with coffee shops, street sellers, and it is a well-known meeting place. The name of the sick boy was Ivo Andrić.

Although I used to pass many times next to people looking for help on the streets, the last resort of those in need, this example caught my ear. Is it because I heard it during my walk, or as a researcher who was listening for context-specific sound clues? Was this a plea to my consciousness to help due to my status of a diaspora? Numerous organisations call upon Bosnians living abroad for charity. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the health system is corrupt and inadequate, and children are often sent abroad for treatment financed solely through charities. It is common that relatives raise money for their loved ones, and gather donations in public. Cases of frauds and fake appeals are also common.

This appeal for help is just one example that illustrates how listening to a particular sound can open up the depth of the contextual information. The experience of this sound and the site, the city centre, next to the biggest Catholic cathedral[63] in the city opens up a number of other levels. One of these is opened up by the boy's name, Ivo Andrić, also the name of a well-known Bosnian author who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1961. It is not just sad that 125 years after the writer's birth, a life of a boy who carries his name is threatened due to a broken health system, but also the one of Andrić's text's refers directly to the location where my *field recording* was taken from. The text also alludes to multi-ethnic tensions that lead to conflict causing the collapse of the health system in contemporary B&H amongst many other social issues.

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[62] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/appeal for help for Ivo Andric - In front of Sacred Heart Cathedral

[63] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/bells of Sacred Heart Cathedral

The text is called "A letter" and was written just after the end of the Great War, in 1920:

> Whoever lies awake at night in Sarajevo hears the voices of the Sarajevo night. The clock on the Catholic cathedral strikes the hour with weighty confidence: 2 AM. More than a minute passes (to be exact, seventy-five seconds - I counted) and only then with a rather weaker, but piercing sound does the Orthodox church announce the hour, and chime its own 2 AM. A moment after it the tower clock on the Beys' mosque strikes the hour in a hoarse, faraway voice, and that strikes 11, the ghostly Turkish hour, by the strange calculation of distant and alien parts of the world. The Jews have no clock to sound their hour, so God alone knows what time it is for them by the Sephardic reckoning or the Ashkenazy.
>
> Thus at night, while everyone is sleeping, division keeps vigil in the counting of the late, small hours, and separates these sleeping people who, awake, rejoice and mourn, feast and fast by four different and antagonistic calendars, and send all their prayers and wishes to one heaven in four different ecclesiastical languages. And this difference, sometimes visible and open, sometimes invisible and hidden, is always similar to hatred, and often completely identical with it. (Diogen 2019)

This quotation touches on the specific *soundmarks* of Sarajevo, such as the sound of Catholic and Orthodox churches, as well as the 'Ezan', the Muslim call for prayer. The text uncovers similarities to contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina, sounds that are perceived as sonic postcards of a city, can be problematized from the standpoint of a resident. One might question the aim of such a distinctive sonic presence of religion in the city in the context of its turbulent history in the last century.

These *soundmarks* are very common in contemporary Sarajevo, and they uncover a whole range of questions and observations, primarily related to the political implications of sound amplification and the marking of territory.

In my presentation at *The Sound of Memory* symposium at Goldsmiths in April 2017, I described sounds of church bells and call for prayer as 'sonic religious iconography'. There are referred to as iconography as they carry very potent connotations and their power lies in the realm of belief and often myth, with religious institutions playing a central role in making them accessible.

As a survivor of the siege, I recognise their potential for territorialisation, voicing the presence that can be perceived as rich and beautiful evidence of multiculturalism, but also as ominous and oppressive. This situation is exaggerated further by the number of new religious buildings being built since the war, and the widespread use of loudspeakers on minarets that amplify the call for prayer.

These sounds present one of the most potent examples of the use of sound as an ideological vehicle daily in public space. In the post-conflict society, sounds of church bells and Ezan, carry specific meanings. Institutions, religious buildings with often-high towers and in case of mosques - minarets, perform these sounds that saturate the space below. The sound waves meet, interweave, and enter the public and private spaces.

These sounds that might be perceived as exotic, but rich, beautiful and unique, were also crucial in marking the end of the war. They were enabled by mass reconstruction schemes that encouraged refugees to return home. As such, they sounded the age of recovery, acceptance and moving forward. Opposing interpretations and understandings of such sounds in public space are shaped by a national context but also personal experiences of conflict.

Moreover, numerous new mosques and churches have been built since the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country has never opened up a public discussion regarding the sources of funding for these new religious buildings that didn't exist before the war. Additionally, the relationships of these new institutions with the local community are difficult to problematize, as religious identities are closely interwoven with ethnic and political questions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project of re-affirming identities in which religious and national factors play a part has been in the centre of the political problem in B&H, as indicated in the introduction to the thesis.

Jim Marshall, highlights the complex relationship between personal identities and group identities frustrated by the term identity in this way:

> You know I've been married for around 16 years, but I have never once woken up, because I'd always waken up before my wife because I am a morning person, she is not so much. And I've never woken up and looked at her and thought there is my Bosnian wife next to me. There's my Bosnian Muslim wife next to me, and there's my Bosnian son. They are me, and I am them, they are part of me. We are a nation. The three of us are a nation.
>
> I've given more affiliation to these two human beings that I share my life with than I ever had to anyone in my home country, including my own family. (Marshall 2016, 41 min 16 sec)

This quotation also shows that the issues of religious and ethnic affiliations are sensitive, and every individual has to find their way of navigating through it. Many, see a way out by foregrounding their other identities which are informed by personal experiences of life, growing up, bringing up a family and spending time with friends.

The discussion of the call for prayer shows that sound carries a potent political power, provoking reactions in many Christian dominated communities in Western Europe, against the amplified call for prayer. The whole argument addresses the importance of context and resident perspectives, highlighting the potential dangers in claiming that the political possibility of sound (Voegelin 2019b) lies in the nature of sound phenomena that defies borders and walls. The sound of church bells and Muslim call for prayer floods public space, the physical property of sound travelling in space made it possible for me to experience and capture the recording in the first place. However, it is dangerous to build an argument that listening assumes the integration of various voices towards dialogue, imagination and multiple truths without further, in-depth involvement in the context of a place.

For instance, Voegelin points out that

> …[sonic fictions] are imagination as a generative and responsive engagement in a current condition that probes its normative sheen and creates from doubt and with humility and unexpected of its materiality and sense, to produce a different truth that is inclusive also of what might seem unthinkable, profoundly unrealistic, a surprise even. A truth, in other words, that goes beyond the scope of a rational political imagination, but which is exactly from where the biggest issues facing us today: global warming, mass migration, war, health and care, will find their answers. (2019b p. 37)

Voegelin's sonic fictions are directly derived from the experience of sound composed into artworks, and not listening sound *in situ*. She doesn't go and meet refugees and listen to the sound of the sea during the refugee rescue operations. From the devastating aspects of migrant crisis and drone wars in *The Political Possibility of Sound* (2019b), she touches on properties of sound to travel, inspire and imagine the other worlds. What she fails to engage with is the experience of listening *in situ* and through the depth of contextual understanding, experience some of the situations she describes. While listening to sound from the comfort of an armchair or an art installation, it is possible to let imagination render other possible worlds and assume that global problems we are facing are products of rational imagination. Both attitudes, the rational political imagination and listening to recording are detached from the perspective of the individual caught in the gruesome reality of war, migration due to conflict, or economic and climate issues which urge instinctive reactions for self-preservation.

This attitude of the detached "travelling academic" for whom the world always seems in flux is discussed by Massey (2001) and referred to in the second chapter of this thesis.

The actual experience of war is profoundly irrational, and rationality in many ways is a domain of the outsider who observes the course of events, away from the grasp of crisis. Jim Marshall, my interviewee from Sarajevo, describes for him, the most terrifying sound of war:

> The worst sound I have ever heard in my life was not actually the sound of shells exploding. It was the sound of the sirens going off in the city before you knew the shells were coming. There was something that really, really disturbed you know, really deep in your stomach, you know. There was something very, very terrifying about that. (Marshall 2016, 53 min 50 sec)

During another interview in Sarajevo, Mensur Demir also described the sound of sirens, but in the following way:

> Siren marking general emergency, that, in childhood, it gets eternally engraved as a moment in your head as a siren is warming up and starts. Before it starts really to shout announcing a general emergency, we all should flee to the basements and such, yes, before this shout, you already feel goosebumps, and you move, it [the siren] didn't even start shouting. Then, a few years after, I hear that the same siren used in Jungle or Techno[64], how come, some strange copy of that the same symbol, the same signal into a kind of alarm, into some madness of ecstasy of individual dance in a mass of million. (Demir 2016, 41 min 26 sec)

This short discussion aimed to position some of the experiences of listening sound *in situ*, versus sound recording, in dialogue with Voegelin's work. The microphone that recorded the plea for help in the name of Ivo Andrić doesn't discriminate between sounds and doesn't select some sounds over the other. Compared to *in situ* listening, where the listener's attention fixates to particular sounds, in my case, the sound of the church, or the voice of a young man, *field recording* captures the sound of a street, determined by the angle of my hand, and the direction in which I point the microphone. *Field recording* captures various sonic textures allowing repeated listening that then makes *reduced listening*, discussed in more detail in the previous chapter, possible.

By not being driven necessarily by aesthetic aspects of experienced sound, but by contextual and multisensory character of *soundwalking*, I recognise that my use of *field recording* is somewhat different from what composer Katherine Norman describes:

> Like the intrepid explorer, the field-recordist often goes out 'into the wild', employing the language of the hunter - 'on safari', 'capturing sound' (...) The hunter brings back the prized game, unusual and from foreign parts, and transplants it from the wild and untamed 'jungle' to the domestic interior, where it can be displayed on the wall (via loudspeakers). And, quite understandably, field-recordings are often made away from home, when on a visit to a strange and compelling environment where strange new sounds accost the listener from every corner. (Norman 2004 p. 61)

[64] Jungle and Techno are genres of Electronic Dance Music.

This quotation links the discussion from the previous chapter regarding the visitor and resident perspectives. Besides the sheer familiarity with the place in which the *field recording* has been captured, the difference between the approach described by Norman and mine, is in the intention.

My aim was not to necessarily present the sounds as stand-alone pieces, and my selection of sounds was guided by research questions and literature. For example, the sounds of the paper factory and train station in Maglaj, or numerous sounds captured in Sarajevo such as religious sounds, or sounds of toys sold by street sellers, capture a glimpse of varied experiences during the *soundwalks*.

While most sounds available in the appendix are layered, featuring numerous voices, sounds of traffic, chatter of people; there are some more abstract recordings that aimed to capture particular sonic aspects of a place.

One such example is the *field recording* of the semi-derelict train station in Maglaj.[65] The electric hum of the underpass and sense of solitude, responds to the loud hum of the corridor under Union Street in Aberdeen captured on Christmas day in 2018.[66] Although there is an aesthetic judgment here, as I was fascinated by this abstract noise, these recordings show that as artists and listeners, we are making links between places. I have also recorded various hums in Banchory[67] and Sarajevo as those sounds illustrate the hidden presence of people, they are often found in edge lands, in fringes of the cities, or in basements, corridors and empty alleys. Sarajevo, Banchory, Aberdeen, and Maglaj are brought continuously together during this research by my interaction with them.

Although most *field recordists* hide their presence from the *field recordings,* the process of capturing sound naturally turns the attention of the *recordist* towards their own body as they need to control it otherwise various bodily sounds would be captured. Awareness and control of bodily sounds such as breathing, swallowing, sneezing are essential aspects of the recording practice especially in my case as I have recorded all of my sounds from the proximity of my body, from the hand, and no tripods or pols were used. The field *recordist* Felicity Ford describes her experience of the field in conversation with the composer Angus Carlyle:

> Field recording is about standing still, listening and becoming present to what is occurring in a way that I don't get with any other approach. Field recording and listening are so key to understanding the physical world, the materiality of a place, the surfaces that surround

[65] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/underpass - train station
[66] Available in the portfolio: Places/Aberdeen/Field Recordings/underpass behind the Market
[67]Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Field Recordings/water sprinklers in the morning

> you, the textures, the size and dimensions...So, with field recording my immediate associations are of my body, the feeling of the recorder in my hand, the sensation of sound in my ears, the feeling of almost trying not to swallow so that I do not interrupt what it is I am trying to hear. (Lane and Carlyle 2016 p. 87)

By drawing on experiences of *soundwalking* and documented *field recording* practices (Norman 2004; Westerkamp 2017; Lane and Carlyle 2016), it is noticeable that the experience of being in the field and listening, with and without equipment is deeply emotionally engaging. It makes a listener acutely aware of their body; it is essentially performative.

3.4. Site as a Pathetic Trigger

I am walking down one of the major streets in Sarajevo city centre. I have just passed next to the Eternal flame memorial to victims of WWII. On the street, there are small, makeshift stalls and mostly old ladies sell flowers or vegetables from their gardens. They are wrapped in newspapers. Someone is selling socks made of hand-processed wool, their rough texture is uncomfortable to wear, but the elderly seller would point out that they are good for blood circulation.

I stop next to the traffic light and look across the road to the Markale market. I cross the street, and I find myself surrounded by a crowd and voices. Most people here sell fruit and vegetables. There are aubergines, tomatoes, courgettes, apples, pears, huge bags of fresh spinach which sellers grab in handfuls and place on their scales; carrots are still covered with soil. Flies and bees are exploring fruit until chased away by the sellers.

I move between the stalls towards the back wall, looking at the modest memorial made of glass with names of people on it. On the ground, there is still a visible part of the exploded shell buried in concrete. I turn my back to the memorial and sit on its edge; the market is next to the street and waves of traffic come and go conducted by traffic lights. A heavy tram rumbles while passing by, it rings from time to time as people run across the tracks.[68]

[68] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/Markale market. As discussed in section 1.5. I have used my subjective voice in a creatively written form, formatted in italic font. This writing shares my subjective experience of listening to the site.

Markale market in Sarajevo, photographs.

Markale market, in the very centre of Sarajevo, was the site of two artillery bombardments that took place; one in 1994, killing 68 people and wounding 144. The second took place in the following year, killing 43 and injuring 84 (Mackic 2018). These events resulted in some of the most shocking images captured during the siege of Sarajevo, and they are eternally engraved in people's minds, or as Susan Sontag says, photographs serve as "totems of causes: sentiment is more likely to crystallize around a photograph than around a verbal slogan" (2003 p. 76).

For turning the footage from the massacre into a symbol of the siege of Sarajevo, along with a few other iconic designs, the role of war journalists was of crucial importance. The Balkan conflict was the first war on the European continent after WWII, and the attention of the media focused on B&H. Internationally, the footage of the conflict, struggling civilians and refugees flooded the TV

screens of the viewers around the globe. The footage appeared at the time of rising reality TV and soap operas at the beginning of the satellite TV age.

When listening in such an emotionally charged place *in situ*, a mere slowing down to listen turns my attention from the openness of the space, street, conversations, to the specificities of a place, referring to Tuan's notion of slowing down turning space into place (Tuan 1977). The space of a market inevitably becomes the place of the Markale market. Memorialised images from news, youtube, documentaries, the images and sounds of people butchered by bombs overwhelm the mind and creep up uninvited.

In rare times during the war when electricity was available and adults were watching the news, I was shouted at to go to another room, to play, and not to see, not to see the footage of Sarajevo broadcast by CNN and watched in my city. The sound couldn't be escaped or muted, and the sound of a suffering person in pain is so uniquely and universally human across geographic areas.

As a result, at Markale, surrounded by walls covered by names of the dead it is very difficult to identify what is a personal memory created by the immediate experience of horror, and what is a memory embedded in the mind through the media. These images and sounds once experienced, become part of identity, of collective memory, and that consequently shapes our listening and the senses of place we acquire today.

Hence while listening to the sound of Markale market now *in situ*, there are no sounds acting as *pathetic triggers*. Visually, yes, there is a modest memorial and the shell buried in the asphalt that many pass daily without paying attention to it. In this case, the site of the market acts as a *pathetic trigger*, and the memories that are triggered are dependent upon the listener's experience of conflict. This can be through images and videos of the event broadcasted on TV, or of a more direct experience of these events. Most residents of Sarajevo still remember what they did on those days in 1994 and 1995, and even if they don't have the first-hand experience of it, they remember it by recalling the footage.

Markale market is now turned into a site of memory, and every year the market closes to welcome politicians and members of the public commemorating the past. Next day, it becomes again a site of exchange, conversation immersed in the collage of fresh fruit and vegetables, flowers for sale on one side, flowers lined in the street next to the monument on the other.

The experience of the siege, war, daily struggle, and the memories of over 11000 civilians and children killed in a period of conflict (1992-1995), that still lives in the memory of all who were in the city during the siege play a part in the experience of the city. If we say that "memory begins when experience itself is definitely past" (Antze and Lambek 2016 p. xiii) then we could interrogate the whole notion of memory in Sarajevo; the war has ended, but for many, the experience of war is still vivid. The daily threat of snipers and shelling was transformed to a decades-long economic struggle in what many describe, a post-conflict, transitional society. Hence the well-known observation often directed to Sarajevans that they live in the past, but at the same time, they rarely speak about the war.

This can be perceived easily through interviews in which I didn't ask directly about the war, but the topic crept in often uninvited:

> the impression of the river during the war period when we didnt have glass on the windows[69], the acoustic impression was very different as there was no public transportation in this density as well. That means that our impression of one location has been changing, although it is difficult to talk about the impression of Sarajevo as a whole city as every small locality has its own sonic idenitity which differs with every small environment.
>
> So, the second association which often crosses my mind, which you could hear from some Sarajevans who have been here during the war, is the aversion to fireworks. Fireworks have marked some cultural events or celebrations in most of these urban environments. However, the sound of fireworks, as well as the visual and acoustic experience, causes in a certain number of poeple including me, a sense of abomination. This could be the one of the worst sounds. Is it some kind of shooting, explosion, meaning those sounds that were probably directly associated with war experience, maybe. (Isanović 2016, 18 min 36 sec)

A study funded by the Ministry of Health of Kanton Sarajevo, shows that up to 82 percent of citizens between age 31 and 50 shows some of the war-related stress symptoms (Kanton Sarajevo. Ministarstvo Zdravlja 2009). Of them, 30 per cent suffer severely and they are being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder-PTSD (Ibid.). At the same time, no large-scale mental health support is available. Instead, the images of atrocities are being played over and over again in the media.

On top of these mental health issues caused by the war, there are continuous attempts to commercialise the past. The tourist that comes to Bosnia and Herzegovina is often very well informed about the history and the conflict, however, there also those who are interested in ethically dubious re-enactments.

[69] Glass on the windows was destroyed due to the sound/pressure waves of exploding shells. Heavy-duty plastic sheets, donated by the UNHCR, were widely used instead of glass panels.

For instance, in summer 2018 an 'authentic War Zone Igman & Sarajevo' paintball and airsoft centre opened, offering group play on sites of actual battles from the recent war, as well as WWII (Klix 2018). According to their promotional videos, the sounds of real fighting, of guns and shells, the sound of nature such as wind and rain, and sounds of wild animals such as wolves are played on site to entertain the players. The whole site is covered with CCTV, and it is possible to follow the battles via live video streams or receive the footage on request (War zone 2019).

Another, more disturbing example, can be found in the *War Hostel Sarajevo* which according to their website, exposes the visitors 24/7 to the sound of "original gunfire and bomb sounds" (War Hostel 2019). The electricity in the hostel is provided by car batteries, while water should be collected with plastic canisters. The author of the site shares his story:

> My name is Zero One or if you prefer 01. This is my father's war code name which is now my name. I have survived the war in Sarajevo together with my family and now as a tribute to what we have survived, I have created the War hostel in Sarajevo so that we can support ourselves and to share the story, with those willing to listen. (...) The War Hostel is a unique historically accurate simulation of war torn Sarajevo, full with authentic items from the war which serve as decorations and run by a small family which survived the war in Sarajevo and is willing to share their war experience and personal stories with you. (War Hostel 2019)

The constant internal dialogue in which the past is not reconciled bleeds towards the outside and problematises the relationships between residents and visitors. Simultaneously, visitors also have different agendas. While resident Jim Marshall says that the average tourist that comes to B&H is very well informed and knows what they can expect (Marshall 2016), Adla Isanović, a lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, highlights the idea of B&H as exotic, but geographically close (to West European countries), familiar but foreign.

> We have some, after the war especially, those first two decades, we had that exotic, of post-war tourism, so, visiting ruins from the war and looking for those remains. Then, surprisingly, as, "everything looks like here as nothing has happened"-although it was 25, 20 years ago… So, in that regard, I believe, they are looking for that type of exoticism, that something which is perceived as the other or different, but at the same time familiar. (Isanović 2016, 5 min 41 sec)

These examples show that citizens haven't come to terms with the past, and that engagement with the city leads to continuously growing complexities where the question of how the past shapes us is of central importance.

The city carries it's past and the population copes with it in different ways. This ranges from the bizarre example of dealing with the past and voicing history at the War Hostel, to shaping art

production in profound ways through contemporary arts practices in cinema, theatre and gallery spaces.

Through this discussion, the question remains, can we listen to the city detached from its context? *Reduced listening*, elaborated in the second chapter of the thesis, directs our focus on material qualities of sound independent from their meaning (Chion 1994). If we recognise that sound behaves in an anarchic way as it 'goes' through spaces and bodies, the sites in which the sounds 'live' their existence, shape their bodies, moulding them, giving them life; the listener unlocks the relationships between the site and sound phenomena, turning the physical sensations of sound, the sound waves that travel through space to the experience.

The recognition of the political agency of sound is also a matter of responsibility towards the places of memory and conflict, to recognise their complex histories and emotional weight. However, once this transition is made, one might realize that every site can be tuned to a site of memory at a personal or group level, and offer profound insights from this perspective. In this chapter, such examples were offered by my interviewees from Aberdeen and Banchory: Karl Revel, Marc Higgin, and Donald Butler; amongst the interviewees from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3.5. Case Study - Cable Car on Trebević Mountain

This chapter so far has presented several examples of the sites acting as powerful catalysts for remembrance. From Sarajevo city centre that offered the rich sonic mixture of sounds, a plea of a young man for help, and the sound of church bells, to another part of the city, Dobrinja, a *field recording* of the Muslim call for prayer and church bells simultaneously impregnating the public space.

Many *field recordings* available in the portfolio are related to personal or historical references, for example, the recording of birds from the roof of my parents' flat in Sarajevo, captures some distant bird chatter from a hill called Mojmilo. This hill has been the site where many snipers were based targeting our part of the town during the war. Hence the birds have replaced the shells in the span of a bit more than two decades.[70]

[70] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/from my sky window - Dobrinja 5 neighbourhood

In this next section of the thesis I will focus on a site that opens up multiple levels of history and experience.

Trebević mountain was one of the key sites during the Sarajevo Winter Olympics in 1984. Well known for the bobsleigh run on its slopes, this 1627 meters tall mountain, was very popular as a holiday site during Yugoslav times. For residents of the city in the valley below, it provided a refuge from smog in winter and heat in summer.

My parents have told me numerous stories about the cable car taking visitors from the old, Ottoman part of town straight to the mountain in a matter of minutes. I struggled to imagine such a voyage because the famous cable car was destroyed during the war.

I also struggled to imagine this, because the Trebević I knew imposed an imminent threat for the citizens of Sarajevo during the siege. Armies were positioned on the slopes of the mountain targeting civilians in the city during day and night. Areas of the city directly under the fire were called 'sniper alleys'.

Trebević cast a dark shadow threatening to swallow the city below, taking it into the darkness of fire and smoke. For years after the war, the mountain was haunted by this past. The invisible 'border' splitting Bosnia and Herzegovina between the Federation and Republika Srpska, follows the slopes of the mountain and forms the border within the city.

As a site that was a strong military post, Trebević mountain is covered with landmines; the fields are now well marked, and as with many other areas of B&H, are waiting for a slow and painful removal.

The cable car was reconstructed in 2018 and open to the public. In September, I got a chance to use it for the very first time, as I don't remember the visits in my early childhood.

The initial recording captured on my way to the mountain was not successful, but I managed to capture children voices commenting on my microphone in the proximity of the cable car's landing

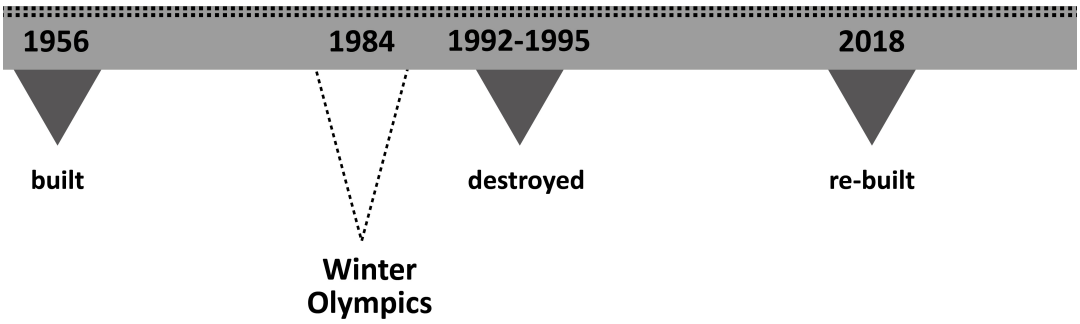
station. I also captured sounds from the inside of the cabin during the returned trip from the mountain.[71]

Cable car climbing Trebević mountain with panorama of Sarajevo in the distance, photograph.

I also walked to the bob sledge that is now derelict and covered in graffiti. Some sections of the site are used as a trail for mountain bike races.

In one of the sections, I captured the sound of spray cans by graffiti artists from Italy.[72] While listening to him and his girlfriend, I noticed other visitors roaming around, and the numerous historical layers of the site. This is just a few minutes away from where the landing station of the cable car is built.

[71] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/inside the cable car - Mountain Trebević-Sarajevo



Timeline of Sarajevo-Trebević Mountain Cable Car, illustration.

I could also refer to World War Two, link it to the events of the World War I and the history that predate those, however, this was for me closer, and a more familiar history.

I found myself amongst tourists, capturing a graffiti artist painting a destroyed Olympic monument, enabled by a cable car that has just been renovated since the war. In a strange turn of events, Sarajevo attracted numerous tourists in 1984, war journalists in 1990s, and now tourists came back to document and enjoy in the powerful sites that bring different experiences of history together. Time and space converge at the site, and the sound recording represents just one aspect of the place. The recording I captured, listened to separately, could be anywhere, although a voice of a middle-aged woman passing by placed us somewhere in central Bosnia. The woman, despite the stereotypes, encouraged the graffiti artist by saying "bravo", "bravo" and "they are filming, filming and drawing".[73]

Bob sleigh run, Trebević mountain near Sarajevo, photographs.

The awareness of the location unlocks a whole range of meanings and connotations, which are not divorced from emotion, on the contrary, they help the listener to discover the place.

[73] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Field Recordings/grafitti artist - Mountain Trebević

One of the examples of such juxtaposition of narrative, history and *field recording*, can be found in *Sounds of Dangerous Places* (2012) by *field recordist* Peter Cusack. The publication contains two audio CDs and a text focusing on sounds of Chernobyl. The second section of the book explores Caspian Oil and UK sites, which covers different sights and we engage with them differently.

Voegelin tackles the importance of uncovering the details of the site of Cusack's *field recording* in the following way:

> I know I am in Chernobyl a place that rings in my memory as the epitome of nuclear catastrophe, fuzzy news images and the dread of the nuclear age. The title unlocks and locks the piece. It places it and makes the place invisible. I know where I am but I do not know how to hear it. (Voegelin 2010 p. 157)

Even though Sarajevo is a living city and marked by rich history and context, while Chernobyl is marked with by catastrophe, there is a similarity between the two. A site 'unlocks' the piece, but for Voegelin, it also locks it. When it comes to "locking it" from her point of view it blocks our imagination in the act of listening:

> There are some clear signifiers: the Geigercounter, Russian language, sounds and animals, but the place is produced beyond the semantics of the material at the intersections of what I know and what I can never know but only sense through the tendency of humanity to symbolize to each other what we fear for ourselves. (2010 p. 157)

This shows that Voegelin is focused on sound alone, because the stories and images available in the book open up some of the layers and ways into the place. Cusack manages to share some intimate, personal aspects of Chernobyl as a place in which people still live, their songs and stories offer a new perspective of the place beyond the one marked by the catastrophe. However, Voegelin admits that "the place is produced beyond the semantics of the material" and she foregrounds what she knows and what does she not know (2010 p. 157), however she won't engage with what she might have learned from the Cusack's contextual introduction and his work with residents. This acceptance of other perspectives and context can create new knowledge, hence this research proposes such an approach to listening.

For example, in one of the interviews with Cusack in the Chernobyl evacuee's lament, an old man describes how he misses his old village:

> Chenobyl resident: There was forest you understand, completely different climate. And here, here I can't work it out. And here it is getting in the way all the time it's hindering. Got no damn health at all (...) I miss nature, and here...here life is...even that is wasted. I don't have any strength. It has taken away everything, the hands, the legs, and, and all of the

> body. There I felt completely different. And also the radiation has contributed. (Cusack 2012 p. 38)

He also adds:

> ...And they stuck us here and it's such a...The houses they have built here...those are not houses, they are coffins, little tiny coffins. It's a dump. There is nothing to get interested in around here. (Cusack 2012 p. 39)

This example of a Chernobyl survivor resembles the interviews conducted as part of this research. Over and over again, throughout this thesis, I aimed to present a case that there is no reason to push away the multisensory aspects of perception, as well as a personal and contextual experience of sound. Although *reduced listening* helps us to focus just on sound phenomena has its place in sound world, it also restricts approaches in sound art as interdisciplinary practice.

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, narratives about personal experiences of listening establish links between the literature, context of place, and *soundwalks*. The chapter addresses the question on how our past shapes our listening in the present, unlocking the temporal limitations of *field recording* and *soundwalks* practised in the present.

The porous mechanism of perception allows us to absorb and make sense of the world through listening in the present referring to what was sensed in the past. This could appear intimidating, as it suggests that the form that sound takes, its shape, is just one of the facets of the sonic phenomena.

The chapter tackled the work of Voegelin starting from her notion of *timespace*, which was a key for the development of this work. Her writing on *pathetic trigger*, referring to the potential of sound to trigger memories (2006; 2010) has encouraged me to develop the work in its current form.

The work of composers such as Katherine Norman, Hildegard Westerkamp, and the collection of interviews composed by Cathy Lane and Angus Carlyle *In the Field* (2016) have deeply informed my research. In these works, I was looking for trajectories that take us beyond the facets of sound towards the inner experience of sound, and memories. Moreover, I was also interested in the

listening informed by contextual aspects of place bringing to bear new forms of awareness of ourselves, and *soundscapes* of our environments.

Soundwalks have been instrumental in the development of my approach to listening as a porous practice embracing memory and contexts of place. This is because *soundwalking* enables multisensory stimuli in the context of an actual place, evoking autobiographical memories. However, I am aware that many examples I presented here are teased out by interviews and not directly by *soundwalks*. This is because the scope of my research didn't allow me to organise numerous *soundwalks* and also to facilitate interviews as part of those sessions. Hence more research should be done in this regard towards the development of a *soundwalking* method that would allow participants to record their experiences. For such projects I would work with a small number of participants and we would focus on specific locations, which has been difficult for this research that looked into larger, complex places, mostly cities and towns.

However, the research has shown that remembrance alone, or listening to recorded sound, brings rich results. Most of my memories shared in this chapter were teased out by *soundwalks*.

As the pilot research I supported in psychology by Kinga Glama (2019) shows, there are gaps in other disciplines with regard to sound. Practice-led research like this PhD can inform studies in other disciplines, and the crossovers can bring interesting results. For example, the idea of a comparison between close and distant sound stimuli emerged from my experience of *soundwalking*, as I became conscious of the potential of sound to alert, and evoke deep feelings and memories.

As I focused on sound art discourse, occasional gaps in the current literature shows through, primarily in the treatment of residents and the context of place. The *Sound of Dangerous Places* (2012) by Cusack, is a fine example of work that offers sonic and visual information in the form of *field recordings* and images. The contextual introduction of the history and present situation in Chernobyl is also in the book. However, the publication presents just one short interview and a few poems from the residents that can be problematized as in terms of scale and depth of the involvement of the author with the place.

As insight in local context has a political aspect, the work of Voegelin has been of critical interest. Additionally, the recent work of Brandon LaBelle *Sonic Agency: Sound and Emergent Forms of Resistance* (2018) tackles similar topics. Compared to Voegelin, Labelle approaches the topic more

inclusively. His writing is deeply informed by historical aspects of the artworks and protests he is tackling, as well as the artist's backgrounds. However, even his writing is still tackling the facade of sound, as he says the political force of sound "extends or restricts the limits of the body" where sound is used to extend the political agency through voicing and sound amplification (Labelle 2018 p. 7). Although LaBelle's writing is contextually informed, there is still a difference between an author contextualising the work from outside, and tackling the issues from inside from perspectives of residents, actors or participants. As this thesis shows, the narrative of the resident or native is often tangled up in numerous layers of context. Consequently, it is often difficult to extrapolate clear trajectories in writing, but through these various directions we can sense a glimpse of complexity of our involvement with the world.

By presenting narratives from often musically untrained interviewees, my aim was to create a more inclusive space in which we could learn from non-musicians engaging with everyday *soundscapes* of their environments. The chapter shows that the rich connotations and histories teased out by *soundscapes* could be a core for future public projects. This chapter directs a different approach to research on *soundscapes* that instead of theorising and contextualising from above, work starts from the place, from people who live and know the place, from the experience of place and engagement with its history. This approach would establish lasting relationships with the place, and would assume that if we were writing on the sound of place, to experience it first. This is especially important in conflict and post-conflict areas, referring to Voegelin's tackling of the Palestine question, and migrant crisis (Voegelin 2019b). Post-conflict places such as Sarajevo show that engagement with the sound of a place assumes an awareness of history and its people.

Moreover, if we also allow ourselves to listen through our past selves aware that personal identities play an active role in how and what we listen *in situ*, then different approaches to creative practice open up. These practices would be mindful of sensitive and political nature of sound *field recording*, but also deep narratives and history that contribute to the listening experience. The 'others', either as untrained listeners, or locals to the place, could contribute to the artworks in direct and indirect ways.

As my *performance art* practice is generative in nature and refers continually to the practice of writing, reading and *soundwalking*, the experience of writing this thesis might encourage me to explore voice-based narratives in my pieces in the future.

4. Performing Listening

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapters looked at how personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place. During the research process, I gathered numerous personal narratives which show us the profound ways in which autobiographical memory and contexts of place help us to make sense of what we hear, which again feeds into our experience of place and personal identities. This has been explored mostly in the Third Chapter of the thesis, while in the Second, I tackled how the questions regarding the context of sound we hear are discussed in sound art discourses. In this regard, the interdisciplinary nature of the field comes to the fore, and I introduced some compositional approaches to listening introducing the work of composers Pierre Schaeffer, Michel Chion, and R. Murray Schafer. In this regard, I observed how the tendency to treat sound as an object detached from the causes of sound and contexts of place shape material oriented tendencies in sound art discourse in general. These attitudes also shape different definitions of sound art, where I foregrounded *sounding art* which Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax (2017) describe as the range of practices interested in political, social and personal aspects of listening. This aligns with the interest of this research, also inclusive of sound art articulated through a variety of media. The work of Seth Kim-Cohen has been also influential in this regard as he presents that the work in any media that explore phenomena of sound and listening could be considered as sound art (2009).

Hence this chapter makes a leap into this arena by introducing the practice developed during this PhD. The *performance art* pieces *Grains of Sound* (2016), *Hold in/Breathe Out* (2016)*, One Thousand Pomegranite Seeds* (2017) and *Silencer* (2018) are envisaged as a form of sound art that work with themes of this research which used the research questions as a guide:

How does the acknowledgment of context through the intrusion of place-based, identity-based approaches challenge the field of sound art?

By working with the context of place, the body and memories, my *soundwalking* experiences became central for the development of my *performance art* works. As the focus of these works is not in the exploration of material quality of sound, but working with knowledge of place we acquire through listening, simultaneously shaped by our previous experiences of place, my works

could fall outside of what some authors identify as sound art, because they explore sound as a theme employing different media. The material focused approaches to sound art that would be challenged by these *performance art* pieces are tackled in the Chapter Two by referring to the work of Maes (2013; 2017) however, the thesis also presents more inclusive approaches to sound art described by LaBelle, Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax, as well as Seth Kim-Cohen.

The chapter also shows what context-aware sound art practice could be, and how such a practice can work with complex personal identities. Through descriptions of performances, I aim to show how these performances were composed, their contextual underpinnings, what aspects of the research they worked with, and how they treat different media within themselves, such as image, installation or performative action. This method of sharing and informing is also used to negotiate the research question tackling interdisciplinary challenges in the work, as the thesis aims to communicate the relevant aspects of the research to different practitioners regardless of their background. This is a reason why in this chapter I also tackle the performative aspects of *soundwalk* which urged me to focus on performance in my practice, the main traits of *performance art* practice, and works of *performance art* that are often considered in the histories of sound art.

How and in what ways can performance art practice expand strategies of making, in the field of sound art practice?

This is a central question for this chapter that foregrounds *performance art* practices in a sound art context, practices which have been influential for my creative work. Here I recognise the tendency of *performance art* as a form of critical and social engagement, tackling in a broader sense the ways the individuals navigate through social and political contexts. This resonates with this research, as well as strong *performance art* traditions in ex-Yugoslavia that also feed my interest in performance through the works of Marina Abramović, Tanja Ostojić, or performance groups OHO and NSK.

The chapter also will highlight a rich tradition of performance artists working with and engaging with sound. Authors such as Alan Licht, and Brandon LaBelle tackle these histories by discussing the work of Japanese groups Gutai and Ongaku, and practitioners such as Vito Acconci, and Alvin Lucier. These examples show that *performance art* practices are not new to sound art discourse; however, they are most often discussed as historic references drawing from works of Cage and Fluxus. This is where the notion of 'expanding existing strategies of making' in the research question comes from, as while I am aware that *performance art* practice is not new to the discourse, it is still often referred historically. Moreover, the ways in which sound art authors and

visual art authors write about the work of Acconci and Lucier is different in tackling the sonic, the visual, the use of the body, and even conceptual and contextual underpinnings of the work. This is why in this chapter, I aim to foreground performative quality of sound art practices such as *soundwalking* while implying that even audio-visual installation has performative potential (in the ways in which the audience moves through the space). I also introduce some basic traits of *performance art*. I discuss how my pieces are informed, why different materials are used, how they communicate, and how they contribute to the overall piece. This strategy of writing, explaining and illustrating, aims to address the interdisciplinary challenges with regard to the ways art is discussed in different traditions.

Why did I turn towards performance during this PhD? There are multiple reasons, starting from the performative quality of *soundwalking*, and the multisensory abundance and strong emotions evoked by intense listening *in situ*. Next, *performance art* allowed me to 'compress' multiple experiences and express them within a smaller number of pieces, and with hindsight, the scope of this research (across two countries, four places), hundreds of *field recordings* taken, numerous *soundwalks* performed, photographs and interviews taken, produced a body of work that I found difficult to tackle at times. While the scope of the research made me aware of the rich potential of listening and multiple contexts, it has created a problem as to how is it possible to provide a hint of that abundance through creative practice?

I turned to what I know, and I was familiar with, *performance art* is still widely practised in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The pieces I am familiar with and had the opportunity to witness live tackle complex contexts, create immersive environments and bring different media together. This resonated with this research.

However, the pieces I developed can be challenging for some authors and practitioners of sound art, this is especially the case with *Silencer* (2018), where the work that doesn't reproduce any sound, but it is informed deeply by interests and concerns of sound art discourse. Such work provokes discussion of disciplinary boundaries in relation to the media used in the piece.

Although it is peculiar that discussion on disciplines is raised in this time and age, 60 years after compositions of La Monte Young, followed by numerous experiments since, the attitudes and approaches I met in the literature as well as in conferences and conversations with practitioners, shows that this is a conversation still worth having. This interest in disciplines and their language derives from my interest in art education and the ways in which art practice is written about and

discussed. The contribution then of these pieces of *performance art* is in opening up the conversation on interdisciplinary research, a commonly raised trait, but challenging in practice.

Although *performance art* pieces are informed by the interviews, literature and *soundwalks*, the nature of my creative practice moved and progressed much faster than my written discourse. They work with the concept of *timespace* (Voegelin 2010) by transforming what is invisible, to the visible and hearable. The visual and sonic at times is difficult to separate, as it is my body that brings the artworks together. Similarly, as it is impossible to translate the experience of listening *in situ* to someone in its multisensory entirety through documentation, it is challenging to recreate the experience of performance through documentation as well; experience of sound and performance is *in situ* and ephemeral. The documentation of *performance art* pieces is often frustrating, un-engaging, as it represents the document of the artwork and not necessarily the artwork in its own right. My aim was to overcome this disadvantage in part, by writing about the pieces in more detail in the second part of this chapter.

The documentation of the pieces of *performance art* can be exhibited in the form of installations, creating new iterations of these pieces, by re-editing digital materials and using objects from the performance in new contexts. This would create new pieces of work referring to the original performances, and this is the aim of my final exhibition that allows a more immersive experience compared to the digital sound and video files in my portfolio.

Performance, in the same way as *soundwalking*, offers sensory abundance that I work with through my relationship with the audience. The accumulated experiences of *soundwalks* are brought before an audience in *performance art* pieces, establishing a relationship of empathy between them and me. I acknowledge my audience, and without them, performance doesn't exist in the form it has been intended. I often listen to their movements during the piece, I look at them, and I establish relationships. They hold their breath with me, and our relationship is the key to the first three *performance art* pieces. *Silencer* (2018), in contrast, doesn't share this intimate space. Although visually disruptive, the strategy in this piece was conceived of differently, as it acknowledges that intimate sharing is made possible in the privileged domain of an art institution, and it rarely happens in public space.

In some cases, materials in these *performance art* pieces are presented as objects with sounding potential embedded in them. It would be easy to imagine the grains of soil, walnuts, and pomegranates, being smashed, opened, and rolled even if they are exhibited as stationary

artefacts. On the other hand, objects used in the installations and performances bring a whole range of personal and cultural associations with them. These artworks are informed by material gathered, *soundwalking*, interviews, memories, histories, and contexts that I have encountered. They create layered outputs, offering a rich range of material for interpretation.

Each of the four pieces of *performance art* dealt with different aspects of the research, concentrating on what I have learned, working with it, embodying it, and composing it. This layered practice, integrating different art forms, works alongside the notions that our knowledge of place comes from a multisensory encounter with the world (Rodaway 1994). The cultural and personal connotations of objects, materials, and colours, are brought to illustrate the depth of a personal experience of sound. Hence soil doesn't just act like a physical object, it also acts in relation to sound; presents the product and record of a particular time, a series of sonic events solidified.

The soil is of significance in this practice, and while other symbols and materials I used in the pieces are discussed in the context of individual performances, the importance of soil for my practice is tackled in the dedicated *Soil as a Record of Time* section of the chapter. Soil serves as a material counterpart to *field recordings*, and by displacing it, carrying it from a place to place, it allowed me to highlight issues of migration and history.

4.2. From Performing a Soundwalk to Performance Art

While walking, I discovered a lake surrounded by mountains. I approached the clear, mirror-like surface of the water and walked into it while feeling the coldness of the water, my toes sinking into smooth and slightly warmer mud at the bottom of the lake. I see myself on the surface, floating away towards the mountains. Everything is on display now, the outside and inside, the past and presence coming together. I am in all of my places simultaneously. The pomegranate is ripped apart, and its seeds are scattered. I stare and wait for your breath to catch mine, our times are in sync. Silence.[74]

Confronted by the research question*: How do personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place?*, I had to dive deeper into my own memories and feelings aroused by different environments, in order to come any closer to answering this question. I had to ask myself: Do I

[74] As discussed in section 1.5. I have used my subjective voice in a creatively written form, formatted in italic font.

belong? What does it mean to belong? What does it mean to listen to home and visit other homes? What are my identities?

As a person who grew up surrounded by artists working across the different media, it was natural to turn to *performance art* as one of the media to explore my question. *Performance art* allowed me to use different materials, to extend their meaning, to build on symbols in order to create narratives that are context-dependent, and could be read at different levels. It allowed me to use *soundscape* recordings to take people somewhere and have them focus on sounds created *in situ*. I have placed sound in the centre of my exploration.

In the three performances, I created environments in which materials reinforce sound or explore the layers of experience from the past. Some of these materials and objects are paper, charcoal, soil, pomegranates, walnuts, water, and a fish bowl. The memory of a place and experience of the place is multisensory and although sound in its capacity to be felt through the whole body is a focus, I have used the other media to express some of my findings, observations, and research. Hence the performative aspect of some works created as part of this PhD, uses *performance art* as a medium to explore sonority experienced through depth of personal history, as a subject matter. In this way the performances *Grains of Sound* (2016), *Hold in/Breathe Out* (2016)*, One Thousand Pomegranite Seeds* (2017) and *Silencer* (2018) are forms of *sounding art* (Cobussen, Meelberg, and Truax 2017).

The contextual aspects of my work can be recognised in my choice of objects, materials, sounds and light. They mediate the relationship between myself and the audience, through interaction and improvisation. The works were methodically built while allowing improvisation. They are sometimes dynamic, and sometimes embrace silence.

I have also recognised important aspects of *soundwalking* while in the field. The *soundwalking* represents an immersive leap into the world of everyday sound. It leads to the sense of being present; the sense of discovery is always surprising. A *soundwalk* performed even with first year undergraduate students of contemporary art, who have not yet developed their appreciation for *soundscape*, allows them to slow down and experience place in a more engaged way.

It slows down the pace of walking so that there is time for the senses to adjust, hear better, see better, smell better, to feel the ground underfoot, and acquire a deep sense of self in the relationship with the world.

In situ listening is practiced through *soundwalking*, and its performative qualities are of special interest to this chapter. The awareness of one's body, breathing and movement are easily observed during *soundwalking*, inevitably captured by a microphone. A *soundwalker* in this way listens to his movement and combined with the awareness of the environment, he becomes a conscious agent playing a part in the piece, in which he is at once audience, performer and *recordist*.

The composer Hildegard Westerkamp stresses that in *soundwalking*, one becomes aware of the sound of one's own body. If done in a group, the experience is different depending on our physical position in the group during the walk (Westerkamp 2007). This challenge to the spectator-audience divide, the sensorial exploration of space questioning what is felt, perceived, works alongside the concerns of *performance art*.

For understanding the history and epistemology of *soundwalk*, the work *LISTEN* (1968) by Max Neuhaus, is crucial as it is considered as the one of the first works of this kind. In an interview with Lander and Lexier, Neuhaus says the following about the work:

> The first performance was for a small group of invited friends. I asked them to meet me on the corner of Avenue D and West 14th Street in Manhattan. I rubber stamped LISTEN on each person's hand and began walking with them down 14th Street towards the East River. (2013 p. 63)

Neuhaus continues with a description of the walk mentioning a "spectacularly massive rumbling" coming from the power plant, crossing the highway, all the way to his studio where he performed some percussion pieces (2013 p. 63).

The fact that he speaks about the work as a 'performance' should not come as surprise knowing that he is a musician who was just starting his art career at this point. We can acknowledge though that the leap is great between the musician performing his pieces, and the musician leading the group to hear what is already in the environment as a performance.

In the following iterations of the piece, Max Neuhaus would do these works labelled as 'lecture demonstrations'. In them the rubber stamp message "LISTEN" stands for a "lecture" and "demonstration" stands for the walk (Lander and Lexier 1990 p. 65).

Neuhaus also acknowledges the work of World Soundscape Project (WSP) that was discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, and points out that his work was often misunderstood in an academic

context. According to Neuhaus, R. Murray Schafer's book *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* originally published in 1977, could have changed opinions about his work, if it was better known at the time (Lander and Lexier 1990 p. 65).
This is important as it shows that Neuhaus was familiar with Schafer's work, and *soundwalking* is often associated with both Neuhaus and WSP. For example, Caleb Kelly, a sound author based in Australia, points out that

> …initially pioneered by Max Neuhaus, this practice [soundwalking] involves directing the audience around a geographical environment or artificial sound spaces, drawing their attention to the multifarious sounds they come across. (Kelly 2011 p. 14)

This description contests Neuhaus's acknowledgement of the work of WSP, although note that *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* by R. Murray Schafer was published 9 years after his first walk.

In *Soundwalking: Aural Excursions into the Everyday* John Drever points out that in his approach to *soundwalking*, Neuhaus was drawing directly from Cage, but frustrated that in *4'33''* (1952) the audience was more fascinated with the novelty of everyday sounds being listened to in the concert space, then appreciating the sounds in their own right. As a result, he decided to take the audience outside the concert hall altogether (2009).

What is of interest here is what happens after the audience moves from the concert hall, the ways a group moves through the space self-aware of disruptions and noise they introduce to the environment is different from a concert experience. *LISTEN* by Neuhaus in many ways acts like a piece of *performance art*. I use adjectives that Adrian Heathfield, editor of *Live Art and Performance* (2012) assigns to *performance art*, and I use them for a *soundwalk*: embodiment, breaking traditions of representation, foregrounding the experiential, being open to different kinds of engagement with meaning, and the activation of the audience (Heathfield 2004 p. 7). The negotiation of time and space, the exploration of time relative to the spectator/audience divide, has been also prominent in discourses surrounding *performance art* but are relevant for *soundwalks*.

Neuhaus starts his piece by stamping the word 'listen' on the hand of the audience. "LISTEN" is in capital lettering inspired by his girlfriend shouting the word during domestic arguments (Neuhaus 1990 p. 63).

So the word is charged with meaning, it has the authority, it shouts, and it ends up on the skin of the audience. This act is symbolic and functional; its role is to remind people to listen, to focus on hearing consciously. This is an initiation to the ritual of the walk. The walk itself is a radical intervention in space. A group of people approach the power plant; stand motionless listening to the 'rambling noise' that would attract the attention of passers-by even today. In later iterations Neuhaus even engages with academic notions of the lecture and demonstration (1990). The strategy of subverting and exploring of different roles in this case of academic context again fits the discourse of *performance art*. Neuhaus's lecture consists of one word, and its demonstration consists of guidance and *soundscape* listening.

Moreover, what works for *Listen* (1968), as a piece of *performance art*, is its engagement with the ecological, political and social layers of the site. The ecological in the context of *soundwalking* draws upon the World Soundscape Project known for their aim to increase overall awareness of *soundscapes*, and also reduce the level of noise (Schafer 1994). The political awareness of *Listen* (1968) can emerge from this ecological, or it can grow from the individual's relationship with the site of the walk. These are important aspects of *soundwalking* that reflect interest of many sound artists with visual art backgrounds.

Numerous other artists throughout the 20th century have created work that is discussed in sound and visual art histories that point out the rich interdisciplinary nature of sound art. Brandon Labelle in *Background Noise-Perspectives on Sound Art* writes about the Japanese group Ongaku, in addition to elaborating on performance artworks by Vito Acconci *Seedbed* (1972), and Alvin Lucier *I Am Sitting in a Room* (1969) (LaBelle 2015).

In *Seedbed* (1972), Vito Acconci is hidden in the gallery floor, masturbating. He narrates his fantasies directed to the gallery visitors and his voice amplified by loudspeakers fills the space. In the piece often referred to as a piece of sound art, *I Am Sitting in a Room* (1969), Alvin Lucier records his voice in the room and then continues playing the voice from a tape recorder and recording a new iteration of the piece simultaneously. With each iteration, his voice becomes more muddled, distant and distorted. In these examples, artists use their bodies, voice, but also the walls, space, room or visitors as active participants in the pieces. They question the gallery system, the nature of space, intimacy, of becoming, by engaging with sound.

From the sound art perspective, LaBelle (2015) maps in a detailed way the history of ideas connecting performance and sound art, highlighting the importance of site specificity, happening,

and performative practice. The legacy of Cage is of importance in these considerations, as his work has attracted many visual artists to explore sonarity, while also inspiring composers to expand their creative process.

For example, in a composition for Bob Morris, La Monte Young instructs a reader to 'draw a straight line, and follow it'. As a result, he doesn't just experiment with drawing as form of composition, but the durational performative action shapes temporal, spatial visual and sonic dimensions of the work.

When referring to Cage, LaBelle points out that Cage can be

> …situated within an experimental music legacy that progressively moves away from an overtly musical framework and toward an increasingly contextual and extra-musical. (LaBelle 2015 p.8)

While LaBelle is a bit unclear as to the extent to which Cage tackled the contextual, Drever indicates that artists who were learning from Cage, moved towards the contextual more then Cage himself. He points out that students of Cage in period from 1956 to 1960 are those

> …who resolutely reintegrated the social, although refracted through Cagean precepts of chance and indeterminancy. The Class included George Brecht, Al Hansen, Dick Higgins, Allan Kaprow and Jackson MacLow, a veritable role call of the first generation American Fluxus movement. (2009 p. 21)

This is important for understanding performance and more generally, performative practices in sound art, as well as contextual, both of interest of this research.

Labelle also develops his point further, and positions the Japanese collective group Ongaku founded at the end of the 1950s "not so much as a medium between the Cage-Schaeffer divide but as a trajectory that cuts through it." (2015 p. 35) He continues by explaining that Cage "operates on a social level through conceptual techniques" and *musique concrète* as through "technological construction of found sound". Ongaku "appropriates found objects through an expressivity of bodily action". (2015 p. 36)

The other influential figure in the context of performance and sound art is Saburo Murakami. He was a member of the Japanese group called "Gutai" and in 1956 he performed *Many Screens of Paper* (Labelle 2015). As part of one performance, he ran through sheets of paper penetrating them, and consequently created a unique sonic, visual, and emotional impact.

LaBelle's positioning of Ongaku and Gutai in the context of the cultural trajectory of post-1945 Japan resonates deeply with me as someone who was raised in a post-conflict society. He states "that [they] sought to explore and collapse the distance between subject and object, art and life" (LaBelle 2015 p. 44). Further on, he develops the notion that through a performative body, Ongaku urges us to employ

> another form of listening, to hear both the body of sound and the individual body, the sound object, and its contextual origin, as an intersection, as a contact and its subsequent noise. The performing body forces itself outward, exerting against the notions borders of physicality and against the concrete world, and by extension the cultural space of music. (LaBelle 2015 p. 44)

Most of these notions play a part in my practice, which in its broadest sense aims to challenge the distances between the audience and myself. The value of the objects I use is embedded in materials and recordings over time, through ways they were collected and treated. Every piece of *performance art* starts much before the part that is shared with the audience, either through the collection of soil, transportation of materials, or acquiring *field recordings*. My body in these pieces doesn't act, it doesn't pretend. It is brought before the audience with its history, emotions and failures.

I emphasize the body here, as it is often overlooked aspect of sound art, but it is central to *performance art*. *Performance art* is difficult to define, it is open ended and anarchic (Goldberg 2011).

> By its nature, performance defies precise or easy definition beyond the simple declaration that it is live art by artists. Any stricter definition would immediately negate the possibility of performance itself. (Goldberg 2011 p. 9)

The use of my body in creative practice emerged naturally during the research, due to the intimacy of the topic and the potential of *performance art* to tackle complex and multi-layered issues. Moreover, the crossover of *performance art* and sound histories, has inspired me to build on the strong *performance art* tradition of ex-Yugoslavia. The immersive aspects of the listening experience, the performative aspects of the *soundwalking*, and my desire to bring personal history to my work also fuelled this intention. Consequently, I created four *performance art* pieces: *Grains of Sound* (2016*), Hold in/Breathe Out* (2016), *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017), and *Silencer* (2018).

The strong tradition of *performance art* in ex-Yugoslavia has informed these pieces as I have been immersed in overlapping areas of *performance art* and sound practices. The example of OHO, an art

collective from Slovenia founded in the second half of the 60s, is instructive. OHO as a word is constructed by a combination of 'oko' and 'uho' meaning 'eye' and 'ear' in Slovenian as well as in the Serbo-Croat language, which used to be the official language of Yugoslavia.

The group marked the interest in body art in Slovenia practiced in form of happenings and *performance art* (Zabel 1998). This group was influential for the majority of contemporary performance artists from the region, and their practice is politically and socially engaged. In the series called *Summer Projects* (1969) they made interventions in forests and fields. The group is known for the performance in a public square in Ljubljana called *Mount Triglav* (1968) which they performed during student protests in Slovenia. Three members of the group covered themselves with a dark canvas, thus recreating the shape of the mountain that is a national symbol of the country. With only their heads visible, they not only referred to a national symbol, a sensitive matter in the context of Yugoslavia, but they also claimed that symbol for themselves (Šuvaković 2007). The work opens space for various interpretations while negotiating individual and group identities, art and social discourses.

Another Slovenian group, the collective NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst), was formed in Ljubljana in the early 1980s. NSK was composed of the three main groups: IRWIN (visual arts), Sestre Scipion Nasice (theatre), and Laibach (music). In NSK, Laibach represents the ideological; the theater the religious; and IRWIN the cultural and historical impulse (Monroe 2005). “This multi-disciplinary collective functions as a Gesamtkunstwerk, and images and symbols are cross-pollinated by all groups within the NSK, constituting its output as a whole” (Bell 2014 p. 105).

NSK and OHO work across media, using performative work to explore conceptual, contextually rich and critical ideas. At times questioning, but also illustrating the accumulative experiences, these practices are ephemeral, difficult to research and document.

Hence in this research, the performance pieces I developed embrace these traits of performance. The pieces are informed by the accumulated experiences of listening in place, mostly through *soundwalking*, but also through conversations and interviews. The research also teased out a range of my autobiographical memories of the Bosnian war that influenced *performance art* pieces.

Some of the strategies I used in the pieces draw from other contemporary artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina whose work also tackles identities, history and who have often responded through the body, *performance art* and sound, to the conflicts of the 1990s. For instance, Lana Čmajčanin

employed sound as a key element in installation *20.000 – Trauma of a Crime* (2010), a work that deals with more than 20 000 accounts of rape during the Bosnian war. The installation incorporates a sound piece composed from testimonies of the victims. The work employs partly illuminated music stands carrying the scores filled with successive numbers. The voices of the victims recalling crimes are played from the loudspeakers, saturating the empty and eerie space of the gallery (Blackwood 2015).

A work illustrating the cross-fertilisation between the "performed silence" of John Cage and *performance art* in the local Bosnian context can be found in the work *No Lyrics, No Music, No Country, Nothing…*(1997) made by a Bosnian artist living in New York City, Nebojša Šerić-Šoba. In this work, first performed in Ljubljana, he appeared as a street busker with a blank sign around his neck, holding a guitar without strings. In front of him is an empty metal can of USA food aid given to citizens in need during the war. The label stated, "not to be sold or exchanged". The work was performed just after the war in Sarajevo and Ljubljana, and passers by, assuming that Šoba is one more mentally ill person distressed by the war, were handing him coins. As part of the performance, he didn't produce any sound at all (Larsen 1998).

The majority of contemporary artists in Bosnia and Herzegovina are dealing with the body from various perspectives and a significant number practice also as performance artists. An interest in the body partially came from the direct experience of war and the threat it imposed to the physical body, together with the survival imperatives of individual group cultures and identities.

> The shock experienced in face of the transition to the new reality, and the direct threat of war to our bodies –for the war in the Balkans was actually directed against the body- have reminded us that we are captives of our physical existence. (Badovinac 1998 p. 17)

This quotation speaks directly to the performance *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017), in which I act both as an oppressor and oppressed while ripping off the skin and flesh of the pomegranates. The intimate relationship with these objects, their juice covering my shirt had the aim to bring the audience closer to the act of violence, uncovering the complex relationship between objects and bodies; observers and performers.

The acknowledgment of the tradition of crosspollination between sound, visual art, and *performance art*; recognition of the active role of the body is central for understanding of pieces created as part of my research. In these works, space, light, my body, sound I produce by interacting with materials and objects, sound played from loudspeakers, sound recorded, and objects chosen play a role in the piece, they all communicate different aspects of the work or

reinforce each other. The presence and relationship created between audience and my body is critically developed and stretched to the sufficient point of tension. My body in these works is not the one playing the instrument or an object used as such, but the body is gendered, an emotional container of memory and experience. It is inspired by *performance art* and happenings that I witnessed live, in the literature and in interaction with contemporary artists in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

What further informed my work is the awareness that *performance art* in the 1960s was often a demonstration or an execution of ideas of conceptual art focusing on ideas and less on tangible products (Goldberg 2011 p. 7). This again resonated with the idea of exploring sonority by embracing the ephemerality of the sonic experience through *performance art*.

However, from the short references about the *performance art* pieces I tackled in this section, it is noticeable that the use of objects of certain connotations has been an important aspect of my practice. These objects have allowed me to create pieces that have links between them and emerge from the range of creative practices tackled in Chapter One as *soundwalking*, writing, reading, and performing. Performing in some ways is present in ways I interact with the literature, ways I write and commit to *soundwalks*. Moreover, it is also noticeable that these practices assume the process of documentation and collecting of information, experiences or even materials for work. From this tendency I turned to the soil as a powerful container of memory, a substance that if moved and sampled, could engage with implications of displacement, consequently establishing links with ephemeral aspects of this research, such as autobiographical memories and sound as a record of time. Additionally, by sharing the questions on my use of soil in this research, I illustrate the research I conduct when I work with the particular material. This responds to the research question on how *performance art* expends dominant strategies of making in the field of sound art.

4.3. Soil as a Record of Time

When I take the microphone to record sound, I can only start recording from the present. Time marked between pressing the recording button to start recording, and stopping it, is a captured past. It can only be referred to through this recording. However, this past recorded is immediate; the *field recording* with regard to duration is not comparable with the span of someone's experience of place, formed over many months and years.

The *field recordings* in this work are used for the documentation of portions of *soundscapes* I have experienced during my *soundwalks*. They differ significantly from the actual experiences of *soundscapes*, which through sensory abundance, movement through space and numerous other aspects, generates a very different experience. *Soundwalks* and interviews encourage memories. From interviews I learned about past and events that have happened even before I was born that shape the experience of listening today of people who remember them. However, beyond transcripts and interview recordings that are valuable artefacts, *soundwalks* and interviews are ephemeral in many ways, and they don't leave many artefacts I could work with. The materials these methods generate included fragments of actual *soundscapes* in the form of *field recordings*, photographs, and interviews with its transcripts.

As a result of difference in methods where *field recording* allows me to capture specific sounds in short timeframes; interviews and *soundwalking* which open up the world of meanings and contexts referring to very long periods of time, but without leaving many artefacts, I struggled to find something I could use in my practice to bring the majority of future works together. Moreover, there was a need for something that could carry various connotations related to the sense of place and belonging while also being able to communicate with different audiences.

This is why I turned to the soil as a powerful symbol that represents a physical and metaphorical record of time. Soil is deeply endowed with meaning; it can be transported and displaced, amplified and recorded.

4.3.1. Soil Samples from Sarajevo, Maglaj, Banchory & Aberdeen

Along with the sound recordings I have taken in four places, in each, I have chosen one location from which I took a soil sample. The choice was based on my involvement with particular locations.

In Sarajevo, I took a soil sample from the Historical Museum's garden. In the garden is a bronze statue of Tito, president of the former Yugoslavia.

Besides the statue, the garden is occupied by a few old machine guns and cannons used in WWII. The Historical Museum prior to the Bosnian war (1992-1996) was called the Museum of the Revolution and it used to commemorate the partisan struggle during the WWII. Nowadays it also exhibits objects, stories, and memories from the recent war, by focusing on the siege of Sarajevo (1992-1996).

I chose the museum because I spent a lot of time in the surrounding area. My high school was just 10 min walk down Wilsonovo promenade on the banks of the river Miljacka. This is a rare car free zone used for recreation. As part of the museum complex, there is a popular cafe called Tito, and a children's' park where kids can choose to play, or to explore a tank and other second world war munitions.

Also, I chose this location because it sums up the complex web of relationships between the history of the city and its people. The intimate knowledge of the museum which I acquired, as a design volunteer, the awareness of the struggle to keep the museum open in the precarious circumstances of cultural funding in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the deteriorating building, and a lack of functioning heating in winter, reflects many of the realities of living in B&H. This was one of the places that evoked some difficult memories from the recent and more distant past, along with laughing children and youth in the café, in our present.

Taking a soil sample from the garden of Historical Museum in Sarajevo, photographs.

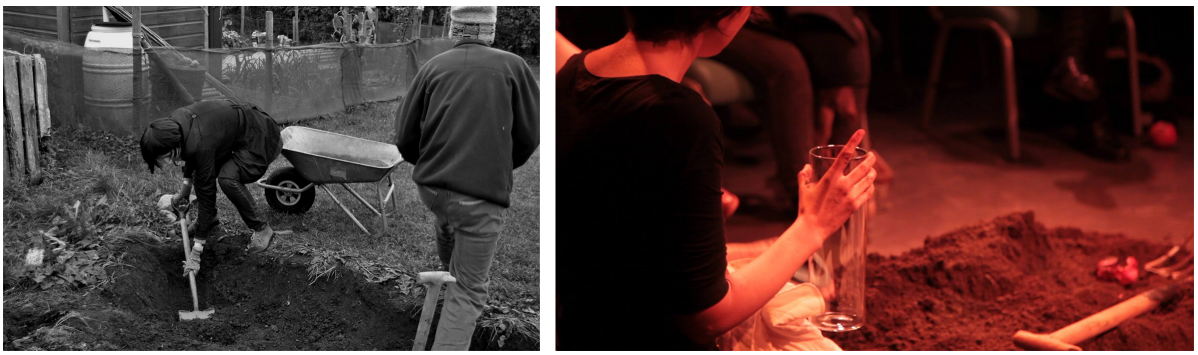
The location I have chosen in Maglaj, is near the bridge that connects the old and new parts of the city. It is just a few metres from the river Bosna. The location is at a crossroads, occupied by walkers, cyclists, and cars. They follow the road south towards the paper factory Natronka, or cross the bridge connecting the old and the new part of town. I took the sample in the summer of 2016, an extremely hot period in Maglaj when the town experienced temperatures of over 35 degrees. The place I took the soil from was a construction site at the time, and the soil seemed lifeless and dry.

The construction aimed to deliver a new promenade with bicycle and pedestrian tracks along the river. It leads to the paper factory and runs parallel to a new part of town. This part is roughly built

post WWII with the most of the buildings dating from the 1960s onwards. The sample location seemed important to residents for different activities, leisure, religion, and business. It is also in the proximity of the monument built to commemorate the victims of the recent war. The site looks towards the old mosque across the river, as well as the fortress dating back to the 15th century.

Taking a soil sample next to the crossroad connecting a new and old part of Maglaj, next to the river, photographs.

In Banchory, I took a soil sample as part of my performance the *Grains of Sound* in 2016. With the help of Mark Hope, a volunteer and co-founder of the Barn arts centre and my co-supervisor, I took a tonne of soil from the garden and moved it to the main performance space. That summer I spent three days camping in the garden of the Barn recording sounds. Consequently, I felt that I had managed to learn about the building and make a connection with the site. I also walked many times from the venue to Banchory town centre covering a distance of 1.5 miles. In that way, I became familiar with the geographic and physical orientation of the centre. More about community, and the role of the Barn in it, is revealed in the interview with Bertha Forbes.[75]



Left: Taking soil with Mark Hope from the garden of the Barn, photograph.
Right: Taking a soil sample during the performance *Grains of Sound* (2016), photograph.

[75]Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Interviews/Bertha Forbes

In Aberdeen, I took the soil from the proximity of the Anatomy Rooms, the art studio complex where I have written the majority of my thesis. The daily routine of walking to the studio and writing has marked this period in my life. The sounds around the room I rent are very familiar to me. I am even familiar with street buskers, and some passers-by who also work and live nearby.

The studio complex is behind the large building that used to be part of the Marischal College and now is headquarter of Aberdeen City Council. Until a few decades ago it used to host the Anatomy Department of the University of Aberdeen. The site is shrouded in stories and myths where public health, death and academia intersect.

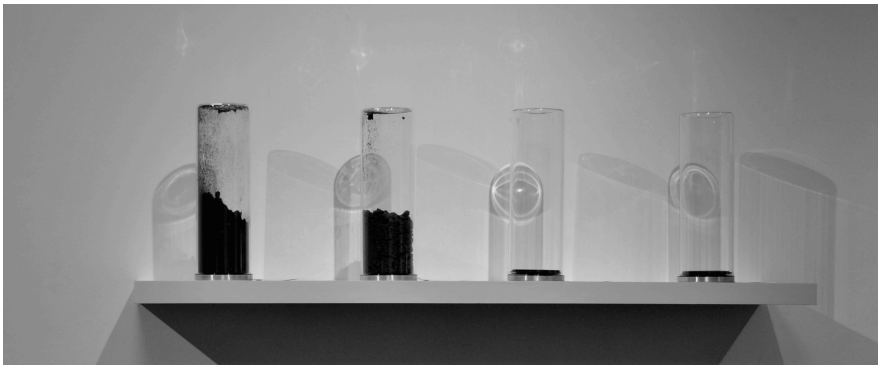

Taking a soil sample behind Marischal College, near the entrance to the studio complex The Anatomy Rooms in Aberdeen, photographs.

Following from this, it is clear that soil samples are endowed with value. In Sarajevo, the sample comes from a historic site that is also closely related to different periods of my life. In Aberdeen, the significance of the site lays in my time spent in the studio of the Anatomy Rooms, developing my work. In Banchory, it comes from performance and my residence at Barn, and in Maglaj it comes from a site that defines the city geographically. Also, many recordings of the river Bosna came from nearby.

4.3.2. Soil: Connotations and Meanings

Soil samples embody time, but they also point out to our relationship with the land. Combined with sonic artefacts and sound pieces they act as an illustration of the human experience of place, which is often formed across a lifetime incorporating even memories of our ancestors. The samples exhibited in the glass containers, one next another, problematise the notions of 'motherland' and 'fatherland' used interchangeably in Bosnian cultural narratives. The stories of the land of our fathers and grandfathers are used in poems and songs about longing, as well as in daily media,

often manipulating ethnic divisions.[76] Consequently, my performance pieces *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017), and *Grains of Sound* (2016) accompanied with the exhibition at the Barn, where the soil samples were exhibited in glass containers, amplify the symbolic connotations of the soil, referring to narratives of place and personal identities.



Soil samples from Sarajevo and Maglaj in the exhibition *Grains of Sound* (2016) in Banchory, photograph.

The soils might differ according to their physical characteristics, but exhibited in transparent containers they still challenge the notions of some aggressive claims on land with reference to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In carrying soil samples, the very act of transporting them, the value that they are endowed with might be lost through a process of displacement. The meaning and weight they carry is challenged and by being exhibited together, it provokes the viewer to think, potentially: 'what is this brown matter we fight for?' Seen through the transparent glass containers, the difference between 'my' soil and 'your' soil is questioned. In this way, my work and the act of displacement of soil aims to be openly critical of the ethnic divide and competing land claims in the Bosnian context.

In Scotland, the issue of land ownership is occasionally raised in the context of the Highland Clearances, but also less politically charged reference to gardens, hiking and walking.

Nan Shepherd, well known for her descriptions of hikes and walks in Scottish mountains says:

> The more one learns of this intricate interplay of soil, altitude, weather, and the living tissues of plant and insect (...) the more the mystery deepens. Knowledge does not dispel

[76] For instance the article published by National Geographic *20 Years Later, a Bosnian Returns to His War-Scarred Home,* highlights the personal experiences of exile due to war, however the romantic notions of homeland are also endowed with feeling of nostalgia, and questions of ethnic identity (Strochlic 2018).

> mystery. Scientists tell me that the alpine flora of the Scottish mountains is Arctic in origin - that these small scattered plants have outlived the Glacial period and are the only vegetable life in our country that is older than the Ice Age. But that doesn't explain them. It only adds time to the equation and gives it a new dimension. (2011 p. 59)

In terms of the development of the idea of soil as a record of time, scientific approaches have been informative. They also take in consideration living matter and weather.

The Russian pedologist[77] Vasily Dokuchaev has created one of the first descriptions of soil formation. In 1898 he described them as follows: (1) the nature (content and structure) of the parent rock; (2) the climate of the given terrain; (3) the mass and character of vegetation; (4) the age of the terrain; and, finally, (5) the terrain topography. His successor, S. A. Zakharov published, in 1927, a formula for soil formation in which along with plant material, animal organisms are added (Florinsky 2012).

In reading this from the position of a sound artist, we notice that some of these factors contributing to soil formation are often recorded, in the context of *soundscape field recording*. For example, wind is always a factor determining the choice of equipment and the site for recording. At Scolty Hill near Banchory, wind represented the essential part of place, hence on several occasions I was recording it.[78]

A path towards Scolty Hill near Banchory, photograph.

[77] Pedology is "the study of the formation, characteristics, and distribution of soils" (Collins. English Dictionary 2019e).
[78] Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Field Recordings/wind - Scolty Hill

Beyond the wind, rain can be very expressive, and in the summer of 2017 I was trapped in the car in Maglaj, and ended up recording the rain.[79] Summer showers are something I strongly relate to the climate in central Bosnia. On the other hand, the rain recorded during camping in the garden of the Barn, had a very different feel. The steady sound of the raindrops falling on my tent at night just increased the sense of solitude and isolation. The Barn is closed at night, and because fenced fields surround it, the feeling of loneliness and physical sensation of coldness was difficult to escape.[80]

Looked at in this way, soil can become a record of weather changes, wind, showers, snow and heat in summer. It also becomes a record of the organisms inhabiting the land, and although we might need to use specialised microphones in other to record them, for example, the sounds of an earthworm digging tunnels in the soil, others are recorded with less difficulty. Many of my recordings both in Bosnia and Scotland contain the sounds of animals, birds and insects. Therefore, something that roamed the land today and was recorded today will inevitably become part of the soil tomorrow. The performance and exhibition *Grains of Sound,* 2016 in Banchory was partly inspired by the cycle of life and death.

4.4. Performance Art Pieces

I was not aware, at the beginning of my research how my commitment to sound would profoundly change, how I think about my practice, my identities, and myself. In summer 2015 I left Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country where I had spent all my life, to move to Scotland. Since then, I have travelled back and forth, and I have recorded how the relationship between my family and friends in both countries transformed.

What I actually brought to Scotland is not just what I thought initially to be valuable - skill and knowledge of video editing, animation, and design; but, I also brought aesthetics, approach, and questions that are well explored in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of these questions informed the practice and research; questions on the impact of national on personal identities, individual and national histories, displacement and diaspora, language and differing perceptions of place. The aspects of the research I explored collided with my personal transformation and ways of coping, with the position of a Bosnian diaspora person living in the UK. I responded by developing *performance art* practice.

[79] Available in the portfolio: Places/Maglaj/Field Recordings/Rain - Town Centre
[80] Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Field Recordings/Rain - the Garden of the Barn

In the first three performances *Hold in/Breathe Out (2016), Grains of Sound* (2016), *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017);[81] I was unfolding, elaborating, and dealing with some of the complexities of my research question and of my relationship with the places I am researching. These pieces establish a loose narrative through the conceptual use of objects, which are endowed with value and symbolism.

The latest piece, *Silencer* (2018) closes the circle by questioning the strategy used in the other pieces. *Silencer* (2018) was created as a response to the insight that people do not necessarily have the time to immerse themselves in the depths of context, the symbolism of meanings, or to discover their personal experience of history through an encounter with an art project. Consequently, *Silencer* does not share its history, its identity is unknown, it is not even labelled as an art project, and even its gender identity is unclear. *Silencer* is a character that explores cities unburdened by its past or context.

Analysed from some time distance, it is noticeable that the pieces I have created use different methodological strategies to work towards a resolution of the ideas and questions I want to explore. These strategies can be summed up in following way:

Hold in/Breathe Out- Illustration
Grains of Sound-Confrontation
One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds - Embodiment
Silencer-Transcendence

Some aspects of these strategies exist in all the pieces, and it could be argued that all these pieces are confrontational, embodied, illustrative, and transcendent. The areas they might confront, embody or illustrate are conceptual and thematic; memory, physical comfort, personal and geographic spaces, identities, or arena of personal history. However, the overall aim of bringing these strategies forward is to provide an insight into the initial impulses from which the works were composed, or questions, which the works raise. The initial questions that helped me in development of these are following:

Hold in/Breathe Out (2016) - How could I show what it means to invoke the memory of a place to which the audience has never been?

[81] The documentation is available in the portfolio in the folder 'Performance Art Pieces'.

Grains of Sound (2016) - How does it feel to find yourself in a town so completely different from the other places you have experienced?
One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds (2017) - How would it be possible to reveal some of my personal experience of Bosnian history?
Silencer (2018) - How to create a work of sound art in a public place, but not to augment the existing *soundscape* with new noise?

These questions gave the works the initial impulses, and they helped in creative decision-making. The creative methodology was composed of continuous questioning of materials, sounds, movements, spaces to use, and how to use them in other to materialise and bring forward the specific set of concerns in every piece. The concerns are referred to chapter two and three of this thesis, regarding personal identity, memory and context.

The references of autobiographical memory and history in these questions are related not just because much of our knowledge of history is composed of multiple sources and recollections of events of the past, but also individual histories, even intimate memories "intertwine with the wider histories" in contemporary art practice (Gibbons 2007 p. 52). Gibbons also points out that memory is central for the creation of a "knowledge of the self and for knowledge of the world" (2007 p. 5). This is evidenced in the *performance art* pieces. For instance, in *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017) I use soil sent by my family to my friends in Serbia, who then brought the soil to Aberdeen. The piece tackles personal experience of conflict, but by involving friends from different countries, I refer to wider geo-political forces that played a role in the Balkan Wars.

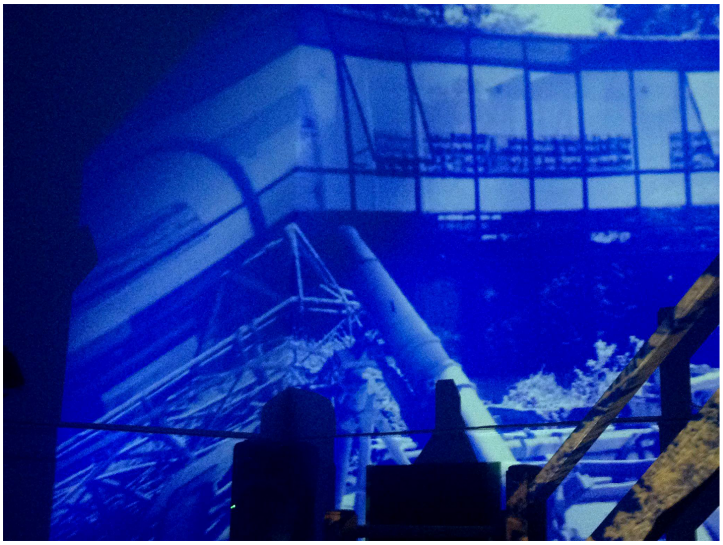
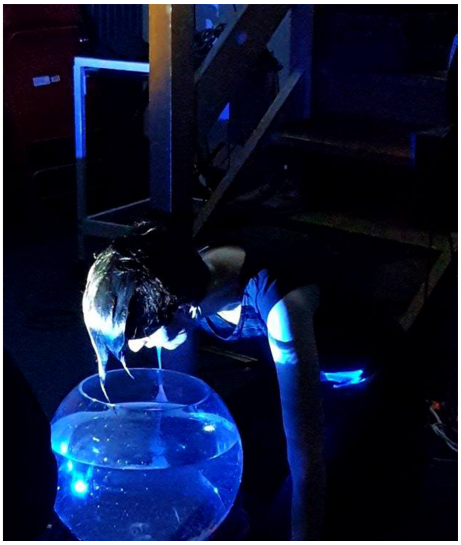
The methodology of the practice, and the development of the pieces, was underpinned by studying the works of *performance art* mentioned in the previous section, sound artists and discourse, discussed in the second chapter, knowledge of place gathered through interviews, and personal experience of place developed through walks, recordings, and observation discussed in chapter three. Hence, the criticality of the pieces discussed in this chapter lies in a rigorous choice of materials, symbols, sounds, and objects that helped me to address issues at multiple levels.

Consequently, the pieces create their own worlds, accessible at different levels dependent on the personal insight and level of knowledge of differing members of the audience. The following section of the dissertation aims to unfold these differing critical and contextual layers by using the same structure for each performance. This structure will include the description of the piece that will be followed by themes that the piece tackles. Next, I will tackle the connotations of objects and

materials I used in the pieces, and the final sections would include notes on my experience of performance, as well as notes on documentation.

4.5. The Performance in Words: Hold in/Breathe Out

I placed a big fish bowl in front of the projector casting shadows on the wall behind. The audience was seated facing me.
Next, I added water into a bowl slowly, so the audience could focus on the sound that this produced. I faced the audience, and while kneeling, I immersed my head into the water, triggering a stream of audio-visual recordings of Sarajevo.
The images were partially distorted, while the sounds I used were non-altered fragments of my field recordings.
When coming out of the water, I would stop the stream of images, creating a transition back to a blue light, with the silence disrupted by sounds of my breath, dripping water and the shadow on the wall.[82]

The performance *Hold in/Breath Out* (2016), Aberdeen, photograph.

In this performance my aim was to open up private and inaccessible memories of place. I was seeking to create a moment of empathy with the audience through observation. Many members of the audience were holding their breath with me, experiencing an altered sense of time. They

[82] Documentation is available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces/Hold in-Breathe Out. As discussed in section 1.5. I have used my subjective voice in a creatively written form, formatted in italic font. This writing is used to describe the performance art piece.

realised that the length of their encounter with Sarajevo depended on my capability to hold my breath.

While creating this work I focused on a state of displacement, and memory of place. I asked myself how I could bring Sarajevo to an audience who has never been there? How could I show what it means to invoke repeatedly a memory of the place from the perspective of a displaced person. In this process, place is used as a signifier of physical location, endowed with meanings, memories, cultural and private references. Due to a link between autobiographical memories and identities (Monk et al. 2017), it was important to explore the process of remembering through performance, beyond the discussion tackled in Chapter Three.

This also brings us to the function of narrative described in Chapter three as a vehicle of memory, or in the words of cognitive psychologists Roger Schank and Robert Abelson "we remember by telling stories". In their words

> storytelling is not something we just happen to do. It is something we virtually have to do if we want to remember anything at all. The stories we create are the memories we have. (Schank and Abelson 1995 p. 33)

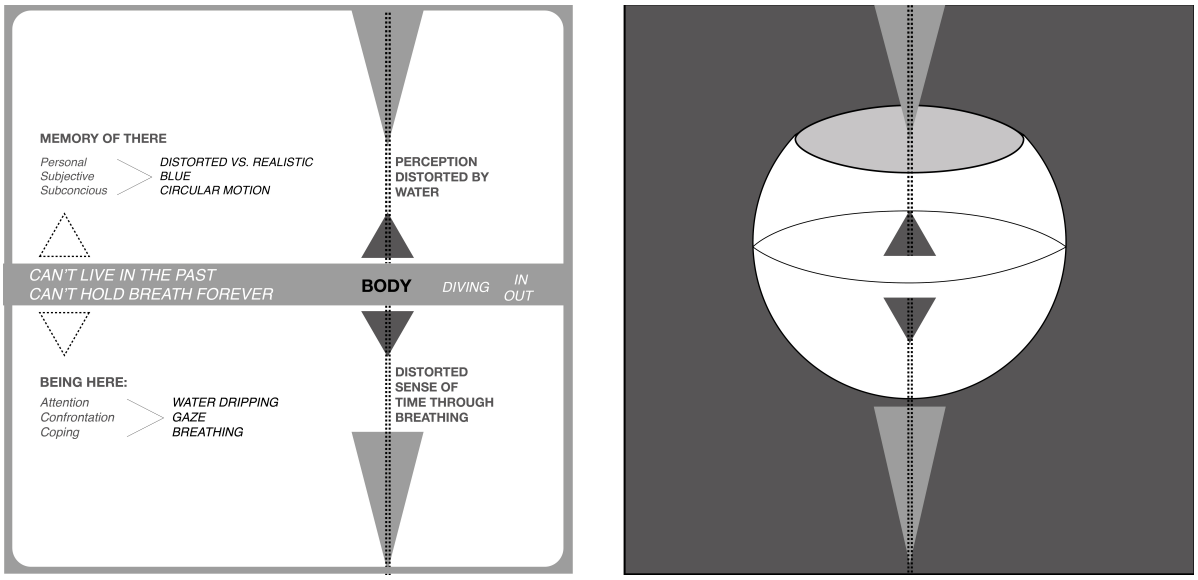
In the pieces I have created, instead of re-telling the narrative about the places, I have decided to offer a new narrative through performance. In the piece *Hold in/Breath Out* (2016), I offered a glimpse of city *soundscapes*, and images of places that are slightly distorted. By offering just short excerpts, I allow the audience to place sounds experienced as a part of the performance, relative to their own experiences of places more familiar to them.

My relationship with Sarajevo is complex, it can't be easily narrated, and it can't be easily expressed. Consequently, the piece is not about Sarajevo, the piece is about me remembering Sarajevo. This work doesn't feature idealised *soundscapes* or picturesque images of the city. The sounds heard consist of a mix featuring very short sound events such as conversations and traffic. The images used are distorted and they seem random and mashed up. My breath and the sounds of dripping water interrupt the stream of audio-visual clips abruptly.

In light of the discussion in the chapter two, the work explores the multisensory aspect of memory mindful of the use of *field recording* taken from the original context of Sarajevo and presented in Aberdeen. The work acknowledges the difficulty of translation of this context as it gives just short audio recordings dependent of duration how long I can hold the breath under water. The work doesn't provide access to a broader context, as the quantity of materials and experiences I

gathered was difficult to translate to a single piece. Hence *Hold in/Breathe Out* (2016) provides the setting for the different context, the *field recordings* are integrated into the loose narrative of performance and perceived in relation to my body and identity. I am from Sarajevo, these are my memories and for me interesting places and sounds that I work within this piece.

The contrast between sounds played while my head is underwater and silence while I was catching my breath signifies discrepancy between the complex resident perspective of a place and silence of here and now. My position in this country (Scotland), facing the audience who most likely are not familiar with the socio-geographic space I am coming from also provides a further layering to the piece. Starting from that point, I realised that similar discrepancies exist between resident and visitor perspectives while listening *in situ*. This situation bears the additional weight in case of experience of war and siege in Sarajevo.



Creative process, illustrations.

4.5.1. Symbols and Materials

The illustrations reveal to a certain degree, the way in which I have built the artwork. The crucial duality between presence and my memory of a place is sublimated in the intense experience of performance in presence, creating an illustrated *timespace* (Voegelin 2010).

The *timespace* of an individual immersed in the present, and simultaneously in all their past selves, is alluded to in the repetitive diving in and out, breathing in, holding the breath, and breathing out.

The fish bowl, due to its curvature, creates a distorted image, and this reinforces the individual nature of memory and remembering process. The idea of repetition, breathing, diving, circling, illustrates the process of remembering and nostalgia. Psychologists describe remembering as a creative process where remembered events or places are recreated in each instance of remembering (Sacks 2013). In the performance, this theory is alluded to by the fish bowl, and the story of a golden fish in an aquarium who, by the time that it makes a loop in the bowl, forgets that it had already been there seconds ago.

Similarly, we are often unaware how much we refer to the past in our thoughts, conversations, and daily activities. We go back and forth; unaware of a number of times we have revisited past events. For example, only when people point out to me that I have been mentioning Sarajevo a lot in recent conversations, I realise I miss it.

Why did I use water? Water is used here to aid in literal interpretation of expressions such as diving in and out from thoughts and memory. Water allowed me to use it as the contrasting acoustic element to the playback of *field recordings*. When the AV playback stopped, I would raise my head and breath in. The sound of water droplets falling from my body to the bowl was loud enough to be heard without the need for amplification. This was only possible because the audience was sitting in complete silence and focused on my actions. This silence filled by the sound of water refers also to the sounds of ritual washing and the fountains in mosque courtyards in Sarajevo. Mensur Demir, my interviewee from Sarajevo, describes this as a feature of religious architecture in Sarajevo (Demir 2016).[83]

Furthermore, the sound of water droplets accentuated the passage of time, as I would commence the next cycle of diving in, only after my breath would settle, and the water stopped running from my hair to the fishbowl.

While diving in, seconds seemed to last forever. The length of the performance often depends on my interaction with people, and when I feel that they are following me closely. When they are with me, when they are holding their breath with me I know that we, the audience and I are in a very different, very intimate space of sharing and empathy.

[83] Available in the portfolio: Places/Sarajevo/Interviews/Mensur Demir

4.5.2. Experience

While underwater, the sounds I experienced were distorted. The sharp contrast between the experience of listening underwater, and above, was one of the most disorientating aspects of the performance. I fought against the instincts of my body to panic by slowing down heartbeats, calming down, and breathing deeply. The light of the projector would have blinded me if I had looked straight towards the audience. During the whole process, I was aware of the movements of my body, how they might sound and appear from the outside. I practised the performance intensively, in order to prepare my body to cope with the different physical aspects of the piece.

The piece itself creates a memory of the experience of performance, and in the process creates several different renderings of it. Firstly, there is my initial memory and the pool of materials from which I selected the audio-visual clips. Secondly, there is my experience of performance in which I sublimate the stress and tension of coming in front of the audience, and then holding my breath underwater whilst going through the audio-visual clips in my mind. Finally, there is the experience of the audience, making sense of the sounds and images in an empathic relationship with myself as the performer, while holding their breath in synchronised fashion with mine. They develop multiple readings of the piece based on their experiences.

For instance, one member of the audience said that the performance made him feel uncomfortable, he felt as I was testing my physical limits, almost torturing myself. On the other hand, I as the performer was the one who controlled the performance, I triggered the clips, and that offered him some comfort.

4.5.3. Notes on Documentation

The piece was not video documented at the time due to technical and organisation challenges. However, the performance was re-enacted in 2019 for the camera with slight alterations. As the original piece was performed as part of the SonAda festival, the other pieces were programmed just before and after the performance I used a wooden platform on wheels to bring the fishbowl to the space. The bowl was filled with water backstage, and as part of the performance, I just added one jug to it at the beginning of the piece.

In the re-enacted version, I didn't have to meet any specific duration as the original had to be very short due to the nature of the festival programme. Consequently, I used several jugs to fill the fishbowl, which made the performance longer.[84]

4.6. Performance in Words: Grains of Sound

The audience enters into a large and dark space. They hear an industrial hum filling the space by becoming louder gradually. The sound is coming from 2 pairs of stereo loudspeakers positioned in the corners of the room.

People sit in the chairs arranged in the middle of the space around a long, white piece of paper laid on the ground. In the middle of the paper, there is a pile of soil.

The audience listens to sections of the field recordings, a sound of wind, high evergreen trees rubbing against each other during a windy day, and the thundering noise of water.

I am still, under a heavy and wet layer of soil, waiting. I shiver, I control my breaths, I am listening to the sound of rain from the high frequency loudspeakers positioned just above me. After a quarter of an hour, the reproduced soundscape diminishes and is replaced by the sound of breathing - my breathing.

I move under the soil. I use my right hand to clear a layer of soil from my face. Then slowly, I uncover the rest of my body. I look at people who stare intensively at me. I look at the pile of soil and a pitchfork placed on the top of the pile.

Pomegranates bleed on the paper while I rip them apart with the pitchfork. I approach people giving them pieces, or I leave them near their chairs.

In the corner of the performance space, there is a small opening with the wooden shutters. I open it and climb from the darkness of the performance space to the brightly lit gallery space. I bring the empty glass container from the gallery to the performance area. I fill it with soil in front of the audience who observe my actions.

[84] Available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces/Hold in-Breathe Out/Documentation of the performance

Then, the sound starts again, I sit on the pile to listen one more set of soundscape field recordings. The audience and I, we, listen together the sound of birds, voices and at the end, the sound of traffic of the main road going through Banchory.

When finished, I bring with me a soil sample and leave the space through the same opening leading to the gallery. I place the soil sample amongst other samples in the gallery, before disappearing backstage.[85]

Grains of Sound (2016), stills from video by Denholm, 2016.

[85] Documentation is available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces/Grains of Sound/Documentation of the performance. As discussed in section 1.5. I have used my subjective voice in a creatively written form, formatted in italic font. This writing is used to describe the performance art piece.

Both sound pieces that were played during the performance were around 15 minutes long. The sounds were gathered during my walks in Banchory, I followed the river Dee upstream and downstream; I walked to Scolty Hill near the town through the woods and countryside. The landscapes of the area are dramatic, featuring tall trees and fields covered in low bushes and grass constantly bettered by the wind. The venue, in which the performance took place, the Barn, has a wild garden. I camped there for 3 days earlier that summer. While I was camping, I managed to record birdlife from close range, and these recordings were played from the loudspeakers positioned above the soil during the performance.

Although I used different methods in my research, such as taking soil samples, doing *field recordings*, conducting interviews, taking photographs, and sound walks, Banchory felt alien to me on many levels. The overall *soundscapes* and a rhythm of life accentuated my feeling of displacement. What struck me was that people in Banchory established a relationship with the land by maintaining their gardens, lawns, and allotments.[86] In allotments such as the one behind the Barn, the local community is growing organic food.

The natural resources such as the rivers, forests and fields of the whole area are managed carefully. The old estates of the area have an important role in this process. For example Crathes Castle, garden and estate is just a few minutes drive from Banchory and attracts many tourists. I hadn't experienced this type of tourism and management before. The Royal Deeside area has a very little in common with Maglaj, a town in the central Bosnia surrounded with incredible natural potential, that I was also researching. While sitting on the banks of the river Dee I was saying to myself "the river Bosna should be cared for in the same way as the river Dee" or "the river Bosna wants to be like river Dee". This is because the river Bosna is a site of on-going ecological disaster, one of the most polluted rivers in the country, a river from which fish is not fit "for human consumption" (Čalić 2018). By experiencing the river Dee and remembering the river Bosna, I have become aware of a historical, cultural, economic, and ecological gap between the two countries.

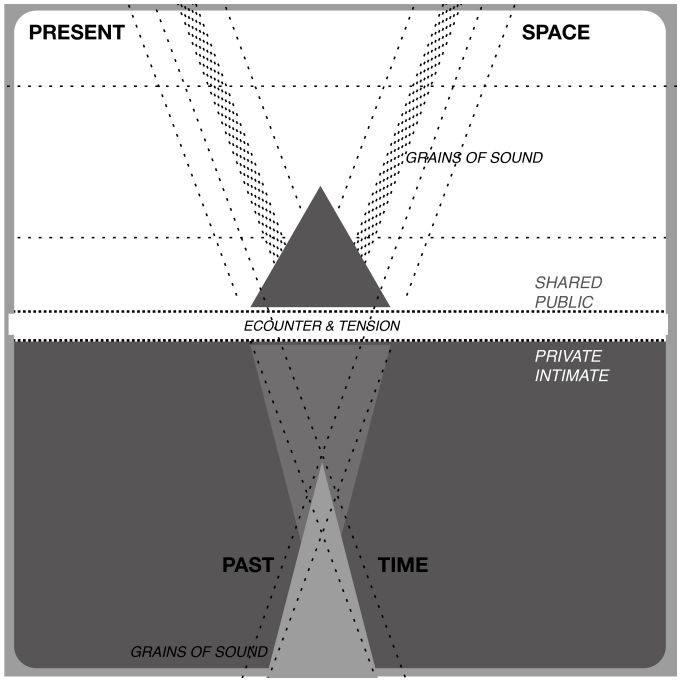
Moreover, the importance of personal history and migration in the local context of Banchory became obvious in the interview with an elderly resident, Bertha Forbes. She said that many would describe the Barn, as a place created by and for newcomers. She mentioned that many "indigenous" people would think of newcomers as "others" (Forbes 2016, 10 min 26 sec). This conversation made the town feel even more distant to me.

[86] Available in the portfolio: Places/Banchory/Field Recordings/water sprinklers in the morning

Therefore, I decided to be buried in this soil, and to appear, to resurrect, to wake up, to be born again in what was for me a strange but at times beautiful town. The act of being buried for more than 20 minutes might seem extreme. It is an act that marked a new beginning, but also underlines the ephemeral nature of our life, and unavoidable death.

Thus my initial question in creating of this piece was: How does it feel to find yourself in a town so different from the place you are familiar with? Is it wealth, history, culture, care for the environment, and tradition that makes this place different? I tried to embody this confrontation between my old country and my new country throughout the piece.

Listening made these observations possible, as for listening, it was necessary to slow down, stop, absorb the sound, and observe the landscape. Through this piece, I was bringing worlds together. I was exercising Voegelin's notion of *timespace* (2010), as my experience of the Bosnian context was my strongest point of reference.



Grains of Sound (2016), illustration.

The illustration above depicts in part, the primary concerns of the piece. At the centre of the image, there is a space representing the point of encounter and tension. Firstly, this encounter is of the experience of Banchory compared to the experience of Sarajevo and Maglaj. Secondly, the same axes points out the temporal and spatial divide brought together through the body and personal experience of place. The body is in the centre, referring to the *soundscape* as a sonic environment,

which surrounds the sentient (Rodaway 1994). Sound penetrates the body and evokes memories, the recollections of the past, and personal history.

According to Seán Street, a poet and broadcaster

> ...the personal sound of identity is something other than dialogue; the general sound of life does not answer back, but feeds the internal monologue of self, which in turn feeds into a personal identity by which we are recognised in our individual interactions with others. (Street 2017 p. 6)

Thus, while lying on the hard floor, my body absorbed the moisture from the soil. It also absorbed sounds. In my mind, I travelled inside of my being, and I realised that the sounds that I chose fed the internal dialogue of the self.

The illustration depicts the porousness of the inner versus exterior worlds, public versus personal, shared versus intimate spheres. The sound penetrates through them, and this process is not happening just in and through the body of the artist, but it also affects every individual in the audience. By using different means of expression, such as light, sound, soil, and pomegranates, I wanted to provide a glimpse into my invisible and audible, my personal, and my historical. In the process, each listener and viewer turns audio-visual stimuli into their personal, experienced, and historical.

If the initial point of tension about displacement was the starting point, that tension then was pushed to its maximum in material form. After unfolding the complexities of my encounter with Banchory, indicated in my introduction to this thesis, I had to then transform them by using light and darkness, soil and sound in the art piece.

The performance space was dark, and the light changed colours, from purple red-to yellow to green during the piece. As part of the sound piece, I used sounds from different areas of Banchory, from the town centre to the countryside, forests and river. In the first piece, we visit the Scolty tower and listen to the people in the tower walking on the metal stairs. The tower is exposed to wind, and different trails through the countryside lead to it. The first piece ends with the sound of rain watering the soil, soaking it, and inviting me to come out from underneath the soil. The second piece attempts to be brighter, featuring the sounds of birds, water, and at the end, it returns to a populated domain of people, to everyday life and sound of traffic. Although all sounds came from Banchory, the audience questioned why I used the sounds of engines to depict a place of such pristine beauty.

In using them, I wanted to confront visual conceptions of the place, from a sonic position. For instance, gardens often appear visually calm, but in fact, they can be very noisy. In the particular case of Banchory, the sound of water pumps, on the banks of the river Dee, taking water for the nearby golf course, was impressive for me, both culturally and aesthetically. The facility is barely noticeable visually, and it is positioned away from the most popular walking trails near the river. However, the sound and its location reveal a lot about inner workings of the golf course, and to some degree, destabilises the notions of the river as a place of supreme and untouched nature and beauty.

The River Dee near Banchory, photograph.

4.6.1. Symbols and Materials

However, *Grains of Sound* (2016) goes beyond merely articulating the present experience of a place experienced through our past. The ephemeral nature of experienced sound played from loudspeakers or created on the spot, is analogous to the ephemerality of our existence. Our life and our bodies are temporal as is sound:

> ...sound is a memento mori. Looked at this way, the tolling of a bell, which on one level we may see as a bridge between the material world and that of the spirit and imagination, may also be heard as a metaphor for life and death. (Street 2017 p. 82)

I didn't use a bell; I used soil, which emphasized even further this relationship between the experiences of sound as a passing temporal based phenomena, and our life. As described earlier in this chapter, soil is used here for its symbolic potential, marking out time beyond personal experience of life, towards a generational, historical and geological time.

The position of the other, versus the position of the resident, was brought to the surface in this work. The beautifully maintained forests of Banchory, its much loved river, the sprinklers, and the uniform sound of traffic resembling some sounds from Bosnia, perceived *in situ*, highlighted the

sense of displacement. The contrast between Banchory and the cities in Bosnia was difficult to overcome, and the difference is in the context and history of the place.

Wet soil covered my body during the performance, and while lying there on the floor during the piece, I realised that I couldn't escape my history. The realisation that through encounters to these places I am sinking deeper towards discovery and embracing my history also brought the awareness that these experiences are almost impossible to narrate in a linear fashion, as where should I start? The multiple experiences now enriched with many other voices, recordings and walks, become plenty that has to be translated into symbols and objects presented to the audience. These objects compared to Schaeffer's *sound objects* (2017) are open for interpretations and playful interaction; they are carriers of meanings across cultures.

As to how is it possible to communicate personal experience of war?

A writer Susan Sontag says:

> 'We' - this 'we' is everyone who has never experienced anything like what they went through - don't understand. We don't get it. We truly can't imagine what it was like. We can't imagine how dreadful, how terrifying war is; and how normal it becomes. Can't understand, can't imagine. That's what every soldier, and every journalist and aid worker and independent observer who has put in time under fire, and had the luck to elude the death that struck down others nearby, stubbornly feels. And they are right. (2003 p. 113)

Although in my case it was not terrifying at all, it was normal growing up during the war as I didn't remember peacetime, and the perspective of a child is one of shame, because as a child you are not allowed to see it, only to hear it from the cold basement, behind the stove in which mum is burning the carpet taken from under your feet. Just when you leave the space marked by war you realise that normal feels very different and there are no words to express it.

4.6.2. Experience

The soil used in the performance was wet and heavy despite attempts made to dry it. The grains of soil falling on my body created the most impressive sounds I have ever experienced. A small piece of cloth covered my face, and I used a plastic pipe for breathing.

I had only one rehearsal in the venue. I learned from it that the first layer of soil should be placed gently on me, as by lying on my back, my body was completely exposed to the shock of the burial. I realised that the body could panic despite the mental efforts to stay calm, as being buried alive triggers the deepest instincts of our body.

The soil was cold, and I shivered as it clung to my clothes.

While being buried, I could hear the people in the separate space of the gallery chatting and drinking wine. When the sound of the shovels diminished, the doors of the performance space opened, and people entered. I could hear their steps and their proximity to me. I counted minutes of the piece by controlling breathing through the tube.

While listening to the piece, buried on the floor of the venue, I realised that I didn't use soil just because of its high symbolic value, and the interesting sound the soil makes when disturbed. I realised that subconsciously I was exploring my history. I didn't grow up with the idea of resurrection, as I do not come from a Christian background. Instead, I have grown up haunted by images of mass tombs that have been excavated in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the end of the war. The buried civilians were victims of the worst war crimes; many of them were tortured and placed in concentration camps. These thoughts came to me while I was lying there, on the floor of the art venue in Banchory.

Stories of the rare survivors of the mass killings came to me. The survivors would pretend to be dead and stay still, covered by dead bodies waiting for the night. After dark, if lucky, they would escape before bulldozers would come to cover the remains. These survivors would run through the forests, often hiding for days and weeks, before finally reaching safety. The Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia-Herzegovina, by the end of the war, counted around 31,500 people as missing. Since the war, over 100 individual and mass tombs have been excavated. The institute uses the DNA of surviving relatives to identify victims, which can be a challenging task, as some of the sites were re-excavated and moved by the perpetrators several times with the purpose of hiding any evidence of their crimes (ICMP 2019).

As a result, different aspects of this piece, including the soil, waiting and controlled breathing were drawing from this dark aspect of the Bosnian conflict.

On the top of the pile of soil there was an old pitchfork and a few pomegranates. Pomegranates create a link with the piece I created in 2017. By lying on the ground, they also resemble the red flags used to mark human remains during excavations of mass graves.

4.6.3. Notes on Documentation

The documentation of the piece has been done with the one camera mounted on the tripod which captured a wide shot of the performance, while the other camera was hand held and consequently, less successful. The piece although difficult to recreate uses a range of *field recordings* which can be used forward more engaging presentation of the documentation in the future.

4.7. Performance in Words: One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds

I am kneeling on a long, white piece of paper in a large venue. I am motionless. Different props are next to me. Chairs are on my left and right side. Doors open and the audience enters the room. I am looking straight to the wall opposite me waiting for a murmur to stop and people find the place to sit.

I get up and take a large, heavy, chopping board. I also take a wooden meat hammer, and I hit the board three times. Next, I walk on the paper barefoot, kneel, draw with charcoal, and spill the soil sample brought from Sarajevo. I cover the soil with the chopping board.

I roll pomegranates and walnuts on the paper. I destroy pomegranates slowly with knitting needles and meet hammer. I smash walnuts with the meat hammer.

I smash my head into the debris of pomegranates and walnuts.

I raise my head, gather the debris to the three piles by whispering the words "jedan, dva, tri" (one, two, three in Bosnian). Next, I burn a match and lighten up three candles.

Finally, as I leave the room, lights go darker, and the sound is played from a loudspeaker positioned in proximity to the white paper. A field recording of the Muslim call for prayer and church bells ringing simultaneously in Sarajevo fills the room.[87]

[87] Documentation is available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces/One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds/ Documentation of the performance. As discussed in section 1.5. I have used my subjective voice in a creatively written form, formatted in italic font. This writing is used to describe the performance art piece.

One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds (2017), photograph.

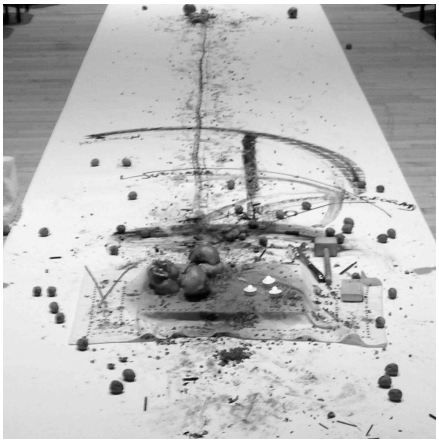
Apart from the *field recording*, all sounds in the piece were experienced acoustically as part of the performance. The audience could see multiple microphones positioned around the paper. They were recording the sounds of the performance piece that would be used in an installation consisting of video documentation, recorded sounds, and used objects during the piece. The installation would also present a long piece of paper used in the performance.

The audience could see my hand ripping the pomegranates, but they couldn't necessarily hear this. The aim of the sound recordings was to bring these different experiences of documentation together in the form of installation at the later point.[88]

By making it possible for a listener to hear the sounds of the performance separate from the video documentation, I aimed to problematize the relationship between the original performance and different forms of its documentation. The information acquired by listening to the sounds separately from the context of the *performance art* piece, would be limited. In this regard, the listener can apply *reduced listening* discussed in chapter two, but he/she will inevitably miss background information that informed the piece. Similarly, just seeing the performance without an insight into the process of making, historical and personal context, would result only in a limited understanding of the piece.

[88] Available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces/One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds/Documentation of the performance

Therefore, *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017) consists of different elements that provide different sensations and in the form of installation would include the performance, audio-video documentation, objects used in the piece, and sheet of paper still carrying marks, footprints, drawing and pomegranate stains.



One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds (2017), photograph.

This performance creates its own world inhabited by objects, symbols, relationships and actions. By taking a sound recording of the performance with multiple microphones, I mimicked the *field recordist* who records the environment in other to focus on sounds interesting to him or her, resulting in a detachment from the contextual matrix. Treated in this way, the sounds recorded are interesting but taken in isolation; they can't carry the weight of the contextual, historical, personal, and emotional dimensions of the original piece.

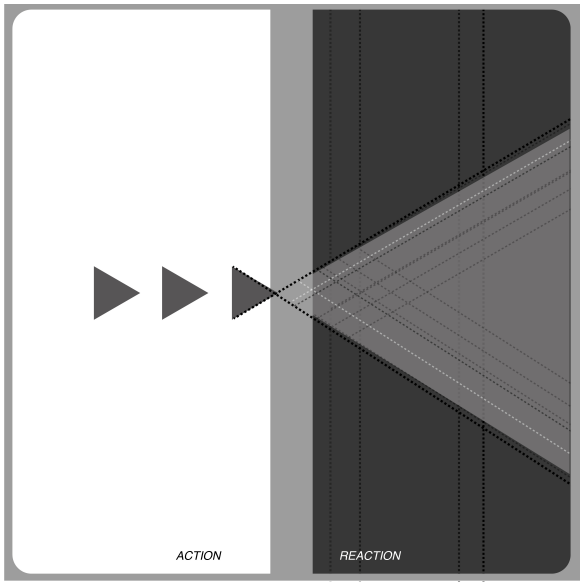
Consequently, *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017) exemplifies the contribution of my research related to the importance of the context of place in the process of listening. If the sounds recorded are heard with an awareness of the history of my country, the impression and the impact they create in the listener will undoubtedly be different. This argument focuses on original sounds and *field recording*, listening to places, and in this case, an artwork.

The piece integrates sound and vision, objects and action, but also relies on information disseminated to the audience by other means, such as a text provided in the leaflet and event programme. The work was commissioned as part of 3G-Three generations of Women perform at the Threshold Arts Space, part of Horsecross, Perth. This annual event focuses on female artists from Eastern Europe, and in 2017, the programme focused on contemporary art from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The audience had the opportunity to hear a presentation delivered by the curator

and author Jon Blackwood, as well as to see a range of video art pieces created by female artists from my country before the performance.

Many of the projected works dealt with the direct experience of war or post-war economic, political and personal matters. This event, thus, provided a rich contextual support for the piece. The additional information explaining some aspects of the work, symbols used, and different materials were available to the audience prior to the event.[89]

Despite supporting information being available to the audience prior to the performance, I decided not to approach the making of this piece in a literal way. Instead, I have used rich symbols open to interpretation. The primary aim of the piece was to embody the relationship between oppressed and oppressor through agency and action between different objects. I exerted agency over the pomegranates and walnuts during the performance. In the process, my hands and face were stained, and my shirt was covered in the fruit's juices.



One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds (2017), illustration.

In the reality of war, even the one who pulls the trigger, has to cope with the gun's jerk. He has to dig trenches and move low to the ground, hence when thinking about the war the earthy smell of a military uniform often comes to mind. In this sense, I embodied the duality of the oppressor, and those being oppressed. I gained control in order to lose it during the piece, as the question remains who dictates the actions, which placed me in this uncomfortable situation of staining, ripping and

[89] Available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces/One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds

smashing up the fruit. This is because as individuals we don't have agency over historical events, but we are caught up in them.

This piece emerged from the question: How can I demonstrate and reveal my personal experience of Bosnian history? If in the previous two works, I decided that illustration and confrontation would be a method to answer to the questions the works dealt with, then it is clear that in this work I resolved the piece through embodiment. For me, that was the only possible approach in dealing with this history as non-linear, symbolic, and not necessarily in a literal manner. The conflict has brought destruction to all parties involved. One more reason for using a non-verbal performance was the lack of consensus about history and its victims. War crimes happened on all sides, and due to the involvement of neighbouring countries, it is difficult to establish the facts. Many of the events occurred locally, and the situation was different from place to place, in some case, village to village. This complexity of the events is difficult to unfold through a linear narrative, and blaming anyone wouldn't be helpful. I aimed to point at the absurdity of war in which no one ends with clean hands.

Therefore, I decided to employ symbols that are powerful enough, and capable of carrying a specific set of meanings, for the narrative of the performance to unfold.

> …narratives are excellent pedagogical devices for understanding the world. Narratives allow us to contextualise events, to make them sequential, causal, and even symbolic. (Monk et al. 2017 p. 246)

At the end of the performance, I burned candles next to three piles of pomegranate and walnut debris, lights in the space were damped, and I walked out. The sound *field recording* of Ezan, or Muslim call for prayer, with the church bells ringing at the same time filled the room. It aimed to imaginatively transport the audience to Sarajevo, to Dobrinja, where I grew up, and the place where the recording was taken.

The following quotation shows how similar sounds and symbols can convey meaning:

> (…) the tolling of a bell, which on one level we may see as a bridge between the material world and that of the spirit and imagination, may also be heard as a metaphor for life and death. (Street 2017 p. 82)

In the text the author Seán Street emphasises the ephemeral nature of sound. Bells specifically underline the perishable quality of life, visually and aurally. Moreover, this quotation can offer a broad interpretation of my *field recording*. The sound of church bells and the sound of a mosque are both religious sounds, they emerge and leave the space in minutes. However, if the one is

familiar with context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, then religious, ideological, political, and cultural meanings can be teased out from such a recording. As has been already discussed in Chapter Three, for some, this *field recording* used in the piece could represent a sonic postcard of the city, and serve as evidence of multi-ethnic cohabitation. However, by being used to end the performance including smashing, grinding and breaking of different materials, the question regarding cohabitation, war and peace remains open.

4.7.1. Symbols and Materials

The pomegranate is a symbol of fertility and resurrection. In the mythical tradition of ancient Rome, pomegranates were associated with Ceres, the goddess of agriculture and nature's regenerative powers, and her daughter Proserpina. Proserpina was taken by Pluto (Hades) to the underworld and was permitted to return on condition that she did not consume any food in the Underworld. However, Proserpina did place pomegranate seeds in her mouth during her stay; she was condemned to spend half of the year in the underground, and another half with her mother above ground. This lead to seasons being experienced on Earth, autumn and winter while she was in Underground, and spring and summer while she was on Earth (The Hutchinson Dictionary of Symbols in Art 2005 p. 60).

Many other religions adopted a pomegranate as a symbol, including Christianity where it represents the Resurrection.

In addition to the symbolic values of the pomegranate, I was inclined to use it due to its structure and appearance. Its fleshy and juicy insides are not just powerful visually, but also sonically. Pomegranates can bleed, roll on the ground; they can be ripped open, its numerous seeds underneath the skin can symbolise peoples, ethnic, national groups, and shared destinies. Every seed of the pomegranate has the potential to give life, but they are tightly packed together behind the thick layer of flesh and skin. This feature in many ways symbolises the claustrophobic aspect of inter-ethnic issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina, concerning the constitution of government and public institutions tackled in the introduction of the thesis.

Moreover, pomegranate or '*nar*' in Bosnian is commonly grown in the Herzegovinian south of the country. My father's family is from that part of the country and by using his favourite fruit, the fruit of his childhood, I wanted to acknowledge his family history. He was heavily involved in the war, and during the siege of Sarajevo in several instances was close to death. His body still contains pieces of shrapnel, and as a pomegranate, the skin keeps them inside, hardly visible.

Because I ripped the pomegranates during the performance with knitting needles, one of the audience members said: “you were pressing them close to your abdomen as they were bleeding, and a whole scene connoted abortion”. This was done purposely, even though the piece was not about abortion in literal sense, but could relate to the relationship with homeland and notions of violence.

The other symbol used in the piece is a walnut. Walnuts also hold edible flesh under their hard skin. As symbols of masculinity, I've kept them in my hands, moved around, rubbed and swirled, and created a range of noises in the process.

While a play between the masculine (walnuts) and the feminine (pomegranates) can be recognised in the work, this was just one of the several dualities present. Some others are soil and fire, oppressor and oppressed, aggressor and victim, objects and action. These dualities created dynamic relationships within the piece, supporting the loose, non-linear, and symbolic narrative.

Walnuts are also key ingredients in Bosnian and Herzegovinian cuisine. Traditional sweets such as Baklava, Rahat Lokum (the Bosnian version of Turkish delight), Ružice (roses), tufahije, štrudle (“strudel” from German), and šape (paws) contain them. Interestingly, these dishes also reflect the layered history of the country, and the influences of the Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires. Regardless of their origin, these sweets are made traditionally during Ramadan and Eid. The process of making them usually involves grinding kilograms of walnuts. Walnuts are also used in the cuisines of neighbouring countries, and by the non-Muslim communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Additionally, I also used charcoal and soil. Charcoal is one of the oldest art materials, dating from the time of the cave paintings. It is natural, created by fire and connotes destruction and transformation. The sound of charcoal, when used in drawing, can be unpleasant. I used it in the beginning of the performance for drawing and writing of wards Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Aberdeen. These were the cities that the soil travelled through to reach Perth in the end.

One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds (2017), map in the programme notes.

In 2016, I asked my mum and sister to pack a soil sample from the garden of National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to send it to Belgrade by bus. There, my friend Milan Bojović took over the package from the bus driver. Next, he met Jasmina Založnik, from Slovenia, who kindly took it to Aberdeen by plane in her personal luggage. From Aberdeen, the soil was brought to Perth for the performance. The path that soil travelled, involved different generations of people. My mother has lived through the siege of Sarajevo, Milan is from Višegrad, a city immortalised in Ivo Andrić's novel *Bridge over the Drina* (1945), and very troubled in recent history by ethnic cleansing and the commission and subsequent denial of war crimes; Jasmina from Slovenia, the country that gained independence from Yugoslavia in a largely peaceful way.

The part of the text used in the leaflet in Perth was:

> The performance you are about to take part in started in spring last year.
>
> My family lives in Sarajevo, and they decided to help me in making a link between several ex-Yugoslav countries, East and West.
> How?
> My Sister and my Mother, Mirsada and Emina, took a sample of soil from the front of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
> They packed the soil and sent it to Belgrade, Serbia by bus.

Heavy packages are often transported in this way in my country.
The following day, at Belgrade bus station, Milan Bojović took the soil, and met Jasmina Založnik (from Slovenia) and gave her the package.
Jasmina then brought the soil to Aberdeen by plane.

This travel involving all these people was the first stage of the performance, and it happened almost a year before the actual performing of my piece. As in *Grains of Sound* (2016), the performance informally started much sooner than the section of the piece that was shared with the audience in Perth. In *Grains of Sound* (2016) the site from which the soil has been taken was prepared months in advance. Then, the soil was dried in the venue, and after the performance, was taken back to the garden.

Finally, the number three has a symbolic value and refers to the three 'constitutive ethnic groups' in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I have hit the chopping board three times, I have made three piles from the smashed pomegranates, I have said, one, two, three in Bosnian. The number underlines the oppressive system imposed on the citizens of B&H that fails to recognise others, minority groups and groups who wish not to religiously or ethnically declare themselves. A Bosnian and Herzegovinian phrase *'brojanje krvnih zrnaca'* portraits this in a picturesque way. The meaning is 'counting of blood cells', although in this context '*zrno*' means both 'a cell' and 'a seed'. In the sentence, it might be used in the following way: 'S*vaka odluka zahtjeva brojanje krvih zrnaca'*, which means that every decision demands the counting of blood cells/seeds. The phrase refers to the awkward and often absurd ways of determining ethnic identity where family histories, the religious connotations of names, and the overall affiliation and practice of religion are taken into account.

4.7.2. Experience

In this performance, I didn't enter the space when the audience was already in their seats. I decided to kneel on the edge of the white paper, in the middle of the space and wait for the audience to enter. For the first time during this research, as part of the piece, I saw a crowd enter the venue. The audience found their seats and quickly fell silent. I waited. This contrast between the noise of the crowd and silence made the atmosphere tense. My heart was beating hard. I could feel their gaze focused on me. My knees felt weak.

I was also aware that as soon as the piece finished, I would have to clear out the venue for an unrelated event afterwards. No trace would be left of the performance. "Sound is always disappearing because it is temporal, as are we. The loudest sound only emphasises the silence

around it, so in its bleakest incarnation, sound is a memento mori" (Street 2017 p. 82). In this way, performance, similar to any sound event, appears as a spark of action and then disappears in silence.

The performance embraced silence, also, as part of the action. After intensive movements and disruptions, silence would fill the room over and over again. The space in which the performance took place was highly reverberant; hence I used this reverb to support the piece. I got up and hit the chopping board three times. That was the loudest sound of the piece. As I did it, a child in the audience cried. I could hear the disruption while the child and his company went out. I continued the performance regardless, the sequence of my interactions with the objects having been decided beforehand. I knew what sounds and visual effects I could achieve by interacting with them. I didn't mind the child's cry, as the sound of the audience was a part of the piece.

Although the sequence of the performative actions had been decided beforehand, the duration was improvised. I couldn't exactly say how long the piece was going to take, as some moves needed to be followed by a long silence. The interaction with the objects was inspired by Schaeffer's emphasis on play when he describes a child playing with the grass, and by blowing on it, produces sound (2017). Although Schaeffer is preoccupied with a child exploring the musical qualities of the activity, while moving away from the contextual (2017), the activity itself extends the understanding of the object. Grass becomes not just an element of nature, but an instrument, perceived by a performer and the audience similarly as our knowledge of the object expands while we smell it, stretch, rotate or roll. Hence the play with pomegranate, walnuts, charcoal, and soil, was explored in an improvised manner, and the sonic and visual effects were taken into consideration in the development of the piece. These activated objects acquired new 'powers' and connotations during the performance.

4.7.3. Notes on Documentation

The piece has been documented at the time with the single camera, although it was agreed to have at least two. However, the recorded sounds with multiple microphones bring further documentation of the piece that may be used in further iterations of the piece for installation purposes. During the performance, various objects were used, the soil was recollected and preserved. The paper on which performance has taken place will be used along with audio-visual documentation in future, installation-based iterations.

4.8. Performance in Words: Silencer

London

I found myself in one of the offices of London College of Communication, putting on a suit that I fashioned from soundproof white panels.

Dressed as the Silencer, I became a character, not able to hear most sounds, or see clearly as the glasses easily steamed up, with limited capability to feel vibration or wind, due to the thickness of the suit.

By leaving the building, Silencer encountered an unfamiliar terrain. The area of Elephant and Castle seemed a few hours ago very noisy, busy, overwhelming, but now it was very quiet. In the suit, I experienced a certain detachment from the environment. A full body experience of sound had been challenged, and it was clear that sound happens somewhere else. I was aware of the sources of only rare, very loud sound sources.

Navigation in a maze of cycling lanes was difficult. The world is packed with information, and our minds are heavily selective. I was learning to navigate this new world as Silencer, to explore the area in silence, in an almost meditative state. People were waving at Silencer and taking pictures. We were interacting.

After 2 hours of walk, Silencer went back to the University.[90]

[90] Documentation of the performance is available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces/Silencer/Documentation of the performance. As discussed in section 1.5. I have used my subjective voice in a creatively written form, formatted in italic font. This writing is used to describe the performance art piece.

Lower right: *Silencer* (2018), Elephant and Castle, London. Photograph by Hall.

The *performance art* piece *Silencer* (2018) was commissioned by CRISAP as part of *City Sonic Places: experiencing the urban soundscape symposium*. Some of the foregrounded questions in their open call were: How do we hear the cities in which we live? What can artists do to contribute effectively to more human orientated urban sound environments? The requirement was for the work to take place outdoors, in and around the immediate environment of Elephant and Castle.[91]

This call represented a challenge, as my pieces up to that point were contextually informed, they employed sound and vision, but in order to communicate effectively, a few conditions had to be fulfilled. The location was important as it enabled the audience to slow down and immerse themselves in the work. The pieces created their reality in conjunction with the conditions of the venue and event structure. *Hold In/Breathe Out*, for example, used the festival as a venue; hence, it was essential to perform within the given time frame, to be able to set up quickly, and leave the space, hopefully, without spilling water on the floor. Contextual information was also important, and the audience had some written materials at their disposal at each event. These materials are provided in the portfolio.

A bustling location such as Elephant and Castle would hardly provide the right conditions for my work, and it would be challenging to share contextual materials.

[91] The call is available at: http://www.crisap.org/2017/12/07/open-call-urban-sonic-places-commission/

Additionally, based on experience from the other pieces, I could predict that not all members of the public would be interested in the story I was able to share. This created the first of two main conditions from which the work emerged. As not sharing, implies closing within, or not saying; this condition became necessary for this silent piece of sound art. Silencer didn't share his or the others contextual, personal, and historical narrative.

The level of noise in the area of Elephant and Castle imposed the second condition on the work. Both conditions directed me towards creating a work that would be silent, and which wouldn't contribute to the sonic cacophony of Elephant and Castle. Therefore, based on these two conditions, a vital question emerged: How to create a work of sound art in a public space but not augment the existing *soundscape* with new noise? From the position of sound ecology, this was the critical in considering the location of the piece, and the overall levels of noise. In the context of this research, not sharing personal experiences, but to hold back, and try to experience the world in a fresh, new way, was a challenge.

If *Hold In/Breathe Out* employed illustration*; Grains of Sound*- confrontation; *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds*- embodiment; at this point of research, I could say I was transcending some aspect of the research topic, as, without a venue or the time that would allow contemplation and listening, it was challenging to create a work that would dealing with the personal experience of place and *soundscape*. I completed the circle, from the continuous unfolding of context and trying to find the ways to share it with the different audience, to folding it back on itself. Instead of bringing the audience to a constructed place filled with symbols and meanings, *Silencer* went out into the world and let the audience or passers-by encounter it on their own terms. Some didn't pay attention; some took a photo, some tried to communicate with the *Silencer*. This encounter could be short, a glimpse from the bus, a picture from the bike that hardly slowed down, material for a conversation on the tube. People hugged it, they danced with it, shared leaflets together, a boy in a wheelchair smiled and made a 'selfie' with it.

Silencer offered a new sensory experience for the person wearing it. For those that *Silencer* encounters, it inspired questions, wonder, attention that might continue for days and weeks after the performance. For example, some photographs of my performance in Aberdeen appeared on the Facebook page 'Aberdeen in Colour' where the users referred to me as 'he'. On the day of my performance it was snowing in Aberdeen, so most people thought that the work represented some strange snowsuit. Their humorous remarks show that the work was perceived relative to the context of the location. By comparison, one of the passers-by from Elephant and Castle posted on

twitter my picture with the caption: “LCC is a strange place”. Here, a person perceived the work in connection to the London College of Communication.

The suit was made of soundproof foam and covered my whole body. My feet were covered with an extra thick layer of foam. In addition to dampening sound, I wanted also to dampen vibration. My hands were covered with gloves made out of foam too. Under my hood, I wore sound dampening earplugs and headphones. I wore protective glasses, more normally used in construction, to complete the suit visually. They would easily stem up, consequently affecting my vision.

The suit is warm, thick, and textural and it is not easy to get used to wearing it.

I did not create characters before as part of my practice, but Silencer was born as soon as I put the suit on. The sensing of the world differently, and alienation from the environment, as well as the conscious effort I had to exert in other to navigate the streets, helped in its creation. At a basic level, people couldn't see my body, except part of my face. Hence, even my gender became less important, my body weight, my skin colour, my hairstyle, was not visible. Due to its form, I had to adjust the way I walked, automatically, and in the ways I looked at the objects, traffic, lights, people, I had to rely much more on vision. This resulted in the creation of a different personality. This process was also helped by extremely positive reactions to *Silencer*.

Silencer would say about itself:

> *Silencer* is a curious character, friendly, and wants to explore the world within its capabilities. It walks slowly and clumsily. Silencer is genderless. It is out there to learn about the environment while absorbing some of the city noise in that process. It also absorbs some of the pollution as soundproof panels create static electricity, and actually, attract tiny particles of dirt and fibres from the air.

In the context of sound ecology pioneered by Schafer, *Silencer* might propose a new type of sonic activism. The relationship between living beings and their sonic environment is one of the primary concerns of acoustic ecology “is the soundscape of the world an intermediate composition over which we have no control, or are we its composers and performers, responsible for giving it form and beauty?” (Schafer 1994 p. 5)

Since the 1990s, the interest in acoustic ecology was rising in the world, some of the organisations working with concerns of sound ecology are: World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, Australian Forum for Acoustic Ecology, the Canadian Association for Sound Ecology, Japanese Soundscape

Association, Cresson in France and similar. In 1998 the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology concluded that sound ecology would focus on

> 1) a consideration of the right to individual sonic space, 2) the development of sound-oriented education and research into the sonic environment, 3) the improvement of sound design in objects and media 4) the creation and enforcement of legislation to protect the acoustic environment and public health. (Waterman 2000 p. 113)

Silencer (2018) was informed by the developments in the field of acoustic ecology, although the majority of the effort of this field was invested in attempts to reduce the overall noise level in urban environments, or to protect residents of urban areas from traffic noise, for example. In the context of acoustic ecology then, *Silencer* (2018) proposes a form of sonic activism, where individuals would wear sound absorbing materials and in the process significantly reduce the level of noise in the public space.

For the individual who wears the silencer suit including headphones, earplugs and goggles, the change in the experience of the world is drastic. In the suit, I experienced a certain detachment from the environment. The full body experience of sound discussed in Chapter Two was challenged, and it was clear that sound happens somewhere else in the environment. My central position in the *soundscape* has been lost. I was aware of the sources of only rare, very loud sound sources.

What I saw, and what I heard were not related, and this didn't align with the usual perception of the environment. The low-frequency noise from the traffic was almost completely gone, and most of the high frequencies were absent too. I found myself in a world of nearly complete silence, except from time to time the sound of a bus passing very close to me. People were muted except if they spoke loudly and close to me. This disconnection between the visual and aural experience was evident as I could see bicycles passing by, people chattering, moving to let me pass, cars passing by but almost all of it was muted.

Wearing the suit, my detachment between visual and aural sensations was so strong that at times I felt like I was in a silent film. I wasn't watching the film, but I was in the film set. As people and traffic revolved around, the detachment from reality was great enough to actually question the existence of the fourth wall. The fourth wall is known in theatre as an imaginary wall between the audience and performer, which is often acknowledged only when some of the actors break it and interact with the audience. Practically, I questioned what is real and where is the audience? Are they beyond my sensory reach, are they watching this as in a film, are they in front or behind me?

Am I interacting with them? Slight disorientations occurred from time to time, and I had to invest a considerable amount of energy to focus and navigate this different world.

This in practice shows the degree to which we rely on our senses to navigate the environment. I found it considerably challenging to find my way around.

Consequently, the *Silencer* suit represented a vehicle for research into perception, but in the way it conducts its walk, it functioned also as a *performance art* piece. *Silencer* exists in the environment, it explores it, and in the process, it communicates with people. This communication is rarely verbal, although people have asked me what is all about, can they take a picture with me, or of me, etcetera. *Silencer* performs *soundwalking*, but it is enabled to experience of the world only through specific sounds and frequencies. It also allows the listener to experience the sound of their breathing, swallowing, and generally of their own corporeal selves.

Due to the specific texture of the suit provided by the soundproof panels, many people understood that the work is sound related. In this regard, I suspect that the proximity of the art school helped. Many, though, struggled to realise that this was an art piece, as it had an unusual form. Comments like 'this can just happen in London' were quite common as well as people touching and hugging me, as the suit is very soft.

Finally, it is in the nature of this artwork to blur the line between life and art inspired by the work of performance artists such as Marina Abramović, OHO, or Nebojša Šerić-Šoba. As my experience of the public reaction was limited due to the restrictions of the suit, I decided to record the next walk with *binaural* microphones. That allowed me to record the reactions of passers-by, the *soundscape* of the walk, without compromising the work, or my own experience of performing it. The recorder was hidden under the suit, so I couldn't preview sound recording levels during the piece, and some sounds would inevitably be distorted.

I have performed *Silencer* in Aberdeen on 1 March 2018. On this occasion, I integrated *binaural* microphones in the suit, positioning them in the hood of the suit, and I covered them with an additional layer of foam to make them invisible, and to add some degree of extra wind protection.[92]

[92] Available in the portfolio: Performance Art Pieces/Silencer/Documentation of the performance

Silencer (2019), Aberdeen. Photos by Bachanek.

The experience of this work in Aberdeen was very different compared to London. The level of interaction with passers-by was much lower, and people were taking photos of me without seeking interaction. The unusual feature of this walk was weather- it was snowing in Aberdeen. From Facebook comments I have stumbled across online, it is clear that most people thought that the suit has something to do with the snow. One more factor was that in Aberdeen was that I had an audience following me from a considerable distance, as we had organised a discussion after the walk about the piece and *performance art* at the WorM, a contemporary art venue in the city. So in Aberdeen, due to the difference contours of the local art world, and me being a local, actually, despite the snow, 20 or so people came to see or follow my walk. Although *Silencer* (2018) was not advertised as a staged piece, the audience was keen to experience it as such.

Finally, *Silencer* (2018) draws directly on research presented in this thesis by working with sound absorbing materials. One of my aims was to explore alternative approaches to acoustic ecology and *soundscape*. *Silencer* doesn't share narratives, as public space can hardly offer intimacy required for sharing. Moreover, by its slightly disruptive appearance, *Silencer* makes visible the position of the 'other', and by hypothetically reducing the noise of the city, it creates the space for the voice of those who are often pushed aside. By being silent, Silencer is also stripped down from its visible identities and has limited means of interaction (doesn't speak). *Silencer* performs a different version of a *soundwalk*, through almost complete silence. By radically alternating sensory perceptions, *Silencer* experiments with the notions of multisensory experience of the world by rendering the world differently for the wearer. It shows ultimately that the relationship between the sense of vision and sound is intimately interwoven.

4.8.1. Experience

From time to time I allowed myself to enter into an almost meditative state of sensing and observing through my new and different body. I could observe for the first time in my life the movement of grass and trees and wonder about the cause of these movements, as I couldn't feel the wind. Air movements could be felt on small exposed parts of my face and only when they were strong enough. Occasionally the wind would penetrate my gloves, and this came as a relief, as a disruption of my immersion in this strange new reality. This process of introspection made me aware of different parts of my body, and of a role that an intricate dance of sensory inputs has in the creation of our world. I could also internalise, hear my breathing, and swallowing. I became aware of the internal physical mechanism of the body and its movements. This internalisation became especially marked in public parks; even a distance of a few metres from a major road provided an experience of complete silence.

In Silencer's words:

> Silencer became familiar with limits of his/her senses. Silencer worked with them and although silencer couldn't understand why and where people were rushing, it waved to them. They were taking photos, videos, and asked for selfies. People in the UK can be really polite, and they asked Silencer all the time if they can take a photo of it. People were friendly and besides one person asking Silencer if it is going to explode; most others returned with the wave, and smile. Silencer was asked: What is this all about? What is this? What is the meaning of it all? But Silencer wasn't good in verbal communication and would shrug and allowed people to take photos. Silencer assumed that most people were unfamiliar with this sort of public engagement but was happy to realise that passers-by understood that it is all about sound and that it can't hear them well. Silencer encountered many friendly faces, on bus stops, near shops, in parks. Silencer was sad for not being able to enter into the children's playground at St Mary's Churchyard, as the sign showed that the park was just for children. Silencer wanted to play and interact with strange installations designed for children to play with. Silencer was attracted to strange objects that had some similarities with his appearance. It liked the installation of white concrete bowls in the St Mary's Churchyard park. They were white and they were just standing there, round and static. Silencer just wanted to stay there and absorb the sound, sunlight, wind, and air next to them. Silencer liked the Michael Faraday Memorial. It could reflect on its shiny metal surfaces and from the hill next to it, could observe and sense the area.
>
> Silencer felt like home surrounded by huge buildings behind the shopping centre. It felt like the shiny concrete reflected the aesthetics of its textural second skin. The windows of these high buildings resembled the pattern of its suit. Silencer was not aware that from afar, the suit looked like a cropped object from a picture in Photoshop. It resembled the pattern of the alpha/transparency channel in digital image processing software. Silencer noticed the small details in the environment that are often unnoticed. For example, a small wind measuring device on the light pole near St Mary's Churchyard park. Silencer noticed many maps on bus stops, train station and on the streets, and it studied them carefully. Some tourists asked silencer for the directions, and he was sad for not being able to help.

4.8.2. Notes on Documentation

The performance in London is documented in a few photographs, while the performance in Aberdeen was documented in a series of video clips and numerous photographs. The recording of the walk with *binaural* microphones hidden in the suit is also rich and may be used in further iterations of the piece.

4.9. Conclusion

This chapter tackled the *performance art* pieces that were developed during this research. In the beginning, it approached *soundwalking* as a form of a performance by learning from the artist Max Neuhaus. The chapter drew parallels with traits of *performance art*, such as the questioning of the artist-audience divide, embodiment, experimentation and a focus on the experiential. The work of other performance and sound artists such as Alvin Lucier and Vito Acconci have also been covered, as well as a range of artists that LaBelle (2015) brings into his discussion of sound art. This contextual introduction aimed to highlight a link between visual *performance art* traditions and sound art, which informed my work.

Moreover, I have also raised some specific references from ex-Yugoslavia that were important for establishing the *performance art* tradition in the region such as performance groups OHO and NSK. Yugoslav artists used their bodies to highlight political and social issues in society, as part of highly contextual practices, and this aspect of their *performance art* work is of interest in light of my research. The majority of high profile contemporary artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina are also performance artists, which is the form of their choice when tackling complex themes such as gender and patriarchy, group identities, and the Yugoslav past and nostalgia.

Although in the Second and Third chapters I looked at the overlapping areas of music and sound art, this Fourth chapter leans more towards visual art by recognising the rich tradition of performance artists engaging with sound. The research question on interdisciplinary challenges is tackled by looking at the overlapping spheres of performance and sound art. These interwoven practices explore listening and sonic phenomena by either directly working with sound, or by pointing out the social and political aspects of listening.

The *performance art* pieces I developed during this research draw from these histories, they enabled me to work with multisensory stimuli in the ways that the performances are developed

and staged. All of these performances create installations that are activated by the audience and my performing body, which sometimes went through physically and psychologically challenging situations. Soil, water, walnuts, and pomegranates are used for their sonic potential, but also as signifiers of potent ideas linked to identities and belonging. The pieces also allow the audience to slow down and listen to sounds created in the gallery by dragging the massive old pitchfork across the paper for example in *Grains of Sou*nd (2016), or rolling pomegranates in *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017). In *Hold in/Breathe Out* (2016), the sonic potential of water is accompanied by symbolic diving in and out from a fishbowl.

These performances tackle the themes of listening shaped by our autobiographical memories. Moreover, they are site-specific and contextually informed, taking into consideration the size and placement of the venue within the place, its audience, the histories and narratives tackled in the pieces. The problem of bringing personal experiences of other places to a very different geographical and political context is overcome by the use of materials that carry universal meanings, the body that creates the relationships of empathy and recognisable and unprocessed sounds.

The pieces *Hold in/Breathe Out* (2016), *Grains of Sound* (2016) and *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017) worked directly towards resolving the research questions on how personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place, as well as issues of broader historical contexts. They refer to private experiences of place, as well as more expansive notions of migration, displacement and experience of conflict. Silencer (2018), however, uses a slightly different strategy provoked by the challenges of public space in which can be difficult to establish relationship of empathy with the audience. *Silencer* (2018) amongst the engagement, sonic activism, and allowing the wearer a different experience of the world, all discussed in the chapter; makes a wearer feel like a foreigner in a place by dramatically altering its senses. Hence, the work still addresses issues of identities and context, but it makes invisible, visible by illustrating the feeling of the 'otherness' in the visual appearance of the suit. Sonically, it acts in opposition to expectation, it doesn't introduce more noise into the environment as the majority of sound art pieces in public spaces, but works towards taking the noise away. *Silencer* (2018) is 'the other' who quietly learns about its new environment.

However, all the pieces have a disruptive element by enabling me to experience in a new way either by allowing me to be buried and unbury myself, to dive and hold my breath, let me 'harm' pomegranates, or walk in a suit that makes me look alien. This disruption comes from a deep desire

to bring an intense world of thoughts and feelings, to the surface. It is also provoked by displacement that constantly requires a negotiation of past and present, here and there:

> The situation of immigration leads to a kind of self-othering as well. Displacement results in a tenuous relationship with the past, with the self that used to exist and operate in a different place, where the qualities that constituted us were in no need of negotiation. Immigration is an ontological crisis because you are forced to negotiate the conditions of your selfhood under perpetually changing existential circumstances. (Hemon 2013 p. 17)

The negotiation results in an increased awareness of self and the other, while also in time, suggests ways of coping. This aspect of my work helped me personally to learn more about myself, showing that the acknowledging of contexts and personal identities in public discourse allows us to learn, and to develop a more inclusive world-view. Accordingly, it prepares us for a time of increased migration due to conflicts, climate change and economic difficulties. The core of public discussions in both B&H and Scotland is the ontology of identity-who we are; in time of changing circumstances that we ourselves don't have control over.

The creative practices that can engage in such broader issues enabled me to work with various organisations, such as the Barn, interested in themes of ecology and sustainability, and Horsecross in Perth, supporting female artists across different geographies. *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017) and *Silencer* (2018) were developed as a result of public commissions, and they show that this research could engage with a broader social discourse. However, as *performance art* pieces are site-specific and audience-oriented, they depend on the support of organisations, and are created in negotiation with them. This is both an advantage and constraint as for every piece presented as part of this portfolio, there are two or three other proposals that were rejected. Here, the accent is on curatorial support, a, willingness to engage with practice that emerges from research, which consequently requires time for the development of the work and it's documentation. The practices involve a certain amount of risk and experiment as they don't follow well-defined approaches and solutions. These pieces mostly require engagement with the performances sites and places, time for learning, and engaging the local audiences.

The challenges of production have been significant due to my status as a student, as I couldn't seek external funding. At the same time, technical support teams and curators don't have a lot of experience with this type of work; hence a lot of communication and negotiation is required. The challenges of documentation have been significant, and I have not always been capable of bringing the best results. In the future, I would work towards amplifying materials that I work with, and I am

working towards collaborations with other sound artists, as it has been challenging to bring these performances to life alone.

5. Summary

5.1. Contexts of Place

This work foregrounds the importance of the context of place that helps artists to inform their work in depth, creating more inclusive and more culturally sensitive practices. The thesis focuses on how discourses on sound art tackle contexts and histories of place influenced and informed by traditions of *soundscape* and *electroacoustic* composition (Chion; Schaeffer; Schafer). It also tackles how Voegelin (2006; 2010; 2014) treats context through concepts such as *pathetic trigger* and *timespace* that this research critiques, learns from, but also extends to actual places and sites. Voegelin's antagonistic approach to visual sensations as fixed and restrained is problematic due to the multisensory aspects of perception. As I have argued in Chapter Two and Three, even visual imagery is not fixed in meanings and connotations, and we could interpret it differently based on our personal experiences. These aspects are also informed by work of geographers Tuan (1974; 1977), Massey (2001; 2005) and Rodaway (1994) that made me aware that our migrant status, duration of our residency and multisensory aspect of geography, all shape our perception of sound.

By integrating different research methods, I have suggested ways of developing research inclusive of resident and non-specialised perceptions. This is of importance when interested in a sense of place or personal experiences of listening, as a range of voices provides insights that can only be acquired with difficulty from an outsider's perspectives. Understanding of histories and contexts informs the ways we listen and interact with places, hence this research through examples, illustrations and dialogue presents ways of developing context and individual sensitive research in sound art. By tackling sites of trauma and memory such as the Trebević mountain near Sarajevo or Markale market, the work suggests ways in which we could engage with such sites inclusive of their complex histories. In this regard, a crucial step would be an acknowledgement of multiple layers and perspectives when engaging with such places.

Each of these *performance art* pieces works with the context of places and venues simultaneously as described in the Fourth Chapter. For instance, by highlighting issues of displacement *Hold In/Breathe Out* (2016) shows that the context of a place is not narrated easily, but it emerges as a collage of sounds and images that might seem unrelated to someone who has never been there.

One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds (2017) on the other hand, works directly with personal experience of conflict. By not presenting a linear, or black and white 'narrative', the work uncovers the complexity of a place. The soil brought from Sarajevo via Belgrade, pomegranates and walnuts, are signifiers of themes, but the message is open to various interpretations, or in other words, individuals engaging with the work will make sense of it informed by their knowledge of the world, their personal identities. *Grains of Sound* (2016) referred to the history of war crimes in B&H, and context of the Barn that is interested in sustainability, by uniting the two through work with soil. *Silencer* (2018), refused to share its history, but through intensive sensing through a 'new body' learned from the sites in which *soundwalking* has taken place. By doing so, it engaged with the idea of 'the other', as a foreigner in an urban environment. *Silencer* (2018) is also site specific, as it is conceived to perform only in city centres and in his words 'enjoys slick concrete and glass surfaces reminding it of the texture of his outer skin'.

5.2. Contexts of Disciplines

The research has also shown that the context of place is treated differently by different authors, highlighted by varied approaches in the discourse of sound art. In the Second Chapter, I tackled some dominant influences of *soundscape* and *electroacoustic* composition, while in the Third Chapter I recognised that *soundwalking* opens up the field to contextual, personal and multisensory aspects of listening experience. Notions of the multisensory emerge from Rodaway (1994), who points out that it can be challenging to separate and identify different sensations while walking, as do we hear, feel or see a wind for instance?

Several books, articles and countless exhibitions, performances and radio programmes contribute to the continuing development of sound art every year. Hence, when discussing discourses of sound art broadly, I am aware that my research has limitations in scope, although it has been formed on the basis of my involvement in the field, the study of literature, conversations with other researchers, students and artists. Moreover, I was not able to experience countless pieces of sound art live and that is a disadvantage because sound art events can be difficult to document, and experiencing them live brings multiple contextual layers into a rounded understanding of the work. Hence, my tackling of sound art context is based on the work of significant authors and the works of sound art I have experienced live, and it could be slightly limited geographically, as approaches to sound art vary not only with an artist's educational background, but also their geographic background. In this regard, this work focuses more on sound art practised in the UK, and it reflects the concerns and themes I was exposed to during my PhD. The work captures questions I

encountered as a practitioner regarding *performance art* practice, and also questions the personal identities and contexts emerging from my literature review.

The opportunity to be involved in a conversation about sound art at the Music programme at the University of Aberdeen and the Contemporary Art Practice programme at Gray's School of Art has been instrumental in this work. Taking time to learn about creative processes informed by different disciplines and referring simultaneously to sound art, helped to develop my understanding and creation of new knowledge. My engagement with the field of *soundscape* and *electroacoustic* composition enabled me to take part in the discussions, to improve my skills and understanding of the topic, and to engage in academic discourse in sound art. The thesis is a record of that journey, and I hope the practitioners from both visual art and music backgrounds find it helpful towards an understanding of my research themes.

The *performance art* practice draws from visual art traditions and contributes to sound art histories. As in the case of this portfolio, it tackles research questions regarding sound, and it can be considered as sound art by drawing from Kim-Cohen (2009) and Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax (2017). In this way, *performance art* is a form in which the theme of sound is explored. Similarly, the form of installation can be used in sound art or socially engaged art. In this way, by using different forms, sound art transcends the constraints of the medium and can explore sound phenomena and listening experiences by utilising various forms of creative expressions from writing, drawing to performance. A discussion of form versus themes informing definitions of sound art is tackled in the Sound Art: Discipline and Theme section in Chapter Two.

By inhabiting this interdisciplinary space, this work shows that by drawing on several disciplines, outputs are created that might not easily fit into well-defined terrains of practice. The challenges of developing such work lay not in just terminology, understanding of creative processes and histories that I have been mapping in the body of this thesis, but also in challenging criteria and value. This is why I also introduce the contextual information on *performance art* in Fourth Chapter of the thesis.

5.3. Personal Identities

Our narratives about ourselves based on our education, life experiences, the places we have been, are all referred within this research as personal identities. The notion of personal identities is broad, however, their acknowledgement, leads to more inclusive conversations. Although this thesis by drawing on Voegelin's work claims that listening generates multiple worlds, as we all

experience worlds differently, the conversations about these worlds open space for issues of class, gender, and migration. The inclusive spaces welcoming a variety of perspectives and voices are political spaces, and this thesis is not interested just in the range of dialects and languages that we can encounter on the streets, but it is inclusive of personal narratives and experiences. Although interviews present multiple narratives, the *performance art* pieces, on the other hand, don't use voice. In the case of my *performance art* pieces, I found it problematic to use voice, as I tackled multi-layered and complex ideas that are difficult to express in a linear fashion. If I used voice, it would be as if I had silenced others and brought forward just my own perspective or selected perspectives. Moreover, I found it difficult to use the voices of my interviewees in places in which they are situated, where they can be recognised. The ethical aspect of using voice has not been resolved within the *performance art* pieces, although in the context of sound installations they might be used in the future. The future work would also focus on smaller locations, and I would work with collaborators for extended periods.

From these observations, issues of scope emerge. Working in four places allowed me to engage in familiar and unfamiliar places, as well as to meet some of their residents; the quantity of materials and experiences has been overwhelming to work with creatively. The vast scope of the project has enabled me to discuss different personal experiences, and show for example that the once we perceive a place contextually, which, in the case of Sarajevo, changes our experience dramatically, then we can apply this method to any place. However, on the other hand, due to large scope of the work, the depth of my relationships with people and locations has suffered, and I would engage with specific sites for more extended periods in future, instead of perhaps tackling larger notions of place or regional contexts.

5.4. Research Questions

How do personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place, and how does this form of listening specifically inform approaches to sound art?

This question has been tackled mostly in the Second and Third chapters of the thesis. I have presented numerous narratives that show that autobiographical memory allows individuals to experience the same sounds and places differently. The overall awareness of the history of a place and the resident status in a place supports this process. By referring to the Second Chapter, this strategy shows the importance of these often overlooked perspectives for the current discussion on sound, especially as they do not often come from musically trained listeners. Moreover, this also

shows that there is an awareness of the contextual and autobiographical in the field, especially in the work of composers Katherine Norman and Hildegard Westerkamp that presents itself as a sensibility in their interaction with locations. The chapter presents their work alongside interviews collected during the PhD in order to point out that autobiographical memories shape listening experiences of trained experts as well, which is relevant in discussions regarding *reduced listening* tackled in the Second and Third Chapters.

Therefore, personal identities and histories shape profoundly experiences of listening to place through mechanisms of autobiographical memory. Sound experienced *in situ* is most often recognisable, and as such it triggers a range of memories. This phenomenon explored further has the potential to open up more inclusive discussion on listening from within the sound art discourse, inclusive of various listening perspectives.

How does the acknowledgement of context through the intrusion of place-based, identity-based approaches challenge the field of sound art?

This research has discovered that numerous 'worlds' are generated through the process of perception shaped by personal identities of different listeners; similarly, practitioners of different backgrounds approach the sound field from slightly different angles. The work of Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax (2017) shows in this regard that the discussion about what is and could be sound art is timely.

The research has shown that the previous research question on personal identities highlighted different attitudes in the field concerning contextual aspects of place. The attitudes drawing from *electroacoustic* and *soundscape* composition focused on the material qualities of sound, detaching sound from the meaning and its cause, have been of especial interest in my work. Although I am aware that further research on this subject should be developed towards mapping the treatment of context across compositional and sound art disciplines, some of the material focused approaches that I presented in Second Chapter would be foreign to most visual art practitioners. The attempts to de-contextualise visual sensations are extremely rare in contemporary art; hence I found it important to point out discrepancies and differences as they meet in the interdisciplinary space of sound art.

The acknowledgement of context underlines differences within the field that would be beneficial to evaluate and tackle in the future, towards more self-aware sound art practices. Such future

research would be helpful for practitioners, but it would also offer a range of methods and approaches that would be able to engage with places of memory and trauma. This PhD contributes to this conversation, as well as to a broad discussion on the potential of sound art to respond to political and social challenges of our time.

How can an artist negotiate the interdisciplinary challenge of music versus visual art approaches in sound art?

This is a question I tackled in all chapters as I discussed different approaches and methods. The work shows that engagement with a variety of methods and approaches opens up questions and areas for future research. This can be fruitful for practitioners, as it will foster collaboration based on mutual understanding of strengths and the creative process of the other. The interdisciplinary approaches can also lead to unlikely forms of practice, as in the case of *Silencer* (2018) that is a sculpture, a character, facilitator and tool of research. It enables a *soundwalk*, performance, and works ecologically as it reduces the level of noise in the environment.

How and in what ways can performance art practice expand strategies of making, in the field of sound art practice?

The creative practices are layered; they tend to open up research, to pose questions and offer a range of interpretations and experiences. This work uses *performance art* as a form to explore sound art ideas and practices. It allowed me to work with my body as we listen through our whole bodies, not just ears. It has been inspired by powerful effects of *soundwalking*, and potential of sound to evoke memories.

Moreover, performance is always personal, and through the medium of performance, I felt at ease bringing my histories into the works, informed by other people's experiences and context of the sites.

5.5. Overview

This research emerges from an interest in the ways that personal identities form our perception and understanding of the world around us. In its methods and questions, it focused on sounds experienced *in situ*/actual environments. It has shown that autobiographical memories and experience of sound are intimately linked and it has pointed out at the importance of social and

political contexts at play. I looked at sound art literature for examples of creative practices dealing with the position of an individual in relation to wider contexts, the practices that are translating and highlighting social issues along the way, and bringing these issues forward in the form of contemporary sound art practice.

However, during the literature review, I encountered the approaches that often set aside individual perspectives, and the relevance of historical contexts where sounds have been recorded. These attitudes have shown me that sound art inhabits different spaces, speaks through different identities, and as practitioners, we are negotiating different approaches. I've met music promoters who perceive sound art very differently from gallerists, curators who draw firm lines dividing music and sound art, and many others who all follow their own perspective of this newly emergent field with little insight into the histories of a broad array of practices that draw from and contribute to it.

During the PhD, I also became aware that my question on how personal identities and histories shape our experience of listening to place might not be perceived as a sound art question for all actors within the field. This is not a discipline-specific question, and other humanities disciplines could tackle it. Nonetheless, that doesn't mean that it is not relevant for artists. By posing such a question, this practice-led research introduces a range of methods and concerns that won't provide definite answers, but can challenge existing practices and inform the future work.

Hence in the core of this work, there is an artist learning how we make sense of the world by engaging with different methods, negotiating and writing along the way. Thus, this research is explorative and takes a risk in asking questions that open up possibilities and point out areas in which more research needs to be developed such as studies about personal identities, the values of different voices in sound art and development of context-sensitive practices.

The importance of this topic for sound art disciplines is in questioning established perspectives such as those focusing on material aspects of sound as shaping of sound art discourse. The terminology and approaches that grow from such tendencies can make sound art challenging to access for practitioners from other disciplines, but also it affects how the field reaches its audience and how it perceives itself, politically and ethically. Hence by posing the questions on personal identities and context, the research aims towards a broader awareness of the history of places we listen to, and awareness of ways that we treat members of the public. By bringing many voices to the body of this thesis, the research promotes awareness of how we source *field recordings* and how we use them in relation to places where they are sourced. The implication is that by considering various

perspectives, by becoming aware of political aspects of capturing sounds from the multisensory abundance, we learn more about the process of acquiring knowledge while bringing it to wider audiences outside of specialised circles of experts. Far more urgently, in time of political and social crisis, this approach would equip us to respond responsibly, activate spaces and communicate challenges faced beyond the high walls of academic privilege.

By sensitising the reader and audiences for matters of contexts and personal identities, this work offers an approach towards politically and socially aware sound art. Compared to authors such as Voegelin and LaBelle, the approach practised here is personal and sometimes intimate, it is about knowing from the inside of contexts, the inside of places in everyday language, about every day experiences.

The engagement with context is in the core of this study, the context of individuals and places, sounds and objects. While we are trying to navigate through a complex world of surveillance capitalism in which private data is traded globally, the meaning and value of that data becomes more important. This research offers an optimistic pushback against overall post-truth atmosphere caused by superficial browsing, as opposed to engaging with people and places directly. The performances bring the body into the core of the work as the sound is experienced through a whole body, the works respond to a need for creating immersive experiences that we can engage with by referring to experiences familiar to us. Beyond referring to familiar connotations of soil and sounds of nature, the works have a disruptive quality. This disruption emerges as my audience and I leave the place of comfort. For me, this happens while holding the breath, contemplating life and death under a tonne of soil, while for them, it is through a gaze.

These are some of the emerging questions: What we are prepared to watch? How far does empathy go? What are the limits of private space? By entering into the private space of my audience, I initiate an exchange at the edges of comfort and discomfort. I don't want anyone to feel trapped, I don't force interaction, although, this is a challenging aspect of performance as it leans upon the individuals involved and their understanding of the conventions of the form. *Performance art* is not a piece of theatre, all individuals involved are allowed to move, leave the space, initiate interactions as that is a condition of the piece and the ways in which private and public space meet. And while a medium of *performance art* seems self-centred, it aims to point out that we are all performing all the time, performances allow sharing, even if the audience is not buried in soil with me.

Performance art practice is naturally contextual and personal; hence it comes as a natural response inspired by the performative qualities of *soundwalking*. It is a challenging form as it is difficult to rehearse it; the specificities of sites and venues render it always fresh and different. As an ephemeral practice, *performance art* activates bodies as political subjects who act independently of formal institutions and the art market. *Performance art* is an art form of the fringes, and as such it is time-based, challenging to document, and shares a lot in common with sound phenomena. As we are entering the times of crisis in which our existence and freedoms will be questioned, this work proposes a performative action for one of the forms of socially and politically engaged sound art. This sound art would recognise the body as a locus of multisensory engagement, enclosing histories and memories situated in place.

6. Research Contribution

Although this research can be of interest to scholars from different disciplines, my focus has been directed towards sound art discourse in which I have intervened through my praxis (theory and practice interwoven). Hence this work contributes to current sound art research in a number of ways. Firstly, the research is performative in the sense that the practice draws from literature, and vice versa, and through these interactions, gaps in the literature and practice emerge, to which the practice responds organically. Revealing this dynamic interplay in this practice-led research is a crucial contribution of this work to current international debates on what 'artistic' research is, how it is conducted, and articulated. The evidencing of significance and urgency in debate on praxis is reflected in national discussions on the nomenclature of such research; 'practice research', 'practice-led', 'practice-based' or 'artistic research'. Operating in this landscape has required a broad understanding of humanities research, as well as of research practices based in the creative disciplines of sonic arts studies and contemporary art.

Hence for an interdisciplinary researcher, as well as a sound art researcher interested in the development of research-based praxis, this work is a useful resource because it maps my research path, and along the way, tackles also some of the conventions of different disciplines. The most common question I am asked by fellow PhD candidates and established researchers is "how do theory and practice come together in your research?"

Praxis is always in dialogue, and never finite, but even as performed in this thesis, it allows me to utilise different platforms enabling effective dissemination of the work, from working in communities, to galleries, in classrooms, concerts and academic conferences.

The value of this practice-led research is in tackling multi-layered questions, utilising often-unconventional research methods, giving a form to experiential research practices. It embraces the challenges of acquiring knowledge from experience, the most fundamental way of knowing.

This framework of praxis allows the working with familiar and unfamiliar places, across different geographic contexts, which is of interest to contemporary sound art discourse. The questions of decolonisation, migration, displacement or broadly, power and oppression are important themes. Artists working in the challenging times of late capitalism also have the responsibility to tackle them. In such tasks, this research can be a valuable resource as it works from a 'ground-up' perspective, learning from residents of places, while also being aware that the researcher's subjectivity is always present in such work.

Finally, this research works with known methods in sound art practice i.e. soundwalking and *field recording* and through the research process, the inquiry has led to unexpected outcomes in the form of *performance art* (*Hold in/Breathe Out* (2016), *Grains of Sound* (2016), *One Thousand Pomegranate Seeds* (2017), *Silencer* (2018)). This path is a form of praxis that is generative of new knowledge i.e. the practitioner starts with open-ended questions that may be important personally, or important to a wider field of endeavour. By engaging literature as well as range of creative practices in the research questions, the practitioner establishes a field of enquiry where multiple feedback loops are performed. These, as happened here, can lead to unexpected outcomes that have the potential to challenge disciplinary boundaries.

This strategy (articulated as praxis) struggles to sit comfortably in academic disciplines of sound art and visual art because as it draws from both. Hence, it provokes a discussion of what sound art is and the role of visual and sound stimuli in such a discussion. It contributes knowledge in the ways in which the senses interact, in creative conventions, and in the relationship between formal elements (composition, colour, space) and the body. *Performance art* pieces bring the intensity of lived experience and context to the fore in this work.

Performance art practice is one of the most difficult art forms to define, and yet, it allows for working with sound in ways that are intensely personal, intimate and contextual. In *performance*

art pieces, different strands of the research come together in a condensed, yet poetic and aesthetically powerful way.

A significant part of this thesis maps the paths that led me towards *performance art* as a medium along with the creative decisions that I have made. My future research will tackle a history of sound-centred *performance art* practice, as well as its methods. The awareness of sound as a full-body experience, and of our bodies as sound instruments and agents, are transformative of creative processes in sound art. Although these notions are not necessarily new, referring back to the Fluxus artists, for example, this rich 'edge land' between *performance art* emerging from visual art traditions, and sound art, is a space that I will now turn my attention to, beyond this thesis.

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Glossary

acousmatic - refers to a sound source whose cause is not visible. By drawing on the work of Pierre Schaeffer, Michel Chion defines an acousmatic situation as:
"a listening situation in which one hears a sound without seeing its cause. It also specifies the sound heard under these conditions. Because cause is a contextual notion, the criteria for determining that a sound is perceived under acousmatic circumstances are as well" (Chion 2016 p. 265). This notion extends to *acousmatic music*.

acousmatic music - used as an alternative to *musique concrète* (Battier 2007).
"the term is used in reference to the musical work of the GRM,[93] has to be extended through the notion of '*acousmate*', which gave a mystical dimension to the phenomenon of hidden sound. Sound technologies have increasingly reinforced the idea of '*acousmate*' as a number of great mystics have given witness, supporting our listening to voices without bodies" (Battier 2007 p. 196).

ambisonics - aims "to provide an auditory equivalent (and compliment) to the 360° video capture [that] enables the user to explore the visual scene by way of head rotation, ambisonic sound facilitates the same degree of interactivity, but with soundscape" (Garner 2018 p. 268).

binaural recording - a technique that "tries to reproduce the sound signals at the entrance to the two ears of a listener authentically, thus providing all acoustic cues deemed sufficient for perceptual authenticity" (Blauert 2005 p. 3).

electroacoustic music or in some literature *electro-acoustic music* - this term is "widely used to denote music that integrates sounds from the natural world with audio processing as well as synthesized sounds" (Holmes 2008 p. 183). Holmes points out that the "contemporary practitioners are schooled in synthesis techniques (analogue and digital), signal processing and sound manipulation, analysis and re-synthesis, spatialisation, recording, and real-time or interactive software programming for live performance" (Ibid.). The term is closely related to *musique concrète* and *acousmatic music.*

field recording - recording of environmental sound (in context of sound art practice) is made widely accessible by technical developments of recording equipment such as microphones and light and affordable digital recorders.

field recordist - a person conducting field recording. Sound practitioners, from various disciplinary backgrounds, use the term.

[93] "*Groupe de Recherche de Musique Concrète* was founded in 1951, and renamed the *Groupe de Recherches Musicales*, or GRM in 1958" (LaBelle 2015 p. 25).

humanist geography - explores "the idea of place as a meaningful component in human life - a centre of meaning and field of care that formed the basis for human interaction" (Cresswell 2004 p. 57).

in situ - "in the natural, original, or appropriate position" (Collins. English Dictionary 2019c).
In the context of sound art, it refers to listening to sound in the original location where it has been experienced. However, with references to shifting 'sonic frame', *in situ* can be referred as listening to reproduced sound with an understanding that sound is shaped by the acoustic properties of the location, including the site specific sounds that originate therein (Chion 2016). The term transphonia can be used in this context as well (Uimonen 2005).

musique concrète - "positions music within larger sonic syntax based on the manipulation of audio machines and recording media, the cultivation of sound objects and their intrinsic dynamic" (LaBelle 2015 p. 26). According to LaBelle, by being the one of the founders of "the Groupe (later renamed Groupe de Recherches Musicales, or GRM, in 1958), Schaeffer created a specialised context for audio research and musical experimentation [that led to] the establishment of *electro-acoustic* music" (2015 p. 25).

pathetic trigger - the potential of sound to trigger an "emotional and sentimental involvement with the work" (Voegelin 2006 p. 13).

performance art - commonly associated with happening and live art, it is often studied in the context of contemporary visual art. "By its nature, performance defies precise or easy definition beyond the simple declaration that it is live art by artists. Any stricter definition would immediately negate the possibility of performance itself" (Goldberg 2011 p. 9).

pitch - "In music, the position of a tone in the musical scale, which is today designated by a letter name, and which is determined by the frequency of vibration of the source of the tone. Pitch is an attribute of every musical tone; the fundamental, or first harmonic, of any tone is perceived as its pitch" (Collins 2013 p. 219).

recordist - see *field recordist*.

reduced listening - "[a] mode of listening that deliberately and artificially abstracts from causes-and (...) from effects-and from meaning in order to attend to sound considered for itself and not only with regard to its sensible aspects of pitch and rhythm but also of grain, matter, shape, mass, and volume" (Chion 2016 p. 267).

non-cochlear (sonic art) - "cochlea is the spiral-shaped part of the inner ear" (Collins.English Dictionary 2019).
According to Seth Kim-Cohen, "a non-cochlear sonic art seeks to replace the solidity of the object sonore, of sound-in-itself, with the discursiveness of a conceptual sonic practice. Such a replacement adjusts the focus of producing and receiving sound from the window itself to its expanded situation" (2009 p. 217-218).

And, "non-cochlear art, as we will see, might engage philosophical texts, musical discourse, social roles enacted by the production and reception of sound and/or music, conventions of performance, or the inherent presumptions underlying the experience of audio recordings (...) Yes, sound might be used. But so too can a non-cochlear sonic art present itself in any medium: photography, books, lines on walls, mirrors, sculpture, as well as performance, speech, choreography, social practice, and so on" (2009 p. 156-157).

sound object - "sound itself, considered as *sound* and not the material object (instrument or some sort of device) that produces it" (Schaeffer 2017 p. 8).

soundmark - "a community sound which is unique or possesses qualities which make it specially regarded or noticed by the people in that community" (Schafer 1994 p. 10).

sounding art - "refers to those artistic expressions that use sound as material, medium, and/or subject matter. This does not mean that sounding art has to consist of sound per se: music is a form of sounding art, just as soundscape may be listened to as if it were music; but, since silence can also be potentially very telling, artworks that remain silent, yet still are about sound or the absence thereof), are considered sounding artworks as well" (Cobussen, Meelberg and Truax 2017 p. 3).

soundscape - "the hearer, or listener, is at the centre of the soundscape. It is a context, it surrounds and it generally consists of many sounds coming from different directions and of differing characteristics" (Rodaway 1994 p. 86). Further, "the soundscape is any acoustic field of study. We may speak of a musical composition as a soundscape, or a radio program as a soundscape, or an acoustic environment as a soundscape" (Schafer 1994 p. 7).

soundscape composition - a form of *electroacoustic* music (Truax 2012), "grouped with, or has grown out of the *acousmatic* music" (Drever 2002 p. 21).
"Soundscape composition aims to stimulate a conversation between environmental sound and musical work, wedding the discovery of place-based sonority with deep listening" (LaBelle 2015 p. 196).

soundwalk - "any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment" (Westerkamp 2007).

timespace - Voegelin removes the dash between time and place, and claims that:
"listening produces such a monistic value similarity between time and space, whose differences are worked out in a signifying practice by the 'inhabiting' subject (...) Sound is the complex monism of being in timespace. It is the dynamic of their incongruous congruity that produces them both as a sensible, distinct but transient materiality: one builds the other in the fleeting locale of its perception from the skin of the self in the shape of the other, and so they are one as dynamic modalities produced locationally in the passing ears of the listening subject" (Voegelin 2010 p. 125).