

Curatorial > LINES OF SIGHT

With this section, RWM opens a line of programs devoted to exploring the complex map of sound art from different points of view organized in curatorial series.

LINES OF SIGHT is a bi-monthly program, which takes its name from the interconnected points of the global resonant space created by radio and other wireless technologies. From out of the extraordinary array of music that plays on this worldwide stage, we will follow threads as diverse as musical notation and non-linear composition, and introduce artists who explore the ideas around transmission as a medium for creative expression.

Curated by Barbara Held and Pilar Subirà.

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Barbara Held is a flutist, composer and sound artist, whose current focus is the rhythmic relationship between music and video image. She has commissioned and performed an idiosyncratic body of new repertoire for flute by both Spanish and American composers, and was the creator and producer of *Music at Metrónom*, a series of concerts of experimental music that gave special support to collaboration between musicians and visual artists. She believes in the responsibility of artist/curators to take a turn at presenting each other's work.

<http://www.barbaraheld.com/>
<http://barbaraheld.wordpress.com/>

Pilar Subirà is a percussionist, a sought-after performer of new music and frequent member of various orchestras and chamber ensembles. For the past 15 years she has been presenting a daily program in the classical music channel of Catalunya Ràdio.

Sound mastering by Ferran Conangla.

You can submit your questions, comments and links to:
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LINES OF SIGHT #7

Radio Incarné. Yasunao Tone and Tesuo Kogawa

01. Introduction

When we were asked to make a radio collaboration for Radio web MACBA, we decided to use an email exchange on radioart, vocalize the text, and then both of us play it live in performance.

Our collaboration started as argument on temporality, which was my fault because I started this difficult topic and it made our dialog into hastily scribbled heavy-handed letter exchanges rather than crisp emails. After we became aware of that, we began scribbling our thought by using the email format and keyboards. So, in accordance with Kogawa's insistence on hands, we have literally thought on a column of email by hands. Regrettably, our native language is Japanese and we have been forced to speak a language we seldom use when we dream so we couldn't play with words. However, I tried to add playfulness by vocalizing with a synthetic voice program from Mac's "Simple Text" and burned it onto CDR. Then I prepared the CDR (so called scratching) and played it with my old CD player. Unfortunately we couldn't practice our program as radioart because Radio web MACBA has no format for live broadcasting from Tokyo and New York. We present our collaboration in this recorded form.

Yasunao Tone

[Transcription of the dialogue available here.](#)

02. Playlist

Total running time: 55min

01 "'Radio Incarné', a dialogue", 2008

Collaboration with Tetsuo Kogawa and Yasunao Tone for "Lines of Sight" and Radio web MACBA, 2008.

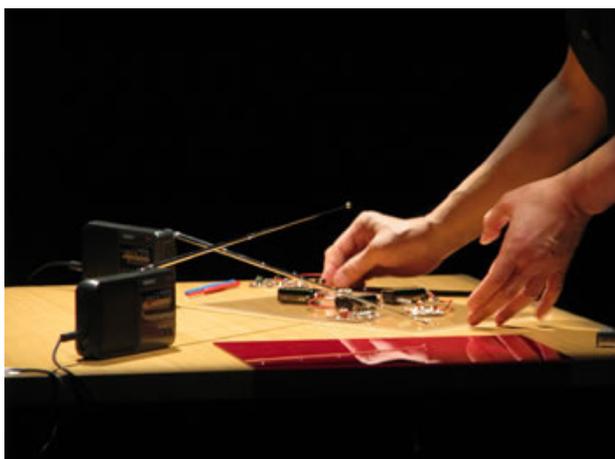
Yasunao Tone's text is read aloud by Victoria high quality of simple text, and Tetsuo Kogawa's text is read aloud by Bruce high quality of simple text. Excerpt from Channel Thirteen's Charlie Rose show daily interview program, "Larry Lessig Defends Copyright, Loves Charlie Rose Remixes" from TechCrunch.
www.techcrunch.com



[Tetsuo Kogawa 'Dom im Berg', Graz, Austria, October 7, 2007. Photo by Susanna Niedermayr]



[Tetsuo Kogawa 'Dom im Berg', Graz, Austria, October 7, 2007. Photo by Susanna Niedermayr]



[Tetsuo Kogawa 'Dom im Berg', Graz, Austria, October 7, 2007. Photo by Susanna Niedermayr]

03. Text

A Radioart Manifest

by Tetsuo Kogawa

This article is based on my lecture-performances at AV Festival 2008 in Newcastle, England and Deep Wireless Festival of Radio & Transmission Art in Toronto, Canada. I would like to express my appreciation for Honor Harger, Darren Copeland and Nadene Thériault-Copeland for giving me a chance to rethink about radioart.

Radio art or radioart is a new genre of art and I think that it is the most advanced genre among the arts using electronics. The first international festival of "radio art" was held in Dublin, Ireland, August 12 to 18, 1990.ⁱ

At the time, however, radio art was mostly considered as an art using the existing radio station consisting of regular transmission facilities. The difference would be in the contents and the audio facilities. In short, radio art was merely a new family member of radio programs. This would not be impolite to the numerous admirable works of sounds and music using the radio station. I am talking about what the concept of radio art or radioart *is* or *should be*. As long as we use this term, it should express something newer than the existing genre. In order to rethink on this point, let's use "radioart" rather than "radio art" from now on.

What is radioart? Who is radioart? The popular meaning of "radio" has been a receiving tool of radio signals. There is and can be radioart using such a tool. More positively, radioart would be involved in wireless transmission. However, such a transmission remains its function of broadcasting. The radio station broadcasts. Broadcast means 'cast broadly'. Sometimes broadcasting is done not so broadly. It is called "narrowcasting". But it still does *cast*. Broadcasting has been seeking for more and more broad range of transmission toward nation-wide, worldwide and space-wide (satellite) broadcasting.

Broadcasting presumes the dualistic two elements: sender and receiver or transmitting and receiving. These two elements must be in accordance by tuning of the input and the output. In this accordance, we say that messages are delivered from one point to another. Broadcasting is considered as a point-to-point relationship. Broadcasting has been seeking to expand the distance between such points as far as possible. The development of recent electronic technology has easily enabled us to expand the distance. Digital broadcasting is supposed to perfectly enable such an accordance of the input and output, however, the difference between the input and the output never disappears unless extreme and forced abstraction or simplification is introduced. One of the most obvious examples of such an enforcement and abstraction would be Morse code communication. Even this simplified communication has to rely on the process of interpretation of the signals. As long as a person operates sending and receiving, arbitrariness and redundancy would intervene in the communication. In this sense, radio has been seized with a modernist paranoia of accordance of I/O by tuning. Digital technology is expected to satisfy such a paranoiac dreamⁱⁱⁱ.

The Internet already sketches what very different things are happening in the contemporary electronic medium. Potentially, the Internet erases the difference between the sender and the receiver. It proves that the set concept of "sender" and "receiver" is obsolete. It should be relevant to think about radio transmission from the perspective of the computer. In fact, the computer is a transmitter. This transmitter does not deliver anything. The computer does not deliver messages but can duplicate everything omnipresently. You could say that a message is virtually delivered from one place to another. But the fact is that duplication appears in different places. The computer does not expand messages from one place to another but operates by *sampling* locally and proliferating globally. I have named this function "translocal". Different from a "global medium" such as satellite broadcasting that covers a global zone with homogeneous contents, the Internet can infinitely multiply local units and can simultaneously duplicate them remotely. The computer creates *polymorphous* space where different units of semiological signs relate to each other and are interwoven.



[Tetsuo Kogawa 'Dom im Berg', Graz, Austria, October 7, 2007. Photo by Susanna Niedermayr]



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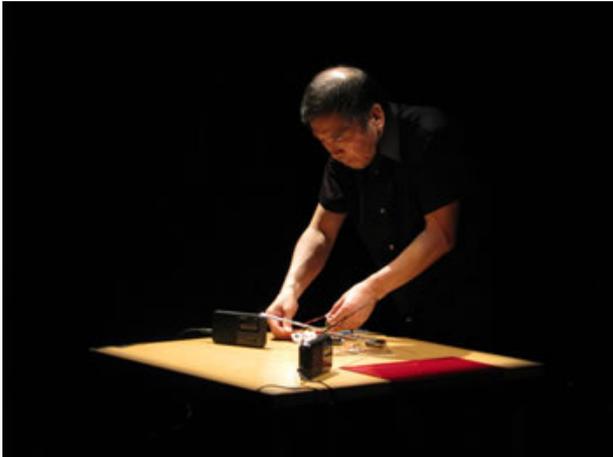
I was involved in Mini FM, meaning a miniaturized FM radio station, that was very popular in the '80s in Japan^v. From the early '80s to the mid '80s, hundreds of stations appeared across the country. Before the new name of "Mini FM", we called our activity "free radio", deeply influenced by the Italian free radio scene in the late '70s. Among various types of stations, we started our Mini FM "Radio Home Run" as narrowcasting for local communities or venues where artists and activists got together. "Radio Home Run" connotes "over the border". While being involved in Mini FM, I found that a certain limitation of the service area created a new kind of communication. It was amazing that a walking-distance radio was not a childish attempt but provided a different form of communication: the station was not only a transmitting place but also a totally unconventional space for artists, activists, students and bohemians. The program might have been poor and ill-organized, but the space revitalized the emotions of the participants. Meanwhile I became familiar with Félix Guattari's concepts^v of "micro politics" and "molecular revolution", and was able to make sure that Mini FM unconsciously stepped into such dimensions. In my understanding of Guattari-Deleuze, "molecular" is the minimum unit of singularity and multiplicity. Unless you change this level, nothing will be changed at all. In 1985, Guattari came to Japan^{vi} and visited Radio Home Run. He recognized that our attempt was seeking something like his "molecular revolution" and "Schizoanalysis", in his idiosyncratic term. I became aware that Mini FM could reveal all the details and trivia of what we are thinking and feeling.

In 1995, I started my website called "Polymorphous Space" that has the subtitle "Translocal Weaving Connections^{vii}". My experience with the Internet made sure that the authentic function of the transmitter (computer) is not to cast but to vitalize, and the transmitting size of "local or global" is not so important. Every local unit of transmission is translocal and it contains something global. This is quite natural in the area of organic cells from the perspective of molecular biology.

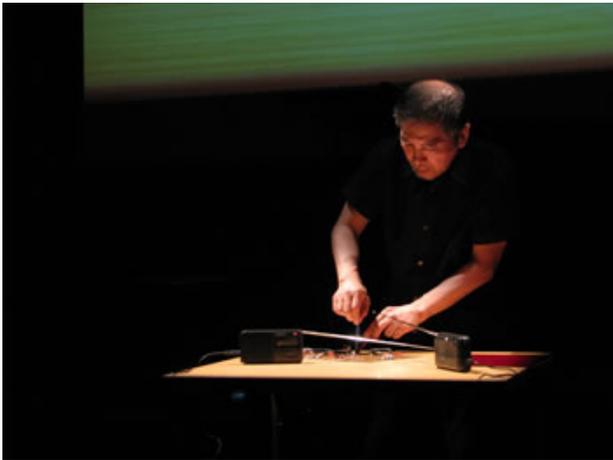
Now we can say that Mini FM was a transitional form from broadcasting radio to something to overcome it. One thing that is new is that the action of transmission itself can be considered as a collective performance art. Also, Mini FM allowed me to find that in radio the point is not the type of contents but the size of transmission, and then I became interested in how far minimized the size is. Finally I have arrived at a notion that a hand-sized radio transmission could be possible. I insist on "hands" because hands are the minimal unit of our body as long as they have the dual functions: touching and being touched. Also, the concept of art derives from *techne* in old Greek, which meant 'hand-work'. Therefore I can say that a minimal Mini FM could be a modest model of radio art.

The concept of "radio art" is quite old. Since the Futurists' interest in radio in the thirties, many artists and theoreticians have been involved in radio from the perspective of art. However, as I mentioned, most of them relied on already existed radio (broadcasting) stations. The point was the contents that the stations carried. It was "art radio" instead of "radio art". They considered radio as a medium just like paper for a book. Radio technology was secondary. John Cage was one of the earliest artists who used radio technology for creating his new sound pieces and his performance art, but even Cage used radio as a tool for music and sound art. Instead of historic and scholastic consideration of "radio art", I would like to thrust into examining the concept itself.

When does radio become radioart beyond being a medium? For newspaper, for instance, paper is a medium. So plastic and a liquid crystal display (LCD) can be substituted for it. How and when does paper become an art? It is when the material of "paper" changes itself into a different material. Whatever you write and draw on a sheet of paper, it remains a medium. Therefore such attempts create not paperart but art on the paper. And when you crumple up it, it becomes garbage. Adorno argued that "all post-Auschwitz culture, including its urgent critiques, is garbage" ^{viii}. This "garbage" (Muell) is, however, not a worthless thing but a new material of art in Adorno's critical perspective^{ix}. In my interpretation, post-modern arts (arts after modernism) start with Adorno's "garbage". His argument advocated "trash art", but considering his critiques against the electronic mass media such as radio and television we can argue that the most post-modern material as "garbage" would be airwaves.



[Tetsuo Kogawa 'Dom im Berg', Graz, Austria, October 7, 2007. Photo by Susanna Niedermayr]



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[Tetsuo Kogawa 'Dom im Berg', Graz, Austria, October 7, 2007. Photo by Susanna Niedermayr]

Thinking about how airwaves as garbage become an art, the aforesaid example of paper might help us. When a sheet of paper is crumpled, it becomes garbage and at the same time it has many folds. They damage the material as a writing/drawing paper but change this material into another. Giles Deleuze provides an interesting understanding of fold although it is in relation to Leibniz' monadology.

A labyrinth is said, etymologically, to be multiple because it contains many folds. The multiple is not only that which has many parts but also what is folded in many ways.^x

This argument is very suggestive because it talks about the difference of multiplicity not by contents of material but by the material itself. Parts create a multiplicity of contents, but they do not change the material itself. They are only a parasite on the material. In the example of airwaves, contents/parts are parasites on the airwaves: that's why broadcasting airwaves are called a "carrier".

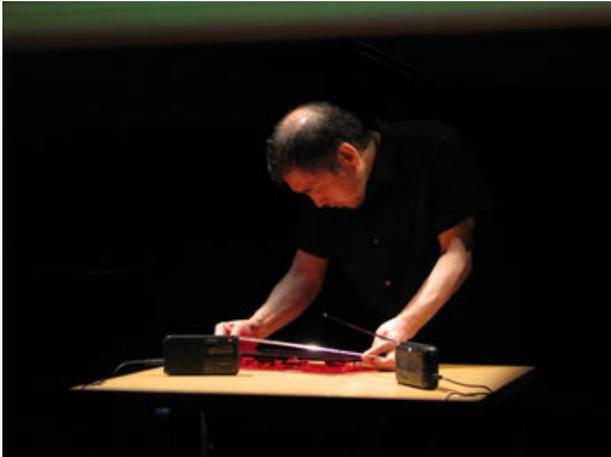
Radioart has started with intervening directly in the material called "airwaves". They are classified from the different and various waves to which airwaves belong. These waves are sometimes audible and visible and sometimes inaudible and invisible. Conventionally, airwaves are classified as EHF, SHF, UHF, VHF, HF, LF, VLF and so on. Whatever its frequency is, every airwave radiates. Radio is radiation. Radioart tries to intervene in radiation by electromagnetic transmission and create a certain form of waves. The form of radiation is oscillation. Waves oscillate. When our body and senses have an appropriate 'resonance', we can perceive the waves, but waves oscillate by themselves even without our perception. Waves oscillate by themselves. Waves swing back and forth, up and down, omnidirectionally. Waves themselves don't convey anything. They are a Heraclitean free play of waves: *panta rhei*.

Radio art is a way of being involved in such an oscillation of airwaves. As long as we don't expect any kind of telepathy or extrasensory perception, we need a *detection* interface that enables us to perceive vibrations as sounds or lights. But these are not the sign of messages but the sign of the "inner life" of waves. In his conversation with Daniel Charles, John Cage made an interesting comment using the example of an ashtray, saying that an ashtray is in a state of vibration. We can't hear these vibrations, but in an anechoic chamber, "I'm going to listen to its inner life thanks to a suitable technology, which surely will not have been designed for that purpose."^{xi}

After the Mini FM movement was over, along with my attempt to use Internet radio and radio parties using micro transmitters, my challenge of radioart has been to shrink the size of transmission to the minimum. How to decide what is the minimum? Given that as an artist I am committed to transmitting, a man of *techné*, i.e. a creating-transforming subject using hands, the minimum size that the airwaves and my body can act together should be the distance that I stretch out my hands full-length. That is a one meter radius. I built a transmitter that can cover a radius of one meter, and tried to create a kind of *folding* of airwaves. Recently, the radio landscape (I would prefer to call it 'radios scape') has become popular especially in VLF. You can use it for creating new sound art pieces, but it would be more interesting that to consider it as play with airwaves. But this "play" means exactly what Heidegger wrote about Heraclitus: "Why does it play, the great child of world-play Heraclitus brought into view in the *aion*? It plays, because it plays."^{xii}

The sounds would be only an index of how you played with airwaves. Radio art is a process art rather than an object art. You cannot fix the live process as it was. In fact, it's very hard to control even a one meter radius of electromagnetic field. We cannot perfectly control our own hands. Therefore we have to 'release' ourselves toward things themselves: airwaves themselves.

Regarding the difference of play in my radioart, I can differentiate my performance from sound art, experimental music and noise music. Although he is speaking about experimental music, Michael Nyman's description would be more appropriate to radioart.



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Duchamp once said that 'the point was to forget with *my hand*...I wanted to put painting once again at the service of my mind.' The *head* has always been the guiding principle of Western music, and experimental music has successfully taught performers to remember with their hands, to produce and experience sounds physiologically.^{xiii}

Experimental music has been gradually forgetting "the hands" since digital devices began fascinating musicians. The situation of our hands has been drastically changing with the appearance of VR technology and robotics. Today, nobody can deny himself to be a cyborg in one way or another. So, the horizon between "my hands" and "my mind" has become seamless. But I would like to insist that the point would be to forget with my mind rather than with my hands.

[in Acoustic.Space nr. 7: SPECTROPIA illuminating investigations in the electromagnetic spectrum, 2008, Riga, Liepaja, pp.128-135]

[footnotes]

ⁱ Some of the data can be read and listened in my website:
<http://anarchy.translocal.jp/radioart/1990IRAF.html>

ⁱⁱ Weil der Mensch als geschichtlicher er selbst ist, muss sich die Frage nach seinem eignen Sein wandeln aus der Form: >>Was ist der Mensch?<< in die Form: >>wer ist der Mensch?<<? , Martin Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik,, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1957, p.110.

ⁱⁱⁱ Martin Heidegger deconstructs the Western Metaphysics that the modern science and technology are based on.. He argues that this Metaphysics anticipates such a truth as "the true, whether it be a matter or a proposition, is what accords, the accorcant" [das Wahre, sei es eine wahre Sache oder ein wahre Satz, ist das, was stimmt, das Stimmende].(Von Wesen der Waharheit, Vittorio Klostermann, p.7, Pathmarks, Trans. by William McNeill, Cambridge University Press, s138.

^{iv} A detailed story is in "Mini FM: Performing Microscopic Distance (An E-Mail Interview with Tetsuo Kogawa", At a Distance Precursors to Art and Activism on the Internet, edited by Annmarie Chandler and Norie Neumark, The MIT Press, 2005, pp.190-209. More theoretical analyses are in my several articles of <http://anarchy.translocal.jp/non-japanese/index.html>

^v Félix Guattari, La revolution moléculaire, 1977, Edition Recherches,
^{*} The recordings of my three interviews with him are at
<http://anarchy.translocal.jp/guattari/index.html>

^{vi} The recordings of my three interviews with him are at
<http://anarchy.translocal.jp/guattari/index.html>

^{vii} <http://anarchy.translocal.jp/oldpages/95-12-12/index.html>

^{viii} Alle Kulture nach Auschwitz, samt der dringlichen Kritik daran, ist Muell., Negative Dialectik, suhrkamp taschenbuch wissenschaft 113, 1966, p.359

^{ix} Tetsuo Kogawa, "Trash-art in the age of Digital Ash", <http://anarchy.translocal.jp/non-japanese/19990808trash-art.html>, The Look From the East, MediaArtLab, Moscow, 2000, pp.169-175
Adorno's <<Strategy of Hibernation>>, The Look From the East, MediaArtLab, Moscow, 2000, pp.70-77.

^x Gilles Deleuze, The Fold Leibniz and the Baroque, Trans. by Tom Conley, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p.3.

^{xi} John Cage, For the Birds, Marion Boyars, 1976, 1995, pp. 220-221.

^{xii} Martin Heidegger, Der Satz vom Grund, Guenther Neske, p.188 [Warum spielt das von Heraklit im *aión* erblickte grosse Kind des Weltspieles? Es spielt, weil es spielt. Das <<Weil>> versinkt im Spiel. DasSpiel is ohne <<Warum>>. Es spielt, dieweil es spielt., Trans. by Reginald Lilly, The Principle of Reason, Indiana University Press, p113.

^{xiii} Michael Nyman, Experimental Music Cage and Beyond, Second Edition, Cambridge, 1999, p.14.

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04. Additional links

Tetsuo Kogawa

<http://anarchy.translocal.jp/>

<http://anarchy.translocal.jp/about.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn8B-L2CMso>

Yasunao Tone

www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/cutandsplice/tone.shtml

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/cutandsplice/tone2.shtml>

<http://www.asphodel.com/releases/view.php?Id=68&SessionID=90d47f74f43af7c>

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