As a follow-up of the successful The Global Composition 2012, the 2018 conference brought together around 100 scholars, scientist, designers, engineers, educators, artists, composers, and activists from all over the world, all selected by a double-blind peer-review process following a transdisciplinary open call.

Within the frame work of acoustic ecology, this year’s symposium had its focus on media culture. It discussed innovative cultural, artistic and educational auditory practices in an age coined by worldwide migration, the societal requirement of diversity, and an enormous increase of new audio technologies and Augmented/Virtual Reality.

At the same time, The Global Composition 2018 centered around the silver jubilee of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, which was founded 25 years before in Banff/Canada, so that the Dieburg event also balanced and compared Soundscape Studies’ achievements, its old and new perspectives.

The symposium's keynote lectures investigated and discussed current and prototypical problems within the field of the auditory world, and suggested possible pathways to solutions:

- Prof. Dr. Milena Drozdena (Simon Fraser Univ., Vancouver/Canada): Gendered Ecologies. Voice and the Game Soundscape.
- Prof. Dr. Maria Klatte (University of Kaisersltuern, Germany): Effects of Noise on Cognitive Performance in Children. Evidence from Laboratory and Field Studies.
- Walter Tügner (Independent Artist, Allensbach, Germany): Recording European Biotopes. Listen to Nature!

In keynote workshops the conference's overall topic was practiced by various approaches to listening and auditory awareness. The workshops were also open to the general public and took place in cooperation with Prof. Ulrike Pfeifer, Frankfurt UAS (Faculty of Social Work and Health) and within the academic network of the Hessische Film- und Medienakademie h_da.

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Scientific, scholarly and artistic contributions

More than 150 submissions were reviewed by the committees, resulting in a conference program with a transdisciplinary variety of paper presentations as the core of the symposium. The carefully selected program of installations, performances, compositions, workshops and earplays added an array of creative as well as practice oriented positions.

Emerging focal points

Migration and diversity, virtual technologies and media aesthetic education emerged as the “red threads” throughout the conference. Numerous contributions reflected not merely the soundscapes of natural and urban environments, but discussed also soundscapes’ social implications, e.g. experiences of women, queers, and migrants, such as in Amanda Gutierrez’s highly acclaimed essay and audiovisual installation, “Walking in Lightness.”

As one major topic, artistic contributions dealt with the tangible and simulative qualities of sound created by 3D audio technologies, and along the paradigm of soundscape: Pieces from accomplished artists like Barry Truax and Leah Barclay and by newcomers like Natascha Rehberg and Aleksandar Vejnovic were presented – created, displayed and discussed by and within the framework of Darmstadt UAS’s Soundscape and Environmental Lab.

Media aesthetic education unfolded as a major and future topic, as its central goal is not merely to master the digital age’s machines for utilitarian purposes, but its aesthetic-oriented exploration of the devices’ characteristics and potentials for expression and creation.

Discourse

Daily plenary sessions complemented the ongoing discourse, starting with “Erratic Blocks”, five-minute intervals, which exports from other fields added to the Soundscape Studies’ discourse from their point of view of their respective discipline.

A social sculpture

On the occasion of WFAE’s 25th anniversary, a “social sculpture” was created by photos, program copies, compositions, recordings, reminiscences, writings, drawings, which participants who attended the founding event in Banff/Canada in 1993 were asked to bring in.

Documentations: Proceedings and videos

The published conference proceedings with full papers filled a book of around 500 pages. A video-documentation on a youtube channel of each lecture, paper session and impressions of the workshops and events are complementing the documentation of the symposium.

www.youtube.com/channel/UCr3X25zJ9mla0zdzbgSWV5Q