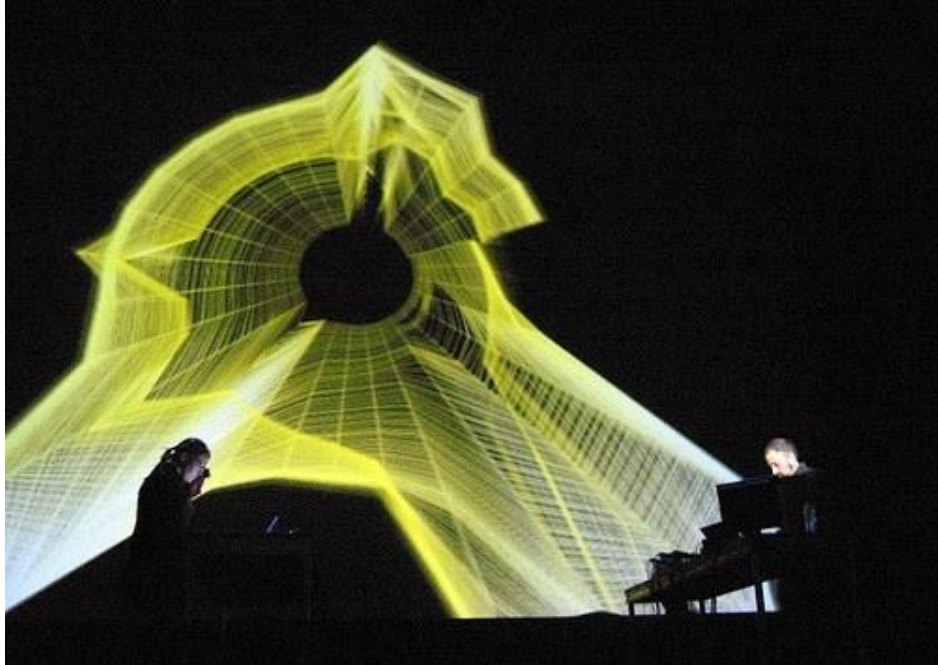
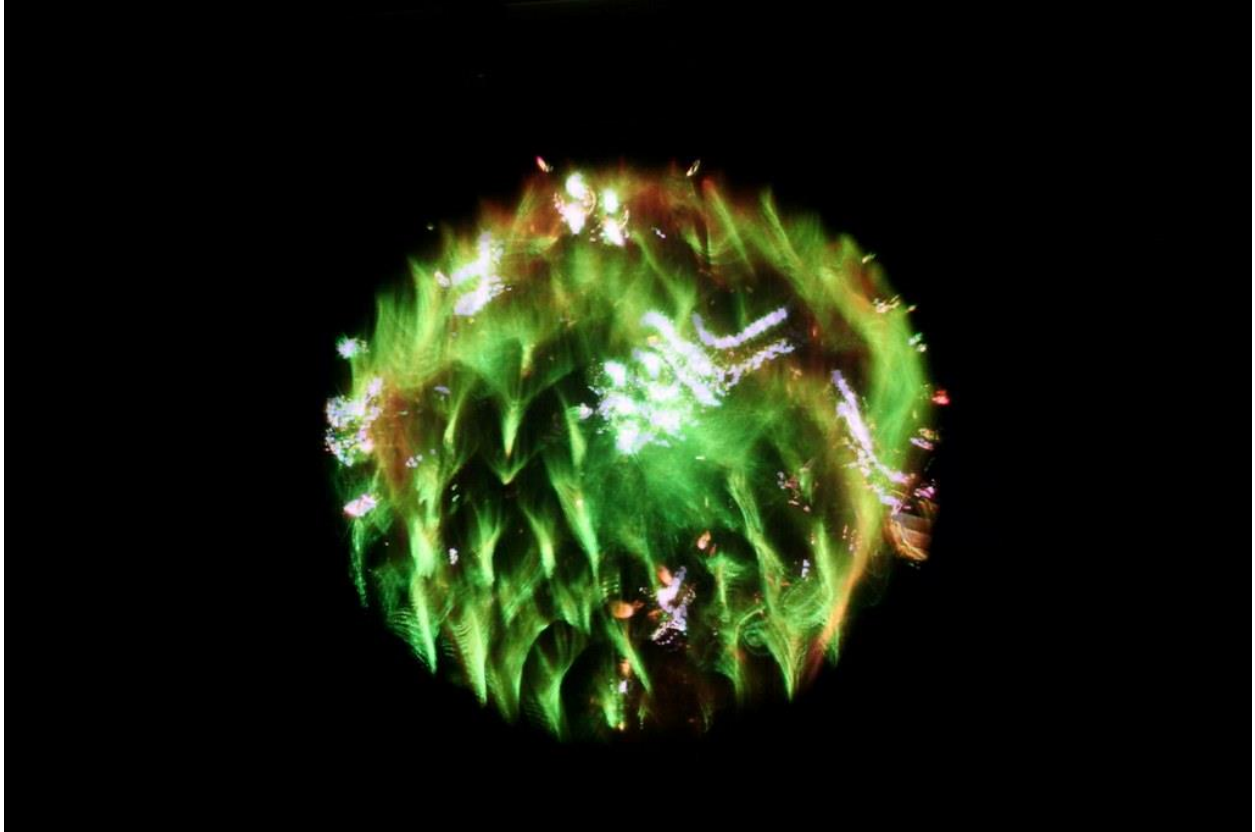


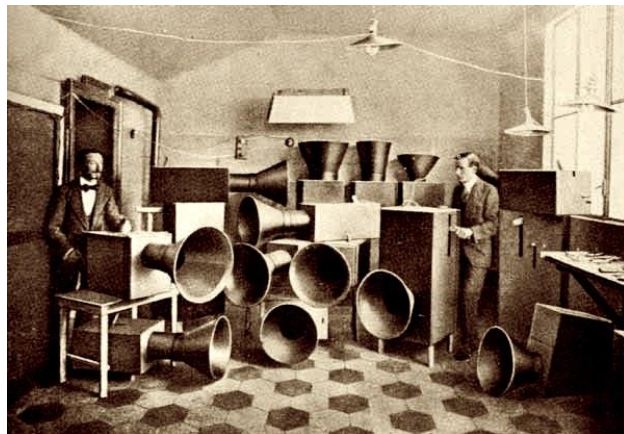


SOUND ART | Savannah Barrett

Sound art bridges the gap between visual and auditory art (music) by combining the two in a way that either medium can inspire the other (MasterClass, 2021).



Luigi Russolo, an Italian Futurist artist, was inspired by the noises of industrial soundscapes during the Industrial Revolution (MasterClass, 2021). He took the subjectivity of noise versus music and ran with it. Using what he heard, Russolo made an instrument that combined percussion, strings, and bells called the Intonarumori (MasterClass, 2021).

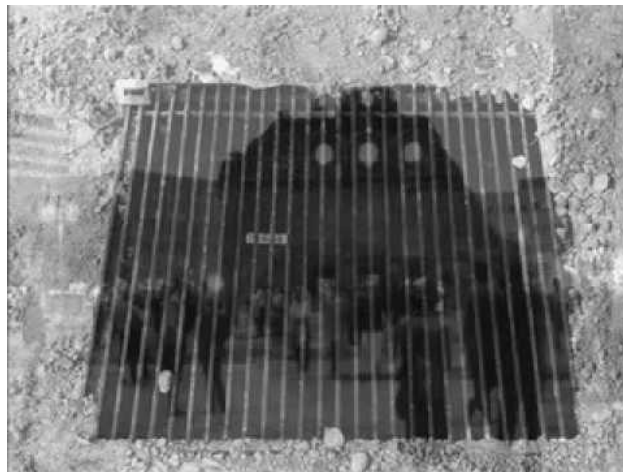


1 - According to MasterClass, Russolo manufactured 27 of these to prove the theories outlined in his manifesto, *The Art of Noises* (1913) that revolved around recognizing our attunement to the soundscapes of daily life (2021).

Several other artists participated in making this art form more distinguished and recognizable. Sound art became a coined term in 1979 when the New York City Museum of Modern Art showcased Barbara London's exhibition called *Sound Art* (MasterClass, 2021).

Classifying your work as sound art is extremely inclusive due to the subjectivity of what one may use to inspire them. This includes things such as rain, silence, birds, paper noises, etc. One may use sound to inspire visual art and/ or one may use the simplicity of an action or visuals to create sound.

One of my favorite historical examples of sound art is by Bill Fontana called *Distant Trains* made in 1984 (Solomon, 2020). Because of World War II, one of the busiest train stations in Europe, Anhalter Bahnhof, was decommissioned in 1952; however, for one month in Berlin, loudspeakers were buried under it and live microphones were placed in Köln Hauptbahnhof that transmitted the real-time sounds of that train station into the abandoned one (Solomon, 2020). This concept is extremely chilling to hear considering the intent.



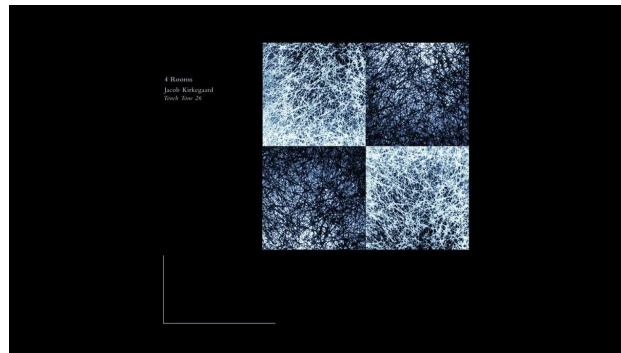
2 - The dynamics, pitch, tone color, and rhythm are all dependent on human movement. The sounds made by the trains coming in provide a crescendo as well as a change in dynamic. The consistency of the pitch and rhythm are upheld by the announcements being made. The tone color is eerie, chilling, and depressing, as the sounds of life provide recognition of what used to be.

The specific time marking of 2:28-2:33 was especially daunting because the sound of what I can assume is static through the overhead speakers sounds like people screaming, which only adds to the haunting history of that location.

Honestly, I am grateful to have found this piece because in our first discussion, *What is Music?*, I was challenged to consider other sounds to be musical, such as sounds of construction. My original thought was, "How could noises like that be considered music when it emanates irritation and inconvenience?" I was wrong. It is music that can be nostalgic, representative of life, and unintentionally beautiful.

(Dr. Barudin, consider your point to be made and well-appreciated).

Apparently, the sound art I am attracted to tends to be on the dark side because another piece I found is by an amazing Danish artist named Jacob Kirkegaard. His piece, *4 Rooms* (2005), was composed by layering the sounds of four rooms inside the Zone of Alienation in Chernobyl which are in the vicinity of the explosion of Reactor 4 of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant (Hencz, n.d.). These sounds were made by recording the sounds of the room and playing them while recording the sounds of the room again-- repeating this process up to 10 times for each room, then layering them, curated this piece (Hencz, n.d.).



3 - This piece is similar to his other works that have dealt with other themes such as "border walls in global and metaphorical contexts and melting ice in the Arctic" (Hencz, n.d.). I implore you to look up his other pieces, specifically the melting ice in the Arctic one, because it's so eerily beautiful.

The tone color of each room is dark, rumbling, heavy, and dramatic. The dynamics are kind of all fortissimo, very loud, but I believe the cause of that is the style of layering he used to create this piece. The pitches change based on the amount of echo available in the room. The gymnasium has much higher pitches than all of the rest of the rooms due to the acoustic availability.

At time marking 43:41 (gymnasium), there seems to be a syncopation of sorts, as there is an unexpected pulsating sound that lasts for quite a while then lulls out without explanation.

Artists to listen to include:

- Jacob Kirkegaard: (work described above) His work is genuinely intriguing because it allows us to hear sounds that we never thought possible. I am excited to look into more of his work, as I would love to follow it to see what he creates next.
- Samson Young: He creates tragic and beautiful sound art performances that are politically charged by removing the audios from footage of a series of night bombing, then watches the video and attempts to add back each soundtrack correctly, including sounds of explosions, gunshots and debris, by making sounds with regular household objects, drums, and amplifiers (Hencz, n.d.). Personally, I am hesitant to even listen to those performances because I fear the emotional response it may illicit.

Both of these artists bring light to heavy life events by creating beauty within the tragedy.

Sound art as a concept draws inspiration from the sounds, experiences, struggles and triumphs, and silences that we encounter in daily life. That said, there are likely sound art artists that draw inspiration from Medieval music and even Medieval life in general. If you think about it, Madrigals are sound art because the poems and stories inspired by life are then performed by vocalists and instrumentalists.

References

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