

Soundart as Electronic Literary Artifacts: objects of shifting imaginations, spaces of self-construction, and spaces of memory

### Keywords

empirical, case study, unplace, a museum without a place, music, sound, sound art, literary artifacts, discursive, engagement, meaning

### Abstract

This presentation describes an empirical study of interpretative itineraries used by visitors to a curated collection of sound art works part of the unplace, a museum without a place exhibition, July-November 2015, Lisbon, Portugal. Results of this case study will be valuable to theorists and artists of electronic literature seeking to engage readers with virtual, online, or curated installations of electronic literature, especially as to how they might foster narrative and storytelling.

### Proposal

In 2003, UNESCO ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage which encourages understanding of sound and music as cultural artifacts despite their lack of physical tangibility. Concurrently, the digital revolution in the music industry is motivating debates on ethical, aesthetic, and philosophical dimensions related to sound.

The results are that the bias toward visually-oriented presentation of heritage and culture in exhibitions is being challenged. Museums, galleries, and organizations have begun curating sound and music either as cultural/literary artifacts or as works of art in their exhibitions. Still, the idea that sound objects can be curated is under-researched. As a result, scholars and artists may ask what aspects of listening are dominant when visitors experience curated sound artifacts, and whether those aspects promote narrative potential.

This presentation reports ongoing, collaborative international doctoral research efforts using discourse analysis methods to investigate the ability of sound narratives to inspire visitor imagination. Specifically, the presenters will examine written accounts describing visitors' experiences with a curated collection of sound objects included in the 2015 unplace, a museum without a place, an international virtual museum exhibition, based in Lisbon, Portugal. This research is designed to assess the ability of sound objects to inspire visitor narrative immersion and interactivity, as determined from visitor's discussion of their sense of engagement with sound objects in this curated context.

Presenter remarks about this case study are framed by discussion of theory and practice behind the original exhibited collection of sound artifacts, and their interpretation by visitors of the unplace, a museum without a place exhibition.

Insightful, if preliminary, results from this study are valuable to theorists and

artists seeking to engage readers with virtual, online, or curated installations of electronic literature, especially as to how they might foster narrative and storytelling.

Presenters

Alcina Cortez

INET-MD, Instituto de Etnomusicologia, Música e Dança, Lisbon, Portugal

[alcinamariacortez@gmail.com](mailto:alcinamariacortez@gmail.com)

John F. Barber

Creative Media & Digital Culture

Washington State University Vancouver

Vancouver, WA, USA

[jfbarber@eaze.net](mailto:jfbarber@eaze.net)