

## Music is Not Enough: The appropriation of the category “arte sonoro” in Argentina

Mene Savasta Alsina  
Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero  
mene.savasta.alsina@gmail.com

381

**Abstract.** The first event in Argentina that ever included *arte sonoro* in its programming was Experimenta. Through its concerts and workshops, it was a milestone for the Argentinean experimental music at the end of the 90s. Since its first edition in 1997, it challenged circles and procedures already stabilized in music, bringing together artists from different generations and sonic searches. It was in its year 2000 edition that the festival incorporated *arte sonoro* as one of its tags for the first time. What does it happen when it becomes necessary, from one moment to the next, to use a new expression to name an artistic activity? That music is not enough is the hypothesis of this outline of the sound art history in Argentina, which aims to illuminate the foundational moment when that category *arte sonoro* began to be used in the programming of events and festivals.

From the observation of the textual framework around works and events -that is, catalogs, critical texts or press releases- we will see that, since 2000 in Argentina, the initial circulation of the expression *arte sonoro* shows what could be understood as musical origin, as a reaction to what was established, and as one of the features that contribute to the particular identity of early Argentine *arte sonoro*, in contrast with other histories -from other geographies- that usually link the origin of sound art with art installations and the participation of galleries and museums.

**Keywords:** Arte sonoro. Sound art. Identities. Histories. Categories. Argentina. Musical establishments.

## A música não é suficiente: a apropriação da categoria “arte sonoro” na Argentina

O primeiro evento na Argentina a incluir *arte sonoro* em sua programação foi o Experimenta. Em seus concertos e workshops, foi um divisor de águas para a música experimental argentina no final dos anos 1990. Desde sua primeira edição em 1997, tem desafiado círculos e procedimentos já arraigados na música, reunindo artistas de diferentes gerações e indagações sonoras. Foi na edição do ano 2000 que o festival incorporou como uma de suas tags a expressão *arte sonoro* pela primeira vez. O que acontece quando se torna necessário, de um momento para outro, usar uma nova expressão para designar uma atividade artística?

A hipótese de que *música não é suficiente* sublinha a história da arte dos sons na Argentina, que pretende desvendar o momento fundador quando a categoria *arte sonora* começou a ser usada na programação dos eventos e festivais.

A partir da observação do arcabouço textual em torno de obras e eventos - ou seja, dos catálogos, textos críticos e press releases - veremos que, desde 2000 na Argentina, a circulação inicial da expressão *arte sonoro* mostra o que poderia ser compreendido como origem musical, como uma reação ao que estava estabelecido, e como uma das características que contribuem para uma identidade particular da antiga *arte sonoro* na Argentina, em contraste com outras histórias - de outras geografias - que usualmente relacionam a origem da arte do som com instalações artísticas e a participação de galerias e museus.

**Palavras-chave:** Arte sonoro. Arte dos sons. Identidades. Histórias. Categorias. Argentina. Instituições musicais.

## Introduction

Why, from one moment to the next, does a new designation, such as *sound art*, *arte sonoro*, or *Klangkunst* arise in order to name an artistic practice? Why, if thus far the word *music* has been enough to denominate the artistic domain involving sound?

“Music is not enough” is the hypothesis of this outline of the history of the origins of sound art in Argentina. With the aim of recovering the particular case of early-20th-century Argentina, we will first address the initial circulation of the category of *arte sonoro*; that is, where and when *arte sonoro* began to be talked about, and what social representations promoted this designation.

Beginning from the observation of the textual framework surrounding events, cycles, and festivals, we will see that, since the year 2000 in Argentina, the category of *arte sonoro* has been propagated in association with the work of experimental and electroacoustic musicians, broadening the genealogy connecting vanguards, experimentalism, and interdisciplinary searches. We will also see it evidenced that the appropriation of expression occurs primarily in order to construct an alternative to an antiquated circuit of academic music which did not embrace more radical practices in sound.

Thus, we will postulate what could be a musical origin of Argentine *arte sonoro*. It is musical in its negative sense: *arte sonoro* is proposed as a reaction to what is institutionalized as music and its legitimated paths of circulation. And it is musical in the sense of persistence, evident in its recurring proximity to categories such as experimental music, improvisation, and performance art, and in the tendency to prolong spectatorial habits around music, such as that of the concert format.

This origin grants to the Argentine sound art of the beginning of the 21st century its particular identity, which furthermore contrasts with other histories – of other geographies – which usually connect the origin of sound art to artistic installations and the participation of galleries and museums.

So it is, that this paper hopes to provide two lines of examination: one illuminating the history of *arte sonoro* in Argentina in the foundational moment at which the category began to circulate in order to define a practice, starting with its incorporation in events

and festivals, such as Experimenta, Conciertos en el Limb0, and Tsonami, and another which aims to address the sense that pushes categories forth as particularly site- and time-specific phenomena.

### **It is being: sense as relation**

History is not a simple succession of facts. The past is written in history: history is the past textualized in material traces that connect in some way, starting from an observation. I refer to history as a scientific discipline, and as experience.

The object of history is always a relation, unstable, between the observed, the observer, and the situation of observation. Fortunately, it is this way. Otherwise, it would be a closure, well-known and boring. This good fortune is rooted in the fact that the past is not that which has happened, but that which happens with each new designation (MOYINEDO, 2014). For this reason, each group or individual provides its particular vision of the past, connecting and disconnecting practices from genealogies, each time with its own intentions. Thus, are written histories which live in synchrony with others and, through legitimation, in different states of truth.

The object of a form of expression such as *arte sonoro* also enjoys this good fortune. *Arte sonoro*, like so many other designations emerging in contemporaneity, emerges steeped in that consciousness of the instability of its sense, the broadening of its being-true. As with other designations, artifacts of language, *arte sonoro* is not today as it was yesterday; it is neither here nor there. Perhaps this is why aesthetic approaches which attempt to delimit their identities beginning with the enumeration of characteristics within works drown in contradictions. And even more so when this delimiting is attempted based on histories which are not constructed from the point of observation of the particular case.

As we were claiming: sense is always a relation. No material manifestation is, in itself, a work of *arte sonoro* or sound art. A text's ability to signify (A text, a cluster of heterogeneous materials presented for perception) is defined every time it is placed into a social fabric, that is, every time it acquires a position with respect to other texts. Linguistic texts, or texts with otherwise semiotic modes: visual, spatial, sonic, gestural. Only upon being placed, that is, upon linking with its discursive surroundings, may a materiality acquire the status of a work of art, of sound art or music.

If our objective is to reconstruct some aspect of the identity of sound art in Argentina at a foundational stage, it will be necessary to rebuild those links in order to recover the different representations that it brought about at a given moment. That is, to try to rebuild the relations of that which was denominated *arte sonoro*, with the habits of production and of reading that it called forth. Methodologically, these habits are revealed as textualities, as discursive sets that constitute the conditions of production and recognition (VERÓN, 1987). The textualities that concern us in this work may be denominated paratexts.

By introducing the notion of paratexts, we are recovering the ideas of Gerard Genette, who also provides the relational focus that we are proposing as a counterpart to intrinsic discursive analysis. Through the idea of transtextuality (GENETTE, 1962), Genette approaches the study and classification of the different modes of relation that a text establishes with others. Of those possible, of special interest to us will be paratextuality, which is that which maintains the greatest degree of proximity to the text, surrounding it and forming a threshold through which the reader or receiver accesses the text.

With the aim of describing how, from paratexts, the horizon of expectations determining works of sound art is constructed, we will analyze the case of those events, festivals, and cycles which, in early-21st-century Argentina, used this category to refer to their content. Thus, our body of work will be comprised both of any graphical and digital categories, and any articles in newspapers and magazines, which have proposed *arte sonoro* as a configuration of sense.

Starting from the observation of this textual framework, we will propose a reconstruction of the relationships that *arte sonoro* established with adjacent categories such as music, concerts, installations, improvisation, performance art, and others, in order to bring ourselves closer to some of the trajectories of sense that it has brought forth in this slice of space-time.

## Border Zone: Experimenta 2000

The first event in Argentina that included *arte sonoro* in its programming was the Experimenta cycle. Through its numerous concerts and workshops, it constituted a milestone for late-90s Argentine experimental music. Since its first edition in 1997, it was not only the setting for internationally-renowned artists to present their work in the country; it also signified an important impulse in the local scene. Artists of different generations and seeking different sonic pathways congregated at and around its concerts. This raised the standard for questioning the established circuits, genres, and procedures around them; they thus broadened the ideas of music and experimentation with sound in Argentina. Furthermore, its programming built bridges between Latin American avant-garde art and international experimentation in the 60s and 70s, via the recuperation of works by artists not included in the official repertory, and from the divulgation of texts and videos by artists who were impossible to schedule for presentation.

All of its editions between 1997 and 2000 included the publication of a general catalog with information on the artists presented, as well as handbook catalogs for each edition. The festival's statement appears over and over: Experimenta aimed to encourage a cutting-edge aesthetic and bring to light all sound works circulating outside of established genres.

Experimenta is a production and diffusion space which provides for the sharing of the knowledge of current-day creators who exist on the border areas, "no-man's land", and at the same time invites anyone who wishes to venture, in this sense, to use the space to develop new ideas<sup>1</sup> (KOREMBLIT, Catalog 1997).

This question-posing nature, one seeking the aesthetic and institutional borderlines, led to the incorporation, in the year 2000, of *arte sonoro* as one of its tags, which appeared in close proximity to *experimental music*, *improvisation*, and *performance art*, to describe its content. In fact, it even changed its name: Experimenta 2000 was sub-titled as *Festival Internacional de Arte Sonoro y Visual* (International festival of sonic and visual art).

---

<sup>1</sup> "Experimenta es un espacio de producción y difusión que ofrece compartir el conocimiento de creadores del presente que caminan por zonas de frontera, "tierras de nadie", y a la vez invita a quienes quieran arriesgar en ese sentido a utilizar el espacio para desarrollar ideas nuevas" (KOREMBLIT, Catálogo 1997).

Before it has simply been Experimenta. Again the words of Claudio Korembli, its driving force and producer:

Experimenta 2000 is an Independent International Festival of experimental music, improvisation, sound and visual art, performance art, film, and experimental video, which has been alive in Buenos Aires for 4 years,

It is independent in that it does not depend on any political organization and it answers to no established artistic school, ghetto, or genre<sup>2</sup> (Prologue of 2000 edition catalog).

Experimenta 2000 lasted 10 days in a row and was held in three cities: Buenos Aires, Bariloche, and Santiago de Chile. The activities were concerts, workshops, and video projections. In the case of Buenos Aires, these were held in the Rojas Cultural Center, the MAMBA (Buenos Aires Museum of Modern Art), and the Recoleta Cultural Center.

As in its previous editions, the graphical items that the festival produced were a general catalog numbering nearly 100 pages and a foldable A3-sized hand catalog. The general catalog contains information about the programming, plus interviews and theoretical texts or essays which serve as a framework for reflection on the activities. The hand catalog, on the other hand, only deals with listing the program, giving minimal information on the works: artist, title, and description, date, time, and place of activities.

It is interesting to distinguish between the different functions or associations that the category of *arte sonoro* acquires in the catalogs (Fig. 1). Initially, it suggests an overall sense of expression, which seems to construct a disciplinary distinction more than a generic one, as it appears in the event's name: *Festival internacional de arte sonoro y visual* (International Festival of Sound and Visual Art). In this case it would seem to gravitate towards that conception of *sonic arts* or *artes sonoras* as a notion inclusive of all artistic practices involving sound, within which music would fit.

However, in both catalogs, another sense of the expression *arte sonoro* is evidenced, when, in the description of the programming, it appears in a list among other

---

<sup>2</sup> "Experimenta 2000 es un Festival internacional Independiente de música experimental, improvisación, arte sonoro y visual, performances, cine y video experimental, que cumple 4 años de vida en Buenos Aires. Independiente porque no depende de organización política alguna y no responde a ninguna escuela, ghetto o género artístico establecido" (prólogo del catálogo de la edición del 2000).

expressions such as *experimental music*, *performance art*, *improvisation*, *experimental film*, and *video art*. In this case, the functioning of the category seems to issue a distinction of type or genre, through which the works may be grouped.

387 Another place where it takes on the character of a generic category is in the general catalog. There, the works and artists are grouped into sections, under categories that were not in the hand catalog: *Arte sonoro*, *Pianismo* (works with piano), *Electrónica viva* (Live electronics), *Improvisación* (Improvisation), *Nuevas composiciones* (New compositions), *Nuevos instrumentos* (New instruments), *Del Di Tella al 2000* (From Di Tella to 2000), and *Video-arte sonoro* (Video-sound art). These sections allow us to distinguish the curatorial lines in the programming of the festival and, through allusive texts, offer a context for their interpretation.



Figure 1 – Experimenta 2000 hand catalog.

Festival Internacional de Arte Sonoro y Visual



**EXPERIMENTA**  
BUENOS AIRES 2000  
BARILOCHE  
SANTIAGO DE CHILE

**ARTISTAS LOCALES**  
El Avión Negro  
Gabriel Paiuk Ensemble  
Guaco  
Gustavo Ribicic  
Adriana de los Santos  
QfwfQ  
Mariano Losi  
Eduardo Kusnir  
Sin Cataforesis  
Oscar Bazán  
Héctor Fiore  
Patricia Martínez  
Adolfo Reisin  
Marcelo Katz  
Martín Ferres Trathenbroit  
Colectivo Eterofónico  
Ensamble Experimenta

**MUSICA EXPERIMENTAL**  
**ARTE SONORO**  
**IMPROVISACION**  
**PERFORMANCES**  
**CINE EXPERIMENTAL**  
**VIDEO ARTE**  
**TALLERES**  
**DEBATES**  
**ENSAYOS**

**ARTISTAS VISITANTES**  
Frederic Rzewski (USA-BÉLGICA)  
Salvo Cuccia (ITALIA)  
Jean Marc Montera (FRANCIA)  
Ricardo Arias (COLOMBIA)  
Renato Maselli (GUATEMALA)  
Paul Panhuysen (HOLANDA)  
Richard Lerman (USA)  
Voice Crack (SUIZA)  
Nic Collins (USA)  
David Dunn (USA)

Centro Cultural Recoleta | **OCTUBRE** | **2 al 11**  
Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas  
MAMBA- Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires

  
UNIVERSIDAD DE BUENOS AIRES EXTENSIÓN UNIVERSITARIA Corrientes 2038 Buenos Aires  
Municipio de Eindhoven-Embajada de Holanda, ADESCA-Guatemala, Festival Escuta!-Rio de Janeiro, The Institute of Art of Chicago, Arts International-USA, Embajada de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica



It is interesting to note that the *Arte sonora* section, in addition to the two articles which deal with aesthetic problems in sound art (written by Paul Panhyusen and Barbara Barthelmes, respectively), only includes the works of David Dunn and Richard Lerman, both of whom are artists from the United States who deal with the relationship between environment and sound, through the use of electronics and computers. The reason for this inclusion will be, for us, another narrowly-taken hypothesis: these artists work from an idea of sound “liberated” from the constrictions of musical and instrumental language; they consider the sonic environment of the world to be a source for their works, and, in some cases, their work is site-specific.

On this occasion, “the composer and sound artist” (as he is called in the bio in the catalog) David Dunn presented two works, or two performances for computers. Both compositions, which, furthermore, were displayed in sheet-music form, possess a certain degree of openness, starting from the inclusion of computer programs with behavioral autonomy. Pleroma 3, one of the works, is basically a multi-channel electro-acoustic work in which the artist explores the chaotic behavior of a software-modeled system, proposing a sonic metaphor for the behavior of nature. In the catalog description, neither of the two works claim any belonging to the practice of sound art. However, on the same page as his description, the workshop that David Dunn was to give in Experimenta was summarized as so: “Nature, sound art, and the sacred”. This workshop was to be concerned with presenting reflections regarding the relationship of sound and nature, and with bringing forth the artist’s production of “sound art performances in specific places” (Experimenta 2000, p. 21).

For his part, the works of Richard Lerman are also presented as compositions which are performed, in this case, for different setups of contact microphones and objects. Changing States 6, for example, is a piece for 5 instruments, made by the artist, amplified with piezo pickups. The sounds are produced by the action of small blowtorches on the instruments. The performer follows a piece of sheet music describing the gestures that he or she must carry out.

Dunn and Lerman’s inclusion in the catalog under the category of *arte sonora* shows a particular representation of the figure of sound artist, which offers no greater specificity. In fact, it coexists alongside that of composer, not only because the

denominations “sound artist and composer” appear nearby in their bios, but also because neither of the two artists abandons the productive habits of academic music: the works are composed, written in sheet music, and performed by an interpreter (in both cases, the composers themselves).

Observing the content of the other sections of the catalog will shed no additional light for our aim or configuring an idea of *arte sonoro*, or distinguishing the figure of sound artist clearly from that of musician in this appropriation. In fact, it would support the hypothesis of its initial instability, and above all, of how it exists near music, and its habits of production and reception.

The text of the catalog that introduces the festival, written by Daniel Varela, contributes not towards identifying sound art with some particular type of work, but rather, with the ability of the practice to establish an interdisciplinary space and question established genres and circuits.

Experimenta 2000 will give a fundamental place to paradigmatic expression of the crossing of barriers between disciplines. Sound Art is an established example of the space where sound, plastics in the form of installations and environment - like simultaneous architecture and sculpture - may conjugate as another response to the limitations of the idea of the work. (...) Communication opened by these principles invites a dissolution of vertical structures pertaining to the musical establishment...<sup>3</sup> (VARELA, in Experimenta 2000 Catalog, p. 13).

It is very quaint (or symptomatic) how, in this list of crossing disciplines, music is not named. In this affirmation, the liberation of sound from its musical ties seems to be taken for granted. We can take it as an expression of desire, which is in line with what the spirit of Experiment was since its first edition. But, as the last sentence of the quote indicates, in Argentina, this would still require a disconnection that neither Experimenta nor the experiences to immediately come would not deliberately enact. This is because, from our reading, the musical establishment is not only identified with the institutional: music is also rooted (or stuck) in the methods of creation of those who would mobilize

---

<sup>3</sup> Experimenta 2000 dará lugar primordial a una expresión paradigmática del cruce de barreras entre disciplinas. El Sound Art es un acabado ejemplo del espacio donde el sonido, la plástica en forma de instalación y el ambiente –como arquitectura y escultura simultánea-, pueden conjugarse como otra respuesta a las limitaciones de la idea de obra. (...) La comunicación abierta por estos principios invita a una disolución de los verticalismos propios del establishment musical... (VARELA, en Catálogo Experimenta 2000, p. 13).

the category of *arte sonoro* in the beginning of the 21st century. Though sound may have successfully broadened its domain, it was to remain fenced into the concert form.

## Interdisciplinary work, liberation of sound and counterculture: Limb0 and Tsonami experiences

391

Some years later, there arose other events which incorporated *arte sonoro* in their programming, and in which some recurrent aspects can be seen from the aims of Experimenta.

The cycle “Conciertos en el LIMb0” emerges at the pivotal point in the development of multimedia art in Argentina, towards the year 2007, and its activities extend into 2011 (inclusive), with the CCEBA (Spanish Cultural Center in Buenos Aires) as its principal headquarters. Coordinated by Jorge Haro, the concerts enjoyed a continuity which allowed for the presentation of numerous international and local artists.

At least since 2008, articles in the press and invitations refer to their activities as a *Ciclo de arte sonoro y música experimental* (Cycle of sound art and experimental music), and its content intermixes at least these three genealogies: electroacoustic music, experimental music, and sonic explorations stemming from “art and new technologies”. In press articles and the official blog of the LIMb0 concert series, the concerts are presented as follows:

... A project of divulgation of new musical expressions and of sound art, constructed from the starting points of aesthetic and technical research at intersecting areas between languages and new technologies<sup>4</sup> (Online site of Concerts in Limb0).

A great many experimental musicians, electroacoustic composers, and audiovisual projects, and at times presentations of recordings or performances with new interfaces for creation, were presented at these concerts. To name only a few of the Argentine artists who were presented: Cecilia Castro, Nicolas Varchausky, the Buque Factoria collective, Yamil Burguener, and Coso, all linked to these concepts even in the years prior to the practice of sound art.

---

<sup>4</sup> “...un proyecto de divulgación de nuevas expresiones musicales y de arte sonoro construidas desde la investigación estética y técnica en áreas de cruce entre lenguajes y nuevas tecnologías” (sitio online de Conciertos en el Limb0).

Despite the emphasis placed on the intersection between languages, the selection of the concert format did not facilitate the presentation of works which proposed other modes of listening or other relationships with space. The concert determines behaviors of reading: it begins at a specific time, the spectator must arrive on time, find a place to be situated, and remain in the hall for as long as the artist provides for the duration of his or her work. Even when, within the hall, the spectators are not situated “*a la italiana*” (in front of a stage), the temporal determinations of the concert are comprehensive in terms of the reception of the works.

On the other hand, as in *Experimenta*, we find in the concert programming the representation of sound art both as a practice which “liberates sound” from musical language, and to a greater or lesser degree, from the productive habits of the figure of the composer. As Jorge Haro himself, artist and curator of the *Limb0* cycle, reflects, in an article entitled “Sound Art: Hybridization and the Liberation of Sound” from 2004:

There are many ways to present an object or an artistic process containing sound: from concerts, today redesigned in the experimental field, and in many cases decoupled from the idea of the show, to installations, exhibitions, performances, or Internet projects integrating the sonic and the visual. What is certain is that sound as an expressive element has been liberated from music and musicians, and furthermore has been democratized in its use<sup>5</sup> (HARO, 2004, p. 7).

However, when we contrast these ideas with the circulation of the category of *arte sonoro* in events in Argentina in the first decade of the 2000s, we again find that sound had indeed not been liberated from musicians, nor from their productive habits. Let’s take a look at another festival.

Tsunami took place annually between 2008 and 2013, in the Recoleta Cultural Center of Buenos Aires, except for the final edition, which was in Cordoba. Designated as an *Encuentro de arte sonoro* (Sound art conference), it was modeled after a Chilean event of the same name held since 2007. The catalog with 2009’s program announced the event as follows:

---

<sup>5</sup> “Hay muchas formas de presentar un objeto o un proceso artístico que contenga sonido: desde los conciertos -hoy rediseñados en el ámbito experimental y muchas veces desligados de la idea de espectáculo- hasta las instalaciones, muestras, performances o proyectos en Internet que integran lo sonoro y lo visual. Lo cierto es que el sonido como elemento expresivo se ha liberado de la música y de los músicos y además se ha democratizado en su uso” (HARO, 2004, p. 7).

Tsunami Sound Art Conference Buenos Aires.  
Instrumental, electroacoustic, and mixed music concerts.  
Performances and Sound Installations.<sup>6</sup> (Tsunami Festival 2009 catalog,  
Fig. 2).

Figure 2 – Tsunami 2009 Catalog.



Author's collection.

<sup>6</sup> “Encuentro de Arte Sonoro Tsunami Buenos Aires. Conciertos de Música instrumental, Electroacústica y Mixta. Performances e Instalaciones Sonoras” (catálogo Festival Tsunami 2009).

The meaning of the title *Encuentro de arte sonoro* finds purchase in the generic category list in its subtitle. Here again we find the broad meaning of *arte sonoro*, in which, under this expression, different modalities of music are contained, as well as more interdisciplinary practices such as performance art and sound installations.

In addition to this, that a work be that of artists who use sound as a favored dimension does not seem to be the sole condition under which the expression *arte sonoro* is used. In the same text, reference is made to a characteristic of the works that is of a more social nature than one of working modalities or procedures. Tsonami brings together:

any and all expressions which work with sound as their principal axis and which do not have a space in mass or traditional media, whether due to their own characteristics or the pretensions of its creators, and which constitute expression which seeks neither profit nor commercial ends<sup>7</sup> (Tsonami Festival 2009 catalog).

These ideas, which aim more at artistic circuits and the mode of relating with the public, evidently were not sufficient to explain why a festival mostly programmed for music concerts was called a sound art conference. Perhaps this is why, as seen on the web page, the hand catalogs, and in promotional materials, the original subtitle of *Encuentro de arte sonoro* was replaced in 2011 with *Encuentro de arte sonoro y nuevas músicas* (Sound art and new music conference) (Fig. 3).

---

<sup>7</sup> “[...] todas aquellas expresiones que trabajen con el sonido como eje principal y que no tengan espacio en los medios de comunicación masivos o tradicionales, ya sea por sus propias características o por las pretensiones de sus creadores y que constituyen en una expresión que no busca el lucro, ni fines comerciales” (catálogo Festival Tsonami 2009).



Figure 3 – Tsonami 2011 Catalog cover page.

395



Author's collection.

Something similar, or perhaps more radical, was to happen with the continuation of the Limb0 Concert cycle, the ESCUCHAR cycle. After changing the name and headquarters in the year 2013, the event kept the subtitle *Ciclo de arte sonoro y música experimental* (Sound art and experimental music cycle). But nearing the year 2016 it abandoned its affiliation with the *arte sonoro* category in its institutional paratexts, replacing its subtitle with *sonidos visuals* (visual sounds).

Once again, in all cases we highlight temporal events, whose social means and habits of reception bring them closer to the concert genre than to a situation of exhibition. The denomination of an activity as festival, conference, or cycle places the emphasis on the event's temporal nature.

The question of temporality is key to approaching the majority of activities surrounding the use of the expression *arte sonoro* in Argentina; the spectators must come together at the same time, and of course in the same place. At the same time, the use of

the expressions “art show” or “exhibition” would turn attention towards spatiality: in a showing, the works are there, and the spectator decides the duration of their watching.

In this way, the type of events shown here are closer to the tradition of the temporal arts, prolonged spectatorial habits pertaining to music, such as the modality of the concert; these coexist to a lesser degree with other habits, such as those of the exhibition. Nonetheless, many of the spaces where sound art activities are carried out are associated with the world of contemporary art, (for example: Museum of Modern Art, Recoleta Cultural Center, CCEBA), implying not only the broadening of the specific audience, but perhaps also a certain predisposition to consuming sound art in a more artistic than musical form.

## Some conclusions

We have observed that the incorporation of the expression *arte sonora* in the cases examined coincides with the will to broaden the domain of artistic use of sound beyond the confines of music. The events taking place in Argentina in the first decade of the 21st century are born from a common symptom: there being no institutional space in music for certain poetics and modalities of work. Seen in this way, *arte sonora* emerges as an alternative to a type of circulation which, as we can see in the paratexts of all cases, is considered restrictive in some way. In the brief duration of this work, I have not set the scene of what these events propose as an alternative; rather, we are talking about those which focus on the figure of the composer and the musical work, such as for example in the Buenos Aires Contemporary Music Concert Cycle, and in the training grounds of CEAMC.

The denomination *arte sonora* is proposed at once as disciplinary space, as practice and as genre. Without defining a specific program, or defining characteristic procedures with sound, its incorporation allows for the fundamental opening of the aesthetic discussion of the operations that distinguish it from the musical space. However, in the cases observed there does not seem to be a clear distinction between the figure of sound artist and that of composer, nor between the modalities of musical works and of sound art.

The favored means of reception in the events also contribute to the idea of a musical origin of Argentine *arte sonoro*. In the experience of Experimenta, the concerts of Limb0, and the Tsonami festival, their programs indicate the prolongation of spectatorial concert habits. Though many of the works included in these programs constitute methods of questioning these habits (with the incorporation of new interfaces, instruments, sonic and visual devices), they continued to unfold in durations limited to the scheduled times. While methods of work which propose another type of temporality, such as installations and sound sculptures, and the means of reception of which is the exhibition, these are shown on far fewer occasions.

Though it was not dealt with in detail in this text, I'd like to indicate that, beyond the events and cycles planned for sound art, towards the year 2002 composers began to work with the urban space as a medium for site-specific sound works. This is the case, for example, with Nicolas Varchausky and the Buenos Aires Sonora collective, who came from electroacoustic composition, and who, a few years later (perhaps around 2005 or 2006) would retroactively denominate this part of their production as *arte sonoro* or sound art.

Until approximately 2013, the category of *arte sonoro* appeared mostly in association with the margins of the musical circuit and multimedia art forms, almost always appearing near the expression *música experimental* (experimental music). Further on, new events and competitions would link sound art to the worlds of technological art and contemporary art as well.

In contrast to what is happening in Europe and North America, where those who initially used the term regard works and events which focus on the spatial aspect of sound and, in many cases, from the contemporary art circuit, its use in these latitudes seems to take place in order to provide air for the deeply constricted generic categories of music and its traditional productive habits. As a coda, let's recover something of these other histories for comparison.

For example, the German example, *Klangkunst*, constructs its object in a more restrictive manner. The majority of the texts theorizing about its practice focus on the relationship of sound with its spatial localization, with installations and sound sculptures being central work modalities for circumscribing artistic practice. In turn, from aesthetic

thought, solidified, for example, in the thought of Helga de la Motte-Haber, *Klangkunst* supposes the dissolution of the division between temporal arts and spatial arts. (DE LA MOTTE-HABER, 2002). Speaking of events, even in the catalog of the celebrated Sonambiente exhibition of 1996 in Berlin, the same author writes:

*Klangkunst* means in the first place not the many music performances, for which, with help from synthesizers and computers, artists develop new instruments that demand new performing techniques. Music performance might well have a place on the vague border with *Klangkunst*, and it has also become much broader, following action art. *Klangkunst* in the narrow sense is, however, mainly defined through new aesthetical implications, which have crystallised over the course of a long historical process. To this belongs an abandonment of the strong differentiation between spatial and time-based qualities, which had already been questioned by the musicalisation of painting and abolished with the onset of process art. Through this, every purist concept of the artistic material, which assumed a division between the eye and the ear, was dissolved. An art form emerged that wanted to be heard and seen at the same time. (DE LA MOTTE-HABER, *apud* ENGSTROM; STJTERNA, 2009, p. 12).

Or, furthermore, to summarily exemplify other estimations of the Anglophone world, we may cite Alan Licht, sound art theorist of north American origin, who would say: “Sound art belongs to a situation of exhibition more so than to a situation of performance” (LICHT, 2007, p. 14).

Trying to tell a history of *arte sonora* in Argentina thus implies something more than viewing artistic practice as a description of the works, procedures, and poetics as opposed to others. As we established in the beginning, this task must be directed towards the methods by which the practice builds links to the outside of its material dimension. In this work, we are concerned with freeing the circulation of *arte sonora* as enclave of sense, in order to be able to, from this observation, access the description of a more complex sociocultural process which situates Argentine *arte sonora* as part of a reaction to a way of understanding artistic practice using sound.

Regarding reach, this text is no more than one possible history, one more trajectory of history understood as a network of histories. The vision of complexity in the domain of the historic, and the construction of identity, proposes the acceptance of the multiplicity of possible readings (histories and identities) as coexisting and co-participating in a

complex world. Likewise, the ideas solidified in this paper aim to contribute to the sense of *arte sonoro*, feeding into the density of its identity with one history more.

## References

- DE LA MOTTE-HABBER, (2009) Concepciones del arte sonoro. In: *Ramona* v. 96. Buenos Aires, 2009.
- ENGSTROM A.; STJTERNA, A (2009) Sound Art or Klangkunst? A reading of the German and English literature on sound art. In: *Organized Sounds*, Abril 2009. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231833876\\_Sound\\_Art\\_or\\_Klangkunst\\_A\\_reading\\_of\\_the\\_German\\_and\\_English\\_literature\\_on\\_sound\\_art](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231833876_Sound_Art_or_Klangkunst_A_reading_of_the_German_and_English_literature_on_sound_art).
- GENETTE, G. *Umbrables*. Mexico: Siglo XXI, [1987] 2001.
- GENETTE, G. *Palimpsestos*. Madrid: Taurus, [1962] 1989.
- HARO, J. Arte sonoro: liberación del sonido e hibridación artística. *Revista Lucera*, n. 5, 2004.
- LICHT, A. *Sound Art: Beyond music, between categories*. New York: Rizzoli Internacional Publications, 2007.
- MOYINEDO, S. *Aspectos discursivos de la circulación artística*, Ensayos. Historia y teoría del arte, Bogotá D. C., Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2008, n. 15, p. 54-82.
- VERÓN, E. *La semiosis social*. Barcelona: Gedisa, 1987.

## Graphical and online catalogs

- KOREMBLIT, C. Catálogo de Experimenta 2000. Buenos Aires, 2009.
- HARO, J. Blog de Limb0. Retrieved from <http://conciertosenlimb0.blogspot.com.ar/> Consultado en junio 2017.
- MAKEDONSKY, D. et al. Catálogo de mano del Festival Tsonami 2009. Buenos Aires, 2009. Retrieved from [http://www.schachter.com.ar/2009-Tsonami\\_BSAS.pdf](http://www.schachter.com.ar/2009-Tsonami_BSAS.pdf).
- MAKEDONSKY, D. et al. Festival Tsonami 2011, Buenos Aires, 2011. Retrieved from <http://tsonamibuenosaires.blogspot.com.ar/p/tsonami-2011.html>.
- VARCHAUSKY, N. personal site. <http://varchausky.com.ar/>.

