



PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

HOMO ELECTROMAGNETICUS II: PARADIGMS AND PARADOXES AN "AFTER THE MEDIA" MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

ALEXANDRE BENTO UNIVERSIDADE NOVA, LISBON



▶ Watch and listen to *Homo Electromagneticus*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vO8d8qmn2TI>

Homo Electromagneticus is a musical performance realized in 2022 through a set of original instruments created with open-source and low-cost technologies. Arduino microcontrollers, sensors, brainwaves, MIDI, algorithms, and the interaction with plants' capacitance provide digital, acoustic and mechatronic sound production forms. Cognizant of the material and energy dump that is the signature of the Anthropocene, the piece thrives on a commitment to the conscientious and responsible production of waste. Thus, in addition to original musical instruments, I also utilized old bottles, kitchen tools, electronics equipment taken from the dump, obsolete musical instruments, human gestures and brain waves as research and performance tools.

Homo Electromagneticus reacts to the exclusivity of digital sound production, choosing instead to revitalize and promote acoustic sound production. Thinking along with Zielinski (2010), the piece helps us to consider art "after the media," meaning that it foregrounds the production of acoustic sound mediated through electromagnetic interfaces. The technological aspect of production is prevalent, but digital and electric sound production does not dominate the performance of the work as a whole.

The performance relies on the emergence of a *mix compositum* in which the distinction between performer and composer becomes blurred. Each performance of the piece requires the players to generate sound anew. Additionally, the very definition of musical "instrument" undergoes a transformation since the performer becomes, in a sense, a necessary instrument in the production of the piece.

Works Cited

Zielinski, Siegfried. 2010. "Thinking About Art after the Media – Research as Practised Culture of Experiment." In *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, edited by Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson, 293–312. London, New York: Routledge.

Biography

Alexandre Bento is currently developing a PhD thesis on musical mechatronics at Universidade Nova in Lisbon, Portugal. He is an integrated researcher at [INET-md](#). Over 31 years, Alexandre has worked with hundreds of musicians in concerts, performances, pedagogical actions and recordings. Learn more at www.alexbento.com

© 2023 Alexandre Bento



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).