Radio as Radical Education

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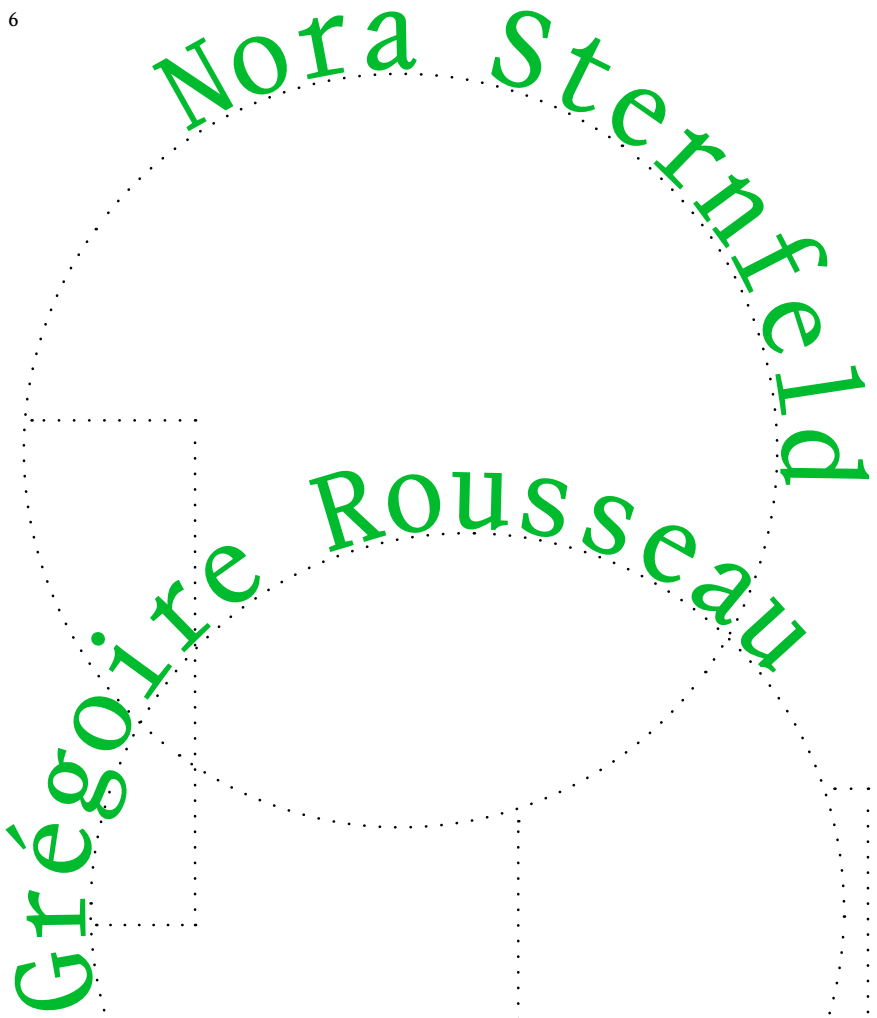


A Polyphonic Voice Responding. Introduction

Nora Sternfeld

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our listeners and readers. Today, we're speaking about the book *Radio as Radical Education.* It brings together the voices and ideas of people who have worked on and with and in radio while understanding their radio projects as education projects or understanding radio as radical education. My name is Nora Sternfeld. I edited this book together with Grégoire Rousseau, who is here with me, in a collaboration between HFBK Hamburg, the art school in Hamburg, and *Station of Commons*[1], an initiative that is also the publisher of the book. We will hear more about *Station of Commons* founded by Grégoire Rousseau and others in Helsinki in 2020. I'm very happy to be here together this afternoon. Grégoire, maybe you can start by explaining why we made this book.

1 https://www.stationofcommons.org/ (last accessed: June 2024).

Grégoire Rousseau

Thank you, Nora, for the introduction. I'm here today primarily thanks to your idea and different contexts you developed for art education at *HFBK Hamburg.* That is a great space and context to develop, experiment, and understand what a radio practice in art education can be in a radical education context. *Station of Commons* was initiated at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020. It's a research platform on digital commoning practices with a very strong emphasis on audio and radio practice.

> The radical education approach wasn't something we developed deliberately, but something that emerged from the practice itself as we tried to understand how a collective can learn and how this learning can then be shared. This idea of sharing encompasses the idea of communication, the idea of distribution. The production of this book continues this movement of learning and sharing. This movement resembles the open-source model. In other words, it is the collective production of a radio program that is inscribed in a strong political history. So, when you approached us and discussed the possibility of this book, it completely made sense for Station of Commons to transfer, to translate

the radio practices into written form in the context of radical education.

Nora Sternfeld

I got this idea as a result of one of the programs you organized for *Miss Read* Berlin in 2023.[2] It was there that I realized that it makes sense to look at the history of radio projects and especially educational radio projects from a trans-local perspective, not only because radio in itself, of course, is a trans-local medium, but also because people in many different places around the world and at different times worked with radio as education. And it seems interesting to me to bring some of these projects together and to think about them together. This brings us to the second question that we wanted to talk about today: the question of radio as radical education itself. What does it mean, where does it come from, what is its history?

2 Miss Read, the Berlin Art Book Fair and Festival, https://missread.com (last accessed: June 2024).

Grégoire Rousseau

Exactly, that's something that is very important to us: to understand the history of radio and especially of radio as a political form of collective organization. That is essential. And it can be traced back to the first article on Brecht discussed in the publication by Anja Steidinger. We can look, of course, at Frantz Fanon's book *A Dying Colonialism* and specifically the chapter "This is the Voice of Algeria" to discover how the radio as a technical device was crucial in organizing the struggle for liberation, how radio was instrumental as it "brought the nation to life and endowed every citizen with a new status."[3] In terms of technologies, I'd like to mention the very influential work of the Japanese artist and activist Tetsuo Kogawa, who explored how to reverse the roles within radio as a means of communication; the idea of the broadcaster and the listener, but maybe of reversing the roles as well. In the 1980s, Japanese "free radio" activists wanted to eliminate the idea of broadcasting to experiment with narrowcasting. They wanted to deconstruct

the principle of central transmitter broadcasting to multiple isolated receivers. Kogawa thought that to initiate close relations between radio community members one could visit the studio and participate in live radio conditions. Narrowcasting is based on relatively basic electronic components, so everyone could build their own radio device and transmit within a couple of kilometers. They made clear that technology is a collective practice that must be reappropriated within public space, and that a truly radical technology produces new expertise and knowledge to be shared at large. That movement inspires what online radio can imagine in terms of organization and technological infrastructure.

3 Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, Grove Press, 1965. p. 96.

Nora Sternfeld

How would you describe that infrastructure and its developments?

Grégoire Rousseau

I think it's very important to keep in mind that radio practices transform as the form of radio itself changes. What are the implications of the radio being the size of a fridge in the 1940s, then something that could fit in a jacket pocket in the 1960s, and now fits inside a cheap mobile phone?

We're trying to understand how these various inputs can form a new practice.

This new practice incorporates the idea of the trans-local; to have many forms of radio. For example, you mentioned *lumbung Radio,* a network of community radios. We consider a radio any collective that produces sound. It's not only this formal idea of the radio: a studio and station with an antenna on the roof that broadcasts on AM/FM frequencies. We think of radio as any collective that wants to share their audio production on a regular basis. For us, that is the definition of radio. That is very important; trying to understand how online

radio changes the relationship and the production relationship between the different radios. At the same time, this way of coming together online can also manifest itself in the physical space. That's why *Miss Read's* invitation to be the radio for the Art Book Fair was very important to us; so that we could all come together and have those workshops, lectures, performances, and DJ sets. In terms of radical education, I think it's very important to consider the radio as a long-term collaboration between professional and personal. It's not a project in capitalistic terms and management terms; something with a precise timeline, with a precise budget, with people doing precise tasks. This is, I think, an important aspect of radical education that can happen in radio practices.

Nora Sternfeld

One of the practices that was also at the beginning of the concept for our book was that of *Oda Projesi* in Istanbul in the 1990s and their work on an archive of their projects. Their article in this book is a conversation between Özge Açıkkol and Seda Yıldız. They talk about an educational radio workshop in Istanbul. And listening to them last year at the *Miss Read* Festival made me realize that this would not be possible in this moment, It brought up the question of the power of archives as pockets of radically imagining other possibilities. We already talked about how radio practices can, I think, in a very specific moment in time, be a way of responding; also responding in a world that is very much talking to us and making us listen. Even though this world pretends to invite us to participate by clicking on something, we are actually reduced to listeners of not only the existing truth regime, but of ubiquitous publicity. We are constantly put in the position of listeners, even of the tea bags that are calling to us in the supermarket. And in that regard, working together to find ways to speak out, to speak out to an open public, working on other means of production for this public is, I think, a practice that could be very interesting if it were done collectively. That was and is emancipatory in different places around the world.

Grégoire Rousseau

Yes, and I would like to emphasize that it's not just a voice responding; it's a polyphonic voice responding. We try to include as many perspectives as possible in the production of this radio. But this manifestation of radio as the idea of the trans-local is an idea of decentralization. This is a very important mode of operation for *lumbung Radio* and *Station of Commons.* That's what we are trying to produce as a collective.

Nora Sternfeld

Let's talk about the articles in our book. We already talked about your article about your work with *Station of Commons* and *lumbung Radio,* and I mentioned the important impulse that came from *Oda Projesi.* Besides these two, what else do we have in the book?

Grégoire Rousseau

We have in the book the contribution from Nikolay Oleynikov, Alessandra Pomarico and Guilia Crisci in the form of a discussion. They address radio as an 'insurgent practice', a space 'to cultivate pedagogy as politics'. Moreover, they reflect on the history of radio such as the Zapatistas Radio *Rebelde;* what can we learn from these, and how to think and use radio practice in current contexts. I am glad to read about the *Firefly Frequency* collective and its members Silvia Maglioni and Graeme Thomson. We had the chance to work together for *documenta fifteen.* They are very active in *lumbung radio.* During the *Miss Read* Festival 2023, Nikolay Oleynikov and Alessandra Pomarico had an amazing presentation on the work of *Ultra-Red* which is a milestone in terms of the politics of collective sound practice.

Nora Sternfeld

Then maybe I can also offer a sneak peek of the article by Anja Steidinger who is a professor here at the *HFBK Hamburg.* She will, in her article, consider the relationship between Bertolt Brecht's approaches to education, as estrangement but, of course, also as collective practices, and as ways to reappropriate the medium, which is another very important aspect. Anja is thinking about

radio as a medium to be reappropriated in the very present in correlation with historical texts by Brecht and Enzensberger. We have another article by my colleague Julia Stolba. Julia Stolba is a researcher here at the *HFBK Hamburg* and part of her research was also related to an archive of art education projects, called *"Kunstvermittlung"* in German, in Vienna in the late 1980s. In this context, she has been working on an archive of historical material about educational projects *(Archiv der Vermittlung)*[4]: She describes a sound project with young workers and talks about how they express their thoughts, conflicts, and the problems of the society of their time in a music project. We are also very interested in the history of *Radio Alice...*

4 https://archivdervermittlung.at (last accessed: June 2024).

Grégoire Rousseau

Yes, once more we have a milestone here. *Radio Alice* has been very important and influential in considering the role of radio in political activism.

> Actually, *Radio Alice* was just one part of a far larger movement. The role of the radio was very experimental and at the same time very grounded because it was very artistic, playing more with sound and totally breaking down the usual understanding of radio as "information followed by commercials followed by some music."
>
> > It is a means of political organizing. People would phone in to the radio station and say, "The cops are coming this way. Then we should organize that way, and so on." So of course, it was an amazing real-time form of communication between the activists.
>
> As you can imagine, after a few weeks, the police raided the radio station and closed down its operation. Now, it's important to mention that there have been other radio stations (for example Radio Populare, *Radio Città Futura* and *Radio Onda Rossa,* to name a few...). *Radio Alice* is just the tip of the iceberg, the most well-known or visible.

Nora Sternfeld

I hope that many people will want to read and hear more now. We can promise that it will be a very interesting experience. Thank you for this conversation.

Grégoire Rousseau

Thank you.

Archival Waves. When the past becomes present in the archives of *Oda Projesi*

Seda Yıldız
Özge Açıkkol

In a conversation that touches on artists' self-compiled archives, the possibilities and impossibilities of documenting and transmitting social practice, reactivating archives, and the institutional challenges involved, Özge Açıkkol *(Oda Projesi)* and Seda Yıldız unpack the archives of the *Oda Projesi* collective.

Oda Projesi is an artist collective based in İstanbul and Berlin composed of Özge Açıkkol, Güneş Savaş, and Seçil Yersel, who turned their collaboration into a project in 2000. From January 2000 their space in Galata functioned as a non-profit independent space, hosting projects, gatherings, and actions until 2005, when the collective was evicted from the apartment due to gentrification. Since then, *Oda Projesi* has been mobile. It continues to raise questions about space and place, creating relationship models using different media such as radio stations, books, postcards, and newspapers and giving shape to different meeting points.

Photo from the archive of Oda Projesi in Galata, İstanbul, 2022, Seda Yıldız

Seda Yıldız

Özge, let's start with the *Oda Projesi* archives. In my brief encounter with your self-compiled archive located in an office space in İstanbul, I was alone with a dozen boxes carrying traces of the last 23 years of your artistic practice: boxes of photographs, videos, children's drawings, personal notebooks, press releases, correspondence with institutions... What is this archive? What has been possible for you to document, archive, and transfer from your collaborative artistic practice, and what hasn't?

Özge Açıkkol

First, I'd like to concentrate on 23 years of practice and what it means today. We're still working together, so it's still "an archive in progress." I think there's a big difference between that and an archive of a practice that no longer exists. These 23 years are neither in the distant past, nor very recent. We made use of technologies like photographic slides, negative films, mini DVs, mini discs, analogue photographs, CDs, handwritten papers and letters, and email printouts. There's a lot of physical alongside digital material and this already creates differences and inequities for archiving the items. In the beginning we had less visual material than we had in the last decade.

One reason for this is not only limited technologies, but also because during those early years we didn't really consider our practice a "practice." It was based not on structure but more on spontaneous and intuitive acts that we did together with our neighbors. We had lots of gatherings that weren't meant to be artistic productions but blends of daily life and organized events; maybe we could call it daily life-specific art. And to initiate those encounters, we used artistic means as tools. We also invited people from different disciplines and nationalities to collaborate with us. Back then İstanbul was like a hub of artists who had more possibilities for participating in international residencies and projects. This is no longer the case due to political and financial reasons. So we mediated between people whose practice was related to ours and our neighbors'. Therefore, we were also responsible for translating and transferring dialogues or knowledge between the two parties. Still, everything was going pretty smoothly, not forced with rigid schedules or structures, we were talking and negotiating a lot, and most importantly taking plenty of time for that.

Our projects in the neighborhood over the first year weren't properly documented and weren't intended to be archived, so this material is more like ephemera or souvenirs to preserve than an archival structure. At the end of the day, how do you archive or document a relationship?

Seda, what was your motivation behind examining *Oda Projesi* and the archives? When you took the time to explore our archives on your own, what were your first feelings or perceptions about the material?

Seda Yıldız

Our conversation is a continuation of my research interest in self-compiled artist's archives. Since 2019, I have been collaborating with the Belgrade-based artist collective *Škart,* extensively working and thinking about possibilities and impossibilities of documenting, sharing, mediating, and archiving their socially engaged practice, which is often not of a material nature. As an independent curator, it's crucial for me to lend visibility to marginalized practices that for various reasons do not attract the notice of institutions. I follow Zdenka Badovinac's way of thinking about self-built artist's archives: particularly in countries that lack sustainable institutional infrastructures (we can count Serbia and Turkey in the list), the responsibility of archiving is left to the artists alone; they have to historicize their own practice.

I take responsibility for collaborating with artists to enable such parallel histories to become visible. This was the reason for the urgency behind producing the book that covers *Škart's* 33 years of artistic practice.[1] As to how this relates to *Oda Projesi:* A year later I was invited to contribute to the writing series *A Plural Perspective on the History of Contemporary Art in Turkey* initiated by the Turkish online contemporary art platform *Argonotlar.*[2] The idea was to produce commissioned articles on a selection of artworks and artists. It struck me that in this compiled list there were only a few performance artworks and no examples of social practice, which was quite telling about the status of social practice; its invisibility. I wanted to contribute to this attempt at "history writing" by introducing what is missing: *Oda Projesi.*

What might be the reasons that a women's collective that has been active for 23 years in İstanbul was lost from view? I'm also curious

to hear your thoughts on this. Honestly, I didn't have detailed information about your practice until we started our extensive conversations in July 2022. There might be reasons for this–the generational difference between us–I wasn't able to witness the encounters you were creating in the Galata neighborhood between 2000 and 2005. But then, as I researched, it was curious to see that not much has been written on your work after that period. Claire Bishop and Maria Lind were maybe the first names that cover your practice in detail, but within its location, where the practice was rooted, it was somehow not approached. My motivation was to provide a deeper look into your practice that remained less visible, particularly after 2005.

1 https://www.onomatopee.net/exhibition/building-human-relations-through-art/ (last accessed: June 2024).

2 https://argonotlar.com/ (last accessed: June 2024).

My first encounter with the *Oda Projesi* archive was this summer when I visited your studio space in İstanbul. I was left alone with boxes, without orientation. I enjoyed unpacking boxes on my own, following traces of the projects. Often, they had basic info like which box belongs to which project, with the year and title etc., but for a site-context specific, process-based practice as yours, I felt that looking at images, relics was not doing justice to the work. I had a strong need to know more about the participation, the voices of participants, the contextual framework, and the localities that you operated within and from. The documents alone, as a form of representation, do not reflect the multi-faceted relationships produced together with the participants, which is at the core of your practice. These were my initial thoughts.

I'm keen to think about this gap between the sense of presence social practice generates and its documentation; it creates a

speculative position for the curatorial. Since you mentioned that the archive is still being shaped, and growing, I wonder if the question of documentation and archiving is something that you think of as a collective. What are the strategies you develop to share and pass on your diffuse art practice?

Özge Açıkkol

Seda, you described very well that our archival material is incomplete, and cannot reveal the whole landscape, but at the same time it has a kind of historical value, since those places and the people have changed. The places are totally gentrified and the kids in the neighborhood who were the core participants in the projects are now raising their own kids. They carry the memory in themselves.

We also had some interviews we recorded with women and children. The radio project *101.7EFEM*[3] is especially interesting in that sense; you literally hear the voices of the participants and it's not like material from the past. When you listen to it, it feels like it's happening in the present. I think this is closely related to the strong materiality of the sound that leaves the temporal and spatial aspect to the listener's imagination or interpretation.

3 For the radio project *101.7EFEM* (in collaboration with *Bookstr* and *THEN*) *Oda Projesi* space was turned into a radio studio in 2005. We produced a radio program based on interviews, discussions, field recordings, sound experiments, jingles, gossip, music, live events. The content was essentially based on gentrification concerns and our reflection through the project. The neighbors hosted talk shows, music programs, live cooking sessions, and the kids interviewed the shop owners in the neighborhood. Among the participants were musicians, other artist-run spaces, as well as the real estate agents; we had a vast range of people from different backgrounds to talk about gentrification. At the end of four weeks we had 100 hours of recordings.

There are various reasons why the *Oda Projesi* archival material is incomplete; the projects weren't documented with the purpose of creating an archive, since we didn't have a structured

projection about the future existence or, in more contemporary terms, the "sustainability" of the project. Everything was planned and built in the moment. Archive in the sense of "accumulation" was not on our agenda, we were acting instinctively.

But there are also other reasons for this, mostly related to the privacy of our participants–our neighbors–because the actions we were taking together were integrated in their and our daily lives. Even in some cases when there is documentation or an outcome, we didn't share them with audiences because of the arrangements we had with the people involved. There was a project by Orhan Cem Çetin (as photographer) and Belmin Söylemez (director) *The Photography of My Life* (2003)[4] about taking the neighbors' portraits in places and in costumes that they chose, and they didn't want others to see their fantasies about their own portraits. The process was filmed and showed not the final results, but only the process and rehearsals of the photo shooting sessions. The prints of the photographs were ceremonially given to the neighbors as gifts.

4 *The Photography of My Life* by Orhan Cem Çetin and Belmin Söylemez, part of *Oda Meetings* series within the frame of the 8th İstanbul Biennial, 2003, İstanbul.

Another example is that as part of the *Cultural Agencies*[5] project, we were interviewing mostly the elderly inhabitants of the Gülsuyu-Gülensu neighborhood of İstanbul, which was built by its inhabitants as a shantytown in the 1950s. It was an oral history video documentation. We recorded and edited the interviews and handed over the video tapes to the neighborhood association. That was private material of a highly politicized neighborhood, to be decided to show or not be shown by the interviewees themselves. It was again a gift from us to Gülsuyu-Gülensu; we didn't question the gift's future usage or visibility. These may be invisible in the art world but they exist somewhere in the private archives of the people who were involved in the actions, for which we only used our expertise with

the artistic tools or means that we were capable of. Here we can talk about a deliberate "invisibility" since this kind of social engagement requires an ethical approach; care about the politics of images or documentation. Our mutual relationship was beyond an "image" or documentation, which had the potential of ruining the trust built between us and the communities we worked with. It would be ideal if we could work on the *Oda Projesi* archive together with the people that we had interactions with through these projects.

5 *Cultural Agencies*, one year project, *Oda Projesi*, co-curated with Nikolaus Hirsch and Philipp Misselwitz, Maltepe/Gülsuyu-Gülensu, 2009–2010, İstanbul.

Another reason for not creating "proper" documentation is that we never felt like an "institution" and therefore didn't take the "professional" step of documenting that that involves. We were the ones executing projects, documenting them, and even writing about ourselves. Similarly, now we are trying to compile our archives ourselves. Except for a few articles, we didn't get much critical feedback from the local art milieu, but we did from the Western scene. A lot of PhD students and academics interviewed us; we were approached more as a "case" than an art project when you look at the specificity of the texts written on *Oda Projesi.* In the early 2000s, "collectivity, community art and social engagement, art in public space" were the favorite topics of Western European institutions; this was also the reason we were invited to carry out projects in different places around Europe. We also had a considerable amount of photo documentation made professionally by the institutions then. It's interesting to see this difference of "quality" between our self-compiled archive and the institutions' project documentations.

After the 2010s there was a considerable loss of interest in social contexts, as the invitations we received from the institutions reveal. It's just an observation, but maybe it was another turn in the general tendency towards dialogic and community-based work. I'm curious to hear how you see it. Having closer contact with *Oda Projesi* and *Škart,* do you see continuity or ruptures

when you witness today's tendencies towards social engagement and art?

Seda Yıldız

This "favorite topic of Western European institutions" observation is an interesting one, Özge. It's true that it's now more difficult, if not impossible, to continue social practice in Turkey, which has no sustainable infrastructure for art and culture and the few functioning institutions are apparently not interested in the questions that are relevant to our practice. But what I find more interesting is the diminishing interest in your art practice in Western Europe (where you and I are also based) nowadays. I'm not sure if we can say this for socially engaged practices in general; for example, relational and participatory projects are still common within biennial structure. You often joined international biennials, too.

"Collectives" became a hot topic with *documenta fifteen;* it's also interesting that collectives are newly being "discovered" in Western Europe. In geographies with limited infrastructural sources, people work as collectives as a means of survival. We've seen this in the Balkans since the 1960s; there's an excellent history of subversive, collective practices. Honestly, I'm not sure if there is a genuine interest in learning from these histories, in applying these approaches to our current troubled world. I think there's a big gap here, in theory and practice, from an institutional point of view. Do the institutions, as we know them today, allow for ways to work so unconventionally at all?

Another thing, it's also challenging for institutions to deal with the level of openness in projects like yours; there is a curatorial fear of approaches to socially engaged practice that is not material; the questions of "how" to show and "what" to show, etc. These require unconventional curatorial methods. But within the *Oda Projesi* context, when we, for many months, tried to reach various institutions, particularly in Germany and Turkey, searching for funding

to realize a project to re-activate and share your archive, we didn't get any positive response. More than the nature of social practice, which is marginalized anyway, the location aspect (the fact that you are an artist collective from İstanbul) was not considered "relevant" anymore, I felt. More than examining the modus operandi of a women's collective that's been active for two decades and how it manages to survive with this background, the work was reduced to its geographic content, time, and space and now these institutions are more concerned with other urgent topics (decolonization, for example). It feels like there is almost no space for feminist collective practices where we are now. I feel these issues that we deal with in our practice beyond institutional walls, in small groups, circles, localities, are not taken "seriously." Which may be good for a reason; how do we make this contradiction productive?

Speaking of gaps, I have a conspiracy theory, tell me if you disagree: As women artists you have your own time; your bodily time, a biological rhythm that may follow a different beat than that dictated by the art world. Three of you are mothers. This is evident in the production frequency of your practice after the 2010s as well as the topics you focused on: invisible domestic labor, motherhood, care work. Do you think this gap in your practice might be another reason that *Oda Projesi* remains under the radar? I assume that institutions didn't take notice of your work after 2005 unless you produced projects in the biennial context. However, in this period you continued to create other encounters, circles with other women for example, but as long as they are not documented it goes unnoticed. The art world is interested in materiality.

For a couple of years, you've attempted to reactivate the archive; organizing gatherings, also inviting other practitioners to join the dialogue around the archive. What is the urgency of revisiting the archive for you now?

Özge Açıkkol

You're right, at first, we were rejected from a residency program after we became mothers, due to the physical conditions of the space because we wanted our very young children to join us. But the rejection also came with a question, "How would you work if your children are with you anyway?" I was a very young mother of a 10-month-old baby. It was a little bit of a shock for me as I thought that the residencies would indeed be suitable for all mothers with young children.

After becoming aware of this unfortunate condition, we started working on this topic, and we continue to do so. This difference in rhythm is also very obvious when you work as a collective. We needed a different time frame than the intense production that goes on in the art system. Again, the invisibility of this work we did with women is also related to privacy concerns; our main idea was to create a dialogue between women without thinking about making it public. Although "the private is political," the private is private and it's a sensitive issue and there's always a problem about sharing such material without aestheticizing it.

After 10 years we only managed to publish the *Anne(x)* newspaper[6] at the *17th İstanbul Biennial* (2022), because we needed time to process the material we collected, which is composed of roundtable talks between women who are mostly mothers and work in the cultural field. The Book of Professions[7] project is also another part of our practice that is related to tactics used to counter the precariousness of the art world. We get our share of this, too, because our project is rather "immaterial" in a way. This is the discursive part of our project, which is otherwise more spatial, relational, and site-specific.

This "closed-circuit" aspect of the project is also what led us to reactivate our archive in such a way that we could share our projects with a wider audience. In recent years I realized that we also needed to make intergenerational transfers. There's a new generation that didn't

witness our times and our 23-year-long practice. We feel responsible for transferring our archive, which is not only an archive of artistic production but also of urban history. As you said, it can function as a tactical guide; as an "open source for a feminist mode of working together."

6 *Anne(x)* no: 7 (2022) is a newspaper about *Oda Projesi's* research on "motherhood and production," which was published as an outcome of ten years of dialogue with women from various backgrounds in the cultural field who are mothers and non-mothers. Siehe: https://bienal.iksv.org/en/17b-artists/oda-projesi (last accessed: June 2024).

7 https://bookofprofessions.blogspot.com/ (last accessed: June 2024).

Seda Yıldız

Exactly: approaching the archive as a guide to building survival tactics and creating alliances. A form of learning through the experiences of a women's art collective that survived for decades in turbulent times thus adding to the value of intergenerational exchange.

I'd like to return to the radio project in relation to transfer of material and documentation, as you emphasized the "presentness" in the radio project *101.7EFEM.* In the program, participants and your neighbors present and speak for themselves instead of you, Oda, speaking about them. You speak together tshrough radio. They also host programs and become your co-creators in cohabiting the radio space this time. I feel this is a crucial aspect in the methodology of *Oda Projesi;* an attempt to go beyond representation.

Later you continued using radio as an artistic tool and for instance contributed to *Radyo Bienal* initiated by *İstanbul Biennale* in 2022 with a parasite radio show, so to speak, a "Radio Within a Radio." This means extending an invitation; inviting other women to reflect on invisible labor and motherhood and to voice their experiences through radio. You ask questions such as whether there is a connection

between invisible domestic labor and the invisibility of the radio; or how can invisible labor have visibility within the invisible radio field? I'm curious about the answers you came up with, and also in a broad sense, the potential of using radio as an artistic tool in your practice, a space to cohabit. What possibilities does this space entail? I think radio has a big potential in making art public, it is a mode of communication and dissemination beyond narrow institutional frameworks of exhibition and mediation.

Özge Açıkkol

When we think of the women in the neighborhood, the situation where they only use their voice on the radio and not necessarily become visible was comfortable for them. It was momentary, pure freedom speaking to a public without being defined. But we shouldn't forget that this is also the result of trusting each other after an eight-year relationship as neighbors. Most of the *Oda Projesi* projects in the neighborhood of Galata were very much local and realized within a closed circle, but the collected radio material later became a base for us when we continued our programs in *Açık Radyo* in İstanbul. This means this recorded material in its very present time became open to a broader public and to future audiences. Also, with our participation the very site-specific aspect of the radio project shifted to *Açık Radyo.* The radio, *101.7EFEM* broadcast was only limited to the courtyard surrounding the buildings around our space. Then after we lost our space due to gentrification, we found ourselves in *Açık Radyo,* an independent radio station based in İstanbul, and started to make weekly, rather professional programs away from our DIY radio studio. We named our program "Radio within a Radio" to make it clear that we differentiate ourselves from professional radio; we started to play with the "perfect" sound of the radio by creating sound collages and tried to tell the stories that were collected/archived from *101.7EFEM* project, also reflecting in our present condition being host in a "real" local radio station.

The agency of radio gives us freedom for the uses of the language; a possibility to play with the language and deconstruct it in a way that the very learned and opposed ways of transferring a story/history or a discourse disappear; the language opens to millions of ways of telling things. The question of invisibility is also playing with the language and the meanings; it invites the listener to think about, imagine, and explore different levels of invisibility, primarily invisible labor but also the physicality of the radio, or the invisibility of the audience. But also, it was a question about what visibility means and how it is gained. There might not be a "proper" answer to the question, but we used a format in which we pose one question every week during the *İstanbul Biennale* public program that was moved to the radio space because the pandemic was not over yet. Posing questions is a way of communicating with the listener when there is no possibility for mutual connection. Maybe another question here could be: "How can we create a mutual relationship in the radio space?" This is also an urgent question while reflecting on the methodology of "radio as radical education."

101.7EFEM radio project (in collaboration with Bookstr and *THEN*) at Oda Projesi space, İstanbul, 2005.

Gülsuyu-Gülensu Dükkânı [Shop] used as the main base for the oral history interviews during Cultural Agencies project, Oda Projesi, Nikolaus Hirsch and Philipp Misselwitz, Maltepe/Gülsuyu-Gülensu, 2009–2010, İstanbul.

Outside of *101.7EFEM* radio project
(in collaboration with Bookstr and *THEN*)
at Oda Projesi space, İstanbul, 2005.

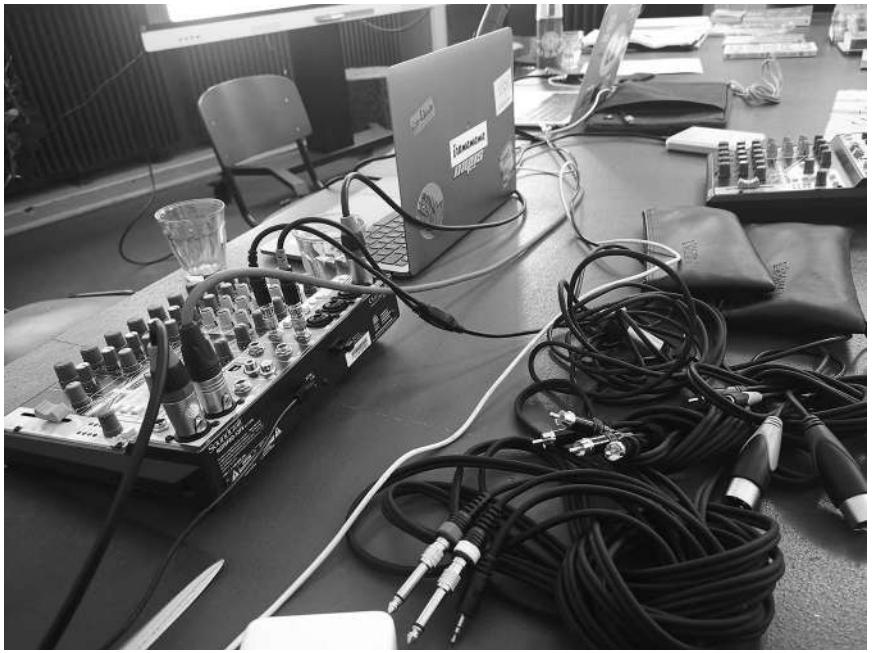
Inside of *101.7EFEM* radio project
(in collaboration with Bookstr and *THEN*)
at Oda Projesi space, İstanbul, 2005.

Anne (x) no: 7, (detail: page 10),
published as part of 17th İstanbul Biennale,
2022, İstanbul.

Anja Steidinger

Commoning Voices. Operational radio and video production as a vast multi-channel system

With Bertolt Brecht's 1932 theory of radio as a point of departure, in this article I would like to reflect on the positions of speakers and critically examine the development of video technology as radical pedagogy beyond radio, which aims to give voice to the voiceless. Thinking from today's perspective, I will subsequently explore updating of the concept of operational video and radio production for educating the commons, especially against the backdrop of advanced communications media and the rise of right-wing populist, misogynistic, racist, and antisemitic factions of the public.



lumbung radio mit
Pascale Obolo, HFBK 2022

VOICES BEHIND THE MICROPHONE: RADIO AS A DIALOGIC INTERCOM

A year before the Nazis' seizure of power in 1933, in his essay "The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication," the writer and founder of epic theater Bertolt Brecht articulated the new possibilities of a future radio as a participatory and collective medium for transmitting information. Ten years earlier, in 1923, with the introduction of German radio as an

entertainment medium for the masses, the program was meant to "entertain and slightly educate"[1] according to the advertisement for the first radio broadcast from the Vox-Haus at Potsdamer Platz in Berlin.

As radio commissioner, Hans Bredow summarized the intention of the new entertainment medium as follows: "Recreation, entertainment, and variety divert the mind from the onerous worries of everyday life, refresh and increase the joy of work; but a joyless people becomes reluctant to work. Herein lies the task of the radio."[2] Radio was preceded by radio telegraphy with the possibility of bidirectional communication of commands and messages[3] during World War I and to implement violent German colonial policy, for example in Namibia.[4]

This radio function as a dialogic intercom, previously used only by the military, is what Bertolt Brecht referred to in 1932, in order to critically examine the one-sided entertainment character of radio:

> *"As for this purpose of the radio in life, in my opinion, it cannot consist of merely making public life more pleasant."*[5] *[…] "A proposal for repurposing radio: Radio must be transformed from a distribution device into a communication device." […] "Radio could be the most magnificent communication device of public life, a vast system of channels–that is, it would be if it were able not only to broadcast but also to receive, thus not only allowing the listener to hear but also to speak and not isolating him, but connecting him. The radio would have to move away from being a supplier and make the listener a supplier." […] "As for the technology to be developed for all such enterprises, it is oriented toward the main objective that the audience must not only be instructed but also instruct."*[6]

With a multi-directional teaching and learning practice, already hinting at the emancipatory potentials of social coexistence through active reciprocal broadcasting and receiving with reflective feedback approaches, Brecht refers to a fundamental point of critical pedagogy:

> *"[The] teacher-student relationship [is recognized] as an active relationship of reciprocal relations."*[7]

Paradigmatically, Nora Sternfeld starts her book *Das pädagogische Unverhältnis: Lehren und Lernen bei Jacques Rancière, Antonio Gramsci und Foucault* with this quote from Antonio Gramsci and focuses on the reciprocity that thus enters political pedagogy. She summarizes it succinctly, "Knowledge transfer and education move away from the traditional logic of

1 Alexander Kulpock, "Zerstreuen und ein wenig bilden: In der Geschichte des Radios spiegelt sich die deutsche Geschichte," *Das Parlament*, no. 11, 14 March 2005. *https://webarchiv.bundestag.de/archive/2007/0206/dasparlament/2005/11/DaspolitischeBuch/030.html* (last accessed: June 2024).

2 Hans Bredow, "Dem deutschen Rundfunk zum Geleit," quoted in Christoph Borbach, "Experimentelle Praktiken: Apparative Radioexperimente in der Weimarer Republik," *Navigationen: Zeitschrift für Medien- und Kulturwissenschaften*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2017. p. 120.

3 Ibid., p. 119.

4 Reinhard Klein-Arendt, Peter Sebald, *Kamina–des Kaisers Großfunkstation in Afrika: Telefunken in der deutschen Kolonie Togo 1911–1914, Fotos und Dokumente*, Maisbach, 2019.

5 Bertolt Brecht, "Der Rundfunk als Kommunikationsapparat: Rede über die Funktion des Rundfunks" (1932), Lorenz Engell et al. (eds.), *Kursbuch Medienkultur: Die maßgeblichen Theorien von Brecht bis Baudrillard*, Stuttgart, 2000. p. 259.

6 Ibid., p. 260 ff

7 Antonio Gramsci, *Gefängnishefte: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 6, Hamburg, 1994. p. 1335, quoted from Nora Sternfeld, *Das pädagogische Unverhältnis: Lehren und Lernen bei Jacques Rancière, Antonio Gramsci und Foucault*, Vienna, 2009. p. 1.

a one-way street—where some have knowledge and others need it—and expose themselves to the risk of possible oncoming traffic."[8]

The quote by Gramsci is from one of the essays that he wrote between 1929 and 1935 while a political prisoner in fascist Italy. This was the same time when Bertolt Brecht wrote his theory of radio. Just a year after its publication, the proposals for such a radio were pushed aside by the Nazi propaganda of *Gleichschaltung*[9] and Brecht had to flee from the Nazis in Germany.

Much later, in the 1970s, video collectives took up Brecht's proposal and made it productive for pedagogical and collective media practice.

In addition to Brecht, reference points for this new form of media work included Walter Benjamin's essays "The Author as Producer" (1934) and "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935), alternative cultural productions from the 1920s, writings by the Russian avant-garde and the cinema movement around Dziga Vertov, as well as formats like workers' newspapers and workers' art clubs.[10] But even when communication is two-way, the question of the conditions of speaking cannot be ignored.[11] Many projects

8 Ibid., p. 1.

9 Slogan of Eugen Hadamovsky, director of the Nazi Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft: "One people! One empire! One radio!" cf. *https://www.student-online.net/Publikationen/356/#Brecht* (last accessed: June 2024).

10 Katja Reichard, "Wandernde Kameras: Operative Medienpraxis, Projektarbeit und kollektive Organisierung im Berliner Märkischen Viertel der 1970er Jahre," Tom Holert (ed.): *Das Erziehungsbild: Zur visuellen Kultur des Pädagogischen*, Vienna, 2010. p. 315–335.

11 Cf. Katja Reichard, "Uffdecken der janz kleenen persönlichen Scheisse: Operative Medienpraxis, Projektarbeit und kollektive Organisierung im Märkischen Viertel der 70er Jahre," *transform eipcp*, 2008, *https://transform.eipcp.net/Actions/exhibitions/networkconvention/reichard.html* (last accessed: June 2024).

from the 1920s through the 1970s to the present reveal the problematic role of assisting professionals. For example, in the texts accompanying her film with warehouse worker Christa S., the documentary filmmaker Rosemarie Blank mentions the decisive role of viewpoint in a production and communication event.[12] Through her previously set goal, even if the form of communication is designed to be reciprocal and participatory, it can still constitute and consolidate power relations unilaterally. In this sense, a lively and conflicting discourse on the speaker's position has developed beyond the question of "Who speaks?"[13]

FROM RADIO TO VIDEO: OPERATIONAL AND COLLECTIVE MEDIA PRACTICE

And here we turn to a new medium: Video is more similar to radio than to film in that it has the technical capability of feedback and direct image transmission. For this reason, video is also referred to as a two-way medium.

After portable recording media became affordable for a broader consumer audience in the late 1960s, various groups with very different motivations in North America, Europe, Latin America, and other countries began actively using video for information exchange, political agitation, and artistic experiments.[14]

In post-war West Germany, this collectively organized information and media production and its distribution formed as a countermovement to the dominant

12 Rosemarie Blank, *Videoarbeit mit Arbeiterfrauen: 'Arbeit und Freizeit' der Lagerarbeiterin Christa*, Medienladen Hamburg, 1978. p. 26.

13 Anja Steidinger, *Unbehagen, Selbst-Repräsentationen von Krisen*, Munich, 2015. p. 57.

14 Ron Burnett, "Video: The Politics of Culture and Community" (1996), Thomas Waugh, Michael Brendan Baker, Ezra Winton (eds.): *Challenge for Change: Activist Documentary at the National Film Board of Canada*, Montreal, 2010. p. 238.

traditional bourgeois public. The political discourse of media collectives focused on creating critical publics against authoritarian university policies, the Vietnam War, and the influence of the Springer media group in West Germany. At the same time, feminist media groups formed, which addressed the role of women and structural injustices in society.

The mainstream culture industry with its media apparatus, also called the "consciousness industry" by Hans Magnus Enzensberger, was accused by the left of manipulating the masses.[15] The alternative media initiatives of that era are close to the manipulation thesis since they aimed to establish new and different truths as a counter-public. Workshops, sit-ins, and teach-ins accompanied these self-organized emancipatory processes at a time when critical pedagogy was also established. In his 1970 essay "Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien,"[16] Enzensberger refers to what he considers an overly brief critique of manipulation, advocating that it be countered with a more diverse and truer production of information that can be taken into one's own hands.

Here too we encounter the question of manipulation, which also applies to self-organized media productions. Enzensberger is not only aware of this, but advocates for its targeted use:

> *"Manipulation means purposeful technical intervention in given material. The use of media presupposes manipulation. The most elementary procedures of media production, from choosing the medium itself to recording, editing, synchronization, mixing, and distribution, are all interventions in the existing material […]. Unmanipulated writing, filming, and broadcasting do not exist […]. Thus, the question is not whether the media are manipulated or not, but who manipulates them. A revolutionary design need not make the manipulators disappear; on the contrary, it should turn everyone into a manipulator."*[17]

15 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien" (1970), Lorenz Engell et al. (eds.): *Kursbuch Medienkultur: die maßgeblichen Theorien von Brecht bis Baudrillard*, Stuttgart, 2000. p. 268.

16 Ibid.

Tom Holert summarizes the diverse tendencies, demands, and promises of the then-new technological formats of audiovisual production in artistic, educational, institutional, and self-organized areas in the 1970s in his essay "'A live feedback of You in the Now, alternating with broadcast in the central monitor': Video, Fernsehen, Selbsterfahrung und Erziehung um 1970." He identifies two main positions: a technologically enthusiastic future scenario for society and education, and alternative, critical, and operative media practice.[18]

For many years, I have been preoccupied with the question arising from Enzensberger's reflections on the pedagogical and artistic tasks of intervening in reality and (counter-) manipulation: To what extent should and can the aim be to turn every individual into a manipulator? And what does that mean today?

17 Ibid., p. 271.

18 Titles such as Nam Jun Paik's essay "Expanded Education for the Paperless Society" and Buckminster Fuller's "Education Automation" illustrate a tendency toward a euphoric atmosphere of change in media technology, mentioned in Tom Holert, "'A live feedback of You in the Now, alternating with broadcast in the central monitor': Video, Fernsehen, Selbsterfahrung und Erziehung um 1970," Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, MUMOK (ed.), Cologne, 2010. p. 37–53.

HAVE THE DREAMS COME TRUE?

At the end of the 1990s, in the context of criticism of globalization, projects like Indymedia and radio and video activism became significant exceptions and yet, as Indymedia shows, precursors to the development of social media platforms like X (formerly known as Twitter). We are no longer dealing with counter-publics versus mainstream publics but with many sub-publics, including online publics.

With technological development within a society, also referred to as an information, network, and knowledge society (Castells/Bell/Drucker), the production processes change, and from the 1990s on it can be observed that Brecht's proposal for a reciprocal communication device, in which participating individuals can be both producers and consumers of information, has been realized with the internet as the social web–albeit within the capitalist logic of neoliberal economic policy. The author Tiziana Terranova describes the new digital workers, the so-called prosumers of the digital economy, for whom the boundaries between work and leisure dissolve, in which work no longer feels like work. Felix Stalder presents two directions of political development[19] emerging from the so-called culture of digitality and articulates the resulting contradiction: one has post-democratic traits, capitalizes any form of social interaction, and neutralizes any protest as no alternative to the prevailing neoliberal capitalism. In contrast, the commons are aimed at reordering the conditions of democracy and building on institutions located beyond the market and state. Economic, social, and ecological dimensions are of primary importance here.[20]

19 Felix Stalder, *Kultur der Digitalität*, Berlin, 2016. p. 205.

20 Ibid., p. 280.

MEDIA-MAKING, BECOMING A MANIPULATOR, AND COMMONS AS RADICAL EDUCATION

In the winter semester of 2022, following *documenta fifteen* and within the framework of the art education major at the *HFBK Hamburg*, *Stations of Commons*[21], specifically Grégoire Rousseau, Eddie Choo Wen Yi (Uniarts Helsinki), and Juan Gomez (HEAD Geneva) offered the *lumbung Radio* Workshop. The proposal was to "understand radio as a medium and as a collective educational and artistic practice for commoning education and educating the commons."[22]

Indeed, the workshop took place at a time when the debate had come to a head over the antisemitic imagery of *Taring Padi's* mural at *documenta fifteen*, the awarding of the *HFBK Hamburg* guest professorship to Reza Afisina and Iswanto Hartono of the Indonesian artists' collective *ruangrupa*, and the associated antisemitic and racist allegations. Against this background, I became part of a group of teachers and students who, in view of the highly polarized and overly simplistic situation, decided to engage in counter-manipulation. The common denominator of the group was the desire not to be divided by the conflict; not to have to choose one side or the other. The conflict was to be the occasion to speak and to find words. The following is an excerpt from one of the advertisements:

> *"Breaking news: We are ruled and divided, but we don't need to be divided. There is enough violence in Germany's past and present to not have to decide whether we speak about Nazi history or postcolonialism, about antisemitism or racism. The competition between struggles against violence and for memory is a capitalist strategy.*

21 Cf. *https://www.stationofcommons.org* (last accessed: June 2024).

22 *https://art-education.hfbk.net/de/courses/lumbung-radio-workshop* (last accessed: June 2024).

"Erinnerungskonkurrenz" is a German word. Fight antisemitism and racism together!"

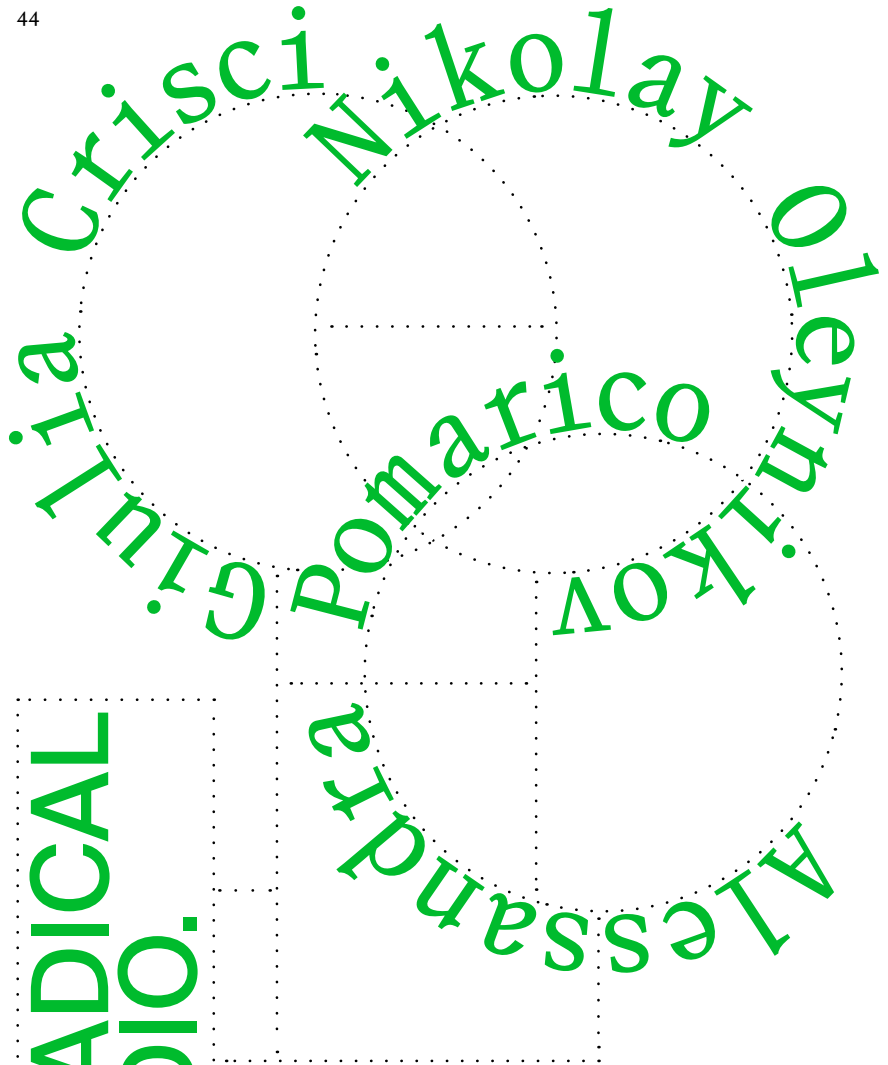
The aim was to allow people to not know and form alliances as part of our own teaching. The importance of updating the operational practice of video and radio for a future education of the commons is, as groups, to educate one another and learn from each other about images, themes, materialities, conflicts, disasters, and speaker positions. Media-making as an artistic practice is radical pedagogy when the work reflects on information, but also on collectively countering existing narratives. This plays a much more essential role for education than numbers of clicks or viewers.

lumbung radio mit Pascale Obolo und Grégoire Rousseau, Station of Commons, HFBK 2022

lumbung radio live broadcast mit Julia Stolba HFBK 2022

lumbung radio live broadcast mit Eddie Choo Wen Yi und Flora Bouteille, HFBK 2022

lumbung radio live broadcast 2022



THE RADICAL IN RADIO.

Rooting Radiophonic Practices in Pedagogies, Community, and Politics

"There are other worlds
out there they
never told you about"[1]
–Sun Ra

1 Sun Ra, *Lanquidity*. Philadelphia: Philly Jazz, 1978.

Alessandra Pomarico Friends, imagine we were hosting a program dedicated to Radical Pedagogy, Community Building, and (Decolonial) Radio Practices in either our *Firefly Frequencies* or *Radio Commons,* or better on *lumbung Radio,* the collective granary in which many radios converge. Indeed, this conversation is about friendship and camaraderie, a politics of coming together, to learn, think-feel, and act collectively. This intention and this spirit connect all of us here (and with many beyond the here and now) speaking to how we work, why we produce art, and specifically how we make radio to make a community. "Radio" has been for many of us an autonomous learning zone, plurivocal and plurifocal, a way to transcend physical and cultural boundaries, overcome borders, and open up to the pluriversal. The hope is to create a weaving together, a space of assonance and dissonance, a place to "come to voice" (after Maria Lugones).[2]

2 Maria Lugones, *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

In this transmission, I am here with Nikolay Oleynikov, artist, activist, member of *Chto Delat*–a Russian collective now in exile, mentor of the *School of Emergencies,* with whom I share life/ work with *Free Home University, Firefly Frequencies* radio, *Ecoversities Alliance* and various other adventures these initiatives have generated. In these tentacular embraces, we crossed paths and hit the road with Giulia Crisci, curator and co-founder of *Radio Commons,* like us involved in art practices that are inherently educational, research-based, community-oriented, and politically grounded. With her, a perspective from the margins and a Southern horizon is also shared.

Quite organically, I imagine this conversation exploring questions around the radio as a commoning, as a learning site, as a community space, as a way to produce situated knowledges, to share about struggles and eventually ignite or amplify them as we have learned in many historical and recent uprisings.

Giulia Crisci Historically, since its invention, the radio has been employed for military purposes. As you point out, it's also been used as an instrument of rebellion and self-organization, for example by the anti-fascist partisans in Italy, *résistance* units in France, by republican troops in Franco's Spain, as well as in anticolonial movements in Africa and Latin America, where radio was a key tool in the Liberation struggle. It was and still is a powerful means of disobedience. In militant movements, art collectives, and different communities, it has become a platform for solidarity, mutual aid, communication during emergencies, and a creative space.

Nikolay Oleynikov I'm thinking of how the Zapatistas' uprising on Jan. 1, 1994 was announced via a radio transmission in San Cristobal by *Subcomandante Marcos.* With his proverbial irony, he said, *"We apologize for the inconvenience, but this is a revolution!"*

The message reverberated in Chiapas, throughout Mexico, and across the world...thirty years later we are still resonating with Zapatismo. Their *Radio Rebelde,* apparently a portable "egg carton-lined studio" was broadcasting on shortwave frequencies, at times it consisted of just a pole with speakers stuck in the ground of a crossroad, in the middle of the Selva, repeatedly transmitting the same program.

With the support of comrades from elsewhere (their training in audiovisuals was fundamental to autonomously circulating and self-representing their vision), they started *Radio Insurgente–La Voz de los sin Voz* [The Voice of those without Voice], the official media of the EZLN, whose location is unknown, transmitting in Spanish as well as in five Indigenous languages. The radio is seminal in circulating Zapatistas' ideas, appeals, communiques, and it is both a tool for self-education and for coordinating actions.

Alessandra Pomarico Recently I've been told that when hurricane season hits the Caribbean, radio is the most solid infrastructure to find information and coordinate help, as during and post Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico it became the hub for viability, hospital spots, food programs, and rescues. As we become more exposed to climate change and related emergencies, we should consider our dependency on the internet, which has allowed a great proliferation of radio projects, many of which are working on developing technologies for the digital commons. Yet, I'm becoming more aware of the carbon footprint we produce for the data we collect. It's so invisible that we tend not to perceive how much energy is needed to store our archives.

To go back to both your points, I agree that radios are reclaiming space to host voices that are often unheard, to share stories, remember, re-learn, and weave communities. Let me bring another example from Abya Yala[3]: the lengthy teachers'

strike of Oaxaca (2006), the role that the pirate radio played in coordinating and enlarging the movement that led to the occupation of city hall against the corrupt governor. Our friend Sergio Yeyo Beltran *(Herramientas de Buen Vivir)* was one of those setting up the antennas and the devices. At the time, he was part of *Unitierra,* a radical experiment of deschooling, decolonizing, and deprofessionalizing education informed by, among others, Gustavo Esteva, an inspiring organic intellectual, an elder who we recently lost. Sometimes it's useful to observe how what we do has the potential to bring forward real change in our communities. This is also what we mean when we cultivate *pedagogy as politics* and we choose to learn through encounters.

3 Pre-Columbian name of Latin America to which many prefer to return.

Giulia Crisci I feel invited to tell a story from "our" South, about the very first Italian pirate radio station–*Radio Libera*–and mention one of the most visionary popular educators, Danilo Dolci, also a sociologist, poet, and activist who worked in Sicily from the 1950s to the 1990s. On the night of March 25, 1970, Dolci and his comrades went to the roof of a building in Partinico, a small town not far from Palermo, to set up a radio station with the devices recovered from the partisans. They intended to denounce the precarious conditions in which people of the Belice Valley were living two years after a violent earthquake. At the time, the state-led agency RAI had a monopoly on the communication network; it was illegal to occupy their frequencies. *Radio Libera* was shut down by the police only 26 hours after it started. But in that short time, they managed to broadcast interviews with people who lost their homes, launch international appeals, organize help, and share Dolci's poems. More importantly, they enabled people to think about and use radio differently.

This story was the inspiration for *Limone Lunare,* a radio work I produced with Camille Pagear in 2020. We commissioned artists, researchers, and writers to create sound pieces that resonated with Danilo Dolci's

educational and creative practice. We released the piece on the *Radio Commons* platform, which then in 2021 became an independent art project that I now co-curate together with Lina Issa, Ian Nesbitt, Alban Cajarville, and Marta Bellingreri.

How did you start *Firefly Frequencies* and what is your origin story with radio?

Nikolay Oleynikov *Firefly Frequencies* came about in 2020 as a direct reaction to the pandemic. A few months before the lockdown, *Free Home University* had hosted a gathering with friends from the *Ecoversities Alliance* in Italy. Silvia Maglioni and Graeme Thomson–co(i)nspirators of the radio–were part of that and together we engaged in a series of "listenings at the threshold," conversations around education emerging from deep listening exercises, recordings, story-telling, musical improvisations, and *Dark Matter Cinema Tarot*[4] readings. When Covid forced us to abandon our stubborn practice of commoning (we are hitting ten years of ongoing experiments with living, learning, and creating collectively), the idea arose to make a web radio. It became our new threshold, our common garden, a shared home, and another version of our schools, a trans-versity. This one allows us to connect interlocally, to be present through the frequencies. It also provided a form of healing, of taking care of each other, recovering from the forced isolation, from separation, and the bi-dimensionality of the screen. It helped us to get back to more embodied forms of relationality. Sound as matter, producing possibilities of attunement, of "being with" many places, people, languages, stories. "To share powers of reception and receptivity at a time when our body and mind are often fatigued by technologies of

connectivity," we wrote with Silvia and Graeme. Many from our community of artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers, theorists, educators, poets, and sound makers responded and many more are joining in rhizomatic ways, connecting through soundwaves, vibrations, reverberations, echoes.

4 Silvia Maglioni and Graeme Thomson's *Dark Matter Cinema Tarot* is a set of tarot cards made of cinema stills that invites burning questions and alternative narratives in a process of collective fabulation and storytelling.

Giulia Crisci In speaking of radio as an "insurgent" practice, one of the intentions of *Radio Commons* is to challenge the Eurocentric knowledge system and its predominantly visually oriented and text-based culture. Through radio, we also want to solicit forms of education that can be experienced differently and that can be *other.* One of the "islands" of our radiophonic archipelago is dedicated to unlearning, which begins by recognizing that our sensory access to the world is not innocent. Gender, race, class, ability, and cultural background profoundly influence our perception and the knowledge we derive from it. Entering a sonic territory as "guests," being attentive to the relationships between those who listen and those who are listened to (after Dylan Robinson),[5] is the prerequisite for creating insurgent and decolonial radio pedagogical practices. Through them we can attempt to reformulate our relationship to knowledge, conveying acts of epistemic disobedience as people are invited to speak up. By inverting the microphone towards a collective voice, the radio becomes a tool for telling one's self, rather than for being retold. Brandon Labelle calls it *acoustic justice,*[6] first and foremost a reclamation of the right to listen and be listened to, to be the subject and not the object of one's own history. Through podcasting, the medium is now even more accessible and it's easier

for communities to represent themselves. More and more, radio platforms are being configured as sound archives, producing over time another epistemic reversal. It is thanks to these spaces that it is possible to recover and transmit voices that have been offended, excluded, omitted, or deemed primordial. Knowledge that would not have survived if they had not been passed down orally. Radio creates this dimension of the encounter you underlined.

5 Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020.

6 Brandon LaBelle, *Acoustic Justice: Listening, Performativity, and the Work of Reorientation.* New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021.

Alessandra Pomarico What we are learning from the Southern hemisphere, or from non-Western cosmologies, is a mode of listening in which the passing of the word, its circulation, is central. This listening in circles, in assemblies where everyone is equally heard and has equal access to speaking, becomes the foundation of the community and what keeps it alive. This inspires us to a different way of organizing and doing community work, inviting a culture of speaking *with* and not "to" or "for" the communities. There is a shift from the authority of the word to the centrality of listening. Often in our activist spaces and within the art world or worst in academic settings questions of ego, entitlement, individualism, and authority are still very incumbent. How can we hold space together undoing the power of those "holding the microphone", the charismatic leaders, the protagonists?

I appreciate how you structured *Radio Commons* through "islands" of knowledge. It speaks to the desire to embrace a polyphony of voices, sounds, music, languages, and sonic gifts not just from different contexts, but from an ecosystem of relations and points of connection.

Giulia Crisci Éduard Glissant wrote: "All archipelagic thought is thought of trembling, of non-presumption, but also of openness and sharing".[7] We are rethinking the practice of radio as an archipelago, and in *Radio Commons* one can surf between different islands–Feminist Narratives, Unlearning, Nomadic Belonging, Fugitive Dialogues, Resistant Reverberation–and a "terra incognita," the hospitable space for contributions external to the editorial cohort. We ask: How can we grow stronger and more vulnerable together? How can we flow together, responding to the shifting tides of collapsing systems? From Sicily, the island where I live, the notion of archipelago challenges insularity and helps us reinvent relationships and their forms. It asks to re-propose South-South alliances, shifting the idea of centrality towards a pluricentric existence. In the South I come and speak from, floating halfway between old Europe and the African continent, this condition of in-betweenness intersects with our "Southern question" as Gramsci called it, the seizing of resources and land, the exploitation of labor, the marginalization of people and their projected backwardness. For the "founding fathers" of the Italian nation, we too were savages to be educated, objects rather than subjects, outside of history and modernity. As migrant people arrive on the Sicilian coast by the thousands today to escape the effects of colonization and ongoing looting, their presence and histories remix with those of this land. These different Souths continuously recombine and reinvent themselves. That's why in our radio laboratory, Palermo wants to connect to Baghdad or Algiers in an effort to listen to resistant reverberations and make common struggles resonate.

7 Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing, University of Michigan Press, 1997. p. 33

Alessandra Pomarico A process of healing from colonial wounds and separability...you are right that it is necessary to bring these South-South perspectives to the center. Those

relations always existed but got reabsorbed in the North-South axis, determined by the dominance of the North. With the help of feminist, Indigenous, Black, and queer thinking, we are learning to deconstruct our languages and frameworks, expanding our horizons outside of the perimeter, or the enclosures, we have internalized. It's an attempt *of being* with, in companionship, in solidarity, intersectionality, interconnectedly, beyond modern-Western paradigms, so to say.

In practical terms, how can a radio become decolonial and anticolonial (and antifascist, antipatriarchal, anticapitalist!!) and not only human-centered? Is it through the themes, languages, and stories we choose to share? Our fireflies, for example, are singing Lullabies for Revolution or having a Partisan Jam, while in Biophonic Assemblages we invite other-than-human sonic presences. Or is it through the way we structure our work, our co-research, how we recirculate resources, *cargos,* and opportunities, and how we invite more people and expand, relationally (deeper and wider but not necessarily in terms of "growth")?

Many are now working in larger networks, it's almost like an ecosystem, for example *PASS* (Pan African Space Station), *lumbung Radio* (interlocal, created after *documenta fifteen*), or *XERCA* (a community radio network in Barcelona). How can we make our radios fugitive spaces and spaces of refuge? Maybe these reverberations, these echoes, these remixes, bringing questions back and forth from and to other places, are also becoming our sonic sanctuaries.

Nikolay Oleynikov You made me think of the "sonic altar" we composed to honor Gustavo Esteva when he passed. It's not a podcast, or a memorial, but something closer to a ceremony, a moment of collective grieving and celebration of life, with people coming together sonically, to share memories and connect with an ancestor. As we wrote with Silvia and Graeme, radio is that place that connects

with other spaces and worlds, “where the living can dance with the dead.”

We are very intentional in conceiving *Firefly Frequencies* as an *ecoversity,* a site of *unlearning* and *uplearning* (from the bottom up), and a pedagogical tool in its own right. In the Reclaiming Pedagogies section we dedicate space to these conversations, we also organize workshops to share tools, or collective listening sessions using “sound objects” taken from *Firefly’s* vast sonic library: be it a poem of Mahmoud Darwish from *Voicings,* or a movement from Phil Kline’s *Unsilent Nights,* an interview with Vandana Shiva or Ann Tsi Ming remixed. After listening, we ask, “What did you hear?”. And this brings us to a deeper conversation, as we learned with *Ultra-red.*[8] It became a way to activate the radio beyond its existence online and during exhibitions, gatherings, and classes. We have taken up the habit of including practices of listening in our lesson plans and often the homework includes exercises in sound journaling, to practice with our ears. When the radio retransmits from book fairs, community festivals, cultural events, or when it carries our militant sound investigations, we are still in the realm of education, or better in a space of learning. We also organize a residency, *Becoming Fireflies,* to live together and engage in exercises of deep listening, somatic expansions, sound walks, “musicking” and “voicing.” Learning by doing together, and producing sound work out of convivial, collective experiences. While cooking, we recorded our Recipes for Disaster and more episodes were added into our collection of sonic offerings in Arabic, Kazakh, Italian, Farsi, French, Russian, Bambara, and other languages.

Once we began by sharing personal memories connected to radio and artist Emilio Fantin spoke about *Radio Alice,* the legendary leftist rebel radio in Bologna. It was 1977, a time of political turmoil and violent repressions in Italy on the verge of almost a civil war. Emilio was a student there when one morning he turned on *Radio Alice* and heard chaos: furniture being dragged, tumultuous voices, a door being smashed, shouts, and orders. The police had broken in. The speaker was trying to report what was happening, when suddenly: SILENCE. Transmission interrupted. That silence was so LOUD, everyone at home knew what was going on, and spontaneously people assembled in the street down from *Radio Alice.*

8 Exploring acoustic space as an enunciative of social relations, sound art collective *Ultra-red* utilizes sound-based research that directly engages in political struggles and organizing. You can listen to *Ultra-red’s* “10 Preliminary Theses on Militant Sound” Investigation on: *https://fireflyfrequencies.org/podcasts/reclaiming-pedagogies?episode_id=51063607* or find the text and much more here: *http://www.ultrared.org* (last accessed: June 2024)

His memory made us all think of the power of the voice, of those exercising their power “over” but also of the collective power of bringing our voices together, which also happens when we take to the street or occupy the campus...

Alessandra Pomarico It was a great way to introduce each other, maybe we should do the same thing here as a way to conclude on a more personal note. Is there a memory of the radio you want to share?

Giulia Crisci I associate radio with waking up in the morning, I immediately turn it on, and it relates me to a world outside of myself, linking my private space to a more common one.

Nikolay Oleynikov Radio was my alarm at 6 AM with the USSR national anthem, grandma preparing me to go to school, -30 degrees, and pitch dark outside. That was during the Soviet times. Later in the late 90s, I was a *rundfunk moderator* for the first jazz radio station in my hometown, Nizhny Novgorod. That was my first real job, right after graduating, and my first experience of not knowing if anyone was listening... I still feel that way!

And for you Ale?

Alessandra Pomarico From my childhood, the radio smells like my grandfather's tomato sauce on a Sunday morning; it's an image from films of people listening to the news from the war; it's also the sound from across the sea, as we played at the beach capturing the frequencies from Albania. They were doing the same thing on the other side of the Adriatic Sea; it is how they learned to speak Italian so well, as I found out years later.

Giulia Crisci I'm curious to know what you are working on radio-wise. From our side we launched an open call, with a very symbolic offer, to repurpose existing work on our platform. As you were saying, a way to become more and support each other. I'm also working on my PhD research, investigating radio practices at the intersection of performance, radical pedagogies, and Southern epistemologies.

Nikolay Oleynikov I'm working on the audio documentation of our struggle to defend

250 hectares of the ancient forest of Arneo in the Apulian region, in Southern Italy. We push back against the local government's decision in favor of Porsche's ecocidal plan to grow their infrastructure to test their cars. Many local and international activists and artists are mobilizing.

Alessandra Pomarico I am collaborating with *What's the Sound of the Border,* a sound inquiry that Elliot Perkins *(Ultra-red)* started with a group of asylum seekers in England. We are composing a collective glossary from the border, a way to reclaim our language from that of the State and the border industrial complex, sharing the knowledge of people with that experience. We arrived at the letter "O" today, and someone made us aware that the word "organize" contains the word "organ"... that image is still resonating with me, so I invite us all to use our radios to speak from the heart and to attune heartbeats...

Stay tuned!

“Zauber saft”

Julia Stolba

Young workers producing songs about life, struggles, and solidarities in 1990s Vienna

“The faithful memory of such a singularity can only be given over to the specter. Is fiction outdone here? Does it lack knowledge? […] One can always dream or speculate around this secret account.”[1]

–Jaques Derrida

1 Jaques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, Chicago & London 1995. p. 100.

While working on the project called *Archiv der Vermittlung. Das Unarchivierbare aktualisieren* (Archive of Education. Updating the Unarchivable), the first time a voice from the past spoke to me was through a song lyric. My fingers had been flicking through folders for hours, searching for material about methods and actions of critical art education associations in Vienna that were inventing and shaping the city in the 1980s and 1990s. My eyes were drawn to a page, a copy in transparent film, that read *“Mit seinem Leben ist jetzt Schluss / er setzte sich den goldenen Schuss”* (His life is now over / he checked himself out). I read through the whole lyric. Who wrote that?

Archiv der Vermittlung, Das Nützliche und das Fremde, Project documentation of Hitfabrik VII, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/start*

It was a lyric about three teenagers, Jimmy, Max, and Cheyenne, produced by the project *Hitfabrik 1*. Associations like the novel *Christiane F.*, published around the same time came to my mind. I wondered who these teenagers were. In spite of the final line, the lyrics seemed quite humorous, telling the story of three people who are super cool, in conflict with the police, who party a lot… Was it a joke? Meant to be shocking? Or was it an uninspired attempt by an adult to show young people that drugs are dangerous? Speculating, carefully listening to voices between folders, searching for answers, I dived deeply into the files that all belonged to a project called *Das Nützliche und das Fremde*[2] (The Useful and the Strange), a series of projects we were researching and archiving in the *Archiv der Vermittlung*.

The project *Archiv der Vermittlung. Das Unarchivierbare aktualisieren* (Archive of Education. Updating the Unarchivable) was initiated in 2021 by Büro *trafo.K* and *schnittpunkt. ausstellungstheorie & praxis* in cooperation with the *University of Applied Arts Vienna* to document and update the history of art education. Starting in Vienna, we were working through art education publications, documents, and methods starting in the late 1960s with a great emphasis on the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s when numerous self-organized associations and initiatives were founded by critical people working in the art field. They developed forms of action in museums and exhibitions that produced important discourses, practices, interventions, methods, and concepts for engaging with art, history, and society. These approaches became institutionalized and are now an integral part of museums and exhibitions. Since these stories have received little attention in archives so far, the project *Archiv der Vermittlung* aims to collect stories and knowledge from different contexts of art education in an open and dynamic process that will never end but always be updated and expanded.[3]

Archives are a maelstrom of history(ies) and images in which one loses oneself, travelling through time, encountering so many questions in which I recognized my own. While I was working in this project, many voices spoke to me through the material, teenagers and young adults who were taking part in these education formats and inscribed themselves so deeply in this archive of education and whose questions, interests, struggles, and desires sometimes reminded me of my teenage self.

Das Nützliche und das Fremde were educational formats from the 1990s onwards for apprentices at

2 Cf. the publication *Das Nützliche und das Fremde*, website of the *Archiv der Vermittlung*, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/50*, (last accessed: June 2024).

3 Cf. website *Archiv der Vermittlung*, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/*, (last accessed: June 2024).

various Viennese vocational schools. Formats of *Das Nützliche und das Fremde* included "What's the point of theater"[4] and "The newspaper makers"[5] as well as a radio project[6] for the art festival *steierischer herbst* in 1999 in cooperation with the free radio program of Graz (Austria), *Radio Helsinki*. In all these formats it is quite clear that their content is shaped primarily–as I read from the archive material–by the participation of the apprentices. It's about issues that concern them as young workers like "always being friendly" and having to listen a lot to customers as a hairdresser. Or about racism, discrimination, exclusion, and cohesion, which, for example, are addressed in the project "was dagegen" by *trafo.K* for the exhibition "Gastarbajteri"[7] or in many songs of the *Hitfabrik* format. In *Hitfabrik* teenagers and young adults wrote songs together, recorded them in a studio, and developed choreographies for music videos. While working with the archival material, these projects particularly caught my interest. The lyrics by the young people spoke to me through time. I developed a strong relationship with the material and the voices living in it; I felt connected to them through photos, lyrics, and issues that have lost none of their relevance in the meantime. In 1997 the project released a CD called "Zaubersaft"[8]

4 *Das Nützliche und das Fremde*, Was soll das Theater? 1, website of the *Archiv der Vermittlung*, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/36*, (last accessed: June 2024).

5 *Das Nützliche und das Fremde*, Die Zeitungsmacher 3, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/40*, (last accessed: June 2024).

6 *Das Nützliche und das Fremde*, radio workshop for the steirischen herbst 99, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/47*, (last accessed: June 2024).

7 *Das Nützliche und das Fremde*, was dagegen? in the context of the exhibition *Gastarbajteri – 40 Jahre Arbeitsmigration*, (last accessed: June 2024).

8 Zaubersaft CD, website of the *Archiv der Vermittlung*, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/139*, (last accessed: June 2024).

containing seven tracks they produced together that deal with the young people's everyday lives. For example, boredom at work, as in "Painters' Song" from the vocational school for painters and decorators, a song about what goes through their heads, what they think about, and what they feel while they are painting walls: about vacation, cars, the cat, sex, gaming, "you," about the end of this shift[9]…

Drugs and addictions are also recurring themes in projects of *Das Nützliche und das Fremde* that affect teenagers and young adults both then and now. They are addressed in the song "Love drugs / Take me" that was recorded by apprentices at the vocational school for textiles and retail in 1994/95 for *Hitfabrik 5*.[10]

> *"Love drugs! / Tell me what do you like? / DRUGS? LOVE? / Come on man, give me an answer! / If you drink and drive / sooner or later / you going to meet the undertaker! / There's no hope for dope! ---------- BUT […] baby don't take drugs, take me!"*[11]

Other tracks address discourses that characterized the 1990s, such as the song "Positiv," from the vocational school for industrial clerks in 1995/96. The song begins with the solitude of a young person sitting alone in a bar. Suddenly someone sits down with her, the two fall in love, and spend the night together. But when she wakes up in the morning the

9 Cf. "Painters' Song" lyrics, Zaubersaft CD, website of the *Archiv der Vermittlung*, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/139*, p. 5–6, (last accessed: June 2024).

10 *Das Nützliche und das Fremde*, Hitfabrik 5, website of the *Archiv der Vermittlung*, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/34*, (last accessed: June 2024).

11 Cf. "Take me" lyrics, Zaubersaft CD, website of the *Archiv der Vermittlung*, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/139*, p. 10–11, (last accessed: June 2024).

lover has left her a note, telling her he has HIV. The song deals with the fear of contracting the virus, "I'm too young to die", and the social marginalization of those who have it. Working against this marginalization is expressed in the lines of these lyrics. At the end of the song, the two come together and "A new life begins for us."[12]

Many songs deal with racism and discrimination, struggles the participants in *Hitfabrik* face in their lives. For example, apprentices in the 1995/96 *WUK* youth project "weit weit weg (Paradies oder Hölle)" coming from the background of the war in Yugoslavia sing about how their hopes for making a life in Austria have been deeply disappointed by the racist society. "If this is paradise, what is hell?" they ask.

> *"I heard that there is such a country, a friend from abroad wrote to me, / where I can say what I think, I don't have to be afraid that they will catch me. / There's work for me there and money, a nice flat and friends, I can meet them whenever I want. / That's where I want to go, that's where I want to go. […] I made it, I thought, but it was all a lie. / A skinhead in front of me shouts in my face, "Foreigners out, we don't want you. I'm scared and just ask myself WHY? / I have to get away from here, I want to run, I have to run, / I want to get completely drunk right now. I can't even do that, there's no money, I'm desperate, what kind of world is this? / Now I'm here in this country, but illegally. The fear of the police is in my bones, I can't find a place to stay and I wander the streets all alone. / I can no longer sleep, my laughter has stopped, my tears have dried up, / they could betray me, I have no one I can trust. / If this is paradise, what is hell like?"*[13]

The affective potential of music in the songs of *Hitfabrik* can be multi-layered through the young voices and the stories they sing about. Sometimes humorous, silly, full of self-irony, sometimes full of pain, resignation, and anger, their songs deal with sadness, war, illness, addiction, the feeling of not belonging, living in a society full of exclusion and discrimination, sexist, and racist violence that were part of the young workers' everyday lives in various ways. They sing and write about them, as well as about their connections, about friendship and love, about solidarity, and the hope of making a difference together as young people through their actions. A song that clearly expresses this cohesion is "Gemeinsam zusammen" from the *WUK* youth project 1993/94.

12 Cf. "Positiv" lyrics, Zaubersaft CD, website of the *Archiv der Vermittlung*, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/139*, p. 8–9, l (last accessed: June 2024).

13 Cf. "weit weit weg (Paradies oder Hölle)" lyrics, Zaubersaft CD, website of the *Archiv der Vermittlung*, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/139*, p. 12–13, (last accessed: June 2024). Translation by the author, original text: "Ich hab gehört, es gibt so ein Land, mir hat das ein Freund aus der Fremde geschrieben, dort kann ich sagen, was ich mir denk, muß keine Angst haben, daß sie mich kriegen. Dort gibt es Arbeit für mich und Geld, eine schöne Wohnung und Freunde, kann sie treffen, wann immer ich will. Dort will ich hin, dort will ich hin. […] Ich habe es geschafft, hab ich mir gedacht, doch leider, alles war Betrug.
Vor mir ein Glatzkopf, der brüllt mir ins Gesicht: Ausländer raus, wir wollen euch nicht.
Ich habe Angst und frage mich nur WARUM? Ich muß weg von hier, will rennen, muß laufen, am liebsten würde ich mich jetzt total besaufen. Selbst das kann ich nicht tun, es fehlt das Geld, ich bin verzweifelt, was ist das für ne Welt? Jetzt bin ich hier in diesem Land, aber illegal. Die Angst vor Polizei, die sitzt mir in den Knochen, ich finde nirgends eine Bleibe und renne einsam durch die Straßen. Ich kann nicht mehr schlafen, mein Lachen ist verstummt, meine Tränen sind vertrocknet, sie könnten mich verraten, habe niemanden, dem ich vertrauen kann. Wenn das das Paradies ist, wie ist dann die Hölle?"

> *"Ham sab sare Agate / I am a foreigner in this country / Together we are stronger / I am a foreigner in all countries / Together we are stronger […] / A common song / We are altogether together […] / I am a foreigner from abroad / and all foreigners have been friends to me / I have seen many people since then / who don't like foreigners / I have only wanted in my life / that we all come together once / but sadly it has never happened / but I hope that one day we will come together / Ham sab sare agate"* [14]

A great deal of information about the creation of these songs, the participants, the educators, photos of the rehearsals and performances, music videos, and song lyrics can be found in the *Archiv der Vermittlung*. They provide insights into the processes of making music together and always pose questions. I wonder how these teenagers are doing now, thirty years later, as adults who may have children themselves who might be participating in art education projects. What kind of lives are they living? Did some of them remain friends? Did they find their way, manage to stay connected and unified despite all their struggles? And what do these songs mean to them after all this time? Are some of them making music? Working with this material showed me once again the potential within archival work to feel so connected and to care about people I never met but

14 Cf. "Gemeinsam zusammen" lyrics, Zaubersaft CD, website of the *Archiv der Vermittlung*, *https://archivdervermittlung.at/document/139*, p. 2–3, (last accessed: June 2024).translation by the author, original text: "Ham sab sare Agate / Ich bin fremd in diesem Land / Gemeinsam sind wir stärker / In allen Ländern bin ich fremd / Gemeinsam sind wir stärker […] / Ein gemeinsames Lied / Wir sind gemeinsam zusammen […] / Ich bin ein Ausländer aus dem Ausland / und alle Ausländer waren für mich Freunde / viele Leute habe ich seither gesehen / die Ausländer nicht mögen / ich hab in meinem Leben nur gewollt / daß wir einmal zusammenkommen / aber leider ist es noch nie geschehen / aber ich hoffe, daß wir einmal / zusammenkommen / Ham sab sare agate."

whose struggles and desires I got to know through their songs. Since I cannot speak with them, I will listen to their music now and then.

Damien Pollard

Radio Alice and Italy's Movement of 1977: polyvocality, sonority and space[1]

1 This text is an shortened version of: Damien Pollard (2021): *Radio Alice and Italy's Movement of 1977: polyvocality, sonority and space*, Sound Studies, 7:2, 151–172, DOI: 10.1080/20551940.2020.1759979. This is an Open Access article re-distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License.

As a media category, "community radio" spans a diverse range of both communication practices and ideologies. In a 1984 report for *UNESCO,* Peter M Lewis describes community media (which prominently includes radio) as media run by and for specific communities beyond the control of mainstream media infrastructures; a form of low-cost, self-managed, non-pro-fit and often politicised broadcasting which may challenge dominant representations of events or draw attention to events overlooked by mainstream media, and which tends to feature significant interaction between listeners and presenters via phone-ins and other participatory practices (1984b; see also Lewis 2006). Lewis succinctly refers to community media like radio as giving a "voice to the voiceless" (2006). Of course, while the notion of marginalised groups striving to find a voice has become a standard political metaphor, radio provides one of the few contexts where this process may manifest literally. Radio gives the individual, standing alone or as a member of a group, the means to go beyond linguistic articulation and express the unique sonority of their voice. Self-evident as this observation may be, I have spelt it out because I would like to argue that the basic vocal self-revelation facilitated by radio has political consequence, and I will do so by drawing on the example of *Radio Alice,* an Italian free radio station that broadcast in Bologna from 1976 to 1977.

Radio Alice–a community radio station according to the criteria laid out by Lewis above–was established by a group of young left-wing activists in Bologna who were involved with the radical magazine *A/Traverso* and who were central to the left-wing youth movement in Italy in the 1970s. The station was committed to challenging (rather than harnessing) the power of language, and it did so by extolling both polyvocality and non-linguistic modes of voice–it was a fulcrum within which a plurality of unique voices could reveal themselves and form a broad, relational network. A communique describing the station complains that

> "[i]n the first case the language [of national radio broadcasters] is univocal: the announcer's […] In the second case, something continues to flee from language. This is manifest in outbursts of laughter, words in suspension, the word which cannot be found and which refuses to change into another one, stammering, silence." (Collective A/Traverso 1980, 131)

In other words, the group criticised mainstream radio for denying both vocal plurality and the non-linguistic expressive potential of the voice. Unlike the sombre, presenter-controlled broadcasts put out by Italy's state broadcaster RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana), *Radio Alice* was notable for its freewheeling approach to radio transmission–it had no set schedule beyond the midday news headlines, used phone-ins extensively and alternated between music, poetry, dada-esque nonsense and political discussion. Luca Chiurchiù argues that the station was

> "part of a bigger project of re-appropriating social knowledge […] the directionality of the message and of communication had to be abolished, in fact, the message and communication themselves had to be abolished to destroy the logic imposed by the system and to remove the mechanisms of domination it placed on desire and corporeality." (2017, 133–4. My translation)

Radio Alice, in short, attacked univocality and logo-centric communication as part of an ambitious political mission to alter Italian society.

THE MOVEMENT OF 1977

Radio Alice was embedded in the youth movement which developed in Italy in the 1970s, particularly in the northern and central regions of the country. In turn, the youth movement represented the legacy of the 1968 student and workers' protests that spread through Italy as they did in many other countries around the world. In Italy, the 1968 movement was triggered practically by overcrowding and institutional inadequacy in the country's higher education system, and more

generally by a distrust of the country's socio-economic restructuring following its mass industrial modernisation in the late 1950s and early 1960s (a moment often referred to as the "boom", or the "economic miracle").[2]

In the history of *Radio Alice,* key amongst these was the youth movement which has since become known as the Movement of 1977 due to the rioting of that year with which it is associated (see below). The Movement of 1977 had many facets, and included student and feminist groups, but was largely anchored in a proliferation of "proletarian youth groups" (Lumley 1990, 296). Like their 1968 forebears, the youth movement continued to operate independently from official channels of protest, being "[d]isaffected from traditional politics, often unable or unwilling to find more than marginal or occasional work, desiring above all to *'stare insieme'* ('be together') and enjoy themselves" (Ginsborg 1990, 381. Italics in original). In the place of mainstream political parties, extra-parliamentary groups on the far left, such as *Lotta Continua* (Continuous Struggle) and *Potere Operaio* (Workers' Power), became rallying points for the Movement and particularly its more revolutionary contingents. Indeed, Ginsborg argues that the Movement of 1977 can be broken into two broad camps, an irreverent and creative countercultural sub-group that used art, poetry and music to experiment with new approaches to social organisation, and a more militant autonomist sub-group that was dedicated to the use of violence in the pursuit of its revolutionary aims (ibid, 382). The overlap between these two groups was considerable, however.

Ultimately, the Movement of 1977 was cut short and by the early 1980 had largely evaporated. This was principally due to the growth of terrorist factions within the Movement and their increasing recourse to violence from the mid-1970s onwards, which culminated in the kidnapping and murder of Christian Democrat *(Democrazia Cristiana)* politician and former prime minister

2 For a full account written in English, see Ginsborg (1990, 210–53).

Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades *(Brigatte Rosse)* in 1978 (see Berardi 1980, 161–2; Lumley 1990, 279–93). The use of political violence proved deeply divisive within the Movement, which was anyway struggling to effect lasting social change, and many began to turn away from collective action. Its ultimate demise notwithstanding, the Movement of 1977 represents a socio-spatial project that was intent on altering the ways in which people inhabited certain sites and the kinds of interactions and interrelations that took place there. Doreen Massey, whose work is discussed in more depth below, argues that "[t]he spatial in its role of bringing distinct temporalities [i.e. individual narratives] into new configurations sets off new social processes" (2005, 71). By challenging established models of human interaction and decoupling them from the logic of capitalism, the Movement of 1977's practice positioned space as the battleground upon which social reconfiguration and change was to be sought. I will argue that *Radio Alice's* style of broadcasting represented the intersection of this spatial project and with the related project of challenging language's power to uphold existing social structures. In turning to the latter, I will now briefly consider *A/ Traverso,* the magazine from which *Radio Alice* developed.

A/TRAVERSO

A/Traverso was first published in Bologna in 1975 by the collective bearing the same name and came out intermittently whenever enough material was ready, but with an estimated 8,000 copies distributed in Bologna, it was one of the highest-profile countercultural publications of the period (Chiurchiù 2017, 39). The terms attraverso and a traverso both translate as "through" in English and mark the magazine's desire to go "through the looking glass" of language–a reference to Lewis Carroll's 1871 novel of that name (see Lewis 1984a, 144). Chiurchiù explains that *A/Traverso* pursued revolution through the merger of a Marxist

political theory inspired by Mao (who presented an apparent alternative to the ineffectual communism of the PCI) and avant-garde modes of expression that took their lead from surrealism, dada and situationism (ibid, 40, 55). The collective was also influenced significantly by post-structural thought, including that of Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. *A/Traverso* did not just communicate a revolutionary message, but used communication as a revolutionary message.

COMMUNITY RADIO

Having been refined into a viable communication medium by Guglielmo Marconi, radio may well be classified as an Italian invention. However, its proliferation and development is a global story. Such is also true for the history of community radio which, as mentioned in the introduction to this article, Peter M Lewis defines (within the broader scope of community media) as being produced by and for a specific and often geographically localised community. Community radio often features significant audience participation in programming and tends to be produced on a low-cost and self-managed basis with the aim of offering content and information overlooked or explicitly marginalised by mainstream media (for a detailed discussion of this definition see Lewis 1984b, 1–7; see also1984a; King 2016, 18–20).

From 1940 onwards, community radio became a more elaborate and coherent project; King explains that during the 1940s "community radio advocates began to set up their own more permanent infrastructure" as evidenced by the birth of community stations in the United States and in South America (King 2016, 2016; see also Lewis 1984b, 17–19). As the twentieth century went on, community radio developed more political, even militant, dimensions and played an important, clandestine role in mid-century guerrilla conflicts in Algeria and Cuba (Raboy 1993, 129–31). During

the 1970s and 1980s, as equipment became more accessible and countercultural movements possessing political worldviews not accounted for by mainstream media expanded, community radio stations began to multiply across Europe (as well as North and South America, Africa and elsewhere). However, it was Italy that experienced the most profound explosion of community radio in the post-war period. The key driver behind the Italian explosion of free radio (community radio not allied to state or mainstream media structures) was a sequence of Constitutional Court rulings in the mid-1970s that declared RAI's monopoly on the airwaves illegal and opened the way for the unrestricted establishment of independent radio stations across the country (Lumley 1990, 304). A total of 800 stations were operating within a year (ibid) and by 1978 that number had officially climbed to 2275 (Lewis 1984b, 96).[3]

The global growth of community radio represents a bi-(or multi-)directional form of practice which stands in opposition to the unidirectional nature of mainstream broadcasting. The proliferation of community radio stations embedded within and responding to the contingencies of specific and localised social contexts, and often involving a plurality of contributors drawn from those contexts, fashions radio broadcasting as a conversational act. As such, the act of "giving voice" to the marginalised should not be understood here as (just) metaphorical, as the act of conferring political agency onto those otherwise denied it. Rather, the literal expression and intermixing of uniquely sonorous voices on a community-wide scale must be borne in mind at the same time. In this sense, community radio's practice of "giving voice" to marginal groups is simultaneously both literal and metaphorical. By facilitating the community-wide interrelation of distinct voices, community radio forms a crucible

3 Many free radio stations had been operating illegally before the ruling (see Berardi, Jacquemet, and Vitali 2009, 77).

within which social networks, community cohesion and thus political agency may be generated. In this way, perhaps the phrase "community radio" can be read in two ways: it is radio generated by a community, but it is also, potentially, radio that generates communities.

RADIO ALICE

The station was set up by Berardi and other leading members of the *A/Traverso* collective alongside the magazine, and began broadcasting on 8 February 1976, from an apartment at 41 Via di Pratello in Bologna. Berardi, Jacquemet and Vitali explain clearly how from its inception *Radio Alice* reified the principles of both the Movement of 1977 and of community radio:

> "the real battle was not over content and social consensus, but rather over the creation of new technologies, interfaces and social linkages […] it was not a matter of recovering revolutionary truth against bourgeois lies […] It was about acting on the social imaginary, circulating plays of fantasy, of flows of desire capable of destabilising the dominant message of work, order and discipline." (2009, 80)

Like *A/Traverso, Radio Alice* represented a revolutionary effort to liberate desire from its political containment, a way of allowing members of the Movement to "be together" and a way of harnessing technology for the creation of new communal structures. This was an effort that refused to meet capitalist hegemony on its own terms by arguing for change in the content of the messages it transmitted, choosing rather to change the terms of engagement entirely and strike through the form of those messages. Berardi and his colleagues continue, "[t]he purpose of independent communication was [...] the construction of a process of autonomous expression, capable of confronting, entangling and contaminating other meaning-producing processes" (ibid). In doing so, and in accordance with the wider principles of community radio, *Radio Alice* strove to cohere new social networks not beholden

to the organisational logic of the dominant social order but rooted in a paradigm of imagination and creativity. This theoretical project resulted in a practice with two distinguishing features: an emphasis on uncensored, live phone-ins, and an incredibly fluid approach to language (which the station carried over from *A/Traverso*). There was no set schedule and broadcasts instead constituted a freewheeling mix of reports, interviews, political statements and discussion, music, poetry, and dada-esque nonsense dialogues (Berardi interviewed on *Ràdio Web Macba* podcast 2014; Eco 1995, 231). Unfortunately, *Radio Alice's* approach to broadcasting means that little of what it put out was recorded and is available for study today (a point stressed repeatedly on the *Radio Alice* website mentioned below). However, through the memoirs of those involved with the station and through those recordings which do exist–many of which have been collected at *radioalice.org*–it is possible to generate an overview of its practice.[4]

The live telephone phone-in was central to *Radio Alice's* broadcasting and a manifestation of the station's belief that it was necessary "to destroy the

4 *radioalice.org* provides a rich collection of archival material relating to the station and its history. The site's content (all in Italian) is of high value to those interested in the station's practice and ethos. From the main landing page, the left-hand menu offers curated text and sound-based sources under various headings. "Voci" ("voices") includes recordings of calls made to the station during the Bologna riots (see below), many of which evidence the changeable and frenetic nature of the events in the speakers' tones as well as their words. "Suoni" ("sounds") includes a collection of recordings–mostly musical–which were released on cassette after the station's closure. Some of these recordings were taken from *Radio Alice's* broadcasts while others were recorded after it was shut down by police. The "Programmi" ("programmes") section includes four short recordings of music and speech which were recorded during broadcast and which include renaissance music and surreal spoken-word excerpts including a reading (in Italian) of Francis Picabia's "Dada Cannibalistic Manifesto" (1920). (The text at the top of the page laments the lack of recordings that have survived of the station's programmes). The "Nastri" ("tapes") section includes three longer clips from some of the "continuous tapes" that were broadcast by the station when no one was available to staff it live (see below). The rest of the site compiles text and video resources connected to the station.

relationship between broadcast and circulation, to dissolve the rigid division between listeners and producers" (Berardi, Jacquemet, and Vitali 2009, 81).
By insistently fusing the telephone and the radio the station thumbed its nose at the notion of professional journalism. Through this model–soon to be widely replicated–events could be reported as they happened by anyone with access to a phone booth and the station more generally became a sort of virtual soapbox, a public platform for anyone who felt they had something to say (see ibid). Indeed, the semiotician and writer Umberto Eco–who was based in Bologna and taught many members of the Movement at the city's university–celebrated the station as "a transparent filter for the voices coming from outside" and "a stream of consciousness [...] which unfurls in the listener's ears" (1995, 228). The unfiltered nature of *Radio Alice's* phone-ins was in stark opposition to the "completely stifling and one-way" nature of RAI's broadcasting which only ever employed carefully marshalled and censored phone-ins (Downing 2001, 293, 1980, 207). One consequence was that threats to the station were often broadcast live on-air, such as one call that exclaimed, "[f]ilthy communists, we'll make you pay dearly for this radio station, we know who you are" (cited in Berardi, Jacquemet, and Vitali 2009, 81). As well as underscoring the station's commitment to polyvocality, calls like this suggest that *Radio Alice's* broadcasts were reaching a wide range of listeners beyond the Movement's core members. Indeed, Chiurchiù claims that the station was heard by young autonomists, old workers, students and even housewives (2017, 133), and more concretely Berardi has claimed its audience counted 40,000 listeners (Berardi interviewed on *Ràdio Web Macba* podcast 2014), a huge number for Bologna, which had a population of around 750,000 in 1976 (macrotrends.net).[5]

However, the few recorded phone calls to the station and the central importance which the station assumed during the 1977 Bologna riots (see below)

suggest that *Radio Alice's* listeners were predominantly young, male members of the Movement.[6]

As a form of community radio, *Radio Alice* undoubtedly gave a "voice to the voiceless"–the *A/Traverso* communique refers to "the voice of those pushed aside" (1980, 131)–and it did so using a conception of voice which operated independently from language. The station figured a platform through which members of the Movement could pursue their ambition of building a social network organised through desire rather than the logic of production by collectively challenging the language that underpinned that logic. What resulted was the opportunity for unique voices–accented, poetic, singing, laughing or screaming–to relate to one another not as a homogenous mass but as, in Berardi, Jacquemet and Vitali's words, "a storm of singularities that expressed themselves on different levels" (2009, 78–79).

Crucially, this vocal project did not simply constitute a theoretical experiment–the 1977 Bologna riots proved that *Radio Alice's* was an approach to radio broadcasting with concrete spatial, and political, consequences.

THE BOLOGNA RIOTS

In turning to the spatial ramification of *Radio Alice's* practice, I would like to consider the significance of the voice to the human perception of space by putting Cavarero's writing on the voice into conversation with the spatial theory of geographer Doreen Massey. Cavarero herself says little about space in *For More than One Voice,* engaging the concept only briefly when she summarises the thinking of Hannah Arendt:

> "[f]or Arendt the political lies purely in the relational space between human beings who are unique and therefore plural. The faculty of speech is political because by speaking to one another in a relational space and communicating themselves, men at the same time communicate the political nature of this space". (2005, 192)

Space for Massey constitutes what may be termed a form of social reality–a particular perception of the material world which is collectively experienced and acted upon.[7] Space, so understood, operates on a far more profound level than Euclidean geometry, and is both the product and the precondition of social interaction. She argues repeatedly that to reduce space to height, width and depth and to treat it as a neutral container in which temporal events play out is to ignore the openness and contingency that gives it its social and thus political potential. This oversight "in turn enables the existence of only one history, one voice, one speaking position" (ibid, 41).

Indeed, *Radio Alice's* emphasis on vocal plurality and the sonority of the voice per se rendered it a potent technology for the creation of politicised space as she and, more overtly, Massey conceive it. This became abundantly clear during the Bologna riots, which began after the student activist and Lotta Continua member Francesco Lorusso was shot dead during clashes with Bologna's police on 11 March 1977.[8]

The intense rioting that followed lasted until the following day and *Radio Alice* took on a central role in the unfolding events. Berardi describes that station as the "walkie-talkie" of the riots (2010); protestors would listen to the station using portable radios as the situation unfolded and, in Briziarelli's words,

5 It is, however, impossible to verify this claim.

6 Feminist groups were also involved with the station, but often found themselves marginalised. See Berardi interviewed on *Ràdio Web Macba* podcast 2014.

7 The terminology here is mine.

8 Notably, Bologna's local government was controlled by the PCI during this period, which further fuelled a sense that the institutional left had become a fundamentally conservative force and that radical, autonomous action was the only viable path towards political change.

"militants called to describe the events, to denounce police violence, and to coordinate the manoeuvres of the protesters; parents called to ask information about their children; even the police and state officers called in to urge the station to stop covering the protests." (2016, 356)

As Berardi and his co-writers describe it:

"[t]he radio-telephone hybrid […] provided the possibility of live accounts during the riots. The calls, broadcast live, alternated with long musical interludes and the commentary of the radio anchor, creating an audio tapestry where multiple radio genres blended in a continuous mix of voices, screams, music and excited statements." (2009, 83)

This account is telling in how it describes the fluid interchange of information as inextricable from an interchange of sonorous modes. While the constant flow of information into and out of the station hinged, naturally, on verbal exchange, the unavoidably provisional nature of the verbal information proffered was still "baked into" the broadcast utterances by the sonority that marked each as being specific to the experience of a certain person in a certain space at a certain time. In other words, no call was definitive; each was a single, unique voice feeding into a wider relational network which in turn manifested a fluid, collective representation of the riots. Each voice was never more or less than a piece in a type of aural jigsaw puzzle.

The chorus of voices which has woven these components into a whole is therefore generative of a spatial reality; as the foundation of human interrelation, *Radio Alice's* many voices "made space" with politically tangible consequences.

Furthermore, as the Movement shaped Bologna's space on their own terms they gained the capacity to control it at a concrete level:

Alice: Listen, do you know if … if there's a way out there on Via San Donato? If there's–
Caller: A way out through San Donato? Not really.

Alice: Basically–
Caller: Via Zamboni is blocked.
Alice: All blocked.
Caller: Also you can't go through the ring.
Alice: Is the demonstration there?
Caller: Nope, no demonstration.
Alice: Where are the comrades?
Caller: The comrades are in the little streets behind Piazza Verdi (cited in ibid 2009, 88).

This call, which is typical of many collected by Berardi, Jacquemet and Vitali, demonstrates how Bologna's various streets and sites were aligned and realigned into a specific–if always provisional–spatial whole through the trajectories traced by the rioters in the city, as well as through the interaction of voices via the station. The aural *jigsaw puzzle* formed through the accumulation of calls like this, and their interaction as a wider plurality, therefore became a sort of sonorous or vocal map of Bologna during the two days of rioting. This was a vocal map characterised, as the above extract demonstrates, by the overtly provisional nature of each of its constituent voices, but this was precisely its power. Each voice spoke the experience of a certain persona at a certain coordinate in each moment, and those experiences could change in a matter of metres or of minutes. The vocal map of Bologna was thus a responsive map that evolved in real time according to changes in the realities expressed by its constituent voices. *Radio Alice* constructed space as space is understood by Massey–as a lived reality that results from specific human interactions over and above the mathematical dimensions in which those interactions take place. In line with Massey's third proposition, the space constructed by and through *Radio Alice* was a constant work in progress, never finished, constantly being deconstructed and reconstructed. Radio itself was revealed as a spatial technology–it was the interchange through which voices could intersect and interrelate in the construction of this space. Ultimately, *Radio Alice's* vocal map of Bologna, an ongoing relation of unique

and uniquely placed voices, was not simply a theoretical experiment; it commandeered Bologna's spatial constitution and hence staged a concrete challenge to its institutional authorities.

SILENCING RADIO ALICE

Owing to its central role in the riots, *Radio Alice* was forcibly shut down by police on 12 March 1977–the second day of rioting. As Eco argues, "it is not just by chance that *Radio Alice* was closed down while other radios continue broadcasting songs of the resistance or folk protest music in a calmer and more museum-like atmosphere" (1995, 226)–the spatial advantage that the station had handed the protestors had apparently exerted too much influence over the course of the riots. The police invasion of the station's studio was broadcast live, and has become something of a sacred text in the history of free radio.[9]

Given the overtly spatial nature of *Radio Alice's* political intervention into the riot, it is telling to note the spatial dynamics at play in the final broadcast. The recording hosted on *radioalice.org* begins as the police are banging on the door of the studio and the four presenters inside are broadcasting requests for assistance to lawyers and other free radio stations.

The poetic serendipity of the very last, interrupted utterance on the tape–"they say that this is a place of–" –could well stand as the station's epitaph: it is the vocal articulation of a space constructed by and through the station's broadcasting, and when the tape cuts off here it seems apparent that this is precisely what Bologna's institutional authorities felt compelled to eradicate.

9 Interestingly, the recording and preservation of the final broadcast is often attributed to the police themselves, who seem to have been taping Radio Alice's broadcasts during the riot for later use as evidence against its organisers (Red Notes 1978, 30).

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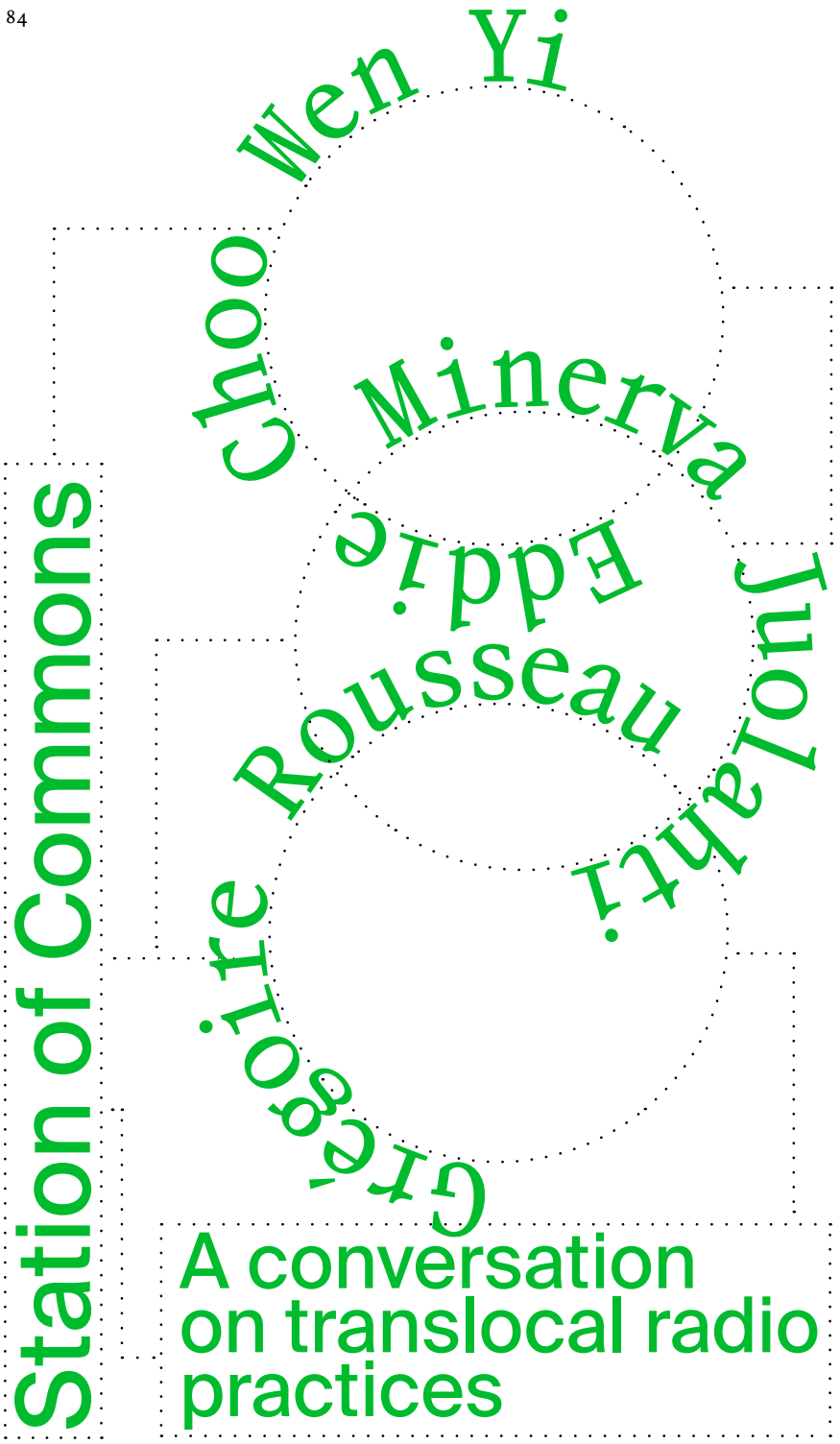


Grégoire Rousseau We're here in the studio in Helsinki to record a discussion for the book *Radio as Radical Education*. My name is Grégoire Rousseau.

Minerva Juolahti I'm Minerva Juolahti.

Eddie Choo Wen Yi I'm Eddie.

Grégoire Rousseau We're all members of the *Station of Commons* art collective. We aim to discuss what can we learn from a translocal radio practice. What's actually happening in *lumbung Radio*? We're also trying to understand how the collective works, how we can make things happen, and what is the process of working with radios from different cultures, different practices, and know-how. I'd like to start by talking about radio practices from Mexico, because they have so many, for example *Via de acesso*, *Radio Nopal*, *Radio Tropiezo*, part of *Crater Invertido*. We first had the opportunity to work together at documenta fifteen and since then we've collaborated on many occasions. They have their own way of working that's different from ours. They have very radical practices that are deeply inscribed in the political landscape of Mexico. Eddie, you communicate with them on regular basis.

Eddie Choo Wen Yi Yeah, *Radio Nopal* has been running a campaign lately. To put it simply, it's more like a fundraiser, and they want as many people as possible to join. The support they seek is not just about funding; they want people to be engaged as well. *Radio Nopal* has been quite active in the *lumbung radio* meetings, and not just Diego. The rest

of the team actually showed up at one of the meetings and said they want to be more active because Diego will soon be a father and is busy. He thinks it's good to let other people get involved instead of him doing everything. We've had Katya, who is based in Oxford, and also Icnelly, if I'm saying the name right. We've been having conversations to get to know each other better because *Radio Nopal* is planning to come to the *Miss Read* Art Book Fair this coming October. They also plan to invite the largest *lumbung radio* group, especially *Stations of Commons*, to Mexico in 2026. *Radio Tropiezo* also plans to hold a big *lumbung radio* festival in Mexico in 2025, so *Radio Nopal* and *Radio Tropiezo* have started having more conversations now. They're asking how *Radio Tropiezo* has done things, so we're actually sharing knowledge and resources at the same time.

Minerva Juolahti I think we all have different ways of connecting to the *lumbung Radio* process. Lately I've been thinking a lot about my own relationship with the radio community and the process of the formation of the radio. The concepts this thinking has brought up have been mess and chaos. For me, maybe the hardest thing to approach in the *lumbung Radio* process, especially in the beginning, was the messy and somewhat chaotic way the inter-local network constructs and reconstructs itself. I mean that, for instance in the case of the Mexican collaborators, the network is growing rhizomatically and new collaborators and activities of the network suddenly appear somewhere

in a different time zone inside a different cultural context, like mushrooms. All the contributors have their own networks and they have their own networks and so on. Everything is about connections. Something beautiful can come up unexpectedly through some unexpected connection. And this process can sometimes be messy and chaotic. I think this might actually form an important part of what makes *lumbung radio* so significant for me as a human being and as an artist. For me, *lumbung radio* has been a process of learning to let go, to enjoy the journey, and to love the mess and chaos.

Grégoire Rousseau Yes, and some of this chaos happens online at the regular Wednesday meetings. We have been at many of these meetings maybe more into the Miss Read. How do we relate to translocal radio practice? I think it's very interesting to think of the translocal practice in the organization of what can happen in the physical space. Because then it becomes very concrete.

Eddie Choo Wen Yi I think it's very interesting when you talk about the local. But I don't want to use the word "interesting" because it doesn't mean anything. It's really tricky that we are connecting their local with our local, so there's no singular local. It is dislocated local connecting. So there are no "others" because we all are in the local. We are in our own local, we are in our local reality, and so are they; they are in their local reality, too. All these different locals are connecting; joining becomes like a hub, and then we are all connecting.

Everyone is the other, and at the same time, we are our own locals.

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about reality. Everyone has their own reality, but when multiple realities clash, our communication cannot work well. That doesn't mean that anyone is right or wrong; it just means we have different perspectives and different realities.

In the *lumbung Radio,* we've been dealing with time zones, and we have our own lives. For example, the time zone is so different depending on the geographic location. You can't say my time is wrong because Mexico's reality might have an 8 a.m. meeting, while in Finland, it's 5 p.m., and in Japan, it's 1 a.m. Everyone has a reality, and how they choose between these realities involves effort. People want to meet on the platform. Sometimes they take space, sometimes they take time, and sometimes they just want self-care and don't join. We have different needs and are constantly adjusting.

When we always talk about the localities, the locals, and the others, how do we differentiate the others? The others are not local, but at this point, we can't figure that out because we are the locals. Everyone is local, so what's the problem? There is no problem. Everyone is the other because everyone is also their own local. We don't have this problem anymore, we don't centralize where we should go because we know that people take turns to take space. If we don't

actually have a local physical space, it's even better to have more discussion. For example, Katya is a Mexican based in Oxford, and we talk so much about food. Even in *lumbung radio* meetings, the three of us only talk about food. But that's really nice because that's how I feel I can learn from them. I think I'm going to stop here so maybe Grégoire and Minerva can reflect. I can see your eyes blinking.

Minerva Juolahti I think *lumbung Radio* is bit like a shared dream. We are physically in different places and different time zones but our minds are connected to each other in the virtual. *lumbung Radio* doesn't have one permanent physical space; the radio itself creates and re-creates a virtual space that is like a shared dream. The radio is somehow imaginary and virtual, everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

Grégoire Rousseau I'd like to reflect or comment on what you said. It may be virtual because it's online, but it's nevertheless very real. I think that there is something very important in the dynamic of *lumbung Radio* that is very real; being dynamic and the capacity to find form in the physical space as well. Because we see each other, we share emails, pads, we meet online, and we can plan further. As you said it's very important that we can imagine together what *lumbung Radio* is. At the same time, it's so important that we can come together as a group as different as we are. We can still do things, move on together. This form of communication is maybe at the same time a language. This works well in *lumbung Radio* because the way we communicate is through

sound. We also communicate through discussions and through DJ performance or performance in the space at large. I think that it's very important for *lumbung Radio* to be able to meet and share both personal and professional items on a regular basis, so that when we meet in person, we know already how things are going. This process really helped our work in Miss Read, the Berlin Art Book Fair. That was a great time to experiment with language, too. We work with publishers and learn from collective publishing practices; the digital library as a form of translation between the written form and audio. Hopefully soon it will be the same in Dakar with the *African Art Book Fair*. Radio practice as a radical form of collective organization?

Minerva Juolahti In relation to what Grégoire mentioned about sound, I think there is something really interesting in the fact that the radio works in the realm of the audible, which makes it essentially distinct from things that operate more through the visual or through the physical presence of the body. I'm returning again to idea of the dream, how the audible is somehow more strongly connected to the subconscious and to dreams than, for example, the visual because sound is present all the time, everywhere. It's not really possible to turn off our ears even when we sleep whereas it is possible to, for example, shut our eyes or, in most cases, reposition our body. I think this feature of sound and hearing has an interesting connection to the radio, which runs without pausing, 24 hours, 7 days a week. The virtual space that the radio creates through sound is present all the time, potentially everywhere. Even though I said that the radio works in a different realm than that of the physical body, the sound can also be considered

a sort of physical audible presence of the body. In this way the radio is a radical way to come together (physically) through sound, to share the realm of the audible, to be present all the time everywhere, to dream together. Maybe it is actually or also through sound that the boundaries between us and the other that Eddie was speaking about get blurred and porous.

Eddie Choo Wen Yi Yeah, I somehow think that radio creates this dynamic where we are the others, and the others are listening to the radio at the same time. It reminds me of when my parents worked on the farm, and my mom would always turn on the radio while she was doing something. I would always hear something in the background. I also heard my mom talk about the people in the factory, especially those in textile factories who did a lot of labor-intensive work. It was a very strong community, and they all listened to the same radio station. Back in the day, there weren't a lot of choices, so they only listened to one station.

Imagine there's a speaker of a different language next to you: how do they compromise to listen to this? I don't know exactly what my mom experienced, but I assume it was mostly Malaysian Chinese in the same factory, and they would listen to dramas and storytelling. This kind of listening actually formed another kind of community.

With online radio, like *lumbung Radio*, we are also trying to form a community of listeners. It's really hard

to tell who is listening because people are still tuning in through the *lumbung Radio* website, *documenta fifteen* website, ruruHaus website, and other people are relaying from us, so we can never know who our audience is.

We never aim to attract a specific audience or community. In that sense, the listener target group is something we don't worry about. But we reach different communities. This is nice because we're not like programmed radio stations that focus on listener numbers. We don't get those numbers, and we don't aim for them. It's great because we can keep doing what we want to do without changing our direction based on audience size.

This is a significant struggle for artists: whether to do it better or to do it our way. Of course, we want to do it better in our way, and that's why I think…

Grégoire Rousseau That's why the understanding of the operation of a radio community is very important and that is maybe the central stage for the *lumbung Radio*. In the sense of how a new radio can, or wants to, collaborate with *lumbung Radio*. That's always the difficult process or experience from the outside, this form of order that *lumbung Radio* may show as an organization.

Minerva, you talked about a mess and all of us here can relate because we see it happening as we speak, but from the outside it may look like something rigid or closed. This "mess" from the inside may appear as something "set" from the outside. And yes, we are somehow still well organized–also in the sense that we are functional. I think that community radio may not be so easy to approach from the

outside. It may look difficult to enter or to participate or to communicate or do or to do things together. I think it might be good to reflect on how we keep *lumbung radio* open as a network of radios; a network of organized people, as radio is already a collective practice. In *lumbung Radio*, any collective that produces sound for the radio is radio; it may be FM radio, online radio, a DJ collective, performance makers, interviews, field recordings, or curated events. A radio may be any collective willing to share and distribute their work. So, the question is how can we keep this dynamic movement of thoughts and actions? How *lumbung Radio* managed to keep open the collective is something that we should both value and reflect on.

Sometimes it's good to state the obvious; *lumbung Radio* is an art collective, far from a company model.

This means that when a new collective joins us, the new collective doesn't have to adapt or change its way of doing things to fit in a ready-made model. The new radio will transform *lumbung Radio* into a new collective process, *lumbung Radio* time. This is a complex process that has manifested many times already *(Miss Read, African Art Book Fair, Pixelache…);* what can this newly formed collective learn from each other's practice, as different as their contexts may be?

Minerva Juolahti Maybe there is something in the mess and chaos that I was speaking about that could be one of the keys for trying to keep the radio process as open as possible for all different directions and possibilities that the current and future contributors can bring with them. Maybe in the mess and chaos there also lies the possibility for freedom. In this

regard, I want to say that despite all the mess and chaos that it entails, I didn't mean that the process of the radio is not actually also very well-organized and well-functioning.

Eddie Choo Wen Yi Just to make a general comment about the question of chaos, I think the question itself is another opportunity for us to find a solution. It doesn't necessarily have to be seen as a problem. I believe the question actually opens another direction for what we might do. I totally understand what you are saying, but I have a different perspective. Does it really matter where we are when we work together? What really matters?

For me, it's the connection that matters. I get to know something that I could never learn if I stayed in one place. That's why I always want to travel and see different places. The travel isn't about taking pictures of places that already have thousands of pictures on the internet. I want to meet people and understand how their lives are. I want to experience different lives because experiencing different lives is something very beautiful. It's beautiful in the sense that I step out of my comfort zone to learn something new. It's a learning process for me.

Grégoire Rousseau Radical education.

Eddie Choo Wen Yi Let's define radical education then.

Grégoire Rousseau Isn't it to learn something that we don't know yet?

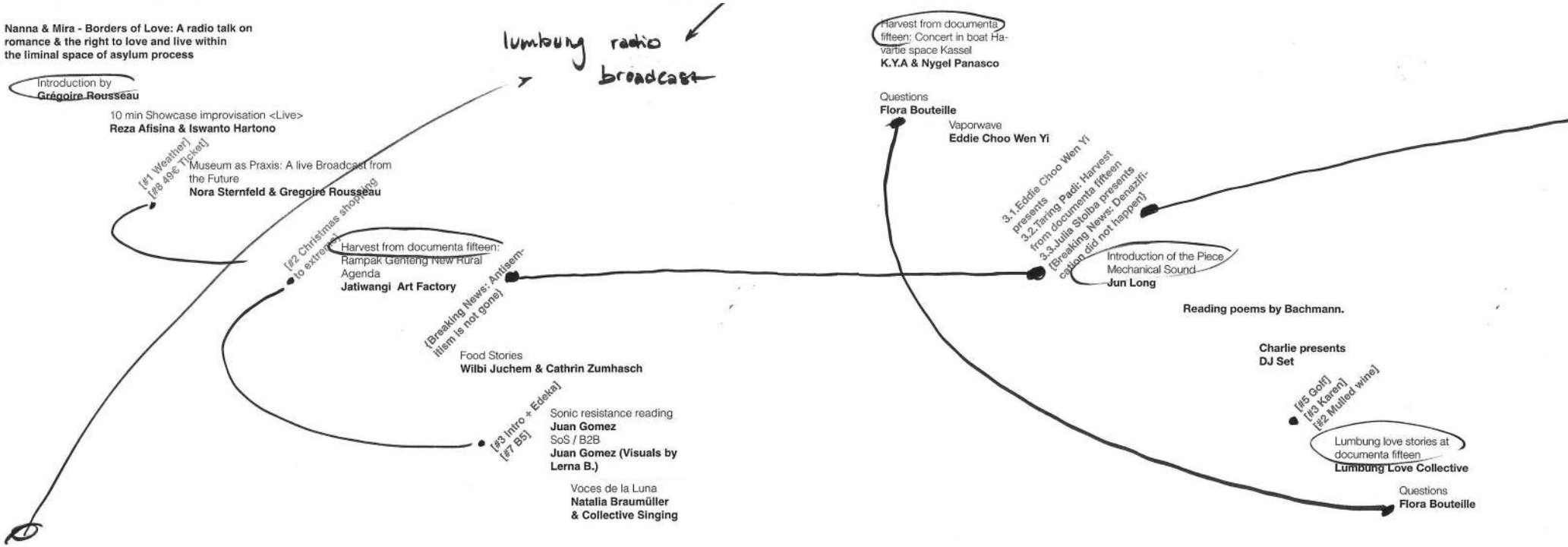
Eddie Choo Wen Yi I think we should stop there instead of, like, answering everything. I think that's even better.

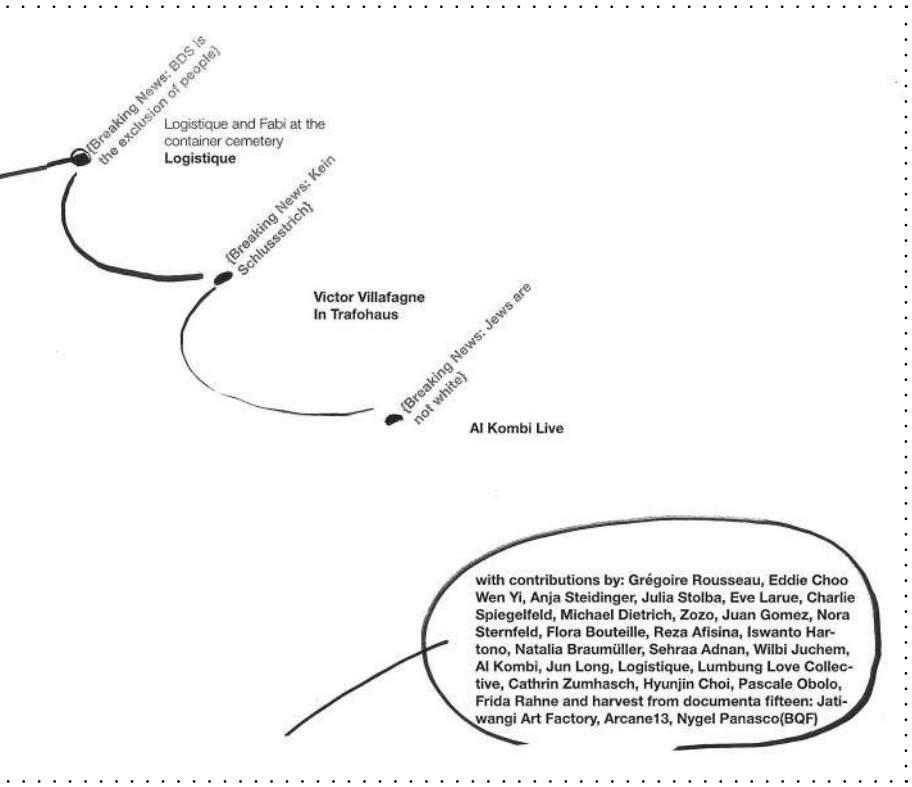
Grégoire Rousseau Good, let's do that. Yes, thank you everyone.

All Thank you

Lumbung Radio Broadcast Program

The seminar “Lumbung Radio Workshop” at HFBK Hamburg in December 2022 proposed to understand radio as a medium and as a collective educational and artistic practice for commoning education and educating the commons. It departs from Station of Commons‘s practice coordinating lumbung radio. Together we approached radio as a form of sharing resources, know-how and knowledge, and we discussed how to think the radio program collectively. During the seminar the participants imagined and produced together a lumbung radio program. The audio content harvest has been be broadcasted on lumbung radio (from the Aula Wartenau at the HFBK Hamburg) on the last day of the seminar.


lumbung radio broadcast
Nanna & Mira - Borders of Love: A radio talk on romance & the right to love and live within the liminal space of asylum process
Introduction by Grégoire Rousseau
10 min Showcase improvisation <Live>
Reza Afisina & Iswanto Hartono
[#1 Weather]
[#8 49€ Ticket]
Museum as Praxis: A live Broadcast from the Future
Nora Sternfeld & Gregoire Rousseau
[#2 Christmas shopping to extreme]
Harvest from documenta fifteen: Rampak Gentong New Rural Agenda
Jatiwangi Art Factory
{Breaking News: Antisemitism is not gone}
Food Stories
Wilbi Juchem & Cathrin Zumhasch
[#3 Intro + Edeka]
[#7 B5]
Sonic resistance reading
Juan Gomez
SoS / B2B
Juan Gomez (Visuals by Lerna B.)
Voces de la Luna
Natalia Braumüller & Collective Singing
Harvest from documenta fifteen: Concert in boat Havartie space Kassel
K.Y.A & Nygel Panasco
Questions
Flora Bouteille
Vaporwave
Eddie Choo Wen Yi
3.1.Eddie Choo Wen Yi presents
3.2.Taring Padi: Harvest from documenta fifteen
3.3.Julia Stolba presents {Breaking News: Denazification did not happen}
Introduction of the Piece Mechanical Sound
Jun Long
Reading poems by Bachmann.
Charlie presents
DJ Set
[#5 Golf]
[#3 Karen]
[#2 Mulled wine]
Lumbung love stories at documenta fifteen
Lumbung Love Collective
Questions
Flora Bouteille


{Breaking News: BDS is the exclusion of people}
Logistique and Fabi at the container cemetery
Logistique
{Breaking News: Kein Schlussstrich}
Victor Villafagne
In Trafohaus
{Breaking News: Jews are not white}
Al Kombi Live
with contributions by: Grégoire Rousseau, Eddie Choo Wen Yi, Anja Steidinger, Julia Stolba, Eve Larue, Charlie Spiegelfeld, Michael Dietrich, Zozo, Juan Gomez, Nora Sternfeld, Flora Bouteille, Reza Afisina, Iswanto Hartono, Natalia Braumüller, Sehraa Adnan, Wilbi Juchem, Al Kombi, Jun Long, Logistique, Lumbung Love Collective, Cathrin Zumhasch, Hyunjin Choi, Pascale Obolo, Frida Rahne and harvest from documenta fifteen: Jatiwangi Art Factory, Arcane13, Nygel Panasco(BQF)

ALESSANDRA POMARICO

(PhD) is an independent curator, writer, educator, and organizer working at the intersection of arts, pedagogy, and community building. Co-founder of Free Home University, an artistic-pedagogical experiment, Sound Res (festival, summer school, music residency); Ammirato Culture House art center, and trans-local network Ecoversities Alliance. Her current research focuses on the ecologies of knowledge and relational epistemologies. Recent projects include firefly frequencies radio, M.E.D.U.S.E (Mediterranean Ecofeminist, Decolonial Union for Self-Education), School of the We (Graz), Grounding~Seeding (Bratislava), The New Alphabet School Commoning (HKW Berlin), Healing (Dakar), What's the Sound of the Border (England). Editor at artseverywhere, she curated Pedagogies Otherwise, co-edited What's there to Learn, and When the Roots Start Moving: Resonating with Zapatismo (Archive Books). Often invited to co-design learning spaces, she was granted the XI Italian Council Fellowship, is a lecturer at the University of Art & Design in Linz, and is a part of Art as Social Practice at Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Künste Frankfurt.

ANJA STEIDINGER

works as an artist at the intersection of art, politics, and education. From 2006 to 2020 she lived in Barcelona. That is where she wrote her dissertation on artistic (self-)representations of unease in the context of the economic crisis in Spain (published by Edition Metzel, Munich 2015). She is co-founder of the activist artist collective Enmedio and of the artistic film mediation project with and for children La Maleta del Cine in Barcelona. Since 2022 she has been part of INGLAM–Inglourious Art Mediators, a band for lecture performances in Hamburg. Her working method, often based on collaborative production, combines anti-discriminatory perspectives with art projects and develops spaces for communication and collective action from artistic intervention and documentation.

DAMIEN POLLARD

is a PhD Candidate at the University of Cambridge's Centre for Film and Screen and Italian Section. His research focuses on sound in Italian horror and giallo cinema of the 1960s to 1980s, and is particularly interested in attending to the voice in these films as a way of rethinking their historicity. More widely, he is interested in Italian sonic culture throughout the twentieth and twenty first centuries. He has presented his work at numerous international conferences and has published on the soundscapes of Dario Argento's supernatural films in the Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies 7:1 (2019), and on the political implications of voice dubbing in Italian genre cinema in Screen (forthcoming, 2020). Before starting his doctoral project, Damien was a practicing documentary filmmaker.

EDDIE CHOO WEN YI

is a multidisciplinary artist. She was born in Selangor, Malaysia. She earned a diploma in Fine Arts after three years of studies at Dasein Academy of Arts in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In 2013, her work Diary of a Madline was honored with a solo show at Lostgens in Kuala Lumpur. She won the Outstanding Art Prize of the Arts Fine Arts Department at Taipei National University. The Madline series was exhibited in the Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts. In 2018, she received her BFA from the Taipei National University of the Arts. She currently lives in Finland and is continuing her MFA at the Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki. Her works revolve around questions of belonging and purpose, the experience of existing in the midst of different social groups and an ever-changing cityscape. Eddie was an intern at documenta fifteen, lumbung kios, and lumbung Radio. Eddie joined the collective in Station of Commons in July 2022.

GIULIA CRISCI

is an independent art curator and PhD candidate at IUAV Università di Venezia. She graduated in Art History in Palermo and specialized in Turin with a thesis on Immaterial Public Space. Her research focuses on radio creation in the Mediterranean, between artistic practices, radical pedagogies, and social movements. Her ongoing curatorial projects include Radio Commons: a sonic Archipelago, and Limone Lunare, an archive of oral sources of social movements and political struggles in Sicily. She curated the 'i-team' educational program for cultural professionals of Relais Culture Europe in Paris in partnership with several European organizations. She was a direct assistant of Unidee- University of Ideas of Fondazione Pistoletto in Biella, Italy.

GRÉGOIRE ROUSSEAU

is an artist and educator based in Helsinki. He has a degree in electrical engineering and a Master of Fine Arts and is currently a doctoral candidate at Aalto University. His artistic work questions the role of the machine; the algorithm within the digitally controlled society. He regularly lectures on art in the technological space at Aalto University, uniarts Finland, ENSBA Paris, the French Institute in Finland, CAC Shanghai, etc. In 2001, he co-founded the Tuulanauhat record label; in 2014, he co-founded Rabrab Press with Sezgin Boynik. In 2018, he authored the publication Learning from electric energy in the arts and in 2020, he initiated Station of Commons with Juan Gomez. He has been working for lumbung Radio since 2022. He exhibits internationally at Titanik gallery, Kunstpavillon Munich, Oksasenkatu11, Cite Internationale de Paris, Palais des Beaux-Arts museum in Paris, Manifesta13, documenta fifteen, Miss Read 2023, and African Art Book Fair, part of the Dakar biennial OFF.

JULIA STOLBA

is an artist and art scientist. Since April 2021 she has been researching for her artistic-scientific doctoral studies at the HFBK Hamburg on artistic, curatorial, and critical art education approaches with histories of violence in archives as well as on forms and meanings of affects within that. Since 2021 she has been part of the Wartenau HFBK Art Education team. Before that she worked on the documenta studies team at the Kunsthochschule Kassel from 2018 to 2022. There she studied fine arts (diploma) and art studies (MA). She is a member of the avArc collective, which she co-founded in 2020 and part of the band INGLAM (Inglourious Art Mediators). In her conceptual, artistic research at the intersection of theory and practice, she works with painting installations, sound and lecture performances on resistant feminist, anti-fascist, and anti-racist counter-histories to the hegemonic canon of knowledge.

MINERVA JUOLAHTI

is a sound and performance artist working with body, sound, space, and paper. They work artistically especially with sound performance and use the sounds produced by the body as a starting point in their work. Their works are usually performative and conceptual spatial gestures that evolve around the sonic. At the moment, they are concentrating on the radicality and ephemerality of the human voice in the processes of remembering and forgetting. Juolahti has performed in several different contexts and venues, such as documenta fifteen, New Performance Turku, Kiilan Äänipäivät, Sola festival, MUU Helsinki gallery, and Vantaan Art Museum Artsi. Besides the more traditional art venues they have presented work, for example, inside a former maternity hospital, on a mountain, inside a forest, on metro stations, and in a bathroom. Juolahti is active in different associations and communities, such as Mad House, Äänen Lumo ry, Rindamus collective, and Station of Commons. Part of their artistic practice is to coordinate and organize concerts and art events. Juolahti's background is in visual arts, social sciences, and folklore studies. They live and work in Helsinki, Finland.

NIKOLAY OLEYNIKOV

a fermented artist; old-aged punk; distilled antifascist; recently a refugee; member of Chto Delat; harmonica, percussion, voice of Arkady Kots band; co-founder and mentor at Chto Delat School of Engaged Art (now School of Emergencies); co-pilot at Free Home University; part of the FireFlyFrequencies.org cohort; contributor and editor for ArtesEverywhere.ca; author of The Sex of the Oppressed (FreeMarxistPress/PS-Guelph, 2013–2024). Teaches at NABA, Rome.

NORA STERNFELD

is an educator and curator. She is Professor of Art Education at the HFBK Hamburg. From 2018–2020 she was documenta Professor at the Kunsthochschule Kassel. From 2012 until 2018 she was Professor of Curating and Mediating Art at the Aalto University in Helsinki. Furthermore she is co-director of /ecm–Study Program in exhibition theory and practice at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, part of trafo.K, Office for Art, Education and Critical Knowledge Production based in Vienna, since 2022 of INGLAM–Inglourious Art Mediators–a band for lecture performances based in Hamburg, and of freethought, a platform for research, education, and production. In this context she was one of the artistic directors of the Bergen Assembly 2016 and worked from 2020–2022 on Spectral Infrastructure a research trajectory in collaboration with basis voor actuele kunst (BAK, Utrecht). She publishes on contemporary art, educational theory, exhibitions, politics of history, and anti-racism.

ÖZGE AÇIKKOL

is an artist working at the intersection of art, socio-spatial practices, research, and social pedagogy. Since 2000, she has been a member of the Oda Projesi collective hosting actions around the existing social and spatial relationships in their neighborhood in İstanbul. She has taken part in exhibitions such as The Hauntologists, BAK (basis voor actuele kunst), Utrecht, Netherlands (2022); Reflections from the Women's Archives, DEPO İstanbul (2022); Edit Your Future Bucharest Biennial 8, (2018); and with Oda Projesi she has participated in various international exhibitions such as the 4th Gwangju Biennial, 50th Venice Biennial; Collective Creativity at the Museum Fridericianum, Kassel; The Gatherers at Yerba Buena Art Center, San Francisco, and the 8th, 9th, and 17th İstanbul Biennial.

SEDA YİLDIZ

is an independent curator and currently PhD researcher at the HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. With an educational background in art practice and design, in recent years her transdisciplinary practice has involved curating, writing, and editing. Ongoing research interests include questions of curating site-context specific, process-driven socially engaged art practices; artist collectives and self-archiving practices. Conviviality and friendship are central values in her practice. Since 2019 she has been collaborating with Belgrade based Škart and recently with İstanbul based Oda Projesi artist collectives in translating their archives to bodily experiences and making them public. Yıldız is the editor and co-author of the book Building Human Relations Through Art: Belgrade Škart collective (Belgrade) from 1990 to present (Onomatopee, 2022), which maps the collective's decades-long multi-layered artistic practice through archival research and oral history. yildizseda.com

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