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This is a journey into sound/Bring the noise.

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Abstract:

The aim of this thesis is to survey the discussions around the position of sound art within the broader arts, and to explore strategies and research areas within fine art and my own practice, so as to identify new areas of enquiry and develop my work within this field. I investigate the phenomenology of vision and hearing and contrast the different ways these two senses operate as primary sources of perception. I analyse the privileging of sight and the dominance of the visual in art institutions. Ideas of the literal and model subject within installation art are explored and the convergence of these subjectivities is overlaid with this phenomenological research, in order to develop a direction within installation art. The lack of authoritative sources in this field, beyond the few relevant texts, has meant that my research has employed respected new media and the Internet as a second tier of sources. I also analyse my own practice as an example of how sound art activates extramusical ideas. My research concludes that sound art has much to reveal to the broader arts community about perception and the creation of meaning, and also that there are many prospective avenues of enquiry within fine arts for the inclusion and analysis of audio based work.

Keywords: sound art; phenomenology; hearing; privileging of sight; subjectivities; extramusical; perception.

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Sound saturates the arts of this century, and its importance becomes evident if we can hear past the presumption of mute visuality within art history, past the matter of music that excludes references to the world, past the voice that is already the source of its own existence, past the phonetic taskmastering of writing, and past what we might see as hearing.

(Douglas Kahn, 1990.)



Figure 1. Members of Fluxus Internationale playing the piano.