



Foundation

Psychogeography

Psychogeography describes the effect of a geographical location on the emotions and behaviour of individuals.

How do different places make us feel and behave? The term psychogeography was invented by the Marxist theorist Guy Debord in 1955 in order to explore this.

Inspired by the French nineteenth century poet and writer Charles Baudelaire's concept of the flâneur – an urban wanderer – Debord suggested playful and inventive ways of navigating the urban environment in order to examine its architecture and spaces.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/psychogeography>



Phonography: Field Recording

Field recording of natural sounds, also called phonography (a term chosen to illustrate its similarities to photography), was originally developed as a documentary adjunct to research work in the field, and foley work for film.



Martin Schmidt of the American electronic duo Matmos, recording cows in 2006

A hand holds a camera lens in the foreground, with the lens's viewfinder showing a clear image of a lake and mountains. The background of the entire image is a blurred version of the same scene, creating a sense of depth and focus on the lens.

Microphone is Similar to a Camera Lens

Point it. Move it. Hold Still. What changes?



Relationship between Sound and Place:

How can sound reveal about the identity of a place?





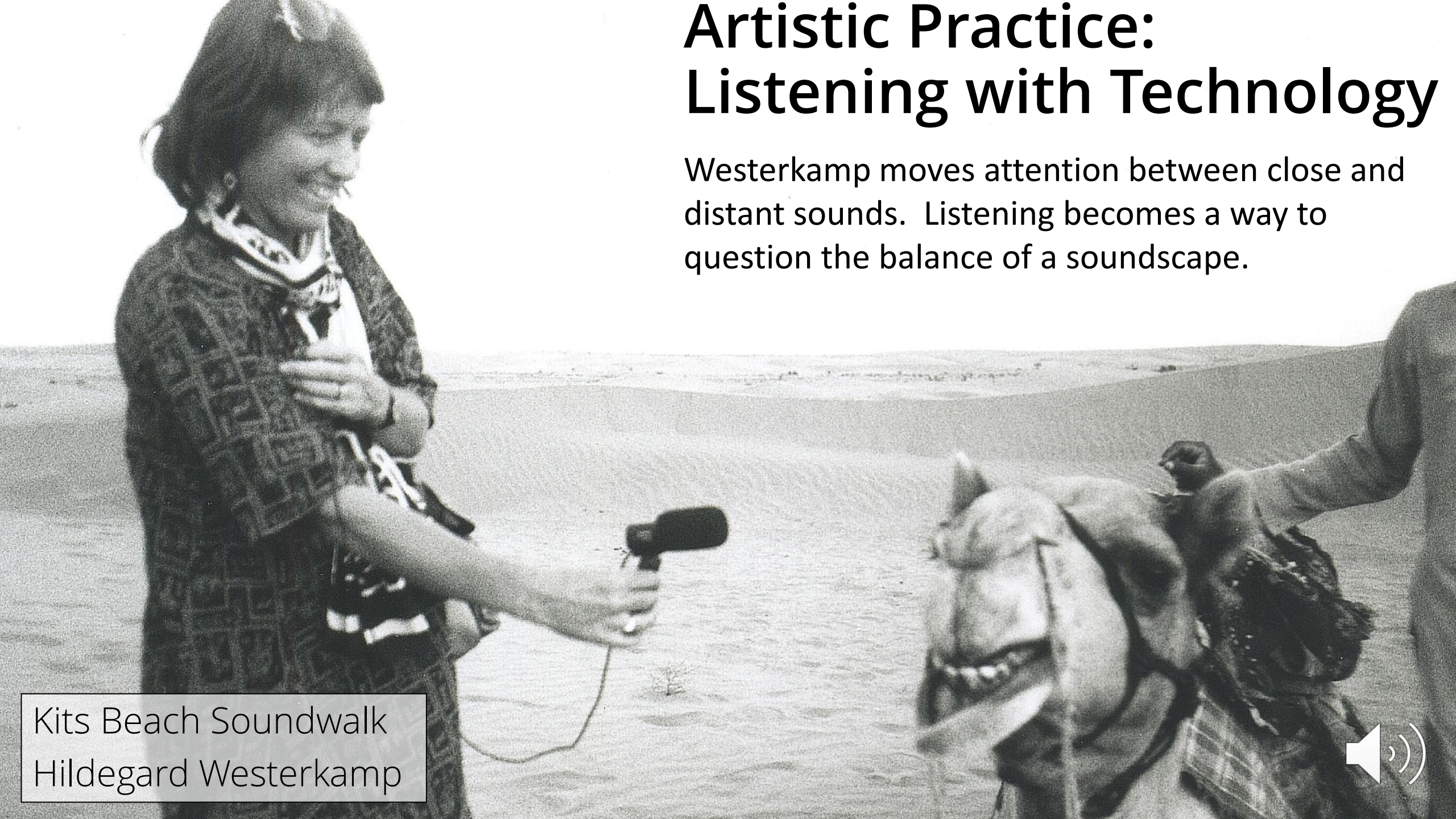
H4n Pro
Portable Recorder

Listening from Different Perspectives

Mic Type	Perspective	Ideal For	Analogy
XY Recorder	Wide stereo image	Realistic ambiances, spatial context	Wide-angle lens
Shotgun Mic	Focused, directional	Isolating detail or dialogue	Telephoto lens
Contact Mic	Inside vibrations	Hidden textures (metal, glass, wood)	X-ray lens
Electromagnetic Sensor	Non-audible electromagnetic hums	Abstract, technological sounds	Infrared camera

Artistic Practice: Listening with Technology

Westerkamp moves attention between close and distant sounds. Listening becomes a way to question the balance of a soundscape.

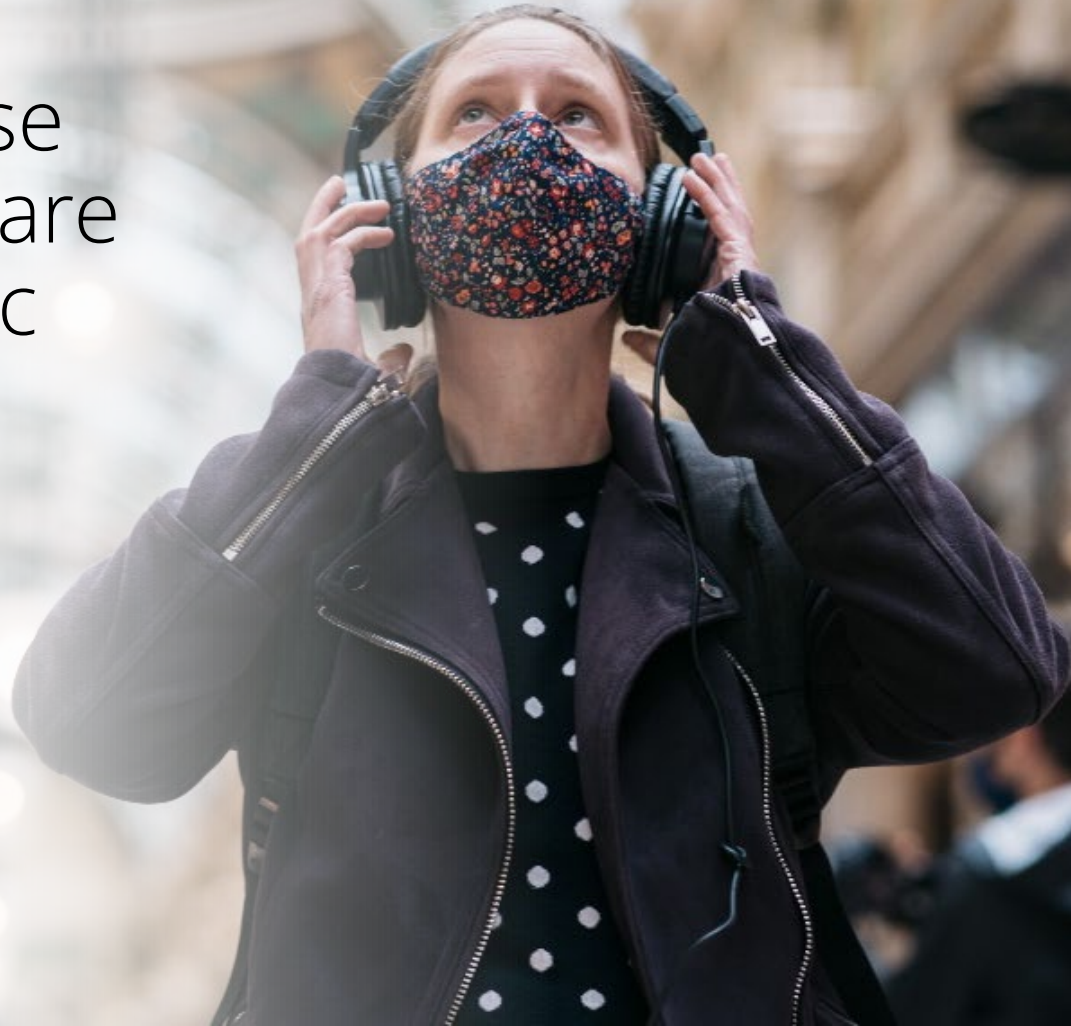


Kits Beach Soundwalk
Hildegard Westerkamp



Soundwalk

A Soundwalk is an exercise that helps us become aware of our immediate acoustic environment.

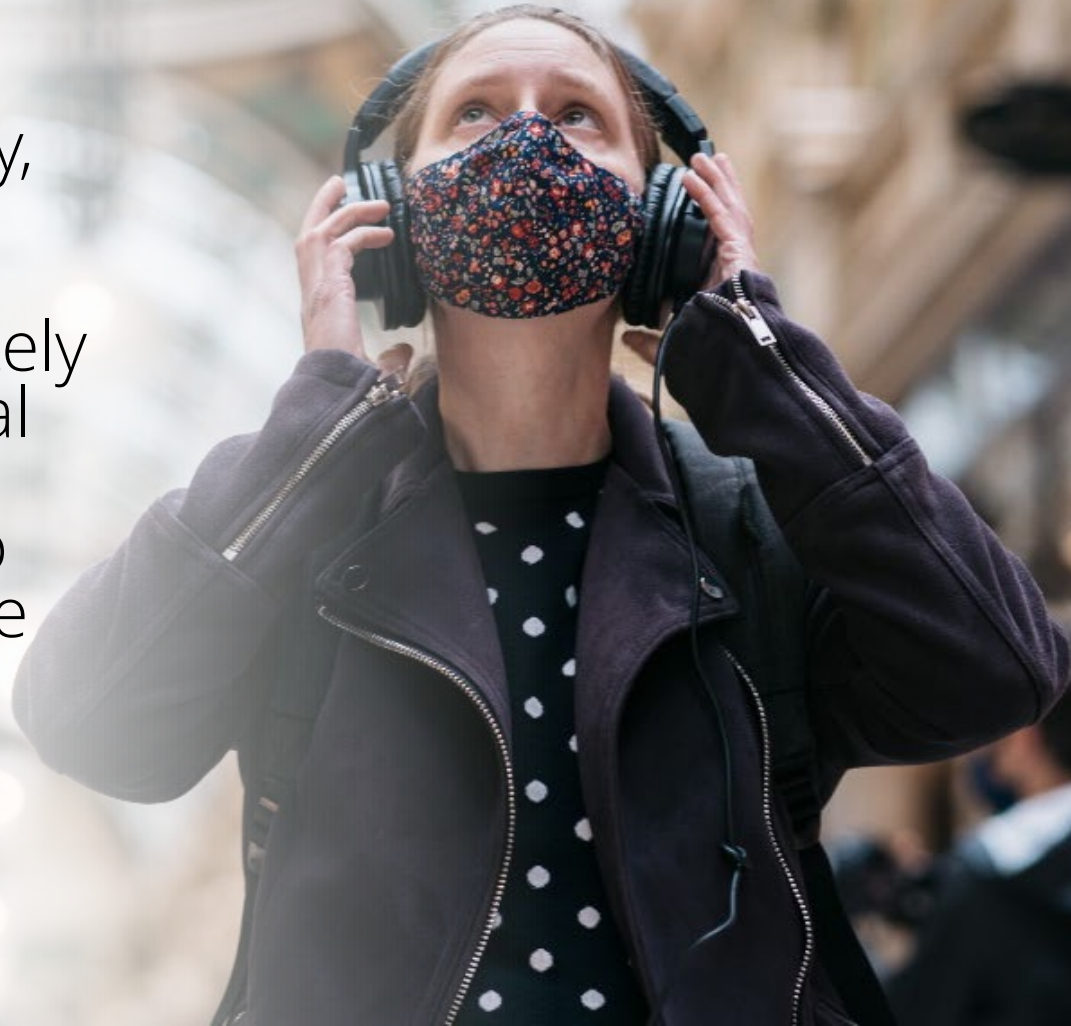


Hildegard Westerkamp, Sound Walk
<https://www.hildegardwesterkamp.ca/sound/installations/Nada/soundwalk/>

Soundwalk

A soundwalk is a form of active participation in the soundscape.

Though the variations are many, the essential purpose of a soundwalk is to encourage the participant to listen discriminately and moreover, to make a critical judgement about the sounds heard and their contribution to the balance or imbalance of the sonic environment.



Hildegard Westerkamp, Sound Walk
<https://www.hildegardwesterkamp.ca/sound/installations/Nada/soundwalk/>

Soundwalk

- Who owns the soundscape?
- Which sounds mask others?
- Whose activity is audible?
- What changes across time of day?

A soundwalk can ask social questions as well as describe atmosphere.



Dynevor Centre for Art, Design and Medi

LC Swansea, Oystermouth Rd, Maritime

Add destination

OPTIONS

Send directions to your phone

via Oxford St

12 min

0.6 mile

DETAILS

via Albert Row

13 min

0.6 mile

via B4489

13 min

0.7 mile

All routes are mostly flat

Soundwalk

Dynevor Campus to Swansea Marina
(or around campus if it's raining)



Soundwalk Considerations

- What sounds did you encounter you had not heard before?
- What is the closest sound?
- What is the farthest sound?
- Which sounds move from left to right?
- How many man-made sounds did you hear?
- Can you hear sounds with rhythm?
- What is the loudest sound you hear?
- What is the quietest sound you hear?
- Are there any sounds masked by another?
- Can you hear your own footsteps?
- How many natural sounds did you hear?
- How many times do you hear music playing?
- Do the sounds you hear have pitch?
- What is the highest sound?
- What is the lowest sound?

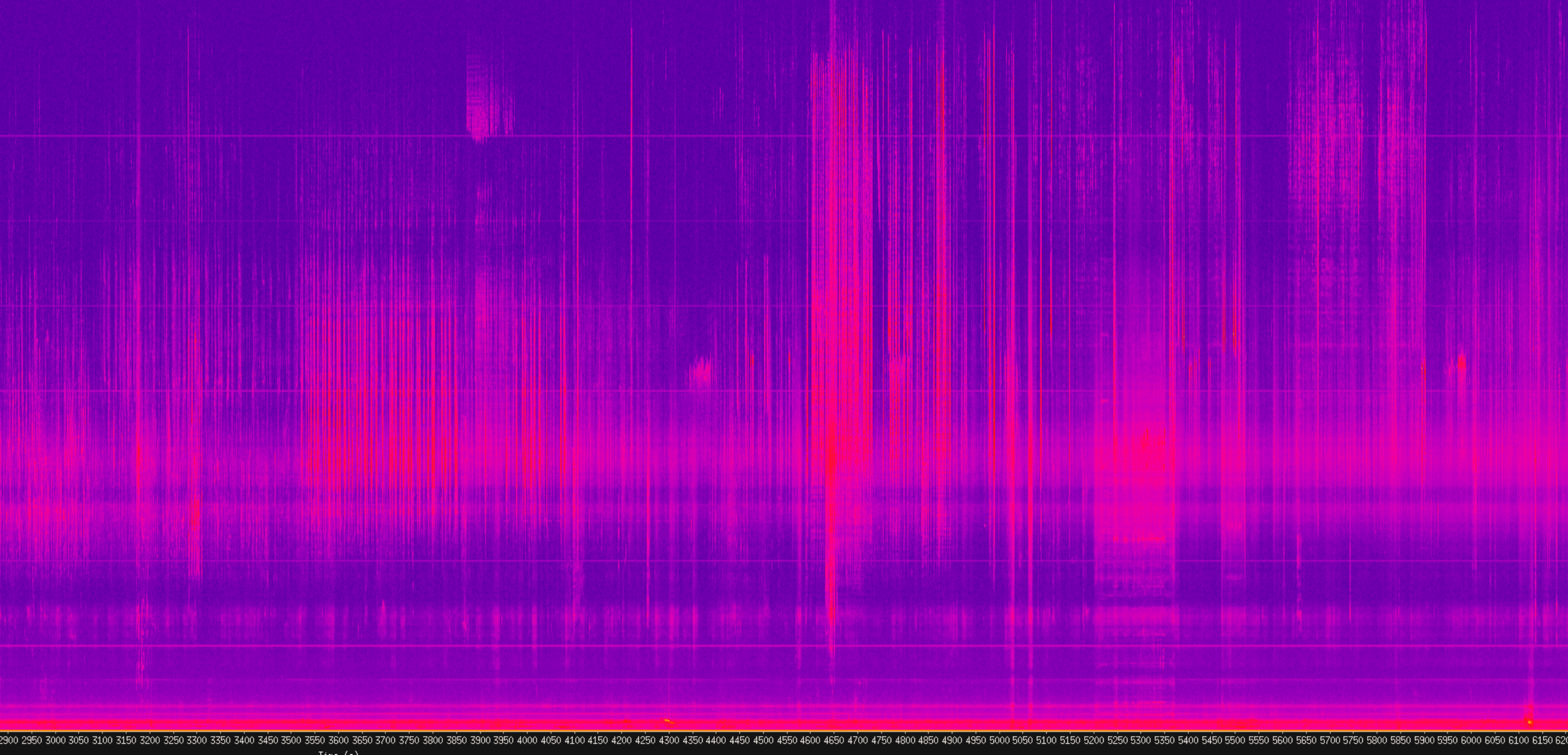


Documentation

Describe one moment on the walk when listening changed how you understood a place.

What did you notice, and did a microphone or sensor change what you heard?

The Sound of Our Modern Environment





Noise Pollution

How our noisy world is seriously damaging our health:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crmjdm2m4yjo>

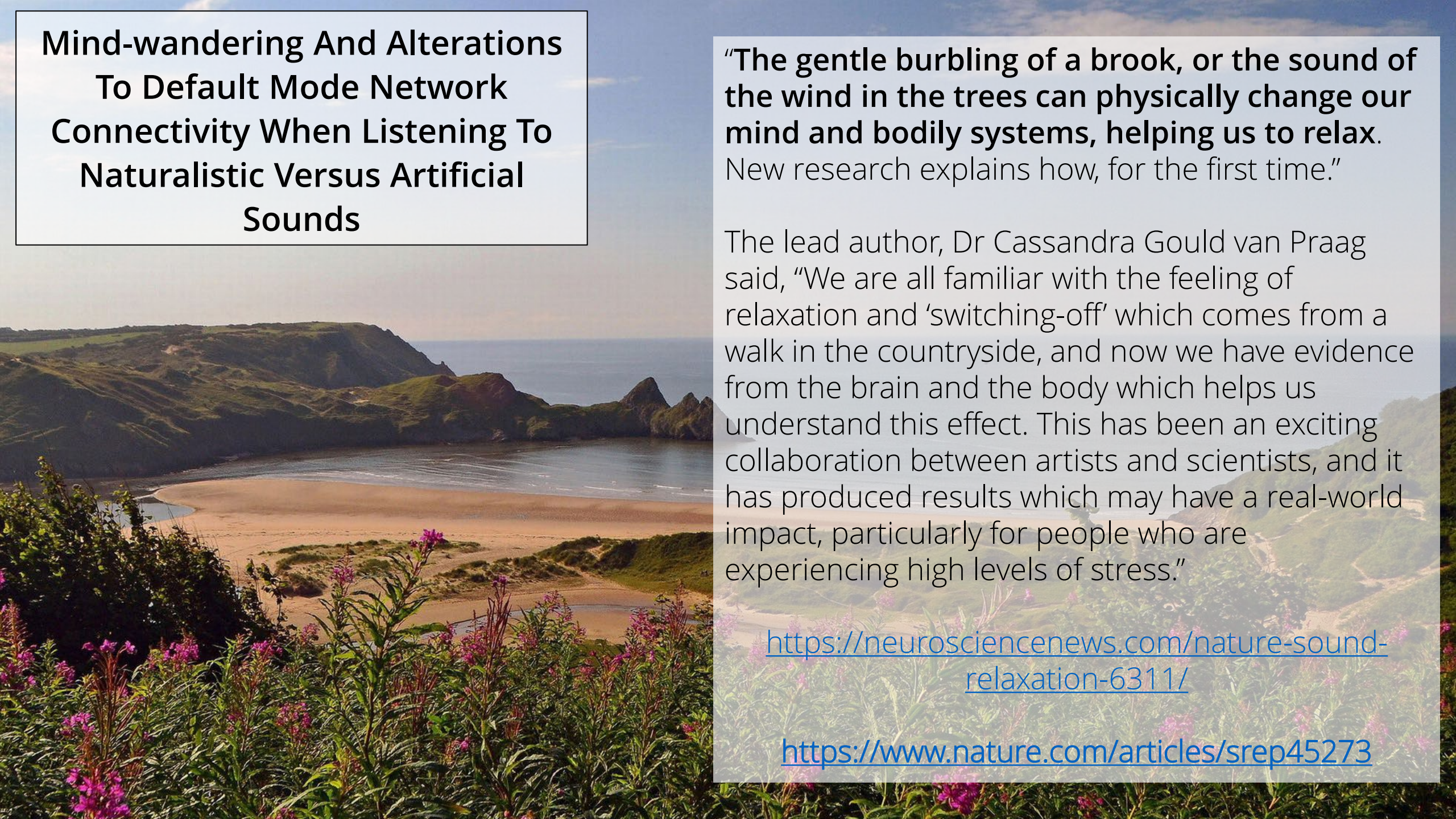


Tuning Your Ears: Cocktail Party Effect





Listening to the Natural Environment:
Current Research Suggests it could be Beneficial



Mind-wandering And Alterations To Default Mode Network Connectivity When Listening To Naturalistic Versus Artificial Sounds

“The gentle burbling of a brook, or the sound of the wind in the trees can physically change our mind and bodily systems, helping us to relax. New research explains how, for the first time.”

The lead author, Dr Cassandra Gould van Praag said, “We are all familiar with the feeling of relaxation and ‘switching-off’ which comes from a walk in the countryside, and now we have evidence from the brain and the body which helps us understand this effect. This has been an exciting collaboration between artists and scientists, and it has produced results which may have a real-world impact, particularly for people who are experiencing high levels of stress.”

<https://neurosciencenews.com/nature-sound-relaxation-6311/>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/srep45273>

WOODLAND TRUST: WOODLAND SOUNDS BOOST WELLBEING ACCORDING TO NEW STUDY

"The crunch of snapping twigs underfoot. Lilted birdsong from above. The rustling of trees in the breeze. **Woodland sounds have been shown to have a direct impact on our wellbeing, making us more relaxed, less stressed and less anxious.**

A new mental chronometry study* commissioned by the National Trust explored how **soaking up the sounds of the natural world affects people**, and found it **relaxes us** more than if we listen to a voiced meditation app, and in the tests, **reduced feelings of stress and anxiety by over a fifth.**

* Mental chronometry is the study of reaction time, measuring elapsed time between sensory stimulus onsets and subsequent behavioural responses."

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/press-release/woodland-sounds-boost-wellbeing-according-to-new-study>

Highlighting the Differences between Hearing and Listening

There are differences between hearing and listening.

Hearing could be considered passive, whilst **listening** could be considered active.



Developing Listening Skills: Hearing And Listening

In order to approach human reaction to sound and content it is necessary to differentiate between processes of hearing and listening.

While **hearing is presented as a passive activity** (Hanns Eisler and Theodor Adorno, 1947, p. 74; Nancy Van DeVeer, 1979, p. 2; Pauline Oliveros, 2005, p. 7; Barthes, 1985/1991, p. 246 and Uimonen, 2002, p. 177), **a faculty selected by evolution for its contribution to survival** (Manley and Gleich, 1992, p. 561 and Truax, 2001, p. 18), location and orientation (Cook, 1999, p. 101 & Wishart 1986, p. 41), **listening is considered from many different perspectives.**

Barthes (1991, p. 245) suggests, **"Hearing is a physiological phenomenon; listening is a psychological act."** Uimonen (2002, p. 177) changes the emphasis slightly by suggesting that, **"hearing may be defined as a physiological function whereas listening is more or less cognitive."**

In Situ Listening: Soundscape, Site and Transphonia, Marcus Leadley:
https://research.gold.ac.uk/15066/1/MUS_thesis_LeadleyM_2015.pdf