



[Growing silence]

Silence as an instrument of experience.

A project to promote the qualities of silence and space in an urban context. Our project is about the experience and importance of urban silence and the connection between space and silence.

Not the physical definition of silence, or the acoustical definition counts. Through a phenomenological approach to silence the artists explore how sound unambiguously works on the human being (in this case in an urban context). Silence is an instrument of experience and as well as an instrument of knowledge.

The project wants to realize a cultural bridge between the presence of silence as access to historical and natural soundscapes and the inner experience of silence. Silence is not limited to a material-acoustical aspect, silence is as well a part of city life as an inner space, a breathing space.

This project tries to involve young people in the making of and creating of (urban) silence. We invite students and young artists into the design process and try to engage them in the future development of their environment and to excite them about the city. Approaching silence will explore silence in the city, looking for design tools for the shaping of places and urban experiences.

the Milena principle and Escoitar.org [Spain] work together as a collective of sound artists, visual artists, anthropologists, musicologists and developers on projects focused on sound, auditive memory and the ethical concerns of cultural action. They use open source technologies as a key concept for social activation. They realize interactive sound maps, sound walks, sound installations, performances, connecting visual arts with sound art and other activities linked with the preservation of sound memory, the acknowledgment of intangible cultural heritage, the encouragement of listeners' involvement in the composition of the sound heritage.

[Shaping Silence - Acoustic Ecology]

We see sound as a source of knowledge about society. Silence is sound too. We approach sound in an artistic way. We only use open source software. We are creating audio tours that allow for a spontaneous and intuitive way to explore the city. We are inspired by the Situationists and their psychogeography. We allow people to make their own audio tours in an android app. It allows you to edit and add sound to a place. You can save your sound walk, load it to your smartphone. And once you are there, you can listen to it. You can display your audio material everywhere, with GPS.

Instead of a predefined guided audiotour, it is a matter of discovery. Space is filled up with memories of the people that live in the spaces. Now you can discover the city in an emotional way. We actually create a collective memory of the city. They are half fiction half documentary audio walks. We invite people to be surprised about the things that are normally unnoticed and discover personal stories.

Often acoustic space is ignored in the construction of a public space. The prevalence of noise or sounds that do not convey any social significance and are a disturbance of the quality of life, reduces the ability to identify with the place we inhabit. It is therefore urgent to think about the acoustical problems societies are facing today and integrate that thinking in urban planning, architecture and management of public space, because the idea we have of ourselves, our personal awareness and the relationships we build in the external world, are inextricably linked to a space. We all exist somewhere. And personal identity also relates to this.