

# Clickanywhere exhibition launch welcome talk

By Salomé Voegelin

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to **welcome** you to the first in a series of sound specific on-line shows commissioned by CRiSAP. The centre for creative research in sound arts practice here at the London College of Communication.

I was very excited to have been invited to curate this first show and to be given the opportunity to hopefully set an interesting precedent for other exciting shows to come.

The invitation to curate on-line particularly to curate *sound* on-line is a site-specific challenge. The concept and curatorial focus of this show came out of this site specificity; the aesthetic and interactive context on-line. The production and usage of this virtual space; its materiality and the method the user engages with this materiality all influenced the way I went about conceptualising and realising this show: It determined my approach to curatorial practice; it brought me to the shows thematic, the voice; it guided my choice of artists involved as well as the design of the site itself.

I perceive the internet as an only dimly-lit space, that holds and hides information and ideas in virtual boxes and filing cabinets. They are dependent for their existence on the interaction by the visitor on-line, who searches, and finds them on his or her own route of discovery. The internet is a phenomenological space, a virtual-life world created through my being in it, and reciprocally I too am at the moment of surfing intersubjectively my on-line self. In this sense I think the internet, the virtual, has a thoroughly sonic character and demands a sonic sensibility. By this I mean it demands me to be engaged, enveloped by the whole act of surfing. I am not only reading a pre-existing text from a distance but as surfer am a quasi listener physically and directly involved in its production. On-line I generate the site and my trajectory through the site, through my surfing in it. In surfing I open rooms, unfold them, shed light into them. I close them, it goes dark again, the music stops, it does not exist anymore, at least as far as I am concerned.

Room after room filled with voices of known and unknown authors, peer reviewed or totally subjective or even anonymous, fact and fiction. It is a Kafkaesk space, a Cubist castle, with many staircases and slides that will never show you its real authority or centre of control. Which does not mean that there isn't one.

The walls of these rooms are constructed from the material of their own information. These are box room sized and bridal suite spaced places made up of words and information, pictures and sounds. My experience was that when you curate on-line you do not put things into places but construct spaces. These spaces are together yet separate and allow a side by side of sound work that would not be possible in the reality of stone and brick architecture.

The separate togetherness of these rooms is what makes it so exciting for sound. Soundwork can stand next to each other on-line, it can enrich, expand and deny each other without drowning each other out in an inevitable physical way. The actual space in the Gallery enforces an exhibition protocol, through its visual conventions and architectural limitations. On-line I am allowed to play with this protocol and re-evaluate it through the expectations of the surfer passing by.

The colour and design of the site, *clickanywhere*, seeks to play with the transparent opacity of the rooms on-line. They are seemingly permeable and yet totally separate getting darker and darker the closer to the actual work you get. The transparency is created by the surfer, and surfing is a solitary pursuit.

Curating sound on-line allows you to get an audience of single listeners without insisting on a headphone set up. The intimacy for which many of the works were chosen is assured through the convention of the web. The paradox of the launch of course is that we can surf together, each on our headphones. It is quite uncomfortable to have somebody listening over your shoulder whilst you are surfing, even when you are not on considering private sites.

This desire and need for solitude on-line and yet the paradox to want to make connections is the reason why I focused on the voice as a particular sound. The voice beckons, enchants, berates, it is semantic and sonor, makes collective sense and produces useful personal non-sense. The internet is full of unspoken voices. News reports, articles, written information, where a writer is assumed but never furnished with a voice. Of course there a spoken blogs to download, radio streams etc. but in general the written word wins over its articulation.

To use the voice and to curate voice-work on-line produces vocal rooms, rooms that *are* the body of the speaker. Sitting there in the semi dark is a small human being or two, created through our own auditory imagination. These tiny people are talking to us and in this intimate imagining merge with our own inner voice, our surfing-intersubjective-self, which is inventing them. - I want to catch you there in your solitude, drag you into the woods and take you fishing.

Where you can indeed see somebody there is still room for imagination, to sit yourself next to them.

Another curatorial factor was that most of the work chosen for this show played in one way or another with assumptions about authorship. Not in a political or ideological way, but in a material or conceptual way. These voices particularly once they are on-line, become autonomous, freed from their creators a kind of Frankenstein self-will sets in. The boundaries between speaker and artist are blurred and in this dimly-lit space the speaker seems to be the artist becoming the space on the site that takes on a human outline.

These ideas about constructed sites and listener positions are what directed and informed my curatorial decisions and concepts, that is not to say that you will all hear the same, in fact, in your own listening you will invent different relationships and different imaginations and generate the site through your own intersubjective surfing.

I hope you will enjoy exploring clickanywhere publicly here in this space and more privately upstairs in the mezzanine, and later really privately at home.