

stuff change / látková přeměna (2024)
multisensory & participatory installation (23 mins, looped)

inflatable sculpture, multi-channel composition, vibration actuators.



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ars electronica, junge ilco, toepfer foundation, grewus.

concept

everyone emits and has heard bowel sounds. nonetheless, their metabolic acoustics remain stigmatized; their sonic richness is often silenced. stoff wechsel / látková přeměna is a multi-sensory installation exploring the acoustic and haptic quality of gut feeling. it brings our guts into collective resonances and viscerally encourages them to synchronize with each other.

stoff wechsel / látková přeměna sounds out how we can attune to one another, not via breath or heartbeat, but through our gastrointestinal systems — asking to get closer to yourself, think outside your own rationality and to experience your body as an ecological system.

in an inflatable bath of sounds, the audience's gut sounds are experimented with and woven into a composition — or gutscape — that affects our internal organs and nurtures multi-organ communication. beyond semantics, this space enmeshes sounds with intuition, opening up to the hidden interplay of collective subconscious processes, affects and decision making that define our gut feeling.

installation

getting closer to the sonic gutscape facilitates the emergence of a relation with our bodies outside of the traditional stigma surrounding it. the installation consists of an inflatable of five meters diameter, made of pvc and an outer silicone layer with actuators hidden beneath. these interact with the touch of the visitor, intensifying the sonic experience of the listener through haptic stimulation.

surrounding the inflatable, the audience finds silicone cushions which they can put on top of their guts. encapsulating a self-built hydrophone — which makes you hear the sound of blood running through the veins — they allow to transcend the capacities of our ear to listen to amplified internal movements in real-time. these sounds are intertwined with a looping electroacoustic composition of thirty minutes duration.

the sonic space, which creates the feeling of being absorbed in intestines, is threefold:

- (1) spatialised composition with a dome-like immersive quality,
- (2) vibrotactile quality of lower frequencies in the inflatable,
- (3) live sounds of interacting audiences.

version one - sculpture



version one - sculpture

composition

the gutscape consists of a looping, fixed multi-channel composition of 23 minutes, entirely made of recordings of the belly: it fuses gut sounds of the artists' digestive tracts with patients living with a stoma (artificial bowel outlet).

set-up provided by sikau / pubalova

- inflatable 6 m x 2 m x 1,80 m (height)
- including 12 vibrotactile actuators (8 grewus hapforce 2, 4 grewus ulti) and 2 built-in speakers
- reaper file for playing multi-channel sound mix
- touchdesigner file for controlling vibration actuators and possibly light fixtures (depending on the type)

technical equipment needed on site

- multi-channel / four channel speaker set up + subwoofer (hung on rack above the installation) + one subwoofer (behind the sculpture)
- audio interface for speaker set up + 2 XLR outputs for vibration actuators
- set of light fixtures on the object
- computer with reaper, touchdesigner and DW service for remote control of installation
- vacuum cleaner
- air blower for jumping castles (1kW), with an adapter hole of 50 mm for the big valve of the inner inflatable

technical set-up

artists sikau / pubalova install the inflatable sculpture on-site.
we need support from one sound engineer and two stage hands.

keeping the sculpture intact

to maintain the firm wrinkled texture, vacuum the sculpture twice a day.
(a regular vacuum cleaner is sufficient)

taking the installation down (done by staff on site)

deflate the inner sculpture by opening the big valve of 10 mm
(with the vacuum cleaner it's much faster)

fold it together with multiple people so that it fits into the box

put the electronic cables into a separate electronic box

send it back.

version two - hydrophones



version two - hydrophones

composition

the gutscape consists of a binaural composition, entirely made of recordings of the belly: it fuses gut sounds of the artists' digestive tracts with patients living with a stoma (artificial bowel outlet). The hydrophones hanging in the ceiling can be used to add your own live gut sounds to the composition.

set-up provided by sikau / pubalova

- four hydrophones
- electroacoustic composition

technical equipment needed on site

- eight pairs of headphones, two connecting to one hydrophone each
- audio interface for headphones (4 inputs, 8 outputs / 4 outputs and splitters)
- computer with reaper, touchdesigner and DW service for remote control of installation
- set of light fixtures on the hanging hydrophones
- cozy opportunities to sit and lie to engage with own live gut sounds

technical set-up

artists sikau / pubalova install the hydrophones on-site.

taking the installation down (done by staff on site)

disconnect all cables.

send the hydrophones back.

exhibition note

listening to our guts means attuning to our intuitions. we trust these subtle, physical sensations to guide our decision-making. our metabolic vibrations, though a tangible part of our experience, are often overlooked and stigmatised, left to resonate unnoticed.

stuff change / látková přeměna takes us into the sonic territory of the gut to reimagine the richness of our bowel sounds. within our bodies, a vibrant ecosystem of microorganisms drives the physical movements and chemical breakdowns that generate an unpredictable, ever-changing sonic signature — unique to each of us. the artists have experimented with their own organs. their research sounded out how medicalised guts reshape one's perception and connection to inner resonances.

as you move through the space, gurgles, rumbles, and growls emerge from the inflatable sculpture. you are invited to gently squeeze your body to the wrinkled tissue, feeling the amplified vibrations ripple outwards. this gutscape encourages deep listening: sonic textures unfold, from expansive howls and crisp effervescence to crescendos of sirens and squelches, followed by breathy, oceanic hums.

the experience evokes the digestive process itself. spatialised across the room, sounds swirl and shift, evolving from healing ambiance to a radical sonic climax, before quieting into a final airy rumble — leaving an already-entangled silence.

chewy, textured cushions invite you to engage in this collective resonance. as you press them gently to your belly, hydrophones amplify your internal rhythms. get curious and experiment with your acoustics, letting the sounds grow louder as you rehearse for the shared encounter.

by reclaiming what is dismissed as embarrassing noise, stuff change / látková přeměna directs our attention into the complex compositions of our gastrointestinal systems. we become attuned to our own and each other's gut sounds, tapping into a multi-organ dialogue beyond semantics. the synchronised resonances makes us question what emerges from us and what flows between bodies. as the gutscape fades, we are left with a heightened awareness — of silences and reverberations — that lingers long after the last echoes dissipate. we may walk away with a renewed sense of what it means to 'listen to your gut.'

contacts for set up / tech clarifications

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