
Our events at the Whitney Biennial are a performative survey of listening, as we found it being used as a tool in different practices, disciplines and communities in North America (music, poetry, film, philosophy, activism...). To give you an idea of how we understand each performance as concerning listening, we list below our own brief notes, descriptions or questions...

**A
SURVEY IS

A
PROCESS

OF
LISTENING**

WEDNESDAY 2 MAY

Five Protocols for the Sound of Freedom Ultra-red and George Lewis

11am–1:45pm

As part of their ongoing collaboration with and participation in specific struggles for gender and sexual rights, anti-racism, and resistance to the war on the poor, the sound art collective Ultra-red invited five individuals and collectives to compose protocols for how we might listen to the sound of freedom. On each day of *A survey is a process of listening* a cohort of researchers performs one of the five protocols as a way of generating collective improvised listening that we can then reflect upon, analyze collectively, and arrive at proposals for future action.

For day one of Ultra-red's project, the investigation will take up protocols composed and facilitated by George E. Lewis. George's protocol hopes to "(1) gain additional facility in the performance of "sonic intuition," or the ability to read minds and intentions through the ears, and (2) to explore instances of "emotional transduction," or conversions of sound into human emotional and spiritual resonances."

Wallingford Food Bank Christopher DeLaurenti

2:30–4pm

Consisting of: site recordings, interviews, and surreptitious microphone captures made while Christopher needed to use a food bank in 2004. Does this performance involve an *imaginary* listening, in which we imagine the context we're listening to (with no visual clues)? In so doing, do we imagine a *typical* situation (not specific characters in a specific situation, but typical characters), one we can all relate to?

A Handbook of Protocols for Literary Listening

Craig Dworkin & Vanessa Place

4:45–5:45pm

Craig has edited a small handbook of exemplary instances of literary listening in radical, conceptual writing. This event is a guided reading of that handbook. Vanessa Place, including in Craig's handbook, has published some of her professional appellate briefs in literary venues, as narrative poems, where aspects of their style and story can be newly heard.

THURSDAY 3 MAY

Five Protocols for the Sound of Freedom Ultra-red and members of the House|Ballroom scene

11am–1:45pm

For day two of Ultra-red's project, the investigation will take up protocols composed and facilitated by the Vogue'ology collective. Their protocol draws on African American feminists and Womanist theologians to consider the terms by which members of the Latino/a and African American lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender House|Ballroom scene strive for freedom.

Hit Parade Christof Migone

2:30–4:15pm

Christof's work uses simple, open-ended concepts to collectively test out and expand on ideas of: language, voice, bodies, performance, space, intimacy, complicity and endurance. *Hit Parade* is based on a very simple proposition that allows us, by listening, to think about how we inhabit public or private spaces, how sound or our bodies can articulate those spaces, about individuals and community, about labor or endurance.

The Indivisible or Inadmissible Committee

4pm–5:30pm

When one calls a strike, who hears the call, who attunes and listens to it? How to listen to the call of a strike? What prevents one from hearing this call or stops one from listening to it? And for those who listen to its call, what does it call for today? Can the police in us, beside us or against us listen?

FRIDAY 4 MAY

Five Protocols for the Sound of Freedom Ultra-red and Nancy Nevárez

1pm–4pm

For day three of Ultra-red's project, the investigation will take up composed and facilitated by Nancy Nevárez. A poet, playwright, and anti-poverty activist grounded in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence, Nancy's protocol ask us to listen to the reading of different scenarios, to reflect on what we hear, and on what stays with us.

Is a survey a process of listening? Barry Esson & Jay Sanders

4:30–5:15pm

A brief chat about the different registers of listening and their context, as Arika tried to reflect them in their program for the Biennial.

Comrades of Time Andrea Geyer

6–7:00pm

Seven women recite monologues composed from speeches, letters and essays written by architects, writers, philosophers and political organizers from the vibrant years of the Weimar Republic. Can these readings act as a kind of cultural echo? Just as distant sound is experienced afresh when it's reflected back to us, can listening to these texts allow us to experience historical times as present within us?

Paramedia Yasunao Tone

7:45–8:45pm

Tone's performances are some of the most compelling examples of a cognitive experience in sound that we can think of. Never a demonstration of ideas, they simply cause us to think. Specifically, *Paramedia* made us think through ideas of: 'Blackout' - to hear in a momentary gap clear of consciousness and decision-making and, 'De-control' - to hear an abandonment of order.

SATURDAY 5 MAY

Five Protocols for the Sound of Freedom Ultra-red and Fred Moten

11am–2pm

For day four of Ultra-red's project, the investigation will take up protocols composed and facilitated by Fred Moten. Fred is a poet, teacher, and theorist of/within the black radical aesthetic: his protocol is an improvisatory proposal for sensory listening (to the voice, to history, to collectivity), with the whole body.

Sean Meehan

2:30–3:30pm

We think Sean uses percussion as a means to mark time, so as to create a kind of social patience for and openness to the non-aural aspects of music. Is it a music of non-listening, or one that encourages the listener to focus not (only) on what they hear, but to embody the spatial and social characteristics of a specific setting, time and group of people?

Cosmic Pessimism Eugene Thacker

4pm–4:30pm

On a planetary scale and over deep time nothing could be more insignificant than the human. So could we say that reality is un-human? How does this relate to Renaissance occult musical thinkers of the cosmic, who proposed listening to the "disharmony of the world"? Does listening to this disharmony allow us to rethink the world as unthinkable, and without us?

In Passing

Brandon LaBelle

5pm–5:45pm

In Passing opens a space in and amongst the audience, to set strangers into conversation and to dramatize the silent thoughts of a reader. Could we say that it embodies a social idea of reverberation: the persistence of something in a space after it was first produced? Is this an allegorical idea of listening (it embodies an idea in/ of listening), or a collective one (to listen together), or maybe it's a notion of quotidian listening (to listen to the sonic figures of everyday life)?

SUNDAY 6 MAY

Five Protocols for the Sound of Freedom **Ultra-red**

11am-2pm

For day five of Ultra-red's project, the investigation will review the previous work undertaken together and pose some future questions, using the Mississippi Freedom School Curriculum (which encouraged teachers to use questions as their primary tool) as a starting point.

Dr. Mabuse dispassionately recites communist theory over found footage of riots

Evan Calder Williams

2:45-3:30pm

A bodiless treatise from a criminal mastermind long presumed dead, concerning the un-present voice and images of the present, narration, exciting images and bored speakers, audience misbehaviour and police megaphones, and, lastly, the possibility that the one speaking from behind the curtain may have no clue as to what is happening on the other side. What if nobody's listening?

TEST

4:30-5:45pm

TEST are the classic, tough, underground, street hardened Free Jazz group. In their music, we think you can hear complimentary notions of liberty in the way the collective is organised, a) as a group of people and, b) in their music. Hierarchy is eschewed. Every player shares the burden of composition. Everybody is responsible for their actions, and how those actions affect others. Is this kind of collective music an embodied practice of liberty, (individual, social, musical)?

Presented by:

Arika WHITNEY

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