

## **Soundscape: evoking associations through sound**

Arts 107: Digital Imaging in the Visual Arts

Prof. Claudia Esslinger

*"when you're beating a drum, you can hear what the boom comes the teeniest bit too late or the teeniest bit too early, because your whole attention is focused on the razor edge between silence and noise...when you beat a drum you create NOW, when silence becomes a sound so enormous and alive it feels like you are breathing in the clouds and the sky, and your heart is the rain and the thunder." From Ruth Ozeki in A Tale for the Time Being p238*

For this project you will **find** and **create** sounds to use in a sound collage. You will use a digital audio recorder or the sound lab to gather these sounds and then create a sound collage one minute long. The sounds you find will help determine the content of the piece.

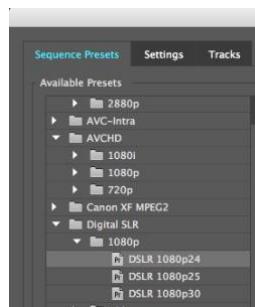
**The structure** of this collage may be based on a structure that you already know from your personal background or may be developed through experimentation. (*For instance, you might use the structure of a sonnet to organize your sound. If you are interested in horizons or sunsets, your sound might stretch out long and slow increasing in speed as it ends (like the sun dipping into the horizon). Be able to identify the shape of time in your piece when you are finished (you don't have to preplan this, but respond to the sounds you find.)*)

**Finding Sounds:** Carry the recorder and explore the world around you. Use headphones. Go to places beyond Kenyon. Record at least a minute of each sound you find interesting from several angles and distances. You will find that a rushing stream can sound like a roar, whereas a faucet can sound like a running stream. A very loud sound can cut out on a digital recorder unless you manually attenuate (lower, hold back) the sound. *Find* five different sounds (each with some variations (fast water, slow water for instance)). Record at least 15 sec of room tone/ air tone in each space (what we think of as no sound, yet it holds a resonance and reverberation of that space).

**Making Sounds (Foley):** Record sounds that you make with elements that you find, gather or create. This part is similar to what a Foley artist does in a film, hitting a piece of sheet metal to simulate thunder, etc. What kinds of materials can you come up with? What interesting sounds can you make? Make at least 5 different sounds with variations in pitch or volume for each one.

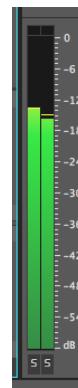
Practice making sounds have a direction and variety rather than random repetition. (Shake something as it passes by the mic increasing or decreasing speed for instance, rather than just shaking something up and down)

**Making Sounds (tonal):** Tonal sound variations are found in many forms. The most common are formal instruments that we know of such as guitars and pianos, flutes and tubas. The voice is also an instrument, as is anything you can use to produce varied sounds that have different tones.



**Importing and Editing:** Import the sounds into Premiere Pro to edit. Make a sequence first that will match your video footage:

**File/ New Sequence /SequencePresets/DigitalSLR/1080p/DSLR  
1080p 24 or 30.**



You will layer the sound, using room tone throughout. Consider making a bed of sound (lower tones) first adding accents and middle tones afterwards. Another way to think about this is the way vocal or instrumental compositions are arranged: Bass, Tenor, Alto, Soprano...Think about the volume of each sound separately from its tone, that is, a low tone could be loudest, a high tone could be quiet (since these are differently received by the ear).

A rule of thumb is to have volumes on the audio meter bounce at -6 to -9 db for the sound you want the most obvious, then -12, -18 and -24 for the least obvious. Do not go above 0 db when recording as the sound will cut out.

Think of the sound as having a texture, a color. You can use transitions, jump cuts, simple filters (don't overdo this). You can use visual waveforms to cut the clips precisely. You can use markers and measure time carefully or approach it loosely. We will look at the option to use Adobe Audition, Audacity, or Garage Band, but only if needed.