

## Editorial: Revisiting interdisciplinarity within collaborative sonic practice

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Over the past two decades, collaboration has emerged as a keyword and an important methodological and ethical concern in various disciplines, which has nurtured interdisciplinary approaches that often encompass innovative processes of knowledge production (Marcus 2010). In sonic practice, trends such as participatory art, the workshop turn, and ideas of Do-It-With-Others (Catlow and Garrett 2012) contributed to the emergence of creative processes that manifest within the sphere of inter-human relations through participation and collaboration. Such processes can operate beyond the institutional space, or classic studio and gallery settings, by engaging directly with the social realm; blurring the lines between art, performance and our lived social, political, economic, technological and environmental realities. The growing practices, methodologies and vocabularies of creating, researching and collaborating, can be inextricably intertwined with the way works function and are experienced. Such concerns have been identified and theorised as *dialogical* (Kester 2005), *transformative* (Fischer-Lichte 2008) and *operational* (Bianchini and Verhagen 2016). How are interdisciplinary practices, methodologies and vocabularies shaping the way sound and music works are created and experienced? How does this search for knowledge change sonic practice?

To explore the above questions productively, it is necessary to consider how interdisciplinary approaches to research might facilitate a more granular understanding of the process of collaboration and the nature of the relationship between collaborators, their different approaches to methods of making, and their different criteria about what is a successful outcome. Taking into account a traditional approach to interdisciplinarity, which emphasises the seamless integration of diverse elements, it can be easily argued that all outcomes of all collaborative processes are inherently interdisciplinary. In the theorisation of interdisciplinarity, the focus on integration is particularly popular when effective solutions to practical problems are designed and produced as a result of successfully integrating different forms of knowledge in unique ways. Repko and Szostak (2016) have discussed extensively how integration occurs in interdisciplinary ways of working, and how a successful outcome relates to the level and quality of integration between disciplines, in an effort to devise solutions to practical problems that cannot be solved within the context of single disciplines. Following this, it seems that different types of successful collaboration rely on a certain level of integration, emerging through effective exchanges between heterogeneous elements and occurring through complementarity of their diverse materialities.

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However, due to how interdisciplinary processes have been theorized from the start, the development of accompanying critical perspectives which engage with relatively invisible discontinuities and tensions have been also possible alongside the mainstream position on the importance of integration. As Joe Moran (2010) argues there are no totalising, or comprehensive ways to understand or theorize interdisciplinarity. All manifestations of interdisciplinary processes exist as responses to concrete practical problems. Although integration might appear as a core element that determines the nature of the exchange between members of interdisciplinary teams, the exchange between the researchers also “establish[es] a kind of undisciplined space in the interstices between disciplines”, as Joe Moran also suggests (2010, 14). More recently Celia Lury (2018) discusses how interdisciplinary methods initiate processes of interruption/deconstruction that lead to processes of re-assembly. This indicates that the transformations and mutations which might emerge as a result of an interdisciplinary process could be the product of an uneasy and turbulent exchange.

Thus, the trajectory of the theorisation of interdisciplinary methods which increasingly draws attention to moments of uneasiness, flow disruption and awkward juxtapositions, also engages with what comes next, a process of re-organisation of the components, and solutions for co-existence which sometimes relies on complementarity, yet other times presupposes counterbalance between heterogeneous elements. Apart from the fact that these recent developments contribute to a more prominently political position that interdisciplinary methods can occupy in the contemporary landscape of critical thought and action, they also provide useful tools for those interested in revisiting existing understandings of collaboration. Capitalising on what we learn through experimenting with critical approaches to interdisciplinarity, we acquire tools that allow us to handle collaborative processes of all kinds; those that occur seamlessly and harmoniously as well as those which proceed through tensions and interruptions, leading to novel and productive mutations. This issue of *Airea* brings together a collection of texts on collaborative sonic practices, which are approached as examples of interdisciplinary processes to allow for a more granular but less prescriptive understanding of collaboration, thus offering tools for a deeper understanding of the diverse collaborative interactions within sonic art contexts and the numerous unexpected mutations currently taking our understanding of sonic art to new territories.

More, specifically, the second issue of *Airea Journal* explores the questions mentioned earlier by presenting practice-based and theoretical contributions of collaborative interdisciplinary creative processes in sound. This special focus on sound is addressed from multiple perspectives in relation to compositional, audiovisual, social, political, environmental, participatory and performative standpoints. This is a move that pays attention to and interrogates the aesthetics, methodologies and politics of interdisciplinary sonic practices. The sound arts often involve more than one disciplines and in order to study and comprehend them, an interdisciplinary approach is demanded. Many sound artworks are more than just (about) sound or sounds. Consequently, no single discipline is able to fully encompass how sound as affective and vibrant matter can be both reflexive and constitutive of social, cultural, political, religious, ethical, and perhaps even biological or cognitive developments. Sound can be investigated from almost any angle, and the articles in the present issue include numerous disciplines and subjects.

The ensemble of the articles explore sound as material beyond its musical or sonorous outcome. Each one offers a different viewpoint on interdisciplinary forms of sonic expression. The authors understand and deploy sound as both a cultural material and an active and vibrant subject matter. Either by discussing their own practice or developing new theoretical frameworks, the articles in this issue extend interdisciplinarity in the co-development of ideas and cultural politics between music, sound, the creative arts and both the empirical and social sciences. Through an interdisciplinary lens that addresses the social dimension of musico-sonic experience they offer new theoretical and methodological frameworks for sonic practices.

Two main approaches can be distinguished among the featured articles. The first two articles reflect on the issues, creative processes and challenges of practices that are situated across artistic disciplines. This group focuses on collaboration between disciplines and composers. The second strand emphasizes community-related contributions, which are articulated through forms of participation or collaboration with an audience or with a particular community. With their diverse focuses, analytical tools and methodologies, all five articles offer valuable insights that help shed light upon the various stages of collaboration, the ways in which interdisciplinary collaboration is achieved sonically and the relationship between knowledge generated through collective intelligence, experience and creativity.

*Collaboration between disciplines and composers:*

Martine Louise Rossiter explores a new creative process for incorporating visual stimuli such as infographics and paintings in the field of acousmatic composition. Rossiter's article presents the project *Music – Bodies – Machines: Fritz Kahn and Acousmatic Music* to examine questions of visual representation and materiality through sound. Central to Rossiter's approach is a multisensory experience ranging from materials reflected through sounds to relationships between visual qualities and sonic ones such as phrasing, placement and the overall structure of her compositions. The article discusses the impact of the context of a particular image have to a compositional response and offers a new interdisciplinary insight to artistic practice and research through parallels between the specific sonic and visual work.

Martin Scheuregger and Litha Efthymiou discuss composer-composer collaboration based on their music-theatre composition *I only know I am*. They explore issues and opportunities of the combination of two compositional practices. Questions about communication, technology, and the issue of tacit knowledge are viewed from a collaborative and interdisciplinary perspective. The article offers an alternative understanding of the way two aesthetic approaches can be reconciled to create a synergy.

*Community-related collaboration:*

Richy Carey investigates a communal performative process in which community groups and choirs are brought together to devise and realise a new choral/film work titled *Áččẽñt̃β*. The work is performed by an audience and explores accents as a sonorous social matter between our individual and collective identities. This article presents the compositional praxis of the work while engaging with the complexity of authorship and agency through image-sound, spectacle-spectator and individual-communal relationships.

Daniel Galbreath presents a new way of understanding the collaborative processes of choral music. Drawing upon complexity theory, he analyses a case study to reveal the complexity and embodied nature of the social interactions that make up a performance of choral music. As well as revealing the resourcefulness of complexity theory as applied to music practice, his study re-positions choir singers as participants in a distributed authorship of a musical work, rather than discrete and atomised channels for another musician's creative and authorial output.

Katerina Talianni approaches sound from an ecological and anthropological lens through sound art works that aim to reconnect communities to the environment. This article showcases hybrid types of knowledge dialogic and collaborative forms of epistemic and material equity within sound art works. Collaboration, new technologies, and phenomenological listening enable the multiple agents of such sound art works to be part of the creative processes, while successfully voice their authorial presence. The interdisciplinary, collaborative and open-ended nature of these projects brings forward the social and political dimension of sound and listening, which could figure in more collaborative forms of knowledge production and inspire climate action. By deploying the methodological and

analytical tool of acoustemology, the article argues in favour of developing an ecocritical listening of artworks that turn the environment into sound art.

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