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Sonic Art and the Acoustics of Food: Examining culinary sounds to understand resistance

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*University of*  
**HUDDERSFIELD**  
Inspiring global professionals

**Sonic Art and the Acoustics of Food:  
Examining culinary sounds to understand resistance**

David Vélez Rodríguez

A portfolio of works submitted to the University of Huddersfield  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2021

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## Portfolio listing

Title: **Turmeric**

Format: Multiformat

Elements: Composition in CD + Field recording + Printed recipes

Duration: 48m14s + 31m58s + 3 pages

Label: Marginal Frequency (USA)

Date: Created between March and August 2020. Publication: Late 2021/early 2022

Curator: Alan Jones

Link: <https://marginalfrequency.bandcamp.com/>

Group of collaborators: Supriya Nagarajan (voice) India/UK, Maria Sappho (piano and objects) USA/UK, Ruchi Singh (Tikka Masala cooking and anecdote) India/UK, Cyanching Wu (cello and field recordings) Taiwan/UK, Colin Frank (percussion) Canada/UK, Sister Sandra (anecdote and research) Jamaica/UK, Joey Hopkinson (narration and research) UK, Joanne Mansley (shouting) UK, David (shouting) UK, Dalston street fruit kiosk traders (shouting), Dr. Kalim Siddiqui (research) India/UK.

Title: **Ecos de la Chicha** (Echoes of Chicha)

Format: Multisensory cooking performance

Duration: 62m33s

Venue: Huerta Santa Elena (Bogotá, Colombia)

Event: 45<sup>th</sup> SNA (45<sup>th</sup> National Artists Salon)

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Curator: Ana Ruiz Valencia

Documentation: <https://youtu.be/MGB6tGKbZN0>

Group of collaborators: Elena Villamil (cooking and anecdote), María Buenaventura (cooking), Yudy Esmeralda Ramirez (singing and market shouting) and workshop participants (Camilo Quiroga, Cristina Consuegra, Laura Escobar, Victoria Portela, Luza Quiceno Quiroga, Sabina Gámez and Camilo Leyva)

Title: **Preparando Chicha** (Brewing *Chicha*)

Format: Field recordings from the preparation of *Chicha*

Duration: 73m03s

Label: Published via Bandcamp

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Curator: Ana Ruiz Valencia

Link: <https://davidvelez.bandcamp.com/track/preparando-chicha>

Collaborator: Elena Villamil (brewing)

Title: **Moravia**

Format: Multisensory cooking performance

Duration: 48m13s

Venue: Exploratorio building, Parque Explora Museum (Medellin, Colombia)

Date: 9th October 2019

Curator: Camilo Cantor

Documentation: <https://youtu.be/MGB6tGKbZN0>

Group of collaborators: Cleyda Murillo (cooking and anecdote), Camilo Cantor (cooking), Celeste Betancour (cooking), Biviana Alvarez (cooking), Alex Jaramillo (market shouting), Ofelia Pérez (market shouting)

Title: **El Caribe en Yorkshire** (The Caribbean in Yorkshire)

Format: Multisensory cooking performance

Duration: 33m16s

Venue: Small Seeds (Huddersfield)

Event: By the Book

Date: 25th January 2019

Curator: Ryoko Akama

Documentation: <https://youtu.be/MGB6tGKbZN0>

Collaborator: Lina María Velandia (cooking) Colombia/UK

Title: **Se lo comieron todo** (They Ate it All)

Format: Multisensory cooking performance

Duration: 29m16s

Venue: Casa de Monja (Valparaíso, Chile)

Event: International sound art Festival Tsonami as part of an artistic residency

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Curator: Fernando Godoy

Documentation: <https://youtu.be/MGB6tGKbZN0>

Collaborator: Christian Castro (cooking) Chile/Italy

Title: 台灣現場烹飪 (Taiwanese Live Cooking)

Format: Multisensory cooking performance

Duration: 34m41s

Venue: Café OTO Project Space (London)

Date: 11th October 2018

Curator: Fielding Hope

Documentation: <https://youtu.be/MGB6tGKbZN0>

Group of collaborators: Cyanching Wu (cooking) Taiwan/UK, Felipe Rodríguez (microphones) Colombia

Title: **You Never Eat Alone, You Never Cook for One**

Format: Field recording

Duration: 148m37s

Label: Gruenrekorder (Germany)

Date: To be published in November 2021

Curators: Roland Etzin and Lasse-Marc Riek

Link: <https://www.gruenrekorder.de/fieldnotes/>

Collaborator: Cyanching Wu (cooking)

Title: **Yuca Hervida**

Format: Sound Composition

Duration: 15m02s

Album: Peripheral Ethnography (VA)

Label: Verz (London)

Date: To be published in November 2021

Curator: Phil Maguire

Link: <https://verzimprint.bandcamp.com/>

Title: **Beige is the True Colour of Melancholy**

Format: Acousmatic Installation x 8.1 channels (Version presented is 2-channel)

Duration: 25m17s

Exhibition place: Richard Steinitz Building, University of Huddersfield (UK)

Event: Re.Sound

Date: 11th May 2018

Curator: Cyanching Wu

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/davidvelezr/beige-is-the-true-color-of-melancholy>

Group of collaborators: Lag and Nat

Title: **The Kitchen of Chef Lag**

Format: Field recordings

Duration: 19m11s

Label: Published via Bandcamp

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018

Audio: <https://davidvelez.bandcamp.com/album/the-kitchen-of-chef-lag>

Group of collaborators: Lag and Nat

Title: **The Dying Art of Food Market Shouting**

Format: Street Food Market Performance

Duration: 30m

Venue: Huddersfield Open Market

Dates: 18th and 25th May 2019

Audio: <https://davidvelez.bandcamp.com/album/the-art-of-market-shouting-concert-documentation>

Collaborator: Joanne Mansley (Shouting) UK

Title: **One Last Perfect Day**

Format: Hortiacoustic Installation

Elements: Acousmatic Sound Installation x 6 channels (Version presented is 2-channel) + Video

Duration: 34m35s + 09m57s

Exhibition space: Lab3 salon in MAMM (Medellin, Colombia)

Dates: September 2021 - March 2022 (Created between 2019 and 2021 in Huddersfield)

Curator and producer: Jorge Barco

Link: <https://habitatsonoro.wordpress.com/2021/09/16/one-last-perfect-day/>

In collaboration with *Siembraviva* and Lumen

Title: **CCSA Video Portfolio of Multisensory Collaborative Cooking Performances**

Format: Video

Duration: 31m07s

Published in: YouTube

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Video: <https://youtu.be/MGB6tGKbZN0>

Group of videographers: La Radio Criolla, Rossana Uribe, Stephen Harvey (photos) and Santiago

Rodríguez. Sound recording: Camilo Jimenez and Jo Kennedy

## **Abstract**

This research focuses on food sounds that resonate when resistance is exercised as luscious and joyful culinary experiences that contest circumstances of adversity, precarity and territory dislocation. Food, as means of resistance, has been approached by a number of art practitioners including Sabor Clandestino in Bolivia, Fatima Kadumy in Palestine, and María Buenaventura and Elena Villamil in Colombia. Such sounds, which are commonly underheard and ignored in sonic and food art, in my work provide important leads about how resistance operates in contemporary times, considering theories about the politics of sound by Brandon LaBelle and Salomé Voegelin, and theories about the politics of food by Jane Bennett. The artistic examination and theoretical investigation of the culinary acoustics of resistance presented in this research make an original and significant contribution to the knowledge of the practice of sonic and food art in contemporaneity. This project examines its sonic and edible material through Collaborative Culinary Sound Art (CCSA), an original practice that considers the intersubjectivity of sound and listening, the strategic possibility of sound and food, and the multisensory connection between sound, smell, and taste. The thesis will initially outline and critique theories that study relevant philosophical considerations in the emergence of CCSA by LaBelle, Voegelin, Gilles Deleuze, Mark Peter Wright, and Bennett. It will discuss relevant works from a series of artists from diverse fields such as sound art, experimental music, contemporary music, and food and visual arts. Finally, it will examine the circumstances and considerations that led to the development of CCSA and demonstrate how this thinking has informed a portfolio of original pieces and will reflect on the artistic considerations and methodologies developed in this research.



## Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank Lina María Velandia for her immense support, generosity, knowledge and affection during the development of PhD and my family, especially Alvaro Vélez, Marta Rodríguez, Ana Vélez and Elisa Morales.

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## Introduction

My practice examines food sounds to understand resistance. Resistance is understood in multiple ways. Firstly, in the sense proposed by Gilles Deleuze in his lecture *Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création? Avoir une Idée en Cinema*:

Only the act of resistance resists death, either as a work of art or as human struggle.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, the resistance associated with Joseph Beuys' *Social Sculpture*<sup>2</sup> in which the assemblages of collaborative artmaking can spur significant changes in society. Thirdly, the four models of resistance as posited in the theories of Brandon LaBelle<sup>3</sup> that operate in today's vibrational politics. Here, the joy and pleasure that we find in everyday experiences allows individuals to sustain and expand their freedom and autonomy in conditions of adversity. Finally, resistance connected with the possibility of exercising our individuality and stir the relationships between our bodies and our social environments as conveyed in the theories of Jane Bennett's *Bodies of Force*.<sup>4</sup>

In my creative process, resistance operates as the predominant vector. It is a poetic and political force that I directly engage with in my sound creation with food connecting it with its context in contemporaneity. In this research, contemporaneity is approached in correspondence with the global economic and environmental crisis that we experience and with the times of disillusion that we live.<sup>5</sup> In the pieces resulting from this process, resistance is expressed as affectionate solidary and empathic actions engendered by the radiant and vibrant material of food and sound. Resistance in my practice acts as a point of contact and complicity with the actant elements that intervene in the creation of my work. This project approaches listening and sound as intersubjective, considering the theories of sound researcher Salomé Voegelin. Here, the listener exists in the realm of the sonic, in terms of their complicity with it.<sup>6</sup> This project engages with food and sound as ontologically autonomous material drawing from theories in speculative realism, new materialism and sound art. Here, the *Edible Matter* thesis of Bennett<sup>7</sup> and Voegelin theories on noise are major contributions.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleuze, G. (1987) *Avoir une idée en cinema*. <https://www.lepeuplequimanque.org/en/acte-de-creation-gilles-deleuze.html>  
<https://youtu.be/s9Rq4-d5Ies> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Hollaus, I. (2011) *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, vol. 71.

<sup>3</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press.

<sup>4</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Malik, S. (2018) *Contra-Contemporary*, in *The Future of the New: Artistic Innovation in Time of Social Acceleration*. Veliz Press.

<sup>6</sup> Voegelin, S. (2010) *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. Continuum. (page 10)

<sup>7</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press. (page 39)

The term affection in this thesis refers to the positive social and environmental effects of experiencing and expressing love by the nourishing means of horticulture and commensality and the social possibility of collective artmaking. The approach to this term in this work connects with the theories of Chilean biologist and philosopher Humberto Maturana, who suggests that love is an essential biological condition of the human being, that, when it is interrupted, our well-being is affected.<sup>8</sup> For him, love is essential in the process of reconstructing debilitated social structures and vulnerable individual circumstances. In this thesis, solidarity and empathy are considered in connection with intersubjectivity and the possibility to connect individuals with the experiences and circumstances of others, particularly those contesting precarious and unprivileged conditions. Art theorist Elissa Yukiko studies empathy in contemporary art, and she defines it as the emotional and cognitive processes that occur when our bodies reply when perceiving pain or joy in others.<sup>9</sup> Radiance and vibrance are terms that are noted in this thesis to refer to the correspondence between the cooking hearth, the colourful material of food, the joy that permeates the cooking and dining experiences, the vibration of sound, and the agitating circumstances of contemporary politics. Vibrant is a commonly used term in the theories of LaBelle and Bennett in connection with the sonic in contemporaneity.

## Research Questions

If food can operate as means of resistance, what are the artistic considerations and significance of examining the material of food sounds in such circumstances? This is the central issue of this thesis. As such, the creative work and research address the following questions:

- 1) How can the Collaborative Culinary Sound Art (CCSA) practice evidence the artistic significance of food sounds which resonate in circumstances of resistance?
- 2) What are the artistic considerations and methodologies required to demonstrate this significance?

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<sup>8</sup> Verden-Zöller, G., Maturana, H. (2008) *The Origin of Humanness in the Biology of Love*. Imprint Academic.

<sup>9</sup> Yukiko Weichbrodt, E. (2013) *Through the Body: Corporeality, Subjectivity, and Empathy in Contemporary American Art*. Washington University in St. Louis.

## Scope

This research invites artists and researchers from diverse backgrounds, who are interested in food sounds, to consider all the ethical, political and poetical implications that come into play when approaching them. This project apposes a constellation of artists, cooks, ideas, theories, sounds, aromas and dishes with the intent to demonstrate the significance of examining food sounds in circumstances where adversity is contested by culinary means. The significance of this will be demonstrated in both this thesis and the portfolio of works.

This introduction will serve to traverse a series of considerations, situations, encounters, and experiences that preceded the liminal beginnings of my development of CCSA, but which were crucial in its future development.

## The Sonic in CCSA

Listening and sound are the central sensorial and material considerations of this research. My interest in sound and listening connects with political aspects of my artistic practice where I seek to experience and understand the world beyond the cultural predominance and privilege of visibility. In my sonic art work, I am interested in examining the periphery and marginality of our perception and in subverting the cultural biases that pervade our senses with the coloniality and exclusion embedded in visibility. About the political aspects of listening and sound in my work, it is important to consider the ideas of Salomé Voegelin, which suggest that the critical discourse in art emphasises the division between the described and its description while it fails to engage with the concurrence, immediacy, and immersion of the sonic.<sup>10</sup> For her, language approaches sound in terms of its attributions and fails to address it as a noun reducing it to visual references.<sup>11</sup> In her theories, sound and its materiality expose the limitations of language to engage with the physicality of the sonic.<sup>12</sup> Another important consideration in my interest in sound to develop this project is the idea of phenomenological doubt presented by Voegelin, where our sonic experience is full of hesitation, while our visual perception is associated with certainty and totality.<sup>13</sup> For her, visibility engages with the object from a distance, while being examined in a position of stability. This creates

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<sup>10</sup> Voegelin, S (2010) *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. Continuum.

<sup>11</sup> Voegelin, S (2010) *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. Continuum.

<sup>12</sup> Voegelin, S (2010) *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. Continuum.

<sup>13</sup> Voegelin, S (2010) *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. Continuum.

a conflict with the fluctuating, vibrational and resonant universe of the sonic, as she suggests.<sup>14</sup> Christoph Cox is another leading researcher and author, whose theories about sound, coloniality, biases and hegemony illustrate my interest in sound. For him, a philosophy of sound should call for an ontology that disrupts the cultural conception of objects in which solid manifestations are privileged.<sup>15</sup> This could bias the ontological approaches towards the unsettled materiality of liquid, gas, and plasma, relegating invisible, intangible, and ephemeral things to marginality, as Cox suggests.<sup>16</sup> He contends that smelt, tasted and heard material operate under the predominance of the solid, favouring sight and touch in the construction of common sense.<sup>17</sup> The paradox of sound art operating in the discursive predominance of visibility and tangibility is a subject studied by other important researchers like Budhaditya Chattopadhyay, who argues that the material of sound is marginalized because of its inability to operate in the realm of representation.<sup>18</sup> The criticism of Voegelin, Cox and Chattopadhyay exemplify the critical position that I, as an artist working with sound, establish towards the coloniality and hegemony of visibility in culture.

As will be addressed in the Research Context of this thesis, sound is culturally the neglected sense in culinary and food research, which illustrates the material considerations of this project. In my work, the sonic universe is immersive, invisible, unsettled, and unstable, and in a state of constant vibration, which creates correspondences with the thermodynamic processes of cooking. In CCSA, sound and listening are approached as intersubjective encounters with sonic material where visibility is contested in acousmatic multisensory cooking performances, installations and compositions. Here, the experience of the audience is detached from visual stimuli while encouraging correspondences between auditory, olfactory, and gustatory stimuli, as will be addressed in the Portfolio Chapter of this thesis.

## Food Sounds in Contemporary Culture

Food sounds resonate at the margins of perception, where they go unnoticed by most cooks, chefs and diners. This is caused, in part, by architectural ideas that isolate the kitchen and the dining table which is a practice founded in exclusion and classism as noted by Estella Ciobanu.<sup>19</sup> The high levels of noise of kitchen extractors are another aspect that silence cooking sounds in the culinary

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<sup>14</sup> Voegelin, S (2010) *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. Continuum.

<sup>15</sup> Cox, Ch., Jaskey, J., Malik, S. (2015) *Realism Materialism Art*. Sternberg Press.

<sup>16</sup> Cox, Ch., Jaskey, J., Malik, S. (2015) *Realism Materialism Art*. Sternberg Press.

<sup>17</sup> Cox, Ch., Jaskey, J., Malik, S. (2015) *Realism Materialism Art*. Sternberg Press.

<sup>18</sup> Chattopadhyay, B. (2017) *Beyond Matter*. Seismograf.

<sup>19</sup> Ciobanu, E. (2019) *Kitchen and Other Tables to Think With*. Universitatea Ovidius Constanta.

experience.<sup>20</sup> In food literature not enough attention is given to food sounds as it is pointed out in Tara Brabazon's essay *The Sounds of Food*.<sup>21</sup> However, over the past ten years, experimental psychologists and food scientists have focused their attention on these sounds and their multisensory possibility in correspondence with food aromas, colours, and flavours. Furthermore, over the past 3 decades, a small but growing group of musicians and sound artists have begun to assess the acoustic possibilities of working with food, from recording cooking sounds to using kitchen ingredients and utensils as instruments. In my experience working with professional and casual cooks, most of them have indicated their preference of talking, listening to music or watching YouTube videos over any attention to the cooking sounds themselves. Yet, when they have listened, a new dimension of food has emerged with stimulating possibilities, as will be evidenced in the Workshops section of the Portfolio Chapter of this thesis.

Charles Spence is one of the leading scientists examining food sounds. He is an experimental psychologist who has been studying this topic for years, analysing them as part of multisensory experiences. Spence has authored a number of articles and books about the acoustic experience of cooking and food, such as *The Perfect Meal*<sup>22</sup> and *As Bitter as a Trombone*.<sup>23</sup> In *The Perfect Meal*, Spence and Betina Piqueras-Fiszman argue that the importance of sound and listening has been largely overlooked. However, they suggest that today more chefs are making an effort to explore the resonance of their preparations using, for example, popping candy and accompanying environmental sounds. Spence refers to the studies of food scientist Zeta Vickers along with the work of other researchers who analyse the acoustic factors intervening in the differentiation between crispness and crunchiness. Vickers' study concludes that the latter is actually associated with higher pitches. Spence also discovered that the sound of biting and chewing food is associated with the perception of freshness of crisps. During an experiment where the participants ate 200 crisps as part of this study, the results showed that elevated loudness and high-frequency accentuation increased the perception of crispiness and freshness.

In 2013, Sara Kate Gillingham published the article *Kitchen Sounds: The Orchestra of Cooking & Eating*<sup>24</sup> where she references Jacques Pépin, a famous chef and culinary instructor, who was able to discern when a piece of meat was over-cooked by just paying close attention to its sizzling sound. Gillingham also links the recording of cooking sounds with the process of memory in

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<sup>20</sup> Notes from CCSA Workshop. (2021) David Vélez. Personal Archive.

<sup>21</sup> Brabazon, T. (2017) *The Sounds of Food: Defamiliarization and the Blinding of Taste*. Journal of Sound Studies.

<sup>22</sup> Spence, Ch. & Piqueras-Fiszman, B. (2014) *The Perfect Meal*. John Wiley and Sons.

<sup>23</sup> Crisnel, A.S. & Spence, Ch. (2010) *As Bitter as a Trombone*. Attention, Perception, & Psychophysics. Oxford University Press.

<sup>24</sup> Gillingham, S.K. (2013) *Kitchen Sounds: The Orchestra of Cooking & Eating*. [www.thekitchn.com](http://www.thekitchn.com) (Last visited April 22nd 2021)



culinary work. In 2012 Christine He, who is visually impaired, won the Master Chef reality show competition by presenting great sensibility and an acute sense of listening. Here she challenged biases and preconceptions towards low vision individuals while subverting a culture of culinary design founded in the privilege of sight. When cooks pay attention to food sounds, they are exhibiting great intuition, as is suggested by food critic Judy Hevrdejs in the article *The Sounds of Cooking*<sup>25</sup> published by the Chicago Tribune. The ability to rely on other senses, Hevrdejs contends, allows cooks to have a more detailed understanding of the many processes that simultaneously can take place in the kitchen.

The aesthetic relation that connects food and sound becomes especially relevant, considering the emergence in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century of sound art and food art, and the interest in the intersection of music, food and cooking as will be substantiated in the Research Context of this thesis. Over the past century, many artists working with music and sound have explored food in their work. John Cage's interest in edible mushrooms drew major attention in the mycologist community and his personal and unorthodox versions of classic sauces and soups were published in a column in Vogue magazine. Pierre Schaeffer recorded the sounds of banging cooking pans as part of his piece *Étude Pathétique* (1948);<sup>26</sup> and in a more urban-electronic context, Amon Tobin composed *Kitchen Sink* based on sounds entirely recorded in a kitchen and released on his acclaimed electronic album *Foley Room* (2007).<sup>27</sup> In the Research Context chapter, I will explore a series of works that actively engage with the relation between food, sound, and music.

## Resistance and Latin American Art

Resistance is a key concept to understand the artistic practice in Latin America over the past 100 years. *Nuestra América: una Cultura de Resistencia* (Our America: A Culture of Resistance)<sup>28</sup> is an essay by artist and researcher Julio Castellanos Rodríguez where he examines the importance of the idea of resistance in the development of the arts in Latin America.

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<sup>25</sup> Hevrdejs, J. (2014) *The sounds of cooking*. Chicago Tribune.

<sup>26</sup> Schaeffer, P. (1948) *Étude Pathétique*. INA-GRM.

<sup>27</sup> Tobin, A. (1965) *Foley Room*. Ninja Tune.

<sup>28</sup> Castellanos Rodríguez, J. (2017) *Nuestra América: una cultura de resistencia*. Centro Universitario Municipal.

Latin American culture is one of resistance, it faces the mercantile hegemonic originating from the international power centres of modern society.<sup>29</sup>

For Castellanos, the work of poet and philosopher José Martí was fundamental in the construction of the paradigm of resistance. Martí was critical of European colonialists' ruthlessness in exterminating Latin American communities and imposing neo-colonial practices from the United States in this territory. Martí was a defender of the scientific and technological contributions of the Inca, Maya and Aztec communities, which had been overlooked for centuries, in an education system developed under the hegemony of colonial thought. Spanish colonization and the intrusive interference of North American policies have kept Latin America in a state of dependency and subjection which is the theme of analysis for Marta Traba, an art critic and theorist born in Argentina. In her essay, *Nuestra América: una cultura de resistencia* (Our America: A Culture of Resistance),<sup>30</sup> she examines the idea of resistance in the development of Latin American Art. She suggests that the culture of resistance has contributed in raising linguistic structural systems of analysis which have helped to establish a critical stand point towards issues such as colonialism and dependency. For her, the construction of symbols and metaphors, the factual task of fashioning art as a language appear in Latin American works. Traba presents the exploration of Incan symbolism by Peruvian artists Fernando de Szyszlo which operated as a tool for a non-colonial thorough examination of indigenous cultures and their relationship with the world, where they journeyed between myths and mythopoesis. The work of de Szyszlo, for Traba, contested the colonized and condescending approach in which many indigenous cultures were approached until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Traba remarked:

Sometimes the artist or writer of the culture of resistance does not expressly pursue the symbolic or metaphoric language but acts as a transmitter of a reality whose richness, variety and peculiarity are too attractive to be detached from it.<sup>31</sup>

In her essay, Traba acknowledges that the culture of resistance has developed artworks that suggest and embody revolutionary values in the sense that they have challenged imposed North American and European aesthetic considerations; also, these artworks have been critical with problematic internal aspects of cultural dependency and artistic docility. She further suggests that the culture of resistance in the arts has legitimized creative activity derived from polyculturality and

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<sup>29</sup> Translated from Castellanos Rodríguez, J. (2017) *Nuestra América: una cultura de resistencia*. Centro Universitario Municipal. (page 158)

<sup>30</sup> Traba, M. (1984) *Nuestra América: una cultura de resistencia*. Revista de Estudios Sociales No. 34. Planeta. (page 144)

<sup>31</sup> Translated from Traba, M. (1984) *Nuestra América: una cultura de resistencia*. Revista de Estudios Sociales No. 34. Planeta. (page 144)

transculturation where ways of life and worldviews that have disputed political and social changes are thoroughly considered.

## Food and Resistance

Harald Lemke writes:

For Beuys, being or becoming active in agriculture or horticulture as an art of living demonstrated a political ethos. He comprehended the delicious potatoes harvested in the front garden of the Berlin gallery literally as the natural fruits of a creative resistance against industrial agribusiness and conventional farming methods. The cultivation of one's own vegetable garden (...) meant to reclaim control over one's own life and to ensure a way of producing one's own food along wholesome lines that subverts mass production and the inferior quality of mass-produced products.<sup>32</sup>

When Joseph Beuys said that, "Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler (...)"<sup>33</sup> (everyone is an artist), he was pointing to the aesthetic value and significance that we can find in ordinary and quotidian situations and objects. Furthermore, when he developed the concept of *Social Sculpture*,<sup>34</sup> he was pointing to the political possibility of the everyday, linked to the collaborative social assemblages that intervene in public space artmaking:

Only on condition of a radical widening of definitions will it be possible for art and activities related to art [to] provide evidence that art is now the only evolutionary-revolutionary power. Only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the death line: to dismantle in order to build social organism as a work of art.<sup>35</sup>

Beuys was a pioneer in the consideration of food production, preparation and consumption in the arts as suggested by Harald Lemke in his essay *The Extended Art of Eating*.<sup>36</sup> For Lemke, Beuys "presented home cooking as a potential art of living, foodstuffs as art objects, and the ecological rebirth of agriculture as a social sculpture."<sup>37</sup> The work of Beuys elicited the political possibility of

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<sup>32</sup> Lemke, H. (2007) *The Extended Art of Eating: Joseph Beuys' Unknown Gastronomy*. Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto University. (page 61)

<sup>33</sup> Beuys, J. quoted in Gaensheimer, S., Malz, I., Blume, E., Nichols, c. (2007) *Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler. Kosmopolitische Übungen mit Joseph Beuys*. Hatje Cantz. (page 2)

<sup>34</sup> Beuys, J. (1982) *7000 Oak Trees*. Documenta 7 Catalogue.

<sup>35</sup> Beuys, J. quoted in Tisdall, C. (1974) *Art into Society, Society into Art*. ICA.

<sup>36</sup> Lemke, H. (2007) *The Extended Art of Eating: Joseph Beuys' Unknown Gastronomy*. Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto University. (page 61)

<sup>37</sup> Lemke, H. (2007) *The Extended Art of Eating: Joseph Beuys' Unknown Gastronomy*. Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto University. (page 53)

food from thoughtful and everyday actions where food operates as a device of defiance that grants autonomy and contests hegemonic economical practices.

## Food, Joy and the Spiritual

Oliver Morton is a science author for whom photosynthesis is a miracle which operates as the foundation of all life forms on earth.<sup>38</sup> In his research, Oliver celebrates the influence of tiny nutrients in the enormous organic assemblages of seas and forests, while he calls for a more sensitive and knowledgeable approach to photosynthesis and all the organic structures that depend on it.

The enormous pleasure that we gain from eating something that we find tasty has been studied by neurophysiologists and psychiatrists in order to understand the many complex neurological processes that are triggered in the dining experience in an attempt to cure depression. Morten Kringelbach writes:

It's no accident that food and sex are our primary sources of pleasure. They are critical for our survival, so having dedicated pleasure networks in the brain that tend to make us seek them out makes absolute sense.<sup>39</sup>

The spiritual association of food can be traced back to ancestral rituals of celebration and mourning where the gastronomic experience prefigured ceremonies of boundless emotional and cultural significance. Sarah Chavez, also known as Sarah Troop, is a Mexican activist and author interested in the politics of food and death. She has studied Norwegian, Thai, Mexican, and other ancestral rituals and celebrations and distinguishes three modes in which the relation between food and death is activated:

Food, as it relates to death, has primarily been used in three different ways – consumed by the mourners to benefit either themselves or the deceased, to feed the dead, or in some instances the dying and finally, to nourish a natural element, e.g., the earth or animals.<sup>40</sup>

The rituals around food can also connect with experiences of thorough resonance and compelling sounds as what happened in the rituals of the pre-Incan Peru Chavín community, who were known

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<sup>38</sup> Morton, O. (2009) *Eating the Sun*. Harper Collins Publishers.

<sup>39</sup> Kringelbach, M. quoted in Wood, J. (2009) *Seeking pleasure: food, sex & music*. University of Oxford website. (page 1) <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/science-blog/seeking-pleasure-food-sex-music> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>40</sup> Chavez, S. (2013) *About Nourishing Death*. <https://nourishingdeath.wordpress.com/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

for their developments in acoustic architecture. Their ceremonies assisted in exploring the emotional potency of multi-sensorial experiences created around food and sound, while they consumed maize-based dishes and fermented beverages made with that crop and cactus. Here, they danced to ritual music which was performed with conchs-shells, an early wind instrument. The performers were carefully located according to the architecture of the tunnels where the ceremonies took place. The effects of food and beverages were meant to combine with the architectural sound spatialization to create the overwhelming sensation that sound was coming from every direction. Jonathan Abel, who studied the acoustics of these ceremonies as part of a group from Stanford University, writes:

I was exposed to this incredible culture that seemed to be able to control the senses in a way through the architecture, through the features of Chavín, and, in particular, these Strombus shell trumpets.<sup>41</sup>

The connection between the alimentary and the spiritual is a subject that will later be developed in the analysis of my work with Elena Villamil in *Ecos de la Chicha* in the discussion of the Portfolio of Works in Chapter 3.

## Food Sounds and Social Responsibility

The community of sound art has been criticized for its alleged elitism and disconnection from its much larger cultural context as recently published in the controversial article *White Out*<sup>42</sup> authored by Tony Herrington in *The Wire*. Here he suggests that the scene is a bastion of white privilege in scenarios that do not welcome inclusion and diversity. As much as I find this article naïve and lacking rigour and research or his privileged views biased, the debate that it provokes is important. In his 1974 book, *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*,<sup>43</sup> Cornelius Cardew strongly critiques the new music practice, associating it with a disconnection from the less privileged members of society. Cardew analyses John Cage's *Atlas Eclipticalis*,<sup>44</sup> which describes a lack of sensitivity in a Lincoln Center performance in 1962. Cardew comments on the performers clearly ill at ease with contact microphones attached to their instruments, which led to confusion, chaos and mayhem as some of them mangled the electric set up, in an action that was condemned by Cage. Cardew expected

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<sup>41</sup> Abel, J. quoted in Haven, C. (2011) *Ancient shells meet high-tech: Stanford researchers study the sound of pre-Incan conches/Chavín de Huántar Archaeological Acoustics Project*. Stanford News. <https://news.stanford.edu/pr/2011/pr-conch-acoustic-musicians-020711.html> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>42</sup> Herrington, T. (2020) *White Out!* *The Wire*. <https://www.thewire.co.uk/in-writing/essays/white-out-tony-herrington> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>43</sup> Cardew, C. (1974) *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. Latimer New Dimensions.

<sup>44</sup> Cage, J. (1962) *Atlas Eclipticalis*

a more empathetic and receptive reaction, in which Cage could have self-evaluated the piece and all the social and political elements that came into play in its conception and performance. Cardew writes:

How can a composer truly reflect society if he ignores the lessons of that society? If a composer cannot or refuses to come to terms with such problems then the matter should be thrown open to public criticism. The artist serves the community, not vice versa.<sup>45</sup>

In his book, a concerned Cardew observes the alienation of many artists when they become part of a bourgeois bubble, rescinding their social responsibilities. But what are these responsibilities? Why should artists in particular be socially responsible, as part of their art making? In 1977, Arnold Berleant published the article 'Toward an Ethics of Art, arguing that the artists' social responsibility, "(...) comes from their singular ability to reveal and shape reality."<sup>46</sup>

In my work, food becomes the element that connects my practice with its social and political context. Food is the material with which I seek to contact a world that is negotiated by politics and traversed by food. As suggested by Joseph Beuys, food creates paths to more ethical, ecological, socially aware and autonomous societies. Food bonds individuals with the communities to which they belong and unites humans with their environment. Our culinary and dietary habits are critical for our habitat; the alimentary industry is one of the largest emitters of carbon gases and a large generator of plastic waste. Studies reveal that the livestock industry is responsible for 50% of the total carbon dioxide emissions, and for 70% of the tropical forest deforestation.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, over 50% of the 400 million tons of plastic fabricated annually are the product of food packaging.<sup>48</sup> Food also allows us to understand the magnitude of the problems of social inequity and poverty from a unique perspective. Food has been a human right since 2019<sup>49</sup> and yet there are approximately 850,000,000 people in the world who suffer from malnutrition and 62 million die from this each year, accounting for 58% of the total global deaths.<sup>50</sup> Over 1,300,000,000 tons of food are wasted annually and during 2018, the food industry obtained total revenues of over \$8.7 trillion (\$8,700,000,000,000).<sup>51</sup> The crucial role of food in the current economic and

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<sup>45</sup> Cardew, C. (1974) *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. Latimer New Dimensions. (page 39)

<sup>46</sup> Berleant, A. (1977) *Toward an Ethics of Art*. Leonardo. MIT. (page 5)

<sup>47</sup> Metz, B, Davidson, O.R., Bosch, P.R., Dave, R. Meyer L.A. Meyer (2007) *Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>48</sup> Metz, B, Davidson, O.R., Bosch, P.R., Dave, R. Meyer L.A. Meyer (2007) *Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>49</sup> *How FAO is helping every man, woman and child have access to affordable and nutritious food* (2020) FAO. <http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1333853/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>50</sup> *How FAO is helping every man, woman and child have access to affordable and nutritious food* (2020) FAO. <http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1333853/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

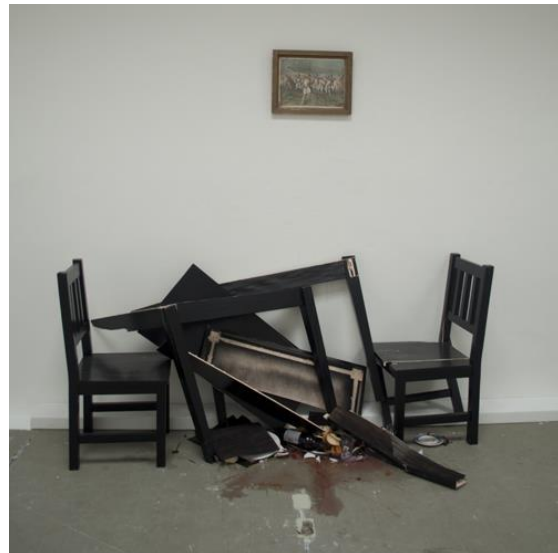
<sup>51</sup> *How FAO is helping every man, woman and child have access to affordable and nutritious food* (2020) FAO. <http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1333853/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

environmental crisis that we are facing urges me to approach it with sensibility and responsibility, granting its material social and political possibility.

## The Material of Food Sounds in My Work

In my work with sound art, my interest with food manifested in 2006 when I recorded myself cooking breakfast. These sounds, together with other field recordings, were processed and composed into four pieces published in 2006 on the album *Desayuno*<sup>52</sup> in which culinary sounds were approached as raw material to be processed in real time with visual interfaces of *Supercollider* developed by IXI audio.

In my work with sculpture, food emerged in 2013, in my performance piece *Adrift and Catastrophe*.<sup>53</sup> Here the stage setting is a table in a room (Figures 1 and 2), and it takes place after the main course but before dessert. A sliding wall gradually shoves the table and other furniture against the opposite wall. After the furniture has been crushed, the bread, cake, leftovers, grapes and wine that have spilled onto the floor are left to decompose for the remainder of the exhibition. Food here suggested life, with or without the presence of people. However, after the pileup, the rotten grapes and spilt items suggested decay and death.<sup>54</sup>



<sup>52</sup> Vélez, D. (2006) *Desayuno*. Enough Records.

<sup>53</sup> Vélez, D. (2013) *Adrift and Catastrophe*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia / Rojo Gallery.

<sup>54</sup> Vélez, D. (2013) *Adrift and Catastrophe*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia / Rojo Gallery <https://vimeo.com/123140595> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

My work with rural communities was influential in the development of my interest in food sounds. In the field recording workshops *Sonidos y Acervos del Quindío*,<sup>55</sup> (Sounds and Heritage from Quindío) I directed groups of participants that were invited to record sounds that they considered representative of the acoustic cultural identity of their communities, and to compose a piece with these sounds. One of the participant groups focused on coffee-production sounds. The sounds garnered document the many stages of this process, which begins with cropping, and ends with its final industrial manufacture. This experience corroborated the importance of food sounds in the formation of cultural identity. Coffee was the foundation of the economy in Quindío for many decades, but current neo-liberal practices have negatively affected the farmers in this region, forcing many to lose their jobs or to find work outside of agriculture.<sup>56</sup>

Three years later, in 2016, I was invited by Gaetano Carboni to Polinaria, a Sound Art residency, in which I was commissioned to document the production, preparation and consumption of traditional ingredients and dishes in the Province of Benevento. The townsfolk affectionately and generously invited the resident artists into their farms and kitchens to record the sounds of their signature crops and recipes, and then to taste them at their dining tables in an atmosphere of bounty, appreciation and friendliness. This experience presented me with powerful sounds, complex social assemblages and exquisite favours. Furthermore, I encountered recipes which call for ingredients that grow in the houses where they are consumed, which indicate a very special relation with food based on autonomy, heritage and local production.

That same year, I was invited to Mexico to perform two concerts as part of the Umbral sound festival. In one the venues, there was a kitchen near the stage, which gave me the idea to fry buns and boil water as part of my performance. The concert was not focused exclusively on cooking sounds, but this piece opened a path in terms of the material possibilities of my work.

A year later, in 2017, with Felipe Rodríguez, we developed the *Conciertos de Cocina* (Cooking Concerts) series, where we invited cooks like Nobara Hayakawa<sup>57</sup> and Madi Castro<sup>58</sup> to prepare distinctive dishes, amplifying sounds with microphones, mixers and speakers. Here, the audience

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<sup>55</sup> Vélez, D. (2013) *Sonidos y Acervos del Quindío*. Ministerio de Cultura  
<https://sonidosyacervosquindio.bandcamp.com/music>  
(Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>56</sup> Vásquez Cardona, D. (2015) *La crisis cafetera: elementos para una discusión sobre los análisis de los sistemas alimentarios*. Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.

<sup>57</sup> Hayakawa, N., Rodríguez, F., Vélez, D. (2017) *Concierto de Cocina #2*. <https://vimeo.com/203951117> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>58</sup> Castro, M., Rodríguez, F., Vélez, D. (2018) *Concierto de Cocina #3*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOaWsR31Zjc>  
(Last visited April 22nd 2021)



was partially separated from the kitchen, which allowed the aromas to subtly waft through the room. At the end of the concert, small portions of the prepared dishes were served, while encouraging a dialogue about the event among the guests. *Conciertos de Cocina* was the starting point of CCSA where matters inherent to the material of food were still in a liminal stage. However, the poetic possibility of cooking and other kitchen sounds already presented me with ideas, questions and forms that I have continued developing.

## Collaboration and Affection

In 2016, I was invited to the *Liminaria* artistic residency in Montefalcone, Italy by Leandro Pisano where I was appointed to perform the residency's closing ceremony, together with Chilean artist Fernando Godoy. Montefalcone has an ageing population of 1,766 inhabitants and its traditions and identity are slowly becoming obsolete because of the major migration of its younger generations to larger cities, in addition to the influence of increasing technology in agricultural production in their everyday life. After a couple of days of ethnographic work, we discovered the significance of the ringing of church bells in the culture of the town as well as the dominant sounds of the bells of the cows, horses, and sheep in their soundscape. After our initial research we decided to make a collaborative concert titled *Passaggi di Tempo*<sup>59</sup> in which the residents of Montefalcone were invited to perform with us, using bells as well as traditional and obsolete instruments which are part of their sound heritage (Figure 3). The reaction of the community to our invitation was positive, enthusiastic and the improvised performance came together powerfully and emotionally.<sup>60</sup> A large procession of performers started in a monastery located at the fringes of the town. In the Santa Maria Assunta and Santi Pietro e Paolo churches, Nicola (the town's bell ringer), Fernando and I performed on the bells. When the procession arrived in the square, homage was paid to Nicola in the form of a performance by a traditional musician singing a piece he had co-written with us. Nicola was about to retire, yet nobody was interested in taking his job since it is not attractive to the younger generation and will likely have to be done by machine or just a speaker and a media player. As of 2020, Nicola is still ringing the bells of both churches.

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<sup>59</sup> Godoy, F., Vélez, D. (2012) *Passaggi di Tempo*. *Liminaria*.

<sup>60</sup> Godoy, F., Vélez, D. (2012) *Passaggi di Tempo*. *Liminaria*. <https://youtu.be/NKIDGr7nbDA> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)



**Figure 3:** Godoy, F., Véllez, D. (2016) *Passaggi di Tempo. Liminaria*

To feel the performers and audience so deeply moved in *Passaggi di Tempo*, to the point that many cried with joy, was one of the most significant and revealing experiences that I have ever had as an artist. However, it also posed questions about ethnographic work in sound art and the urgency not to colonise, exoticize or romanticise the community and its social and cultural context.

# Chapter 1. Research Context

In this chapter I will navigate the unfolding landscape of the key concepts, ideas and theories that will shape a context, to gain understanding of the considerations and scope of my practice.

This thesis refers to sound art as a practice that centres its creative work in the action of listening and in the recording and decontextualization of sounds. Sonic arts have gradually distanced themselves, aesthetically and theoretically, from their origins in music and visual art, resulting in specific concepts that expand the scope of their research and creation and the potential connections with other fields. The term *sound art* gained mainstream recognition when composer William Hellermann established the SoundArt Foundation in New York in 1983, but prior to that, in the late 1970s, British composer Trevor Wishart was already using the term sonic art to refer to new and divergent developments in experimental music.<sup>61</sup>

## 1.1 Theoretical Context

### 1.1.1 Resistance and the Arts

In his lecture *Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création? Avoir une Idée en Cinema*,<sup>62</sup> Gilles Deleuze says, in relation to the act of creation, that: "Having an idea is not a matter of communication."<sup>63</sup> Communication, for Deleuze, is the transmission and propagation of information but then, what is information? Deleuze associates information with spreading out an imperative command; he connects communication with the notion of public announcement where we are informed to act upon a belief that is presented as a given. These announcements are not communicated to be doubted or questioned. This, for Deleuze, is the basis of information: control. With this in mind, Deleuze perceives no connection between art and communication.

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<sup>61</sup> Wishart, T. (1996) *On Sonic Art*. Routledge.

<sup>62</sup> Deleuze, G. (1987) *Avoir une idée en cinema*. <https://www.lepeuplequimanque.org/en/acte-de-creation-gilles-deleuze.html>  
<https://youtu.be/s9Rq4-d5Ies> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>63</sup> Translation from Deleuze, G. (1987) *Avoir une idée en cinema*. <https://www.lepeuplequimanque.org/en/acte-de-creation-gilles-deleuze.html>  
<https://youtu.be/s9Rq4-d5Ies> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

Deleuze introduces then the idea of counter-information that, to some extent, is present in every art piece, as he suggests it. Counter-information operates contesting the communication exercised by the organisms of control, and this was crucial in WWII to inform the ‘outside world’ about the horrors of the Nazi regime. Similar is the case of totalitarian oppressive systems that restrain the free circulation of information. For Deleuze, counter-information is only effective when it functions as an act of resistance, as a vector that contests the control over all forms of communication.<sup>64</sup> Although artmaking has nothing to do with communication, for Deleuze, there is a correspondence between artmaking, counter-information and resistance, but what are the elements and conditions that come into play in such correspondence?

Deleuze made reference to André Malraux, who said that art is the only thing that challenges death, under the basic premise that the material of art objects prevails in time and outlives the creators. Art, in this case, is what resists and contests. Deleuze mentions some films by Jean-Marie Straub–Huillet which presents a deliberate disconnection between the visual and sound, and in this lack of correspondence, something is missing.<sup>65</sup> For Deleuze, when something is missing here, something is actually slipping under, operating unseen, unheard, covert; these are the ways of resistance. In Deleuze’s lecture, resistance operates in two stances, as the human action of contesting adversity and struggle, and as a work of art, but what is the relation between these two stances? What is the relationship between human struggle and art? To understand this enigmatic relationship, Deleuze quoted Paul Klee when he said: “The people are missing”<sup>66</sup> and this notion was further elaborated by film critic Mark Fisher who wrote:

After Hitler, after Stalin, Deleuze argues, it was no longer possible to believe that the masses were a readymade political subject that were about to take the reins of world history. The urgent task was not to organize the masses into a party, but to point to the absence of any viable revolutionary political subject - in the hope of bringing a new kind of subject into being.<sup>67</sup>

For Fisher, Deleuze is suggesting that art operates in the *invention of a people*, filling a void caused by a people that is missing.

Deleuze’s lecture concludes with the idea that a piece of art is created for people who are not there yet, for the people that are missing. For Greg Lambert, who studies Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas

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<sup>64</sup> Translation from Deleuze, G. (1987) *Avoir une idée en cinéma*. <https://www.lepeuplequimanque.org/en/acte-de-creation-gilles-deleuze.html> <https://youtu.be/s9Rq4-d5Ies> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>65</sup> Translation from Deleuze, G. (1987) *Avoir une idée en cinéma*. <https://www.lepeuplequimanque.org/en/acte-de-creation-gilles-deleuze.html> <https://youtu.be/s9Rq4-d5Ies> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>66</sup> Klee, P. (1924) *Actor’s Mask* text. (page 1)

<sup>67</sup> Fisher, M. (2010) *Solidarity Not Identification*. *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 1. University of California Press. (page 48)

about resistance,<sup>68</sup> post-war art should act in “the absence, even the impossibility, of a people who would constitute its organic community.”<sup>69</sup> For Deleuze, the artistic creation becomes a vector analogue to the contest of circumstances of adversity, and here, I will try to establish a metaphor. Artmaking and resisting adversity transpire as a shout into the void. The scream emerges as a contesting gesture of resistance that is meant to be heard whether there is someone listening or not. Here, the shouting action claims to be heard with resonance where it occupies the void with receiving possibility.

In conversations with Claire Parnet,<sup>70</sup> Deleuze acknowledges that resistance is inherent in any process of creation when the stability of an anachronic aesthetic, ideological or social system is opposed. In artmaking, he perceives the strength and autonomy of following its own processes and rhythms where the outputs cannot be rushed or forced to premature finalization. Furthermore, he acknowledges that in artmaking, there is an inherent “(...) shame of being a person.”<sup>71</sup> Deleuze connects this idea with the experience in a Nazi camp of Jewish author Primo Levi, who survived, but was deeply remorseful for not having taken the place of others who did not make it. Here, Deleuze associates artmaking with the shame of being a person, in the sense that artistic creation activates a liberating force that sets life free. Here, life is a matter beyond individuality; it is a “fantastic vital power.”<sup>72</sup> For Deleuze, art operates as the freer of such power. When Claire Parnet reminds Deleuze that Primo Levi committed suicide, Deleuze puts the spotlight on how creation contests death, pointing to his writings which, surviving him, will continue exercising the liberating possibility of creation.

Deleuze’s ideas present art as a liberating force that releases the vitality of life from the prisons in which we humans often confine it. Food, as will be examined in this thesis, operates as aesthetic and nourishing material, which, in contemporary politics provides individuals and communities with freedom, autonomy and the capacity to live a full life. This suggests the possibility of food as autonomous material that operates in synergy with life, in conditions of adversity and struggle. This food is prepared with affection, solidarity, and complicity; its nourishing and luscious flavours, aromas and sounds present paths of liberation and wholeness.

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<sup>68</sup> Lambert, G. (2021) *The People Are Missing: Minor Literature Today*. University of Nebraska Press.

<sup>69</sup> Lambert, G. (2021) *The People Are Missing: Minor Literature Today*. University of Nebraska Press. (page vii)

<sup>70</sup> Deleuze, J. (1996) R as Resistance. Interview for the documentary *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* by Claire Parnet. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voRRg3HBQnE> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>71</sup> Deleuze, J. (1996) R as Resistance. Interview for the documentary *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* by Claire Parnet. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voRRg3HBQnE> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>72</sup> Deleuze, J. (1996) R as Resistance. Interview for the documentary *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* by Claire Parnet. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voRRg3HBQnE> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

## How do the theories of Gilles Deleuze about resistance connect with my practice?

The theories of Deleuze influence my relationship with my practice and allow me to understand its artistic context in contemporaneity. These considerations affect my contact with the social and environmental settings where I listen to the sounds that constitute the material of my work and where I meet my CCSA collaborators. Their sensibilities strongly influence the intersubjective processes and outcomes of my work. Deleuze ideas about resistance presenting art as a liberating force are reflected in *One Last Perfect Day* where my encouragement of horticulture looks to present paths of liberation from the imposition of agricultural technologies and policies that are detrimental to our food autonomy and sovereignty. The material considerations of *One Last Perfect Day* are strategic, and aim to stimulate the growth of beets, as will be addressed in detail in the Portfolio Chapter of this thesis. Deleuze's ideas about the strategic possibilities of disconnecting sound and visibility are important to understand the scope of the material decisions of my work where some pieces are presented to the public in covertness, without notification like *The Dying Art of Food Market Shouting*, or when I create a disconnection between the causality of the sound heard and its artistic interpretation as occurs with *Yuca Hervida*. In this piece, my experience with isolation and uncertainty connects with the complex relation that Deleuze perceives between artmaking and human adversity.

### 1.1.2 Sound and Emergent Forms of Resistance

Is there a potential embedded in sonic thought that may lend itself to contemporary struggles? (...) What particular ethical and agentic positions or tactics may be adopted from the experiences we have of listening and being heard?<sup>73</sup>

Brandon LaBelle's *Sonic Agency: Sound and Emergent Forms of Resistance*<sup>74</sup> was a crucial navigating tool in the preparation of this thesis. His theories in this work operate in the field of strategy, since they examine how sound, in its material possibilities, can respond to the critical political context of contemporary times in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. His text aims to implement "sound as a powerful yet rather immaterial weapon."<sup>75</sup> I find the idea of a weapon problematic; therefore, I will elaborate on this further on.

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<sup>73</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 4)

<sup>74</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press.

<sup>75</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 5)

For LaBelle, sound works by stirring up and surpassing “(...) arenas of visibility by relating us to the unseen, the non-represented or the not yet apparent”<sup>76</sup> while advocating for an expansion of the underheard. This is a possibility associated with listening to the imperceptible and acting without being perceived.

LaBelle here distinguishes four modes of resistance: “the invisible, the overheard, the itinerant and the weak”, which he expounds in individual chapters.<sup>77</sup>

In reference to the invisible, LaBelle approaches sound as “a material event that generates conditions or experiences of non-visibility (...) A physical movement of pressures and molecular agitations that is fundamentally invisible, or beyond the threshold of sight.”<sup>78</sup> LaBelle finds, in the invisibility of sound, a key strategic aspect inherent to its ambiguous materiality and to its agency in the in-betweens of things. He detects something about how sound falls away from its solid material causality, overflowing and surpassing it and propagating and provoking mobilization of matter through the physical and emotional properties of the sonic. Here, resonance, echo and reverberation subvert the material borders of things.

Regarding the invisible model, LaBelle examined the work of the Ultra-red collective from Los Angeles, California, which: “Explores acoustic space as enunciative of social relations”<sup>79</sup> raising questions such as: “What is the sound of citizenship?”<sup>80</sup> and creating radio, performances, field recordings, installations, texts, and public space art pieces that operate as forms of activist art. The influence of Pierre Schaeffer in the work of Ultra-red, as LaBelle suggests, operates in the possibility of breaking apart the linguistic structures by detaching the signifier of the sound from its signified. The idea of the acousmatic also has been applied to keep the identity of some of the participants of their projects secret and to conceal or reveal elements of a certain soundscape as part of activist strategies. Imperceptibility is a term that I will use in connection with what LaBelle refers to as invisibility, in which manifestations of great agency function through disseminated and subtle structures which are impossible to detect. LaBelle’s approach to imperceptibility is something that I connect with the concept of *impoder*<sup>81</sup> suggested by Colombian artist Maria Leguizamo, where she examines “the invisible, most fragile and often neglected”<sup>82</sup> to explore how

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<sup>76</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 5)

<sup>77</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 3)

<sup>78</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 32)

<sup>79</sup> Ultra-red. *Mission Statement* <http://www.ultrared.org/mission.html> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>80</sup> Ultra-red. *Mission Statement* <http://www.ultrared.org/mission.html> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>81</sup> Leguizamo, M. (2020) Interview for the article *Impoder* by David Vélez. Sonic Field. <https://sonicfield.org/2020/10/impodermariale/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>82</sup> Leguizamo, M. (2020) Interview for the article *Impoder* by David Vélez. Sonic Field. <https://sonicfield.org/2020/10/impodermariale/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

great magnitudes of strength and potency are deployed in imperceptible legions of apparent irrelevance. The invisible weapon that LaBelle proposes, or the subverted weapon that I suggest, might be the sum of many invisible, minuscule interconnected autonomous devices that in time and with collaboration, establish relentless agency of astounding proportions.

To introduce the overheard model of resistance LaBelle presents the concept of *bodies of force*,<sup>83</sup> created by Jane Bennett. Here, she approaches life as a “a restless activeness”<sup>84</sup> or “vitality”<sup>85</sup> constricted into the singularity of the body in which this liveliness expands the bodies, transforming them through collective actions which occur as “matter-energy assemblages”<sup>86</sup> where stillness is impossible and every atom is involved. In *Background Noise*,<sup>87</sup> LaBelle writes: “Sound is intrinsically and unignorably relational: it emanates, propagates, communicates, vibrates, and agitates; it leaves a body and enters others.”<sup>88</sup> Such properties have qualities that I perceive as vital, lively, organic and where we can sense live resonating, echoing and reverberating, as if sound in its odd materiality could reveal the political currents of the world. For LaBelle, vibration contains the body within a space of liveliness, where political entanglements contaminate these bodies, spreading and reaching out in resonance. He refers to sound as a vibrant matter where its properties conduct experiences and exchanges and in which “listening and being heard takes place.”<sup>89</sup>

To develop the idea of an overheard resistance, the concept of subjectivity is key and here LaBelle presents a model that draws from the theories of Brazilian psychoanalyst Suely Rolnik.<sup>90</sup> She approaches the contemporary world as “an infinite ocean churned up by swirling waves”<sup>91</sup> in constant flow and disarray in which she recognizes elements of a second flood where flocks of Noah’s arks wander in eternity without hope of ever reaching solid ground. In Rolnik’s text, alienation is pervasive in a contemporary world in which subjectivity has no name, residence or identity, and which, she contends, is linked to a homelessness where we are denied “a feeling of oneself, a subjective, palpable consistency”<sup>92</sup> or in her words, a being “at home.”<sup>93</sup> In today’s tidal contingency, Rolnik highlights the disruptive potency of subjectivity in which currents of power

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<sup>83</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 60)

<sup>84</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: a political ecology of things*. Duke University Press. (page 54)

<sup>85</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: a political ecology of things*. Duke University Press. (page 110)

<sup>86</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 61)

<sup>87</sup> LaBelle, B. (2006) *Background Noise*. Continuum.

<sup>88</sup> LaBelle, B. (2006) *Background Noise*. Continuum. (page ix)

<sup>89</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 61)

<sup>90</sup> Rolnik, S. (1998) *Anthropophagic Subjectivity*. Fundação Bial de São Paulo.

<sup>91</sup> Rolnik, S. (1998) *Anthropophagic Subjectivity*. Fundação Bial de São Paulo. (page 16)

<sup>92</sup> Rolnik, S. (1998) *Anthropophagic Subjectivity*. Fundação Bial de São Paulo. (page 2)

<sup>93</sup> Rolnik, S. (1998) *Anthropophagic Subjectivity*. Fundação Bial de São Paulo. (page 2)



expose us to alterity, a concept that I would like to connect with empathy, and with the potency of inhabiting the subjectivity of others as an act of affection and solidarity in the realms of the political. For LaBelle, the vibrating forces that determine contemporary politics have disruptive effects on language, in which meanings associated with fixity and determinacy are reconfigured in this tidal, nomadic, and virtual construction of a political and affective world. In these conditions of vulnerability and instability, LaBelle presents the possibility of vibrating bodies expressing their subjectivity in which their vulnerable conditions could expose them to being overheard. “In articulating a body in pieces, unhomed from identity, one is potentially captured in so many ways—in short, one is picked up, tracked, and hacked, monitored and registered, followed and arrested through conditions of vibratility. This necessarily relies on a shift in corporeality in general.”<sup>94</sup>

I would like to connect LaBelle’s ideas with the work of British sculptor Antony Gormley, devoted to exploring environmental issues with the mediation of the body: the body is viewed as a place rather than an object. For Gormley, the experience of closing our eyes before falling asleep dissolves the boundaries between body and space,<sup>95</sup> which is a powerful poetic reflection that will help me to grapple with some of LaBelle’s ideas in which the body expands to become limitless yet also broken into pieces.

For Gormley, it is in this seamless boundary of body and environment, in darkness, that the vibrance of the body is activated as a force based on resonance and connectivity, and not attached to singularity or fixity. In vibrating politics, the significance of an overheard model emerges as crucial, and it presents a context of operation which is open to social mobilization but which in this openness, is vulnerable to eavesdropping and surveillance agents.

LaBelle enquires about the difficulties of constructing ethics of engagement in such unstable, volatile, and vibrating conditions, whereby listening and being heard require new considerations in the realm of the sonic and the strategic; these considerations refer to the medium, the audience and the intensities delivered in the sound art practice.

An agency of the overheard, I would suggest, may enable acts of forceful entry, to invade the scene, with gestures of interruption, and in doing so, it may also support coalitional frameworks and assemblies by which to retune the grounds on which bodies struggle; to construct a vibrant assemblage of social care and compassion.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 63)

<sup>95</sup> Gormley, A. quoted in Newman, M. (2013) *Body as a Place*. White Cube. (page 1)

<sup>96</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 66)

For LaBelle, the overheard model might require finding “meaning in the incoherent fragments and noises that interrupt and that trouble and excite the margins between oneself and another.”<sup>97</sup> These ideas will be examined later in this thesis in connection to my work with market shouters.

In LaBelle’s hypothesis, subjectivity is a matter of intensity, to the extent that it becomes an interference to others, where it is significant in terms of its capacity to interrupt. The idea of subjectivity as a disruptive action, and not a fixed identity, calls for new ways of making art and engaging with its poetical and political complexity in which exteriority provides auspicious conditions for an intersubjective exchange of sensibilities and desires.

The invisible sonic weapon that embodies the potency of the politics of sound in LaBelle’s theories should be able to subvert the networks to which it is connected by means of alterity, and it should be able to overhear and detect how it is being eavesdropped.

When referring to the itinerant, as the third model of resistance after the invisible and the overheard, LaBelle writes:

Produced by current economic conditions, while being subjected to any number of discriminations, transience and being without place are pronounced consequences of a neoliberal system, for neoliberalism forces an intensity of movement – of mobility and hyper-connectivity, of insecurity – which creates conditions of possibility while making home and place vulnerable to the powers of economic gain and loss.<sup>98</sup>

For LaBelle, displacement, migration, and eviction are determinant factors in the context of contemporary culture which require new models of logic, based on aspects of mobility and displacement. The philosophical framework of this model should consider relocations, occupations and trespassing as a means to stimulate ideas about borders. In this chapter, LaBelle presents the theories of Kim Riegel, who writes about bordering solidarities in which alliances and collaborative networks are made around boundaries with strategic subverting purposes. This is the case of the 2018 performance of John Luther Adams’s *Inuksuit*<sup>99</sup> by the San Diego Symphony on the U.S.-Mexican border, interpreted as a criticism of the migratory policies of Donald Trump. With a similar purpose, the Dresdner Sinfoniker performed a concert titled *Tear Down That Wall!* in 2017 in Tijuana with the help of a group of international musicians.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, the artwork

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<sup>97</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 66)

<sup>98</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 90)

<sup>99</sup> John Luther Adams, J.L. / The San Diego Symphony (2018) *Inuksuit*.

<sup>100</sup> Guerra, R., Galindo, R. (2017) Concert to Protest Trump’s Border Wall Held at US-Mexico Border. NBC website <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/german-orchestra-holds-protest-concert-at-us-mexican-border/17092/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

*Seesaw at the border*,<sup>101</sup> by Colectivo Chopeke, Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello, installed seesaws on the wall between Juarez, Mexico, and El Paso, Texas. This was a strong critique of the migratory policies of the United States.

Listening to the many different struggles means learning in its most practical form: from personal and collective experiences gained on the street, in protest camps, in direct challenges to an unjust border and asylum regime. Listening to and learning from those who refuse to accept the violent conditions imposed on them is inspiring and eye-opening. This process of listening and learning will be continued with the continuation, spread and intensification of struggles.<sup>102</sup>

The itinerant model of resistance, as presented by LaBelle, calls for an empathetic listening for which affection is essential, and also for the disobedience and reconfiguration of imposed borders. These are key concepts that directly inform my CCSA practice, considering my interest in migration and uprooting which will be evidenced in the Portfolio on this thesis. Furthermore, the deployed potency of the invisible sonic weapon, a product of LaBelle's thesis, is disseminated beyond borders, while challenging preconceived ideas about territories in which mobility is a structural force that operates on empathy towards struggle.

The fourth and final model of resistance presented by LaBelle in his thesis is the weak, introducing the theories of Audre Lorde as a major reference.

The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference.<sup>103</sup>

In the weak model of resistance, LaBelle presents a model that operates in more intimate and affectionate scenarios, developing the conditions for sharing and exchange. These intimate scenarios serve for LaBelle to perceive a connection between the vibrancy of the political and the spiritual around joyful experiences in which sensuality becomes a force from which subjectivity confronts oppressive and imposing agents. In these intimate scenarios of joy and exchange, we are exposed and vulnerable, but we also find our greatest strength. LaBelle approaches the physical and perceptual phenomena of sound and its political agency as elements which act conjointly in the world of vibrant politics where "Sound is always moving away from a source; it abandons

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<sup>101</sup> Colectivo Chopeke, Rael, R., San Fratello, V. (2019) *Seesaw at the border*.

<sup>102</sup> Lorde, A. quoted in LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 108)

<sup>103</sup> Lorde, A. (1978) *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*. Kore Press. (page 87)

origin, it longs and is perennially leaving. In traveling and migrating, in brushing up against numerous surfaces, being absorbed or reflected as it moves (...).”<sup>104</sup>

The *sonorous envelope* idea of psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu<sup>105</sup> is a reference for LaBelle in the development of the weak model of resistance. This theory considers the skin an essential component of the structures of the mind, rooted in the earliest gestation stages and the first contact with sound, and the affection that resonates through the mother’s voice swaddling the child in a sonic container that supports the development of the ego in the first years of life. For LaBelle, sounds are essential constituents in the contemporary construction of subjectivity; bodies cultivate strong sensibilities and the tensions between calmness and abruptness represent a debilitating force that leaves a lasting emotional impression connecting sound with sensuality and desire. To develop the weak model of resistance, LaBelle addresses the ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) phenomena where subtle sounds produce tactile and textural acoustic sensations with special correspondence in the skin, producing tingly static-like euphoric sensations similar to the stimulus of tracing fingers along the skin and which are commonly associated with auditory/tactile synesthesia. ASMR-oriented videos have become a social media sensation, enticing millions of listeners on a vast number of YouTube channels, and the sounds of cooking and eating are common themes on these videos. This is a subset that I will further tackle in relation to my CCSA practice.

For LaBelle, “ASMR (...) may introduce the agency of the weak that I’m pursuing here (...) As such, to grow weak at the knees or to faint, may act as an alternative framework for modalities of being a subject in the world, not to mention emergent forms of resistance and mutuality.”<sup>106</sup> Here the weak model of resistance emerges with prodigious agency in the strategic by challenging aesthetics associated with power and strength while pursuing subtle but connective resonances. LaBelle presents the concept of the weak-strength and enquires about the strategic possibility of the weak in disobedience and resistance against oppressive and imposing structures of power, asking “how might we articulate our weaknesses as affirmations of life?”<sup>107</sup> For him, strength might be approached as the possibility to give others agency and voice by retracting and conceding space, but also by refusing to listen, by not acceding to take part with my listening.

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<sup>104</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 123)

<sup>105</sup> Anzieu, D. (1985) *The Skin Ego*. Routledge.

<sup>106</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 124)

<sup>107</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 125)

In connection with LaBelle's weak-strength, I would like to quote Theodor W. Adorno in *Minima Moralia*:

When philosophers, who are well known to have difficulty in keeping silent, engage in conversation, they should try always to lose the argument, but in such a way as to convict their opponent of untruth. The point should not be to have absolutely correct, irrefutable, watertight conditions - for they inevitably boil down to tautologies, but insights which cause the question of their justness to judge itself.<sup>108</sup>

Here, I acknowledge that to renounce and desist from the mechanisms of hegemony could act as a liberating action that finds in liberation the potency to lure the oppressor to defeat. In the martial art of Aikido, the aikidoka employs the attacker's strength to defeat them. The principles of Aikido present the paths in which resistance can contest the violent means of oppression, precisely by not exercising violence. This consideration is crucial in the CCSA project *Turmeric*, which will be examined in the Portfolio Chapter.

In the erotic subjectivity of the weak model, presented by LaBelle, "The general disorientation central to hallucinogens is one that disperses identity, diffusing one's sense of self into an associative framework in which delineations between interior and exterior, bodies and things, inorganic and organic dissipate."<sup>109</sup> For him, practices of orientation and affectionate unison develop into a possible convergence point between the spiritual and the political "to weaken us as a project of deep becoming."<sup>110</sup> Here I would like to partner LaBelle's thesis with the pre-Incan Chavín culture, mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, in which shamans topped the social power, celebrating ceremonies that Jonathan Abel suggested were a means to "control the senses."<sup>111</sup> LaBelle refers to the experiences of Aldus Huxley where:

(...) a meditation on perception and consciousness, which leads to a recognition of all that interrupts the profoundly limited concept of the "I." In contrast, under the influence of mescaline, perception opens out to what Huxley terms the "living light" of the "Not I" where the world is no longer ordered according to "distances and measurements(...)"<sup>112</sup>

The control of the senses in the vibrational politics could be linked to perceptual phenomena associated with depersonalization, alterity, and otherness.

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<sup>108</sup> Adorno, T. (1951) *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*. Verso Books. (page 70)

<sup>109</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 130)

<sup>110</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 130)

<sup>111</sup> Abel, J. quoted in Haven, C. (2011) *Ancient shells meet high-tech: Stanford researchers study the sound of pre-Incan conches/Chavín de Huántar Archaeological Acoustics Project*. Stanford News. <https://news.stanford.edu/pr/2011/pr-conch-acoustic-musicians-020711.html> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>112</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 130)

As mentioned before, when LaBelle introduces his emergent forms of resistance theories, he deems “sound as a powerful and yet rather immaterial weapon,”<sup>113</sup> to which I object, precisely because the idea of a weapon is embedded in hegemonic and oppressing practices which support the status quo via violence. Here a dis-arm, meaning a device that subverts the arm and renders arms obsolete, seems to operate more coherently with some of LaBelle’s ideas. In the weak model, LaBelle evokes the *Flower Child* photo by Bernie Boston in which LaBelle perceives a “confrontation central to forms of resistance that often seek to not only withstand regimes of violence, but also base resistance on a moral responsibility for life in general.”<sup>114</sup> The dis-arm antiquates weapons in a world where armaments are no longer needed.

For LaBelle, the weak-strength finds in peaceful resistance, collective actions and disobedience, the possibility of reinventing political subjectivity and to oppose using non-violent actions that create global networks of collaboration, spurring social change. In this model, listening is an essential element, which requires patience and still bodies with the disposition to listen, seeking to become vulnerable and supportive.

In speaking, I take up space, and in doing so I may perform certain privileges of which I may not be fully aware. In speaking, I may reinforce an existing imbalance or discriminatory condition, for ‘what tends to get heard in public settings is a way of speaking associated with those who control social, political, and economic institutions.’<sup>115</sup>

LaBelle perceives an element of vulnerability in listening and connects it with the capacity to hear things differently with the resonance of somebody else in which the listener’s perception goes beyond themselves in an act of affection.

In the weak model, LaBelle invokes the work of Judith Butler to fashion the idea of precarity which influences our lives, accentuating, as Butler writes, “vulnerability, interdependency, and mutual care as essential factors for sustaining life in general.”<sup>116</sup> For Butler, empathy towards the precarity of others implies “a principle of equal vulnerability that governs all living beings”,<sup>117</sup> and this presents LaBelle with the possibility of changing the conditions that make oppression and violence possible.

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<sup>113</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 5)

<sup>114</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 132)

<sup>115</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 15)

<sup>116</sup> Butler, J. quoted by Brandon LaBelle (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 142)

<sup>117</sup> Butler, J. quoted by Brandon LaBelle (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 142)

LaBelle is interested in the idea of a *revolution without movement*<sup>118</sup> by Asef Bayat who examines the foundation of revolutionary projects which are not based on forms of attacks, but which transpire with gestures and everyday actions, bringing communities together in solidarity and affection.

Although the political is generally understood not to be the time and space for nurturing intimacy and erotic subjectivity, it may in fact be what is needed in today's environment; as the dynamics of governing power reach into the essential conditions and experiences of what it means to act within the world, shaping bodies and lives, livelihoods and future hopes, practices of political life that engage an ethics beyond the purely political seem necessary.<sup>119</sup>

Prior to analysing the correspondences between the theories presented here by Brandon Labelle and my work in further detail, there is a passage in the book *The Great Animal Orchestra*<sup>120</sup> by Bernie Krause that I would like to associate with his study of the politics of sound. After exhaustive research, Krause learned that the *scaphiopodidae* frog species relies on sound spatialization and unison singing to survive encounters with predators by creating a surface of sound which acts like a shield where no individual frog can be localized and hunted. Nevertheless, interference from aircraft noise pollution can break down these alliance structures created by the frogs, which find in their openness to the sounding environment their major strength and vulnerability. This analogy illustrates how resistance operates in LaBelle's theories, where the separation between strengths and weaknesses are often indistinguishable.

### **How do the theories of Brandon Labelle connect with my practice?**

The approach to subjectivity linked to otherness and alterity introduced by LaBelle presents me, as an artist, with questions about how I engage with the political and social environment in my practice. The way I listen, the prominence awarded to certain sounds and the lack of attention to others reveals the complexity of my material examination in which political, social and cultural biases determine the hierarchy of the objects in my acoustic field, hence the importance to listening with complicity, affection and solidarity towards the sonic embodiments of struggle and vulnerability.

The theories of LaBelle examined here showed me the relevance of engaging with culinary as means of resistance through sound. The acoustic is the overlooked sensibility and material of food, as will be addressed throughout this thesis. This strategic inconspicuousness presents me with a

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<sup>118</sup> Bayat, A. (1998) *Revolution without Movement, Movement without Revolution: Comparing Islamic Activism in Iran and Egypt*. Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 40, No. 1, Jan. (page 136)

<sup>119</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmiths Press. (page 145)

<sup>120</sup> Krause, B. (2013) *The Great Animal Orchestra*. Profile Books.

sensibility that I wished to materialize in the portfolio of pieces of this research by exploring the periphery of our perception. The possibility of the acousmatic to break apart linguistic structures suggested by LaBelle find an echo in my work. This is the case when I deliberately detach the sonic and the visual in CCSA concerts or when I present cooking recordings disconnected from smell and taste, which are the senses commonly associated with food. The material of food is noted here in terms of timbre, frequencies, textures, and their capacity to expand the olfactory experience that guides the performance and composition of sound art pieces.

More precisely, the correspondences between my work and the theories of Brandon LaBelle about resistance are verified in the performance *Ecos de la Chicha*, to which I will refer in the Portfolio of this thesis. The qualities of the sounds examined here might reveal cues for desired worlds in which the horticulture and cooking techniques offered could provide individuals with sovereignty and autonomy, two considerations of contemporary resistance. Another piece in which the theories of LaBelle resonate is *Turmeric*, in which the cooking sounds of immigrant communities are proffered as invisible sonic deployments of solidarity and collaboration that operate in undetectable unison. Here, I expressly worked with artists who have experienced territorial dislocations, to grant my work the material to encourage a subjective process of creation, an idea that finds correspondence with Brandon LaBelle's weak model of resistance. The consideration of the physical qualities of sounds in his theories help me to understand my work by establishing an aesthetic parallel with the material of the cooking heat and the aromas, as will be addressed in the Portfolio and Conclusions of this thesis. The disruptive potency of singularity that LaBelle connects with the overheard model of resistance can be heard in *The Dying Art of Food Market Shouting*, where my work interrupts the public and my art encounters receptivity while also facing resistance and dividing the communities to which it was presented. In CCSA pieces like *Turmeric*, *Beige is the True Color of Melancholy*, *The Kitchen of Chef Lag* or *Taiwanese Live Cooking*, the ideas of borders are subverted by cartographies in which the alliance of food and diaspora contest uprooting and cultural biases. Also, when I consider food a sonic phenomenon in CCSA, my work finds interesting correspondences with LaBelle's itinerant model which demonstrates the importance of food in its multidimensionality to contest adversity in kitchens and dining tables. These matters will be examined in detail in the Portfolio Chapter of this thesis.

To finalize this section, it is significant to note that LaBelle mentions ASMR sounds and the sensations they stimulate in the skin to introduce the weak as political agency. Cooking sounds, particularly panning and frying, are common in ASMR videos and audio recordings and in this



regard, listeners have voiced experiencing such sensations while listening to some of my work. This is the case with Joe Hopkinson, a British historian and collaborator in my CCSA project, with my recordings of chef Lag's kitchen which gave him goosebumps.<sup>121</sup> This reaction presents interesting considerations that connect the material of my work and LaBelle's theories in terms of the intersubjective experience suggested by my pieces as perceived by the spectators.

### 1.1.3 The Political Possibility of Sound - A Geography of Sound

In this section, I will examine the concept of *Geography of Sound* developed by Salomé Voegelin in her book *The Political Possibility of Sound*.<sup>122</sup> Here, she approaches sound and listening as intensities with agenda in the political, which also act as transforming forces that could help imagine a plural and collective "possibility of politics."<sup>123</sup>

Initially, it is important to underline the concept of intersubjectivity developed by Voegelin in previous books and essays.

Sound does not describe but produces the object/phenomenon under consideration. It shares nothing of the totalizing ability of the visual. It does not deny visual reality but practises its own fleeting actuality, augmenting the seen through the heard. The sonic reality is intersubjective in that it does not exist without my being in it and I in turn only exist in my complicity with it.<sup>124</sup>

Voegelin's intersubjectivity allows examining the connection between the perceptual and the political in sound artmaking, evidencing how I approached it in this research. In this section, I will navigate the ideas and concepts that shape her *Geography of Sound* where intersubjectivity emerges as key.

In this thesis, I will engage with the poetic writings of Salomé Voegelin as capsules of poetic meaning that I inhabit with my imagination and subjectivity and that I seek to connect with my creation.

This reading as a textual phonography on vertical lines of words meets the rhizomatic networks of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their critique of a taxonomical and phallogocentric language. The invisible

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<sup>121</sup> Hopkinson, J. (2018) Interview by David Vélez. Personal Archive.

<sup>122</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

<sup>123</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 17)

<sup>124</sup> Voegelin, S. (2010) *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. Continuum. (page 10)

verticality of reading sonic textures joins in the challenge to the arboretic, the image of the tree that starts from one point and fixes an order, which Deleuze and Guattari stage via the rhizome ‘that connects any point to any other point.’<sup>125</sup>

The recurrent concept of *slices* in this book is key to engaging with Voegelin’s thesis, in which

Sound makes thinkable the possibilities of this world, not as metaphor and parable or in relation to a textual universe, but as a portal into real possibility, and shows us the world through its variants: the slices of a timespace geology that holds the cavernous simultaneity of all the possible possibilities of this world.<sup>126</sup>

These *slices* embody the many concurrent possibilities of new worlds happening at every second, the desire and the effort of millions vibrating in silent unison.

Voegelin creates a geography of sound through a series of poetic considerations; however, this discipline should not be approached in terms of maps or cartographic images, but rather as a geographical configuration of the intersubjective nature of our experience in the sonic world. For Voegelin, the tridimensionality of sound cannot be accessed through bidimensional renders or scores, and instead this geography approaches the sonic as a generative construction which “enables a different imagination and insight into how and where things are and move, providing a different focus and demanding a different vocabulary of how to speak of the physical organization of this world.”<sup>127</sup>

The transformative possibility of imagination is a recurrent idea for Voegelin in which the perceptual and subjective aspects of sound and listening present strategic possibility in collective actions. Voegelin quotes geographer Doreen Massey’s “the way we imagine space has effects”<sup>128</sup> to underline the agency of imagination in shaping political realities. For Voegelin, imagination is a powerful force with an agency in politics and with influence in the construction of our sense of belonging, which affects how “we perceive our trajectory and being to have or fail to have an impact on the construction of place.”<sup>129</sup> To supplement this idea, it is important to examine the strong correlation between struggle and identity as it appears in the thesis of Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire<sup>130</sup> and also in the research of ethnomusicologist Steven Feld,<sup>131</sup> who underline the vital role of struggle in the construction of a sense of place in situations of displacement. For

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<sup>125</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 190)

<sup>126</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 28)

<sup>127</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 76)

<sup>128</sup> Massey, D. (2005) *For space*. SAGE Publications. (page 55)

<sup>129</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 76)

<sup>130</sup> Freire, P. (2005) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum.

<sup>131</sup> Feld, S., Basso, K.H. (1996) *Senses of Place*. School of American Research Press.

Voegelin, a geography of sound approaches the “world as a sphere of possibility”<sup>132</sup> in which geography is a model of applied philosophy that provides scope to fathom the ephemeral territories of the sonic. In the model of geography that she proposes, its political reality engages with the exploration of desirable worlds in which the imagined is made present.

Voegelin’s pursuit, in the idea of geography of sound, is to “establish the geographical imagination of a different world.”<sup>133</sup> She aims to sense how these possible worlds are configured, deriving from a reality that needs a “geography to practice and articulate their invisible territories, immaterial things and unseen activities.”<sup>134</sup> If desire and politics shape the worlds that we envisage for the future, the poetics and politics of sound art grant them agency in the configuration of these desired worlds. Sound art operates in these slices, in the desire and resistance of millions as a silent force of unfathomable magnitudes.

For Voegelin, the “geography of sound does not avoid the real, but circumnavigates its biases, measures and histories”,<sup>135</sup> while also acknowledging the possibility that her model might discuss the initial aims of geography as a field. The unseen sphere of sound that Voegelin presents in this essay is “where the political possibilities of geography can be rethought”,<sup>136</sup> and here the theories of Erin Manning and Brian Massumi<sup>137</sup> are relevant for Voegelin, where the surface of geography is noted as a “generative environment”<sup>138</sup> that activates “rhythms of creative practice in philosophy.”<sup>139</sup> For Voegelin, the knowledge product of a geography of sound works in terms of our aesthetic experience with its invisibility, where we engage with “the contingency of being in the world as a practice of its plural geographies.”<sup>140</sup>

The work of Doreen Massey is key in Voegelin’s development of a geography of sound considering that for Massey, the assorted “narratives, stories, and trajectories are all suppressed in the emergence of science as the writing of the world.”<sup>141</sup> Voegelin is critical of visual representational models in geography which “come to produce the truth from their own abstracted imagination.”<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 77)

<sup>133</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 76)

<sup>134</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 78)

<sup>135</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 78)

<sup>136</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 78)

<sup>137</sup> Manning, E. & Massumi, B. (2014) *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience*. University of Minnesota Press.

<sup>138</sup> Manning, E. & Massumi, B. (2014) *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience*. University of Minnesota Press. (page vii)

<sup>139</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 79)

<sup>140</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 80)

<sup>141</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 81)

<sup>142</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 81)

The *slices* of Voegelin derive from Massey's time-slices, in which, "Movement visibly consists in passing from one point to another, and consequently in traversing space."<sup>143</sup>

In Voegelin's geography, space is approached, "(...) as an always already existing whole through which we pass, applying our time to its static expanse, moving along its infinite but separate nodes without affecting its duration."<sup>144</sup> These poetic reflections are the way I approach Voegelin's work, as invisible sculptures where meaning is their materiality, and where this materiality is expressed in terms of resonating forces with political agency, hence the importance of inhabiting their ideas to let them grow, develop, mutate, vanish, and re-emerge.

In Voegelin's theories, the simultaneous timespace-*slices* interconnects us in our interaction as we are invited to reinvent geography, one in which experience is pondered, "as a mobile and viscous expanse that enables and holds our agency and that of things, without visible boundaries in a generative and reciprocal embrace."<sup>145</sup> Voegelin uses poetic and sculptural elements to develop a theory of the politics of sound when she refers to a viscous expanse. She writes about a density, a cadence, a measure, a texture, and a glossy sense of material embedded in the weightlessness of resonance.

The possible worlds of sound enable the rethinking of a current geography, showing irreverence to its aims as historical and governmental regulator by creating a geographical future science. Free from its military and scientific conventions, and thus free from the constraints and expectations of the past, it is able to access the present from the future to practice its unknown variants. This geography does not produce a utopian or dystopian vision into, but a possibilist look back from the future.<sup>146</sup>

For Voegelin, these desired worlds have agency in the de-territorializing of politics by refusing governance by occupation. Similar to what LaBelle presents in the weak model of resistance, Voegelin's geography of sound "demands an ethics of engagement that creates vulnerability"<sup>147</sup> which acknowledges the multiplicity of simultaneities in the construction of things.

We can never find the same temporal location again but move through multiplicitous and simultaneous timespace slices as the configuration of all the possibilities of the work, reminding us of all the possibilities of the world. In this sense the work is elastic and probable rather than real.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 81)

<sup>144</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (page 81)

<sup>145</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury. (page 86)

<sup>146</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury. (page 85)

<sup>147</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury. (page 86)

<sup>148</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury. (pages 85-86)

The geography of Voegelin finds its viscous dimensionality in the simultaneity and indivisibility of slices, and in the intersubjectivity that presents imagination with agency in the politic.

For Voegelin, it is important to engage with simultaneity where, to the extent of the imperceptible, I am simultaneous with the thing heard.

I hear this sound of my simultaneity with others not as a horizon of my being but along vertical lines as the possible slices of our encounter, establishing the depth of the in-between where it does not serve theory or cartography, but the movement and configuration of a performative place.<sup>149</sup>

The performative character of our ordinary encounters with the world, in which possibility is constructed in terms of simultaneity and imagination, is a Voegelin idea in which I find great artistic and poetic potency.

### **How do the theories of Salomé Voegelin connect with my practice?**

The idea of intersubjectivity presented by Voegelin is one of the fundamental theoretical considerations in this research. This is substantiated in the way in which CCSA engages with its collaborators and material. I aim to create spaces where the sounds are approached beyond my subjectivity in gestures of alterity where I enquire about how others perceive them. This will be addressed in detail and depth in the Portfolio and Conclusions Chapters of this thesis.

The *Geography of Sound* that Voegelin introduces is one of the key considerations in my work with immigrant kitchens in the UK and particularly in *Turmeric*. The concept of *slices* allowed me to understand the political possibility of kitchens in the UK as territories of resistance. This is how I could conceive sizzling cooking sounds in diaspora communities as a deployment that resonate in unison and simultaneity as a force or resistance. These philosophical and poetic considerations have effects on the way in which I engage with the material aspects of my work as will be addressed in the Portfolio Chapter. Cooking sounds from immigrant kitchens in the UK embody the possibility of imagination to nourish possible worlds and create undetectable alliances, like the ones Voegelin suggests in her thesis. When she refers to the time and disposition required in listening, I connect with the generous and unconditional process in which I listen to the recordings of my work to master them or select fragments to sample and sequence. In this regard, cooking

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<sup>149</sup> Voegelin, S. (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound*. Bloomsbury. (page 89)

sounds require unbiased sensibility, attention, and disposition because of the way they ordinarily and mundanely emerge.

For Voegelin, imagination have agency in the de-territorializing of politics by contesting domination by means of occupation. *Turmeric* reveals the possibility of resistance to affect communities in the UK, shaping desired circumstances of equality and inclusion. In *Ecos de la Chicha*, her theories about the possibility of listening and imagination connect with future worlds materialized with ingredients that avoid the mediation of government and private impositions. These recipes affect the olfactory and gustatory experience creating multisensory poetical correspondences in CCSA pieces.

#### 1.1.4 Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields

In his PhD thesis, *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields: The Poetics and Politics of Environmental Sound Arts*,<sup>150</sup> Mark Peter Wright considers important ethical questions relating to sound art practice. For him, it is fundamental to examine the problematic observer-subject model in field recordings in order to pursue a true collaborative approach with the recorded space. He presents a hybrid framework that considers the agency of anthropology in field studies and the ethical aspects of representation as a matter of crucial relevance. Wright contends that one of the issues with this model is that it reduces the practice to a matter of conservation or composition, which is out of his field of interest.

Has the pursuit of sound itself merely re-enforced an anthropocentric view? Is sound now on the brink of exotic taxidermy?<sup>151</sup>

In his exploration of South Gare, Northern England, Wright proposes an inter-agential model of practice that results from the political engagement with the field, which is based on the conceptual frameworks of *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields* that he conceived to note encounters of radical asymmetry. In his work, Wright regards the field in terms of antagonizing forces and this is noticeable in the inter-agential model that he proposes, which operates in the complexity of human

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<sup>150</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields*. CRiSAP.

<sup>151</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields*. CRiSAP. (page 78)

and non-human relations, and which embraces “an affirmation of relational (site/body, human/non-human) difference and productive agential antagonism.”<sup>152</sup>

Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields ensure that the field is perceived as a plural movement rather than fixed identity.<sup>153</sup>

In inter-agential aesthetics, Wright presents a series of premises that include incorporating aspects of the field of ethics as material for artistic creation, which is an important reflection that demonstrates how and why, in many sound art works, the creative process and the output are inseparable, and why it is so important that they be considered in singularity.

“Sound is a sensibility rather than a medium or an object”<sup>154</sup> argues Wright, where the experience of listening is not exclusively authored by anyone, demonstrating that the field, rather than inspiration or a subject of analysis, is best approached as an autonomous force which the sound artist joins with his practice. Wright welcomes the incidental, the contingent, the peripheral and the marginal as elements of reflection where “noise, microphone handling, shattered mirrors, severed cables, back problems are the inaudible and marginalized aspects that I believe need to be re-inserted in complex and subtle ways.”<sup>155</sup>

The distinction that Wright makes between humans and nonhumans and the exercises of “auditory perspectival switches (...)”<sup>156</sup> are the beginning of an interesting discussion. In *Object-Oriented Musicology*,<sup>157</sup> Eric Taxier considers the possibility of translating a colonial political discussion to the universe of inanimate objects, challenging ontological divisions between humans and all other bodies in the universe. What Taxier proposes could engage with a horizontal model of collaboration in which the listener might establish non-discriminatory modes of relation with every constituting element of an environment.

Wright proposes the microphone as a mirror heading to the field to “draw it towards an aesthetic and politically aware future”,<sup>158</sup> but what are the aims and implications of this idea? Are we aiming to perceive the way the world perceives itself? What happens with the listener, as a constitutive element of the field, when he is behind the mirror? These are matters examined by archaeologist

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<sup>152</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields*. CRiSAP. (page 165)

<sup>153</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields*. CRiSAP. (page 23)

<sup>154</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields*. CRiSAP. (page 157)

<sup>155</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields*. CRiSAP. (page 45)

<sup>156</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields*. CRiSAP. (page 24)

<sup>157</sup> Taxier, E. (2020) *Object-Oriented Musicology*. CUNY Academic Works.

<sup>158</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields*. CRiSAP. (page 21)

Severin Fowles in the essay *The perfect subject*,<sup>159</sup> where he cites Jean Baudrillard who referred to objects as “the finest of domesticated animals.”<sup>160</sup> Fowles presents all non-human objects as things in which we can reflect what we cannot reflect on other humans quoting Baudrillard:

As a mirror the object is perfect, precisely because it sends back not real images, but desired ones. (...) What is more, you can look at an object without it looking back at you. That is why everything that cannot be invested in human relationships is invested in objects.<sup>161</sup>

*A line made by listening*<sup>162</sup> by Mark Peter Wright is a piece which is part of his *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields* project, designed in collaboration with the soundscape of South Gare. This 10m13s piece “highlights the wealth of natural and industrial behaviour exhibited within this unique stretch of reclaimed land, built between 1861-1884.”<sup>163</sup> In his notes, Wright is critical of aspects of his own methodology exploring natural and industrial behaviour as divided elements in the field, which, to some extent, he considers a failure as he concludes, “It seemed clear that I needed to loosen my structural grip, I had to relax my methodology of marking and imposing and allow the area’s own agency to be heard.”<sup>164</sup>

Graham Harman, the object-oriented philosopher writes, “(...) all of the objects we experience are merely fictions: simplified models of the far more complex objects that continue to exist when I turn my head away from them, not to mention when I sleep or die.”<sup>165</sup> Intuition emerges as a very important tool for the artist who should be able to subvert the rigidity of their methodology in favour of a thorough listening of the field. In *A Line Made by Listening*, we can appreciate some of Wright’s methodology and theories applied, “Rather than walk and record a straight line through South Gare I chose four places to sit and document. Editing the four areas of the line together, I hoped to create a sense of movement from these points of relative stasis.”<sup>166</sup>

Wright’s change of approach in *A Line Made by Listening*, pursuing a loose structure, allows the sounds to settle, to inhabit the recording, to perform. In failure, contingency and intuition inhabit the work of Wright through the sounds of South Gare. The outcome is a very powerful and yet

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<sup>159</sup> Fowles, S. (2016) *The perfect subject*. Journal of Material Culture.

<sup>160</sup> Baudrillard, J. quoted in Fowles, S. (2016) *The perfect subject*. Journal of Material Culture. (page 21)

<sup>161</sup> Baudrillard, J. (1996) *The Systems of Objects*. Verso. (page 96)

<sup>162</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2012) *A line made by listening*. Gruenrekorder.

<sup>163</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2012) *A line made by listening* (liner notes). Gruenrekorder. (page 1) [https://www.gruenrekorder.de/?page\\_id=7176](https://www.gruenrekorder.de/?page_id=7176) (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>164</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields*. CRiSAP. (page 69)

<sup>165</sup> Harman, G. (2018) *Object-oriented ontology*. Pelican. (page 34)

<sup>166</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) *Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields*. CRiSAP. (page 68)



careful and austere piece which I trust to hear and to engage with the sounds of South Gare, confident of Wright's intuition and methodology.

### **How do the theories of Mark Peter Wright connect with my practice?**

Mark Peter Wright's ideas are relevant in this research when I present the unprocessed recordings of the Tikka Masala cooking by Ruchi in *Turmeric*, the *Chicha* brewing by Elena in *Ecos de la Chicha*, Cyanching's recipes in *Taiwanese Live Cooking*, and Lag's kitchen recordings in *The Kitchen of Lag*. The creative process of these pieces considers planned and unplanned aspects connected with the selection of microphones and their placement towards the sound sources. The use of a shotgun microphone in *Ecos de la Chicha* suggested a series of poetic reflections that occurred thanks to its focalized perception. Although unplanned, it became an essential poetic consideration in the project. Furthermore, the collaboration with Felipe in the concert with Cyanching, where he hand-controlled a shotgun mic, allowed the audience to get deeply immersed in the frying preparation which can be heard in the video documentation. Also, in connection with Wright's ideas, the noise that resulted from the kitchen ventilator in the recording of the Tikka Masala preparation in *Turmeric* added an unwanted/unexpected element of contingency that presented a noisy aesthetic element. In this regard, the use of alternative means of recording due to unplanned events, as happened with Supriya's singing (recorded with a Rode Me-C microphone and a mobile phone), also brought a special raw sensibility to the project. In the same order of ideas, the absence of cooking recordings from Sister Sandra was compensated with sounds from our conversations. This demonstrates the vulnerability of my work to contingency, where it connects with Wright's ideas.

#### **1.1.5 Edible Matter**

Jane Bennett is a political philosopher whose book *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*,<sup>167</sup> and particularly the chapter "Edible Matter", have been influential in my research with food sounds. Her theories allowed me to understand the philosophical implications of my work with the materiality of food sound in contemporary politics. In this section, I will navigate through her ideas to provide context to my work with the acoustics of food.

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<sup>167</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press.

Food will appear as actant inside and alongside intention-forming, morality-(dis)obeying, language-using, reflexivity-wielding, and culture-making human beings, and as an inducer-producer of salient, public effects.<sup>168</sup>

For Bennett, food is an actant body that operates alongside and within the human body. For instance, *american consumption* is for her the array of human bodies and food that causes the health crisis of obesity. She studies the emotional and cognitive effects of alimentary habits while presenting data that suggest that over the past 60 years the projected consumption of calories per person in the US increased by the staggering figure of 650 calories. Bennett perceives here a larger structure of vectors that act on one's body in specific and agential aspects such as metabolism and tissue generation. Certain greasy food, she adds, puts people on unnecessarily risk of coronary diseases where there is no consumption regulation. On the other hand, there is evidence of the benefits of oil supplements in reducing aggression, improving cognition, and contributing to mental health. For Bennett, food is a core element in the vast production-consumption structures, working like an operator replicating these assemblages. She perceives that social sciences have failed to study food as an ontologically autonomous object but rather have focused on reducing it to malleable inanimate material.

For her, Nietzsche was one of the earliest philosophers who examined food as a political, cultural, and biological actant, and she underlines his idea of the incorrect diet where he linked alcohol consumption and vegetarianism to depression and other emotional imbalances. His strong moral values on food consumption were based on his ideas that food modifies "human matter"<sup>169</sup> as if one body acted over another, as Bennett points out. For her, Henry David Thoreau was another of the first philosophers who acknowledged the organic agency of food, which was apparent in his drastic diet change, from being a fervent carnivore to objecting to meat for hygienic reasons. Thoreau's dietary values and habits, which were often paradoxical, related to his imagination and his poetic *genius*.

Leon Kass is a researcher and author on bioethics, medicine and human rights, whose research is very significant for Bennett in the study of food as an actant organic vector.

Kass argues that the mundane act of eating reveals something about the very order of Creation: it reveals a natural hierarchy of bodies, with matter on the bottom, organisms in the middle, and humans at the top.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press. (page 42)

<sup>169</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press. (page 44)

<sup>170</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press. (page 47)

She underlines Kass's idea that food becomes its devourer, rather than the other way around. For Kass, an organism is material body "infused with a nonmaterial supplement",<sup>171</sup> and that supplement is life. Life, here, is the successful organization of an organism that finds its material means in nourishment. Bennett suggests that Kass theories tender that every life form is susceptible to be transformed by the food that nourishes it, and that this vector of transformation is what he defines as life. Kass's evangelic affiliation is connected—by Bennett—with the idea of *vitalism* developed by Henri Bergson, where both call for a study of material as a vibrating organic power. She presents evidence that supports the theories in which food operates as an organic actant introduced by Nietzsche and Thoreau and by groups of researchers working with oil supplements. For them, food consumption is "the formation of an assemblage of human and nonhuman elements, all of which bear some agentic capacity."<sup>172</sup> For Bennett, the direct correlation between food and its devourer conveys political implications in terms of empowerment and possibility, but also in terms of how the structures of power and hegemony disseminate. "Eating appears as a series of mutual transformations in which the border between inside and outside becomes blurry",<sup>173</sup> she further suggests.

Author Maud Ellmann, whose work is a reference for Bennett's theories, is quoted by the latter:

[Food's] disintegration in the stomach, its assimilation in the blood, its diaphoresis in the epidermis, its metempsychosis in the large intestine; its viscosity in okra, gumbo, oysters; its elasticity in jellies, its deliquescence in blancmanges; its tumescence in the throats of serpents, its slow erosion in the bellies of sharks; its odysseys through pastures, orchards, wheat fields, stock-yards, supermarkets, kitchens, pig troughs, rubbish dumps, disposals; the industries of sowing, hunting, cooking, milling, processing, and canning it; the wizardry of its mutations, ballooning in bread, subsiding in souffles; raw and cooked, solid and melting, vegetable and mineral, fish, flesh, and fowl, encompassing the whole compendium of living substance.<sup>174</sup>

For Bennett, food unveils itinerant qualities of matter that keeps it in continuous variation. In metabolization. For example, the vitality of matter keeps the inside and the outside in constant permutation. This vitality, she suggests, operates in the shadow of the cultural divisions between organic and inorganic matter.

Another major reference in Bennett's thesis is the concept of Slow Food developed in Italy in the 1960s that takes into consideration all aspects of food production and preparation, aiming to have

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<sup>171</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press. (page 48)

<sup>172</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press. (page 49)

<sup>173</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press. (page 49)

<sup>174</sup> Ellmann, M. (1993) *The Hunger Artists*. Eagleton. (page 112)

friendly ecological processes. Slow Food also emphasises kitchens as points where pleasure, culture and community converge, while prioritizing the use of regional and seasonal ingredients.

[Slow Food] (...) celebrates, in one fell swoop, ecological sustainability, cultural specificity, nutritional economy, aesthetic pleasure, and the skills needed to make meals from scratch. In grouping these images and practices together, in forming that particular congregation, slow food just might have a chance to reform the public that once coalesced under the banner of 'environmentalism'.<sup>175</sup>

In Slow Food, the culinary experience invites reflecting on the economic, occupational, agricultural, and logistical aspects involved in the preparation of a dish when it is served at the table. For Bennett, this reveals a life journal that connects circumstances, places and people in chains and networks of interconnected points. She suggests that Slow Food awards consumers valuable information about the food they eat, which includes the working conditions of its production. For her, Slow Food embraces the possibility of an ontological autonomy of food if it considers edible matter as an organic vector that operates in correspondence with life. If we acknowledge food as an autonomous form of life, Bennett suggests, it could introduce prompt and positive environmental changes.

Food, as a self-altering, dissipative materiality, is also a player. It enters into what we become. It is one of the many agencies operative in the moods, cognitive dispositions, and moral sensibilities that we bring to bear as we engage the questions of what to eat, how to get it, and when to stop.<sup>176</sup>

### **How do the theories of Jane Bennett connect with my practice?**

To acknowledge that the organic material of food feeds us as much as it feeds from us is the most important contribution of Jane Bennett's *Edible Matter* in this research. It challenged and subverted my initial approach to food as inanimate subordinate material. Bennett's ideas present me with food sounds as acoustic manifestations of the geographies and assemblages that food creates which I make evident in my work connecting food production, trading, preparation, and consumption. In her theories, food emerges as a life form that interacts with our bodies creating a synergetic vector of mutability. In this regard, CCSA focuses on the thermodynamic processes of cooking where textures, forms and colours mutate and transform. The ideas of Bennett, help me engage with the aesthetic autonomy of the artistic material of my practice by creating a balance between subtle accentuation and minimal mediation.

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<sup>175</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press. (page 50)

<sup>176</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press. (page 51)

Jane Bennet's theories suggest that my decision of working with food sounds to connect my practice with its social contemporary context is fruitful, as will be further illustrated in the Portfolio and Conclusion of this thesis.

Lastly, the phenomena of seed dispersal by animals allowed me to understand the scope of Bennett's theories. Here, plants attract animal species with their flavours as means of reproduction. This is the case with the desert melon in South Africa, which invites the thirsty aardvarks with their sweet juice. These animals bury their own egest containing the seeds which works as manure that helps the melon plant to grow.<sup>177</sup>

### 1.1.6 The Politics of Food

The Delfina Foundation is one of the most active organizations working with art and food in the world. In 2019 they published the book *The Politics of Food*,<sup>178</sup> edited and curated by Aaron Cezar, director, and Dani Burrows, curator. They invited cooks, activists, environmental researchers, farmers, artists, and restaurateurs to discuss aspects relevant to the production, preparation and consumption of food and its social, political, and poetic implications. In this section, I will navigate through fragments of this book that I find relevant in connection with CCSA.

Patrick Holden is a British farmer and activist, and Mark Hix is a restaurateur with extensive knowledge of ingredients of provenance. For the book, they were invited to dialogue and discuss matters relevant to their work. Holden discussed the hidden cost of food that does not consider its environmental impact. In his research, for each pound spent on food, an extra pound goes to damages and impact that are never disclosed to the costumer. Holden also runs a project presented to the government that seeks to create a system that brings greater profit to environmentally sensitive agriculture and horticultural projects, while making polluting and insensitive projects unprofitable. In this exchange, Hix emphasises the importance of establishing relations between the origin of the food and the consumer, where buying local and having a connection with resident chains of food production have enormous impact on the environment and in the quality of food consumed. Both Hix and Holden are critical of the consumption of exotic food that is not grown locally, as is the case of avocado in the UK, which needs to be imported, thereby significantly impacting the environment and domestic economies. They both agree that culinary activity and

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<sup>177</sup> Wehner, T.C. et al (2020) *Cucurbits*. CABI.

<sup>178</sup> Cezar, A., Burrows, D. (2019) *Politics of Food*. Sternberg Press.

agriculture should be implemented in more school programs to create awareness and sensitivity and encourage autonomy and self-sustainability.

In another chapter of this book, Michel Pimbert, specialist in food sovereignty, and Thomas Unh  n  k, agroecologist, discussed their field of research, emphasizing the importance of small, separate, and independent projects in which individuals claim autonomy over their alimentary habits as occurs in indigenous communities. For them, the concentration of power in food production involves encouraging technologies that do not consider the environmental and social impact. These technologies are designed to concentrate the power in food production even more. Fields like food sovereignty and agroecology work towards an environmentally friendly processes that also grants individuals autonomy in their diet and the origin of the ingredients. For example, food sovereignty has established six basic principles:

- The focus is food for people
- Food providers are valued
- Food systems should be located locally
- Control is exercised locally
- Knowledge and skills should be shared and acquired
- Nature is considered an actant collaborator

Pimbert also presents examples in South India of communities that gather around food sovereignty, the alliances of which transcend into how they communicate. They use local radio stations and other autonomous operations that do not depend on the technological structures of large companies and multinational conglomerates.

Harry G. West is a socio-cultural anthropologist who authored the chapter “*We Are What We Eat*” in *The Politics of Food*. He writes about the importance of the social context in which food is prepared and consumed. For him sharing spaces of food consumption and production has been of historic importance in the development of society and in the creation of vital spaces for socialization and gathering. For instance, West shares stories of his work in Mozambique, where he realized that food is prepared and produced as a communitarian task in which each individual has a responsibility in a chain of assemblages. West illustrates how these assemblages of cooperation have been definitive in many cooking and food production techniques as can be substantiated in the many variations of dumplings and turnovers, which require different complex preparations to be performed simultaneously. In his experience in Mozambique, West also noticed

how communities establish familiarity with visitors and guests by offering them dishes that would seem repulsive to the outsider because of cultural culinary biases. If the visitors subvert their own biases and eat them, they are then welcomed into the community.<sup>179</sup>

### **How do the ideas and concepts of *The Politics of Food* connect with my practice?**

*The Politics of Food*, presented in this research is a point of material convergence between the political and the environmental in the alimentary. The concepts of Mark Hix and Michel Pimbert proffer paths to more sustainable means of food production and preparation. Here the proximity between the consumer and the producer encourages ethical practices and transparent processes. These ideas connect with the development of pieces like *Ecos de la Chicha*, *Moravia* and *One last perfect Day*, in which horticulture, ancestral preparations and alliances around food are encouraged. In *One Last Perfect Day*, in particular, the possibility of sound to stimulate horticultural processes reveals the connection between the ideas of Mark Hix and Michel Pimbert and my practice. The subversion of food biases to connect communities and individuals with dissimilar approaches to culinary culture in Mozambique, as mentioned by Harry G. West, connects with the research of my piece *Turmeric* as will be examined in the Portfolio Chapter.

#### **1.1.7 The Sounds of Food**

Tara Brabazon is a researcher in cultural studies who penned the article “*The Sounds of Food: Defamiliarization and the Blinding of Taste*”<sup>180</sup> published by *The Journal of Sonic Studies*. She examines how most texts written about the experience with food usually omit the acoustic element. She approaches this article as an “oral history”<sup>181</sup> of the obsolete, unheard, undocumented geographies that are created around food, questioning the hegemony of the visual, the tactile, and the gustatory in the cultural approach to food.

Brabazon presents a personal methodology that combines sound recording and writing based on two key elements: the acoustic phenomena of food sounds and their recording, and the “exegesis” of such phenomena. For her, food sounds are “accidental” in the absence of a “narrative,” and she

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<sup>179</sup> Cezar, A., Burrows, D. (2019) *Politics of Food*. Sternberg Press.

<sup>180</sup> Brabazon, T. (2017) *The Sounds of Food: Defamiliarization and the Blinding of Taste*. Journal of Sound Studies. (page 1) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/369386/369387> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>181</sup> Brabazon, T. (2017) *The Sounds of Food: Defamiliarization and the Blinding of Taste*. Journal of Sound Studies. (page 1) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/369386/369387> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

seeks to interpret the accidental character of these sounds by establishing a signifier and a significant.<sup>182</sup> She creates three categories of food sounds, or sonic artefacts as she calls them: shopping sounds, food delivery sounds and cooking. In regard to this categorization, she mentions:

This is a way to demonstrate the value of sound in enabling difference, revealing Jacques Derrida's two stage system of meaning. Meaning is determined via difference: signs gain their meaning by being different from other signs.<sup>183</sup>

In her examination of food sounds, Brabazon acknowledges a large gap between signifier and signified, where this discrepancy creates doubt, agitation and unpredictability, perturbing meaning systems. In her methodology, food sounds are introduced with a voice-over, which frames them. However, for her, sounds overflow frames and borders.

Brabazon's analysis resulted in an interesting observation about cooking sounds.

For example, the information that emerged through the recording of the cooking processes revealed not only the leakage of media – such as television – into the experience of food, but also the conversations emerging through cooking. The unexpected sounds – that I had no awareness of before this research project – reveal the scale of the packaging encasing food. Plastic wrapping, including bags of fruit and vegetables, not only occupy space and time in the cooking process, but reveal under-discussed sounds.<sup>184</sup>

After a thorough analysis of the sounds of cooking, ordering, and shopping for food, Brabazon concludes that, to create meaning, all food requires translation from the experience of taste. In her research, the gap between signifier and signified hinders any attempt to understand and control them. In the vibrance of the sonic, she adds, meaning is constructed in non-fixed, ambiguous, and unsettled ways. This leads her to conclude that food sounds such as material offer “meta-realizations about the abstractions of food”<sup>185</sup> and that the acoustic research of food benefits from decontextualizing food sounds from the everyday scenarios in which they resonate.

The difficulties of analysing food sounds in terms of signifier and signified, as was made by Brabazon in her research, suggests that the semiotic approach in which she examined them operating as signs might be an impractical methodology. Furthermore, the pursuit of a significance

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<sup>182</sup> Brabazon, T. (2017) *The Sounds of Food: Defamiliarization and the Blinding of Taste*. Journal of Sound Studies. (page 1) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/369386/369387> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>183</sup> Brabazon, T. (2017) *The Sounds of Food: Defamiliarization and the Blinding of Taste*. Journal of Sound Studies. (page 1) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/369386/369387> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>184</sup> Brabazon, T. (2017) *The Sounds of Food: Defamiliarization and the Blinding of Taste*. Journal of Sound Studies. (page 1) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/369386/369387> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>185</sup> Brabazon, T. (2017) *The Sounds of Food: Defamiliarization and the Blinding of Taste*. Journal of Sound Studies. (page 1) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/369386/369387> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)



in terms of meaning, understanding and control might just operate as an exercise to domesticate them.

### **How do the theories of Tara Brabazon connect with my practice?**

Tara Brabazon's theories reveal key material considerations in this project. Initially, she emphasises the cultural disinterest in food sounds in culinary, granting them an unexplored artistic possibility. This consideration permeates artistic decisions in all CCSA pieces that connect with the selection of sound in this project. The acousmatic formats implemented in concerts and installations resonate with such reflections. When she proves the disconnection between signifier and signified in recorded sounds, her theories connect with the ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Brandon LaBelle about the strategic possibility of the sensorial disconnection with visibility as was examined in previous sections of this chapter.

In connection with the ideas about contingency presented by Mark Peter Wright in this chapter, the possibility of cooking sounds to open the door to other food-related sounds, as suggested by Brabazon, are pertinent in this research. This is evident in my work with Chef Lag, in which the irrigation and drainage system of his kitchen created a universe of compelling background sounds.

### **1.1.8 The Subversion Against Colonial Thought in the Sonic Field**

The social considerations and the community processes in which I encounter the material and the CCSA collaborators find in anthropology and ethnography auspice concepts and ideas. In this section, I will navigate through the theories of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Steven Feld, two researchers whose investigation resonate with the creative process of my work.

#### **Cannibal Metaphysics**

Can anthropology be philosophy? Can it not just contribute to but do, and even aid in reinventing philosophy, in the sense of constructive, speculative metaphysics?<sup>186</sup>

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro is a Brazilian anthropologist who reflects on contemporary anthropology and ethnography in his book *Cannibal Metaphysics*. In the chapter "*A Remarkable*

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<sup>186</sup> Viveiros de Castro, E. (2009) *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Univocal Publishing. (page 9)

*Reversal*”, Viveiros de Castro makes a reference to the “ethnographic”<sup>187</sup> present, and poses the following question, “(...) what do anthropologists owe, conceptually, to the people they study?”<sup>188</sup> To address it, Viveiros approaches this question from the other angle, enquiring whether the development of anthropological theory emerges as a consequence of “(...) the structures and conjunctures (critic-historically understood) of the social formations, ideological debates, intellectual fields and academic contexts from which anthropologists themselves emerge?”<sup>190</sup> Viveiros suggests that anthropology should consider the imaginative potency of the societies and communities that it examines.<sup>191</sup> Furthermore, he cites the relationship between the observer and the subject as the ambiguous but fruitful basis for an original approach to anthropology.<sup>192</sup>

In this book, Viveiros presents anthropology as a field that has been able to subvert its origins in colonialism and colonial thought, to be approached now, and finally, as “the theory/practice of the permanent decolonization of thought.”<sup>193</sup> However, for him, anthropology is still considered reticently by many sectors that acknowledge that here, the Other is represented or invented, and not given an actual voice as if “(...) every ‘European’ discourse on peoples of non-European tradition(s) serves only to illumine our ‘representations of the other,’ and even thereby making a certain theoretical postcolonialism.”<sup>194</sup>

“By always seeing the Same in the Other, by thinking that under the mask of the other it is always just “us” contemplating ourselves, we end up complacently accepting a shortcut and an interest only in what is “of interest to us”-ourselves.”<sup>195</sup>

Viveiros quotes philosopher Patrice Maniglier who suggests that relevant and actual anthropology: “returns to us an image in which we are unrecognizable to ourselves (...)”,<sup>196</sup> and presents the possibility of experiencing another culture, as the examination of our own culture, altering the possibility of imagination itself. For Viveiros, it is essential to embrace that “those societies and cultures that are the object of anthropological research influence, or, to put it more accurately, coproduce the theories of society and culture that it formulates.”<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Viveiros de Castro, E. (2009) *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Univocal Publishing. (page 39)

<sup>188</sup> Viveiros de Castro, E. (2009) *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Univocal Publishing. (page 39)

<sup>190</sup> Viveiros de Castro, E. (2009) *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Univocal Publishing. (page 40)

<sup>191</sup> Viveiros de Castro, E. (2009) *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Univocal Publishing. (page 40)

<sup>192</sup> Viveiros de Castro, E. (2009) *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Univocal Publishing. (page 40)

<sup>193</sup> Viveiros de Castro, E. (2009) *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Univocal Publishing. (page 10)

<sup>194</sup> Viveiros de Castro, E. (2009) *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Univocal Publishing. (page 40)

<sup>195</sup> Viveiros de Castro, E. (2009) *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Univocal Publishing. (page 41)

<sup>196</sup> Maniglier, P. (2000) *L'humanisme interminable de Lévi-Strauss*. Les Temps modernes 609:216-41.

<sup>197</sup> Viveiros de Castro, E. (2009) *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Univocal Publishing.

## How do the theories of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro connect with my practice?

The ideas of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro presented here resonate in my practice and provide tools for analysis about the collaborative processes and outcomes of CCSA. Intersubjectivity, as posited by Salomé Voegelin, connects with his ideas about colonialism and ethnography, suggesting relevant considerations that in this research help developing fieldwork that contests colonial thought in its creation. When Viveiros de Castro suggests that anthropology should acknowledge the sensibility and imagination of the societies and communities that it approaches, CCSA emerges with relevance and pertinence. My practice examines food sounds in collaboration with the communities and individuals which it studies and reveals the strategic possibility of food and sound and the required intersubjective sensibility and imagination to exercise it.

CCSA presents me as an artist with the possibility of questioning my practice and my aesthetic biases, and this connects with Patrice Maniglier suggesting that anthropology should reflect an image in which the observer can't recognize themselves, as cited by Viveiros de Castro. These considerations will be addressed in detail in the Conclusions of this thesis.

### Acoustemology

Steven Feld is an ethnomusicologist, anthropologist, and linguist who coined the term Acoustemology<sup>198</sup> in 1996 by joining the words *Acoustics* and *Epistemology*. Acoustemology studies the things that are knowable through sound and how that knowledge is acquired and transmitted. Feld studied the *Kaluli* culture people of Papua New Guinea, intrigued by the ability of children to identify bird species by just listening to their songs.<sup>199</sup> For him, this capacity, which is based on the recognition of aesthetic aspects such as timbre, rhythm and pitch, occurs as part of a universal knowledge which are nurtured in the relationships that occur in the sonic environment.<sup>200</sup>

The theories of Edward S. Casey<sup>201</sup> are influential for Feld in his book *Senses of Place*,<sup>202</sup> where Feld developed the concept of acoustemology. Casey suggests that being in place means knowing or becoming aware of one's consciousness and "sensuous presence in the world."<sup>203</sup> Feld paraphrases

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<sup>198</sup> Feld, S., Basso, K.H. (1996) *Senses of Place*. School of American Research Press.

<sup>199</sup> Feld, S. (1982) *Sound and Sentiment*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

<sup>200</sup> Feld, S. (1982) *Sound and Sentiment*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

<sup>201</sup> Edwards, C. (1993) *Getting Back into Place*. Indiana University Press.

<sup>202</sup> Feld, S., Basso, K.H. (1996) *Senses of Place*. School of American Research Press.

<sup>203</sup> Feld, S., Basso, K.H. (1996) *Senses of Place*. School of American Research Press. (page 8)

Casey when he writes “place is the most fundamental form of embodied experience – the site of a powerful fusion of self, space and time.”<sup>204</sup> Karen I. Blu is an anthropologist referenced by Feld in his theories.<sup>205</sup> For her, struggle and uproot are circumstances contested with actions meant to create a sense of home.

The overwhelmingly multisensory character of perceptual experience should lead to some expectation for a multisensory conceptualization of place. But by and large, ethnographic and cultural-geographic work on senses of place has been dominated by the visualism deeply rooted in the European concept of landscape. Denis Cosgrove has analyzed how two distinct notions of landscape, both sharing a pervasive visualism, have merged in the West.<sup>206</sup>

### **How do the theories of Steven Feld connect with my practice?**

In my work, the concept of acoustemology connects with the importance of developing a sensibility that is specific to the material of cooking sounds, food trading shouting and horticulture to understand resistance. In Chapters 2, 3 and 4 in this thesis, I will expound this sensibility within the creation of CCSA pieces. The idea of acoustemology resonates with my work with market shouting in public spaces for which I have developed a sonic sensibility that helps me obtain information about the political, cultural, and environmental aspects of these places.

The theories of Feld suggest the importance of contesting the privilege embedded in visuality in fieldwork. Here the acousmatic format of CCSA performances and installations emerges with auspicious possibility as well as the untreated recordings presented in *Turmeric*, *Ecos de la Chicha*, *Taiwanese Live Cooking* and *The Kitchen of Lag*. Identity aspects connected with food, environmental acoustics and resistance are examined and exhibited here in disconnection with visuality.

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<sup>204</sup> Feld, S., Basso, K.H. (1996) *Senses of Place*. School of American Research Press. (page 8)

<sup>205</sup> Blu, K. I. (1994) *Reading Back*. University of Oklahoma Press.

<sup>206</sup> Feld, S., Basso, K.H. (1996) *Senses of Place*. School of American Research Press. (page 94)

## 1.2 Scenarios of Practice

### 1.2.1 Food as Means of Resistance

In this section, I will examine the work of a series of artists, cooks and activists who explore food as means of resistance in their projects. This was discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, regarding the work of Joseph Beuys and it will be examined in contemporary practice.

#### Sabor Clandestino

The resistance of kitchens and the use of local products expressed in small acts lead us to share ideas, knowledge, cultures that make “Quality Food” a constant debate.<sup>207</sup>

I learned about the work of this Bolivian collective through fellow artist and curator Gueily Morato who wants me to collaborate with them in the near future. Sabor Clandestino has no website and their presence in social media is limited to a Facebook page and the YouTube channel of Marco Antonio Quelca Huayta, one of its members.<sup>208</sup>

Sabor Clandestino focuses on the culture of everyday life and street food experiences. One of their projects is *Somos calle* (We are Street),<sup>209</sup> presenting the creativity and experimentation of *Haute cuisine* restaurants to communities and individuals for whom these experiences are monetarily inaccessible. As part of this project, they also offer free dinners in open spaces in which large groups of commuters can enjoy the comfort of Bolivian street food. The performative and visual aspects of these actions are important, since they wear ski masks and black clothes, serve the food on black squared dishes, and carry portable kitchens that they set up on the go. Another of their projects is *Cascándole* (Hit it), where they serve tasting menus in open and unusual spaces to address social issues. Here they use products that they call *humble* which are based on the early origins of Bolivian cuisine. The creativity of everyday life is approached as culinary protocols and techniques, and the food is served by waiters donning white uniforms and using everyday objects as crockery.

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<sup>207</sup> Translated from Sabor Clandestino Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/Sabor-Clandestino-337274726662632/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>208</sup> Marco Antonio Quelca Huayta YouTube channel

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSaMhc3k2s29iND7o6s\\_zew/featured](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSaMhc3k2s29iND7o6s_zew/featured) (Last visited June 15th 2021)

<sup>209</sup> Translated from Sabor Clandestino Facebook page.

[https://www.facebook.com/Sabor-Clandestino-337274726662632/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/Sabor-Clandestino-337274726662632/about/?ref=page_internal) (Last visited June 15th 2021)

The presentation of the dishes incorporates elements of sculpture and installation art. *Cascándole* is an itinerant project that unfolds throughout different cities and towns in Bolivia where *Sabor Clandestino* also organizes workshops to encourage the deconstruction of traditional Bolivian recipes incorporating ancestral ingredients.

## Fatima Kadumy

There are politics and resistance behind cuisine (...) We show our city and our lives as we see them. Foreigners can then judge Palestinians from the inside.<sup>210</sup>

Fatima Kadumy is an activist, cook and artist from Palestine who organizes groups of women that work around culinary social organizations and artistic activities in Nablus. She is member of many projects that help women who struggle because of the occupation of Israeli forces in this area. Nablus is a critical and strategic point for actions of resistance in Palestine, and in this regard, she says: “To defend the country some prefer war, but there are other, more pleasing, ways to do it.”<sup>211</sup>

In an article about her, written by Sarah Benhaida for The Jakarta Post,<sup>212</sup> Kadumy suggests that meals present perfect circumstances to discuss politics in calm and enjoyable scenarios. Here she also mentions that the Israel stand has been given a voice and it is now time to listen to the Palestine side. Kadumy mentions Israelis and Palestinians arguing about the origin of dishes like *hummus* and *falafel*. “The Israelis learned to make hummus with us (...) they watched and learned to make hummus and now they say that they invented it”<sup>213</sup> she claims.

In Palestine, Fatima Kadumy is part of Slow Food, which I referred to in this thesis in the section about Jane Bennett. As part of this, Kadumy leads the *Bait al Karama* project that operates as a community centre directed by Palestinian women to empower communities with social models of financially sustainable food production and preparation. The women come from unprivileged contexts, and they run educational activities in this centre, focusing on providing tools for financial autonomy and alimentary autonomy. Their two main objectives are:<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Benhaida, S. (2015) *Palestinian cooks put resistance on the menu*. The Jakarta Post. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/09/23/palestinian-cooks-put-resistance-menu.html> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>211</sup> Benhaida, S. (2015) *Palestinian cooks put resistance on the menu*. The Jakarta Post. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/09/23/palestinian-cooks-put-resistance-menu.html> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>212</sup> Benhaida, S. (2015) *Palestinian cooks put resistance on the menu*. The Jakarta Post. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/09/23/palestinian-cooks-put-resistance-menu.html> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>213</sup> Benhaida, S. (2015) *Palestinian cooks put resistance on the menu*. The Jakarta Post. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/09/23/palestinian-cooks-put-resistance-menu.html> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>214</sup> Bait al Karama website. <https://baitalkarama.org/the-project/> (Last visited June 15th 2021)

- To support the needs of women of the Old City of Nablus who have been affected by Israeli occupation
- To bring attention to the Old City of Nablus as a place of rich cultural and aesthetic activity and attract sustainable tourism to the area

## María Buenaventura

Cooking, planting, breeding, hunting, or fishing are not the only acts of creation with food: eating is creation: it creates the body. It creates life.<sup>215</sup>

In the project *Ecos de la Chicha*, which I will discuss in the Portfolio Chapter of this thesis, I had the opportunity to work with María Buenaventura. She is a Colombian artist working with food as a creative force. In her practice, food revises history and social structures by examining ancestral cooking techniques and shared spaces of food production, preparation, and consumption. In this section, I will examine two pieces that display her interesting ideas and reflections about food.

*El territorio no está en venta (The territory is not for sale)* is a project that generated reflection and research outcomes in collaboration with inhabitants and community leaders in the area of Usme. In 2000, the Bogotá Land Use Plan declared their farmland and housing plots urban expansion areas. Since then, the farmers of Usme have been forced to defend their land and in this prolonged struggle, their resistance has made the multiple forms of displacement visible, as well as the conflict between rural and urban, a central conflict in Latin America. The output of this project was presented as an installation consisting of a video, and a series of printed pieces, seeds, and seeded plants. Here, Buenaventura perceives a problem when laws about land and soil are legislated in the urban context of the capital, forcing farmers to surrender to them.

*Biblioteca de plantas (Library of Plants)*<sup>216</sup> is a project in which Buenaventura proposes a library of living vegetables to replace dissected or frozen plants. She posits a library that creates networks with seed banks and where fragility and rebelliousness question the idea of the archive as the only

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<sup>215</sup> Buenaventura, M (2021) Qué es comer. Published on her website. <https://mariabuenaventura.com/2021/07/08/que-es-comer/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>216</sup> Buenaventura, M. (2012) *Biblioteca de plantas*.

mean of conservation. In *Library of Plants*, Buenaventura encourages openness to change and the constant mutability of vegetable life.

The creation of the Library of Plants presents four basic ideas:

“As a library it is a common good, as any library supposes the work of thousands of years, of thousands of people; as a library of plants, it supposes a communion with our vegetal, animal, mineral species, of which we are at most caretakers (librarians I would say), not owners. We are “owners” in the sense in which the Amazonian natives speak of the “owners of the animals” or the “owner of the yucca” (the spirits that take care of the beings).

As a library, it assumes that the plants and their very organization, the whole itself, can be read, cited, re-seeded as means of acquiring knowledge.

As a living library, which must be renewed and which will not always have the same, it questions the desire of the dead archive and the technological seed banks, absent from the world and made behind everyone’s back as private property.

As plant libraries can be located in community houses, research centres, communal spaces of community seed banks or, if possible, in local libraries, they do not have a unique design and their construction must adapt to the shelves of a place and to the needs of plants and their caretakers.”<sup>217</sup>

About Maria’s work, curator Julia Buenaventura, wrote:

It is clear that man created maize, but it is also clear that maize created man. Which leads to a series of political problems about the land and its expropriation, resistance to monocultures, the defence of community gardens and, in all this, the proposal of smell and taste as key senses. These are senses excluded by Western arts, for not being able to abstract from their objects. It is clear, you cannot represent the flavour of a potato, you have to make the potato present. Thus, the work is resolved in various mechanisms: as occupation of space, of the plate or of group discussion.<sup>218</sup>

**Elena Villamil** is another influential artist approaching food as means of resistance, whose work I will examine in the Portfolio of this thesis in connection with our collaboration in *Ecos de la Chicha*. Her influence in my work is dramatic and pieces like *One Last Perfect Day* were conceived as a result of my initial collaboration with her. In the section of *Ecos de la Chicha*, I will closely

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<sup>217</sup> Buenaventura, M (2021) Published on her website. <https://mariabuenaventura.com/portfolio/biblioteca-de-plantas-2/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>218</sup> Buenaventura, J. from María Buenaventura website. <https://mariabuenaventura.com/contacto/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)



examine her horticultural project and some of the circumstances in which she exercises resistance employing food.

### **CCSA in the artistic context of Food as Means of Resistance (Original Contribution)**

In the context of the artistic approach and examination of food as means of resistance, my practice encounters points of convergence as much as it finds original and particular considerations. CCSA pieces like *The Dying Art of Food Market Shouting* find correspondences with the public space actions of *Sabor Clandestino* which engage streets, parks and other communal areas as scenarios for the arts. My collaboration with Cleyda and her community projects in *Moravia* connect with the work of Fatima Kadumi and *Bait al Karama* where vulnerable communities find ways to overcome adversity by means of community culinary projects. *El territorio no está en venta* by María Buenaventura is a piece that highlights the importance of land and soil for communities supported by agriculture, and the resistance that they exercise employing food against laws that deny them the possibility of growing food. These are ideas that came together in our collaboration with Elena Villamil in *Ecos de la Chicha*.

As was pointed out in this thesis in the ideas of Charles Spence in the Introduction and by Tara Brabazon in the Theoretical Context, sound is often the missing element in food analysis and culinary practice. This is the case when food has been approached as means of resistance, where sound has been given little attention particularly as a strategic artistic consideration. In this sense, pieces like *One Last Perfect Day*, which uses sounds as means to stimulate vegetable growth, or *Turmeric* which approaches immigrant kitchens in the UK as places of resistance against racism, this research makes an original contribution to this field of practice. CCSA demonstrates the importance of sound and listening in connection with edible matter, to expand the esthetical possibilities of food as means of resistance considering the often-ignored element in the political aspects of food production, preparation, and consumption.

## 1.2.2 Otherness

Leon David Cobo is a Colombian artist who works with sound, community field work, and listening, and has a practice operating somewhere between sound art, ethnomusicology, anthropology and ethnography. His work with vulnerable communities who have been exposed to violence and armed conflict makes him a key reference in my work, principally considering the ethical and affectionate aspects of the practice. To examine his work, I interviewed him in June 2020 and this section presents my notes<sup>219</sup> from this dialogue, and some reflections on my part at the end. Most of his work is exhibited in museums as multichannel and binaural pieces of original untreated recordings based on oral tradition and ceremonial music, rarely displaying visual elements although he collaborates with illustrators and photographers; but he explicitly avoids the representation of the moving image on video in his expositions. Cobo told me that his work with non-treated long duration recordings is, in part, a consequence of his presence in these communities already being intrusive enough, so he prefers to approach his work as a bridge between these individuals and the listener, attempting to diffuse himself to become a better medium so that *the Other* can resonate.

*Mujeres Olvidadas del Bicentenario* (Forgotten women of the bicentenary)<sup>220</sup> is a collaborative multimedia installation founded on oral tradition recordings, illustrations and text which was created by Leon David Cobo and the Micrófonos En Libertad collective. The aim was to give a voice to the many revolutionary women who courageously helped Colombia gain independence from Spain but who were granted little or no recognition due to gender biases minimizing the historic relevance of their actions. In my work with field recordings and environmental sounds, the questions about where to focus the ears and the microphone is a political question about the poetic and philosophical in sound art and in reference to Leon's work in *Forgotten Women of the Bicentenary*. I was interested in these stories, which are narrated by women who are related to the long-forgotten female emancipators.

In this regard, Cobo says that he is captivated by *otherness*, bearing in mind that Colombia is a country with many voices, which often are antagonistic to one another, but also where others are muted or unheard. For Cobo these dramatic differences are one of the reasons why Colombia has been immersed in an armed conflict for so many decades. The possibility of listening to otherness was central in his interest in the stories of these dauntless unsung heroines, as well as his preceding

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<sup>219</sup> Cobo, L.D. (2019) Interview by David Vélez. Personal Archive.

<sup>220</sup> Cobo, L.D., Micrófonos en libertad (2019) *Mujeres Olvidadas del Bicentenario*. <https://soundcloud.com/micronosenlibertad> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

concern with violence and discrimination against women in Colombia, a problem that he has examined in a series of sound projects. In *Mujeres Olvidadas del Bicentenario*, he and the collective Micrófonos en Libertad engaged in stories of great historical and poetic significance about champions like Matilde Anaray, Juana Escobar and Cleotilde Escobar de Niño. In the production of this project, Cobo encountered a series of circumstances that put the spotlight on the political, social, and cultural tensions pervading Colombian territory in the form of armed conflict, which he perceives as a cross-cutting element in all of his field work with communities in Colombia.

Cobo has been conducting field work with communities since 1999, and in these years he has conversed and collaborated with acts of armed conflict as was illustrated in *Victus*,<sup>221</sup> a performing collective project of which he was part. Here, adversaries in the Colombian conflict, such as former guerrilla, paramilitary, and public forces, together with civilians, shared the stage to perform a piece that aimed to give a voice to the different actants in the conflict. In this regard, I asked him about the methodologies that were followed in this complex and sensitive process.

In *Victus* Cobo says, it was extremely important to work with a pedagogist like María Victoria Estrada and adhere to the theories of Humberto Maturana, in order to avoid romanticizations and biased, polarizing criticism; otherwise, it could have affected any possibility of dialogue between the parties. The methodology used in this process took into consideration ideas such as Maturana's *biology of love*<sup>222</sup> and *autopoiesis*<sup>223</sup> (circularity) where it is important to approach the other as an equal. With the aim of understanding the nature of Colombian conflict, the *Victus* group developed a timeline to trace back the history of violence in the country, almost back to the Big Bang, and this reflection spurred them to invite a group of physicists to help them study the forces and laws of the universe where they could connect chaos theory with the armed conflict in Colombia. This provided them with a philosophical and poetic understanding to such complex and sinister phenomenon. Here, Cobo says, the performers acknowledged their war experiences as precarious and miserable, leading to arid, broken territories, hence the need to create new experiences for ex-combatants and civilians by means of art, where former opponents accepted an invitation to reflect and dialogue together. The neutrality exhibited by Cobo and the other artists involved was key in creating scenarios of exchange and remediation. To be able to achieve neutrality, Cobo says, he needed to self-examine, putting aside the layers of biases, the product of one's ideology and values, and the stereotypes that one creates, in order to converse with former guerrilla, paramilitary and

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<sup>221</sup> VA (2018) *Victus*. Casa Ensemble.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjIS0uxJisY> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>222</sup> Verden-Zöllner, G., Maturana, H. (2008) *The Origin of Humanness in the Biology of Love*. Imprint Academic.

<sup>223</sup> Maturana, H., Varela, F. (1972) *De Maquinas y Seres Vivos*. Editorial Universitaria, S.A.

public forces who committed atrocious crimes. This dialogue occurred following a methodology that he describes as phenomenological, and which generated paths of affection, compassion, and empathy within the group. Cobo believes that the creative process of art, when approached responsibly and ethically, is essential in these processes of affection, dialogue, and remediation among antagonists. Everyone involved should be able to communicate their story and experience to nourish and engage all the parties involved, and this, eventually, will shed light on how to approach and eventually stop the armed conflict, which, after centuries, still claims many lives in Colombia.

Also, for Cobo it was important to listen to the humanity in everyone involved in this conflict and learn about the events and circumstances, such as indoctrinations and forced recruitments, to which they might have been subjected. He cites stories of 9-year-old children being kidnapped to be trained and enlisted in combat groups, which has been a common practice in Colombia for decades. After, and despite being in contact with such brutal and traumatic accounts, Cobo is positive about humanity and believes in the possibility of a solidary and affective society, given an auspicious and loving context. He connects these thoughts with the fact that in the creation of *Victus*, the identity of the ex-combatants was initially not revealed, but by the time the issue inevitably came up, the potentially conflicting parties were already friends thanks to the artistic affectionate and positive process which occurred.

In the conversation with Cobo, I recognize the importance of the act of listening in these sensitive and delicate artistic processes in which alterity, affection and solidarity are crucial, so I asked him about the extent to which these experiences of dialogue and remediation privilege the possibility of the sonic subverting problematic elements of the visual discourse.

For him, biological configurations related with the early development of listening in the womb (16 weeks) are influential considerations in his *obstinacy* to believe in the artistic practice with sound and its possibility to analyse, understand and heal the relations that we establish with ourselves and our environment. Cobo mentions that he had the privilege to record songs of the Wiwa indigenous community in the Colombian Caribbean, with a 'wise woman' singing to the child in the womb to connect the child with the outside world, demonstrating the importance of listening in the spirituality and cosmogony of these cultures. He has also had the opportunity to work with children in different contexts for a number of projects, and this experience has revealed to him the significance of listening during cognitive development and the capacity to create tools for critical analysis in these children. This is another reason for his specific interest in sound pieces

based on the affectionate action of listening. Cobo expresses that the suggestive and evocative possibilities of attentive, curious listening are essential in nightly indigenous rituals which gravitate around sound and in which the participants can only imagine and envision these worlds by means of sound.

The artistic decision to tackle the field and the environment in its political complexity holds many implications revolving around the affectionate, the ethical, and the poetics of sound art. When artists conceive no other way to work, they face the possibility of giving resonance to desired worlds in which the potency of life to love overcomes and prevails over struggle and violence. The work and reflections of Cobo help me fathom the scope of the practice with sound in which artists listen and record the life of others doing what they do every day, speaking about their affections and disaffections. It is essential that artists view themselves as catalysers, as mediums that need to be emptied of biases and stereotypes, being able to critique with affection and generosity, joining forces with others and aiding in making desires resonate. These reflections about the affectionate and ethical aspects of collaborative work with members of communities that we engage with, are aspects that I will later develop when I present my CCSA portfolio of works.

### 1.2.3 The Kitchen of Lee Patterson

The first thing that comes to my mind when I listen to Lee Patterson's *Egg Fry #2*<sup>224</sup> is: what am I listening to when I'm listening to the sound of an egg frying? What ideas, experiences, emotions, and affections are being triggered by this grainy, tactile, potentially goosebumps giving sounds? What parts of my psyche are touched by these oft unperceived sounds that emerge when we fry an egg? What happens when these sizzling sounds operate in the background underneath wandering thoughts, kitchen chat or the eventual sounding of the radio, TV, or phone?

To approach this piece by Patterson, the analysis of the perception of sound has interesting things to say about the process of frying eggs, and here the work of Charles Spence is relevant. Spence has found correlation between sound and olfactory stimuli as part of our experience with food by conducting a series of experiments in which the environmental sounds and the colour of food affect its taste. Considering Spence's theories, it is likely that Patterson's synesthetic experience when he recorded *Egg Fry #2* in his kitchen varied dramatically from what the spectator

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<sup>224</sup> Patterson, L. (2012) *Egg Fry #2*. Cathnor. <https://cathnor.bandcamp.com/album/egg-fry-2> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

experienced. What happens if we listen to this piece in the kitchen and we bring a fried egg to the experience? Initially, what is alluring to me is the aspects that Patterson finds interesting about these sounds. What made him decide to record and eventually publish them? What does he perceive when he is listening to eggs frying? Pondering these issues, I contacted him and then mailed him some questions, taking into account that I recorded frying an egg for a completely different purpose in 2007 for my *Desayuno* sound publication.

Fragments from the interview are quoted at length below, given the significance of Patterson's work and its engagement with issues outlined above:

*David Véléz: Do you remember the first time you got interested in the sounds of cooking?*

Lee Patterson: It's hard to recall exactly, but sometime around 2004 - 2005. I was regularly frying and eating eggs for breakfast most mornings and I suppose it was around that time that I noticed how interesting they sounded to me. I also recall hearing the whistling of certain foods whilst in the cooker or grill, mostly sausages but I've been vegetarian for almost 30 years, so those memories must be from childhood.

Patterson connects the sound of frying eggs with a particular moment of the day and a specific time of his life when this dish was a recurrent element in his breakfast, as if these sounds today triggered memories associated with aromas, flavours and sounds, which reveal how the auditory experience in the kitchen is formed, between the possibility of reduction and the luscious olfactory stimuli working together amid a gradually growing desire.

*DV: I assume that you cook. How important is it to listen, when you are preparing a recipe?*

LP: I do like to cook/prepare my own food but strangely, I'm not often aware of any sounds made, other than perhaps water coming to boil in an open pan. I'm usually too busy preparing ingredients and trying not to chop off the tips of my fingers! That said, I do often find myself singing/harmonising with the drone from the oven fan or, very occasionally, the microwave oven.

It is interesting how Patterson likes to subtly tune in to the baking sounds with his voice as if he were an accomplice of the mechanisms of ovens that make the kitchen a warm, vibrant place with musical possibility. This resembles my performative approach in the CCSA concerts when I collaborated with cooks and joined them, letting their sounds propagate to guide my performance.

*DV: What is the most fascinating thing that you find in the sound of frying an egg?*

LP. When I made those two recordings, it was the complexity, variation and development of the sounds. I was also very interested in how certain elements reminded me of electronic music (from Bernhard Günter - Autechre, etc.) as well as to animal or insect sounds. It was a complete and self-contained sound world (a soundscape in a pan as I, perhaps naïvely, termed back in 2009) and it was happening in my kitchen!

The morphology of the sounds through time and how I could influence them by controlling the heat of the ring suggested to me a very simple compositional strategy, a framework within which the events could happen, a beginning and end with a dense middle section, a subtle yet complex crescendo.

In *Egg Fry #2*, Patterson was cooking using his ears, making decisions based on acoustic aesthetics rather than merely preparing food and using a knob to create a structure supported in the intensity of the sizzling sounds created by the heat propagating through the pan, the oil, and the egg. The kitchen here is approached in its musical and artistic possibility, a sounding environment bursting in poetry where the magic in our everyday life resonates with great vibrance and evocative power.

Experimental music icon Bernhard Günter and electronic avant-garde duo Autechre are influential in my work, particularly in the earliest stages of my practice. My initial interest in cooking sounds focused on colours, shapes, patterns, contrasts, timbres, harmonies, and other sonic qualities that I found appealing. These sonic elements are akin to sounds that attracted me to the work of experimental and electronic artists like Christian Fennesz, Mika Vainio, Pan Sonic, Geir Jenssen, Deathprod, Richard Garet, Steve Roden, Richard Chartier, Ben Owen, Seth Nehil and Andrew Deutsch, all who have influenced my practice. In my work, these acoustic qualities connect the reductionist approach rooted in *musique concrète* with an intersubjective, affectionate, solidary, and emphatic process of listening.

My interview with Patterson continued:

*David Vélez: After listening to your piece “Egg Fry #2” on Cathnor, it seems to me like a great example of the capacity of sound to detach itself from its causality in order to suggest “fictions” in the listener, and in this case, I felt like I was listening, in a very strange garden with buzzing insects, bubbling creeks and rain falling. When you listen to this piece, do you feel like you are listening to a fried egg? If not, what kind of scenarios does it suggest to you?*

Lee Patterson: I’m listening to it again right now! Most of the time it’s difficult for me not to hear it as a frying egg, but it does suggest to me underwater sound worlds, ‘alien’ communications, perhaps the (transcribed) infrasonic work of Felix Hess’s Air Pressure Fluctuations or some of the intricately edited/constructed works of Bernhard Günter. It is also quite similar to the sounds I obtain from chalk when immersed in water.

The suggestive and evocative possibilities of environmental sounds are vast, the freedom and malleability that they award the listener to shape them in their imagination and provide them with emotional significance and multisensory dimensionality reveal essential aspects about our psyche and desires, allowing the emergence of elements related to the construction of our identity.

*DV: You and Helena Gough used the sound of frying eggs and roasting seeds to create soundscapes for the “Cut and splice” episode of the BBC radio show “Hear and Now” dedicated to food and sound. How did these sounds work in order to fabricate a soundscape?*

LP: (...) As I recall, Helena brought a number of recordings (porridge in a pan etc.). I don’t remember if these recordings were manipulated electronically as well (...) We worked out a sequence of events so the performance was at least in some parts, composed. Dave Hunt constructed some electret microphones for placement above the frying pan and at some point, I burnt nuts and seeds on my specially prepared contact microphones...

*DV: Other than fried eggs, are there other dishes that interest you from an aesthetic acoustic perspective?*

LP: I want to make some hydrophone recordings of eggs placed in near boiling water, also chickpeas.

*Egg Fry #2* by Lee Patterson connects me with particular aspects of food sounds that bring together my work with experimental music and sound art with my interest in culinary art, where sounds, flavours, colours and aromas join forces in the spiritual and sensuous experience of everyday life and where the aesthetics of sound are not detached from their causality but are instead incorporated into a multidimensional, multisensory, synesthetic and intersubjective realm.

## 1.2.4 Unusual Ingredients

*Unusual Ingredients* are a group comprising musicians Jacob Thompson-Bell and Adam Martin and researcher Caroline Hobkinson. I saw them perform in Leeds in March 2020. This was an excellent opportunity to explore further how other sound artists have approached working with food. Before the show, I was already familiar with this project because of the participation of Charles Spence. The group of psychologists, artists and chefs that collaborate with Spence also includes superstar restaurateur and cook Heston Blumenthal, who has created art pieces with food such as cheese made with bacteria offered up by celebrities.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Blumenthal, H. (2019) *Human Cheese*.



Before the concert, I consulted their website which states:

Our work draws on the latest gastrophysical research into sensory perception, our music uses exact sonic frequencies and musical gestures calibrated to enhance the mouthfeel, flavour and provenance of each ingredient.<sup>226</sup>

The words ‘exact’ and ‘calibration’ in this concert put a lot of pressure on me as a listener, since my reaction was supposed to respond in a certain way to a certain stimulus; otherwise, something was wrong. Nevertheless, I was very excited to experience the sensorial connection between sound and aroma in this piece, and how the interdisciplinary work with Spence emerged.

The concert was performed in a medium-sized venue at Kingsgate in Leeds and here the first thing that I noticed was that no cooking was taking place. A video teaser on their site showed succulent images of food preparation that created unmet expectations. We were given a small tray with tiny food samplers that we had to eat, following a sequence indicated by the artists.

The concert started with Caroline Hobkinson introducing the context, which seemed less ambitious and rigid, and more enticing and deliverable than what I read on their page.

The performance moved on and so did our progressive devouring of tiny, tasty snacks of chocolate, menthol, honey and coffee candy and seaweed. The music in this concert was apparently not performed but Thompson-Bell’s gestures with the mix and the computer suggested that there was some real time interaction.

The first piece involved popping candy, an ingredient already used by Lee Patterson in his concerts, which creates compelling sounds in correspondence with the acoustics of the mouth. The experience was pleasant, and the candy popping in the mouth, together with the recordings of these sounds, worked well. In my initial reaction, I acknowledged that, in this context, food in the mouth acts like a tiny edible sculpture, the textures, and shapes of which interact with the scents. That was already a good start presenting me with interesting considerations. This piece connected me with the candy only when the popping candy recordings resonated. Otherwise, it was just compelling ambient music, safe and effective, but did the popping candy taste any different?

We were then given a snack of caramelized ginger to eat while listening to the corresponding piece. The melodies were repetitive, minimal and some of the patterns evoked traditional Asian music.

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<sup>226</sup> Thompson-Bell, J., Martin, A., Hobkinson, C. (2020) *Unusual Ingredients*. <https://unusualingredients.co/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

Again, the music was emotionally potent and aesthetically compelling, but did ginger taste different? After all, I had never tasted caramelized ginger, so this was new to me. At this point, the performance felt like a pleasant experience created to be multisensory and exciting rather than something calculated and designed as the quoted text suggested.

The concert continued with seaweed, which was the strongest experience here. The suggestive melodies and the field recordings of sea waves worked very well with the salty taste. The connection between the flavour and the sounds extended the experience to the origins of the dish, creating a potent poetic link.

The following pieces included a coffee bonbon, pepper and chocolate and honey lozenge with dried thyme. They were very engaging as an experience, delivering soothing sounds and comforting flavours. The soft arpeggiated sounds and soothing pads kept this experience in a pleasant and safe place. Again, the sounds awarded a compelling complement, but the coffee bonbon tasted just like a coffee bonbon in an ambient music concert.

Bubble gum was another of the interesting pieces in this concert, thanks to the field recordings of playgrounds and sounds that evoked toy instruments. The melodies and chords that complemented this piece acted effectively, but would they have worked equally effectively with or without the candy?

The menthol piece appealed to a very obvious cultural connection with the sounds of the wind. This correspondence sounded fragile and unnatural but effective.

### **Comments and correspondence with CCSA**

*Unusual Ingredients* and CCSA show two different and contrasting approaches to the work with sound and food. As it was presented in the Introduction of this thesis, my interest is not to establish universal truths or rights or wrongs in the practice with sound and food. But *Unusual Ingredients* is missing a factor that I find essential in order to make a significant contribution to the artistic work with food: the affectionate and the human. Food is presented here as a product reduced to a perceptual phenomenon and as an act of consumption. Food without a history. Furthermore, the environment in which this experience was presented was cold, safe, clean, sterile, distant from the warm, chaotic, lively, and radiant processes in which food is prepared. Attending this concert, gave me a point of reference that has enabled me to distinguish values and considerations that make CCSA original in its examination of food sounds. My criticism of *Unusual*

*Ingredients* presents me with a responsibility, with my own values and considerations, towards food in my work with sound. The ethical, environmental, and social engagement of CCSA with edible material will require more sensibility and environmental and social responsibility on my part, which I seek to develop in upcoming projects. Here, the division between my private life and my work might eventually vanish.

### 1.2.5 Other Scenarios of Practice

In this section I will present an eclectic series of concepts and projects that revolve around the materiality of food and food sounds, which demonstrate the amplitude of the scope of works, ideas and artists that have contributed to the development of CCSA. For diverse reasons, these projects were not examined in greater detail but their contribution to this research is significant. The diversity of the projects cited here suggest the lively, organic and even paradoxical paths that this research encountered in its development.

#### Artists performing with sound, food ingredients, cooking, and music

**Fast Forward** is an English musician, based in NYC, who uses a variety of objects and devices to compose and perform music, including food and cooking utensils. He is well known for the conception of *Feeding Frenzy*,<sup>227</sup> a concert where five cooks and five musicians perform for one hour and thirty minutes with the help of waiters that constantly bring fresh food to the tables. The music performers follow a score, and the actions of the cooks are amplified, therefore becoming part of the music. The menu,<sup>228</sup> which does not include animals, follows the classic dining structure of 1) Hors d'oeuvres 2) Appetizers 3) Main course 4) Dessert 5) Coffee 6) Aperitif. Fast Forward has organized Feeding Frenzy in NYC and Miami, and in Lithuania, Austria, France, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Fast Forward also conceived *Musique a' la Mode*, a concert where kitchen utensils and cooking hardware are used to perform music by David Moss, Fast Forward and Michael Evans, with the help of David Linton. While I do not see a major conceptual connection between the work of Fast Forward and my work, the idea of cooking concerts, where

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<sup>227</sup> Fast Forward et al. *Feeding Frenzy*.

<sup>228</sup> Fast Forward website. [http://www.mrfastforward.com/site/Feeding\\_Frenzy.html](http://www.mrfastforward.com/site/Feeding_Frenzy.html) (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

the sound of food preparation converses with improvised sounds, creates a common ground between our practices.

*Ricefall*<sup>229</sup> by **Michael Pisaro** is a music piece performed by pouring rice over a series of surfaces that include metal, wood, stone, paper, hard plastic dry leaves, rice, and ceramic. In some versions, it also includes violin, viola, flute, and electronics. *Ricefall* has been a big success with numerous performances worldwide, presenting to the performers with an expressive and interesting material in rice, as Terry Longshore<sup>230</sup> and other percussionists have expressed. *Ricefall* finds its origins in the book *Touching the Rock*<sup>231</sup> by author John Hull, who is blind and who writes about his experience with the world mediated by sound. In this book, there is a fragment in which Hull describes his experience with rain:

Rain has a way of bringing out the contours of everything; it throws a coloured blanket over previous invisible things; instead of an intermittent and thus fragmented world, the steadily falling rain creates continuity of acoustic experience.<sup>232</sup>

In a 2020 interview,<sup>233</sup> Pisaro expressed his fascination for the way in which Hull connected with the sound of pouring rain to learn about the surface, shape, and cardinal references of things. In this interview, Pisaro mentioned that he had never thought of or heard rain in that way, which was one of the reasons that influenced its composition. The performers align in a grid to drop rice over things and reveal the geography of the space where it is performed.

**The Vegetable Orchestra** was founded in 1998 and it fuses music styles including House, Experimental Music, Free Jazz, and Noise. In the Vegetable Orchestra website,<sup>234</sup> they respond a series of questions about their practice:

About the musical aspect you can say that the vegetables hidden inside sound life is brought to the surface and made visual during the performance. For example, on our last two CDs, we pre-recorded the sounds, then composed pieces via computer, and afterwards rearranged them for live performance. The whole procedure of sampling has a lot to do with the process of decomposition and reconstruction. When you listen to the sound you can no longer tell if it's a carrot or an eggplant clap.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Pisaro, M. (2010) *Ricefall*.

<sup>230</sup> Pisaro, M. (2020) Interview for the Oregon Center for the Arts by Terry Longshore. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXR4zm\\_C-ZA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXR4zm_C-ZA) (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>231</sup> Hull, J. (2016) *Touching the rock*. SPCK

<sup>232</sup> Hull, J. (2016) *Touching the rock*. SPCK (page 26)

<sup>233</sup> Pisaro, M. (2020) Interview for the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eq6b3NCfiI8> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>234</sup> Vegetable Orchestra website. <http://www.vegetableorchestra.org/qa.php> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>235</sup> Vegetable Orchestra website. <http://www.vegetableorchestra.org/qa.php> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

In China, the **Nan brothers** make music working with tubers as wind instruments, playing traditional folkloric tunes, using the moisture of tubers to control the instruments' pitch.

If the water content in vegetables evaporates, the tune will become higher than the basic tune or go out of tune. Therefore, we choose the vegetables with as much water content as possible. The vegetables have to be solid and hard. We can't use those vegetables left over for days. They are too soft to be played.<sup>236</sup>

**Linsey Pollak** is an Australian luthier, musician and composer known for creating unusual instruments, like his carrot clarinet, which was presented and performed with at TEDxSydney in 2014. At the time of writing, the video documenting this presentation and performance reached 7,120,797 views.<sup>237</sup>

**Música Más** was an Argentine collective experimenting with sound, music, and art which performed *La Última Cena* in 1970<sup>238</sup>. Thirteen guests sat at a table and performed music with the crockery and food served. The performers followed a score and the indications of a conductor, except for one performer, who merely ate. The piece ended when all the interpreters stopped their performance, directing the focus of the audience to the eating performer. Finally, he stopped eating, took the last sip of his drink, burped, and left while the lights faded out. After this, an assemblage of ropes, pulled by one of the performers, broke down all the dining furniture.

*Tasteful Turntable*<sup>239</sup> is a project of **Nikolaj and Lars Kynde**, two Danish sound artists/composers interested in synaesthesia. They enquire on the way music can influence our olfactory and gustatory perception, by creating an interactive turning dining table.<sup>240</sup> The actions of food consumption by the performers connect with a series of musical structures that seek to create a cross modal correspondence between what is eaten and what is heard.

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<sup>236</sup> Nan Brothers (2012) interview by Xiaoyun Yao for BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-asia-17340348> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>237</sup> Pollak, L. (2014) TED Talk. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BISrGwN-yH4&feature=youtu.be> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>238</sup> Música Más (1970) *La Última Cena*.

<sup>239</sup> Kynde, N., Kynde, L. (2015) *Tasteful Turntable*.

<sup>240</sup> Everyday Listening (no author mentioned) (2015) *Tasteful Turntable*. <http://www.everydaylistening.com/articles/tag/food> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

## Artworks Examining Market Shouting

*Pregón Prestado*<sup>241</sup> is an itinerant performance by **Luis Urquieta**, using a market trolley to transport a speaker that projects the sounds of *El Cardonal* market on a street that connects two major food markets in Valparaiso.<sup>242</sup>

**Emeka Ogboh** is a Nigerian sonic artist whose work explores food and cultural identity. His 2016 installation *Market Symphony*<sup>243</sup> projected the sound of the Balogun food market in Lagos on small speakers embedded in food plates that were exhibited in the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C.<sup>244</sup>

**Felix Blume** is a French sound artist, whose work has him toggling between Europe and Latin America, and who created the piece *Coro Informal*<sup>245</sup> based of market shouting sounds. He created a series of boxes that operate like music boxes where each resonates with the sound of a different trader. The spectator can then open the boxes creating an array of sounds.<sup>246</sup>

**Miguel Angel Montoya** and **Pablo Lagos Lopez** roamed the streets of Fontibón, Bogotá in their piece *Sin valor*<sup>247</sup> (Valueless), shouting through a megaphone to pitch their art pieces which they offered for trade to the local community.<sup>248</sup>

## Food Art Projects

**Gordon Matta-Clark** was an influential sculpture artist who, in 1971,<sup>249</sup> opened *FOOD*, a socially sensitive restaurant in Soho, NY, and an early antecedent in food art. It offered affordable dishes cooked with fresh, local, and seasonal ingredients, where the kitchen and dining area was not separate to allow the guests to experience cooking as a performance. This project had an enormous influence on the NY restaurateur community popularizing Japanese recipes cooked with local ingredients, and bone marrow dishes.<sup>250</sup> Here food was prepared and consumed in experiences

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<sup>241</sup> Urquieta, L. (2015) *Pregón Prestado*.

<sup>242</sup> Lutxo Urquieta Vimeo page. <https://vimeo.com/153796322> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>243</sup> Ogboh, E. (2016) *Market Symphony*.

<sup>244</sup> Smithsonian website <https://africa.si.edu/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/market-symphony-by-emeka-ogboh/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>245</sup> Blume, F. (2016) *Coro informal*.

<sup>246</sup> Felix Blume website. <http://www.felixblume.com/coro-informal/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>247</sup> Montoya, M.A. & Lagos Lopez, P. (2015) *Sin Valor*.

<sup>248</sup> Encuentro AVID Vimeo page. <https://vimeo.com/47702441> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>249</sup> Matta-Clark, G. (1971-1974) *FOOD*.

<sup>250</sup> Zalman, S. (2017) *Eat, Live, Work*. Tate Research Publication.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/walls-paper/eat-live-work> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

that also included dance, music performances and other artistic expressions. These were created by artists such as Robert Krushner, Donald Judd and collaborators of Philip Glass and Trisha Brown, who were invited by Matta-Clark. This was also a space to discuss arts, food, and politics in an environment of reflection and critique.<sup>251</sup> One of the motivations of Matta-Clarke with *FOOD* was to create a space of affordable dining where struggling artists could meet and discuss strategies and create alliances.

**Ernesto Morillo** is a contemporary Colombian sculptor who works with potatoes and who creates a new series of pieces every harvest season. We had a brief but productive exchange, and, in this section, I will present extracts of our dialogue. One of the points that captured his initial attention is the fact that, before the 17<sup>th</sup> century, potatoes were considered ugly and devilish in Europe because they grew underground. The work of French botanist Antoine-Augustin Parmentier has been very influential for Morillo. Parmentier's research is the origin of the popularity of potatoes today, thanks to his findings which revealed the nutritional and gastronomic advantages of potatoes, subverting negative biases about its appearance.<sup>252</sup> Morillo writes:

The potato is fundamental and it is the basis of the work, it is the core, but it is a wild card to talk about many things and make many pieces in different ways. The work has an interest around the speculations and constructions that result from the structures and processes of market economies; also, about culture and society. Some pieces have referred to historical matters, anecdotes and other events that say a lot about us and about them (or the opposite).<sup>253</sup>

**Superflux** is a UK art collective which presented their installation *Mitigation of Shock*<sup>254</sup> in 2019, which was developed under the creative direction of Anab Jain and Jon Arden. They recreated an apartment in London in 2050 to materialize a window into an adverse and inhospitable future that society was unprepared for, where food is scarce and climate change has transformed everyday life.

Once a comfortable living space designed for a world of automated living, global trade and material abundance, the apartment has been adapted to a future it was never meant to inhabit. Discarded newspapers and a radio show reflect the tensions of this new world; recipes in the kitchen reveal the change in food production, storage, and consumption (...) Towering silver stacks of mushrooms, cabbages and chilli plants flourish in an optimally lit indoor environment. (...) The growing stacks are not the only source of food.

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<sup>251</sup> Zalman, S. (2017) *Eat, Live, Work*. Tate Research Publication.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/walls-paper/eat-live-work> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>252</sup> Kanuckel, A. (2021) *The Strange History Of Potatoes And The Man Who Made Them Popular*. Farmer's Almanac Journal

<sup>253</sup> Translated from Morillo, E. (2019) Interview by David Vélez. Personal Archive.

<sup>254</sup> Superflux (2019) *Mitigation of Shock*.

Around the apartment is littered evidence of experimentation with other types of food; city foraging, trapping urban animals, growing mushrooms, breeding mealworms and canning foodstuffs. These changes in food production, acquisition, and preservation have led to the development of new recipes that seek to make the most of available food. Improvised recipes for dishes including mealworm burgers and fox stew can be found strewn around the kitchen.<sup>255</sup>

## Artists working with aroma and sound

**Oswaldo Maciá** is a Colombian artist, living between the UK and the US, who explores the correspondence between olfactory and audible stimuli. His work focuses on sampling scents and recording sounds to create multisensory sculptures like *Under the Horizon*<sup>256</sup>:

Under the Horizon is an olfactory-acoustic sculpture that creates a space for thought. My work uses the scent of smell to make people stop and think in order to raise questions in new ways. For me, the olfactory is an essential sculptural medium: what we perceive through our noses has no verbal language, it reaches straight to intuition. When we cannot reduce senses to words and over-worn platitudes, we find a new vocabulary for thinking about the world.<sup>257</sup>

## Culinary Projects Exploring Sound

In March 2018, the **Nihonbashi Sakura Festival** in Japan exhibited a virtual experience where people were invited to listen to the sounds involved in the preparation of tempura at a multisensory digital counter.<sup>258</sup> The appeal of the sounds of tempura cooking is a very important aspect in specialized restaurants in Japan where they play no ambient sounds with the clear purpose of focusing connoisseurs' attention on the sounds of tempura preparation.

One of the most widely recognized examples of artistic work with food and sound is the 2016 collaboration between filmmakers **Yuri Ancarani** and **Mirco Mencacci**, the New York Times and chef **Massimo Bottura** from the famous cutting-edge restaurant Osteria Francescana. In this collaborative and interdisciplinary project, Bottura prepared his mother's recipe for lasagne (his favourite meal as a child) in an anechoic chamber using eight shotgun microphones and a set of

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<sup>255</sup> Superflux website. <https://superflux.in/index.php/work/mitigation-of-shock/#> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>256</sup> Maciá, O. (2011-19) *Under the Horizon*.

<sup>257</sup> Oswaldo Maciá website. <https://www.oswaldomacia.com/under-the-horizon> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>258</sup> Nihonbashi Sakura Festival YouTube page. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rillBRp4Kk> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)



binaural microphones, a project that was documented on a video that drew a lot of attention and interest worldwide.<sup>259</sup> This project was supervised by Professor Roberto Tovo, the director of the Engineering Department of the University of Padova, and Francesco Pompoli, engineer from the Università degli studi di Ferrara with emphasis on acoustic research.

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<sup>259</sup> Ancarani, Y. (2016) *Massimo Botura*. The New York Times Style Magazine. <https://goo.gl/HE4DK6> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

## Chapter 2. The Preparation of Collaborative Culinary Sound Art (CCSA)

The idea of resistance presented in the Introduction of this thesis, in connection with the theories of Giles Deleuze, Joseph Beuys, Brandon LaBelle and Jane Bennett, is the conceptual vector with which CCSA seeks to actively engage. For me, this is a resistance that operates in alliance with the materiality of food as was examined in the work of Sabor Clandestino in Bolivia, Fatima Kadumy in Palestine, and María Buenaventura in Colombia, and will be presented in my collaboration with Elena Villamil in my hometown, Bogotá.

In this chapter, I will navigate the circumstances and considerations that lead to the conception and preparation of my notion of Collaborative Culinary Sound Art (CCSA).

The origins of the CCSA can be traced to my move from Colombia to the north of England to conduct my research on food and sound at the University of Huddersfield. I arrived in the UK during the harsh winter of 2017/18 and the effects of capsaicin, found in peppers, helped me deal with my Seasonal Affective Disorder, which was a product of the grim weather and reduced daylight. Chili peppers are ingredients that arrived from Central and South America, and they present a pleasurable numbing sensation that responds to the burning pain inflicted. Capsaicin has been used as pain medicine since pre-Columbian times in Mexico, and its effects in spicy food provided me with the heat and radiance that I was so missing.

My yearning for capsaicin, my interest in the sizzle of cooking sounds and the fragile territorialities that I was embracing as a foreigner escorted my ear and microphone to the kitchens of immigrant cooks like Lag from Thailand, Cyaching Wu from Taiwan, Sister Sandra from Jamaica and Lina Velandia, my wife, from Colombia. With them, we shared experiences and ideas that transformed the forbidding weather into resonant and joyful scenarios. Here, uprootedness and estrangement created a bond around the cooking hearth, in which food was an active element connecting our experiences. Later, my interest in these foreign dishes led my ears and microphones to marketplaces and small immigrant shops where a universe of sound offered itself up to me.

In CCSA three categories of food sounds are considered:

- 1) Cooking sounds
- 2) Open market shouting and murmuring sounds

- 3) Kitchen conversations
- 4) Sine tones

This categorisation allows me to focus on different aspects of the material of my work.

In CCSA, cooking sounds are produced by the different techniques of food preparations that include slicing, chopping, boiling, frying, grilling, stirring and straining. I work with these sounds by setting up kitchens in venues that decontextualize them, and by inviting spectators into kitchens to listen to the food being prepared there. These sounds are amplified with the help of unidirectional and condenser mics, and piezo electric devices. In these concerts, cooking sounds resonate in correspondence with the aromas of food, hence the importance of multisensory considerations in CCSA concerts. I also record cooking sounds to present them as documentation of my research, and to compose pieces published on physical and digital formats where the equivalence with smell is explored in other formats.

Open market shouting and murmuring sounds became a chief interest in my work after a visit to the Ballaro food market in Palermo, Italy, in 2018. Sicily has always been a migration centre bonding vital commercial routes from Europe and Africa with the rest of the world. In my visit to Ballaro, I had the opportunity to experience its polyculturality in the languages and accents that abound, and in the diversity of ingredients, dishes, flavours, and wafting aromas. The sounds of marketplaces have been studied in texts like *Los Sonidos que Resisten*<sup>260</sup> (The Sounds That Resist), penned by Colombian psychologist Camilo Andrés Moreno, and in *A Market of Sounds: Exchanging Ideas Between Sound Art and Ethnography*<sup>261</sup> by Greek historian and ethnologist Georgios Mouratidis. The authors put the spotlight on the aesthetic richness and cultural relevance of these sounds. Market shouting is considered today acoustically polluting and unsanitary.<sup>262</sup> Therefore, my work seeks to resignify it in a new context. In CCSA, market shouting is presented in multisensory cooking performances in collaboration with traders who act as performers of the concerts. My collaboration with them also moves into public space performances in which their competitive shouting is set alongside field recordings. I record their shouting as material to create compositions and installations and present them as audio notes and documentation of my research.

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<sup>260</sup> Moreno Hernández, C.A. (2011) *Los Sonidos que Resisten*. IDPC. [https://issuu.com/patrimoniobogota/docs/los\\_sonidos\\_que\\_resisten\\_fondo](https://issuu.com/patrimoniobogota/docs/los_sonidos_que_resisten_fondo) (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>261</sup> Mouratidis, G. (2017) *A Market of Sounds: Exchanging Ideas Between Sound Art and Ethnography*. Medium.

<sup>262</sup> Moore, B. (2021) *Covid: UK town crier championships to be held in silence*. BBC News <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-56766202> (Last visited June 22nd 2021)

Kitchen conversations are sounds that I gather as documentation and material in the CCSA pieces. These stories resonate in the cuisines of cooks who have experienced different forms of migration and territorial dislocations, and whose voices are sampled.

Sine tones are sounds that emerge as material in this project, initially because of the interesting material contrast that they present with cooking sounds. Their simplicity and homogeneity bring out the complex textures of cooking sounds creating interesting correspondences that I examine in my work. Sine waves are also approached in this research because of their capacity to stimulate the growth of vegetables based on scientific studies.

To help understand the scope of this practice in cooking concerts, I created a small manifesto that was developed as my research progressed, with the following set of basic conditions:

### **The CCSA Manifesto for cooking performances**

- Food is prepared and the sounds and aromas of these preparations must be perceivable by the audience
- The dish is selected in a joint effort with the collaborative artists in a process for its origins and ingredients to operate as artistic considerations
- Food is served to eat
- The cooking sounds are amplified and equalized so they can operate as the core of the performance. Sine waves, in their simplicity, and other field recordings can be used to present elements of contrast towards the live amplified food preparation sounds
- The audience should be blindfolded so they can be immersed in an acousmatic olfactory and acoustic experience
- The aromas operate as cues for performing with the intensities of the live cooking sounds and other interpreted sounds
- Marketplace sounds are presented in the performance either by collaborating with traders, who shout live, or by performing with field recordings in open markets. These sounds suggest the idea that food has a pathway in which geographies and social assemblages are constructed and embodied in the dish\*

\*This only applies for pieces presented after 2019, when I began to collaborate with shouting market traders.

For these performances, I work with a hardware mixer to control the microphone intensity, focusing on the hobs and chopping boards. In many cases, the aroma of food preparation operates in my performance as sensorial cues that I join with my interpretation with the mixer. As another aspect of my performances, in Ableton Live I load up to 70-80 individual audio files of recorded cooking sounds, sine waves and other audio files. These sounds can consist of a single sine wave or recording, or they can be the result of complex assemblages of multiple sources previously created in Logic or Audacity. These structures involve extensive compositional work, with significant editing and where I modify the pitch and speed of sounds to produce low end vibration, detailed textures and intricate patterns. Furthermore, some of these sounds are the result of applying subtle noise and reverberation filters. Once these sounds are loaded in Ableton, they are ready to be triggered and modified in real time with pitch and speed change, and with distortion filters.

For field recording compositions and installations, this manifesto applies in modified ways in consideration of the specificities of their format. However, the idea to invite the listeners to cook in their house by including recipes in CD booklets and other forms of instructions provides interesting possibilities, as will be explored in the portfolio of pieces.

## Chapter 3. Portfolio of Works

In this chapter I will present a group of projects and pieces created and developed between 2018 and 2021 within my Collaborative Culinary Sound Art practice. I have divided them into four categories: Multiplatform, Multisensory Cooking Performances; Audio publications and Acousmatic Installations; Street Food Market Performances; Hortiacoustic Projects and Workshops. In CCSA the curators, collaborators, material and contingency of each project have agency in the creative process and the output format of each project. These outputs navigate between sound publications (compositions and recordings), installations and performances. To present my work in this portfolio, I created five categories that help to present the particular considerations of each project:

**Multiplatform** is a format consideration specific to *Turmeric*, a project that resulted from a performance that couldn't be presented for public health reasons. It comprises one composition, one raw field recording and two printed food recipes. The text incorporates cooking in the experience of the listener stimulating olfactory and gustatory stimuli.

**Multisensory Collaborative Cooking Performances** comprise the most common output in CCSA projects. Live cooking is the central element, and the experience is acousmatic and multisensorial. This format brings to the sound art performance format the lively and organic performing possibility of cooking while considering edible material in its presentation.

**Audio publications** and **Acousmatic Installations** are formats in which the artistic outputs are presented as reduced sound objects projected in exhibition sites or as compositions issued as playable media like CDs, cassettes, and digital publications. Here the listener has partial or no contact with olfactory, tactile and gustatory stimuli.

**Street Food Market Performances** is an original CCSA format in which I collaborate with food traders who use their shouting for artistic purposes and where I perform with field recordings.

**Hortiacoustics** is another original CCSA format that considers the collaboration with edible vegetables in its creative process and output. Here, acoustic studies in agriculture-related fields are engaged to stimulate the growth of the vegetables involved. This format surged when I created *One Last Perfect Day*.

### 3.1 Turmeric

Initially, it is important to emphasise that before listening to this work, the recommendation is to cook and/or eat Tikka Masala or any Asian, Caribbean, or mixed curry preparation that preferably includes turmeric in the recipe as well. It is favourable that the aromas and flavours of these preparations act as initial contact with these eight pieces, to create a radiant and empathic context where their sounds can fully act. Furthermore, the residual aromas of these preparations will create the multisensory conditions required for a poetic and significant experience.

*Turmeric* is a multiplatform sound art project that examines the sounds, aromas, and flavours of the preparation of Tikka Masala and the political intricacy and complexity that surrounds its origins and great popularity in the UK. *Turmeric* is chronologically the last project devised as part of the CCSA practice. The experience and research product of the first three years of work helped to give it form. This is a project permeated by contingency where external circumstances influenced its initial development.

CCSA was implemented as projects presented in Colombia and Chile, but the field work in the UK was the most significant in terms of understanding its scope and contribution. Here, as a foreigner, I experienced the feeling of being uprooted and the importance of food in these processes, which later connected me with stories of resistance against discrimination and displacement.

#### The initial contact

Culinary uprooting can be a common experience for many immigrants and foreigners who struggle to find the ingredients of their hometown dishes. This is severely aggravated when they are victims of racism and discrimination by neighbours and landlords because of the smell of their concoctions, as occurred in the UK in the 1950s when Asian and Caribbean immigrants finally had partial access to some of their native spices.<sup>263</sup> Today, manifestations of racism and discrimination towards immigrant culinary culture persist. The most recent case occurred just a

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<sup>263</sup> Desai, R. (1963) *Indian Immigrants in Britain*. Oxford University Press.

few years ago when real estate mogul Fergus Wilson was found at fault for banning immigrants from letting and buying housing.<sup>264</sup>

The sensorial paradox that emerges around the scents and flavours of immigrant food in the UK refers to how food can operate as a critical device that overturns the structures of society and shows important clues for desired worlds of equity and inclusion. Alterity, here works as the possibility to overthrow our biases.

Dr. Kalim Siddiqui is an economist and researcher who studies the effects of colonial models in global inequality, and who has collaborated extensively with my artistic research. On one occasion, he mentioned stories from the 1950s and 1960s in which racism against the scents of immigrant homes and restaurant kitchens escalated into sheer violence and vandalism, putting these communities in conditions of great vulnerability.<sup>265</sup> This is a matter studied by Elizabeth Buettner in her essay “*Going for an Indian*”,<sup>266</sup> and by Benjamin Bowling in his text “*The Emergence of Violent Racism as a Public Issue in Britain 1945-81*”, included in the book *Racial Violence in Britain*<sup>267</sup> from 1993.

In *Asian Voices: First Generation Migrants*, authored by environmental researcher Nafhesa Ali, I learned that, between the 1950-70s, immigrant cooks and families offered food to their British neighbours as a kind and generous response to their negative biases associated with the aroma of their cooking.

At the time, it was also a new experience for English people with the Asians coming in and if they felt a curry being made next door they thought ‘Oh it smells’. But eventually if you have English neighbours we would say ‘Would you have some as well?’<sup>268</sup>

For Siddiqui<sup>269</sup>, these and other nourishing, affectionate, generous, and peaceful reactions to discrimination, and in some cases to violence, have been quite significant in the development of more diverse and inclusive communities in Britain. This is when I understood resistance as a possibility that permeates society with empathy and solidarity in which biases and prejudgements can be subverted by the friendliness and generosity in which resistance operates. To renounce and

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<sup>264</sup> Landlord’s ‘curry smell’ letting ban unlawful (2017) BBC News. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-41915889> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>265</sup> Siddiqui, K. (2020) Notes from meeting by David Vélez. Personal Archive.

<sup>266</sup> Buettner, E. (2008) *Going for an Indian*. The Journal of Modern History, Vol. 80, No. 4, A Special Issue on Metropole and Colony. The University of Chicago Press. (page 865)

<sup>267</sup> Panayi, P. (1993) *Racial Violence in Britain*. Leicester University Press.

<sup>268</sup> Ali, N. (2011) *Asian Voices: First Generation Migrants*. University of Huddersfield.

<sup>269</sup> Siddiqui, K. (2020) Notes from meeting by David Vélez. Personal Archive.



desist from the mechanisms of oppression is one of the biggest strengths of contemporary political resistance, as was discussed in connection with Brandon LaBelle's theories in the Research context of this thesis.

Working with Kalim Siddiqui allowed me to acknowledge the scope and possibility of *Turmeric* as a project that approaches immigrant recipes in the UK as actant material, which, in alliance with the diaspora, exercises resistance and contests violence with joy and warmth. These recipes have resisted cultural, economic, and environmental changes, mutating and expanding for thousands of years.

### **Contingency**

*Turmeric* was originally conceived as a concert to be presented in May of 2020 in Huddersfield, but because of the public health crisis of 2020/21, it became a sound art piece consisting of an album comprising eight pieces, one unprocessed field recording and lastly, a very important element, Ruchi's Chicken and Paneer Tikka Masala recipes. They will be included in the CD booklet aiming to work as a sound art action to be interpreted by the listeners in their kitchen.

*Turmeric* was composed and produced during the first months of the UK lockdown in conditions of uncertainty and isolation which had significant agency in the process of its creation. Contingency permeated the creative process of this project, which was reflected in aspects like the impossibility of working as planned with Jamaican cook Sister Sandra, who had to close her Huddersfield restaurant as an immediate consequence of the lockdown. Also, working remotely with the artists presented unplanned circumstances that I will elaborate on later.

### **Composition notes**

My work on *Turmeric* comprised five different stages:

- The selection of the dish to be prepared and recorded
- The selection of the collaborators
- The recording of the Tikka Masala preparation by Ruchi Singh

- The preparation and selection of fragments of the cooking recordings that were sent to the performers as cues for improvisation
- The recording of the improvised sessions
- The studio composition working with cooking and improvised musical recordings

## Tikka Masala

Despite the frequent condemnation of the aromas of the preparation of immigrant recipes in the UK, Tikka Masala is today one of the major food exports of the country and was voted as the most popular dish in the UK in a 2011 survey.<sup>270</sup> This brought further discussion to the controversy sparked in 2009 when British politician Mohammad Sarwar requested Protected Designation of Origin for the Scottish authorship of Tikka Masala.<sup>271</sup>

The basis of the preparation of Tikka Masala dates back to the Mughal Empire in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in South Asia when turmeric was so rare and valuable that groups of merchants, permitted by the British Empire, travelled to South Asian territory to trade it and other valued spices.<sup>272</sup> This venture led to the formation of the East India Company, which later flourished into a military British enterprise operating in Asia, which thenceforth has been denounced for its role in the imposition of colonizing British policies in India.<sup>273</sup>

The partiality towards Tikka Masala and other immigrant recipes in the UK now, such as Jamaican Jerk Chicken and Kebab, is a reminder of the resistance by immigrant communities against discrimination and how this struggle has helped Britain dream about equalitarian, inclusive and solidary societies, as was suggested by Kalim Siddiqui.<sup>274</sup>

The popularity of spicy immigrant food in the UK is embedded in ancestral cooking techniques developed in Asia and America that combine medicinal technologies and ceremonial practices.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Ziggeras, D. (2012) *Chicken Tikka Masala' voted UK's most popular dish*. Poultry World.

<https://www.poultryworld.net/Broilers/Markets--Trade/2011/6/Chicken-Tikka-Masala-voted-UKs-most-popular-dish-WP009041W/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>271</sup> Glasgow Chicken Tikka Masala (UK Parliament Early day motion) 16 July 2009.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/39136/glasgow-chicken-tikka-masala> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>272</sup> Dsouza Prabhu, R. (2021) *How the colonisation of India influenced global food*. Aljazeera website.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/4/1/how-the-colonisation-of-india-influenced-global-food> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>273</sup> Dalrymple, W. (2015) *The East India Company: The original corporate raiders*. The Guardian.

<sup>274</sup> Siddiqui, K. (2020) Notes from meeting by David Vélez. Personal Archive.

<sup>275</sup> Cornell Chronicle. *Food bacteria-spice survey shows why some cultures like it hot*. <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/1998/03/food-bacteria-spice-survey-shows-why-some-cultures-it-hot> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

These technologies were brought to Britain in the form of turmeric, pepper and other spices which were originally used to prevent pathogens in the form of food-attacking bacteria such as *staphylococcus*, *clostridium*, *escherichia*, *listeria*, *salmonella*, *shigella* and *vibrio*, 3,000 years ago. In *Turmeric*, the story behind Tikka Masala showcases the complex and intricate paths that food creates as an actant vector connecting bodies, communities, and cultures.

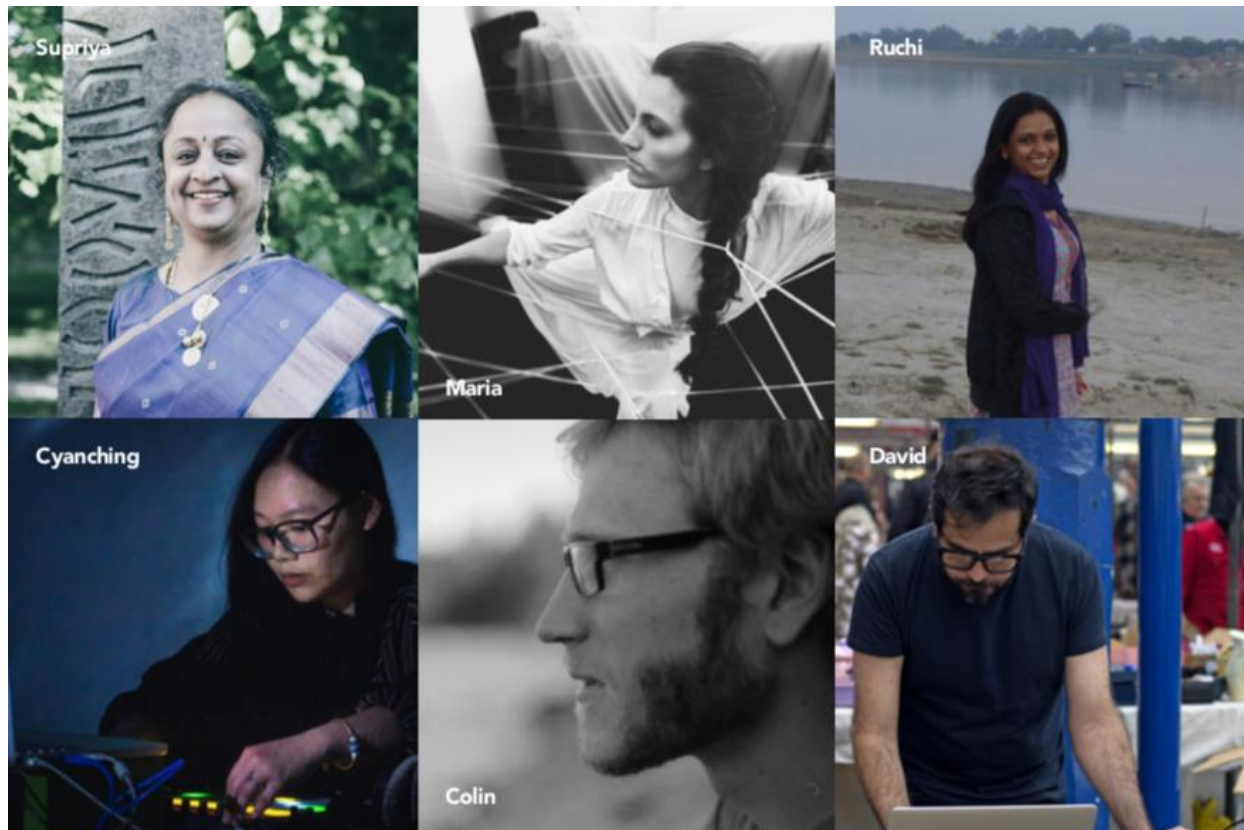


Figure 4: Six of Turmeric collaborators

The group of collaborators (Figure 4) is composed of artists who share an interest in the food-sound-music relation. I began to meet with them during my field work in the UK, and I had previously worked with most of them on projects involving food and sound. To propitiate a collaborative scenario with them, in *Turmeric*, cooking sounds were presented to them as poetical cartographies that suggested sonic intensities, ideas, emotions, textures, rhythms, voices, aromas, flavours and memories. They were invited to inhabit them with their listening and explore their musical possibility. The discussion that had been inspired by the origin of Tikka Masala in the UK over the past twenty years enveloped this dish in paradoxes and political complexity, which I invited the collaborators to explore as well.

Supriya Nagarajan is a classically trained Indian Carnatic singer and sound artist, currently living in Dewsbury, who shares an interest in the connection between food and sound. Maria Sappho is an improviser and Colin Frank is a percussionist with whom we did an unrecorded experiment with the effects of capsaicin in August of 2019. Cyanching Wu is an artist working with electronic music and field recordings who I met when she studied in Huddersfield and we became friends and collaborators. Before *Turmeric*, I worked with Cyanching on other CCSA projects that will be presented later in this chapter. Ruchi Singh is an international student from India who is doing her PhD in economics at the University of Huddersfield and with whom I met working together in the university library. We engaged in interesting conversations about the importance of food, in relation to uprooting and the foul winter weather. We also discussed the impact of colonialism in our countries of origin, which was another reason why she became a perfect collaborator. Ruchi is a proud cook who follows the ancestral recipes that she learned from her mother, and she accepted an invitation to join this project and present her version of Tikka Masala and the sounds she makes in the process.

Another collaborator in *Turmeric* is Sister Sandra, an artist from Jamaica who allowed me to make a recording in her restaurant kitchen and who kindly shared stories about Caribbean immigrants and their process of adaptation. Joe Hopkinson is an historian and researcher from Huddersfield who helped me with my research through a series of interviews and who also did a brief narration in one of the pieces. Finally, Joanne Mansley, David, and the traders of Dalston food street kiosks are part of *Turmeric* with their shouting, which I recorded. Economist and researcher Dr. Kalim Siddiqui, who I mentioned before, helped the project with his research on migration and colonialism.

### **The recording of Tikka Masala**

The recording of Tikka Masala, cooked by Ruchi (Figure 5), was made on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, in Huddersfield, only a couple of weeks before the first lockdown was ordered in the UK. I used one unidirectional microphone and two cardioids seeking detail and textures. After the recording session, Ruchi, my wife Lina, and I sat down and blissfully savoured the dish with rice and naan while also being aware that, in the near future, meeting was neither going to be this easy nor frequent. By listening and recording Ruchi's preparation of Tikka Masala—tasting its richness and detail—I propitiate poetic conditions where complex textures and patterns connect, in my perception, with the social and geographical intricacies contained in this dish.



**Figure 5:** The cooking of Tikka Masala by Ruchi Singh.

### **The cues for the improvisers**

At this stage, I initially considered a structure composed of six pieces in reference to the different steps of Ruchi's Tikka Masala arrangement, which are: chopping and slicing vegetables and chicken, marinating the chicken in the refrigerator for an entire day, cutting the ingredients for the Tikka, frying the chicken, fixing the Masala sauce and cooking the chicken in the sauce. Although the original structure of the album changed, this configuration helped to prepare the material that I sent to the artists and that they later used as guides for improvisation.

The improvised sessions were recorded during the spring of 2020, combining in-person and remote work. In the case of Colin and Maria (Figure 6), I was able to capture their performance in their house in Huddersfield during the last weekend before lockdown. Supriya recorded her sessions in her house in Dewsbury with a directional microphone connected to her cell phone while Cyanching recorded her cello parts in her Perth house in Scotland with a portable digital recorder.



Figure 6: Colin and Maria's recording session in Lindley

### The studio composition

In addition to the cooking and improvised musical recordings mentioned earlier, I also worked with other recordings that had been made and collected during my first three years in Huddersfield. These recordings include sounds of shouting food traders, which were captured between 2019 and 2020. Other recordings that are part of this album include fragments of conversations between Ruchi and me, and between Sister Sandra and me in the kitchen of her Caribbean restaurant in Huddersfield. These kitchen conversations provide a special element in this composition, creating a space of warmth and intimacy that transports the listener to India and Jamaica where some of Ruchi and Sandra's stories occurred. Lastly, I worked with a series of recordings of mill factories in Huddersfield to create elements of abrasiveness and rhythmic relentlessness which point back to the 1960s when many immigrants came to work in English factories, in discriminatory and detrimental conditions.<sup>276</sup> My only performance in this album can be heard in *Rationing* when I chopped the ingredients to marinate the Tikka Masala.

To understand my work as a composer in *Turmeric*, I establish a metaphor with the different cooking techniques in which I chop and dice some ingredients down to small bits but leaving other ingredients in one piece, and in which some ingredients are cooked for an extended period of time while others are served raw. Some sounds here were left unedited and unprocessed, while others

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<sup>276</sup> Desai, R. (1963) *Indian Immigrants in Britain*. Oxford University Press. (page 85)

were sampled and sequenced into bits. In the composition of these eight pieces, I pursued reflecting the organic intricacy and complex materiality of the cooking sounds in my process where editing sounds are approached as a process of sculpting sonic material. Some of the cooking, percussion, piano and machine sounds, for instance, were sampled and sequenced to create patterns that followed Ruchi's slicing sounds. This is evidenced in the piece *Equatorial Latitudes* which juxtaposes minimal samplers with Ruchi's cooking and Colin's and Maria's performance. Supriya's singing performances were left unedited while they were also looped to create harmonic structures in synergy with her singing and other elements. This can be heard in the pieces *Factories*, *Uproot* and *Cooking Heat*. Cyanching's cello riffs were sequenced to create dramatic and ethereal structures in *Factories* where her performance created compelling harmonic structures with Supriya's singing. The frying sounds of Ruchi's cooking were also sampled to evoke rain as an element suggesting struggle and adversity. This can be appreciated in the pieces *Factories* and *Grim*. The recordings of market shouters were left untreated, and they operate as an element that puts the album in the context of the public in Britain where these recordings were made.

*Turmeric* consists of eight pieces that navigate between Sound Art, Experimental Music, Traditional Indian Music, Contemporary Improvisation, Field Recordings and Ambient Music. The unprocessed and unedited recording of Ruchi's Tikka Masala will also be presented as part of this project, together with the album and her Tikka Masala and Paneer Tikka Masala recipes.

On *Turmeric* I aimed to work as an agitator and catalyser of the many stories, sounds and experiences of resistance that are conveyed in this project. I wanted the vibrance and radiance of immigrant kitchens in the UK to connect the listeners in their houses and kitchens with the resistance of immigrants that face uprooting, displacement, discrimination, and racism. I invite the listener to celebrate the contribution of this resistance to help Britain in its quest for a more inclusive and solidary society.

The role of aroma in the production of *Turmeric* was not fully developed. Although the artists were familiar with the smell of curry from previous experiences, which included an experiment with capsaicin with Colin and Maria, this sensorial correlation could have been explored further to guide their performances. Also, the cooker hood of the kitchen where the Tikka Masala recording was made activates automatically so the clatter is audible in the background.

## **Methodological considerations**

Ruchi's cooking sounds were recorded with a Sennheiser MKA 600 shotgun mic connected to a Nikon D600, and a Sony PCM D-50 and its built-in cardioid microphones. This recording setup provides detail and captures the environmental sounds as separate channels. Supriya's singing was recorded with a Samsung Mobile Phone and a Rode Me-C microphone. At this point, it was impossible to access other means of recording and the limitations of the quality of the Supriya recordings were overcome by duplicating the vocal track in two channels adding a subtle reverb in the second one. The performance of Colin and Maria was recorded using two Earth-works Audio SR-25 MP condenser microphones and a Sound Devices CL-8 recorder. Ching recorded her cello part with a Zoom H2N. Sister Sandra's recordings were made with a Samsung Mobile Phone and Joe's voice was recorded on a laptop because of the impossibility of using other means. Other environmental recordings were made with a Zoom H4. The coexistence of different technologies awards interesting material qualities to this work. The sounds were edited in Logic using particular EQ decisions in each recording, pursuing overall contrast, detail and immersion. To master the final output, I worked with Logic using a compression release of 3.82 milliseconds and lookahead of 2.9 milliseconds. I used two Genelec 8030C active speakers and a set of Sennheiser JD 555 headphones to monitor the final output.

### **3.2 *Ecós de la Chicha* (Echoes of *Chicha*)**

*Ecós de la Chicha* started as an invitation to participate in the 45th National Artists Salon in Colombia, one of the biggest art events in Latin America that year. Curator Ana María Ruiz Valencia commissioned me to work with food, cultural impositions and territorial dislocations, which allowed me to revisit stories that I always found significant.

#### ***Chicha* (the food)**

*Chicha* is a fermented drink of ancestral origins, made with maize (Figure 7), which has different variations throughout Latin America. In 1948, the Colombian government banned *Chicha* under the lobby and pressure of banker Julio Mario Santo Domingo and his brewing company Bavaria.



As part of this campaign against *Chicha*, the government released a racist and classist advertisement campaign which attacked citizens from rural and unprivileged areas, and from indigenous descent.



**Figure 7:** Vélez, D. et al. (2019) *Ecos de la Chicha*. Photo: Radio Criolla

In Colombia, *Chicha* is considered a cultural and aesthetic element of resistance and identity as is presented in *Consecuencias sociales de la prohibición de la Chicha en algunas localidades de Bogotá en la segunda mitad del siglo XX* (Social consequences of the prohibition of *Chicha* in some localities of Bogotá in the second half of the 20th century) by Diego Alejandro León Martínez.<sup>277</sup> The resistance of *Chicha* connects with ancestral indigenous knowledge and with the contention against colonial Spanish forces and hegemonic and detrimental economic practices that have affected underprivileged communities.<sup>278</sup> Furthermore, maize, like its derivative, *Chicha*, is a symbol of resistance not only because of its organic resiliency against climate conditions and insects,<sup>279</sup> but also because it relates to an element of cultural resistance in historical political process<sup>280</sup> like the Mexican revolution or the fight against transgenic crops across the continent as is noted in the research of excellent contemporary researchers like Gilberto Giménez, Jorge A. Gonzáles and Catherine Héau.

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<sup>277</sup> Martínez, D.A.L. (2020) *Consecuencias sociales de la prohibición de la chicha en algunas localidades de Bogotá en la segunda mitad del siglo XX*. Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. <http://repository.pedagogica.edu.co/bitstream/handle/20.500.12209/12173/Tesis%20Entrega%20Final%20revisada.pdf> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>278</sup> Zapata, O. (2016) *Chicha: una tradición de resistencia*. Mi Putumayo Newspaper <https://miputumayo.com.co/2016/09/03/chicha-una-tradicion-de-resistencia/> (Last visited June 15th 2021)

<sup>279</sup> Tarté, R (1989) *Investigación, enseñanza y desarrollo agropecuario*. CATIE.

<sup>280</sup> Difusión Digital (2017) *Maíz: símbolo de la resistencia subalterna a través del tiempo*. Resonancias.



**Figure 8:** Elena Villamil. Photo: Radio Criolla

To explore this account, I travelled to Colombia to listen to and record the preparation of *Chicha*, which is how I met Elena Villamil (Figure 8), a self-taught cook, brewer, artist and horticulturist known for her delectable recipe. With her, we planned one workshop of sound art and *Chicha* brewing, and one cooking performance with sounds of dishes that use this beverage in their preparation. We decided to host the activities in her horticultural garden (Figure 9), where she also lives and runs agricultural and culinary workshops, and other interdisciplinary projects around food. It is located in an urban area where *Chicha* has always been popular, particularly during the prohibition when it was brewed and sold here clandestinely until the ban was lifted in 1991.

An aspect that is key in the CCSA practice is its permeability to the environment and to the subjectivities of the artists and other actant elements that collaborate where incidental, contingent, peripheral, and marginal occurrences are welcome. Brewing and tasting with Elena for four days of workshop, while carefully listening to every process and discussing *Chicha*, food, sound, and politics, draw the focus of the project towards her, her garden and the resistance that she exercises against gentrification.



**Figure 9:** Elena's horticultural garden. Photo courtesy of Elena Villamil and Organismo Ideológico

As can be observed in Figure 10, Elena's garden is located in an area that is becoming predominantly financial where banks and other institutions are constructing tall corporate buildings. This has not only cornered Elena and her garden, but the insensitive construction practices of these companies are detrimental to her house, the structure of which is in a dire position. Furthermore, architecture firms are seeking to develop projects in the area, offering her and other tenants purchase of their properties, creating divisions in the community which is characteristic in this process of gentrification as singled out by Juliet Kahne in her article "*Does Placemaking Cause Gentrification?*"<sup>281</sup> My enquiry into *Chicha* brewing and recording the sounds of its preparation connected me to Elena's story of resistance and her self-sustainable ecological and agricultural project, which evidenced other aspects of the politics of food. Horticulture empowers individuals and communities by allowing them to gain autonomy and control over their diet. The ideas of Jane Bennett presented in *Edible Matter*<sup>282</sup> resonate in Elena's garden where food, in its most incipient form, is cultivated close to the kitchen and the dining table, similar to what happens with Slow Food. This is food that reaches the dining plate minimizing unwanted mediation from public regulations and private interests where it grows in synergy with the body that it will nourish. This is food cultivated in the special relation that Elena has established with soil and vegetables, which has made her such an influential figure in the development of horticulture and food art in Bogotá, where her expertise in agriculture and cooking is sought after by artists, biologists, anthropologists, filmmakers, philosophers, chefs, engineers, and individuals from all contexts. Furthermore, her experience growing vegetables and fruits of all kinds has had effects on the spiritual aspects of her life as she mentioned in one of our recorded conversations.<sup>283</sup> For her, working with agriculture has created a different relation with death, where acceptance has replaced

<sup>281</sup> Kahne, J. (2015) *Does Placemaking Cause Gentrification?* PPS <https://www.pps.org/article/gentrification> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>282</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press.

<sup>283</sup> Villamil, E. (2019) Interview by David Vélez. Personal Archive.

fear, because for her, after growing vegetables and fruits for over 20 years, it is evident that death is a fundamental condition for life and vice versa.



Figure 10: The view from Elena's horticultural garden. Photo courtesy of Juan Rojas Vargas.

### The sounds of brewing *Chicha* as recorded during the workshop

The workshop invited a group of artists and anthropologist to brew *Chicha* following Elena's instructions and to record the sounds of its preparation, which we all did. In the next paragraph, I will write about the sounds that I collected during its preparation, which were published as *Preparando Chicha* (Brewing *Chicha*).<sup>284</sup>

Elena's *Chicha* recipe is rooted in a 2,500-year-old tradition, where her provision is brewed on ceramic jars, just like the indigenous Muisca community did in pre-Columbian times.<sup>285</sup> To prepare

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<sup>284</sup> Vélez, D. (2021) *Preparando Chicha*.

<sup>285</sup> Gómez-Montañez, P.F. (2013) *Sacralidad, tormento y rescate: la vida social de la chicha muisca*. Universidad Santo Tomás.

it, the same utensils that were used more than 70 years ago are enlisted and because of this, health regulations are threatening her possibility to continue offering this recipe—which we had the privilege of learning about and experiencing in the workshop. We shelled the corn, ground it, and strained it to squeeze the last drop of juice out. Elena’s garden and kitchen achieve zero waste, maximizing everything. The grinding was done with a mincer and we also used stones, following the original pre-Columbian recipe.

These sounds, together with the preparation which propels them, have resisted and prevailed over economic and technological changes. The recordings were captured with a shotgun microphone to focus on the specific brewing sounds, isolating the noise pollution that surround this garden, which gives these sounds a quiet context as if they were not happening in the crowded, buzzing streets of Bogotá. In these sounds isolated from their context, I can hear certain rurality which I connect with the materiality of these processes. The physical rigor of Elena’s manual preparation of *Chicha* involves lengthy techniques, taking into account that grinding and straining alone can take up to three hours, while the overall brewing procedure can take several days. The duration and material qualities of sounds present a special sensibility to me which evokes the countryside of the 1970s and 1980s, where I grew up, when the sounds of mincers and stones in kitchens resonated. However, as much as they can connect with the past, they might as well act as forecasts of a future in which the influence of ancestral knowledge in horticulture and self-sustainability will lead to projects like Elena’s garden.

The agency of ancestral practices in today’s horticultural developments is a subject of study by researchers like Laura Rival or Elsa Milena Cabrera Tejada<sup>286</sup> who studied the *chagra* agricultural process used by indigenous communities in the Amazon.

The *chagra* agroecosystem is an intrinsic good in itself. The biophysical and the sociocultural coexist in a dynamic and dialectical harmony. Each component of the *chagra* recreates each other in a time and in a space that depends on the respective worldview of each Amazonian indigenous people. It provides environmental and cultural services, offers food and spiritual security, is a gene bank sustained on a solid base of traditional concomitants of domesticated, semi-domesticated and native species. It is a laboratory for experimentation and genetic improvement transmitted from generation to generation.<sup>287</sup>

The rurality of these sounds and the length and physical meticulousness of these processes revealed sounds to me that I present as paths to possible worlds where more ecological and less polluting means of food production and preparation can make human life sustainable, worlds in

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<sup>286</sup> Cabrera Tejada, E.M. (2015) *El agroecosistema chagra entre los indígenas en la Amazonía*. Universidad de Caldas.

<sup>287</sup> Translated from Cabrera Tejada, E.M. (2015) *El agroecosistema chagra entre los indígenas en la Amazonía*. Universidad de Caldas. (page 2)

which our food habits can dramatically change, where we might be more involved in terms of space, time and work in the production and preparation of our own food, which connects with what Jane Bennett expressed in connection with Slow Food. Here ancestral and indigenous knowledge, as Elsa Milena Cabrera Tejada points out, can provide important clues on how to materialize these desired scenarios. By presenting these unedited and unprocessed sounds, I am suggesting what those worlds might sound like.

In one of our conversations, Elena mentioned her respect for ancestral methods of agriculture but was critical of the inflexibility of some of its findings.<sup>288</sup> Her garden is a means for her to experiment and revise the theories and methodologies that she follows, where intuition and personal experience with the plants are vital.

### The performance

After the workshop, I worked with Elena and María Buenaventura, in a cooking performance in which they prepared dishes that use *Chicha* as an ingredient. The interpreters also included Yudy Esmeralda Ramirez, a sound artist who works with her voice and studies indigenous Colombian music. The group of collaborators was completed by a group of 10 cooks (Figure 11).



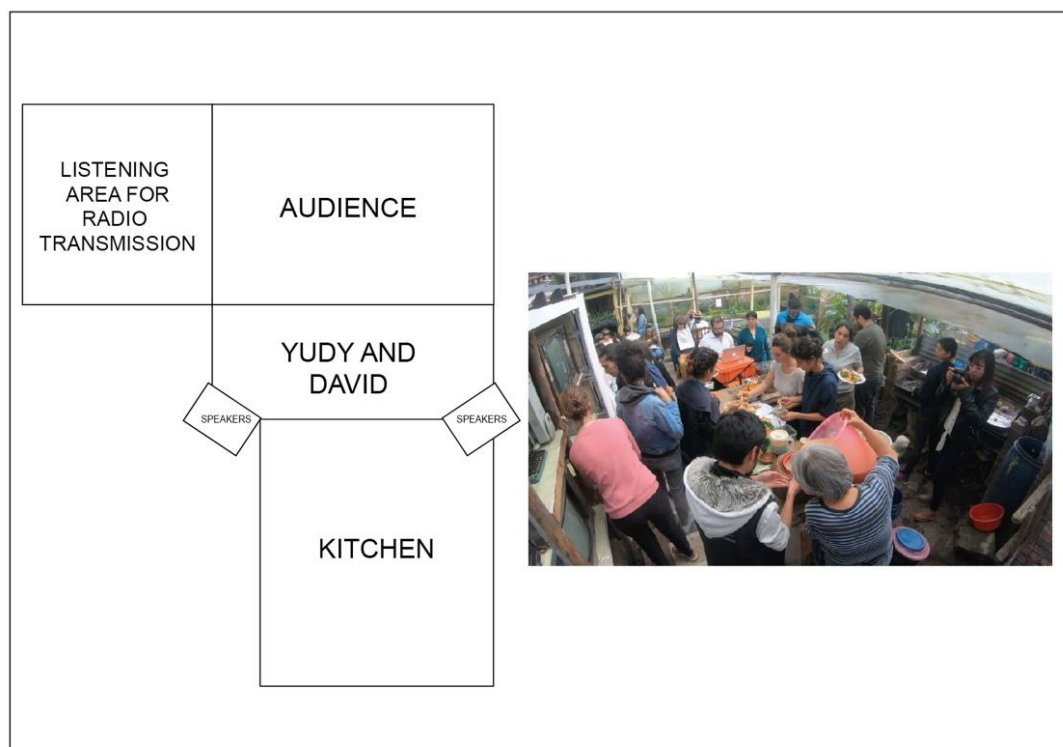
Figure 11: Image from the *Ecos de la Chicha* performance. Photo: Radio Criolla

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<sup>288</sup> Villamil, E. (2019) Interview by David Vélez. Personal Archive.

The food prepared in the concert came from Elena's garden and from similar agricultural projects like the farm of Fabriciano Ortiz, a Seed Guardian<sup>289</sup> whose work consists of protecting the agricultural heritage, identity, and autonomy of independent farmers in the region of Boyacá. The menu consisted of more than six dishes that included smoked and grilled preparations of maize, pumpkin, carrots, onions, potatoes, and cucumber, all seasoned with *Chicha*.

As is illustrated in Figure 12, the concert was performed in Elena's garden in a spatial set up where the blindfolded audience was in the back listening, experiencing the aromas and drinking *Chicha*. I was in the centre with Yudy, facing the open kitchen where the aromas of food and smoke intensely permeated the space. The concert was broadcasted by FM and, in Elena's living room, we placed radios that transmitted the concert to a smaller audience that could still perceive the smoking scents. For this concert, I set up three piezoelectric on the kitchen counter and five shotgun microphones positioned between the counter and the grill.



**Figure 12:** Spatial set up for the *Ecos de la Chicha* concert. Photo: Radio Criolla

<sup>289</sup> Seed Guardian definition by Garden Organic <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/seed-guardians> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

The copious number of cooks and the diverse cooking techniques used kept the performance in constant rhythmic dynamism and fluentness. In my work with the mixer, I navigated through the different cooking stations juxtaposing different patterns, textures, and intensities. My performance with *Chicha* recordings focused on parts in which its liquid materiality created a space of intimacy and liveliness that acted in juxtaposition with the recorded sounds of Elena's voice samples and Yudy's singing. My interpretation with sine waves followed the powerful aromas that emanated from the grill, building structures that subtly oscillated between agitation and quietness. The grinder (Figure 13), the sound of which resembled a lament, was performed by some of the cooks. This distinctive and structural sound in the concert connected the event with the rurality of the *Chicha* preparation. Yudy's melodic singing created compelling harmonic structures with the sine waves which produced moments of great emotional power and vibration. Her shouting style was personal and did not try to mimic the intensities and rhythms of most food traders.



**Figure 13:** The grinder vibration was amplified with piezoelectric devices in *Ecos de la Chicha*. Photo: Radio Criolla

As an artist, I am used to performing in quiet and dark scenarios; even in most of the previous cooking concerts, the atmosphere has been relatively tranquil. Here I was in the middle of a sunny day, surrounded by cooks murmuring and moving around serving food and *Chicha* to the audience and bringing ingredients to the grill. This allowed me to connect with the emotions that the cooks were experiencing and this is how I noticed that, throughout the concert, Elena and other performers cried out for joy.



The collaborative aspect in CCSA operated here in affection, in the capacity of sound and food to gather this assemblage of bodies and ingredients where we operated in complicity, generosity and gratitude towards Elena's resistance. The sounds, aromas, and flavours of these dishes vibrated in alliance with her story, evidencing how resistance operates in the spiritual realm, where Elena exercises her strength, autonomy, knowledge and generosity.

To understand the theoretical context of this project, founded on the resistance of Elena against gentrification and displacement, I recognised a connection with Brandon LaBelle's weak model.<sup>290</sup> Here, the fortitude of Elena's garden, as a space of vibrant resonance, resides precisely in its inconspicuousness where it is cornered and camouflaged amidst towering buildings in this metropolitan area. The vulnerability of its architectural structure suggests the enormous strength required to still stand. The joy disseminated in this concert was bolstered by the effects of *Chicha*, and by ingredients from responsible independent farms and gardens, where resistance against technified and transgenic agriculture is rampant.



**Figure 14:** Vélez, D. et al. (2019) *Ecos de la Chicha*. Blindfolded audience. Photo: Radio Criolla.

The heterogenous audience, bringing in farmers, anthropologists, curators, environmental researchers, Elena's friends and family, visual and food artists, neighbours, musicians and individuals from different ages and contexts and backgrounds, was clearly not a sound art or experimental music niche. The presence of such diverse groups in my concerts (Figure 14)

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<sup>290</sup> LaBelle, B. (2018) *Sonic Agency*. Goldsmith Press.

demonstrates the possibility of food to connect sound art with its broad and rich social context, which in my work is paramount.

## Appendix

Camilo Andrés Jiménez Peralta was the sound engineer for this concert, who sadly lost his life that same night in a traffic accident that shocked all who had worked with him that day. In one of our conversations with Elena, which was recorded and sampled in the concert, she said that to come to terms with death, it was important for her to realize that cereal grains need to die to live,<sup>291</sup> “they need to return to the soil to continue with the cycle of life.” These words resonated greatly with me.

## Methodological Considerations

The *Chicha* brewing sounds were recorded using a Sony ECMGZ1M shotgun microphone and a Zoom H4 as a recording device. In the concert, I used four Sennheiser MKH 418 shotgun microphones, three focused on the grill and one on the counter and chopping boards, and three handmade piezoelectric devices attached to the kitchen counter. The unidirectional microphones captured detail while keeping a safe distance from the cooking flames and the smoke. The piezoelectric devices amplified the slicing and grinding sounds with detail. Yudy used a Shure SM87A microphone for her vocal performance. I worked with an Allen & Heath Zed 16FX mixer that I used to balance the live cooking sounds, Yudy’s performance and my performance for which I used Ableton live. The cooking sounds were accentuated with EQ in the high-end and Yudy’s voice was emphasized in the mid frequencies. The piezo devices were accentuated in the mid-range, and my performance with sine tones focused on the mid-lows and lows. The field recordings I performed underlined the mid and high frequencies. The PA consisted of two Yamaha DZR15 speakers.

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<sup>291</sup> Villamil, E. (2019) Recorded by David Vélez. <https://soundcloud.com/davidvelezr/helenavillamil> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

### 3.3 Moravia

*Moravia* is the result of field work in the city of Medellin after an invitation by curator Camilo Cantor from the Parque Explora Museum to work in the area of Moravia. Here I met Cleyda Murillo (Figure 15), a community leader, cook and horticulturist who has been crucial in the development of social projects in this area. Cleyda's mother migrated to Medellin at a very young age, and she became part of a group of migrants who built this area with the help of university students. Together they battled police and other official forces who contested its construction. Cleyda's mother was also a community leader which inspired her to continue her legacy, together with a large group of single mothers who have been conducting formidable work improving the conditions for people's well-being in this vulnerable area. Food has been the central element in the projects that Cleyda has developed in her neighbourhood, which include communitarian kitchens and horticulture gardens.



**Figure 15:** Cleyda Murillo in *Moravia*. Photo: Rossana Uribe

## The Meal (*Bandeja Paisa*)

With Camilo Cantor, the museum curator, two members of the staff, and Alex Jaramillo and Ofelia Perez, two market shouters, we organized a performance which starred the *Bandeja Paisa* (“local tray”). This traditional dish of this region of Colombia is prepared in very similar fashion to English breakfast, since it comprises crunchy pork skin, *chorizo* (a type of sausage), fried eggs, avocado, rice and *rellena* (similar to black pudding).

The selection of this dish was made to ensure that all the ingredients were available in local shops in Moravia. Here, a gesture as simple as buying local products is significant in terms of the freshness of the ingredients, the environmental impact of production and transportation, and foremost, in the sense of community that it creates.

For a couple of days, I worked with Cleyda in Moravia gathering sounds for the concert in her garden, her kitchen and in the shops where we bought the ingredients for the rehearsal and the concert. She taught me how to make *empanadas* (Colombian turnovers) while sharing stories about her community work which I recorded and sampled in the performance. In Moravia, I met Alex and Ofelia, the traders who participated in the concert with their shouting (Figures 16 and 17), doing exactly what they do every day when they sell goods in the street using their voice.



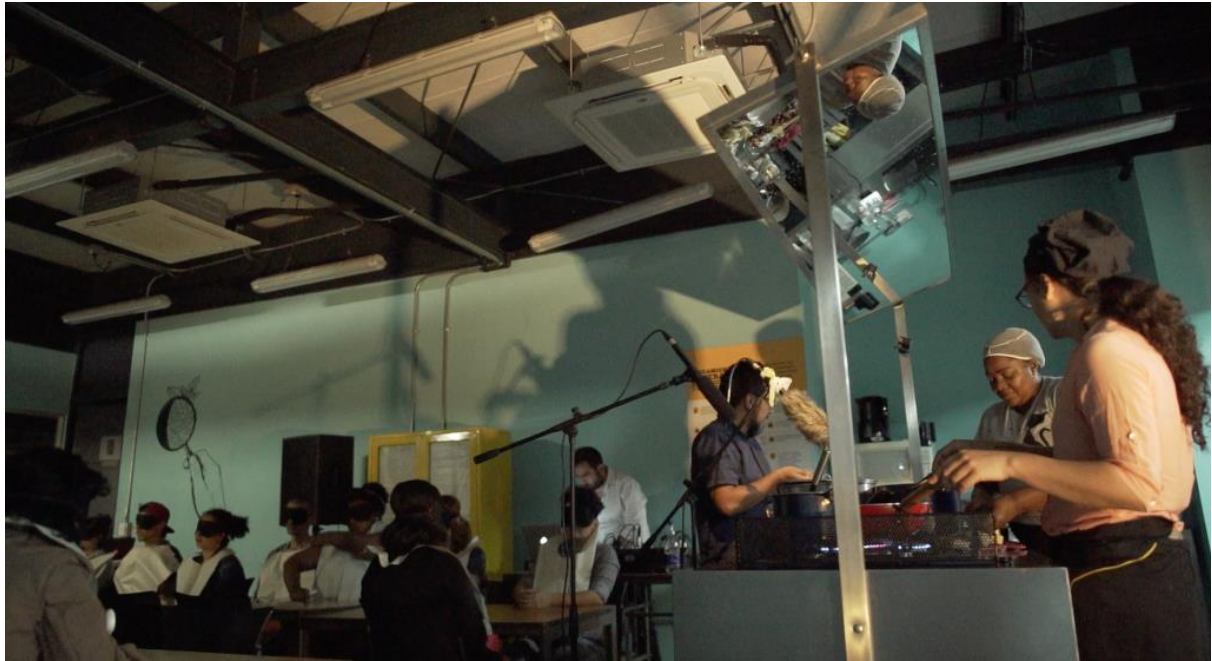
Figure 16: Ofelia Pérez shouting during the *Moravia* performance. Photo: Rossana Uribe.



**Figure 17:** Alex Jaramillo shouting during the *Moravia* performance. Photo: Rossana Uribe.

## **The Performance**

The material of the concert focused on the live chopping, frying and boiling sounds, and on the echoes of the shouting traders. Working with Alex and Ofelia was a momentous experience, which allowed me to guide their spatialized performance operating in correspondence with the acoustics of the building where they moved around advertising the ingredients of the *Bandeja Paisa*. Food market shouting here invited the listeners to meander throughout the social assemblages of solidarity and community sense that the food that they were about to eat had elicited. The samplers from the conversations with Cleyda aimed to show the importance of food in the culinary collective projects that she leads, which presented the audience with stories of resistance and kindness. Camilo Cantor is a sound artist, and Celeste Betancour is a very talented electronic musician (Figure 18), and the rhythmic way in which they handled the utensils and ingredients created interesting pulsing dynamics that I replied with sine waves and recordings. My performance was also guided by the emanating aromas, where the sounds I interpreted oscillated between calm and intense.



**Figure 18:** Camilo and Celeste helping Cleyda to cook in *Moravia*. Photo: Rossana Uribe.

Working with Cleyda allowed me to experience how resistance operates in the vibrance of scenarios where food emerges as an actant device to contest adverse social conditions by building a sense of community and by spurring cooperation. Food emerges here with possibility to transform vulnerable social assemblages that prosper thanks to ingredients that grow in horticultural gardens. These assemblages strengthen their alliances in community kitchens and other spaces of exchange and solidarity.

A key contribution of *Moravia* in this portfolio relies on the possibly of working for the first time with performing food market shouters in a cooking concert. The juxtaposition of these sounds created compelling tensions in which food manifested itself in all its sonic possibilities.

### **Methodological Considerations**

The recordings of the fieldwork with Cleyda were made using a Sony ECMGZ1M shotgun microphone and a Zoom H4 as a recording device. In the concert, I used two Rode NTG2 Shotgun microphones focused on the hobs and two handmade piezoelectric devices attached to the kitchen counter. I worked with a Yamaha MG16XU mixer to balance the live cooking sounds and my performance using Ableton. My EQ considerations highlighted the high end of the cooking sounds, the low and high frequencies of the sine tones and gave room and presence to

the non-amplified shouting sounds of Alex and Ofelia. The PA was composed of two Electro-Voice ELX200-15P and two Behringer D212D speakers using a + configuration that allowed me to experiment with the movement and resonance of the shouters across the space.

### 3.4 *El Caribe en Yorkshire* (The Caribbean in Yorkshire)/Food as an Instrument

This piece was originally presented as *Food as an Instrument*, but I renamed it after the presentation to reflect its true significance. Lina is my wife, who quit her job and came with me to start from scratch in Huddersfield. After living in an 8,000,000-inhabitant metropolis such as Bogotá, where we were surrounded by familiarity, we moved to a town with a population of 162,949 where Spanish is spoken by a tiny minority and where speaking it often puts the speaker in the spotlight. Our relationship with food as a couple changed dramatically upon my initial arrival in 2017 and hers in 2018. Food became the default place to seek out our well-being and identity in times of adaptation. However, the ingredients of many traditional Colombian dishes like *areparina*, *guascas* and *panela* were not available in Huddersfield, which forced us to adjust our traditional recipes.



Figure 19 and 20: Velandia, I, Vélez, D. (2019) *El Caribe en Yorkshire*. Photo: Stephen Harvey.

#### The Menu

The dishes prepared in this concert were prawn ceviche with *panela* (brown sugar) sauce, fried plantains with *panela sofrito* (fried) and couscous, an Afro/Colombian meal combination, which is

easy and quick to prepare, and became familiar and emotionally significant for Lina and me during our acclimatisation process.

## **The Concert**

The sounds of frying plantains became the central material of the concert (Figures 54 and 55). My wish, with my performance with sine waves, was to switch between joy and melancholy in synergy with the sounds of shouting from streets in Latin American food markets. Here I wanted to embody the subjectivities that are shaped in scenarios of uprooting by connecting heterogeneous juxtapositions of sound.

This piece was not just about Colombian food, but also about Colombian food spilling over into Huddersfield, where it was forced to mutate and adapt, food acting in alliance with our immigrant bodies, adjusting together to new territories and conditions. Resistance acts here when well-being is sought after by contesting obstacles of apparent triviality where food in its aesthetic complexity and nourishing potency helps overcome the adversity of uprooting. This naïve but sincere premise was the central point of this piece.

The pieces created in my first 18 months of the PhD, like this one, present CCSA in an incipient stage when the final declarations of the manifesto were still in a liminal stage. However, performances like *El Caribe en Yorkshire* help traversing through the process, from where this practice developed at the initial moments of my arrival in Huddersfield.

## **Methodological Considerations**

In this concert, I used two Sennheiser MKH 418 shotgun microphones focused on the hob and the chopping board. I worked with a Mackie ProFX10 mixer to balance the live cooking sounds and my performance using Ableton. The EQ considerations focused on the cohesion between the live cooking sound, the sampled recording, and the sine tones. The PA comprised two passive speakers; I did not take note of the model.



### 3.5 Se lo comieron Todo (They Ate it All)



Figure 21: Christian Castro in *Se lo comieron todo*. Photo: Pablo Saavedra for Tsonami.

Christian Castro (Figure 21) is a Chilean chef and art curator who lives between Chile and Italy who I met doing field work for my Tsonami residency in Valparaíso. He became interested in my research about food and sound and accepted my invitation to perform together as part of this festival.



Figure 22: Vidriola in the cutting board attached to a Piezo in *Se lo comieron todo*. Photo: Pablo Saavedra for Tsonami.

## **The Menu (Vidriola and couscous)**

Christian suggested cooking a meal that could operate as political criticism of the prevailing neoliberal model imposed in the 1970s under the violent, calamitous regime of Augusto Pinochet. Chile was a laboratory for Neo Liberalism, as submitted in theories and articles of excellent researchers like Federico García Morales, Francisca Guerrero<sup>292</sup> and Rodrigo Cárdenas. The economic and environmental policies played a large role in the appalling, devastating extinction of edible fish and crustaceans in the coastal city of Valparaíso. Christian proposed a menu based on Vidriola (Figure 22), a fish that had been available here but which now needs to be carted from nearby towns. He deliberately used ingredients purchased in a supermarket that is part of a major multinational chain, which entered the Chilean market because of the economic practices that have strongly affected the local economy.

## **The Concert**

The recordings that I interpreted included sounds from El Cardonal food market where Christian often buys his ingredients. I also sampled sounds from the rehearsals in Christian's kitchen and from our conversations. Furthermore, I worked with samplers from interviews of Pier Paolo Pasolini, who is a great inspiration for Christian.

The blunt way in which Christian cut the fish and handled the utensils lead my performance with sine waves into obscure pads and drones where I tried to introduce the horror of the Neo liberal system, which has been equally detrimental in Colombia. The particular timbre of Pasolini's voice created an interesting synergy with the other sonic elements in a performance that I consider particularly compelling within this portfolio.

The major contribution of this piece in the development of CCSA came from Christian's idea to present a dish which includes ingredients that allow the materiality of sound and food art to exercise a political critique. Furthermore, the significance of this piece was corroborated in 2021 when Christian and the curator and director of Tsonami, Fernando Godoy, a regular collaborator in my work, organized a series of concerts in Valparaíso where cooks and musicians collaborated. The experience during *Se lo comieron todo* was inspirational for them.

At this point, resistance was still not manifested in my work as a pivotal vector in creation and analysis. But the work in Latin America, in the context of this festival, connected me with values

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<sup>292</sup> Guerrero, F. (2019) *Experimento Neoliberal. La Tercera*.

and ideas influenced by the Latin American context, which were presented in the Introduction of this thesis in connection with the resistance against the oppressing forces of colonialism, privilege and hegemony.

### **Methodological Considerations**

In this concert, I used two Rode NTG-2 shotgun microphones which focused on the hob and chopping board. I worked with a Yamaha MG12XU mixer to balance the live cookery sounds and my performance using Ableton. The EQ considerations highlighted the piezoelectric chopping sounds and the frying sounds in the mid and high ends creating correspondences with the sampled Christian dialogues and the Pasolini audio quotes. The sine tones focused on the mid and lows creating intense vibration. The PA comprised two Mackie SRM350. To record the sounds from my ethnographic with Christian, I used a Sennheiser MKA 600 shotgun mic and a Sony PCM D-50 as recording device.

### **3.6 台灣現場烹飪/Taiwanese Live Cooking**



**Figure 23:** Cyanching Wu in 台灣現場烹飪. Photo: Lina Velandia.

I met Cyanching (Figure 23) in Huddersfield, where we became friends and collaborators thanks, in large part, to our interest in food and sound. We shared experiences of being uprooted and feeling the territorial dislocations that became joyful and vibrating when we gathered around her cooking. When Cyanching moved to London after receiving her degree, we continued our exchange, which eventually resulted in planning a concert in Café OTO, a very significant place for her that helped to create a community of friends in London. This is how *Taiwanese Live Cooking* was conceived, rooted in experiences shared by foreigners in the UK when food alleviates Seasonal Affective Disorder, uprooting and other forms of territorial dislocation.

Felipe Rodríguez (Figure 24), an essential collaborator in the beginning of my work with food and sound in Colombia, promoted his editorial project CARMA in the concert and joined the performance operating a shotgun microphone that he pointed towards what he found interesting between the hubs or the cooking board.

Cyanching's thoughts about this collaboration awarded us another perspective of how CCSA operates:

As an immigrant, I face a lot of challenges in my daily life, sometimes feeling like I don't belong and that makes finding the right balance difficult at times. Feeling a lack of familiarity with the world around me makes me struggle to find a sense of comfort and calm my mind. Cooking provides me with that safe space where I can feel comfortable and express myself. Recreating the dishes that I used to eat in Taiwan isn't necessarily out of feeling homesick, but rather out of a willingness to give them a new context in my current surroundings. After all, you can't change the fact that you're not home anymore, but you can bring a little bit of home with you.

The entire process of planning dish preparation, selecting the ingredients, going out to buy and then preparing them; cooking and finally tasting makes me feel fully in control and it's a wonderful feeling to focus on completing one simple task without distractions and enjoy the outcome. I find it very meditative.<sup>293</sup>

Furthermore, in the past I exchanged ideas with Cyanching about how food, music and sound connect. Her reflections are important considerations in this regard:

Most of the time, I cook in the kitchen myself, it's like working in the studio making music myself. Once you know what you are doing, the workflow in the kitchen is like making music with a computer. In the kitchen, you start from one task and extend to multitasking (chopping, boiling the water, washing ingredients and others). You gradually have layers of sounds surrounding you. It's like making music, start an idea, play around the others, and put them together, take one out and add one in, develop a bit of the previous one

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<sup>293</sup> Wu, C. (2020) Interview by David Vélez. Personal Archive.

and add another new element. They both (cooking and making music) are very similar processes and there's another thing they are so similar. It's the intuition of taste coming from your background, your daily life, what you've been exposed to.<sup>294</sup>

## **The Menu**

Cyanching cooked fried chicken and cabbage with white rice, which is a recipe that is reminiscent of her family and friends in Taiwan. This preparation was pulsating, sonorous, fizzling and most of all, it created powerful, delectable aromas that became instrumental in the performance. Considering how liminal CCSA was at this point, the considerations on dish selection were very different from the ones in newer performances. However, in terms of the sonorities produced, this menu was a compelling choice.

## **The Concert**

The permeability to the context of CCSA surged in these initial stages, when here, for safety reasons, the door of the venue needed to be open, allowing the sounds of Dalston to enter the acoustic space. Particularly important was the sound of the London Underground (the Tube), which runs near OTO, which can be heard together with traffic noise.

My production here was guided by the succulent aromas of the cooking, where I performed with subtle sine waves and with sounds recorded in Cyanching's kitchen that accentuated some of the textures of the live cooking sounds. Her blunt and precise chopping sounds established compelling and rhythmic patterns that directed the performance during the first half; the frying sounds of chicken, mushrooms and cabbage created an array of noises and textures that resonated with great potency in correspondence with the luscious aromas that emanated therefrom. This presented the second part of this performance with great textures and intensities.

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<sup>294</sup> Wu, C. (2019) Interview with Taiwanese composer Cyanching by David Vélez. Sonic Field. <https://sonicfield.org/cyanchingshadow/> (page 1) (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

The synergy between city sounds, subtle sine waves and the sizzling sounds was a powerfully stimulating experience as testified by Faiz S. Hussain, a spectator who wrote about it in his Instagram account:

It was a torturous hour to the salivating, hungry, blindfolded connoisseur audience enduring an hour of intoxicating aromas emanating from the gangway of the concert tent, seats arranged though we were hearing someone speak. In that hour of immersion into sounds of live food preparation, we were taken through soundscapes of every city, a rowdy bustle of lunchtime fare, the yearning of waiting in long lines for communal eating, the clang and friction of industrial sounds and handmade care into meals we would consume later. It wasn't quite time-travel, but it was nostalgia all the same.<sup>295</sup>

The major contribution of 台灣現場烹飪 in the development of CCSA resides in how the smells of food became a key consideration in the practice, leading my performances and stimulating the audience. Here the material of food in my work surfaced in the correspondence between audible and olfactory stimuli. Furthermore, it was interesting to hear Faiz S. Hussain's text, which confirms that cooking sounds could be perceived differently in association with smell, in this case when we are impatiently waiting for the food to be ready.

To speak about resistance at this stage of CCSA was still very novel; but the possibility of food of contesting the adversity and uprooting that many migrants face, by proving wellness and comfort, sheds lights on the direction that my work would be heading.

The one-take recording from the rehearsal of this concert was left untouched for almost two years until I was contacted in 2020 by the Gruenrekorder label in Germany to submit material for their Field Notes publication.<sup>296</sup> When I revised my archives, these recordings stood out. Their detail and textures immersed me into the thermodynamic intricacy of their preparation while the rhythms of Cyanching's cooking resonated in fluidity and dynamism. The duration of this recording is 02hr28m37s, beginning with the lengthy preparation of rice, the preparation of the chicken and the cabbage independently, and every step was included in the recording. For the Gruenrekorder journal, I submitted this recording with subtle processing on the low end to give the piece presence and resonance, and to create a contrasting element. This recording is one of the most compelling outputs of CCSA in terms of the narrative developed by the different steps of the preparation.

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<sup>295</sup> Hussain, F.S. <https://davidvelezr.tumblr.com/selectedperformances> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>296</sup> Vélez, D., Wu, Ch. (2021) *You Never Eat Alone Yo Never Cook for One*. Field Notes #5. Gruenrekorder. <https://www.gruenrekorder.de/fieldnotes/> (To be published in July)

However, it is a recording that requires generous, attentive, and unconditional listening to be appreciated.



Figure 24: Felipe Rodríguez and Cyanching Wu in 台灣現場烹飪. Photo: Lina Velandia.

## Methodological Considerations

In this concert, we used three Sennheiser MKH 418 shotgun microphones, one focused on the hob, one on the chopping board and one handheld by Felipe focused on what he found interesting in the portable kitchen set-up. Two piezo devices were attached to the cooking table to amplify the slicing and chopping sounds. I worked with a Mackie ProFX10 mixer to balance the live cooking sounds and my performance using Ableton. The EQ considerations focused on highlighting the textures of the live cooking sounds in the high and mid ranges while giving the

presence of sine tones in the high and low ends. The PA comprised two passive speakers; I did not take note of the model. The recordings in Cyanching's kitchen used a Sennheiser MKA 600 shotgun mic and a Sony PCM D-50 as recording device.

### **3.7 *Yuca Hervida* (Boiled cassava)**

*Yuca Hervida* is an atypical piece in this portfolio, responding to moments of change and transition during the 2020 public health crisis. This dish became a source of joy in times of uncertainty, conferring a sense of place when, as an immigrant, I felt estranged from a place that no longer existed. Everywhere outside Huddersfield felt incredible distant, not only in space but also in time.

My practice with food changed dramatically during the health crisis in 2020, since it was impossible for me to present multisensory cooking concerts, which had become the most vibrant forms of CCSA creation. However, cooking began to occupy a larger place in my daily routine, which had a positive effect on my well-being and emotional health. In this process, cooking Colombian dishes activated memories that transported me elsewhere, thereby alleviating the feelings of isolation and unrest.

Cassava is a root which, in order to attain great flavour and texture, needs to be at a certain point of maturation which conditions the success of its preparation to what is available in the few shops that sell it in Huddersfield. If a good cassava is obtainable, it means the recipe will work. Here, cassava is boiled for approximately 45 minutes, until it is fully cooked when it acquires a slightly sweet flavour and a mushy texture. It is served with onions, coriander, or creamy cheese (Figure 25).





Figure 25: *Yuca Hervida*.

The lengthy preparation of boiled cassava invades the kitchen with a subtle sweet scent that propagates as vapor that quickly disseminates when it comes into contact with the surfaces that surround it. This presents me with a strong tactile, olfactory, and acoustic experience that evokes memories of my homeland and connects me with the expectations and desires that arise when I am waiting for food. Furthermore, the cracking sounds of peeling the cassava, the blunt chopping blows, and the compelling sound of boiling water acted in synergy with the warm, hazy experience.

### Composition

The many recordings that I made of the cassava cooking sounded incomplete when compared with the original experience, despite being made with sensitive quality cardioid and condenser microphones. This is something I have experienced many times and, rather than a technical issue, this disappointment operates in the poetic. The fond memories of an experience here affect the

way in which the recorded documentation is perceived. In these cases, I usually wait until the memories fade so the encounter with the recorded material does not seek to match such fresh and powerful memories. However, here I wanted to address this disappointment in another way, drawing from the experiences of the multisensory concerts and aiming to create a different way to connect my work with food sounds with the listener.

Initially I discarded any attempt to recreate a realistic scenario with the recordings which led me to process the sounds, to the point they were unrecognizable. Pitch and speed changes and significant use of noise effects were the key considerations in this process. The recordings processed here included boiling, peeling, and chopping sounds from the cassava preparation and recordings made in the Caribbean shop where I bought it. Furthermore, I created complex sequences of sine waves to give the piece presence and spatial movement. This work began to acquire interesting forms that propagated throughout the space with great dynamism. However, this intuitive process of reduction presented me with a philosophical paradox regarding the physicality and material cohesiveness of my work with food and sound in the development of CCSA. During a session in my home studio, I was working on this piece and drinking tea. I noticed an interesting connection between the abstract, coarse, and sparse mass of sound that I was creating in juxtaposition with the sound of the kettle. A kettle is a common object in most houses, which, depending on the model, produces different sounds that connect the listener with an interesting vibrating material. Furthermore, breathing the steam felt comforting and warm, materializing some of the cassava experience in a tiny place. The sound of pouring boiling water into a cup was also pleasant for me as I wanted it to be part of this listening experience. This is how this piece became not just playable media, but a possibility for the listener to interact with it using its subjectivity and material context by following basic guidelines (Figure 26). The misty, sweet, warm and steamy disseminating presence of cassava cooking, could then be evoked utilizing heat and water.

The contribution of *Yuca Hervida* in the development of CCSA operates in its capacity to make its material considerations flexible and reinventing elements of its practice in conditions that require it. In times of isolation, *Yuca Hervida* relies on its possibility to create proximity with the listener by creating sonic, tactile, and olfactory sensations of comfort. The collaboration here operates in the actant role that the listeners and their subjectivity acquire in its interpretation. Furthermore, water acts here as an element of connection between the composer and the audience in which bodies separated in space and time can converge. The methodology behind this piece and its exhibition indicate an effort, of many that were made, to carry on working with sound and food

under adverse circumstances. Here, resistance is examined in an autoethnographic approach in connection with the possibility of cooking and making sound art for my own well-being.

## Yuca Hervida 15:06

### Requirements

- 1) One kettle or teapot
- 2) One tea cup
- 3) A sound system with an output preferably higher than 20 W per speaker

### Instructions

- 1) Fill the kettle with enough water for 1 and 1/2 cups
- 2) Playback the composition
- 3) Start the kettle
- 4) Once the water is boiling serve the water in the cup
- 5) Keeping a safe distance, place the cup near your mouth and nose and breathe the steam
- 6) Repeat steps 1, 3, 4 and 5 as many times as you want

\* To avoid wasting water, refill the kettle from the cup when step 1 is repeated.

Figure 26: Instructions for the listener/interpreter of *Yuca Hervida*.

### Methodological Considerations

The original cassava cooking sounds were captured with a Sennheiser MKA 600 shotgun mic and a Sony PCM D-50 as recording device while the supermarket recordings were made with a set of Roland 10 EM binaural connected to the PCM D-50. The recordings were edited in Audacity in different stages. I modified the speed and the pitch and equalized the sound to accentuate textures to create a graceful but dense sonic material. The noise effects that I used combined different Apple Audio Units that were customized. The final mix and mastering were made in Logic subtly filtering frequencies over 5,000 Hz and accentuating the frequencies between 2,000 and 3,000 Hz. The compression release was 3.82 milliseconds and the lookahead 2.9 milliseconds. I worked with two Genelec 8030C speakers and a set of Sennheiser JD 555 headphones to monitor the mix.

### 3.8 Beige is the True Colour of Melancholy

### 3.9 The Kitchen of Chef Lag

*Beige is the True Colour of Melancholy* and *The Kitchen of Chef Lag* were created as part of the same collaborative process; therefore, I will address them in the same section. This was the first CCSA project where my contact with the field and its actant elements was in a beginning stage. At this point the effects of capsaicin and sizzling sounds already began to refer my ears and microphones to immigrant kitchens, where I felt closer to home as a stranded foreigner. Both pieces reflect two contrasting approaches to sound creation in which I embrace the material and philosophical paradoxes that my practice could present. While in the first piece cooking recordings were processed, sampled, edited, sequenced, and juxtaposed with sine waves and samples, in the second one, the material was presented unedited and unprocessed.

Lag is a Thai chef who was working in Huddersfield during the creation of this project. I met him in the restaurant where he was working, where I used to go in my longing for capsaicin and pan frying and chopping sounds. He did not speak English, but Nat the waiter, helped us by translating. I was then able to ask Lag to allow me to record the sounds from his kitchen for my PhD project, to which he agreed. We worked during three sessions between March and April in which he selected a number of dishes based on their sounds, which I recorded with a shotgun microphone. Afterwards, I sat down with Nat to eat the food, where we spoke about migration, food, uprooting and other matters that connected us. Lag's kitchen was pure radiance. Giant flames emanated from gigantic hobs that ignited the sizzle of his recipes with exuberant intensity. The sound of water dripping was everywhere as part of a cleaning mechanism that keeps the hobs clear of oil stains. The sound of the conversations between Lag and his wife, who assisted him, brought Thailand to life for me in Huddersfield, activating my memories when I visited it in 1996. Lag selected dishes that included frying provisions in which the moisture of the ingredients, immersed in oil, created exploding bubbles that resonated with vehemence and coarse textures. His handling of the utensils was blunt and percussive, creating rhythmic patterns that permeated the recordings.

*Beige is the True Colour of Melancholy* originated in an unexpected stand-up performance that I did on an open mic event in Huddersfield in March 2018. I pushed myself onto the stage without any experience or preparation and with no notes or script. As an exercise in courage, I went onstage,

told some two-liners, and received a rewarding response from the laughing audience. One of the two liners was,

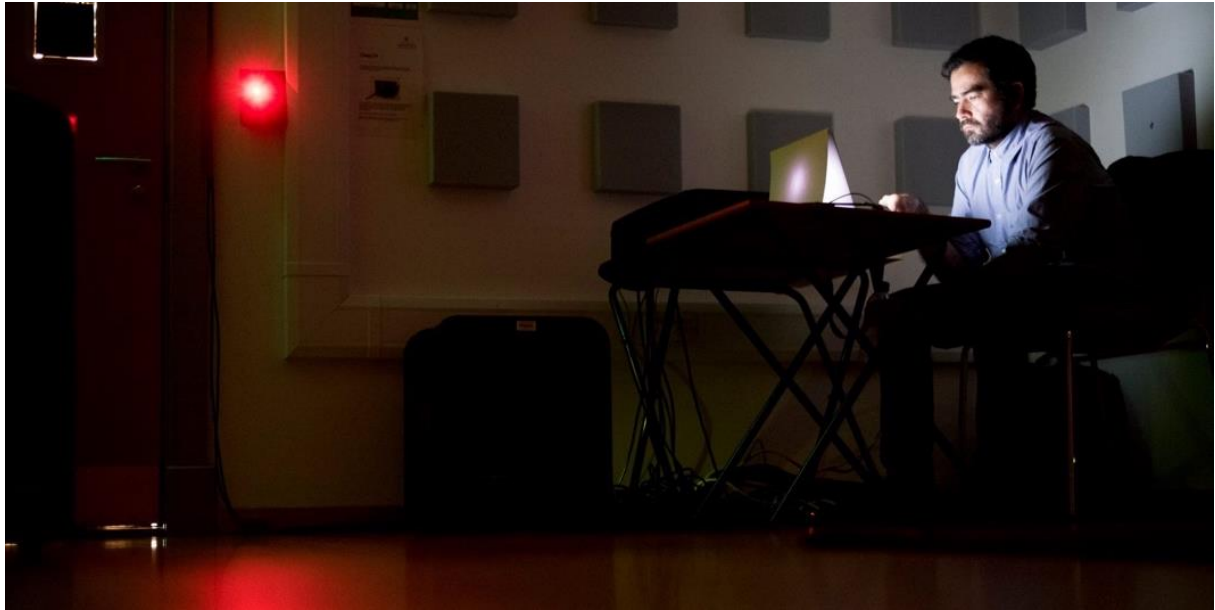
When you arrive at Huddersfield in March, you realize that melancholy has a colour: it is beige.

After this performance, I was invited by Re.Sound (Figure 27) to present an installation in the Richard Steinitz Building under the curatorship of Cyanching Wu. In this initial stage of my work in Huddersfield, I began to research its architecture in connection with food, and I found the TV program *Minorities in Britain*<sup>297</sup> which originally aired on the BBC in June of 1966. It focused on migratory issues in West Yorkshire, showing interviews with local people complaining about immigrant families who painted the front of their otherwise beige houses in different colours. Also, in this documentary, the British interviewees complained about the smell of immigrant cooking which later became the core idea behind the *Turmeric* project. I began to get a glimpse on how resistance operated as an important element in my work. *The Minorities in Britain* documentary and my experience working with Lag steered me in the direction of conceiving a multichannel installation that addressed the role of food in circumstances of gloom connected with the grim weather, the colour beige, and the sensation of uprooting.

In this piece, dejection is contested with loud piquant food of warm radiant colours that contrasts with the opaqueness and blandness of cultural homogeneity. I explored the acoustic materiality of food in juxtaposition with basic synthesis and samplers which became instrumental in the development of CCSA. The samplers that I used here were taken from the BBC documentary and from an interview with Nat, the waiter from Lag's restaurant. There, he spoke about how much he had missed food when he had arrived. The cooking sounds of Lag in this piece were subtly treated to resonate with bluntness and harshness, operating as a force that resists. The sine waves served here as the sounds in which melancholy can be expressed with certain ambiguity. It is a melancholy that surges, in this piece, as a sediment of the encounters between difference and homogeneity evidenced in the documentary and that connects with my own process of adaptation.

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<sup>297</sup> *Minorities in Britain* (1966) BBC.



**Figure 27:** Presenting *Beige is the True Colour of Melancholy*. Photo: Stephen Harvey.

In *The Kitchen of Lag*, I presented the experience in his kitchen with no editing and with subtle EQ and compression. The three pieces that compose this publication were recorded in individual sessions and they include the cooking sounds of Pad Kra Pao, fried egg, Thai breaded prawn, seafood Pad Thai, Tom Yum soup, spring rolls, pork on toast and red curry and rice. My work here concentrated on attentive listening and recording the sounds in their full detail and intensity focusing on the actant resonance of food taking form with Lag's cooking techniques. These are recordings from Huddersfield that evoke Thailand, creating ambiguous territories and intricate cartographies that I heard in Lag's kitchen and that I intend to present in this sound publication.

The creation of these two pieces was the foundation of CCSA, considering that here, culinary uprooting became the vector that gave my work a direction and a connection with my social surroundings. The process behind *The Kitchen of Chef Lag* brought me to a universe of radiance and vibrance that provided comfort and joy in moments of adaptation. I lent my ear and microphones to others that also experienced dislocated territorialities. The research and methodology behind *Beige is the True Colour of Melancholy* tied me with my subjectivity, with the position of criticism from which I experience the world. This piece showed me that I needed to establish a point of individuality and intersubjectivity in a quest for an identity for CCSA, an identity that in the form of sizzling sounds, piquant flavours, radiant colours, and exuding scents allowed me to counter the beige melancholy.

## Methodological Considerations

Lag's kitchen sounds were made with a Sennheiser MKA 600 shotgun microphone and a Sony PCM D-50 as recording device. This methodology allowed me to immerse myself in the details of the cooking sounds avoiding unwanted environmental sounds. Nat's conversations were recorded using the same equipment. In *The Kitchen of Chef Lag* I mastered the untreated recordings in Logic giving predominance to the textures in the high and mid high end. Here I worked with a compression release of 3.82 milliseconds and a lookahead of 2.9 milliseconds.

In *Beige is the True Colour of Melancholy*, I used Audacity to generate the sine tones and Reason to perform them using a MIDI keyboard and a sampler. Later I composed the final piece juxtaposing the sine tones fragments, the Lag recording samples and the found sounds from the BBC documentary. For the final spatialization, I used Ableton. Here I sought to create tension and movement in the space. This installation was exhibited using a MOTU 8-Pre interface and six Mackie SRM350 active speakers.

### 3.10 The Dying Art of Food Market Shouting

My initial focus on kitchen and cooking sounds found, in late 2018, an interesting turnaround when I visited the Ballaro food market in Palermo, Italy, in 2018, as was illustrated in the Chapter 2 of this thesis. Food here presented me with its possibility of creating social assemblages that occur before the preparation and consumption of a dish, which I later connected with Jane Bennett's theories about the ontological autonomy of the materiality of food.<sup>298</sup> The sounds of food market shouting as well as the murmuring crowds emerged as a new category of food sounds in my work that operated under its own considerations. The focus is on the human voice as a force that communicates and agitates these vibrating ensembles.

After my visit to Ballaro, I continued recording food markets in Valparaíso in Chile, Huddersfield, Dewsbury and London in the UK, and Bogotá and Medellín in Colombia. Furthermore, my colleagues Cyanching Wu and Tēnn Uí recorded sounds for this project in marketplaces in Taiwan, and Ilona Krawczyk did the same in different markets in Poland. The archive of food market

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<sup>298</sup> Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press.

sounds that I gathered was completed by sounds made by other recordists and was licensed for use where the work of The London Survey was of great inspiration.

During my field work in markets in Huddersfield, I met food traders Joanne Mansley and Tony Woods, who were very glad that their work was of interest for the arts. They were kind enough to let me record them, and eventually they shared some thoughts about their practice. Woods commented: “This is a dying art but as long as I live, I will keep this going.”<sup>299</sup>

In my work with Joanne and Tony, the potential obsolescence of shouting became evident. It was clear that with their shouting they were not just advertising food ingredients, but they were also resisting and defending the art in their practice. Here the idea of *Social Sculpture*<sup>300</sup> of Joseph Beuys resonated with the Deleuzian idea of resistance, where food trade shouting emerged with great possibility. The resistance of market shouting against obsolescence is a matter already examined by Camilo Andrés Moreno Hernández, who suggests that the volume and vibrance of food markets operate resisting dynamics of communication that favour exclusion:

In the market squares there is a place for communication and debate of the everyday, of the events of the neighbourhood, of the city, of the nation. There, the popular knowledge generated around food, medicine and other types of meaningful learning is transmitted. They are shown as places of resistance to the dynamics of global communication that in some cases are constituted around a character of exclusion.<sup>301</sup>

For Linda O Keeffe, who studied the soundscape of Smithfield on Henry Street in Dublin, from 2009 to 2014,<sup>302</sup> the quest to bring order, prescribed by official agents, has slowly silenced market shouting there. The cultural imposition of silence is revealed in studies by George Klein in his essay “*Site-Sounds*”,<sup>303</sup> and by Christabel Stirling in her article “*Sound Art/Street Life*.”<sup>304</sup> She examines a series of public space works like *Bridge Links* by London-based artist Esther Ainsworth,<sup>305</sup> where Stirling observes the spectators of this piece when perceiving their affected routines, that they,

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<sup>299</sup> Vélez, D., Woods, T. (2019) *This is a Dying Art*. <https://www.instagram.com/p/BvWjSh6BI9V/> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>300</sup> Beuys, J. (1982) *7000 Oak Trees*. Documenta 7 Catalogue.

<sup>301</sup> Translated from Moreno Hernández, C.A. (2011) *Los sonidos que resisten: Identidad y patrimonio en los paisajes sonoros de las plazas de mercado*. Universidad Pedagógica de Colombia. (page 18) [https://issuu.com/patrimoniobogota/docs/los\\_sonidos\\_que\\_resisten\\_fondo](https://issuu.com/patrimoniobogota/docs/los_sonidos_que_resisten_fondo) (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>302</sup> O Keeffe, L. (2018) *The Sound Wars: Silencing the Working Class Soundscape of Smithfield*. Presses Universitaires de Grenoble.

<sup>303</sup> Klein, G. (20010) *Site-Sounds: On strategies of sound art in public space. Organized sounds Volume 14 Issue 1*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>304</sup> Stirling, Ch. (2015) *Sound Art/Street Life*. The Journal of Sonic Studies, 11.

<sup>305</sup> Ainsworth, E. (2013) *Bridge Links*. <http://www.estherainsworth.com/bridgelinks.html> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)



(...) experienced a different kind of fear: a fear that their complacent right to space was being toppled; fear of an impending loss of unity and certainty over a particular geographical location; a fear that challenged rather than affirmed their identifications.<sup>306</sup>

For Stirling, market shouting and other forms of public space acoustics have drawn antagonism from middle and upper classes as was verified in London in Victorian times when the Silence-seekers were paid to contain and remove street music and market shouters from doing their job. Here it is important to consider that the agitating and vibrant material of these sounds can dig up the structures of society exhibiting how these structures are assembled.

The research of Moreno, Keeffe, and Stirling suggests that market shouting challenges the idea that quietness should predominate over loudness in public places, which is an idea rooted in the dominance of middle and upper-class privilege in public spaces.

## **The performance**

During my recording sessions in the Huddersfield Open Market (Figure 28), Eileen Daysh, who is Kirklees Markets Senior Officer, became interested in my work and suggested the possibility of a partnership for a public space sound art exhibition in the market. This is when I conceived this performance in collaboration with Joanne, the food trader, where I performed with an archive of over 80 field recordings from marketplaces around the world (Figure 29). Although this event was officially supported, the idea initially did not sit well with all the traders, who complained during the rehearsal. Fortunately, Eileen understood from the first moment that this performance was going to stir things up in this community, which, for her, was important and positive. During the rehearsal, we set up limits of 72 dB and an average of 63 dB, both of which are within the local noise regulations. The performance was briefly advertised, hence it became a subtle surprise for most of the spectators.

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<sup>306</sup> Stirling, Ch. (2015) *Sound Art/Street. Life* The Journal of Sonic Studies, 11. (page 1)



**Figure 28:** Huddersfield Open Market on a quiet morning.

For 30 minutes, Huddersfield's market resonated with accents and lexicons from around the world celebrating the polycultural expressions and exchanges that food propitiates here, and in the markets where these recordings were made. These expressions and exchanges acted as vibrant and agitating forces that contested quietness and stillness. Despite keeping the levels within what was previously arranged, the concert created a major stir, drawing complaints from traders and visitors. However, for another group it was a very positive experience as was expressed to me. They liked the disruption created by the performance, which they felt was sorely needed. They wanted it to happen again, so it was set up over three more concerts. For Joanne, the shouting collaborator, it was a delightful exercise in which she responded to my performance with her resonating voice in back-and-forth exchanges. She was very excited about the fact that what she does every day as part of her job, for 30 minutes, became a concert.



**Figure 29:** Vélez, D. et al. (2019) *The Dying Art of Food Market Shouting*. Photo: Lina Velandia.

The contribution of this piece to CCSA is its reconsideration of the food sounds. Food market shouting is important material in connection with the autonomy of food as actant vitality as presented in Jane Bennett's theories. The assemblages that she mentions find, in this piece, a voice and an identity that operate with agency on the public. Furthermore, in the context of sound art, the potency of shouting to interrupt, agitate and resist connects with matters that CCSA examines in correspondence with Bennet's *Bodies of Force* and LaBelle's *overheard* model. Here, individuality is expressed in its capacity to stir up the borders between one's body and its social environment. Furthermore, the possibility to collaborate with market shouters in upcoming live events brought a rich universe of political and poetical possibilities to my practice as it later became evident in *Moravia* in my work with Alex and Ofelia, the food traders.

## **Methodological Considerations**

To perform, I used the market's available PA consisting of four passive speakers and one amplifier of which models I did not take note. I performed using Ableton and a Mackie Mix8 Mixer. Equalization decisions aimed to create a subtle sense of immersion with the recorded shouting sounds which were captured using different microphones that include a Sennheiser MKA 600, a Sony PCM D-50, a Zoom H4, a Zoom H2n and the techniques used by the London Survey and other material sampled via freesound.org. I sought to create a balance with the live shouting sounds made by Joanne.

### **3.11 *Un último día perfecto* (One Last Perfect Day)**

Sound art curator Jorge Barco attended the performance of Moravia, and his response to this piece was very positive. A few days later, he invited me to conceive an exhibition to be presented in the MAMM museum based on my research in sound and food. The curatorial invitation required the piece to be exhibited in the Lab3, a windowless salon designed for sound art and experimental music installations which features a 6-channel system.

My experience working with Elena Villamil and Cleyda Murillo, the work of Joseph Beuys and the book *The Politics of Food*<sup>307</sup> presented to me the artistic importance of examining horticulture as means of resistance. Gardens resisted gentrification in the case of Elena and contested adverse social circumstances in the case of Cleyda. For Beuys, small-scaled independent agricultural projects challenge the imposition of agronomic technologies and the concentration of power in food production. In *The Politics of Food*, Mark Hix and Michel Pimbert advocate for more sustainable means of food production and preparation and transparent production processes.

#### **Beetroot (the edible vegetable)**

The selection of beetroot as artistic organic material in this piece surges after my interest in its unique taste, colour, and shape, and due to its superb nutritional and medicinal value, to which I will refer in this section. In my research, I learned that most beet varieties are relatively easy to

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<sup>307</sup> Cezar, A., Burrows, D. (2019) *Politics of Food*. Sternberg Press.

grow indoors if they receive sunlight for at least 6 hours a day, and if they are planted in well-drained soil, ideally fertilized with phosphorus and potassium. Watering is also key, considering that beets are thirsty vegetables, particularly in warm temperatures where proper drainage is also vital because of the length of their roots.

Jeanne McHale is a researcher in physical chemistry who analyses beets to develop sustainable solar energy systems by working with betanin, the component that gives them their unique colour. She studies it to use it as replace for photovoltaic cells in solar panels.<sup>308</sup> The toxicity of these cells is the main reason why solar energy is unsustainable. The research of McHale could help alleviate the energy crisis which is one of the leading causes of the current climate crisis.<sup>309</sup>

Betanin stimulates blood flow to the brain and improves certain cognitive functions, as is suggested by chemistry researcher Li-June Ming<sup>310</sup> and DM Jonathan Burdette.<sup>311</sup> Ming studies the composition of betanin to slow down the speed at which Alzheimer attacks the brain.<sup>312</sup> This disease occurs when the energy reserve accumulated in the brain decreases, and the brain can no longer counteract the detrimental effects of entropy.<sup>313</sup> Considering the ongoing Alzheimer epidemic, Ming's research could benefit millions and save thousands of lives, as revealed by the most recent public health statistics.<sup>314</sup>

## The Title

In 5 billion years, there will be one last perfect day on earth (...) then the sun will begin to die, life will die out, the oceans will boil and finally evaporate.<sup>315</sup>

(Carl Sagan)

By considering the environmental and medicinal possibility of beets, the title of this piece refers to the last day before entropy begins to attack the unprotected brain of Alzheimer's patients, and to the last day in which the climate conditions of the earth will be fitting for life. The title *Un último día perfecto* suggests optimism within a context of disillusion in which the future emerges as precarious, and where the present day and our possibility to enjoy and cherish it allows us to delay

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<sup>308</sup> McHale, J. (2011) *Improved efficiency of betanin-based dye-sensitized solar cells*. Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology A Chemistry N. 22.

<sup>309</sup> McHale, J. (2011) *Improved efficiency of betanin-based dye-sensitized solar cells*. Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology A Chemistry N. 22.

<sup>310</sup> Ming, J. (2018) *Lecture at the 255th National Meeting & Exposition of the American Chemical Society*.

<sup>311</sup> Burdette, H. et al (2016) *Beet Root Juice: An Ergogenic Aid for Exercise and the Aging Brain*. The Journals of Gerontology.

<sup>312</sup> Ming, J. (2018) *Lecture at the 255th National Meeting & Exposition of the American Chemical Society*.

<sup>313</sup> Drachman, D. (2006) *Aging of the brain, entropy, and Alzheimer disease*. PubMed.

<sup>314</sup> Alzheimer's Association (2020) *Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures*.

<sup>315</sup> Sagan, C. (1980) *Cosmos*. Random House. (p. 231)

our encounter with an uncertain tomorrow. These ideas suggest the context in contemporaneity in which this piece claims relevance. Contemporaneity in the sense that G. Douglas Barrett addresses it in the essay *Contemporary Art and the Problem of Music: Towards a Musical Contemporary Art*.<sup>316</sup> For him, the contemporary implies a necessary encounter with struggle where we cannot stay outside or avoid its pervasiveness, but only “(...) negotiate particular conditions through the production of meaning.”<sup>317</sup> Barrett’s ideas about contemporaneity and meaning connect with the weak model of resistance posited by Brandon LaBelle and the geography of sound presented by Salomé Voegelin, in which the joy of everyday life and the alliances and collaborations that they encourage help to contest the adversity and precarity of contemporary times.

### **The installation**

*One Last Perfect Day* consists of five elements: a beet crop, a LED lamp for indoor horticulture, a multi-channel composition, a microphone connected to a transducer device, and a processed video of the sun filmed by NASA, which is not copyrighted.

For this project, I initially created a small hortiacoustic prototype in my studio (Figure 30) where I grew Boltardy beets from seed in large pots placed near a window. My initial point of contact with the material of beets and with horticulture was developed with the help of Elena Villamil, artist and gardener Cristina Ochoa, and musician and horticulturist Dallas Simpson. I also followed YouTube videos that instruct on how to grow beets.<sup>318</sup> In my liminal enterprise with beetroot, I faced moments of concern regarding leggy stems and yellow leaves product of insufficient lighting, overwatered soil caused by using inefficient methods to measure humidity. Also, an infestation of mites and fungus gnats challenged me in this process. These contingent situations were overcome with success, thanks to the openness, generosity, and enormous encouragement that I received from experienced horticulturists. The small indoor **horticultural prototype** that I assembled was later replicated in the museum after a laborious process where the production of Jorge Barco was vital. He was assisted by the agricultural project *Siembraviva*, and the artificial lighting enterprise Lumen. Considering the current public health crisis, I could not travel to Colombia and direct the montage in person as was initially planned.

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<sup>316</sup> Barret, G. (2021) *Contemporary Art and the Problem of Music: Towards a Musical Contemporary Art*. *Twentieth-Century Music*, 18, 223-248.

<sup>317</sup> Barret, G. (2021) *Contemporary Art and the Problem of Music: Towards a Musical Contemporary Art*. *Twentieth-Century Music*, 18, 223-248. (page 233)

<sup>318</sup> YouTube search engine [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=how+to+grow+beets](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=how+to+grow+beets) (Last visited July 22nd 2021)



**Figure 30:** Vélez, D. (2021) *One Last Perfect Day*.

To provide the plants with light in the windowless museum salon, we worked with artificial light using **LED lamps** (Figure 31) that operate with small energy consumption. In the installation, the lamps and the violet luminous element highlight the unfitting conditions for the horticulture crops in the room. This points out the secrecy and inconspicuousness in which resistance operates in contemporaneity as is suggested by Brandon LaBelle's theories. The lamps and violet light connect my piece with Superflux in *Mitigation of Shock*,<sup>319</sup> referring to an uncertain and precarious future where our relationship with food could change dramatically.

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<sup>319</sup> Superflux (2019) *Mitigation of Shock*.



**Figure 31:** Vélez, D. (2021) *One Last Perfect Day*. Courtesy of MAMM.

Simultaneously to growing the beets in my studio, I composed a **multichannel piece** for six speakers considering the beetroot crops as an auditorium. This process required establishing a point of intersubjective acoustic convergence in which I could engage with the perception of sound in vegetables. This was created in consideration of several theories about the acoustics of plants.

The project *Sonic bloom organic farming made easy!* developed by the researcher in agricultural acoustics, Dan Carlson, was a key reference in the composition of this piece. His ideas, which I read about in the essay *Advances in Effects of Sound Waves on Plants*,<sup>320</sup> authored by Rada Hassanien, suggest that plants show a positive reaction to sinusoidal waves above 3,000 Hz. For Carlson, these sounds can accelerate the growth of plants, increase the volume of the harvest, stimulate the development of leaves and flowers, improve resistance to diseases, and increase the reception of nutrients. Since

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<sup>320</sup> Hassanien, R. et al (2014) *Advances in Effects of Sound Waves on Plants*. Journal of Integrative Agriculture. (page 343)



tones over 3,000 Hz open the stomata in the epidermis of stems and leaves, and encourage better absorption of nitrogen, water, and other essential substances, he suggests.<sup>321</sup>

To stimulate the plants, I also examined the paper *Plants respond to leaf vibrations caused by insect herbivore chewing*,<sup>322</sup> authored by Heidi Appel and Rex Cocroft, whose research suggests that these sounds can strengthen the immune system of plants. With the knowledge that to capture the quiet sound of a snail chewing lettuce Chris Watson recorded it in an anechoic chamber,<sup>323</sup> and that insect documentaries use Foley techniques to bring to life their biting sounds,<sup>324</sup> I decided to recreate them considering the difficulties of working in an anechoic chamber with insects. I approached sound design to exaggerate and even give a fictional sense to insect sounds. For this, I used beet slicing and pan-frying sounds recorded with a Sennheiser MKE 600 shotgun microphone to achieve detail and filter the environmental kitchen sounds. These sounds worked as fruitful raw material for sound design which I approached by making modifications of pitch and EQ in Logic and Audacity, and by sampling and sequencing the material. Furthermore, I applied subtle noise effects that sharpened their textures and created a sensation of tactile proximity and magnification.

The relation between insects, plants and sound is also studied by Axel Michelsen<sup>325</sup> who suggests that vegetables are used as acoustic transducers by some species to amplify their sounds. The sounds made by insects in the range of 100 Hz and 250 Hz are often imperceptible, hence the need of these species to use plants to amplify them. Michelsen's theories were another consideration in my examination of sine tones in this piece which gave to the second quarter of the composition (min. 04:20-09:43) a sinister and gloomy aura that reflects the uncertainty and precarity in which this installation considers contemporaneity.

The research of Itzhak Khait<sup>326</sup> and Michael Perks<sup>327</sup> suggest that vegetables produce vibrations ranging between 20 Hz and 100 Hz when they are thirsty. This is a consequence of a process known as cavitation where air bubbles form and implode in the xylem tubes. In consideration of the ideas of Khait and Perks, I worked with sinusoidal tones ranging from 40 Hz to 100 Hz, to

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<sup>321</sup> Hassanien, R. et al (2014) Advances in Effects of Sound Waves on Plants. Journal of Integrative Agriculture. (page 336)

<sup>322</sup> Appel H., Cocroft R. (2014) *Plants respond to leaf vibrations caused by insect herbivore chewing*. Oecologia.

<sup>323</sup> How Loud is a Slithering Snail? (2012) BBC One. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZ4Bh2RkQhM> (Last visited May 15th 2021)

<sup>324</sup> Acorn, J. (2015) *Insects and the Soundscape*. American Entomologist, Volume 61, Issue 4

<sup>325</sup> Michelsen, A (1982) *Transmission Channels for Insect Vibrational Songs*. Springer.

<sup>326</sup> Khait, I. (2019) *Plants emit informative airborne sounds under stress*. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

<sup>327</sup> Perks, M. (2004) *Xylem acoustic signals from mature Pinus sylvestris during an extended drought*. Annals of Forest Science.

subtly replicate the call of the thirsty plants whereby low vibrating sounds accentuate the gloominess of Sagan's forecast.

In the process of composition, I created a vast archive of audio files composed of lengthy sinusoidal tones and processed cooking sounds, all of which covered the ranges and qualities previously mentioned. For this, I used Ableton Live as a sequencer in some parts, and a basic software sampler from Reason in others. Both DAW, allowed me to work with multiple samples and to have a visual reference of the structures as I created them. In the Ableton sessions, I loaded the files as loops which I performed by simultaneously triggering and manipulating the intensity of the different channels using a Korg USB MIDI controller. In the Reason parts, I loaded the sounds in several samplers and performed them as lengthy pads and noises using an M-Audio Oxygen 25 MIDI keyboard, where every individual session became a new layer, gradually increasing the depth and complexity of the composition. As I expected, the fragments created in Ableton sound circular and rhythmic, while the fragments made in Reason suggest linear and elongated structures. The resulting parts were later assembled in Logic and Audacity, where some additional sampling and editing was done. The spatialization was finalized in the EMS5 studio of the university. Here, I sought to fill the space with the moving and resonating presence of sine tones and noisy insect sounds while presenting interesting spatial correspondences between the speakers.

To stimulate the growth of beets in the museum, we placed a condenser microphone connected to a transducing device to project the sound of the voice directly to the pots (Figures 32 and 33). This is an open invitation to the spectators to speak to the plants and nourish them with their voices. The human voice can have positive effects on the growth of vegetables according to studies conducted by the Royal Society of Horticulturists<sup>328</sup> in England and the National Institute of Agricultural Biotechnology in South Korea.<sup>329</sup> The response to the human voice is especially positive when the sound stimulus reaches levels near 60 dB, which coincide with the average intensity of a conversation. This was possible using a Dayton Audio BCT-3 Transducer, a Lepy LP-2024A amplifier and a Shure SM87A microphone.

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<sup>328</sup> Darwin, S. (2009) quoted in the RHS Grow Your Own campaign. *Darwin relative helps plants grow*. BBC News website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/surrey/8113718.stm> (Accessed June 6th 22nd 2021)

<sup>329</sup> Jung, J. et al (2018) *Beyond Chemical Triggers: Evidence for Sound-Evoked Physiological Reactions in Plants*. *Frontiers in plant science*, 9, 25.



**Figure 32:** Vélez, D. (2021) *One Last Perfect Day*. Courtesy of MAMM.



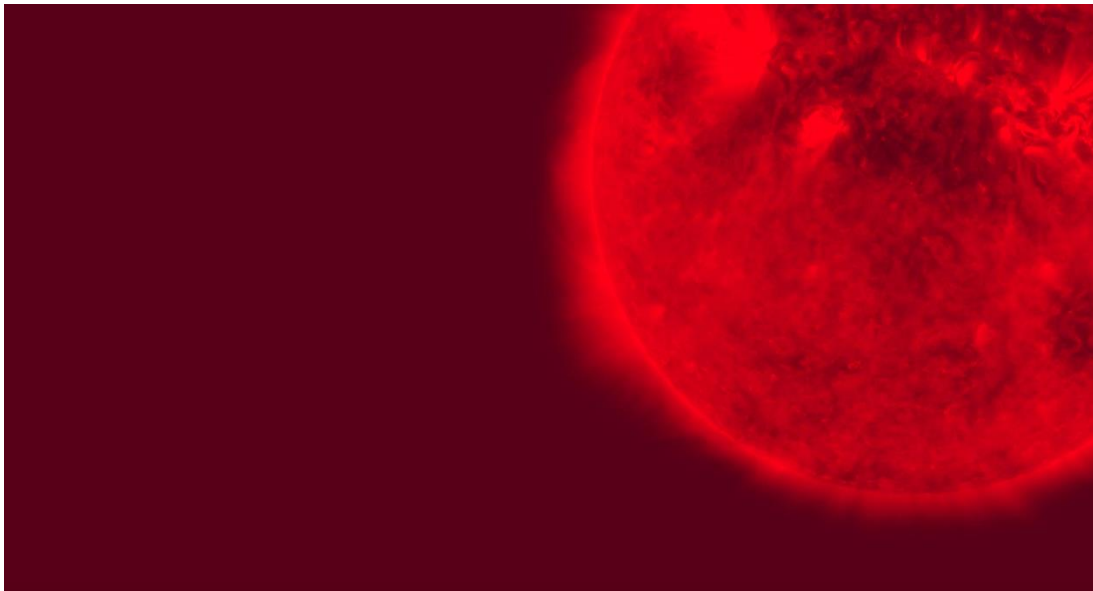
**Figure 33:** Vélez, D. (2021) *One Last Perfect Day*. Courtesy of MAMM.

The installation was completed with a video which samples the footage titled *A Decade of the Sun*<sup>330</sup> filmed by NASA (Figure 34) and made available without copyright restrictions in 2020. In the

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<sup>330</sup> Wiessinger, S. (2020) *A Decade of the Sun*. NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. NASA.

source video, the sun is filmed for 10 years while the footage was speeded up for a total duration of 61 minutes. For the exhibition, I took a fragment of 9s57s that presumably corresponds to 18 months and bled the sun into the upper right corner of the screen to suggest the presence of the eight planets that comprise the solar system. Furthermore, I replaced the black background of the sun with a violet tone that resembles the colour of betanin and that matches the tonality of the lamp's light. The idea of the video finds its origins when I learned that the Beijing mayoralty placed giant screens in the streets with an image of the sun which could not be seen because of the high levels of contamination. The video makes a clear reference to the Sagan quote that gave this installation its title and seeks to act in luminal synergy with the lamp. The circularity in the movement of the sun creates an interesting correspondence with the sine tones while the explosions of the solar flares produce an interesting synergy with the sound design of insects chewing.



**Figure 34:** Vélez, D. (2021) *One Last Perfect Day*.

## Notes

To witness the growth of the curly green leaves, the dispersion of the intense violet venations, the bolstering of the lively violet stems and the formation of the rounded radiant bulbs was a fascinating experience. This unveiled the material plasticity of the beets, which helped me to communicate with them. In response to the colours, shapes, and textures of the vegetables, I fed and bolstered them. Here, the theories of Jane Bennett about the vitality of food manifested with

great visual, tactile, and flavourful poetry. The dedication and time that I devoted to them rewarded me with tasty leaves, stems and medium-sized bulbs that created a symbiotic circular exchange between the plants and me.

The combination of vocal, electronic, and cooking sounds positively stimulated the growth of the stems, leaves and bulbs in my studio and the museum salon, considering studies about indoor agriculture made by the University of Illinois.<sup>331</sup> This installation aspired to create sonic art for beet plants by establishing an intersubjective exchange with them. Working this way permeated the sensibility of my work with subtle densities and ethereal qualities, similar to *Beige is the True Colour of Melancholy* or *Yuca Hervida*, which were also composed with sinusoidal tones and kitchen recordings. Another aspect in which this piece contributed to my creative process, can be assessed in the approach to cooking recordings. Here, the aim to evoke insects chipping and chewing allowed me to explore this material in ways I had not done before, resulting in subtle coarse surfaces with sharp textures developing in repetitive patterns. In the concerts and previous installations, I did not attempt to make major pitch modifications as a gesture of respect with these sounds and the intersubjective context in which they were approached. The consideration of Sagan's apocalyptic futuristic visions and Barrett's post-historic pessimism suggested aesthetics that emphasised the contrast between artificial (sine tones) and organic (insect) sensibilities. The artificial-natural element of contrast was also suggested in the visual aspect of this piece. The LED light and the exhibited video, contrasted in the exhibition room with the organic presence of the beets and with the soil.

To grow my own beets was a liminal step in a path in which I seek to gradually reclaim autonomy and sovereignty over some of the ingredients that I use. As Brandon LaBelle suggest, resisting the struggle of contemporaneity requires discreet but steady advancements that when replicated as collective actions can present great magnitudes. In this sense, this piece inspired a group of Huddersfield artists and engineers to create The Beetroot Collective, of which I am a member. Here, we will seek to make collective art projects considering the poetic possibilities of beet demonstrated on *One Last Perfect Day*, in which horticulture tenders its capacity to create alliances and collaborations.

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<sup>331</sup> Watch your garden grow (website) University of Illinois. <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/veggies/beet.cfm> (Accessed July 22nd 2021)

## **Methodological Considerations**

To record the beet cooking sounds I worked with a Sennheiser MKE 600 and Zoom H4 as recording device. For the performance and composition, I worked with Reason, Ableton, Audacity, a Korg USB MIDI controller and an M-Audio Oxygen 25 MIDI keyboard. I utilized Logic and Audition in the composition and spatialization process. In the museum, the production used a Dayton Audio BCT-3 Transducer, a Lepy LP-2024A amplifier and a Shure SM87A microphone.

### **3.12 Kitchens as Vibrant Places with Musical Possibility**

This CCSA virtual workshop was presented in Los Andes University in Bogotá, Colombia on the 24th of February and the 3rd of March of 2021. I was invited by the art department to direct a virtual workshop, via Zoom, for their MA students. As was expressed before in this thesis in reference to my piece *Yuca Hervida*, CCSA experienced adverse conditions after the public health crisis began. However, this demonstrated the capacity of this practice to adapt and, furthermore, to expand its scope in terms of its creation and contribution. This workshop is another example of the strategies and methodologies that I developed to expand the possibilities of CCSA.

The two-day workshop invited the students to explore the acoustic materiality of food to create experiences of attentive listening and to record the sounds that propitiate that experience.

In the first day, the group of 15 students was instructed to prepare a meal in their houses and record its preparation. The purpose was to cook in a quiet scenario where the sounds could be perceived and recorded in detail and intensely. When I invited the participants to shut down the kitchen vents, I wanted to reveal the cultural marginalization of food sounds, which is a key material consideration in this research. Once the exercise was finished, we gathered by virtual means to enjoy our preparations and share our experiences. On the second day, participants were asked to listen to their recordings and create a piece in which they had the freedom to process (or not) the material, as much as they wanted.



**Figure 35:** The dish prepared by Melissa Pareja in the CCSA workshop.

## **Review**

After a brief introduction, on the first day, I presented them how CCSA developed, and what its considerations were, and then we went to our kitchens to cook. The dishes were selected by them, under the conditions that their preparations could not take longer than 60 minutes (Figure 35). They were recommended not to bring the computers to the kitchens to avoid distractions and to focus on the listening and recording. After one hour of cooking, we all sat down with our plates filled to enjoy the preparation in front of the cameras while discussing our experiences. In the fruitful discussion, they manifested that by cooking in silence a universe of compelling textures, patterns and shapes emerged. This exercise allowed them to understand and perceive the material of sound and food in a different, unheard way, which is one of the most important considerations of CCSA

The resulting pieces reflected the individual approach they used to engage with the exercise. They focused on diverse aspects such as the percussive possibilities of utensil handling or the strong multisensory connection that emerged between aroma and sound.

To reflect on how this workshop activated their attentive listening and sensibility towards the material of food and sound, I will present some of their reflections.

I liked listening to myself and feeling different while I listened to my own cooking. I could hear each pasta seashell falling into the pot full of water. Food feels and tastes differently when we hear it. The body feels different when I listen.<sup>332</sup> (Jenny Contreras)

The experience of cooking with attentive listening and apparent silence allowed us to discover and enjoy the variety and richness of our surroundings, which often go unnoticed. The sounds, smells, textures and vibration of food and utensils begin to interact with each other and with us, creating a musicality that inhabited the space with evocative potential.<sup>333</sup> (Milena Espinosa)

The act of cooking brought together different intensities, textures, sound layers and temporalities, which surged when we heard with a particular disposition. Listening was a careful exercise that I established between my actions and the utensils in the kitchen. For moments, the materiality of some sounds had an expressive and warm atmospheric potential in its relationship with other senses. This was the case when I chopped ginger. Also, there was an element of contingency that was present when cooking failures were recorded.<sup>334</sup> (Sonia Rojas)

### **3.13 CCSA Video Portfolio of Multisensory Collaborative Cooking Performances**

To present the CCSA multisensory performances in this thesis confronted me with a material paradox. How could I exhibit these works where the olfactory and gustatory experiences are of equal relevance to the auditory? Was audio documentation sufficient to demonstrate the radiance and vibrance of these events? Although the sound documentation of some of these concerts was good and interesting as audio material, I felt that they did not reflect aspects that are important to review these works such as:

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<sup>332</sup> Translated from Contreras, J. (2021) Workshop Memoirs by David Vélez. Personal Archive.

<sup>333</sup> Translated from Espinosa, M. (2021) Workshop Memoirs by David Vélez. Personal Archive.

<sup>334</sup> Translated from Rojas, S. (2021) Workshop Memoirs by David Vélez. Personal Archive.



- The correspondences between the performance of the cooks and my own
- The setting-up of the microphones and the piezoelectric devices
- The disposition of the audience
- The scenarios in which these events were presented

These considerations led me to use audio and video to present these pieces in this thesis. Initially, I edited individual videos for each concert but after discussing this material with my supervisor and some collaborators, we agreed that it was more interesting to condense the footage in a single piece. This video was meant to highlight the most significant and distinctive moments of every concert and present them as a cohesive unit. For this, I edited six-minute fragments for each performance and put them together with credits for a 31m16s video. The piece summarized the collaborators, dishes, sounds, ideas, and circumstances that made these performances possible. The concerts are presented in the chronological order in which they took place, from more recent to less recent, and each performance was documented in a particular way, considering that I worked with different videographers who were granted creative freedom under basic guidance.

In *Ecos de la Chicha*, I worked with the production team of La Radio Criolla who used three cameras, one static GoPro capturing with wide lenses the totality of the space, one Blackmagic camera which focused on the kitchen counter and a Canon EOS 5D to film the audience. This set up allowed me to navigate through different aspects of the performance and illustrate its vibrance, radiance and vitality. The fragments that I selected in the editing process focused on Yudy's singing, the performance with the grinder, and the conclusion of the concert which are for me, the most compelling parts of the performance. This video presents Elena's garden as a crucial aspect on this performance. The sound recordings were made by Camilo using an M-Audio Fast Track USB interface receiving signal directly from the mixer.

In *Moravia*, I worked with Rossana Uribe who used two cameras, one static GoPro and one Sony A7 III. The GoPro recorded the totality of the performance while the A7 III was used by her to seize the most exciting moments of the performance. I only used the Sony footage considering the great work Rosanna did focusing on details, capturing the movement of the shouters, revealing the textures and colours of the cooking processes, and presenting the disposition of the audience. Her footage allowed me to create a narrative sequence in which the viewer can navigate through different moments of the *Bandeja Paisa* preparation guided by the testimonials of Cleyda and the shouting sounds of Alex and Ofelia. The video recordings were made using the cardioid

microphones of a Zoom H4 and a Focusrite Scarlett 18i8 interface receiving its signal from the mixing console. The video favoured the Zoom recordings for the sense of space they present.

In *The Caribbean in Yorkshire*, we had technical issues with the video camera therefore I edited the video using a series of photos taken by Stephen Harvey. The sound recordings were made by Jo Kennedy using two DPA 4011A and a Sound Devices CL-8 recorder.

In *Se lo comieron todo* I set up a GoPro camera that focused on Christian's cooking which allowed me to see the interaction between him and the utensils. Also, this video shows *Mano de Monja's* kitchen which has a view to the coast of Valparaíso connecting the video with a conceptual aspect of this performance. To edit this fragment, I traversed the different cooking techniques executed by Christian. The sound recordings were made connecting a Zoom H4 directly to the mixer.

In 台灣現場烹飪, I worked with Santiago Rodríguez, who used a Panasonic Lumix FZ1000 II to capture the different cooking techniques of Cyanching's cooking in detail. His footage allowed me, in editing, to suggest moments with interesting rhythmic patterns in which Cyanching slices the ingredients as well as the coarse and textural sounds of her frying preparations. The recordings were made using a Sennheiser MKE 600 connected to the Panasonic camera and later mixed with the original computer live rendered audio from Ableton, and a room recording made with a Zoom H4.

Altogether, this 31m16s video steers through different aspects of CCSA multisensory performances, presenting them as a cohesive unit of individual and particular projects with their artistic considerations.

## 4. Conclusions

This project presented two basic questions in the Introduction, developed after four years of research and creative practice.

- 1) How can the Collaborative Culinary Sound Art (CCSA) practice evidence the artistic significance of food sounds which resonate in circumstances of resistance?
- 2) What are the artistic considerations and methodologies required to demonstrate this significance?

The artistic significance of the material and collaborative aspects of CCSA was examined in this project by focusing its practice and theory in three key aspects:

- The intersubjectivity of sound and listening
- The strategic possibility of sound and food in the politics of contemporaneity
- The multisensory connection between sound, smell, and taste

**Intersubjectivity** in CCSA was considered in the way Salomé Voegelin approaches it in her theories referenced in the Research Context of this thesis. Here, the listener exists in the realm of the sonic in terms of their complicity with it. Complicity was an essential consideration in the approach to the sounds, flavours and scents of the stories and circumstances of resistance examined in the Portfolio. Listening was key in the recording process and as part of my fieldwork, taking notes and establishing familiarity with the subject of my examination. Here, I lent my ear and opened the microphone to such stories and circumstances moved by the courage, creativity and thrill in which adversity, dependency and territorial dislocations are contested in contemporary times. Furthermore, the sounds examined in this project were considered in correspondence to the research that they were subject to. This was important to engage with their cultural significance and environmental impact, as part of the intersubjective creative processes fulfilled here.

The **strategic** possibility of sound and food in the politics of contemporaneity was considered in CCSA, in correspondence with the theories about the politics of sound of Voegelin and Brandon

LaBelle, and with the theories about the politics of food by Jane Bennett, Joseph Beuys, and Patrick Holden and Michael Pimbert in *The Politics of Food*.<sup>335</sup> In this portfolio of pieces, CCSA considered strategic aspects of sound connected with its autonomy from visuality and its capacity to arouse the public. The strategic aspects of food were contemplated in the autonomy and joy that food can provide to individuals and communities, and its possibility to create alliances and networks of cooperation.

The **multisensory and multidimensional** connection between sound and food was examined in this portfolio to understand its strategic considerations. These contemplations relate to the capacity of this material to connect bodies and spaces in which the cooking hearth, the luscious scents and the cooking sounds operated in vibrant and radiant synergy. In this portfolio, I expanded my intersubjective approach to sound and listening to the multidimensional material of food and sound, approaching flavours and scents beyond my subjectivity.

To examine its three essential artistic considerations, CCSA developed a series of artistic ideas, concepts, and methodologies in detail.

- The marginalization of food sounds in culinary culture and food literature provides them with artistic possibilities, especially bearing in mind the lack of attention they draw and the inconspicuousness with which they resonate. This concern was key in the selection of sound to approach food, considering theories about sound and resistance by Brandon LaBelle and Salomé Voegelin. This was noted when I invited the audience of CCSA performances to bind or close their eyes and experience the acoustics of food while rescinding from the pervading cultural dependency on visuality
- The material of cooking sounds proves their cultural marginality when their artistic examination pointed to the architectural and product design practices that silence them. This is a subject explored in the production of *Turmeric* and the workshop *Kitchens as Vibrant Places with Musical Possibility*
- The shared physical and perceptual attributes of sound, aroma, and heat demonstrate their possibility to connect, propagate and disseminate in complete invisibility. This was a strategic consideration in multisensory CCSA performances where the acousmatic experience of the spectators was guided by the senses of hearing, smell and taste, and by

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<sup>335</sup> Cezar, A., Burrows, D. (2019) *Politics of Food*. Sternberg Press.

the proximity to the cooking hearth. This was the case in *Ecos de la Chicha*, where the smoky grilled preparations warmly invaded the space in synergy with the sound waves

- The analysis of the correspondences between the olfactory and gustatory perception of food reveals the complexity of cultural and social biases connected with discrimination and exclusion. This was the conceptual axis of *Turmeric* and its study of culinary culture and discrimination in the UK
- The examination of food trading sounds illustrates the strategic possibility of the sonic to agitate the public and unveil cultural and political aspects of the community in which they resonate, as occurred with the food trader community in *The Dying Art of Food Market Shouting*
- The analysis of the assemblages that connect horticulture, food trading and cooking present the artistic relevance of the theories that approach food as autonomous and actant organic material, capable of using our bodies and social assemblages to deploy. These assemblages were examined in *Turmeric*, *The Caribbean in Yorkshire* and *They Ate it All*
- The possibility of sine waves to stimulate vegetable growth confirm how intersubjectivity in CCSA transcends anthropocentric thoughts, providing electronically generated sounds with new practical possibilities in sound and food art, and in the study of the perception of sound in plants. This can be assessed in *One Last Perfect Day*
- The sounds of food traders deliver poetical and political correspondence between artmaking and everyday life, where resistance connects them. Here, the obsolescence of market shouting as a commercial endeavour acquired a new significance in sound art evidenced in *The Dying Art of Food Market Shouting*
- The approach to kitchen conversations in correspondence with Didier Anzou theories present them in CCSA with a special significance tying sound and nourishment and creating a special relationship between cook and audience. This can be heard in my collaboration with Ruchi, Sister Sandra, Elena, Cleyda and Christian

- The possibility of food sound recordings to break apart signifier/signified linguistic structures, suggested by Tara Brabazon, signal strategic aspects considered in CCSA. This can be assessed in the way in which cooking sounds were received in multisensory live cooking performances versus the solely acoustic compositions and installations
- The sonic examination of food as means of resistance in this portfolio presents paradoxes about the alimentary, the politic and the poetic. While in *Turmeric* the right of immigrants to their traditional food is examined in its social significance, pieces like *Ecos de la Chicha* and *Moravia* and *One Last Perfect Day* suggest an approach to food based on locality, autonomy, minimum transportation, and decreased environmental impact
- The possibility of food nutrients to comfort the body of the listeners of CCSA multisensory performances and to provide them with chemical energy indicate that working with food sounds requires considerations that expand sonic aspects into the chemical and biological. These are important deliberations in *Ecos de la Chicha* and *One Last Perfect Day*

#### 4.1 Final Reflections

As Eduardo Viveiros de Castro suggested in the Research Context of this thesis, ethnographic examination is critical of colonial thought when the experience and research in the field disentangle the way in which the observer understands and perceives themselves and their own culture and community. This research and my experience creating the pieces of its portfolio transformed how I understand my artistic practice in contemporaneity. To consider the sounds of food -and to do so in circumstances of resistance- welcomed a universe of ideas, concepts, sensibilities, materials, and experiences into my work that ultimately connected it with its social and political context. To inspect food by means of sound brought together my practice with my everyday life even closer as is shown in *One Last Perfect Day* where I was able to feed on the material of my work.

To focus on the acoustics of food as intersubjective material nurtured my work with an element of resistance towards my control over my practice. Here, food sounds permeated my practice with their textures, shapes, colours, rhythms, and with the subjectivities and sensibilities of my collaborators. Furthermore, food sounds and their cultural and social significance introduced

theoretical considerations that also had agency in my creative process. It is important to mention that CCSA presented me with a series of technical artistic considerations that are specific to its material aspects. This is visible in the production of multisensory cooking concerts where the audio requirements are considered together with culinary aspects, keeping in mind that the different cooking techniques require decisions about the microphones and piezo set-up. Furthermore, my appropriation of basic ethnographic methodologies required me to develop sensibilities, skills and ethical considerations that are specific for CCSA, which connect with how I refer to resistance in this thesis.

When Mark Peter Wright refers to sound as "...a sensibility rather than a medium or an object"<sup>336</sup> in the Research Context of this thesis, it helps me to illustrate how I approached the material of food sounds in this project. When Deleuze quoted Paul Klee's "The people that are missing",<sup>337</sup> it became clear to me that my work aims to act like a shout that, in the absence of a receptor, occupies the void with receiving possibility. Here, the shout is the voice that I gave in my work to those that resist struggle, precarity and uncertainty using food. The absence of the receptor is the potential lack of social sensibility and elitism in the arts of sound, as was analysed in this thesis in the ideas of Cornelius Cardew and Tony Harrington in the Introduction of this thesis. The receiving possibility is the capacity of my work to invite the audience of CCSA works to solidarize with the circumstances of struggle, precarity and uncertainty presented in my pieces.

"The people that are missing" present metaphoric, conceptual, and material respects in my work. They are apparent in the cooking sounds and vocal sounds of singing, murmuring, shouting and kitchen conversations that constitute CCSA pieces. These sounds became part of my practice with the mediation of food. Vocal and cooking sounds enriched my work and granted it elements in which I encounter sensibility and affection. In correspondence with Harald Lemke's analysis of Joseph Beuys work with food, the material, collaborative, and theoretical considerations of CSSA have enriched my practice while providing it with an ethos. Here, the ethos operates as a vector of ethical, poetical, and political considerations that give my practice a social significance and relevance in its artistic context.

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<sup>336</sup> Peter Wright, M. (2015) Contact Zones and Elsewhere Fields. CRISAP. (page 157)

<sup>337</sup> Klee, P. (1924) Actor's Mask text. (page 1)

## 4.2 Reception

Most of the pieces developed under CCSA were commissioned by curators who learned about my practice with food sounds and invited me to develop and present projects in the galleries, museums, festivals, and salons mentioned in the Portfolio Chapter. This demonstrates the interest that the acoustics of culinary resistance arouses in the broad field of sonic arts, looking at the diverse backgrounds of curators Ryoko Akama, Ana María Ruiz Valencia, Fernando Godoy, Jorge Barco and Camilo Cantor. Taking into account the complex logistics and extensive fieldwork involved in the portfolio of projects of this research, the support of institutions like the University of Huddersfield, Tsonami, Interno Undici, 45 SNA, AME, Parque Explora museum and the MAMM museum were vital for the sustainability of this project and its continuous development.

The CCSA pieces presented drew positive reactions from the spectators, lecture attendees and workshop participants as was illustrated in the Portfolio Chapter of this thesis. To be able to share and transmit the thinking and sensibility developed in this research is rewarding. The comments about my work made by Faiz S. Hussain and Joe Hopkinson presented me with interesting reflections about the intersubjectivity of listening, considering the spectators of CCSA pieces.

Slowly, CCSA began to draw the interest of editors and researchers who have invited me to write and speak about my work with food sounds in different publications. CARMA is an artistic academic journal that interviewed me in 2018 about my work with food and migration for their YouTube channel,<sup>338</sup> and The Mass is a publication that requested me to write an article in 2020 about my interest in food and sound.<sup>339</sup> More recently, in 2021, artist and art critic Somnath Bhatt interviewed me for MOLD,<sup>340</sup> a journal in contemporary food culture and politics. Here I was able to reflect and express the most important considerations of my research, thanks to the insightful questions made by Bhatt and his interest in my practice.

Sound researchers like Budhaditya Chattopadhyay and Irving Duarte have interviewed me as part of their projects. Chattopadhyay was interested in aspects regarding decoloniality in food sounds, and the outcome of our exchange will be published in his book *Sound Production Practices in the Global South: Beyond Immersion*.<sup>341</sup> Duarte enquired about my work with food traders and the politics of

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<sup>338</sup> Vélez, D. (2018) Interview for CARMA Journal. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oV3W5ydEHmQ&t=2s> (Last visited April 22nd 2021)

<sup>339</sup> Vélez, D. (2020) *The Aesthetics of Food and Sound*. The Mass January 2020. <https://www.the-mass.com/january-2020>

<sup>340</sup> Vélez, D. Interviewed by Somnath Bhatt (2021) *The Sound Food makes*. Interview for MOLD. <https://thisismold.com/gut-vision/the-sound-food-makes>

<sup>341</sup> Chattopadhyay, B. (2021) *Sound Production Practices in the Global South: Beyond Immersion*. Palgrave Macmillan.



public space sound art, for his research project *Arte Sonoro Latinoamericano*.<sup>342</sup> It was gratifying to realise that my research can be significant to others, helping them understand aspects of their work and analyse sonic arts in depth and detail. Institutions like Universidad de Valparaíso in Chile, Universidad de Pamplona in Colombia, Los Andes University in Colombia, and the Reveal cooperative project based in London and Den Haag, invited me to present lectures about CCSA in physical and virtual events, which was a great opportunity to discuss the findings of this project.

Furthermore, it is rewarding for me to identify how the experiences and processes behind this portfolio of works connected and replicated in correspondence with the work of collaborators and curators. As was introduced in the Portfolio Chapter of this thesis, Fernando Godoy and Christian Castro, with whom we worked in *Se lo comieron todo*, curated and performed a series of radio programs for the sound art festival Tsonami, with the collaboration of Chilean sound artists and cooks. The resulting pieces demonstrated the broad aesthetic possibilities that surge from such a specific universe and showed me that the material correspondences between food and sound could reveal interesting things about sonic and culinary artmaking in contemporaneity.

### 4.3 Further Research

CCSA will seek to continue replicating its findings in a project titled *Cooking in the Dark*, where I aim to collaborate with visually impaired cooks focusing on the adversity they encounter and the importance of listening to resist it. I look to develop sonic art pieces, audio papers, essays and symposiums that study phenomenological doubt as presented and developed by Salomé Voegelin in her influential sound art theories drawing from concepts by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Edmund Husserl.<sup>343</sup> The outputs of this research will seek to exhibit how cognition and experience are gained in the non-visual scenarios, in which visually impaired individuals prepare food. Here, their unique and acute acoustic sensibility, help them face the doubt and uncertainty in which they encounter challenging culinary tasks that often leads to burns, cuts, and other injuries. In this project, the synesthetic correspondences between hearing and touch, taste, and smell, will also be studied.

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<sup>342</sup> Arte Sonoro Latinoamericano website [www.artesonorolatinoamericano.com](http://www.artesonorolatinoamericano.com) (Last visited June 15th 2021)

<sup>343</sup> Voegelin, S. (2010) *Listening to Noise and Silence*. Continuum.

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Title: **Concierto de Cocina #3** (in collaboration with Madi Castro and Felipe Rodríguez)

Format: Performance

Date: January 18<sup>th</sup> 2018

Venue: Convention Center, Antonio Nariño University  
Bogotá, Colombia

Title: **Concierto de Cocina #2** (in collaboration with Nobara Hayakawa and Felipe Rodríguez)

Format: Performance

Date: February 11<sup>th</sup> 2017

Venue: Private Apartment  
Bogotá, Colombia

Title: **Passaggi di Tempo** (in collaboration with Fernando Godoy)

Format: Public space performance

Date: July 24<sup>th</sup> 2016

Public space performance presented as part of the Liminaria residency  
Montefalcone, Italy

Title: **Adrift and Catastrophe**

Format: Performance

Date: February 8<sup>th</sup> 2013

Exhibiting space: Universidad Nacional de Colombia under the support of Rojo Gallery  
Bogotá, Colombia

Title: **Desayuno**

Format: Composition

Date: April 5<sup>th</sup> 2007

Label: Enough records

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