

Call for Sound Works

*Fielding*

Catherine Clover and Jordan Lacey

## Background to the project

*Fielding* is a research project oriented towards how sound can play a role in the greening of urban spaces. It forms the creative sonic component of a larger science project funded by an ARC Linkage Grant entitled *Designing Green Spaces for Biodiversity and Human Well-Being* conducted by Professor Sarah Bekessy and her team at Sustainability and Urban Planning RMIT University. Green spaces with a higher diversity of species deliver greater well-being and social benefits than less diverse spaces, yet there is little practical guidance for practitioners wishing to design urban green space to maximise biodiversity outcomes. Sarah's project will fill this gap, providing evidence of how features of urban design link with specific biodiversity outcomes.

The project will take place across numerous sites around the City of Melbourne and these sites will operate as modular experimental greening interventions. Our plot in the Sunken Courtyard at RMIT's city campus is one intervention that will contribute to this larger project. Our project will research the role that sound might contribute in:

- \*How people interact with the greener space through the role of the sonic
- \*How the plants respond to the recordings
- \*How the plants/sounds attract animals and birds and how their presence/absence affects the space, the plants as well as human interaction

*Fielding* will operate as one of Sarah's modular portable plots while extending the research to include our sonic considerations. This stage of *Fielding* is operating as a test or pilot project. We will be growing a diverse range of plants native to the greater Melbourne area, to be provided by Sarah's group. The portable approach allows the scientists to manipulate and experimentally control aspects of the environment to specifically test underlying mechanisms concerning human well-being in a way that has not been possible previously. Sound is a key component of biodiversity – of both animal, plant and human habitats – and one that is frequently overlooked. The role of sound is complex, particularly in cities. The sounds will be field recordings – external recordings – of the sonic components that make up a biodiverse habitat.

A structure will be installed at the site on which native plants of varying heights and types will be placed. The sound will be embedded in the structure so that it does not dominate the courtyard but is audible when passing by or approaching the plants.

The site is the Sunken Courtyard located at RMIT University's city campus in central Melbourne. It is a site surrounded by university buildings including one original bluestone wall from the old Melbourne gaol (1842). Students and staff use it for respite but as it is open to Russell Street via a pathway, it is also accessible to the general public. There is a typical urban ambient sound at the site as well as a

permanent buzzing from a gas distributor. There is one bed of established shrubs and bushes and two mature trees, but the site does not appear to attract wild animals. The centre of the space is covered in astroturf, with a central sunken (two steps down) 4.5m square area made of large bluestone bricks. It is here that the structure supporting the plants will be installed. RMIT students and staff from BA Sound, BDes(LArch) Landscape Architecture, MA Public Art and BA Fine Art are participating in the project.

## Context - Broken Ecologies

This is a call for field recordings (external two channel audio recordings) made in Melbourne's urban and suburban environment, including remnant grasslands in outer suburban areas. We are particularly interested in the concept of *broken ecologies* to be used as a starting point for the audio works. Rather than looking back or trying to emulate a kind of speculative pristine wilderness that may or may not have once existed, broken ecologies work with what we have now, embracing the maladaptive, mixed and complex conditions that we have in our cities today. Utilising terms from soundscape ecology the sources of sound that might be considered are geophonic, biophonic and anthropophonic. In the urban environment there will be overlap between these categories.

### 1. Geophony

Non-biological natural sources of sound, marine or terrestrial eg wind and water (saltwater, freshwater). Other examples are volcanoes and lava, earthquakes and plate tectonics, the movement of ice and glaciers etc. Note the timescale of the geophony is much longer term.

Also consider geophony – poet and cartographer Tim Robinson's idea about language to celebrate place

### 2. Biophony

Non-human non-domestic biological sounds such as wild animals, birds, insects, plants, trees. While the definition of the biophony excludes domestic animals and pets, we are interested in the sounds of these animals.

### 3. Anthropophony

Human sound in all its varieties.

## Requirements

We cannot provide a fee for selected works, but we can offer full credit of your work on the signage of the installation, on all printed matter associated with the project, and on the website. Also as *Fielding* is a test/pilot and is attached to a longer term science project, it has the potential for a larger realisation further down the track. All selected participants will be kept informed and considered a part of the longer term project as it evolves.

1. For this initial expression of interest please email weblinks eg personal website, Soundcloud etc. Don't attach sound files to an email, thanks.  
Email address - fieldingsound01@gmail.com
2. Format of initial audio:  
Length 2x15mins or 1x30mins  
MP3  
48000 Hz  
Stereo  
16bit

Maximum 2 works per individual, size limit of 100mb per submission. For those works selected, we will ask you to provide a 24 bit wav file of each work.

3. In addition, please also include:
  - \*Email contact info
  - \*200 words about the recording/s
  - \*A brief bio of 200 words
  - \*Headshot
  - \*A link to your website or equivalent

Deadline for submitted works 1 Feb 2018

Website

<https://fieldingsound.squarespace.com/>