

The aural world of Christian  
heritage at the  
Catharijneconvent: *Gospel.*  
*Muzikale reis van kracht en  
hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey  
of strength and hope)  
exhibition

María Luisa Guevara Tirado  
Student number: 7566719

RMA Thesis Art History  
GKRMV18002  
Supervisor: Victor Schmidt  
Second reader: Alcina Cortez (Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal)  
1s<sup>th</sup> August 2023  
Utrecht University, Department of Art History  
Graduate School of Humanities Programme, Research Master's

**The aural world of Christian heritage at the Catharijneconvent:  
*Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey of  
strength and hope) exhibition**

**María Luisa Guevara Tirado**

**Abstract**

**Keywords:** Gospel, intangible heritage, music, cultural artifacts, songs, musealization, Christianity, Evangelism, museum narrative

This thesis focuses on the musealization of gospel music at the Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, The Netherlands, with the temporary exhibition *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey of strength and hope), held between the 30th of September 2022 and the 10th of April 2023. Music has a place in museums now, as demonstrated by popular music exhibitions and sound art. Yet, the debate continues. Should sound be in a museum? Multi-sensoriality, inclusivity, and participation have changed how museums operate and present content to the public. In 2003, UNESCO recognized music as Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Music and musical instruments are semantic fields with status and meaning. Songs are cultural artefacts; they reflect the value and beliefs of the culture that produced them. Thus, songs preserve, transmit cultural heritage, and represent societal changes related to politics and economics. The Catharijneconvent, the national museum for art and Christianity in The Netherlands, became the first museum in the country to make an exhibition on gospel music. Why now? Why here? What is the reason behind this decision? This study aims to demonstrate that the Catharijneconvent's approach to incorporating music as a curatorial theme renewed Christian heritage, providing an exploration of an aural world via songs.

The data collection at the exhibition involved gathering information through qualitative research. The theoretical framework involved: art history, musicology, sociology, popular music studies, museum studies, and interviews with the different members of the exhibition team, the curator Rianneke van der Houwen, Willem Driebergen, the audiovisual advisor and research assistant, the designer Wiegert Ambagts from the design studio Namelok, based in Rotterdam; the sound designer and Professor Sara Lenzi from the University of Delft; the American curator Tyree-Boyd-Pates, who was responsible for the exhibition *How Sweet: Gospel in Los Angeles* at the California African American Museum (CAAM). *Gospel. Muzikale reis* was subjected to an extensive analysis, resulting in a theorization.

As more non-musical museums adopt popular music exhibitions, caring for rethinking their ocular-centric displays and integrating listening practices beyond using audio guides, it is clear that music as a curatorial theme has a potential yet to be explored. Therefore, the study case of *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* presented an opportunity to evaluate the importance of cultural artefacts, such as songs, and their

impact as a strategy to make sense of the aural world of Evangelism, renewing the art historical discourse.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter I:</b> <b>Altering perception: sound and music as a medium of meaning in museums</b>	<b>4</b>
<hr/>	
1.1 A historical background of ocularcentrism	6
1.2 The separation of sound and image	9
1.3 <i>Gesamtkunstwerk</i> and synesthesia: Avant-garde through Wagner, Baudelaire, and Kandinsky	12
1.4 The liberation of sound: sound art (before the term)	20
1.5 Sound as a curatorial theme	30
1.6 The transformation of museums: the Catharijneconvent & gospel	39
1.7 The Catharijneconvent and gospel: methodology, analytical Concepts, and framework	43
Conclusions	51
<b>Chapter II</b> <b>Listening to Christian heritage: The living dynamics of the past and the present, <i>Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop</i></b>	<b>53</b>
<hr/>	
2.1 Signifying and embodying: theorizing <i>Gospel Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop</i>	55
2.2 Making sense of sound with curator Rianneke van der Houwen	86
2.3 Gospel, a <i>Memoryscape</i> , <i>musick-ing</i> , and songs as a Representation of Christian heritage	90
58	
Conclusions	95
<b>Closing remarks</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>99</b>

## Introduction

**“Pauline Oliveros:** Listening for me, I want to connect in the broadest sense –it is not only listening to sound but also vibrations, understanding that we are vibrations. We are made of it.

**David Toop:** This seems to me one of the fundamental directions in which certain area of music has gone in this century.

**Pauline Oliveros:** Yes, I think it has done. It is working its way back to a spiritual development. Sound is leading energy in developing that. Giving people space to do that. So I think it is possible for people to get together and create a resonance that can help and amplify that spirituality, and without it having to be full of trappings or whatever, it is. It is an experience, and it can accumulate.”- **Interview January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1995, taken from**

***Inflamed Invisible: Collected Writings on Art and Sound, 1976-2018 by David Toop***

The departure point for this project was music iconography, which I have researched since my bachelor's. I thought I would develop a thesis about Mary Magdalene's musical traits, as the Master of the Female Half-Lengths depicted her playing the lute and reading music scores. I dedicated my bachelor's thesis to traditional music iconography, and it was time for a change. I played an audio track while defending my bachelor's thesis to make the audience aware that paintings could have sound. I focused on the music and the performance. But I did not think about the listener. To say it right, the embodied listener.

Reading about sound, I realized, like many other scholars, artists, and musicians, that we can not stop hearing. We can shut our eyes, hold our breath, and stand still. But covering our ears is not enough. The world is never silent. Hearing is internal.

I have been passionate about music since I was a child. Thanks to my dad, I learned to change a record needle. I was a member of the school choir for fourteen years. When I was fifteen, my mom gifted me her record collection. When I was sixteen, I started collecting records and curating my aural world. I developed an appreciation for sound. Leaving Mary Magdalene behind allowed me to transition from iconography to multi-sensorial experiences. The object of my study was in the Catharijneconvent in Utrecht: the exhibition *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey of strength and hope), held between the 30th of September 2022 and the 10th of April 2024. The exhibition was curated by Rianneke van der Houwen, curator of Dutch Protestantism, and co-curated by the Dutch Gospel and singer Shirma Rouse. Coincidentally, the museum made an exhibition about the many faces of Mary Magdalene from the 25th of June 2021 to the 9th of January 2022. One theme departing led me to the other, from iconography to the realm of gospel. After all, Mary Magdalene had been the subject of musical compositions since the sixteenth century.

“Western knowledge has tried to look upon the world. It has failed to understand that the world is not for the beholding. It is for hearing. It is not legible, but audible.” These are the opening lines for Jacques Attali's *Noise: The Political Economy of*

*Music* (1985).<sup>1</sup> There is no question about the predominance of sight in the hierarchy of the senses proposed by the West. The traditional museum reveals the need for an ocular-centric display of objects. Contemplation and silence go hand in hand.

The study of the senses has revealed their historical dimension; sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste are a product of place and time. The sensorium creates ways of understanding specific contexts. This aspect has become substantial for exhibition design and museum studies. In conjunction with insights into consumer culture, museums started to rethink what they bring to an audience.

Music has a place in museums now, as demonstrated by popular music exhibitions and sound art. Yet, the debate continues: Should sound be in a museum? The current museum practices of inclusivity, diversity, and immersion have changed the delivery of information. The audience is present; their senses are present. The perception of the visual, the aural, the spatial, language, and gestures is not separate; it is multi-modal. We understand as we experience. We learn not only by being shown but by doing, embodying.

My research has two chapters, each containing subchapters and conclusions. In the first chapter, I will discuss part of the historical background of ocularcentrism in the West to demonstrate how sight became the synonym of objectivity and truth. The separation between sound and image in the nineteenth century fueled artistic production that unified the sensorium via synesthesia. Yet, the cooperation between the aural and visible did not solidify, and this partition pushed artists and musicians to push the limits of conventional music practices. The Futurists, the Dadaists, pioneers like Edgar Varèse, Pierre Schaeffer, John Cage, and the Fluxus movement changed the conception around sound, space, and audience participation.

Sound became a curatorial theme for the first time in 1966, and from that moment onwards, featuring sound artists and multi-media works in museums gained recognition, forever changing the exhibition space. Thus, I will discuss the changes in curatorial practices, starting with the material turn and the renewed interest in the sensorium in the late 1990s. The final part of the chapter will deal with the consolidation of popular music as a theme for exhibitions. I argue all these transformations made it possible for the Catharijneconvent to develop an exhibition that articulated the musical part of Christian heritage, Black gospel music.

In the second chapter, I will theorize the gospel exhibition based on the data I gathered from my multiple visits to the museum. Scholars, to name a few, such as Sarah Baker, Andy Bennet, Kevin Edge, Judith Dehail, Mario Schultze, Charles Fairchild, and particularly Marion Leonard, a pioneer in the field of popular music exhibitions, have

---

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Attali. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006, 10th print), 3.

published research output regarding popular music heritage. Popular music heritage is now in conversation with museum studies.

In 2022, Alcina Cortez developed a categorization of sound-based practices in museums. The curatorial concepts and strategies that emerge from these exhibitions are worth discussing to understand how to make sense of popular music. I will use Cortez's framework to discuss *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey of strength and hope). I will argue the exhibition worked as a *memoryscape* because of the component of oral stories in the narrative's construction. Further, I will discuss how the exhibition was an invitation to *musick-ing*. The term developed by the late musician Christopher Small refers to music as an activity, a verb. With this thesis, I hope to contribute to the premise that music is not just a gadget but a way to renew the representation of Christian heritage within a museum space.

## CHAPTER I: Altering perception: sound and music as a medium of meaning in museums

*“My desire to write about sound and for it to be read in a way that triggers listening comes from the conviction that in its invisible mobility, in its sticky and grasping liquidity there is something that augments, expands, and critically evaluates how we see the world and how we arrange ourselves to live in it.”*

Salomé Voegelin in *Sonic Possible Worlds: Hearing the Continuum of Sound*.

Music and sound unfold in time and listening offers other levels of experience. Western knowledge privileged sight over the other senses. Museums became places of silent contemplation where the slightest noise is disruptive. The model of the White Cube<sup>2</sup> argued for the consolidation of rooms that minimized distractions that could come in between the visual experience of the artwork, ignoring other types of interactions. The White Cube contributed to amplifying the distance between the objects and the audience, solidifying the hierarchy of knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

In reality, museums are never silent. Visitors communicate in the venue, and their movement contributes to and creates a sound environment. The conceptual artist Lawrence Weiner described it: "When you look at a painting in a gallery, you hear somebody talk behind you (...) you hear all the noises around you. You start to talk to other people, and that is how you see art. So why not hear it as well as see it all at the same time?"<sup>4</sup>

Weiner's appreciation points out the cognitive processes that unravel when experiencing art, the multi-layered surfaces of social and sensory interactions that have been structurally determined. Sound, its absence, and organization have the power to shape thought structure. In 1977, the historian Jacques Attali demonstrated how arranging and

---

<sup>2</sup> “Artist and critic Brian O’Doherty, the White Cube’s earliest commentator, probably first coined the term in the mid-1970s. His series of three articles entitled “Inside the White Cube,” originally published in *Artforum* in 1976, remain the most thorough and engaging study of the phenomenon. They have been collected and reprinted with later articles on the subject in his *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).” Elena Filipovic, “The Global White Cube,” *On Curating: Politics of Display* Issue 22 (April 2014): 45-64, 60.

<sup>3</sup> “The development of the pristine, placeless White Cube is one of modernism’s triumphs — a development commercial, esthetic, and technological (...) The art within bares itself more and more, until it presents formalist end-products.” Brian O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 79. In other words, the White Cube is a container of constructed experience, where the predominance of the visual establishes the ideal of rationality and modernity.

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence Weiner quoted in Heidi Grundmann, Sabine Breitweiser and Reinhard Braun, *REPLAY – The Beginnings of International Media-Art in Austria* (May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2000 – 6<sup>th</sup> August 2000 at The Generali Foundation, Vienna). (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2000), last accessed April 5, 2023, <http://www.kunstradio.at/REPLAY/index.html>



classifying sound, whether 'disordered noise' or music as a rational aesthetic, coded human relationships.<sup>5</sup> Sound, "something you can hear or that can be heard",<sup>6</sup> serves to restrain, express, survey, and monopolize emotions and culture. Sound is a synonym for localization and the creation of communities; sound is the origin of language and supports oral stories.

The Catharijneconvent's presentation of gospel as a curatorial theme went hand in hand with inclusivity, and it encouraged an understanding of heritage that is not primarily visual. The museum works with SKIN (Samen Kerk in Nederland), the umbrella of various international churches in the Netherlands. Their partnership strives to show the diverse practices and expressions of Christianity in the country, such as evangelism. The evangelic movement in the Netherlands is very strongly influenced by American evangelicalism.<sup>7</sup> Even though gospel is not 'Dutch,' the exhibition showed how different parts of the Dutch society mediated and developed an interpretation of American evangelism, where gospel music plays a significant role inside and outside the church. In evangelic services, the congregation sings and dances. People seek healing, creating a personal narrative, an individual adventure, a 'lived religion.'<sup>8</sup> Thus, the gospel exhibition gathered all these testimonies, aural and visual, in the museum and established a point of dialogue and interaction.

In the end, the core message of Christian music, from chants, hymns, and contemporary songs, is praising God. Gospel music is one form of this tradition, which links worshipping to uplifting emotions. Gospel is the musical expression and performance of religious devotion. The exhibition was a way to engage with Christian art, music, and their presence in today's secularized society, demonstrating that gospel music is alive outside the traditional church setting, permeating life. Religious heritage is a synonym for rich cultural activity, and the Catharijneconvent communicated this via gospel. In this chapter, I argue *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey of strength and hope) would not have been possible without the changes regarding the sensorial conception of sound until its transformation into a curatorial theme in the middle of the 1960s, which resulted in a modification in exhibition spaces.

First, I will discuss part of the history of ocularcentrism, which explains how sight became a synonym for objectivity and truth. The departing point is Aristotle's hierarchy of the senses, which influenced Medieval philosophy. The Renaissance scholars defended the dominion of sight over hearing, smelling, touch, and taste, aided by painting treatises on perspective. Formalism solidified the visual analysis in objective

---

<sup>5</sup> See Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

<sup>6</sup> "Sound," Cambridge Dictionary Online, last modified April 5, 2023, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sound>

<sup>7</sup> Arjan Schoemaker, "The Dutch Evangelical Movement. The social and cultural influences of its growth," Master's Thesis, University of Leiden, 2015, 47.

<sup>8</sup> Schoemaker, "The Dutch Evangelical Movement," 48.

terms, implying sight is rationality. Second, I will examine the accentuation of the separation of sound and image due to secularism, the emergence of concert halls parallel to the nineteenth-century edifying conception of museums, industrialization and its impact on the perception of sound, i.e., machines and their noise as a threat, and the creation of phonographs, that allowed recording sounds.

Third, I will focus on the impact of the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the artwork of the future that advocated for the reconciliation of the arts. I will discuss Richard Wagner's fascination with Greek tragedy and the nature of synesthesia. I will analyze Wagner's impact on the poet Charles Baudelaire and the painter Vassily Kandinsky, who befriended the composer Arnold Schönberg, responsible for breaking traditional Western musical techniques. Fourth, I will review the sound works of Futurists and Dadaists. I will discuss the impact of the composers Edgar Varèse, Pierre Schaeffer, and John Cage and his connection to the Fluxus. Fifth, I will focus on sound as curatorial theme in the late 1960s and the exhibitions that brought sound to museums. Lastly, I will argue that the transformation of museums and the disruption of traditional settings allowed for popular music to become a curatorial theme, thus providing a firm ground for the Catharijneconvent to present their exhibition *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop*.<sup>9</sup> Here I will focus on the conception of museums as ritualized spaces, as expressed by Carol Duncan in 1995.

## 1.1 A historical background of ocularcentrism

Any revision of the history of senses in the West starts with Aristotle's *De Anima* (350 B.C.). The treatise explains the conditions that activate each sense and corresponding organ. Aristotle went a step further and proposed a hierarchization of the five senses in this order: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. The first three are the most important, while the remaining two are marginalized. Aristotle classified the senses according to an ontological hierarchy, i.e., on how essential they are to the survival of animals, and sometimes according to an epistemological hierarchy, i.e., on the degree to which they contributed to the acquisition of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> The classification is not always systematic. In terms of the construction of knowledge and reasoning, Aristotle concluded that sight was superior to the other senses because the observation was

---

<sup>9</sup> The partition between sound and the visual arts also influenced the arrival of music and sound in museums. The material turn —an epistemological change— modified museum practices regarding the delivery of information. An interest in multi-sensoriality and the creation of immersive experiences centered on audience participation challenged museums to welcome and think of popular music and musical narratives as heritage and meaning-making structures.

<sup>10</sup> Katerina Ierodiakonou, “In Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias on the Individuation and Hierarchy of the Senses” in *Forms of Representation in the Aristotelian Tradition*, ed. Juhana Toivanen (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2022), 40–65. See Aristotle. *On the Soul. Parva Naturalia. On Breath*, translated by W. S. Hett. Loeb Classical Library 288 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957).

the entryway to perception. When related to learning and teaching involving oral communication, hearing was the priority. Thus, it became second in Aristotle's ranking.

Aristotle's system was influential in the Middle Ages, as developed by Avicenna (d. 1037) and Averroës (d. 1198). The senses and ethics went hand in hand in Christian philosophy. As cognition took place through the sensorium, mediation was equally important. In fact, "in all periods of the Middle Ages, sensation was not just guarded, but guided (...) involving an interpretative process that implicates the edification of the senses."<sup>11</sup>

For Christianity, the most important activity was the contemplation of God, as described by philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274). Manuscript illumination played a crucial role in the education of the sensorium because the images guided the mind. Even though the Aristotelian hierarchy was a guideline, religious practices such as congregation in the church invoked more than one sense. "The experience of a church is best described under the concept of *synaisthesis*, 'joint perception.'"<sup>12</sup>

Personal devotion was tactile with acts such as kneeling and holding candles. Odors of oils and incense related to the smells of Paradise. The architecture and decoration affected the reception of the liturgy and its chants; music created emotions and called for participation. For instance, bells became an important feature of Western Christianity and invaded the soundscape of Christian lands.<sup>13</sup> The sound of each religious ceremony allowed people to recognize a community.

On the other hand, Christian ethics saw extreme sensorial pleasure as the path of sin. The latter aspect of renouncing the "pleasure of the senses" is not the topic of the thesis, but it is worth remembering that sensory engagement was monitored. The senses were a cultural, double-edged sword, a matter of discussion. Various accounts, such as the writings of Hildegard of Bingen (1098 - 1179), describe that her visions "did not reach her through her eyes or ears, but through her inner senses, and gave her an immediate understanding of the Scripture."<sup>14</sup> In the end, the five senses were the way to communicate with God.

The human senses construct awareness and dictate knowledge-making. In *The Order of Things* (1966), Michel Foucault introduced the concept of *episteme*, "the implicit

---

<sup>11</sup> Richard Newhauser, "Introduction: The Sensual Middle Ages" in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Newhauser (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 12.

<sup>12</sup> Béatrice Caseau, "The Senses in Religion: Liturgy, Devotion, and Deprivation," in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Newhauser (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 91.

<sup>13</sup> J. Arnold and Caroline Goodson, "Resounding Community: The History and Meaning of Medieval Church Bells," *Viator* 43 (2012): 99-130.

<sup>14</sup> Caseau, "The Senses in Religion: Liturgy, Devotion, and Deprivation," 108.

rules of formation which govern what constitutes legitimate forms of knowledge for a particular period.”<sup>15</sup> The internalized rules pertinent to each historical moment define the social patterns and mechanisms by which a community operates and understands rationality. For the anthropologist David Howes, "the hyper-visual esthetic" of modernity is traceable to the invention and subsequent dissemination of linear perspective, most often associated with Leon Battista Alberti (1404 - 1472).<sup>16</sup> Fixating a grid to understand space and creating a distance between the spectator and the world caused an impact on the sensorium. Perspective was the aspect that defined Renaissance *episteme*.<sup>17</sup> Alberti's grid created a rational and balanced space — a way to structure the world mainly through the eyes: "The painter, strives solely to fashion that which is seen; anything which exists on a surface that is visible (...) no one would deny that the painter has nothing to do with things that are not visible."<sup>18</sup> Through this statement, we recognize how sight became the delimiter of experience. The historian Martin Jay identified three ways of seeing. The most important one being the "Cartesian subject." Jay states that with Alberti's formula as a center, "the visual order became a geometricalized space with no emotional entanglement."<sup>19</sup> Sight is the purest, most philosophical sense; it is close to light (hence the equation between theory and contemplation, sight, and intellection).<sup>20</sup> The Cartesian perspective became the dominant standpoint concerning scientific and rational modes of analysis that relied on vision in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sight became a synonym for objectivity.

Renaissance philosophy contributed to downgrade other stimuli: smells, sounds, and tastes. Painting developed a way to infuse the sensorial aspect through allegories. For example, the well-known series *The Five Senses* by Brueghel the Elder (1568 - 1625) and Peter Paul Rubens (1577 - 1640). Each panel presents a character that interacts

---

<sup>15</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Tavistock, 1970) quoted in Majella O’Leary and Robert Chia, “Epistemes and Structures of Sense-Making in Organizational Life,” *Journal of Management Inquiry* Vol. 16, Issue 4 (2007), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Mark M. Smith, *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 23.

<sup>17</sup> “In great part, therefore, the episteme of a given epoch or culture organizes our sensorium”. Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962) and W. J. Ong, *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

<sup>18</sup> Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, translated by Richard Spencer (Yale University Press, 1956) quoted in Danijela Kambaskovic and Charles T. Wolfe, “The Senses in Philosophy and Science: From the Nobility of Sight to the Materialism of Touch,” *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance Vol. 3*, ed. Herman Roodenburg (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 113. See Leon Battista Alberti, *La pittura* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, 1547) (First Italian translation), 11.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Jay, “Scopic Regimes of Modernity,” *The Handbook of Visual Culture*, ed. Ian Heywood and Barry Sandywell et al. (London: Berg, 2012), 8.

<sup>20</sup> Danijela Kambaskovic and Charles T. Wolfe, “The Senses in Philosophy and Science: From the Nobility of Sight to the Materialism of Touch,” *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance Vol. 3*, ed. Herman Roodenburg (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 112.

with objects that affirm a relationship with a specific sense. Sight unfolds in a gallery of paintings and statues. Hearing presents musical instruments, notation books, parrots, birds, and mechanical clocks. What better to represent smell than in an open garden with flowers and a fox to mark the distinction between pleasurable odors and unpleasant ones? Taste features a woman enjoying a banquet in a hunting lodge, where we get a glimpse of a kitchen. Touch unravels in a grotto, a smith's workshop with armors and canyons, where Venus kisses Cupid. Yet, this rich iconography work is not enough to explain the depth of the sensorium.

Formalism helped to solidify the idea that sight was the synonym of objectivity, shaping the art historical discourse until the mid-twentieth century. Formalism, rooted in Plato, Aristotle, and Immanuel Kant, argued that visual analysis had to be grounded in concrete shapes similar to linguistic structures such as lines, values, and forms. This organization of visual terms became the way to conceptualize the artistic experience, leaving behind other crucial aspects like the artists' biographies and lives, the historical context of the artworks, and the reason for creating art. Formalism allowed art history a discipline of a rigorous methodology. As stated by Bakhtin and Medvedev:

"The work does not exist for thought, or for feelings or emotions, but for sight. The concept of seeing itself underwent extensive differentiation."<sup>21</sup>

It is worth mentioning that Formalism shares with Kant a distrust of the purely phenomenological experience of the unity of the senses.<sup>22</sup> In other words, seeing something, perceiving it through the eyes, analyzing its formal qualities beyond distractions meant understanding the world. The language used to explain it could not involve sensibility; it had to be linear and centered. Describing a picture through these terms created a barrier because vision alone, rendered in words, was not a complete testimony of the world. Modernity over-prioritized sight,<sup>23</sup> fragmenting the cognitive, multi-sensorial understanding of art.

## 1.2 The separation of sound and image

The hierarchy of the senses played a significant role in establishing boundaries when it comes to experiencing. Painting and sculpture were for visualizing; music was for listening. Music and the visual arts had a strong relationship. For Alan Licht, ironically,

---

<sup>21</sup> M. Bakhtin & P. Medvedev, "The Formal Method in European Art Scholarship," in *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, trans. A. Wehrle (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), quoted in Francis Halsall, "One Sense is Never Enough," *Journal of Visual Practice* Vol. 3, No. 2 (2004), 112.

<sup>22</sup> Francis Halsall, "One Sense is Never Enough," *Journal of Visual Practice* Vol. 3, No. 2 (2004), 112.

<sup>23</sup> Halsall, "One Sense is Never Enough," 118.

the evolution of sound art may be ascribed in part to sound's separation from visual art rather than their union.<sup>24</sup>

Artists, painters, and sculptors tried to represent music through images. Music iconography, an independent branch of knowledge, studies the depictions in visual arts of musical subjects: performers, performances, instruments, and written music.<sup>25</sup> The first attempt at this discipline came from Renaissance painters. These artists studied ancient Greek and Roman works of art but borrowed what they needed for their artistic purposes, including images of ancient musicians and musical instruments. The sixteenth-century humanism fueled the idea of reconstructing and reviving Greek music. Painters like Leonardo Da Vinci attempted through the *paragone* to defend their craft, expressing that music was a sister to painting because both tried shaping the invisible.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, studying musical iconographical sources from a scientific angle became widely accepted. Dating back to Martin Gebert (1720 - 1793), who used visual sources in addition to his 1774 study of musical performance practices of the Middle Ages,<sup>26</sup> while three decades later, Guillaume André Villoteau (1759 – 1839) was the first scholar to apply visual sources within a music ethnographical study focusing on historic and contemporary musical practices in Greece and Egypt.<sup>27</sup> In the nineteenth century, two currents developed: the use of visual sources for organological research and the study of the portraiture of musicians. The term 'music iconography' was first used in 1922 by William Squire to reference a

---

<sup>24</sup> Alan Licht, *Sound Art Revisited* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 23.

<sup>25</sup> Ann Buckley, "Music Iconography and the Semiotics of Visual Representation," *Music in Art* 23, no. 1/2 (1998): 5–10; "A Preliminary Word." *RldIM/RCMI Newsletter* 1, no. 1 (1975): 1–2; Antonio Baldassarre, "Music Iconography: What is it all about? Some remarks and considerations with a selected bibliography", *Ictus: Periódico do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Música*, no. 09/2 (2008), 69-114; Baldassarre, "Quo vadis music iconography? the répertoire international d'iconographie musicale as a case study", *Fontes Artis Musicae* 54, no. 4 (2007): 440–52; Zdravko Blazeković, "Music Iconography" in Sturman, Janet Lynn, ed. *The Sage International Encyclopedia of Music and Culture* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 2019).

<sup>26</sup> Martin Gerbert, *De cantu et musica sacra a prima ecclesiae aetate usque ad praesens tempus* (San-Blasianis: Monasterium Sancti Blasii, 1774). Reprinted by Othmar Wessely (Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1968) quoted in Antonio Baldassarre, "The Jester of Musicology, or The Place and Function of Music Iconography in Institutions of Higher Education", *Music in Art* 35, no. 1/2 (2010): 10.

<sup>27</sup> Guillaume André Villoteau, *De l'État actuel de l'art musical en Égypte, ou Relation historique et descriptive des recherches et observations faites sur la musique en ce pays* (Paris: Impr. Impériale), 1813, quoted in Antonio Baldassarre, "The Jester of Musicology, or The Place and Function of Music Iconography," 10.

collection of musicians' portraits.<sup>28</sup> Squire argued on the necessity of creating museum catalogs for documenting the life of musicians.

One of the most common themes of music iconography is concerts: public or private, gatherings, processions, and secular environments like a *fête champêtre*. Besides the information researchers gather from the musical instruments and performances practices, it is essential to reference architecture and space. These two aspects defined the sonic environment and the acoustic qualities related to good music quality and successful delivery. Again, churches were places where sound and the visual arts worked hand in hand. Motets, orations, cantatas, requiems, fresco cycles, and altarpieces intoned or depicted the same subject matter, while architecture provided spaces for acoustics and illusions of music, painting, and sculpture.<sup>29</sup>

The strong dualism of image and sound diffused, especially in the nineteenth century, due to various aspects. First, as secularism grew throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, other musical genres took the stage. The secular and the religious became opposites, so the church stopped being the place for the creative arts. With the Enlightenment, museums claimed to be spaces for scientific preservation and study of objects. Museums, too, demonstrated cultural supremacy, and in the nineteenth century, these spaces became symbols of a respected national identity. Therefore, the delivery of information had one goal: to shape the minds of the visitors. Museums, as institutions, gained respect and stood as pillars of virtue and edification. Second, during the 18th century, improvements in orchestral instruments, the decline of musical patronage, and the rise of public concerts all contributed to a general growth in the size of the orchestra, the audience, and the concert hall.<sup>30</sup> As public concerts became popular, the traditional architectural spaces stopped working, so composers and musicians started thinking about ideal acoustic conditions for a satisfactory musical experience. By the nineteenth century, along with the emergence of the orchestra conductor, concert halls became a requirement. The concert hall architecture facilitated sound experimentation between instruments and housed large audiences that saw music differently. In the first part of the nineteenth century, audiences were more attuned to emotions in music. Assisting to a music performance demanded concentration and silence. Just as museums marked their ground through

---

<sup>28</sup> William Barclay Squire, "Music Iconography", *Bulletin de la Société Union musicologique* 2 (1922), 33-36 quoted in Alexis Ruccius, "The History of Musical Iconography and the Influence of Art History: Pictures as Sources and Interpreters of Musical History," in *The Making of the Humanities: Volume III: The Modern Humanities*, edited by Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn, 403–12. (Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 404.

<sup>29</sup> Donald Goddard, "Sound/Art: Living Presences," in *Sound/Art* exhibition catalogue (New York: The SoundArt Foundation, 1983), quoted in Alan Licht, *Sound Art Revisited* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 23.

<sup>30</sup> Christopher R. Herr and Gary W. Siebein, "An Acoustical History of Theaters and Concert Halls: An Investigation of Parallel Developments in Music, Performance Spaces, and the Orchestra," 86<sup>th</sup> ACSA Annual Meeting proceedings, *Constructing Identity*, ed. Craig Barton (1988), 148.

imposing architecture and by establishing strict etiquette practices, so did the concert halls, thus affirming the separation of spaces for the cultivation of sight and hearing.

Third, industrialization and technology affected the way people experienced sound. Mass-produced tools and weapons joined by groans and clatter of steam engines, presses, and locomotives.<sup>31</sup> The expansion of cities brought the sound of machinery associated with the "noisy" working class. Noise became a threat to orderly civilization. Fourth, the invention of different devices, such as the telephone, phonograph cylinders, and the radio at the end of the nineteenth century, changed the panorama. The conception of sound as an independent entity that ultimately would find its way to a genre of sound art started with the mediation and division of sound from its source.<sup>32</sup> These inventions meant that sound no longer had to be tied to a location. In 1877, Thomas Edison's phonograph introduced playback into automatic sound recording. This meant sound could now be repeated. Recordings, first through cylinders and later records, changed everything. The human voice, music, anything within the range of human hearing could be replicated.

### **1.3. *Gesamtkunstwerk* and synesthesia: Avant-garde through Wagner, Baudelaire, and Kandinsky**

The nineteenth century was a powerhouse of moments that appealed to the boundary-crossing of the sensorial hierarchy. Poets, musicians, and artists thought of a holistic dialogue of the senses. The cases that illustrate this are Richard Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, Charles Baudelaire's *Correspondances*, and Vasily Kandinsky's expression of music through the visual arts. Baudelaire and Kandinsky experienced a strong impression when they attended Wagnerian performances. Richard Wagner's ambitious *Gesamtkunstwerk* still influences any artistic practice that proposes an intermingling of the senses. Wagner's philosophy, rooted in the tradition of artistic unity fueled by German Romanticism, strived to create a monumental operatic project, an experience for the audience, the creator, and the performers. The *Gesamtkunstwerk* meant a resignification of performance and a reconciliation between the division of poetry, music, the visual arts, and participation. Wagner's 'artwork of the future' saw itself as resuscitating the ancient ideal of Greek tragedy: the fascination for color hearing, and the numerous attempts to correlate sounds and colors, stemmed from a profound nostalgia for lost unity, a desire to return to roots, in the same way as the exploration of original *synaesthesias* (Ur-Synästhesien).<sup>33</sup>

As expressed before, the hierarchy of the senses and the sensorial experience is a cultural construction. Referencing the Greek tragedies that inspired Wagner, it is

---

<sup>31</sup> Peter Weibel, "Sound as a Medium of Art," in *Sound Art, Sound as a Medium of Art*, ed. Peter Weibel (Cambridge: The MIT Press: 2019), 88.

<sup>32</sup> Licht, *Sound Art Revisited*, 23.

<sup>33</sup> Philippe Junod, *Counterpoints: Dialogues Between Music and The Visual Arts* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2017), 96.



necessary to how did the Greeks sense the world. According to Adeline Grand-Clément:

"Greeks thought of light, smells, and sounds as concrete fluids emanating from things and coming into contact with the human body (...) The ancient experience of color had, therefore, a very close relationship with the other senses: touch, smell, taste, and hearing (...) Greek poetry insisted on the merging of the senses."<sup>34</sup>

"Synesthesia" originates from Greek roots: *syn* means union and *aesthesia* sensation.<sup>35</sup> In other words, the union of the senses. Yet, there are two definitions for synesthesia. The first one describes "a neurological condition that affects individuals who regularly perceive one kind of sensory stimulus simultaneously as another"; the second one is used in philology and literature to designate an "intersensory metaphor," using one kind of sense-impression to describe sense-impressions of another kind.<sup>36</sup> While one definition talks about a neurological condition that speaks about the experience of the world, like for Kandinsky, the other one refers to a description of it, for Baudelaire. In the Wagnerian case, synesthesia is a sense-related metaphor, a literary technique applied to opera, the famous *leitmotif*.

Greek poems were originally part of a performance: they were sung and heard during collective gatherings, not read silently by isolated individuals.<sup>37</sup> For the Greeks, the poets played an active role because they activated the senses. *Synaesthesia* in Greek referred to the shared experience of a group in certain collective gatherings,<sup>38</sup> which leads to recognizing the importance of a cultural background of how people make sense of the world. Perhaps the most attractive idea to Wagner was how the Greeks, the performers of hymns, poems, attendees to a rite, banquet, festival, embodied all stimuli. As stated in Wagner's writings:

"For all that in them moved and lived, as it moved and lived in the beholders, here found its perfected expression; where ear and eye, as soul and heart,

---

<sup>34</sup> Adeline Grand-Clément, "Sensorium, Senses, Synaesthesia, Multisensoriality: A New Way of Approaching Religious Experience in Antiquity?" In *SENSORIUM: The Senses in Roman Polytheism*, ed. Antón Alvar Nuño, Jaime Alvar Ezquerro and Greg Woolf (Brill, 2021), 143.

<sup>35</sup> Sean Allen-Hermanson and Jennifer Matey, "Synesthesia," accessed April 5, 2023, <https://iep.utm.edu/synesthe/>

<sup>36</sup> Grand-Clément, "Sensorium, Senses," 145.

<sup>37</sup> Claude Calame, *Masques d'autorité. Fiction et pragmatique dans la poésie grecque antique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2005) quoted in Adeline Grand-Clément, "Sensorium, Senses, Synaesthesia, Multisensoriality: A New Way of Approaching Religious Experience in Antiquity?" In *SENSORIUM: The Senses in Roman Polytheism*, ed. Antón Alvar Nuño, Jaime Alvar Ezquerro and Greg Woolf (Brill, 2021), 145.

<sup>38</sup> Grand-Clément, "Sensorium, Senses," 146.

lifelike and actual, seized and perceived all, and saw all in spirit and in body revealed."<sup>39</sup>

Wagner's attraction to the Greek drama was supported by Friedrich Schlegel (1772 – 1829), who defended the idea of universal poetry, a fusion of all artistic systems, or by Novalis (1772 - 1801), who considered that "in all true arts one idea – one spirit – is realized,"<sup>40</sup> meaning the arts, music, and poetry were inseparable elements. Yet, it was Friedrich Schelling (1775 – 1854), who theorized that opera, the union of all arts – poetry, music, painting, and dance –,<sup>41</sup> was the highest form of art to guide us back to the ancient performance of drama, the pivotal influence on Wagner. In his writings, Wagner affirmed that "Greek drama was the perfect work of art (...) and that all division of the elements into separate channels must have been hurtful to this unique artwork."<sup>42</sup> The idealization of Greek drama encompassed the subtext of public conscience. Greek drama aided in the edification of the spirit. Wagner's ambition, the revolution of the opera to equate Greek tragedy, had a social dimension.

Wagner's attempt at synaesthesia consisted of gathering dance, poetry, and music in opera to blend a new language. In alignment with Schopenhauer's theory that music is an idea of the world, Wagner further elaborated that only through drama, "we become knowers through the feeling, an instinctive understanding of life."<sup>43</sup> What did this entail? Wagner was obsessed with the construction and retention of a perfected illusion: the sunken orchestra pit, the invisible orchestra, and conductor, the series of proscenium arches, the use of smoke and steam, and the totally darkened theater, all of which contribute to the experience of totality and must be properly considered part of *Gesamtkunstwerk*.<sup>44</sup> Wagner's aim was not only to create an artwork for the audience's satisfaction but to provide an entire experience, addressing the senses, as part of the performance to trigger a social transformation.

My focus has been to highlight the importance of Wagner's quest to deliver a collective artistic project. Wagner's work implied fashioning a collaborative artwork for

---

<sup>39</sup> Richard Wagner, *Wagner on Music and Drama. A compendium of Richard Wagner's prose works*, trans. H. Ashton Ellis (New York: Dutton, 1964), 78

<sup>40</sup> Novalis, *Philosophical Writings*. Tr. and ed. Margaret Mahony Stoljar (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997) quoted in John O'Meara, *The Way of Novalis. An Exposition on the Process of His Achievement* (Ottawa: Heart's Core Publications: 2014), 70.

<sup>41</sup> Friedrich Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst* (1802-3) (Darmstadt, 1990), *The Philosophy of Art*, translated by Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), quoted in Philippe Junod, *Counterpoints: Dialogues Between Music and The Visual Arts* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2017), 44.

<sup>42</sup> Wagner, *Wagner on Music and Drama. A compendium*, 63.

<sup>43</sup> Wagner, *Wagner on Music and Drama. A compendium*, 188.

<sup>44</sup> Mark Berry and Nicholas Vazsonyi, "Introduction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Wagner's Der Ring Des Nibelungen*, ed. Mark Berry and Nicholas Vazsonyi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 33.

contemporary times, something that would entail considerable thought and experimentation concerning the ideal relationship among the component arts.<sup>45</sup>

Wagner's operas impacted performers, musicians, and artists. Among them was the French poet Charles Baudelaire, precursor of the symbolist poetry, who already in 1846 wrote, "in color there is harmony, melody, counterpoint."<sup>46</sup> Baudelaire explored isolation and ambiguity in his writings, aspects discussed by Romantic philosophers. For Baudelaire, synesthesia and the connection between the senses were ways to attain the meaning of the world. *IV Correspondances*, one of his most celebrated poems from *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857), describes the relationship between the spiritual and sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. This poem is the ideal condition of symbolism, the points where various meanings meet, engaging with a dialectic of multiplication and convergence.<sup>47</sup>

If Romantic poets had focused on a subjective exploration of the world, Baudelaire established a distance between subjectivity and objectivity that allowed zooming in and out of sensibility, which activated more than one poetic consciousness, thus modernizing writing:

“Nature is a temple in which living pillars  
Sometimes give voice to confused words;  
Man passes there through forests of symbols  
Which look at him with understanding eyes.

Like prolonged echoes mingling in the distance  
In a deep and tenebrous unity,  
Vast as the dark of night and as the light of day,  
Perfumes, sounds, and colors correspond.

There are perfumes as cool as the flesh of children,  
Sweet as oboes, green as meadows  
— And others are corrupt, and rich, triumphant,

---

<sup>45</sup> Anthony J. Steinhoff, “Richard Wagner, Parsifal, and the Pursuit of *Gesamtkunstwerk*,” in *The Total Work of Art. Foundations, Articulations, Inspirations*, ed. David Imhoof, Margaret E. Menninger, and Anthony J. Steinhoff (Berghahn Books, 2016), 63

<sup>46</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Salón of 1846*, (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1846. Reprinted by David Zwirner Books, 2021), 47.

<sup>47</sup> Ihab H. Hassan, “Baudelaire’s ‘Correspondances:’ The Dialectic of a Poetic Affinity,” *The French Review* vol. 27, no. 6 (1954), 443.

With power to expand into infinity,  
Like amber and incense, musk, benzoin,  
That sing the ecstasy of the soul and senses.”<sup>48</sup>

It is the knowledge of linked realm where understanding resides. The poem not only successfully tackles linguistic synesthesia but pleads for sensorial participation. Baudelaire is mainly preoccupied with the passage from one sense-perception to another, but the correspondances between the concrete and the abstract, the sensuous and the spiritual, also absorb him.<sup>49</sup> The existence of a spiritual world allows for the reciprocity of the arts, where the relationships contained emerge as the understanding of another sensory system, coexisting in parallel constructions. Multiplicity is the principle that sustains the universe and its creation. And as the correspondences expand towards infinity, the soul begins to undercover the richness of the spiritual formation, which is comparable to the total work of art.

In 1860, Baudelaire saw Wagner at the Théâtre-Italien and published in 1861 his only text about music, *Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris*. Even though Baudelaire did not possess the skill to review music, he wanted to praise Wagner amidst the negative reviews. It is important to mention that “Baudelaire's intense response points to the psychological affinities between these two artists, who descended to the source of their creativity —the wordless and imageless amorphous realm of the collective unconscious.”<sup>50</sup> Wagner's writings discussed poetry, drama, music, and there was a serious preoccupation of the psychological impact of opera in the audience. Baudelaire wrote of the structures of reality through the senses.

Wagner and Baudelaire strived to unify human perception either through poetry or music. For both, the basis of language was affective, music, melodies, visions, tones, and rhythms. According to Baudelaire in the essay “Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris”:<sup>51</sup>

"I have often heard it said that music, unlike speech or painting, cannot pretend to communicate anything with certainty. This is true to some extent, but is not entirely true. It communicates in its own way, and through its own means. In

---

<sup>48</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Fleurs du Mal* (Alençon: Auguste Poulet-Malassis, 1857) translated by William Aggeler, *The Flowers of Evil* (Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild, 1954), 30.

<sup>49</sup> Margaret Mein, “Baudelaire and Symbolism,” *L'Esprit Créateur*, vol. 13, no. 2, (1973), 163.

<sup>50</sup> Bettina L. Knapp, “Baudelaire and Wagner's Archetypal Operas,” *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1-2 (Fall-Winter 1988-1989), 59.

<sup>51</sup> Charles Baudelaire, “Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris,” in *Oeuvres complètes III L'Art Romantique* (Édition définitive) (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, Éditeurs, 1869), 211.

Music, as in painting and even in writing (...) there is always a lacuna completed by the listener's imagination."<sup>52</sup>

Baudelaire recognized that the sentiment that Wagner's work conveyed, the theatricality, is what created a different consciousness. Further than developing a psychological analysis on Wagner and Baudelaire, I demonstrated these two figures went beyond the belief that music and poetic imagery belonged to different realms. Wagner's philosophy of music-drama through sparked in Baudelaire the need to express his experience of the opera into a language of correspondences he had already begun to explore.

That there was a correspondence between music and the visual arts was a conviction among artists and musicians in Germany, France, Italy, and Russia during the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>53</sup> No conversation about synesthesia would be complete without referencing Vasili Kandinsky (1866 - 1944), who theorized at length about abstraction. Kandinsky, perhaps the best-known synesthete,<sup>54</sup> strived to develop writings and artworks that manifested multi-sensorial events.

The end of the nineteenth century saw the subordination of arts. Perception did not stand unquestioned. There was movement towards bringing pure forms, guided by a spiritual union where color and sound were the constitutive elements of language, as Baudelaire and Wagner proposed.

Kandinsky documented two events that changed his impressions about sound and the visual arts: seeing for the first time French Impressionist art in Moscow in 1896 and listening to a performance of Wagner's opera *Lohengrin* at the Bolschoi theatre. In his autobiographical essay *Reminiscences* published in 1913, Kandinsky described that while looking at the Monet haystack painting:

"He realized how a picture can hold the viewer's attention even if the subject cannot be immediately identified, for it was the combination of color and form that elicited in him the first emotional response."<sup>55</sup>

Kandinsky started to value emotions over perception, thus formulating a commitment to developing an abstract language. For the second event, Wagner's music, Kandinsky wrote:

---

<sup>52</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Claude Pichois 2 volumes (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1975-6) quoted and translated by Philip Hadlock in Philip Hadlock, "Baudelaire and the Unstaging of "Tannhäuser," *South Atlantic Review*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Spring 2003), 32.

<sup>53</sup> Suzanne Delehanty, *Soundings* exhibition catalogue (Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum/State University of New York at Purchase, 1981), 25.

<sup>54</sup> Amy Lone and Christopher Tyler, "Was Kandinsky a Synesthete," *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences* vol. 13, no. 2 (2003), 223.

<sup>55</sup> Magdalena Dabrowski, *Kandinsky Compositions* exhibition catalogue (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), 13.

"I saw colors before my eyes, while almost mad lines drew themselves in from of me (...) Wanger had painted 'my hour' musically".<sup>56</sup>

"Lohengrin... seemed to me the complete realization of that (fairy-tale) Moscow. The violins, the deep tones of the basses, and especially the wind instruments at that time embodied for me all the power of that pre-nocturnal hour. I saw all my colors in my mind: they stood before my eyes."<sup>57</sup>

The episode was mentioned in his treatise *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1912). Before speaking about Wagner, Kandinsky explained that the "pure sound of a word" is heard unconsciously to justify that literature and poetry communicate at soul level:

"Wagner's music contains similar means. His famous *leitmotiv* is an attempt to emphasize heroic personalities beyond theatrical expedients, as make-up and light effects. He employs a definite *leitmotiv*, which is a pure musical medium. This motive is, so to speak, a musically expressed spiritual atmosphere which precedes the hero, to effect a spiritual radiation felt from afar."<sup>58</sup>

Besides characterizing people through a Wagnerian *leitmotif*, which is a synesthetic connection, Kandinsky focused on the visual landscape derived from the aural experience where the colors and sensations touch the spirit. Kandinsky used aspects of music in his art that would lead to a more abstract work as this would give rise to spiritual sensations on a more immediate and subconscious level.<sup>59</sup>

Kandinsky developed his version of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* that differed from Wagner's. Kandinsky's main elements were sound, movement, and color. Contrary to the Wagnerian theory, these did not need to have an external connection to each other because the essential part of the connection was the "inner vibration", the spiritual dimension. To Kandinsky, every artwork had an "inner sound" that affected the inner

---

<sup>56</sup> Birgit, Hass, "Staging Colours: Edward Gordon Craig and Wassily Kandinsky," in *Textual Intersections: Literature, History and the Arts in Nineteenth Century Europe*, ed. Rachael Langford (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009) in Madalina Dana Rucsanda, "Aspects of the relationship between music and painting and their influence on Schoenberg and Kandinsky," *Bulletin of the Transylvania University of Brasov*, vol. 12 (61) no. 2 (2019), 94.

<sup>57</sup> W. Kandinsky, "Reminiscences," in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994) quoted in Magdalena Dabrowski, *Kandinsky Compositions* exhibition catalogue (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), 19.

<sup>58</sup> W. Kandinsky, *On the Spiritual in Art* (First complete English translation), edited by Hilla Rebay (New York, Guggenheim 1946), 28-29. "The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is publishing the first complete English edition of "On the Spiritual in Art" by Kandinsky. It was translated and checked by American, English, Russian, and German scholars, who have collaborated to achieve the best possible way of doing justice to the original, and of preserving and conveying in the most reverent manner, the ideas and style of Kandinsky (the editor retranslated the entire book to clarify the correct artistic meaning)," see "Foreword to the 1946 New York Edition," 8.

<sup>59</sup> Catherine Mary Chadwick, "Wassily Kandinsky and The Gesamtkunstwerk Tradition: The Role of South German Baroque Architecture in Kandinsky's Move to Abstraction," Master's Diss., (McGill University, 1986), 23-24.

vibrations of the audience without wishing to seek an objective response, as opposed to Wagner's quest for a return related to a moral purpose.

Kandinsky's concept of the inner sound is closely interwoven with the symbolist theory of synesthesia and correspondances.<sup>60</sup> To get a better understanding of the musical language, Kandinsky started a long correspondence with the composer Arnold Schönberg. This friendship influenced Kandinsky's work, especially in the aspects related to abstraction and composition.

For Kandinsky, compositions were the result of the combination of color tones and linear elements of form determined by the internal necessity of the artist. Painting, to Kandinsky, became "compositional," an evolving and spiritual process that had powers equivalent to music. The real quest was to make painting visible, aural, and undulating, to cause an inner vibration that invoked a much-needed open language not bounded by schematism or sensorial hierarchy. Thus, the response from the audience became emotional and not guided by figurative principles.

Schönberg's developments in the musical field, such as atonality and chromatism, broke with the music tradition. In his writing, *Harmonielehre* (1911) published a year before Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, Schönberg discussed harmony. He stated that consonance and dissonance do not constitute contradictory qualities, as had been thought by many generations of theorists, but rather different gradations on a continuum of comprehensibility.<sup>61</sup> In other words, this translates to Kandinsky's artistic process of recognizing the "vibrations" as a denominator of experiences, a synaesthetic event, as he expressed:

"(I) don't think that you receive painting solely through the eyes. No, although you may be unaware of it, you receive through all five senses."<sup>62</sup>

Just as Schönberg's dissonances and Wagner's operatic dramas shocked the public, both composers believed that the Western musical technique had to expand. Music and sound were contact experiences, subject to inevitable change. Wagner, Baudelaire, Kandinsky, and Schönberg questioned the conditions of historically imposed artistic principles. The *Gesamtkunstwerk* challenged the act of creation and its presentation to an audience by shaking epistemological structures. Music, painting, drama, and poetry though historically separated, had profound links to each other,

---

<sup>60</sup> R. J. Cardullo, "Gesamtkunstwerk, Synesthesia, and the Avant-Garde: Wassily Kandinsky's *The Yellow Sound* as a Work of Art," *Hermeneia* no. 18 (2017), 8.

<sup>61</sup> Arnold Schönberg, *Theory of Harmony* (1911), trans. Roy Carter (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983) quoted in Golan Gur, "Arnold Schönberg and the Ideology of Progress in Twentieth-Century Musical Thinking," (2009), 1.

<sup>62</sup> W. Kandinsky, *Punkt – Linie – Fläche* (1926) (Bern, 1955), trad. *Point – ligne – plan*, in *Écrits complets, II*, ed. Philippe Seres (Denoël, 1982) quoted in Philippe Junod, *Counterpoints: Dialogues Between Music and The Visual Arts* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2017), 87.

which regulated a natural multi-sensorial experience that could only come forth through a different theorization and upstaging.

#### 1.4 The liberation of sound: sound art (before the term)

Although synesthesia and a total union of the arts, proved to be influential at the beginning of the 20th century, reaching a point of cooperation between the aural and visible dimensions did not easily solidify. As much as the human reception reacts to the experience of the world in a multi-modal way, the fragmentation of the senses predominates.

Christoph Cox explains that there is resistance, a suspicion that any convergence of the senses is likely to retain the hierarchy that subordinates to the visual.<sup>63</sup> Sound art, as a movement and artistic practice, aims to disrupt visuality. The disobedience — the defiance to the retinal— allowed sound art to enter the quiet museums.

Before "sound art" was a term, early twentieth-century artists and musicians experimented with music and technology, expressing their necessity to consider non-musical sounds as part of the listening experience. In 1913, the Futurist artist Luigi Russolo published the manifesto *L'arte dei rumori*, which advocated for the recognition of sounds:

"We have had enough (...), and we delight much more in combining in our thoughts the noises of trams, of automobile engines, of carriages and brawling crowds (...) the surprising variety of noises, one need only to think of the rumbling thunder, the whistling of the wind (...) let us cross a large modern capital with our ears more sensitive than our eyes."<sup>64</sup>

Russolo presented eight conclusions for futurist composers to enlarge their field of sound and perception, leaving behind the traditional cages: "Our multiplied sensibility, having been conquered by the futurist eyes, will finally have some futurist ears."<sup>65</sup> Russolo advocated for the renewal of the hearing experience, which defied the notions of traditional music conceived as organized sound. Therefore, he created instruments called the *intonarumori*. Inspired by Filippo Marinetti's *Zang Tumb Tumb*, a collection of sound poems published in 1914, which used onomatopoeias and unconventional use of typography that emulated the noises of war, Russolo started experimenting with loudspeakers, boxes, and horns to create machine-like instruments. Russolo's inventions generated rumbles, whistles, screams, and sobs. Those instruments became part of orchestral ensembles because they reproduced raw sounds and enhanced the sound experience.

---

<sup>63</sup> Christoph Cox, "Seeing is Not Hearing: Synaesthesia, Anesthesia and the Audio-Visual," in *Art or Sound* exhibition catalogue, ed. Germano Celant (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2014), 96.

<sup>64</sup> Luigi Russolo, *L'arte dei rumori* (1913), translated by Barclay Brown (New York: Pendragon Press, 1986), 23-28.

<sup>65</sup> Russolo, *L'arte dei rumori*, 29.



In 2001, the musician Luciano Chessa developed his Ph.D. dissertation on Russolo's aesthetics, realizing that "the field of music history still lacked a substantial hermeneutic effort on the art of noises."<sup>66</sup> Chessa concluded that Russolo's instruments had a philosophical intention, connected to the nineteenth-century French ideal of synesthesia, which strived for the interconnections —correspondances— of all senses:

"I believe that the art of noises can be read as a process of conjuring the spirits articulated in two phases: in the first phase, noise becomes spiritualized; in a second phase, spirits materialize."<sup>67</sup>

This resonates with Kandinsky's inner vibrations. For Kandinsky, the artist performed a type of *séance* to access, invoke, and materialize these forms. When reconstructing Russolo's instruments based on a previous reconstruction of *intonarumori* by Pietro Verardi and Aldo Abate for the Venice Biennale in 1977, Chessa concluded that Russolo's creation followed a pattern. Everything started with a monochord, an instrument consisting of a single string stretched over a calibrated sound box with a movable bridge.<sup>68</sup> Chessa explained, "this sound (monochord) was first raw, then it is spiritualized as it is tuned, then is made to exist in the enharmonic space."<sup>69</sup> The *enharmonic space* is where all notes of all the scales reside regardless of bearing different names. Russolo's quest for sound was continuous as he used *glissandos*, a technique to slide rapidly from one pitch to another. Thus, sound became infinite and dynamic. With these instruments, Russolo legitimized the noises Futurists defended, the unpleasant, the mechanic, the irregular.

---

<sup>66</sup> Luciano Chessa, "A Metaphysical Orchestra: Researching and Reconstructing the Intonarumori," in *Art or Sound* exhibition catalogue, ed. Germano Celant (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2014), 148.

<sup>67</sup> Chessa, "A Metaphysical Orchestra," 149.

<sup>68</sup> "Monochord: musical instrument," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed April 5, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/art/monochord>

<sup>69</sup> Chessa, "A Metaphysical Orchestra," 149.

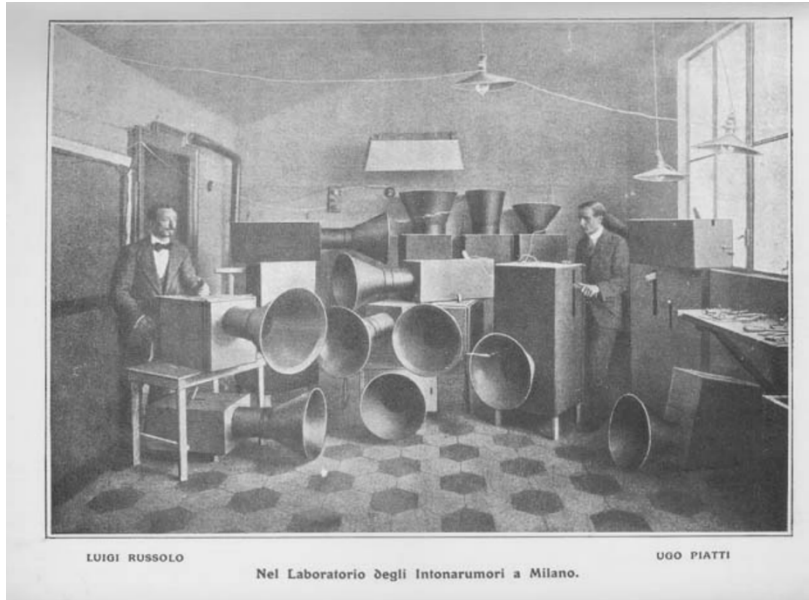


Fig. 1: Luigi Russolo (left) and Ugo Piatti (right) in Russolo's laboratory in Milan, 1914

As stated by Peter Weibel, the photograph of Russolo among his gigantic loudspeakers (Fig. 1) became famous, and ever since, noise has had a face, sound, and image.<sup>70</sup> Further, this photograph is a reminder that sound, via the *intonarumori*, penetrated traditional musical environments, such as concert halls, introducing new forms and subject matters.

Another place that welcomed experiments with sound was the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, founded in 1916 by Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings, the starting point for Dadaism. Ball questioned the articulation of language. Sound poetry, pioneered by Filippo Marinetti and Ball, took the Dada penchant for nonsense to a linguistic conclusion that was enacted with oral performativity.<sup>71</sup> By rejecting logic and plunging into irrationality, Dada poetry explored syllables, shouts, grunts, and the possibilities of chanting, vocal imitation, and repetition.

For instance, *L'amiral cherche une maison à louer* (1916) (Fig. 2) by Tristan Tzara, Richard Hulslenbeck, and Marcel Janco.<sup>72</sup> The poem, a theatrical performance, involved sound effects that complimented the staging. "Sound accidents" had a place in Dada performances. The voices in *L'amiral cherche une maison à louer*, each following a path and evolving into a dramatic way of reciting, focused on the possibility of sound. Additionally, intermedia art links word to music (sound poetry), word to image (collage and visual poetry), gesture to sound (performance art, modern dance), and architecture to print and sculpture (the assemblage-environment) all found expression in the Dada front against cultural complacency.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Weibel, "Sound as a Medium of Art," 14.

<sup>71</sup> Licht, *Sound Art Revisited*, 85.

<sup>72</sup> See Dafydd Jones, "L'amiral Cherche Une Maison à Louer," in *Dada 1960 in Theory Practices of Critical Resistance* (Liverpool University Press, 2014): 152-74.

<sup>73</sup> Hannah B. Higgins, "Art and the Senses: The Avant-Garde Challenge to the Visual Arts," in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Modern Age* ed. David Howes (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 198-99.



Even though these aspects comply with the Futurist ideal, Varèse went further; he was interested in the exploration of the sonic world. He signed the Dada manifesto *Dada soulève tout* in 1921,<sup>76</sup> but Varèse did not see himself as a Dadaist. Much of his work encompassed designing architectural spaces and structures to research sound. Just as Russolo conceived through the *intonarumori* an infinite sound, Varèse advocated leaving behind the human-powered orchestra. Accused of desiring nothing less than the destruction of all musical instruments and even of all performers,<sup>77</sup> Varèse saw in electronic machines a new medium to explore the characteristics of sounds in terms of shape, direction, and repetition.

Using machines for musical purposes allowed musicians and composers to dive into realms of sounds that did not exist before, thus creating a connection between art, science, and imagination. Varèse believed sound to be the primary substance of music and attempted to utilize "blocks of sound, calculated and balanced against each other."<sup>78</sup>

One of his most valued discoveries was "sound projection." Traditionally, music followed a horizontal dimension, associated with a melody that follows a line; and a vertical dimension, which was the harmonic structure. Varèse determined that sound had a perspective. In the words of Ruth Julius, "as if you were looking at a sculpture from different angles."<sup>79</sup> Simultaneously, Varèse was interested in how machines could reproduce sounds while creating a different set of timbres. Rather than substituting traditional music with machines, Varèse wanted music to catch up with the technological developments and to bring attention to the noise, just as Dadaism and the Futurists had done before.

When Varèse was developing his research, the French composer Pierre Schaeffer (1910 - 1955) began experimenting with recorded sound materials in 1943. His research into noises became known as *musique concrète* in 1949.<sup>80</sup> This genre and style of composing recorded sounds and manipulated them until the source of the sound was not traceable. In contrast to classical music notation on paper, Schaeffer wanted to "collect concrete sounds, whatever they came from, and to abstract the musical values that they were potentially containing."<sup>81</sup> Additionally, Schaeffer's technique reverted the process of classical music composition, which often had a plan

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Edgard Varèse and Chou Wen-chung, "The Liberation of Sound," *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Autumn – Winter, 1966), 15.

<sup>78</sup> Wayne A. Nelson, "Edgar Varèse and the electronic medium," Master's diss., (University of Montana, 1979), 11.

<sup>79</sup> Ruth Julius, "Edgar Varèse: An Oral History Project," *Current Museology*, no. 125 (1978) quoted in Wayne A. Nelson, "Edgar Varèse and the electronic medium," Master's diss., (University of Montana, 1979), 12.

<sup>80</sup> Carlos Palombini, "Machine Songs V: Pierre Schaeffer: From Research into Noises to Experimental Music," *Computer Music Journal*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Autumn, 1993), 14.

<sup>81</sup> Jean de Reydellet, "Pierre Schaeffer, 1910-1995: The Founder of "Musique Concrète," *Computer Music Journal*, vol. 20, no. 2 (Summer, 1996), 10.

before inscribing on paper. In *musique concrète*, recording sounds was an experience but not the finished product. The experimentation stage was the moment to assimilate and create. The manipulation part was crucial:

"Once recorded, the suite was decomposed, shortened, magnified, dissected, inverted, exploded, pulverized."<sup>82</sup>

Even though Schaeffer encountered resistance, his work was influential. Just as Varèse considered perspective in sound, Schaeffer, too, saw the possibility of molding or sculpting via the manipulation of sound. In 1951, Schaeffer and the composer Pierre Henry founded the *Groupe de Recherche de Musique Concrète* (GRMC), which helped Varèse dialogue with different perspectives regarding electronic music composition at interplay with the acoustics of space.

Around the same time, sound technologies changed the museum experience via audioguide systems. The first use of an audio tour was in 1952 in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, under the direction of Willem Sandberg, who used radio broadcast technology.<sup>83</sup> The device was wireless and portable. It picked up the silent audio throughout the galleries so the visitors could complement their walk with sound. According to Loic Tallon, the audio tour had two buttons, one to turn it on and off and a section to control the volume.<sup>84</sup> These audio tours were launched to provide foreign language tours to visitors.<sup>85</sup> This was revolutionary because museumgoers could move through space, enjoying information on a painting without the need to read a label. Audio tours reconceived the visitors' relationship with the museum, an ambition that continues until today.<sup>86</sup> For the first time, museums considered the visitors as hearing subjects; the curated audio content as directional sound aided in distributing pedagogical information. The role of this detached voice is to tell the visitors how to experience, why to identify and experience the subtle but pervasive essence of each exhibition, and of the exhibition as a whole.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Pierre Schaeffer, *À la recherche d'une musique concrète* (Paris: Seuil, 1966) quoted in Carlos Palombini, "Machine Songs V: Pierre Schaeffer: From Research into Noises to Experimental Music," *Computer Music Journal*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Autumn, 1993), 16.

<sup>83</sup> Valeria Gasparotti, "Beyond the Audio Tour: Challenges for Mobile Experiences in Museums: The case of "Scapes:" when an artist experiments with one of the most universal interpretation tools," Master's diss., (Reinwardt Academie, Amsterdam University of the Arts, 2014), 15.

<sup>84</sup> Loic Tallon, "Stedelijk Museum 1952 audio guide 7," Flickr, accessed 2 July 2023, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/27591534@N02/3461635644/in/photostream/>

<sup>85</sup> Gasparotti, "Beyond the Audio Tour," 15.

<sup>86</sup> Loic Tallon, "On the Rise of Mobile Technology for Museums," Virtueel Platform, accessed 2 July 2023, <http://archieef.virtueelplatform.nl/kennis/loic-tallon-over-de-opkomst-van-mobiele-technologie-voor-museu-bij-smart-erfgoed-conferentie/>

<sup>87</sup> Nikos Bubaris, "Sound in museums – museums in sound," *Museum Management and Curatorship* vol. 24, no. 4 (2014), 394.

A discussion about sound would not be complete without John Cage and the performance of 4'33 in 1952. Cage, an alumnus of Arnold Schönberg and influenced by composers like Edgar Varèse, started experimenting with unconventional sounds. 4'33 took place in the Maverick Concert Hall in New York City and consisted of David Tudor sitting in front of a piano, turning the music scores (Fig. 3 and 4). 4'33 completely defied the tradition of Western music performance. Though the audience and critics thought 4'33 elapsed in silence, Cage wanted to direct the attention to accidental, minor, and subtle sounds. The concert hall was never silent during the performance of 4'33; the point was to question the act of hearing and its revealing nature in conversation with Zen philosophy.

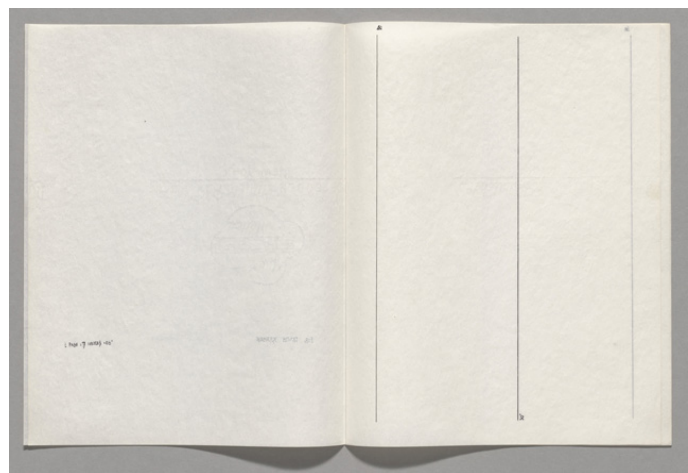
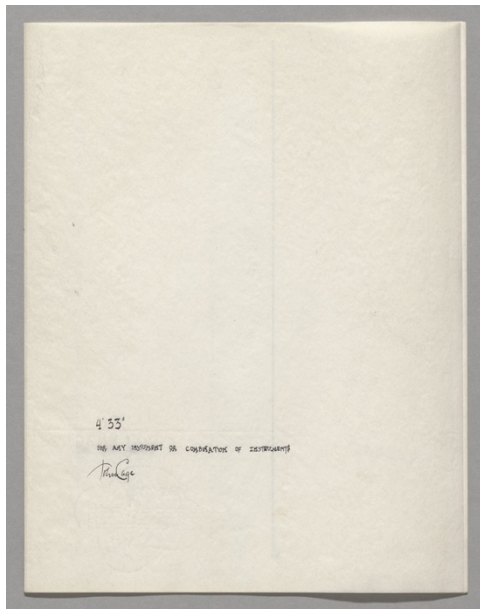


Fig. 3 and 4: John Cage, 4'33 (In Proportional Notation), 1952/53, ink on paper (27,9 x 21.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

4'33, for Eric de Visscher, is essentially a reactionary work, fighting against the invasion of the environment by sound, borrowing the very tools of commercial music, namely, the short-duration hit.<sup>88</sup> Silence should not be confused with the absence of sound. According to Cage:

"Silence surrounds many of the sounds that exist in space unimpeded by one and another and yet interpenetrating one another."<sup>89</sup>

This type of hearing exercise in space, beyond understanding where sounds come from directed by sight, contributes to the awareness that is only attained with a different type of concentration, leaving behind preconceived expectations of traditional music. Hearing is another way of making sense of the world. Cage's compositional

<sup>88</sup> Eric de Visscher, "Silence as A Musical Sculpture. John Cage and the Instruments in 4'33," in *Art or Sound* exhibition catalogue, ed. Germano Celant (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2014), 197.

<sup>89</sup> John Cage, "Julliard Lecture," in Id., *A Year from Monday* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), 3-4.

freedom emancipated the view on sounds and music, allowing for the sonic experience to unfold in time.

One of the ground-breaking moments for the liberation of sound was *Poème Électronique*, which remains Varèse's most meaningful work, where he finally connected music, space, and movement. In 1958, the architect Le Corbusier was invited by the Philips Corporation to design a pavilion for the Brussels World's Fair (Figs. 5 and 6).<sup>90</sup> The engineer and composer Iannis Xenakis based the pavilion models on his musical work *Metastasis*, composed around 1953. Le Corbusier told Varèse to create the music for the space. Varèse's music was a mix of electronic modified sounds and machines:

“The music was distributed over 425 speakers controlled by 15 separate tape tracks. As a result, sounds could sweep around in great circles above the listeners, combining with Le Corbusier's lights and visual effects to create a multimedia spectacle that was viewed by more than two million people.”<sup>91</sup>

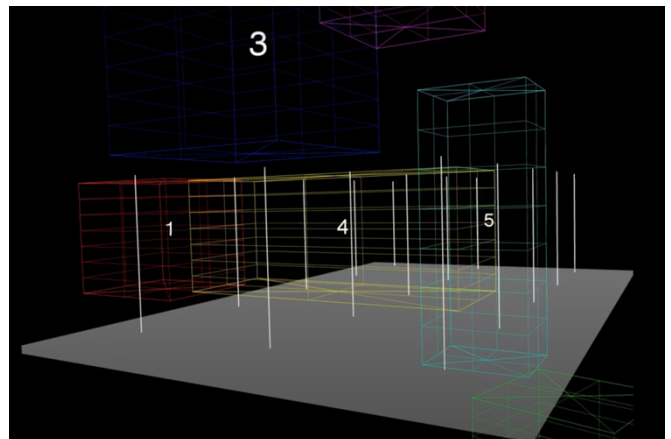
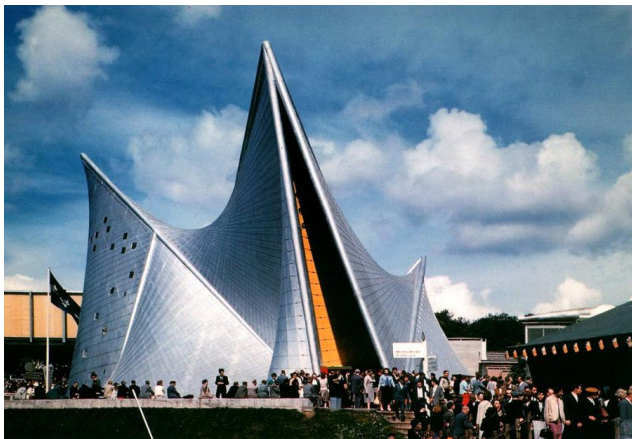


Fig. 5 and 6: Philips Pavilion, Brussels, 1958 (left). Edgar Varèse, *Poème Électronique* in 4DSOUND by Paul Oomen commissioned by Zentrum für Kunst und Medien Karlsruhe, performed and binaurally recorded the 4<sup>th</sup> of March of 2016. Web capture of the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYAyzimsGns>

Even though the pavilion no longer exists, this work opened the door for the exploration of sound and technology. The VEP<sup>92</sup> developed a website experience for *Poème Électronique*, *Virtual Electronic Poem Project: A virtual reality reconstruction* (Fig. 7).<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Julius, “Edgar Varèse: An Oral History Project,” 35.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> VEP: Vincenzo Lombardo, Andrea Valle, Kees Tazelaar, Andrea Arghinetti, Richard Dobson et al. See: <https://www.cirma.unito.it/vep/credits.html>

<sup>93</sup> See *Computer Music Journal: A Virtual PoÈME* vol. 33, issue 2 (Summer 2009): <https://direct-mit-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/comj/issue/33/2>

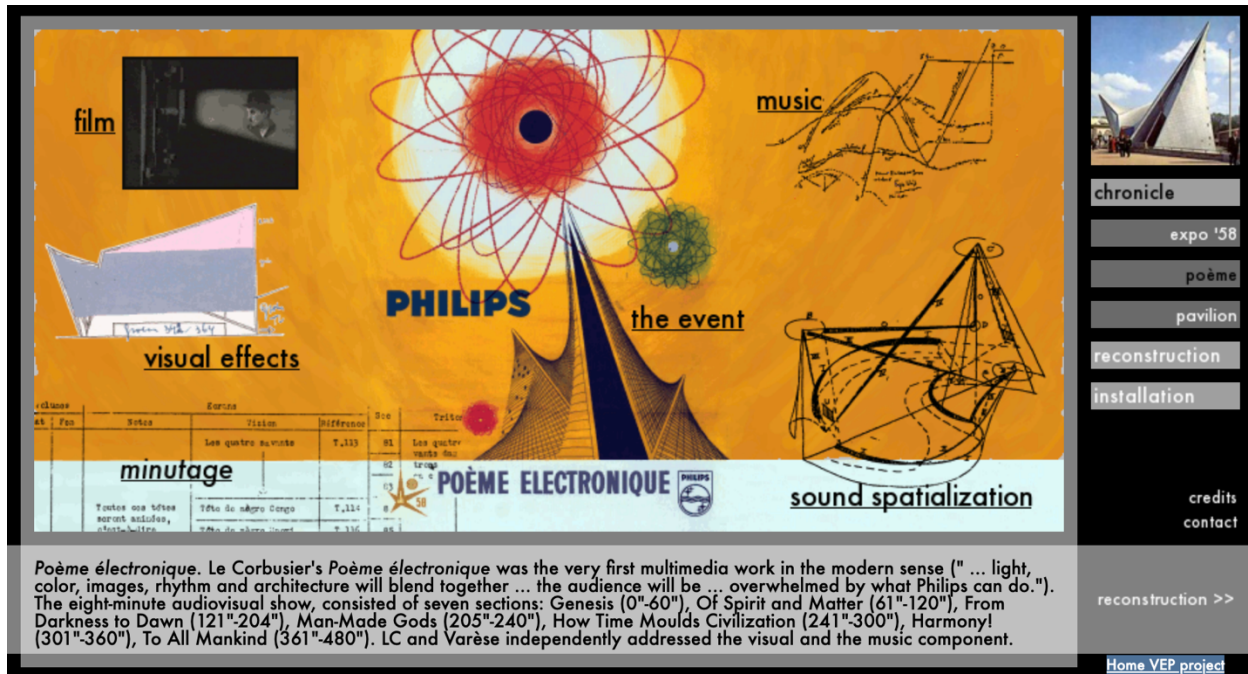


Fig. 7: Web snapshot of the main page of *Poème Électronique*, *Virtual Electronic Poem Project: A virtual reality reconstruction*: <https://www.cirma.unito.it/vep/poeme.html>

There is no doubt that a defining characteristic of the 1960s music avant-garde's was a quest for spatial sound.<sup>94</sup> Mobile speakers became substantial for the success of pop and rock n' roll music. These speakers facilitated sound to become a medium to modify space. This approach and the development of synthesizers and tape recorders signified a new realm. The sound was free and accessible.

In 1962, George Maciunas published the Fluxus Manifesto. He expressed the group's opposition to art consumerism and cultural establishments. Just as the Dadaists, Fluxus integrated different artistic practices and mediums. John Cage was a significant figure for Fluxus as *4'33* called for a new type of interaction with art. Several of Cage's students, like George Brecht, Jackson MacLow, and Dick Higgins, became active in the Fluxus moments, introducing neo-Dada music theater pieces.<sup>95</sup>

Through Cage, not only composers but also artists became interested in exploring sound. One of the first events was the *Fluxus Internationale Festspiele Neuester Musik*, held between September 1 to September 23 of 1962 at the Museum Wiesbaden (Figs. 8 and 9). One of the main objectives was to create different ambients for action concerts exploring scores, arrangements, and multi-sensorial approaches under the premise that anyone could create art. To name a few artists, Joseph Beuys, Nam June Paik, LaMonte Young, Yoko Ono, and Alison Knowles.

<sup>94</sup> Weibel, "Sound as a Medium of Art," 64.

<sup>95</sup> Licht, *Sound Art Revisited*, 90.





Futurists, Dadaists, experimental composers, *musique concrète* advocates, and Fluxus happenings shaped the liberation of sound, and defied traditional epistemologies related to the hierarchy of the senses, space, and audience participation. Technology had an impact on sound experimentation and artistic practices, which demanded a multi-sensorial approach. These are the roots of *sound art*. Yet, the term *sound art* had a later arrival in the art world. It was only in 1983 that William Hellermann coined it as the title of a 1983 exhibition in New York, *Sound/Art*.<sup>98</sup> The term only gained popularity and acknowledgment in the late 1990s. Many discussions still take place to define and delineate *sound art*. The sound artist Steve Roden, who considers his practice fluid and expansive, proposes “sound is not a medium that developed through a clean linear trajectory and ended as a real movement (...) it is a messy history that includes a lot of wonderful things.”<sup>99</sup>

### 1.5 Sound as a curatorial theme

In 1964, Marshall McLuhan published the book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, which contains the chapter “*The Medium is the Message*.” Before the publication, McLuhan developed the idea that the aural had started to gain more recognition than the visual field because of technological developments. The best way to understand McLuhan's connection between medium and content is “the electric light passage:”

“For it is not till electric light is used to spell out some brand name that is noticed as a medium. Then it is not the light but the “content” that is noticed. The message of electric light is like the message of electric power in the industry, totally radical, pervasive, and decentralized.”<sup>100</sup>

To McLuhan, the content of a medium is another medium. An example, the radio contains voices and music: sound. Thus, the way sound is distributed in radio controls the association between people and news broadcasting, different musical genres, and shaping thought.

McLuhan is crucial to understanding how sound became a curatorial theme in the 1960s and 1970s. When sound became the material and the medium, there was expansion. First, sound develops in space and in time. Sound is a continuous process that implies movement. Sound modifies space and viceversa; sound creates a new type of consciousness. Varèse's projection of sound into space involves the audience. Second, many examples of sound art manifested as installation art. For Claire Bishop,

---

<sup>98</sup> Alan Licht, “Sound Art: Origins, development and ambiguities,” *Organised Sound* vol. 14 (April 2009), 3.

<sup>99</sup> Steve Roden in conversation with Alan Licht (2007) quoted in Alan Licht, “Sound Art: Origins, development and ambiguities,” *Organised Sound* vol. 14 (April 2009), 9.

<sup>100</sup> Marshall McLuhan, “The Medium in the Message,” in Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: Extensions of Man* (McGraw-Hill, 1964), 2.

installation heightens the viewer's awareness and bodily responses.<sup>101</sup> Sound creates specific situations. There, the lines between the subject and object become blurry. The aesthetic experience is no longer contemplative but rather an embodiment. The composer R. Murray Schafer, responsible for developing the term *soundscape*, recalls that in the 1960s “many felt that the whole sensorium of the Western world was in upheaval.”<sup>102</sup> Sound's ability to transform space became the reason for an interest in audio exhibitions in the mid-1960s.

Sound appears as a curatorial theme for the first time with the exhibition *Sound Light Silence: Art that Performs* in 1966, curated by Ralph T. Coe, curator of the Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>103</sup> Coe understood sound as one of a number of common denominators for the ever-so-ephemeral experience of the art world of his time; sound, like light, was the fleeting trace of the work that could not be captured by the catalogue.<sup>104</sup>

As explained before, sound could be a subject, a consequence of the materials, a production of an experience, an installation, a sculpture, or a sound-walk. Sound, acoustics, and intermediality demanded an embodied spectator who learned by internalizing knowledge via listening practices. Based on Seth Cluett's compilation of exhibitions that presented sound as a curatorial theme,<sup>105</sup> the USA was a front-runner. European exhibitions on sound appeared at the beginning of the 1970s, becoming more constant from 1979 onwards.

In 1969, two major sound exhibitions opened in the United States. *SOUND*, curated by Ray Pierotti at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts of the American Crafts Council NYC, and *Art by Telephone*,<sup>106</sup> curated by David H. Katzive, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.<sup>107</sup>

*SOUND* included sound sculptures and allowed the visitors to take a "sound walk" through Bülent Arel's electronic composition, which also asked for the visitors to play

---

<sup>101</sup> Eveline J. Vondeling, “Multisensoriality as Medium. An Analysis of Curatorial Practice,” Master's diss., (Utrecht University, 2019), 11

<sup>102</sup> R. Murray Schafer, “Foreword,” in *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds* (1995) (McGill-Queens University Press, 2005), xi.

<sup>103</sup> Ralph T. Coe, *Sound Light Silence: Art that Performs* (Kansas City: Nelson Gallery, 1966) quoted in Seth Allen Cluett. “Loud Speaker: Towards a Component Theory of Media Sound,” (Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 2013), 18.

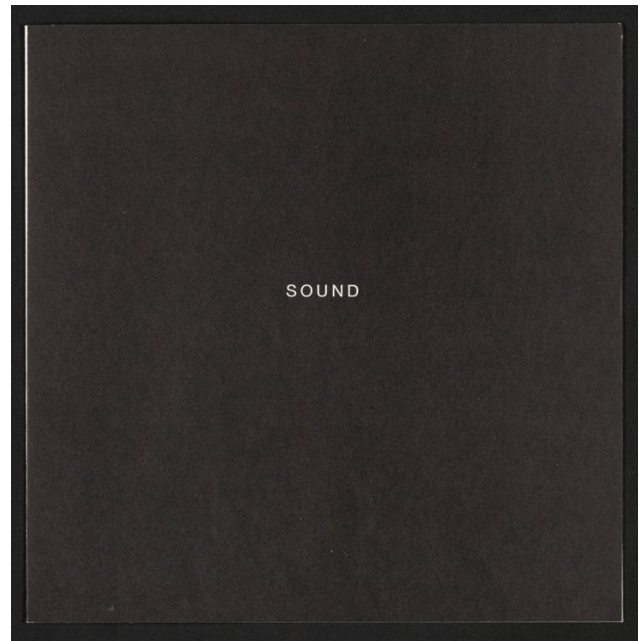
<sup>104</sup> Seth Allen Cluett, “Ephemeral, Immersive, Invasive: Sound as Curatorial Theme 1966-2013,” in Nina Sobol Levent, Alvaro Pascual-Leone and Simon Lacey. *The Multisensory Museum: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Touch Sound Smell Memory and Space*. (Lanham Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 111 – 115.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, “Appendix 1,” 110-124.

<sup>106</sup> Licht, *Sound Art Revisited*, 109.

<sup>107</sup> Seth Cluett, “Ephemeral, Immersive, Invasive: Sound as Curatorial Themes 1966-2012,” in *Multisensory Museum: A Cross-disciplinary Perspective on Multiple Modalities of a Museum Experience*, ed. Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone (New York: AltaMira, 2013), 112.

musical instruments. The exhibition catalogue was a tape that included sounds from the exhibition and interviews by Pierotti with composers like Edgar Varèse. Arel's instruments for the audience were a commission from the exhibition to the artist Terry Fugate-Wilcox (Fig. 10). On the other hand, the medium of the catalogue (Fig. 11) was a creation of a sonic experience for the listener to take home the ambient of the exhibition, but also to make sense of the conversations between the curator and the artists.



Figs. 10 and 11: *Aeon Aethesus*, Terry Fugate-Wilcox, 1969, electronic and Plexiglas (3 ft. tall). "This electronic instrument, shown in the exhibition *SOUND*, did not have a keyboard based traditional piano. Players instead manipulated knobs, buttons, and switches. This interface allowed anyone to make sounds with no prior musical training" (left). *SOUND* (catalogue and sound), catalogue of the exhibition "SOUND" held at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York City. Accompanying the catalogue is a recording of sounds from the exhibition. Accessible via: <https://digital.craftcouncil.org/digital/collection/p15785coll6/id/6500> with a transcript (right).

*Art by Telephone* asked artists from the United States and Europe to communicate their ideas for artworks over the telephone (Fig. 12) to Katzive for the staff to execute the works based on the artists' instructions, avoiding all blueprints and written plans.<sup>108</sup> Some artworks took days to finish and demanded audience participation. The exhibition catalogue was a gate-fold vinyl with recordings of the telephone calls from the artists to the museum (Fig. 13). The vinyl jacket stated:

"The artists who have responded to the challenge of this exhibition share certain basic premises despite the divergence of expression. They want to get away

---

<sup>108</sup> "Art by Telephone," MCA Chicago: Exhibitions, last accessed April 14, 2023, <https://mcachicago.org/Exhibitions/1969/Art-By-Telephone>

from the interpretation of art as a specific, handcrafted, precious object. They value process over product and experience over possession."<sup>109</sup>



Figs. 12 and 13: Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman, Installation view, *Art by Telephone* 1969, courtesy of MCA Chicago (left). Catalogue for *Art by Telephone* held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

As with the *SOUND* catalogue, the vinyl allowed the audience to create their versions of the artwork at home. Further than that, playing it through headphones or speakers meant a re-transmission of artistic experience, prone to be completed. These catalogues, whether tape or records, became the paths to understanding these exhibitions even though the original works no longer exist.

The need to explore different directions in the artistic realm and caring for a relationship with the public was a landmark. After years of focusing on finished visual products, artists started experimenting with media that required developing in time.

In 1971, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam held the exhibition *Geluid «=>» Kijken: drie audio-visuele projecten* by Ton Bruynèl, Dick Raaijmakers and Peter Struycken (Fig. 14). This was the first exhibition of sound as a curatorial theme in Europe followed by *Graphic Music* in Rome in 1972, *Hören -Sehen* in Bremen in 1972 and *Sehen um zu Hören. Objekte und Konzerte zur visuellen Musik der 60er Jahre* in Düsseldorf in 1975. The exhibition catalogue for *Geluid «=>» Kijken* was a 7-inch vinyl (Figs. 15 and 16) with recorded versions of each artist's sound productions. The vinyl included a booklet with detailed essays discussing the audio-visual projects. In the introductory text, the artists explained that:

---

<sup>109</sup> Jan van der Marck quoted in the exhibition catalogue/LP of *Art by Telephone* (1969) in *Art by Telephone* (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1969), Specific Object David Platzker, last accessed 15 April, 2023, [https://specificobject.com/projects/art\\_by\\_telephone/#.ZFSfXuxByWA](https://specificobject.com/projects/art_by_telephone/#.ZFSfXuxByWA)

"The most remarkable development in both modern music and the visual arts is the enormous expansion of the artist's territory."<sup>110</sup>



Figs. 15, 16, and 17: Visitors at *Geluid «=> Kijken: drie audio-visuele projecten* at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Web capture of video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90FU7hzBaHg> (left). Catalogue for *Geluid «=> Kijken: drie audio-visuele projecten* (right). Booklet for *Geluid «=> Kijken: drie audio-visuele projecten* (bottom). Catalogue via: <https://www.discogs.com/es/release/959684-Ton-Bruyn%C3%A8l-Dick-Raaijmakers-Peter-Struycken-Geluid-Kijken-Drie-Audio-Visuele-Projekten/image/SW1hZ2U6MTAxOTQyMzQ=>

Musicians and artists were not confined to traditional means of expression. The liberation of sound, leaving behind canvases, meant a wide array of materials came to play. A finished aesthetic product was no longer dominant. It was the idea that mattered. Bruynèl, Raaijmakers, and Struycken asked: Why should we not be able to see with our ears and hear with our eyes?<sup>111</sup> The point of departure for Bruynèl was directional ambient sound. His work, *Cubes Project* 1969-71, consisted of placing four cubes of steel that vibrated because of recorded noise. Bruynèl wanted the sources of sound to be objects in the exhibition space. Bruynèl left two recorders for the audience to manipulate, so sound depended on combinations and the continuity of the experience.

<sup>110</sup> Ton Bruynèl, Dick Raaijmakers and Peter Struycken, *Geluid «=> Kijken: drie audio-visuele projecten* exhibition catalogue (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1971), 2.

<sup>111</sup> Bruynèl, Raaijmakers and Struycken, *Geluid «=> Kijken*, 2.

Raaijmakers' *Ideofoon I 1970, Ideofoon II 1971, and Ideofoon III 1971* consisted of conceiving loudspeakers as instruments, ideas beyond utility concepts. The first construction consisted of 36 loudspeakers containing a steel ball. By contact or impulse of the bouncing ball, each loudspeaker produced frequencies. For the second construction, spheres constantly traveled a distance between speakers, emitting a rebound frequency sound. In the third construction, all of the loudspeakers were interconnected; the action of one speaker conditioned the sound of the other. Struycken built structural grids, similar to chessboards, that changed according to computer programmed-sound. The audio-visual elements and their combination explored the structural variations depending on chance. For Raaijmaker, the work brought awareness to the image-sound relationship and the complexity of simultaneous languages.

Using records as catalogues complimented the exhibition in its medium. The objects offered the audience the aural environment and a continuation of the event at home. Records have a multi-sensorial value because it is a tactile experience. In 1973, the curator and art critic Germano Celant inaugurated *Record as Artwork, 1959-73* at the Royal College of Art in London. Celant's exhibition was the first to view audio recordings and record covers as art to be exhibited in a museum.<sup>112</sup> It included over 150 records and album covers recorded and designed by artists such as Karel Appel, Marcel Duchamp, and Andy Warhol. In 1977 and 1978, the exhibition went to Fort Worth, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Montreal as *Record as Artwork, from Futurism to Conceptual Art*, curated by Anne Livet. The records were from Celant's collection (Figs. 18 and 19). The goal was to develop a curatorial theme through records to tell the story of sound exploration from the early 1900s until the date.

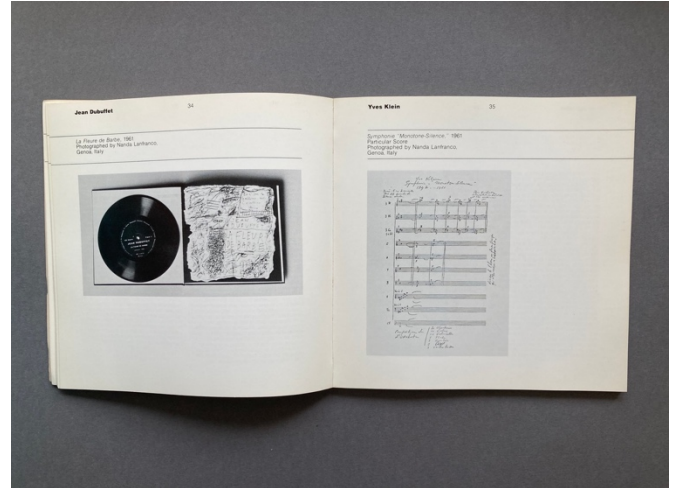
Anne Livet explained each room featured the tracks of the records on tape recorders to provide a continual acoustic survey that complemented and expanded the visual presentation.<sup>113</sup> For the first time, records became a medium to explore curatorial themes: a document, a repository of an aural testimony that was, too, an art object. The fidelity of sound spoke for itself, touching the listener. In other words, the ensemble of noises and aural messages passes between the utterer and listener, capable of recreating in part the psychophysical experience.<sup>114</sup> Additionally, from this moment, using records to aid the presentation of visual work became a possibility. An audiovisual collaboration that enhanced the sonic dimension of a silent museum, creating another approach with the audience, appealing to memories and sensations.

---

<sup>112</sup> Germano Celant, "Record as Artwork 1959-73," in *Sound Art, Sound as a Medium of Art*, ed. Peter Weibel (Cambridge: The MIT Press: 2019), 150.

<sup>113</sup> Anne Livet, "Introduction," in *The Record as Artwork, from Futurism to Conceptual Art* exhibition catalogue (Fort Worth: The Fort Worth Museum of Art, 1977), 6.

<sup>114</sup> Licht, *Sound Art Revisited*, 154.



Figs. 18 and 19: Catalogue for *The Record as Artwork from Futurism to Conceptual Art: The Collection of Germano Celant*.

The gallerist René Block organized the exhibition *Für Augen und Ohren (For Eyes and Ears) From the Music Box to the Acoustic Environment: Objects, Installations, Performances* in 1980. *Für Augen und Ohren* took place at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin. The exhibition, which occupied twelve rooms, was a definitive survey of sound.<sup>115</sup> Block's introduction explained how thanks to records, films, loudspeakers, and radios, the audience now participated in a once-exclusive practice and experience. By mentioning synesthesia and technological developments, Block described the conformation of intermedial art practices stated:

"*Für Augen und Ohren* attempts for the first time to present this development on a larger scale, although it is impossible to summarize the subject in all its complexity in one exhibition" p. 7 cat.

The selection of the artworks strived to reflect multi-sensorial practice where optics and acoustic created a unique environment away from conventional limitations. The nature of the exhibition was a changing situation. Sound was independent or made by the visitors (Figs. 20 and 21). *Für Augen und Ohren* was a festival with a performance schedule, and the catalogue contained interviews and essays. Block integrated music boxes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and other objects like phonographs and mechanical organs in the introductory part of the exhibition.<sup>116</sup> Block's idea was to track back the musical practices and emphasize the development of sonic dimensions from the 1900s to the 1980s.

<sup>115</sup> Licht, *Sound Art Revisited*, 111.

<sup>116</sup> Anne Zeitz, "Akustische Räume, Für Augen und Ohren, Musique en conteneur, Der befreite Klang. Retracing the Heard and Unheard Curatorial Practice of René Block from the 1960s to the 1980s," *Kunsttexte.de e-journal for art and visual history* 1 (2020), 7.





Figs. 20, 21, and 22: Nam June Paik installing a reconstruction of *Exposition of Musik*, in *Für Augen und Ohren*, Akademie der Künste, Berlin. (left). View of *The Headphone Table* by Laurie Anderson in *Für Augen und Ohren*, Akademie der Künste, Berlin (right). Via: Anne Zeits, *Akustische Räume, Für Augen und Ohren, Musique en conteneur, Der befreite Klang Retracing the Heard and Unheard Curatorial Practice of René Block from the 1960s to the 1980s* (2020). Video of *Für Augen und Ohren*, web capture: <https://vimeo.com/89113820> (bottom).

The following year, *Soundings*, curated by Suzanne Delehanty, took place at the Neuberger Museum at SUNY Purchase. This exhibition billed itself as the first American survey of visual artists' use of sound, music, and acoustical phenomena from 1900 to the present.<sup>117</sup> Peter Frank, who reviewed the exhibition for the *Art Journal*, and the composer Alan Licht agree that *Soundings*, at least in the United States, was the formal entrance of music and sounds to a museum context. In the introduction text to the catalogue, Delehanty explained that:

"If sound, music, and noise offered visual artists a means to represent the continuum of space-time, it extended artists' ability to elicit a new response from the once passive onlooker (...) Sound announced that human experience, ever-changing in time and space — the substance of life itself — had become both the subject and object of art."<sup>118</sup>

The catalogue included an essay by Dore Ashton on the importance of the sensorium and possibilities of sound and image to explore intermediality, "realizing the prolonged

<sup>117</sup> Peter Frank, "Soundings at SUNY," *Art Journal* vol. 12, no. 1 (Spring, 1982), 52.

<sup>118</sup> Suzanne Delehanty, *Soundings* exhibition catalogue (Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum/State University of New York at Purchase, 1981), 12.

dream of the total work of art.”<sup>119</sup> A contribution by Germano Celant, *ArtSound*, a political text that explained “the new realities of experiencing sound, contrasted to “sepulchral spaces.”<sup>120</sup> The catalogue featured an essay by Lucy Fisher, *Sound Waves*, a detailed history of cinema, the role of sound, and the treatment of dissonances and experimentation with images, which produced a “highly reflective gesture that looks back at the kinoscope,”<sup>121</sup> the first device used in 1912 to synchronize images with cylinder records. Further, the exhibition showcased loans from more than 30 museums and galleries in the United States that had acquired paintings depicting music, kinetic and aural sculptures, manifestos, photographs of sound installations and performances.

Sound art gained a place of recognition. These two retrospective exhibitions testify to the importance of sound as a curatorial theme. As documented by Seth Cluett, there have been at least 350 sound-themed group exhibitions from 1966 until 2009.<sup>122</sup> Between 1979 and 2010, the number of exhibitions engaging sound averages about eight per year.<sup>123</sup> Sound art's development changed museum practices. It opened the possibility for sound to diversify the visitor's experience, proposing new layers of meaning. An improved version of audio tours accompanied the exhibition *Treasures of Tutankhamun*, which introduced headphones as common practice for major art museums.<sup>124</sup> Then, in 1979, with the arrival of the cassette recorder, the visitor wore a portable cassette-recorder to listen to information at a personal pace and time.<sup>125</sup> Audio guides, too, entered a new phase in 1995 because digital technologies enabled the content length to be doubled from two to four hours.<sup>126</sup> In the late 1990s, with visitors able to choose their own routes and listen as long as they liked, museums began to accept audio guides as an increasingly versatile and desirable visitor accessory,<sup>127</sup> a standard museum companion.

Sound art became a curatorial theme that demanded a change in exhibition spaces. Sound artists encouraged the audience to interact with pieces, to immerse themselves in the installations, and to experience sound. Delivering information was not static and only visual because internalizing sound fostered emotional reactions. There was a

---

<sup>119</sup> Dore Ashton, “Sensoria,” in Suzanne Delehanty, *Soundings* exhibition catalogue (Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum/State University of New York at Purchase, 1981), 19.

<sup>120</sup> Germano Celant, “Artsound,” in Suzanne Delehanty, *Soundings* exhibition catalogue (Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum/State University of New York at Purchase, 1981), 23.

<sup>121</sup> Lucy Fischer, “Sound Waves,” in Suzanne Delehanty, *Soundings* exhibition catalogue (Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum/State University of New York at Purchase, 1981), 26.

<sup>122</sup> See Appendix A in Seth Cluett, “Loud Speaker: Towards a Component Theory of Media Sound,” (Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 2013), 110-24.

<sup>123</sup> Cluett, “Loud Speaker: Towards a Component,” 49.

<sup>124</sup> Jennifer Fischer, “Speeches of Display, Museum Audio Guides by Artists,” in *Aural Cultures*, ed. Jim Drobnick (Toronto & Banff: YYZ Books & Walter Phillips Gallery Editions), 50.

<sup>125</sup> Tallon, “On the Rise of Mobile Technology for Museums.”

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Nancy Proctor and Chris Tellis, “The State of the Art in Museum Handhelds in 2003,” *Museums and the Web 2003*, accessed 2 July 2023, <https://www.archimuse.com/mw2003/papers/proctor/proctor.html>

space for interpretation and movement, new learning frames within larger socio-cultural contexts.

Sound art is why music arrived in museums as a curatorial theme because the sensory world of sound implied music, its performance, history, and memory. Sound, as material and medium, allowed for an embodied aesthetic experience. The sound exhibitions in the United States at the beginning of the 1970s cared for the design of sonic environments where the visitors' participation became crucial. The exhibition catalogues in vinyl strived for a reflection on the multi-sensorial practice because the audience could take home the exhibition's sounds and revive them. The development of audio guides, too, asked the museum visitors to multi-task: walk, look, listen, and learn through the galleries. The audio guide became an usher for the eye, creating a new type of awareness. Sound objects, aural sculptures, paintings depicting music, and sound installations became part of the museum's collection, gaining a place of recognition. Thus, sound, as a meaning-making strategy that combined different ways of reception, transformed the learning experience in museums until today.

## **1.6 The transformation of museums and popular music exhibitions**

Sound art exhibitions since the 1960s disrupted traditional settings. Sound modified space, which required the spectator to engage in a multisensorial way. The curator's function transformed, gaining recognition. Museums started to question how to deliver information and exhibitions are now learning experiences.

Museums became places for edification, but churches had that function before. Are museums the new cathedrals? Even though I will not discuss the history of the Catharijneconvent, the museum is a former convent. This institution, now responsible for the Christian heritage of the Netherlands, was a religious setting. The Catharijneconvent's permanent collection includes art historical objects from the Middle Ages to the twenty-first century. Their exhibitions in today's secularized world aim to connect the public to the religious – specifically Christian transcendence—through cultural memory.

A museum's appearance is an ambitious architectural project. Just as building a cathedral was a lengthy process that required effort and funding, so are museum design and construction. The result is an imposing image. Museums historically have quoted the architecture of Greek and Roman temples, places of wisdom, worship, and authority. For Caroline Duncan, museums appear as environments structured around specific ritual scenarios.<sup>128</sup> Along with the triumph of secularization, museums became places for scientific knowledge.

Every exhibition and display highlights objects, stories, themes, and topics. It is a decision of what to present or not, how to showcase it, and why. Churches were

---

<sup>128</sup> Caroline Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (Routledge, 1995), 2.

crucial for education, and now museums have taken that place. Further, they preserve the community's official cultural memory<sup>129</sup> and create an environment to connect to art in a transcendental way as visitors marvel at and contemplate in silence.

A ritual is associated with religious practices —with the realm of belief, magic, real or symbolic sacrifices, miraculous transformation, or overpowering changes of consciousness,<sup>130</sup> and for Duncan, museums are excellent spaces for those microcosms. The apparent secularization practices have in them many religious components. Museums are ritual spaces for several reasons. First, controlling a museum means controlling the representation of a community and its highest values; second, museums are marked off for contemplation and learning; third, there are decorum rules; fourth, there is an element of performance.<sup>131</sup> This last aspect refers to enactment. For Duncan, visitors enact the ritual in art museums as they enter these sequenced spaces, following a pilgrimage route, stopping at prescribed points for contemplation, and finally, they leave transformed.<sup>132</sup> These places care for the human history in their collections, are outstanding venues outside daily life, and create a scenario for visitors to perceive these treasured objects.

The exhibition's title, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey of strength and hope), speaks for itself. Through gospel, and its musical expressions of devotion, the museum created a route to discover the history of this traditional music genre as an embodiment of Christian transcendence. But to get to that point where music narratives became curatorial themes, a transformation in museal practices took place. Many agents are responsible for these changes. A starting point was the material turn. Mario Schulze defined it as the period between the 1980s and 1990s when there sparked a need to question the understanding of things as the unquestionable and constant fundament of reality, considering their abilities to guide and influence human actions.<sup>133</sup> Museum pieces then objects for aesthetic contemplation, became objects of meaning that conveyed stories. Curators started questioning how museums had been collecting and tried to decipher the reality of objects, the emotions attached to them.

The philosopher Krzysztof Pomian argued that any object in a museum has a semiotic quality.<sup>134</sup> Thus, the curators also assumed the mediation role: creating a performative or staging environment for the objects to articulate the testimony of their existence concerning our physical and emotional worlds. These encounters coincided with a

---

<sup>129</sup> Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, 8.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>133</sup> Mario Schulze, "Things are Changing: Museums and the Material Turn," *Museological Review* 18 (2014), 44.

<sup>134</sup> Krzysztof Pomian, "Entre l'invisible et le visible: la collection," in K. Pomian *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise XVIe – XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987) quoted in Mario Schulze, "Things are Changing: Museums and the Material Turn," *Museological Review* 18 (2014), 48.

revival of the history of the sensorium within the humanities around the 1990s. One of the most notable books on the matter was *The Merging of the Senses*, published in 1993 by Barry Stein and M. Alex Meredith, which explained that the sensory systems gathered information simultaneously, complimenting each other:

"The integration is critical for making sense of the inputs the brain receives from different modalities as it is for interpreting multiple inputs (...) the product of cross-modal matching, cross-modal transfers, the integrative processes, is perception (...) an integrated world view."<sup>135</sup>

The acknowledgment of the multi-sensorial approach, as well as caring for the history of the senses and how they determined the view of the world, tied to cultural analysis, changed the perception of museum objects. Sensory scholars proposed that it is no longer feasible that art history limits its enquires to the visual field alone, for this field is also informed by the senses of touch, hearing, and so forth.<sup>136</sup> Thanks to these, the twenty-first-century museums articulate exhibitions that deal with these complex systems. Museums have become exciting places for historical, cross-cultural, and aesthetic discovery and inspiration.<sup>137</sup> In the introduction to *The Multisensory Museum* (2014), Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone explained that the museum experience is a multi-layered journey:<sup>138</sup>

"Neuroscience, without a doubt, has helped to understand that the brain is not a passive recipient of information through the senses but instead an active seeker of information (...) It has taught us that our internal representation of reality, and thus the predictions we approach experience with and the nature of such experiences themselves, are intrinsically multisensory."<sup>139</sup>

The sensory turn has influenced artists and museum professionals to think beyond, and technology has enhanced the possibilities. Multisensory immersion has taken the place of disinterested contemplation as the goal of much art and has, in turn, led art critics and philosophers to challenge the restrictive sensory politics of the modern museum.<sup>140</sup> For example, the inclusion of sound and music not only as visit-enhancers but as themes and narratives for exhibitions. Sound and music are culturally relevant mediums and objects.

---

<sup>135</sup> Barry Stein and M. Alex Meredith, *The Merging of the Senses* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), ix-xi.

<sup>136</sup> Jenni Lauwrens, "Welcome to the revolution: The sensory turn and art history," *Journal of Art Historiography* 7 (December 2012), 16.

<sup>137</sup> David Howes, "Introduction to Sensory Museology," *The Senses and Society*, 9: 3 (2014), 265.

<sup>138</sup> Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone, eds., *The Multisensory Museum: A Cross-disciplinary Perspective on Multiple Modalities of a Museum Experience*, (New York: AltaMira, 2013), Kindle, 80.

<sup>139</sup> Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone, *The Multisensory Museum*, 87.

<sup>140</sup> Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone, *The Multisensory Museum*, 168.

Since 2003, music holds a key place in the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of humanity as inventoried by UNESCO since its 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.<sup>141</sup> Then, in 2006 UNESCO released a statement about 'Traditional Music':

"The function of music and its tool — the instrument— must not be limited to the mere production of sounds. Traditional Music and instruments convey the deepest cultural, spiritual, and aesthetic values of civilization, transmitting knowledge in many spheres."<sup>142</sup>

It is worth asking how exhibitions enhance the audience's understanding of intangible heritage, meaning music, which is very present in many aspects of life. Music and musical instruments are semantic fields; they have status and meaning. As explained by Georgina Born, music is perhaps the paradigmatic multiply-mediated, immaterial and material, fluid quasi-object, in which subjects and objects collide and intermingle.<sup>143</sup> Music, as heritage, is a way of hearing and understanding the texture of the past. Additionally, music addresses issues such as identity and representation, race, sexuality, politics, psychology, and migration.

Popular music predominates in museum exhibitions. During the 1990s, the generation that experienced the surge of rock n' roll and pop music had aged, and what once was popular music began to change. For Andy Bennet, once the generational tides moved on, the music heritage pendulum swings in the direction of generational icons.<sup>144</sup> The direction changes: the mass-produced music will become part of cultural history. Second, new cultural institutions dedicated to the commemoration of popular music opened. The best example is the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum in 1993, based in Cleveland, Ohio. This museum quickly became a key driver in the efforts to transform the significance of rock and pop from ephemeral youth musics to art forms that had fundamentally shaped the culture and history of the late twentieth century.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>141</sup> Elsa Broclain, Benoît Haug and Pénélope Patrix, "Introduction. Music: Intangible Heritage?," *Transposition, musique et sciences sociales. Musique: patrimoine immatériel?* 8 (2019), <https://journals.openedition.org/transposition/4121> See "The term 'cultural heritage' has changed content considerably in recent decades, partially owing to the instruments developed by UNESCO. Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge, and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts." "What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?," UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, last accessed 27 April 2023, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>

<sup>142</sup> UNESCO 2006 statement quoted in Alexandre Lunsqui, "Music and Globalization: Diversity, Banalization and Culturalization," *Filigrane Musique et globalization* no. 5 (May 2007), <https://revues.mshparisnord.fr/filigrane/index.php?id=161#ftn11>

<sup>143</sup> Georgina Born, "On musical mediation: Ontology, technology and creativity," *Twentieth-Century Music* 2, no. 1 (2005): 7.

<sup>144</sup> Andy Bennett, *Popular Music Heritage* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 8.

<sup>145</sup> Bennett, *Popular Music Heritage*, 5.

Thus, the institutionalization of popular music through a museum was a turning point for cultural heritage

Third, while there is no doubt that popular music is closer to audiences because of its participatory nature and capacity to connect with feelings, this aspect became capitalizable. The Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame Museum and The Liverpool Beatles Museum have considerable touristic value. Even though popular music exhibitions aim for a connection with the audience, block-buster popular music themes and icons hit a high number of attendees. These exhibitions show how effective popular music can be as a subject in attracting new museum audiences.<sup>146</sup>

Popular music exhibitions are part of a wider trend related to the experience economy and the need to provide multi-sensory entertainment in museums. Sound and music are interpretative tools that immerse the audience. Using audio guides, guide port systems, and sound design create an embodied journey. The conclusion from Kate Bailey, Victoria Broackes, and Eric de Visscher, present and former curators at The Victorian and Albert Museum, responsible for the music exhibitions *David Bowie Is...* (23 March 2013 - 15 July 2018), *You Say You Want a Revolution? Records and Rebels 1966-1970* (10 September 2016 - 26 February 2017), and *Pink Floyd: Their Mortal Remains* (13 May 2017 - 15 October 2017), is that when museum visitors hear longer, they also look more.<sup>147</sup> For Kathleen Wiens, former curator of the Musical Instruments Museum in Brussels:

"Popular music is an acknowledged catalyst for learning, for initiating critical thought about cultural processes, and acting as a powerful didactic tool through which personal identities are woven, constructed, and contested."<sup>148</sup>

The curatorial practices behind popular music exhibitions aim to create dynamic environments for displaying information. Thus, other non-musical museums consider music as a theme to articulate history and demonstrate how people, through listening, inhabit the world.

---

<sup>146</sup> Marion Leonard, "Representing Popular Music Histories and Heritage in Museums," *The Routledge Companion to Popular Music History and Heritage* ed. Sarah Baker, Catherine Strong, Lauren Istvandy, and Zelmarie Cantillon (Routledge, 2018), 269.

<sup>147</sup> Kate Bailey, Victoria Broackes, and Eric de Visscher, "The longer we heard, the more we looked. Music at the Victoria and Albert Museum," *Curator The Museum Journal* vol. 62, no. 3 (2019), 341.

<sup>148</sup> Kathleen Wiens, "Popular Music as an Interpretative Device for Creating Meaningful Visitor Experience in Music Museums," *Ethnologies*, 37 (1) (2015), 146.

## 1.7 The Catharijneconvent and gospel: methodology, analytical concepts, and framework

Musealizing music has been a preoccupation taking the shape of composers' houses, museums dedicated to singer-songwriters, popular music museums, departments in art museums, or ethnographic museums, among other musealization forms.<sup>149</sup> The presentation of music and its objects represents a challenge against two historically dominating assumptions: the hierarchy of the senses with sight as a goal and the delivery of musical knowledge through visual terms. Music happens in time; music is a process. In 2019, *Curator: The Museum Journal* released a special edition focused on sonic experiences in museums. The second editorial, "How Do We Listen to Museums?" by Kathleen Wiens and Eric de Visscher, argued that from an academic perspective, there had been little research on sound in museums.<sup>150</sup> The authors discussed few scholars have addressed how audiences relate to the sonic dimension of museums.

In this gap, I saw an opportunity and questions worth answering. The Catharijneconvent is the national museum for the art and heritage of Christianity and manages the most important collection of art and cultural-historic objects of Christianity in the Netherlands.<sup>151</sup> The museum had never done a music exhibition. Why now? How does this relate to their mission and vision? What happens when a museum non-related to music showcases a music exhibition to renew its discourse and attract new audiences? The divisions between art history and music had to disappear to create a compelling narrative. Additionally, gospel music is a hinge. Gospel is a traditional genre that influenced popular music.

The presentation of aural realities in museums demands a revision of the cultural practices: How has music shaped our views of the world? According to Marion Leonard, displaying music-related items in museums is a contact point for oral histories.<sup>152</sup> Popular music exhibitions have been an opportunity for museums to bring on board different agents, such as professional performers and musicians, collectors, and concert spectators that bring unique knowledge to the exhibition-making.

---

<sup>149</sup> Judith Dehal. "Musealising Change or Changing the Museum: the Case of the Musical Instrument Museum from the Visitors' Perspective," *Museological Review*, no. 18 (2014): 54.

<sup>150</sup> Kathleen Wiens and Eric de Visscher, "How Do We Listen to Museums?" *Curator The Museum Journal*, 62, no. 3 (2019): 279.

<sup>151</sup> "Mission and vision," Museum Catharijneconvent, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://www.catharijneconvent.nl/de-organisatie/missie-en-visie/>

<sup>152</sup> Marion Leonard, "Representing popular music histories and heritages in museums," in *The Routledge Companion to Popular Music History and Heritage*, ed. Sarah Baker (Bookshelf, Taylor & Francis, 2018), 264.



Thus, sparked the research question: How did the Catharijneconvent's approach to incorporate gospel music as a curatorial theme renewed Christian heritage through an exploration of the aural world?

I aimed to answer the following questions:

Who were the agents involved in the making of the exhibition?

How did the team come together? How did collaboration prove fruitful?

How did the exhibition communicate Christian heritage through music?

How did gospel music help to understand a social environment and its fluctuations?

What was the exhibition's narrative? What did it articulate?

How did the exhibition deliver knowledge through sound?

How did gospel music impact popular culture, and how was this shown to the audience?

The thesis's methodology comprises of the following: observation, interviews with the curator Rianneke van der Houwen, Willem Driebergen, the audiovisual advisor and research assistant for the gospel exhibition, and Wiegert Ambagts from the design studio Namelok,<sup>153</sup> and the analytical tools based on the framework of representing popular music histories and heritage in museums developed by Alcina Cortez, as well as Cortez's concept of the practice of popular music narratives in museums: *the performatively driven*.

Observation is a research method used in different disciplines, such as the social sciences and humanities. Observation is a scientific method carried out systematically and purposefully; its basis is to watch, evaluate, draw conclusions, and make comments on interactions and relations.<sup>154</sup> In this case, the access to the field of study was visiting the exhibition multiple times from March 2023 until its closing date. I took written notes and photographs with my mobile phone during each visit to elaborate on an analysis. My observation technique was direct, as I looked at the events happening in front of my eyes at the moment of them occurring.<sup>155</sup>

The exhibition had six areas that covered chronological themes. The physical objects in the exhibition were photographs, books, sculptures, archival material such as

---

<sup>153</sup> The quotations of Riannake van der Houwen, Willem Driebergen, and Wiegert Ambagts from Namelok come from personal/unpublished interviews, as stated in the bibliography:

- Wiegert Ambagts from Namelok, interview by María Luisa Guevara Tirado, Utrecht, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.
- Willem Driebergen, interview by María Luisa Guevara Tirado, Utrecht, April 10, 2023.
- Rianneke Van der Houwen, interview by María Luisa Guevara Tirado. Utrecht, March 28, 2023.

<sup>154</sup> Malgorzata Ciesielska, Katarzyna W. Boström and Magnus Öhlander, "Observation Methods" in *Qualitative Methodologies in Organization Studies Volume II: Methods and Possibilities*, edited by M. Ciesielska and Dariusz Jemielniak (London: Palgrave MacMillan 2018), 33.

<sup>155</sup> Ciesielska, Katarzyna W. Boström and Magnus Öhlander, "Observation Methods," 41.

newspapers and letters, performance footage, video interviews, musical instruments like a Hammond organ, vinyl, CDs, Martin Luther King's clothing, Harcourt Klinefelter's tape recorder, and protest signs from the Black Lives Matter movement. I analyzed the function of these objects and what they communicated within the context of the exhibition at the museum.

Curator Rianneke van der Houwen provided me with the list of these objects. Willem Driebergen provided me with a list of the songs used in the exhibition and the files used in the audio guide. Simultaneously, I conducted a series of interviews with Rianneke van der Houwen, Willem Driebergen, and Wiegert Ambagts after visiting the exhibition. I recorded these interviews and transcribed them. The goal of the observation method was to address my research question regarding the renewal of Christian heritage through sound in the gospel exhibition at the Catharijneconvent. The notes, too, followed this aim.

I engaged as a direct participant observer to theorize about the exhibition. I blended with the museumgoers. Direct observation is useful to understand in-depth a social group or organization but from an external/independent point of view.<sup>156</sup> Nevertheless, I was, too, a non-participant observer because I did not interact with the museumgoers in terms of asking questions about their thoughts, feelings, or reactions to the exhibition. I did not reflect at any rate on their behavior. As stated by Malgorzata Ciesielska, Katarzyna W. Boström, and Magnus Öhlander in their comparison of the main types of observations, "participant means observing from an insider perspective, as an active participant of a group or organization. It requires full cultural immersion (although only temporarily) while sustaining an analytical mindset. Non-participant observation means there is an observation from an outsider without interacting with the subjects of observation. This observation is useful when observing a well-known reality, for example, a public place, and there is a need for regarding it from a totally new perspective."<sup>157</sup> The roles of the researcher and the role of the professional can be performed at the same time.<sup>158</sup>

To enrich the data I collected in the field of study, the gospel exhibition at the Catharijneconvent, I decided to interview three exhibition team members of *Gospel. Muzikale reis*, as mentioned before. These interviews allowed me to understand better the aim of the exhibition. I gathered significant information on the planning, preparation, and set-up of *Gospel. Muzikale reis*. I reflected upon the reasons behind different curatorial decisions and the challenges the team had to overcome. The supervision of Lieke Wijnia, head of curatorial and library at the Catharijneconvent, during the writing process significantly enriched my understanding of the negotiation between music and sacrality, as documented in her Ph.D. dissertation *Making Sense through Music: Perception of the Sacred at Festival Musica Sacra Maastricht* (2016).

---

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

Wjinia's thesis “departed from the perspective study of religion to explore the function of art, particularly music, in contemporary culture.”<sup>159</sup> Conversations with Wjinia on her thesis helped me orient my research toward the meaning-making strategies of curatorial practices related to art and musical performance and the problematization of conceptualizing the sacred.

At the same time, I interviewed the museum curator Tyree Boyd-Pates, who was responsible for the exhibition *How Sweet the Sound: Gospel in Los Angeles* at the California African American Museum (CAAM) held between February 8, 2018, and August 26, 2018. Boyd-Pates mentioned that “the CAAM sought to tell the story of Black gospel music by using sound as ephemera. Considering that Black music is so influential in American life, one can find a lot of the experiences and also anxieties of Black Americans within the music produced by the community, and so, using music to drive the historical narrative assisting us, and telling, are rich in the complex version of it alongside gallery walls. One of the biggest challenges, when thinking about how to deliver in musical terms, was to have an exhibition that was not only musically informed but also inter-generational and interfaith, without excluding those who may not necessarily adopt the exhibition's faith.”<sup>160</sup>

These interviews helped me solidify the analysis I performed on the exhibition. Again, I wanted to be sure I was not over-interpreting or elaborating incorrectly on the data I gathered. I reflected on the exhibition with each conversation, and I visited *Gospel. Muzikale reis* after each interview, keeping in mind the discussions to retrieve pertinent information.

In her Ph.D. dissertation, Alcina Cortez created a framework to classify the diverse sound-based museum practices. Based on an analysis of sixty-nine exhibitions, Cortez argued that sound-based multimodal exhibitions cluster into five categories: *sound as a “lecturing mode; sound as an artefact; sound as “ambiance”/soundtrack; sound as art and sound as a mode for crowd-curation.*<sup>161</sup> These categories are the five-use framework of sound-based museum practices. The first one discusses using a voice to deliver information about the exhibition, an oral lecture given to the visitors, for example, audio guides. The second one refers to sound as a representation of a culture and its dynamics. For example, music, literature, theatre are cultural artefacts. The third one indicates practices where the visitor, through sound, is re-inserted or immersed in a historical period. The second and third categories can provoke affective responses. The fourth category refers to using sound as a raw material, meaning the exploration of sound properties such as timbre and pitch build or constitute the exhibition. The fifth category is strictly related to situations where the audience's

---

<sup>159</sup> Lieke Wjinia, “Making Senses through Music: Perceptions of the Sacred at Festival Musica Sacra Maastricht,” Ph.D. diss., (Tilburg University, 2016), 10.

<sup>160</sup> The quotations of Sara Lenzi come from personal/unpublished interviews, as stated in the bibliography:  
- Tyler Boyd-Pates, interview by the author, Utrecht (email), May 22, 2023.

<sup>161</sup> Alcina Cortez, “Communicating Through Sound in Museum Exhibitions: Unravelling a Field of Practice,” Ph.D. diss., (Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2022), 35.

participation builds the exhibition: the exhibition is curated with the audience's collaboration.

Museums have opted for an interactive approach and are developing immersive technologies for their visitors.<sup>162</sup> These technologies employ virtual reality tools such as headsets, 3D imagery, virtual reconstructions, and stereoscopic glasses to immerse visitors in a particular environment and offer them an intense and memorable experience.<sup>163</sup> So far, the digital media, internet-driven storytelling of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is distinguishing itself with several emerging characteristics: it is immersive, multi-sensory, and participatory.<sup>164</sup>

According to Maggie Brunette Stogner, there are four types of immersive storytelling for museums: experiential immersion is sensory or aesthetic in nature with no narrative threat to guide the visitors through the exhibition; narrative immersion brings history to life using story and characters to contextualize objects and guide visitors through a narrative experience where digital video and audio media techniques are frequently integrated with set and lighting design to create a sense of time, place, and lifestyle via multi-screen videos, soundscapes, music, and 2D and 3D animations; theater immersion evolves from big screen films to 3D and 4D with multi-sensory environmental elements such as wind, mist, snow, as well as touch and smell; interactive immersion is expanding rapidly both on-site and off-site, for example, audio-based tours are giving way to self-guided, multi-media tours both within the museums walls and off-site; virtual immersion is evolving in web-based virtual tours that allow the visitors to navigate through representation of a museum's galleries.<sup>165</sup>

The success of immersive spaces comes, too, from sound designers. Sound designer Sara Lenzi, from the University of Delft, explained that her practice is a negotiation between the communicative content via the materials and the expectations of the

---

<sup>162</sup> Isabelle Collin-Lachaud and Juliette Passebois, "Do Immersive Technologies Add Value to the Museumgoing Experience? An Explanatory Study Conducted at France's Paléosite," *International Journal of Arts Management*, vol. 11, no. 1 (Fall 2008), 60.

<sup>163</sup> Florence Belaën, "L'immersion dans les musées de science: médiation ou séduction?," *Culture et Musées* no. 5 (2005), 8-12. "Dans ce contexte les exposition d'immersion ont fait leur apparition dans les musées. Ce genre de réalisation semble récent (...) Le qualificatif « immersif » est associé à un effet d'absorption (...) Comme l'indique Grau dans une mise en perspective de l'apparition des dispositifs d'immersion (Grau, 2003), le concept d'immersion reste difficile à circonscrire (...) Les environnements immersifs cherchent à procurer chez les visiteurs un sentiment global, prolongeant ainsi la quête d'un art total (De Oliveira et al, 2003). L'immersion renvoie à une expérience envoûtante, de « forte » intensité, qui se caractérise par une augmentation de l'émotion et une diminution de la distance critique (Grau, 2003). Elle se traduit par une absorption mentale de sujet qui le conduit d'un état à un autre, avec le sentiment d'être dans « un temps et un lieu particuliers » (Bitgood, 1990)."

<sup>164</sup> Maggie Brunette Stogner, "Communication Culture in the 21st Century: The Power of Media-Enhanced Immersive Storytelling," *The Journal of Museum Education* vol. 36 no. 2 (Summer 2011), 189. "The advantages of implementing 21<sup>st</sup>-century media technologies are two-fold. First, they can be used to engage a more diverse range of visitors and second, they can expand the range and depth of the museum experience."

<sup>165</sup> Maggie Brunette Stogner, "Communication Culture in the 21st Century," 191-194.

experience.<sup>166</sup> Lenzi “rebuilds the experience of the world embodied by multi-sensoriality, so the public has access to all the modalities.” Immersion, for Lenzi, has three components: the unconscious, sound, and light. The peripheral experience, the surface and circulation, and the focalized reception complement each other and create an environment. According to Lenzi, the exhibition content and the brand representation go first. After, she focuses on how a museum, as a brand with a visual identity, can develop further to create a psychological experience, targeting a connection with the audience. Finally, she sketches the sound based on these prior aspects. Lenzi explained: “Sound can be imaginative when there is a need to create non-existent sounds or bounded to audio-visual practices rooted in the film industry.” In this step, she identifies whether the sound fills the rooms or recreates emptiness and decides whether sound is interactive or de-contextualizes the space.

Lenzi stated that “even though not everyone could compose sounds and music, anyone could remember a feeling attached to it, and that powerful mental apprehension defines how people remember an event or form a memory.” In that sense, the embodiment of a sound-experience must preserve the message that wants to be communicated, so people remember the museum, the museum’s agenda, and the event.

As for the *performatively driven* concept, Alcina Cortez visited 21 popular music museums and exhibitions. From her data and analysis of displaying practices and curatorial decisions, she concluded that there are modalities and strategies for signifying in popular music exhibitions that have become a paradigmatic set of practices in popular museum heritagization.<sup>167</sup> These practices are rooted in communicating through experience. Thus, aiming not so much at representing the knowable but enacting it, becoming it, as part of a visitor-centered mindset.<sup>168</sup>

According to Cortez, there are four types of performatively driven strategies: exhibiting sound and music; dramatic strategies; enveloping strategies; and sound epistemologies. The first one refers to the introduction of sound as a curatorial theme.<sup>169</sup> Exhibiting music attracts visitors, fosters connections at a personal level with the audience, and facilitates a different type of understanding. The second refers to the contrasting moments in the exhibition space as a tool to thrill the audience. For instance, a sense of flow between rooms, playing with the illusion of time in

---

<sup>166</sup> The quotations of Sara Lenzi come from personal/unpublished interviews, as stated in the bibliography:

- Sara Lenzi, interview by the author, Utrecht, April 20, 2023.

<sup>167</sup> Alcina Cortez, “Performatively Driven: A Genre for Signifying in Popular Music Exhibitions,” *Curator The Museum Journal* 62, N. 3 (2019), 351.

<sup>168</sup> J. Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience* (California: Left Coast Press, 2009) and B. J. Soren, “Museum Experiences that Change Visitors,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 13, no. 2 (2009): 233-251 in Cortez, “Performatively Driven: A Genre for Signifying in Popular Music Exhibitions,” *Curator The Museum Journal* 62, N. 3 (2019), 352.

<sup>169</sup> Cortez, “Performatively Driven: A Genre for Signifying,” 352.

installations, and creating a climatic finale, "a strategy imported from live concerts."<sup>170</sup> The third deals with immersivity and interactivity to explain the narrative. Popular music exhibitions focus on creating an experience for the audience, recreating an ambient, and re-enacting the past. Thus, traditional text narratives are no longer primarily considered. The fourth is "a strategy to attribute significance to sound as an episteme, a way to convey knowledge."<sup>171</sup>

Overall, all the data collected, either written material, photographs, recorded and transcribed interviews, and the information consulted aimed to provide a reader who did not attend the exhibition with a clear view of the exhibition. Through a partial reconstruction *Gospel. Muzikale reis*, I translated my experience as a researcher into a formal analysis. The data followed the guidelines for qualitative research, keeping the central question in mind. I intended to demonstrate how the gospel exhibition at the Catharijneconvent innovated the art historical discourse by curating cultural artefacts such as songs, thus creating an overall compelling narrative. Christianity produced musical artefacts throughout time, and gospel music is one of them.

---

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 355.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 356.

## Conclusions

Music and sound in museums, once temples of silence, changed the experience of the visitors and the curatorial practices. The twenty-first-century museums are places of discovery that recognize the importance of multi-sensorial communication. Creating immersive experiences is a trend rooted in the epistemological change. In that sense, music and sound became narratives to explore heritage and different meaning-making structures.

By discussing the historical background of ocularcentrism, I demonstrated how the predominance of sight over the other senses paved the way for a fragmented understanding of art through formalist visual analysis. Music was for listening, and the arts were for seeing. A separation amplified by popularity of the concert halls as places to enjoy organized sound, and the museums' image tied to scientific knowledge. Along with industrialization and the introduction of machinery, noise became a threat to society. Simultaneously, the development of sound technology allowed for the human voice and anything within the range of human hearing to be recorded and reproduced outside original settings.

Wagner's idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and Baudelaire's focus on synesthesia influenced artistic practices, proposing a union of the senses. The search for unity oriented a spiritual quest to explore abstract realms. Kandinsky, influenced by Wagner, saw the possibilities of musical languages thanks to the composer Arnold Schönberg. At the beginning of the twentieth century, different avant-gard practices, such as those of Luigi Russolo and the Dadaists, proposed an expansion of sound, a liberation of the constraints of traditional music. The composers Edgar Varèse and Pierre Schaeffer took a step further in their experiments to transform sound electronically. It was clear that sound could modify the acoustics of space, and this was the most important realization for sound to be considered a curatorial theme in the 1960s.

Sound, a continuous process that implied movement, became a medium of meaning that produced a unique stimuli. The sound exhibitions of the late 1960s and early 1970s not only asked the audience to participate but distributed the exhibition catalogues via vinyl and tapes. Sound penetrated museums, from installations to sound sculptures and record exhibitions. In the early 1980s, two shows, *Für Augen und Ohren* and *Soundings*, showcased the development of sonic practices and dimensions from the 1900s to the 1980s.

Sound disrupted traditional exhibition settings, and along with the material turn, the understanding of objects in museums changed. Objects had a semiotic quality, and curators helped bring this aspect forth by staging an environment for objects to articulate their testimonies. In the 1990s, academic interest in the sensorium pushed scholars to stop limiting their research to the visual field. The importance of the multi-sensory journey reached museums, and the once-restrictive politics did not make sense anymore.

With the creation of the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame Museum in 1993, popular music became institutionalized heritage. Then, in 2003, UNESCO recognized music as part of the intangible cultural heritage, which amplified the power of music as a curatorial theme capable of addressing issues such as identity, politics, and history. Popular music exhibitions became effective ways to display information and attract more audiences by creating embodied multi-sensorial experiences. The logic behind the curatorial practices of popular music exhibitions follows the twenty-first-century dynamics of museums: music is a point for dialogue that elicits emotional connections, creates communities, and tells poignant stories. Music and sound act as portraits of society, engaging the audiences. Thus, other non-musical museums saw the potential of including these discourses in practice.

*Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey of strength and hope), amidst the trend of popular music exhibitions, articulated knowledge in a way that expanded human experience through the complex act of listening, the aural understanding of the world. The gospel exhibition at the Catharijneconvent would not have been possible without all of the changes that occurred in the art world, until sound and music gained their rightful place in the White Cube.



## CHAPTER II – *Listening to Christian heritage: The Living dynamics of the past and the present, Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop*

“Listening shapes culture, locally and universally. Listening is directing attention to what is heard, gathering meaning, interpreting and deciding on action.” Pauline Oliveros, *Quantum Listening*.

From the 30th of September of 2022 until the 10th of April of 2023, the Catharijneconvent in Utrecht held the exhibition: *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey of strength and hope) curated by Rianneke van der Houwen, curator of Dutch Protestantism, and co-curated by the Dutch gospel singer Shirma Rouse. The Catharijneconvent became the first museum in the Netherlands to create an exhibition on gospel music. By recognizing the cultural impact of gospel, the Catharijneconvent created an exhibition that refreshed the narratives of Christianity.

*Gospel. Muzikale reis* was the museum’s first attempt to develop a music exhibition to connect, in new ways, to Christian heritage through gospel, specifically “Black gospel” or “African American gospel music.” Though there are different types of gospel music, the Catharijneconvent focused on a particular genre. I will use the terminology “gospel music” to refer to Black gospel music.

The focus of the exhibition was not pop or rock n’ roll, a common theme for popular music exhibitions, and the Catharijneconvent is not a music museum. Gospel music is an expression and representation of Christianity, a cultural artefact, and the influence of this music helped to consolidate other popular music genres. For Paul Long, heritage is a gesture to the past but one located in the dynamic of its mobilization in the present; in this manner, heritage interests can be maneuvered between the intensely specific and a broader referent.<sup>172</sup> The history of gospel music, as with any other genre, is organic.

Music is a narrative of people; it is the discourse of living memories. Gospel music was and still is a way for Christian communities to identify themselves. Gospel is a soundtrack for the Christian life. Simultaneously, gospel music’s implication on the popular music sphere makes it inseparable from many other non-Christian dimensions of historical intersection.

The Catharijneconvent in Utrecht is the national museum for the art and heritage of Christianity and manages the most important collection of art and cultural-historical objects of Christianity in the Netherlands.<sup>173</sup> The Catharijneconvent has explored ways through temporary exhibitions to welcome diverse themes with multi-media setups.

---

<sup>172</sup> Paul Long “What is Popular Music Heritage?,” in *The Routledge Companion to Popular Music History and Heritage*, ed. Sarah Baker (Bookshelf, Taylor & Francis, 2018), 133

<sup>173</sup> “Missie en visie,” *Museum Catharijneconvent*, accessed April 5, 2023, <https://www.catharijneconvent.nl/de-organisatie/missie-en-visie/>

The museum recognizes that even though the points of departure are Christian artworks, the horizon to interact and understand them is ever-changing.

The Catharijneconvent's mission and vision as an institution acknowledges the plurality of Christianity, "telling stories that are polyphonic and stimulate the open mind,"<sup>174</sup> cares for the material and immaterial heritage and its diversity, and believes "in the power that institutional and personal faith can have,"<sup>175</sup> providing an opportunity to reflect on the role of religion, where there is room for unpleasantness and celebration. There is a constant negotiation between the objects of the collection and the necessity to articulate narratives in a stimulating way. Even though the starting points are religious objects, the aspect of Christianity does not apply to all visitors. The challenge is making people familiar with these objects in today's secularized world. In the end, the collection is still the cultural heritage of the Netherlands regarding spirituality, which is a testimony of life.

With *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey of strength and hope), the Catharijneconvent became "the first museum in the Netherlands to make an exhibition about Gospel," in the words of the former museum director Marieke van Schijndel.<sup>176</sup> As argued before, music is a didactic tool, and musealizing popular music fosters an interest in remembering cultural heritage. The case of gospel music is interesting because it is a hinge. Gospel, also known as "black gospel music" or "African American gospel music," is a sacred and traditional music genre that emerged in the 1920s out of a confluence of sacred hymns, spirituals, shouts, jubilee quartet songs, and black devotional songs with noticeable blues and jazz rhythmic and harmonic influences.<sup>177</sup>

At the same time, gospel is considered the sacred root of several American pop music genres, such as rock n' roll, soul, rap, hip hop, and R&B. Gospel has had a cultural impact like no other from generation to generation. In that sense, the tradition of gospel as a religiously inspired music highlights significant aspects of popular culture and its dimensions.

Gospel works as a curatorial theme, re-orientates the multi-verses of Christianity, and refreshes the museum's identity. Simultaneously, gospel appeals to broader audiences because this music is a synonym of collective and individual memories, and the exhibition was an immersive experience. Even though gospel is a religious subject, the delivery of the information responds to the necessity of the twenty-first-century museum trend to articulate knowledge in a way that expands the human experience, and auditory history does that. Besides, the inclusion of music as a curatorial theme in

---

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Marieke van Schijndel, "Voorwoord," *Catharijne, Museum Magazine* (September 2022).

<sup>177</sup> Birgitta Johnson, "Gospel Music," *Oxford Bibliographies*, last modified 23 August, 2017, <https://www-oxfordbibliographies-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/display/document/obo-9780190280024/obo-9780190280024-0052.xml>

a museum of Christian art reconciles and re-introduces the inseparable sonic dimension of religious ceremonies, allowing the audience to understand the richness of multi-sensoriality, offering a model for an embodied articulation of knowledge.

Another significant aspect of the exhibition is that it provided the possibility to go beyond the separation of the religious and the secular. As described by the sound historian Karin Bijsterveld, aural history triggers the listener's imagination and contributes to collective memory.<sup>178</sup> Regardless of the genre, music impacts the audience psychologically. Even if gospel moved from the church environments to other venues, the music never left behind its message of spirituality. The performance of Black gospel traveled to many different audiences with icons such as Mahalia Jackson and Sam Cooke. As described by Don Cusic, many gospel performers, musicians, and singers received their early training and experience in church.<sup>179</sup> Yet, the dispersion of gospel and its performance enlarged the popularity of the genre and its respectability.

When discussing this aspect, it is key to remember the notion of the sacred originated in the study of religion.<sup>180</sup> The secular and the sacred are seen as opposite terms, but these are constructed values. Does gospel stop being the music bearer of good news just because its place of performance is outside the church? No. The exhibition managed to overcome that binary fight “by focusing on the development of the genre and what it entails.”<sup>181</sup> It is clear, throughout the different rooms that quote a church or a nightclub, that gospel had a far richer cultural agenda than the reductive discussion centered around belonging or not to the otherworldly divinity. Also, the exhibition localized gospel and its music-making in the Netherlands, from performers to concerts, inviting the audience to reconsider identity and heritage.

## **2.1. Signifying and embodying: theorizing *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop***

The exhibition started with a banner of Shirma Rouse performing, and a wall of 96 carefully thematically selected gospel records by Demon Fuzz Records (Figs. 23 and 24). These elements welcomed the visitors, establishing a connection between the present state of gospel music in the Netherlands and the traditional gospel records that testify to the mass production and popularity of the genre of music. In conversation with Willem Driebergen:

---

<sup>178</sup> Karin Bijsterveld, “Beyond Echoic Memory,” *The Public Historian*, vol. 37, no. 4 (2015), 9.

<sup>179</sup> Don Cusic, “The Development of Gospel Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Blues and Gospel Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 58.

<sup>180</sup> Lieke Wijnia, “Making Senses through Music: Perceptions of the Sacred,” 7.

<sup>181</sup> Rianneke van der Houwen quoted in *Catharijne, Museum Magazine* (September 2022), 9.

"Since the beginning of the planning stage, we knew that we needed to incorporate records because there is a large target group such as music lovers and record collectors of different ages."



Fig. 23 and 24: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Record wall and two visitors" (left). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Detail of the second half of the record wall" (right).

Driebergen explained that displaying records facilitated using artists' images. Record covers are a clever solution to present musicians' photographs without having trouble with copyright. The wall record marked the entrance. In today's jargon, this was an "Instagram moment." Social media platforms like Instagram are crucial for marketing and branding. According to Jia Jia Fei, digital strategist and former Director of Digital Marketing at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, digital reproduction of images changes the way we look at art. In her Tedx Talk "Art in the Age of Instagram," she explained:

"The rapid digitization of images can expand the meaning of the experience of an object in an entirely new form. Thereby reaching millions of people outside of the physical space who can never physically come to the museum. In the pre-digital photography era, the message was 'This is what I am seeing.' Today the message is 'I was there.' I came, I saw, and I *selfied*." <sup>182</sup>

Fei stated that when attendees share photographs of their museum visit online, there is a contribution to the digital economy. When something is shared on social media, the value instantly changes. Museums have caught up with this trend, acknowledging the

<sup>182</sup> Jia Jia Fei, "Art in the Age of Instagram," 2016, Ted Video, 4:03, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DLNFDQt8Pc>

power that visiting museums is a pleasure-seeking activity worth “posting online.” When museums implement “Instagram moments” in the exhibition design, museums leave behind traditional epistemologies. These memorable sections encourage visitors to participate and share their experiences.

The label accompanying the record wall built a narrative. It mentioned that DemonFuzz Records began as an enterprise of teenagers collecting records, which is something the different visitors could relate to. Besides, the label stated that even though records are for listening, it is fun to look at them too. The label had a QR code, so visitors could follow DemonFuzz’s Instagram page. These curated Black gospel records were the way to dive into the tangible history of gospel. The records spoke for themselves and encouraged the visitors to discuss and engage.

Driebergen brought DemonFuzz Records to collaborate in the exhibition. He mentioned that each record row had a theme: black and white covers, sunsets and skies signaling salvation, praying hands, women, men, “cheesy” record covers, choir scenes, and crosses. Even though the exhibition did not touch upon any aspect related to the marketing of Black gospel music, record covers allow us to make sense of how these performers saw themselves, the trends and shifts throughout the years, and the visual language of gospel.

While visiting the exhibition multiple times, I noticed people stopped to look at the wall, mentioning they had or still owned some of those records. Nostalgia is “an engagement strategy of museums”<sup>183</sup> that deals with popular music heritage: “Nostalgia is used by curators to improve the quality of visitors’ experiences (...) It triggers affective responses in visitors with a living memory of stories being told in exhibits.”<sup>184</sup>

Additionally, nostalgia brings people together regardless of their background. Music impacts culture. While nostalgia could lead to a romanticization of the past, a non-accurate portrayal, it is worth mentioning that using music objects — records, CDs, and tapes — spark emotions and memories in the audience, grounding the experience at a personal level.

---

<sup>183</sup> Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandy and Raphaël Nowak, “Curatorial practice in popular music museums: An emerging typology of structuring component,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* vol. 23, no. 3 (2020), 448.

<sup>184</sup> Baker, Lauren Istvandy and Raphaël Nowak, “Curatorial practice in popular music museums,” 449.



The visitors received an interactive audio guide with headphones before the exhibition (Fig. 25). The singer Shirma Rouse narrated the audio guide; she was the audience's lecturer. The audience discovered gospel music through a popular music icon, Shirma, "the ambassador for Gospel in the Netherlands, who is also involved in the tv program 'Amazing Grace.'"<sup>185</sup>. Some content was activated by pointing at numbered audio tracks in the room. Other areas used a guide port system that picked up the visitor's location and reproduced the sound related to the object.

Fig. 25: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Gospel audio guide."

The audio guide was essential to the exhibition because it created an experience, facilitating visitors to follow at their own pace the sonic journey. The audio guide is a reevaluation of the potential of sound. Besides being a technological gadget that helps to construct a narrative, Shirma's voice is a medium of gospel. Her narration sought to create a meaningful moment by explaining the attributed forces related to the gospel enthusiastically. Shirma's voice often asked the audience to think about their relationship to gospel music and other popular music genres derived from it. With Shirma's image and participation, the exhibition succeeded in the communication of *doing* rather than showing. In the museum, the visitors were a part of a gospel gathering, a powerful re-enactment of the past, and a visit to the genre's essence.

The area before the exhibition had sound. Loudspeakers reproduced the sound of gospel musicians warming up before a concert. This welcomed the visitors to the exhibition, creating a sense of anticipation. In conversation with Driebergen, he expressed the importance of providing a soundscape. This enveloping strategy connects to the audience, and sets the tone for the sonic environment that will unfold, creating a feeling of anticipation and curiosity.

---

<sup>185</sup> Museum Catharijneconvent, "Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop."



Fig. 26: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Welcome to gospel."

Gospel had six themes: *Oh Happy Day!*, *In Church and in Nightclubs*, *Spirituals*, *Gospel & Protest*, *Gospel: Source for Popular Music*, and *Gospel Lives On!* According to Namelok, each theme highlighted a different perspective: "Gospel is mostly an immaterial subject: besides records, there are not many objects to put on display. Therefore, the exhibition relied on audio, video, spatial elements, and graphic design."<sup>186</sup>

The starting point was a room (Fig. 26) that featured the Edwin Hawkins Singers performing the song "Oh Happy Day!", an adaption of the cleric Philippe Doddrige's hymn. This was the first gospel song to become a number-one hit in the United States of America. The sound came through loudspeakers, and this was one of the few rooms where the audience did not use the audio guide.

The exhibition displays six tv-screens with the music footage of "Oh Happy Day!," and other famous songs, such as "Down by the Riverside" by The Impressions, while surrounded by colorful lights. There was a projection of a record in the center of the room. When coming close, one could recognize different labels of gospel releases. Four records of the single "Oh Happy Day!" complemented the screens. The first album, *The Edwin Hawkins Singers Live at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam* (1970), settled the self-referential narrative of Black Gospel in the Netherlands (Figs. 27 and 28). The wall text stated:

<sup>186</sup> "Project, Gospel," Namelok, last accessed May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, <https://namelok.eu/projects/gospel/>

"In the Netherlands, the song spent two weeks at number one in the Top 40 (...) The testimony of personal faith is typical of gospel music (...) The first room was immersive, dynamic, and enthusiastic, which captivated the visitors' attention."

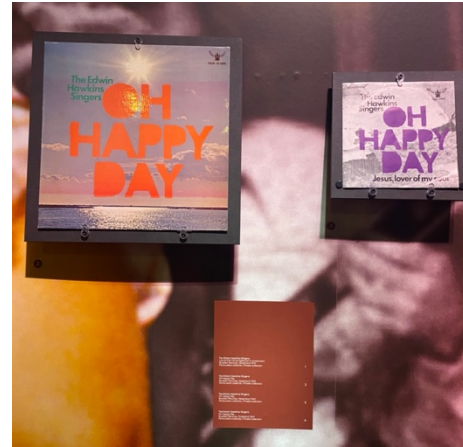


Fig. 27 and 28: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Edwin Hawkins Singers' records."

After this room, the audience entered a corridor with three wall texts. The first wall text was about gospel:

"Immerse yourself in music with the power to touch any heart: gospel. Rooted in the institution of slavery and having originated within the African American community in the United States, the genre has grown into one of the most important musical styles of our era (...)

There's a good chance your favourite pop music includes a gospel influence, too (...)

Regardless of their faith, nationality, or skin colour, gospel touches the hearts of people around the world. Come along on a musical journey and experience that gospel lives on!"

The second wall text deal with gospel's terminology:

"In the United States, gospel music is typically referred to as Black gospel. This is to distinguish the musical genre from other -predominantly White- Christian musical traditions and to indicate that it was developed by African Americans. The term Black gospel is less common in the Netherlands. For many people the addition of the word 'Black' seems unnecessary (...)

This exhibition centres on the history, influence, and reception of the originally Black gospel genre in the Netherlands."



The wall texts contextualized what people could expect from the exhibition, providing conceptual information, expressing how the audience could relate to the music. The exhibition focused on re-telling the story of Black gospel and its presence in the Netherlands. As the exhibition relied on the audio guide, the last text explained how to activate the audio tour.



Fig. 29: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Entry."

The first room, *In Churches and Nightclubs*, explained the emergence of gospel in the United States around the 1920s and 1930s. The wall text explained how the sounds of new churches arrived in different secular settings, creating the question: Should gospel — music intended to honor God — also be sung in a nightclub? The room had curtains in zigzags that allowed the visitors to walk freely through the room (Fig. 29). According to Namelok, "the curtains resembled the storefront churches: through a storefront-like door opening, the visitors enter a space where the self-made nature of these early black churches came to life."<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>187</sup> Namelok, "Project, Gospel."



Fig. 30: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Interactive book."

Ambagts mentioned that they used curtains to create an open space with no strict borders and free flow to complement the idea that the limits of gospel performance, whether in church or nightclubs, were not defined.<sup>188</sup> The visitors navigated from one in-between space to the other, experiencing all content dealing with oral and written traditions.

The display of objects was varied: vitrines with music books containing well-known gospel songs by the Christian evangelist composer Thomas Dorsey and a collection of gospel songs, *Gospel Pearls*, from 1921 that still is in use today (Fig. 30). An interactive screen allowed the visitors to flip through the content of these books, and the labels invited the visitors to look for songs they recognized.



Fig. 31: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Video still of the conversation between the pastor and the club owner."

The zigzag curtains presented photographs of the traditional churches and choirs. The song of this section was "Take My Hand, Precious Lord," written by Christian evangelic composer and blues pianist Thomas Dorsey. The label explained the song was used as a "psalm of freedom" by Martin Luther King. Besides highlighting this connection to history, the label explained that gospel icons and later popular music icons such as Mahalia Jackson and Aretha Franklin performed this song. The song had and still has importance, it is a tune that preserved through generations in and outside the church. From the text, the audience gathered the flexible nature of gospel as it became popular.

The room featured a video where a pastor and a nightclub owner discussed whether gospel could be performed outside the church (Fig. 31). The sound activated when the visitors stood in front of

the projection. The video had a crucial function in the room: present the visitors with both perspectives regarding the gospel's performance, giving a space to analyze the layers related to gospel music. With the video, the room successfully reconstructed the complex nature of gospel's beginnings, testifying to power struggles.

<sup>188</sup> Ambagts, interview.

The projection offered proximity as the content and the message came directly from the the pastor and nightclub owner; it was a conversation.



Fig. 32, 33 and 34: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Musician’s cubicle: Clara Wand” (left). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Musician’s cubicle: Sister Rosetta Tharpe” (right).

This room delivered information through musicians' cubicles and oral history components/sections. It is worth mentioning that the interaction with these cubicles related to the audio guide did not provide a lecturing voice. Instead, the visitors listened to the audio from the footage, activated by either pointing at the wall text or coming close to the video projection. In the musicians' cubicles, sound and image recreated the past. It was a chance to experience and understand the power of Black gospel music outside a church context. Under Cortez's classification, these sections correspond to sound as an artefact. The room had two musicians' cubicles. One for the trendsetter Clara Wand, who took gospel music to jazz festivals and nightclubs in Las Vegas (Fig. 32). The footage showed Wand performing for Hugh Hefner, Playboy's founder. The other was for the singer and guitarist Sister Rosetta Tharpe, a key figure for rock n' roll music (Figs. 33 and 34). In the footage, she sang “Four or Five Times.”



Fig. 35 and 36: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Oral history component: Joan Densol” (left). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Oral history component: Shirma Rouse and Joan Densol ” (right).

The room had three oral history components. In the first (Fig. 35), Reverend Joan Densol Meade explained the meaning of the song “Precious Lord Take My Hand,” she also sang it and invited the audience to consider the song's relevance in the present.

In the second component Miranda Klaver, Professor of Anthropology from the Vrije Universiteit, and Andre Ricketts, worship leader at the International Church, discussed

the song "Holy Spirit" by Clara Wanda. While Klaver explained various aspects of Christian heritage and faith, Ricketts described her choosing of hymns and songs for each service, thus providing the visitors with information to understand gospel as a shared cultural practice. The final component (Fig. 36) featured Shirma Rouse in conversation with the reverend Joan Delsol. They discussed the music of Clara Wanda and Sister Rosetta Tharpe and talked about whether it is okay to play Gospel outside the church. Delsol and Rouse agreed that gospel was universal, so if the music reached the clubs, more people could discover that world and come close to its teachings.

The room transitioned into *Spiritual: African Roots*. Visitors faced two wall texts. The Catharijneconvent explained their use of certain terminology to bring awareness to racist internalized stereotypes. The second text introduced the West African and Caribbean percussion instruments. As stated before in the conversation with Rianneke van der Houwen, the exhibition explained the roots of gospel music in connection to African music and other preserved traditions. According to the wall text: "Spirituals are songs of religious praise that emerged in the plantations of the American South, beginning around 1750."

This room was a challenge for the curators. Displaying musical instruments in a museum means "that the musical instruments are effectively silenced and decontextualized because the context of the performer, the performing space, and the audience reception is lost."<sup>189</sup> In that order, the instruments follow the rules of an ocular-centric display because they lose their original function and become objects for pure aesthetic appreciation. Judith Dehail has discussed new models for musical instrument displays in museums that go toward a new model of conceptualization of music as a process rather than a complete artwork.<sup>190</sup>

Thinking of musical instruments and sound objects and their essence fosters new directions to conceive them as "tools of learning, performative signifiers, and conduits for emotion and nostalgia."<sup>191</sup> In this sense, the sound gains back its power and presence. Gabriel Rossi Rognoni explains that:

"The policies and practices that ensure a result of a cultural choice that reflects the balance between the focus on the material and many intangible values including the musical value of the object, the source to understand the historical making, the performing practices."<sup>192</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> Kevin Edge, "Music in Museums: Some problems in Collecting & Interpreting the Technologies of Pop," *Popular Musicology Online*, issue 3 (2000), last accessed May 11, 2023, <http://www.popular-musicology-online.com/issues/03/edge.html>

<sup>190</sup> Dehail, "Musealising Change or Changing the Museum," 59.

<sup>191</sup> Wiens, "Popular Music as an Interpretative Device," 280.

<sup>192</sup> Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, "Preserving Functionality: Keeping Artefacts 'Alive' in Museums," *Curator The Museum Journal* 62, N. 3 (2019), 411.



Fig. 37: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Spirituals: African Roots room."



Fig. 38: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Spirituals: African Roots room II."

The Catharijnmuseum approached these musical instruments to create an emotional connection with the audience, bringing forth an experience of sound. Rianneke van der Houwen wrote a script about the tradition of African music for the Dutch poet Gershwin Bonevacía to perform. From 2019 to 2022, Gershwin was the city poet of Amsterdam.<sup>193</sup> By bringing along these agents, the museum sparked an active dialogue with Dutch society concerning the meaning-making behind musical heritage as a shared historical narrative. The room showed a video documentary where Gershwin recited a poem, while the percussionist Carlo Hoop played different African instruments (Figs. 37 and 38).

This was a room-filling experience. Bonevacía explained the importance of these drums within the oral tradition of the Spirituals, the rich palette of sounds each musical instrument conveyed, the aspects of performing this traditional music in the intersection of slavery, its abolition, and the feelings of hope and pain. This oral narrative was in synchronicity with Hoop's playing, which spoke for the intangible heritage outside museums.

Ambagts mentioned that the studio wanted the design for this room to be daring. To overcome the difficulties of displaying musical instruments as objects removed from the audience, they designed long benches framed by the percussion instruments. People sat in the middle of the drums (Fig. 39). This meant to re-create the plantation fields where people used these instruments as communication tools.<sup>194</sup> The room was a collective experience.

People could watch the video, but the visitors moved throughout the room simultaneously, as Ambagts described, "feeling with the open audio."

<sup>193</sup> "Biografie van Gershwin Bonevacía," Gershwin Bonevacía, last accessed May 12, 2023, <https://www.gershwinbonevacía.nl/biografie-gershwin-bonevacía/>

<sup>194</sup> Ambagts, interview.



Fig. 39: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Spirituals: African Roots room III."

The room showcased five musical instruments: a ceremonial drum and an *Atumpán*, both from Ghana, an *Aigda* and an *Apinti* from Surinam, and a *Tambú* from Curaçao. The drums had labels that explained their use in ceremonies, their importance in mythology and worship practices, and how each instrument was a 'talking drum' where "rhythm provided an emotional release,"<sup>195</sup> a valuable part of intangible cultural heritage.

The labels asked the viewers to look for physical similarities between the instruments to convey the message that oral traditions and music are universal. Even though these drums were prohibited because of their sound, the instruments allowed people to speak their truth and express emotion.

In the book *Sound System: The Political Power of Music*, Dave Randall describes how music is the act of "truth-telling," an act of resistance to racism, colonialism, and conservative values.<sup>196</sup> It is worth mentioning that when music is suppressed or demonized by political organizations and other institutions, there is a social commitment coming from the artists to fight for their truth. When this music goes mainstream, as with gospel, other spaces become places for divulging a message integrated into popular music culture.

The presentation of musical instruments, alongside multimedia content, gave visitors the opportunity to conceive musical instruments through an embodied experience. This room followed the category of sound as an artefact. Bonevacía presented the musical instruments directly connected to cultural artefacts like the Spirituals. The importance of the room was that it was a point to trace the transformations of Black gospel and its influence.

<sup>195</sup> Label, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop*, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht.

<sup>196</sup> Dave Randall, *Sound System: The Political Power of Music* (Pluto Press, 2017), 39.

The next room was about *Spirituals*, and the one afterwards was *Gospel & Protest*. There was a commitment to exercising the message that Black gospel music was a symbol of resistance by explaining to the visitors that, from the civil rights movement in the 1960s until today with the Black Lives Matter protests, sound encodes a meaning.



Fig. 40: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Spirituals: hymns’ case” (left). Fig. 41: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “The Fisk Jubilee Singers” (right).

The *Spirituals*' room described the story of how these songs passed from the oral tradition to a written form in 1867 (Fig. 40). English hymns made their way into Black churches, "where enslaved people incorporated lyric fragments from these hymns into the spirituals filled with the hope of a better life."<sup>197</sup> The room had a case with The Slave Bible from 1807, used for converting enslaved people. The labels referenced how the Biblical story of Moses was adapted into a Spiritual, “Go Down Moses (let my people go).” The other book was *A Collection of Hymns & Spirituals* from 1801 by Richard Allen, "the founder and bishop of the first official Black church in the United States."<sup>198</sup>

The protagonists of the room were The Fisk Jubilee Singers, a singing group from Nashville that raised money for the Fisk University, a university for formerly enslaved people. A reproduction of their portrait and a wall text presented their story with other archival documents that testified to The Fisk Jubilee Singers visit to the Netherlands in 1877 (Fig. 40 and 41). This group adapted their music for white audiences to get recognition and funding.

<sup>197</sup> Wall text, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht.*

<sup>198</sup> Label, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht.*

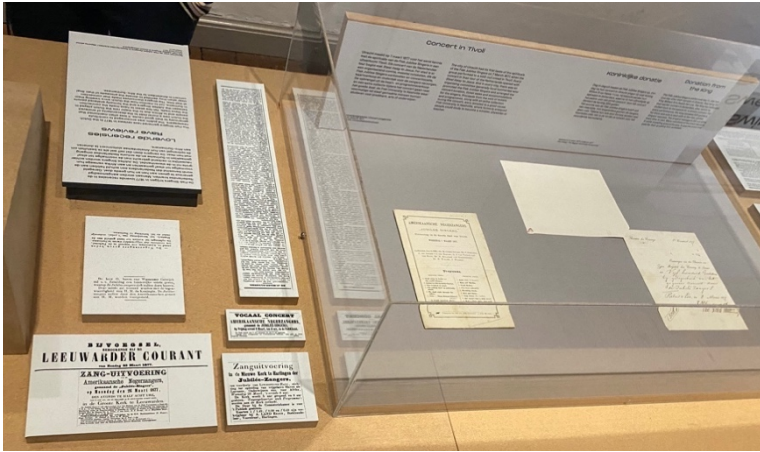


Fig. 42 and 43: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "The Fisk Jubilee Singers' documentation" (left). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "C.S. Adama statue."

The labels for other sources, such as newspaper records from the 1877 reviews on The Fisk Singers (Fig.42), condemned the history of the Dutch Slave trade: "It was often mentioned that the Dutch owe a moral debt to the descendants of enslaved people and to Africa (...) yet few seemed to have made the connection between the Jubilee Singers and the formerly enslaved people in Suriname (...) The singers themselves made the connection clear when they decided to donate the proceeds of their final concert in Amsterdam to the Afro-Surinamese." The emphasis on these aspects challenged representation and transformed, without a doubt, the audience's view on this musical historical event, which encouraged discussing the undermined stories of oppressed communities.<sup>199</sup>

The Fisk Jubilee Singers had a connection to one of the statues owned by the Catharijneconvent, that of C. S. Adama (Fig. 43), who translated from English to Dutch the songs from The Fisk Jubilee Singers. Adama explained how "slaves praised the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour"<sup>200</sup> through his publication and commentary on The Fisk Jubilee Singers.

The room had a musicians' cubicle for The Golden Gate Quartet (Fig. 44 and 45). The theme song was "Shadrack," which tells the Biblical story of three characters, Shadrac, Meshach, and Abednego, who died in the fire because they refused to kneel for the king's idol. The Golden Gate Quartet was formed in the United States in 1934 and sang Spirituals with the style of jazz and blues. The Golden Gate Quartet "emerged from the same quartet tradition as the Fisk Jubilee Singers."<sup>201</sup> The cubicle presented a 1967 video of The Golden Gate Quartet performing "Shadrack" and two of their records, *Negro Spirituals*, released in 1957, and the famous single "Down By the River Side."

<sup>199</sup> Labels, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht.*

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.



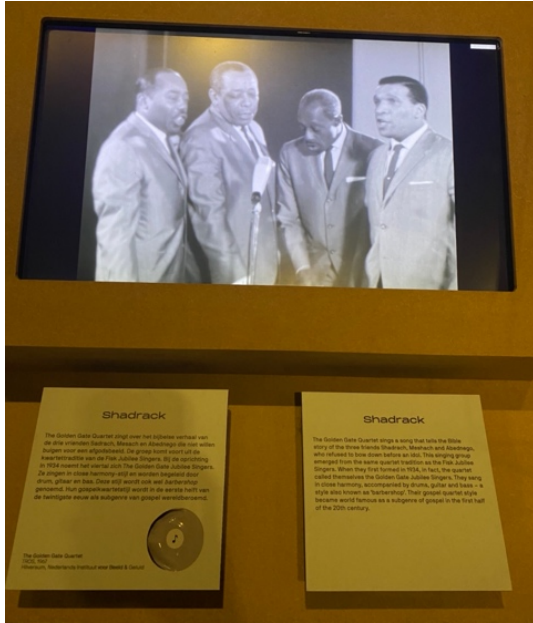


Fig. 44: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Musician’s cubicle: The Golden Gate Quartet” (left). Fig. 45: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Musician’s cubicle: The Golden Gate Quartet’s records” (right).

The third object was a shellac record of The Fisk Jubilee Quartet, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” which played through loudspeakers in the room. The shellac record, bought by the Catharijneconvent for the exhibition, is “one of the earliest known audio recordings of a spiritual.”<sup>202</sup> By positioning these records in the same case, the audience could see and listen to the development of the quartet singing style. In this case, the quartet was a style adopted in other schools and universities, which speaks of the configuration of historical musical practices that became popular, reaching the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

The *Spirituals’* area had two oral history components. The first presented the Rotterdam gospel singer, Joany Muskiet. The footage showed her reaction when listening to The Golden Gate Quartet and Mahalia Jackson. Muskiet sang, moved rhythmically, and described gospel music in relationship to the history of her enslaved ancestors. She explained that everyone can pass the freedom of and through music. This interview allowed the audience to gather that gospel music provides an opportunity to strengthen collective history.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.



Fig. 46 and 47: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Oral history component: Denis Jannah" (left). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Oral history component: Denis Jannah II."

The other component showed Denis Jannah, daughter to one of the pastor singers from The Surinam Golden Gate Boys, reacting to performance footage of her father's group (Figs. 46 and 47). The visitors saw Denise describe her father and the music in her household. She spoke of the power of singing to overcome sad situations and remembered her father's personality. The label explained that the music of The Fisk Jubilee Singers reached many countries and influenced the formation of men's choirs, like the case of the *Mannenkoor* in Surinam. This oral history component was one of the most emotional ones in the exhibition because of the testimony that included a childhood memory.

The exhibition made a transition between the *Spirituals* room to the *Gospel & Protest* by discussing different artists that used their songs as tool against racism. The entrance to *Gospel & Protest* was "The Gospel Gazette." In conversation with Ambagts, I asked him how the design studio came up with it. He explained it was a content-based strategy:

"The information about these artists came from old newspaper articles. Willem gathered them. And this would not transmit anything to the visitors if kept on a small scale. We decided to blow it up. As the way of communicating was through newspapers, we made a combination of different news articles we re-typed and collaged them with pictures."

The Gazette was a type of musicians' cubicle (Figs. 48 and 49). It included images from 1920s Dutch newspapers on musicians like Roland Hayes and Maria Anderson, yet the focus was Paul Robeson. Robeson was a musician and a rights activist. His commitment to singing Spirituals amplified his preoccupation to fight racism toward African Americans in the United States.



Fig. 48 and 49: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "The Gospel Gazette I" (left). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Musician's cubicle: Paul Robenson" (right).

The musician's cubicle presented footage of Paul Robenson singing "Go Down Moses" in the 1930s and an interview on colonialism, African Americans, and civil rights. Thus, the audience could understand the connection between music and activism. The cubicle displayed a single by Marian Anderson, "Negro Spirituals," from 1956, and one by Paul Robenson, "Spirituals," from 1958. The case contained a shellac record with the song "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" sung by Roland Hayes, and two non-musical objects. The first was the cover of a poem by the Dutch writer Hendrik Marsman, with an illustration of Paul Robeson from 1942. The second was the poem *Paul Robeson sings*. The image had little resemblance to Robeson, and it is a stereotypical and exaggerated depiction of a black man of the time. Showcasing this poem by a Marsman, who had previously written on black spirituals inspired by Robeson, testified to the importance of gospel in the Netherlands.

*The Gospel & Protest* (Figs. 50, 51, and 52) room was designed as if the visitors participated in the March on Selma, with bright pink protest signs supporting artworks, TVs, texts, and graphics.<sup>203</sup> Ambagts explained the display was facing backwards. The contrast of apparently randomly placed objects re-enacted a protest environment. Compared to other rooms before, this space was well illuminated, resembling the streets where these marches took place.

<sup>203</sup> Namelok, "Project, Gospel."



Fig. 50, 51 and 52: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Gospel & Protest” (left). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Harcourt Klinefelter’s tape recorder” (center). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “March on Selma cubicle” (right).

Visitors saw Martin Luther King's gown from the back (Fig. 53). As expressed by Ambagts, “this was a decision to make the visitors feel they were marching alongside,” creating a sense of community, guided by this historical figure, and encouraged by gospel.

The theme song was “We Shall Overcome,” the anthem of the American Civil Rights movement in the 1960s (Fig. 54). If the Spirituals were a tool to combat racism, gospel music became a non-violent act of resistance. Until this point, there had been no footage showing an actual congregation singing gospel. This changed with the work of video artist Arthus Jafa, *A kingdom cometh as*, “a video assembled over 100 minutes of found footage of black church services, featuring a range of megachurch bishops, gospel, songwriters, and musicians, including TD Jakes, Le'Andria Johnson, and Al Green.”<sup>204</sup> According to the curator Thomas Jean Lax from the Department of Media and Performance at the MoMA:

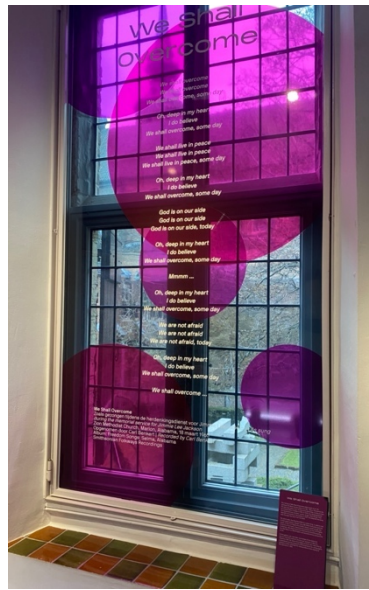
“Jafa has long been preoccupied with a desire to create what he calls a black cinema that 'replicates the power, beauty, and alienation of black music' — a way for images to be felt in the body with the same sensuousness as sonic frequency and verbal intonation.”<sup>205</sup>

<sup>204</sup> Thomas Jean Lax, “A Rehearsal for Communion: On A Jafa’s *akingdonmethas*,” MoMA, last accessed May 12, 2023, <https://www.moma.org/magazine/articles/329>

<sup>205</sup> Jean Lax, “A Rehearsal for Communion.”



Fig. 53 and 54: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Martin Luther King's speech and gown" (left). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "We Shall Overcome" (right).



The audience entered a side room with benches and loudspeakers, a niche to experience a gospel services. When the visitors stepped out, they found the wall text for *Gospel & Protest* and the famous photograph of Martin Luther King walking with the pastor Harcourt Klinefelter, King's press officer. A case displayed Klinefelter's tape recorder, which he used to record Martin Luther King's speeches.

Further, there was a cubicle with footage and audio from the March from Selma to Montgomery, which took place in Alabama in 1965. The activist Jimmie Lee Jackson was shot by a policeman. His death was the reason behind the March from Selma to Montgomery.

The label explained "The demonstrators raised their voices and sung "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen" during an 87-kilometre-long march (...) The march was preceded by 'Bloody Sunday:' a day of brutal violence against peaceful demonstrators in Selma."<sup>206</sup> Klinefelter marched, carrying the tape recorder on display, and interviewed different people, like the woman in the footage, who explained her reasons for marching. With this introduction, the audience could comprehend the importance of music as a legacy of cultural resistance and the motivation behind adopting gospel as a source of strength. The lyrics to "We Shall Overcome" were on a window, and the label explained why Martin Luther King adopted this song.

*Gospel & Protest* linked this chapter of history in the Netherlands by referencing Martin Luther King's visit to the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, as he was awarded an honorary doctorate (Fig. 53). One of the videos presented his speech to the students in Amsterdam, who "welcomed him singing "We Shall Overcome",," (Fig. 54)<sup>207</sup> which signifies the impact of music as a cultural value. Using a theme song is a diegetic use of sound that "refers to the sonic world presented in the story"<sup>208</sup> that articulated

<sup>206</sup> Label, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht.*

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Bubaris, "Sound in museums – museums in sound," 394. "Borrowing from film sound design, the term 'diegetic' refers to the world of the story presented (e.g., the voice of the protagonist) and the term 'non-diegetic' refers to sonic information that is dramaturgically outside the world and the actions of the story presented (e.g., film music composed to dramaturgically 'color' the voice of the protagonist). In

vividness and immediacy. According to Nikos Bubaris, the diegetic use of sound includes the sounds of the exhibition environment, which are no longer a detached narrator, but a way the exhibition unfolds its identity through sound.<sup>209</sup> The voice and the song were part of the historical event, and the strata of meaning resided in that specific context. Additionally, to compliment the narrative, the museum displayed Martin Luther King's gown, which he borrowed for the ceremony at the Vrije Universiteit. Presenting items of clothing and costumes related to historical figures, and artefacts facilitated grasping these past historical events with a sense of proximity and realism.



Fig. 55 and 56: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Oral history component: Typhon" (left).  
Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Oral history component: Mahalia Jackson" (right).

The room had two oral history components. The Dutch hip-hop artist Typhon discussed racism and the Black Lives Matter movement (Fig. 55). Through the song, "Je bent nodig," released in 2020, he denounced racism and shed light on the importance of activism and music. Typhon defined himself as a preacher of love explaining that sharing hope through his music related to the message of the traditional and modern gospel, which is very much alive in the Netherlands.

After, the room featured an interview of Mahalia Jackson (Fig. 56). In 1964, Jackson was invited to sing at Palaver in Utrecht for Ascension Day for the jubilee of the Dutch Bible Society. In an interview for the event, she discussed her commitment to the Civil Rights Movement and her experiences with racism. Jackson stated she used the revenue from her concerts to free imprisoned civil rights activists in the United States. These oral history components showed that contemporary musicians like Typhoon deal with the same preoccupations as Jackson in the 1960s. The last footage focused on the famous "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King on the 28th of August of 1963 but from a musical perspective. The label explained that Clara Ward's interpretation of the gospel song "How I Got Over" became a hymn of the Civil Rights

---

museum exhibition narratives, diegetic sounds refer to the set-up of the exhibition and the immediate relationship between the visitor and the exhibition."

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 394. "Oral histories, audio, audio-visual and multimedia exhibits and the soundscape of displayed cultures are included in this category of diegetic sound (...) These sounds are always in the foreground of the acoustic experience of the visitors, suggesting the most significant exhibition pieces to which the visitor-listener is summoned to pay attention."

Movement. Gospel singers like Ward and Jackson fostered audience participation by creating a call-and-response dynamic, making the attendees rise from their seats. The footage started with a report on the march in Washington, followed by Mahalia Jackson's performance of "How I Got Over" as she "warmed the audience like a gospel singer before the sermon in church" for King's appearance and speech."<sup>210</sup> In fact, for Pearl Williams-Jones:

"There are two basic sources from which gospel singing has derived its aesthetic ideals: the free-style collective improvisations of the black church congregation and the rhetorical solo style of the black gospel preacher. In seeking to communicate the gospel message, there is little difference between the gospel singer and the gospel preacher in the approach to his/her subject."<sup>211</sup>



Fig. 57: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "The record room I."

The explanation of the gospel experience allowed the visitors to comprehend that there was no mutual exclusivity between the other worldly and the secular, as rhythm, voice, and lyrics created an emotional, embodied experience.

The fifth room of the exhibition, *Gospel: Source for Popular Music*, dubbed by William Dribergen as the record room because of its numerous display of vinyl, was one of the core narratives of the exhibition (Fig. 57). According to Namelok, the room became an "old-fashioned record shop, so visitors could sit back and enjoy the music."<sup>212</sup> Ambagts stated "this room was for people to explore their relationship with music." The design created a space for people to walk and sit down. Thus, it stimulated curiosity and was full of objects.

As most of the references in this room started from the 1960s onwards, Namelok based the design on jukeboxes from the sixties. After navigating the exhibition, which took the audience through the roots of gospel, its essence, and heritage, and considering the impact of the music genre, the visitors arrived to a contrasting ambient: an cozy music room. If the rest of the exhibition had followed a pace linked to historical and social dimensions, this room varied the flow. The fifth room acted as a common emotional ground, where the main question was: "What kind of music springs to mind for you?" Dribergen he explained:

<sup>210</sup> Label, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht.*

<sup>211</sup> Pearl Williams-Jones, "Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic," *Ethnomusicology* vol. 19 no. 3 (Sept. 1975), 381.

<sup>212</sup> Namelok, "Project, Gospel."

"This was perhaps the most challenging theme and room. We wanted to create a clear space to explain music. We thought of quoting Shirma Rouse's music room. We wanted her to talk about the music, as she did in the audio guide. We decided Shirma would talk about some songs and styles, soul, jazz, rock n' roll."

As discussed before, memory and nostalgia are crucial for popular music exhibitions. As Sean Street notes in relation to the memory of sound, nostalgia is a fundamental part of what makes you want to remember and it is linked to the desire to retain and tell our stories.<sup>213</sup> Popular music exhibitions are a way of recognizing and giving a space for the re-discovery of music's living history. There is a logic related to the feelings and biographical experiences that change the implications and meanings of the objects on display.



Fig. 58 and 59: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Musician's cubicle: Mahalia Jackson."

The transition from room four to room five was well thought. The audience was received by the footage of Mahalia Jackson (Figs. 58 and 59), whom they had seen in the room before as an activist, now performing "in front of 23,000 Protestants in the Jaarbeurs expo hall in Utrecht"<sup>214</sup> for the

Palaver. This musician's cubicle, on top of a platform resembling stacked records, not only gathered a crowd in the exhibition but was a mirror for the audience. The footage of Jackson focused on the crowd's reaction, mirroring, in one way or another, the visitor's experience in the exhibition of embodying music. The video explained the impact the biggest gospel artist at the time had on the young crowd, making it the perfect to introduce the subject of popular music. Dribergen mentioned "this concert was a huge turn. In fact, it happened even before the crazy Rolling Stones concert in the Netherlands." The Rolling Stones concert in 1964 at the Kurhaus in Scheveningen near The Hague remains to this day "a legendary evening for Dutch popular music."<sup>215</sup> The fact that Jackson's concert took place before that show speaks of the impact and

<sup>213</sup> Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandity, Raphaël Nowak, *Curating Pop*, 127.

<sup>214</sup> Label, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop*, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht.

<sup>215</sup> Amanda Brandellero and Susanne Janssen, "Popular music as cultural heritage: scoping out the field of practice," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 20 n. 3 (2013), 17.



importance of Black gospel music. Mahalia Jackson's performance in Utrecht became a significant part of the history of gospel in the Netherlands.



Fig. 60: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Musician's cubicle: Mahalia Jackson."

The musician's cubicle featured five records. One was Mahalia Jackson's music at Palaver 64' released a year later, a direct link to the material culture related to the event and its memory. The other records were Jackson's singles from 1958 to 1962, pressed in the Netherlands (Fig. 60). This musician's cubicle was one of the most impactful parts of the exhibition. The pairing of the archival footage that took place in the Netherlands and the records as historical materials that commemorated the event, alongside Jackson's interview in the room before, where she discussed racism and activism, created an emotional revisiting of the cultural heritage of gospel to introduce how meaningful the genre is today. The music room created an opportunity for remembering and embodying: "Everybody has an experience of going to a concert, buying a record, and because of that, exhibitions have a lot of meaning for people who come to see them."<sup>216</sup>

The oral history component next to Jackson's footage was a compelling story (Fig. 61). Two screens presented footage. One showed Marion Williams' performance at The Carré in Amsterdam in 1965. The other featured the Dutch sculptor Nel van Lith reacting to the concert as she explained her experience at the event. The label, told a story: "Nel van Lith managed to get a hold of a ticket for the sold-out concert."<sup>217</sup>

<sup>216</sup> Baker, Lauren Istvandity, Raphaël Nowak, *Curating Pop*, 134.

<sup>217</sup> Label, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht*.



Fig. 61: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Oral history component: Nel van Lith."

Van Lith explained Williams' body movements impacted her, so some days after the concert, she casted a bronze sculpture of Marion Williams, which was on display. Thus, demonstrating how strongly people feel about live performances. This suggest that music acted as a catalyst for inspiration. Even though the footage from the live concert was for tv, and there are differences between Van Lith's memory and the video, including Williams' performance brought a "nostalgic vibrancy."

The statue, property of the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, shows how the Catharijneconvent sought objects and testimonies that celebrated Black gospel music in the Netherlands. The oral history components are "also connected to mythical venues and their buzzing history of music,"<sup>218</sup> thus bringing into conversation the performative aspects of memory that commemorates the past and the individuals that recognize themselves through it. As stated before, the gospel singer and the gospel preacher faced the audience in the same way. Therefore, by including these Dutch-based concerts, the Catharijneconvent recognized the importance of music as a commemorative ritual, meaning-making, and unforgettable performance.



Fig. 62: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Record wall: fifth room."

The wall in front of this section featured different records grouped by genre, soul, rock n' roll, and jazz, which gave a sense of the period through the record covers (Fig. 62). Driebergen stated that the record walls "had a flow." Each genre had a label for the audio guide, a list of songs discussed by Shirma Rouse. The visitors stopped, saw the covers, and listened to the song snippets and explanations. Some records featured recognized music icons. Exhibiting popular music in museums sparks this discussion: How to present equally well-known stories and musicians without invalidating or leaving aside artists with less popularity and exposure?

<sup>218</sup> Brandellero and Susanne Janssen, "Popular music as cultural heritage," 15.



Fig. 63, 64 and 65: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Record wall: fifth room."

As stated by Charles Fairchild: "popular music museums have a pronounced tendency towards familiar, traditional and safe forms of museum practice."<sup>219</sup> The Catharijneconvent surpassed this difficulty by working with a varied team of researchers to highlight the narratives that told the biography of Black gospel in the Netherlands and its reception. In that sense, Black gospel and the genres influenced by it were and still are a part of the soundtrack of Dutch life (Figs. 63, 64, and 65).



Fig. 66: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Hammond organ."

The music room would not have been complete without musical instruments and the testimony of musicians. There was a 1937 Hammond organ on display, a characteristic sound element of gospel (Fig. 66). Featuring this instrument allowed explaining to the visitors that the pipe organ, a traditional church instrument, then the electric organ, went outside the sacred spaces into clubs and nightclubs. Gospel music paved the way for Hammond organs to enter other venues. The instrument became a staple for blues, rock n' roll, and progressive rock music, defining the sound of well-known popular bands. The audience could hear Hammond through loudspeakers.<sup>220</sup> This was the only musical instrument recording of the exhibition. The Hammond organ is within the category of "sound as "ambiance/soundtrack."

<sup>219</sup> Baker, Lauren Istvandy, Raphaël Nowak, *Curating Pop*, 18.

<sup>220</sup> The organist Cory Henry played the recording.



Fig. 67 and 68: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Hammond organ."

The organ's recording (Figs. 67 and 68) created the acoustic environment of the "music room," which made the visitors get in touch with Black gospel. Most of the room's content relied on the audio guide, so it is not appropriate to say the organ sound constructed the

museum space; the organ recording was a supportive element. A screen above the Hammond featured interviews with different musicians discussing what it felt to record gospel music or how did gospel affect their creative practices.

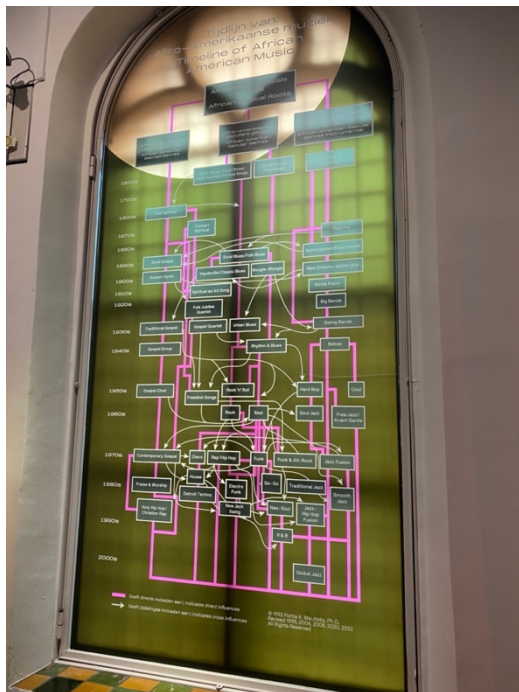


Fig. 69: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Portia K. Maultsby's map."

A window displayed a map by the American ethnomusicologist Portia K. Maultsby (Fig. 69), which showed the roots of gospel music. As discussed with, Maultsby's research output was crucial to the exhibition as she has developed a lot of written material on the evolution of African American music and the ethnicity of African American popular music. Portia Maultsby was an advisor for the exhibition. Her most recent work ventured into ethnographic research of gospel choirs in the Netherlands.<sup>221</sup> The map allowed the visitors to see that Black gospel influenced various music genres and through its sound and message.

<sup>221</sup> "Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology: Portia K. Maultsby," Indiana University Bloomington, last accessed May 15, 2023, <https://folklore.indiana.edu/about/emeriti-faculty/maultsby-portia.html>



Fig. 70 and 71: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Record room: wall II."

A second wall of records featuring pop, hip-hop, and RnB (Figs. 70 and 71) led the audience to the final stage of the rooms, approaching the last theme, *Gospel Lives On!* Subtle aspects such as adding CDs to the second wall also pointed the changes from records to optic discs. The wall presented music by Simon and Garfunkel, Whitney Houston, 2Pac, and MC Hammer. The section had one musician's cubicle. The focus was Aretha Franklin's legendary 1972 performance of the song "Amazing Grace" (Fig. 72), right after the release of her gospel album that bears the same name. The cubicle featured two records by Franklin, one from 1972 and the other from 1978. The label contextualized the origin of the footage:



Fig. 72: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Musician's cubicle: Franklin's 'Amazing Grace.'"

"This is a record of a live performance with the preacher and gospel artist James Cleveland and the Southern California Community Choir in the New Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles (...) This performance was not released until after Franklin's death: it appeared in the 2019 film 'Amazing Grace.'"<sup>222</sup>

<sup>222</sup> Label, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht.*

In conversation with Driebergen, he mentioned: “Featuring the entire video was a discussion because it lasted eleven minutes. I decided not to cut the footage because music takes time to develop; it takes some time to get involved, to experience it.”



Fig. 73 and 74: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Oral history component: Johan Roeland” (left). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, “Rianneke an der Houwen and Shirma Rouse: oral history and musician’s cubicle.”

The oral history component featured Professor Johan Roeland (Fig. 73) reacting to footage from the First EO Youth Day "in Groningen in 1975, which attracted around 3,000 people,"<sup>223</sup> and to the EO Youth Day in Amsterdam in 1999.<sup>224</sup> Roeland discussed the change of music, the crowd, and the dance movement. This oral component allowed tracing the impact of gospel music in Dutch society, focusing on one-day festivals: seasonal events for music culture. Music festivals are like rituals and pilgrimages: people from different backgrounds travel to a location to see an artist perform, and there is a sense of identity in the congregation.

Driebergen stated “that one of the goals of the music room was to present music as a respected subject due to its societal and psychological impact instead of considering it as “a second-class culture,” often dismissed and undermined. The other objective was

<sup>223</sup> Label, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop*, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht.

<sup>224</sup> This oral history component was one of the most interesting of the exhibition. Whereas other videos of the oral history components focused on the music performance, these videos documented the audience’s presence at the festival, which preserve intangible cultural heritage. Based on Cortez’s five categories, this oral history component combines two of them. First, *sound as a lecturing voice* as Professor Johan Roeland discusses the footage from both festivals presented to the museumgoers through the monitors. Professor Roeland reflected on the human expression in these festivals, thus instructing the visitors on the significance of these events. Second, *sound as an artefact* as the video recorded, too, the sounds of a crowd that cheers and chants in a gospel performance, preserving the cultural history associated with Evangelism in the Netherlands.

creating a display where music was not just a gadget but the central discussion and medium of knowledge.

The last section was a mixture between a musician's cubicle and an oral history component featuring the curators Rianneke van der Houwen and Shirma Rouse discussing contemporary gospel musicians (Fig. 74). The screen presented the songs similar to a Spotify display. At the end of the video, the curators said, "Bring the good news," inviting the visitors to the final part of the exhibition. The narrative and chronological approach to the Black gospel through oral stories, biographies, musical instruments, and other culturally significant objects led the audience to the current era of gospel.

Namelok asked the the documentary maker Emma Lesuis to produce a video installation capturing the presence of gospel music in the Netherlands today.<sup>225</sup> The main idea was capturing the variety of gospel performances as part of Dutch heritage. The making of gospel required the expertise of and testimony of many agents, like singers, pastors, ministers, and congregations. The curators spoke to members of different migrant and international churches about the role of gospel. Lesuis created four videos that "for the first time, documented Dutch gospel culture as valuable Dutch religious heritage."<sup>226</sup> Namelok designed this last section for the audience to feel in a concert hall or a church,<sup>227</sup> as they did for the nightclub ambiance at the beginning of the exhibition, immersing the visitors in the different settings. Ambagts mentioned "that the design for these rooms followed the idea of first making the audience experience the performance and then presenting the video portrait of the interviewee." The final wall text concluded with a question for the visitors: "What does gospel mean to you?"

These rooms were a mixture between the oral history components and the musician's cubicles because all the interviewees performed music. Each room had a video screen and wall projection. The first footage presented John Angof, a minister at the Amsterdam City Church. Angof discussed the nature of modern congregations and that all ethnicities can forget their worries when they sing gospel. The second footage showed Angof bustling through the streets of Amsterdam with a crowd that sang: "We feel when we sing." These two videos, side by side, showed that gospel music lives in the church and in Amsterdam streets.

The second room presented the conductor Chesron Leden and the choir Miracles Gospel Choir from the Church of the Resurrection (Figs. 75 and 76). Leden explained the storytelling of Black gospel. The visitors saw him conduct the choir rehearsal on

---

<sup>225</sup> Ambagts, interview.

<sup>226</sup> Namelok, "Project, Gospel."

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.



Fig. 75, 76 and 77: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Oral history: Chesron Leden" (left). Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Oral history: Lea Lynch."

one screen and then a wall projection of the choir performing. The third room focused on Lea Lynch, a choir singer member of the Holland Methodist Church. One video showed Lynch getting ready to perform while she discussed her discovery of gospel music. The other footage presented Lea Lynch singing with the choir (Fig. 77). The video emphasized the body movements and facial expressions of the singers. The last room featured the lyrics of the song "Way Maker" by the Nigerian singer Sinach. The label made emphasis on gospel's global nature. "Way Maker" appeared in YouTube in 2015 and "became a quarantine hymn during the Covid-19 pandemic for Christians around the world."<sup>228</sup>



Fig. 78: Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Donna Lewis."

The last component was a video of Donna Lewis, manager and co-founder of the Zo Gospel Choir. Lewis walked into a backstage area where she met Shirma Rouse (Fig. 78). The screen went black, signaling the end of the exhibition, leading the visitors to the climatic finale, "a wow factor using cutting-edge technology in conjunction with visual effects."<sup>229</sup> Four screens in a corridor with loudspeakers presented footage from Shirma and Lewis's concert at the iconic venue for popular music, Paradiso in Amsterdam, singing the classic song "Amazing Grace", guiding the visitors to the exit (Figs. 79 and 80).<sup>230</sup>

<sup>228</sup> Label, *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop*, Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht.

<sup>229</sup> Cortez, "Performatively Driven: A Genre for Signifying," 355.

<sup>230</sup> For Ambagts, the finale was a commercial aspect of a big concert in a well-recognized concert hall throughout the Netherlands where artists with a trajectory perform.





Fig. 79 and 80 Ma. Luisa Guevara T., personal photograph, "Grand finale."

The visitors could play the gospel songs from the exhibition via Spotify. The Catharijneconvent designed seven playlists. One for the theme songs of each room: "Oh Happy Day," "Precious Lord Take My Hand," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "We Shall Overcome," "Amazing Grace," and "Way Maker." The other six playlists covered the theme per section. These playlists have between seven and eleven songs, except for the last two themes. "Gospel as a source," the record room playlist, has thirty-four songs, meanwhile "Gospel lives" has sixteen. The playlists are fingerprint of the sonic journey designed for the gospel exhibition, demonstrating that enjoying music is a never-ending journey.

## 2.2. Making sense of sound with curator Rianneke van der Houwen

The Catharijneconvent has made exhibitions in the past about different denominations such as Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, Mennonites, and Old Catholicism, but never one about Evangelic Christianity, which has at its center the idea of "gospel," the delivery of good news. This is the first time the Catharijneconvent made a music exhibition in relation to Christian heritage. For Curator Rianneke van der Houwen:

"Once you look at Evangelic Christianity, the material culture is not so important in how they experience faith and religion. For a long time, I thought of how to make an exhibition about this denomination. The museum was working with SKIN (Samen Kerk in Nederland), the umbrella of international churches in the Netherlands, not only evangelical but very diverse. We were already working on altering our presentation and collection, making it more diverse by looking at Christianity nowadays in the Netherlands. The occasion that led to the exhibition was an episode of the show *De Wereld Draait Door* in October 2019.

The host brought a singer to discuss the 2018 documentary '*Amazing Grace*,' based on Aretha Franklin's performance at the New Bethel Baptist Church in Los Angeles. The host inquired if there was a similar church to that in Los Angeles in the Netherlands. The singer said, 'Yes, my church.' At that moment, a few colleagues and I thought we needed to make an exhibition about gospel music. We wanted to involve all those churches in the Netherlands. We know gospel is immaterial culture, but it is alive inside and outside the church. I knew gospel music belonged to evangelical Christianity. Doing this exhibition was a way to shed light on this part of Christianity. We started working on the exhibition in the Fall of 2020 with a project team."

As discussed in the previous chapter, popular music exhibitions have become frequent in museums. How did the team become acquainted with the nature of these exhibitions, and their strategies for representing a music-centered curatorial narrative?:

"With the Covid crisis, it was hard. The Groninger Museum had an exhibition on The Rolling Stones, but we could not see it. We searched for other shows on gospel in the United States. We found some, but we could not travel. There have been more exhibitions on gospel music there. When we could travel again, in the spring of 2021, we visited an exhibition about Kraftwerk in Düsseldorf. But already by that time, we had made many decisions. We spoke to the colleagues at the Groninger Museum because they had experience with the giant traveling exhibitions of David Bowie and The Stones, and they were enthusiastic about our idea."

Regarding the exhibitions in the USA, I was curious to hear if the team considered researching other exhibition spaces, a different category of musical museums such as musicians' and pastor houses related to gospel heritage. When did the answers to the

questions about gospel music start to demand a multi-media and multi-modal exhibition?:

"Even though it would not be fair to say we gained influence from it, I noticed that the houses, mostly, had a lot of text and writing. We knew we did not want that. We called meetings with experts and advisors early. We got advice from the Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame Museum. We asked ourselves: 'What is Gospel music? What is the definition?' In the spring of 2021, we started brainstorming the core message of the exhibition, which translates to 'Gospel lives,' to show that gospel is alive, it renews every day. We worked with our education department. They thought of transferring the content to the people, and had a big lead on the audio-sonic experience. From the beginning, we knew we had to deliver an experience to the public.

From the first moment, we wanted the exhibition to be immersive. We worked with the design team in an early stage because this exhibition is about immaterial heritage. We could not only rely on beautiful paintings. We hired an exhibition designer for the project. It was Namelok in Rotterdam, a very young group of exhibition designers with out-of-the-box thinking"

The need to make an exhibition that connected on a personal level to the audience was primal. The representation of music in the museum told the history of gospel and its development in the Netherlands. By grounding gospel in actual locations, such as Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Suriname, the exhibition presented a sense of community, fostering a conversation about memory, heritage, and inclusion.

Renewing the vision of Christianity through the exhibition meant collaborating with various agents. Shirma Rouse became the face of *Gospel. Muzikale reis*, and the publicity for the exhibition was a photograph of her live performance (Fig. 81). Her image had more impact because her singing has an intangible meaning.



Fig. 81: Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop, "promotional video still," September 22, 2022.

Originally part of church rituals, gospel songs store and carry cultural significance, tell the history of a community, testify to their presence, support tradition, and appeal to feelings. In the end, all music tells a human story. Thus, what better representation and invitation to the exhibition than a Dutch performer, a popular music icon, committed to the continuity of gospel in the Netherlands? Further, in collaboration with the Gospel Festival Amsterdam and TivoliVredenburg, the museum presented dazzling live concerts, including Shirma Rouse and a gospel choir evening.<sup>231</sup>

By establishing that music is an embodied experience that affects people's emotional world, the Catharijneconvent deepened their social agenda with activities that provided a space for the appreciation of gospel. The events heightened the connection between communities and advocated for recognizing the value of gospel as Christian heritage. People buy CDs, vinyl, tapes, and merchandise, invest in tickets to assist concerts and pay for streaming subscriptions like Spotify. Music is an investment of capital and time that provides a strong, meaningful connection to sound. Each person curates their aural world, and the Catharijneconvent's agenda on gospel was an invitation for the audience to become part of this experience, with the exhibition as a guiding point. How did Shirma Rouse become a part of the project?:

"In the summer of 2020, I visited a concert by Rouse a friend had organized. I asked for an introduction. At first, Rouse was an advisor in the meetings, but soon I realized making an exhibition as a gospel lover was not enough. We had to make the exhibition with people from the gospel scene. We worked with historians, journalists, singers, musicians, choirs, and different churches. I invited Shirma and Willem to assist us. Shirma became co-curator, and it was truly complementary. I know about the history of Christianity and Protestantism, and I can research the reception of gospel in the Netherlands. Shirma is a musician, and she knows our music history because she grew up with the genre in church."

Revising the exhibition, I noticed most of the objects were loans, and a few items belonged to the museum. Did the music narrative affect their collecting practice? How did the making of the exhibition help re-think their collection in connection to the sound of the past?

"We bought two shellac records as a project team because it was easier than getting a loan. All the records come from the private collection of Willem Driebergen, our research assistant, who is a music lover. He arranged that material. Only two objects from our own are in the exhibition. One is the sculpture of C.S. Adama van Scheltema. When you think of exhibits, you start thinking about the objects of your collection in ways you never thought of

---

<sup>231</sup> Museum Catharijneconvent, "Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop. Tentoonstelling," accessed May 4, 2023, <https://www.catharijneconvent.nl/tentoonstellingen/gospel-muzikale-reis-van-kracht-en-koop/>

before. We had used this sculpture before to demonstrate how important Van Scheltema was for fighting alcohol abuse, but not related to music. We have a book by Van Scheltema, his translation of American gospel songs into Dutch, which we used in the exhibition. Also, we commissioned a video-installation by Emma Lesuis for the exhibition."

One room focused on percussion instruments of African music and creole instruments linked to Dutch Colonial history and slavery. Creating spaces for less known oral stories is decisive. The history of Christianity has a component of pain and oppression. While there is a preference in popular music exhibitions to present canonized stories, revising the history and implications of music genres and their consolidation makes a change. For instance, born from African American rhythm and blues traditions, early popular music genres of pop and rock —especially in the United States— often drew on the musicality of black musicians.<sup>232</sup> Gentrifying tunes for white audiences because the dominant discourses of popular music favored white stories that downplayed the significance of African American music and artists.<sup>233</sup> How to speak about of formative oral narratives, like Spirituals, that did not survive because of the impact of colonial practices?

"We wanted to include oral stories of Ghana, Surinam, and Curaçao. We brought these percussion instruments because we needed to tell a story of African music to make the audience aware that percussion was used to communicate with other people, but also with the gods and ancestors. This is part of the tradition of the Spirituals, of gospel. Enslaved people in the United States used percussion to connect with the Christian god. It is all part of relevant discussions today.

Gospel music operates as a hinge between traditional and popular music. The rhetoric behind the exhibition provided space to care for people's musical memories while discussing critically gospel's history:

"It comes down to cultural questions. For example, is it okay to have rhythm in a church? People have opinions on it. I hope the exhibition gave more knowledge and understanding to people about other cultures. Besides, there was something recognizable for the visitors, like popular music related to gospel music. We wanted to show there are no boundaries between the church and the world. Some people made those boundaries. In reality, everything is intertwined. This is an African approach where there was never a question of what is sacred or worldly. When African Americans became Christian, they incorporated this vision as well. In early written sources, white coloners criticized black churchgoers because they sang religious lyrics with popular music. That was

---

<sup>232</sup> Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandity, Raphaël Nowak, *Curating Pop*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 25.

<sup>233</sup> Baker, Istvandity, Nowak, *Curating Pop*, 26.

normal for African American people. Religion and music are not separate from other parts of life.”

### **2.3. Gospel, a *memoryscape*, *musick-ing*, and songs as a representation of Christian heritage**

The exhibition developed chronologically, tracing the origins of gospel as a musical genre until today. In *Gospel. Muzikale reis*, the visitor traveled to the slavery past, the cradle of gospel, to discover the Spirituals. Later, in the civil rights movement, the songs were used as a powerful non-violent tool in the struggle for equal rights for the black population in the United States.<sup>234</sup> The exhibition told the story of migration and the reunion of different backgrounds. *Gospel. Muzikale reis* offered lectures and workshops with the exhibition team. Through this agenda, the museum gave the public opportunities to connect with gospel music. In these spaces, the audience could ask questions and enjoy a live concert. The museum advertised the exhibition through different channels by linking the past to popular culture, providing a platform for active discussion and recognition of gospel in the Netherlands. *Gospel. Muzikale reis* shows how museums, as a mirror of society, have started to address the impact and significance of music in people's lives.

The main message of the exhibition was to make the visitors aware of gospel's rich history and its presence through songs and multi-media content. These are cultural artefacts that preserve intangible cultural heritage. In that sense, the exhibition was a reconstruction of the past and a bridge into the present continuity of gospel and its societal and cultural impact. A remembrance of musical practices that shape culture. Songs are used to communicate different stories, as represented in the exhibition. I argue the exhibition worked as a *memoryscape*. For Tammie M. Kennedy, memory links with transformation —a source of agency for (re)creating identities, contesting hegemonic discourses, and articulating critical practices.<sup>235</sup> Memory is a mediated process that once revisited can retrieve important information. Memory has different locations: the body, a place, an object, it is the history constructed within communities. Memory is both collective and individual. The “scape” refers to a picture or a scene. The *memoryscape* could be explained as “imagining a complex landscape upon which memories and memory practices move, come into contact, are contested by, and contest other forms of remembrance.”<sup>236</sup> The exhibition not only told the story of Black

---

<sup>234</sup> Museum Catharijneconvent, “Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop.”

<sup>235</sup> Tammie M. Kennedy, “Mapping ‘Memoriscapes’: Reconfiguring the Theoretical Terrain of Rhetoric and Memory,” *JAC*, vol. 33, no. ¾ (2013), 764.

<sup>236</sup> Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchel Reyes, eds., *Global Memoriscapes: Contesting Remembrance in a Transnational Age* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011) in Tammie M. Kennedy, “Mapping ‘Memoriscapes’: Reconfiguring the Theoretical Terrain of Rhetoric and Memory,” *JAC*, vol. 33, no. ¾ (2013), 277.

gospel but spoke of how it influences today's music. The exhibition created a visual and aural scene, a setting describing the occurrence of gospel.

The Catharijneconvent fostered a dialogue of collective and personal memories attached to music. These different *memoryscapes* told the history of gospel, articulating backgrounds, contexts, and emotions. The exhibition mapped the multidimensions of gospel to embody and celebrate this traditional Christian practice.

I draw on the historian Toby Butler's term *memoryscape*, who created the project *Memoryscape: Voices from the Hidden History of the Thames*, a sound walk experience that "tells the history of a place by listening to the memories of inhabitants, both historical and contemporary, as you walk the London riverside. It is an extremely effective way of bringing the unseen history of an area to life."<sup>237</sup> *Gospel. Muzikale reis*, as expressed in the exhibition title, is a journey, signifying change and movement. With Butler's term, I want to refer to the walking-aural experience in the museum — with a curated audio-guide and use of loudspeakers for ambient sounds and music— that reconstructed the past and built a bridge into the continuum of sound. The visitors walked through rooms that quoted music festivals, concerts, and historical events. These rooms displayed objects such as vinyl, tapes, and footage that "speak of empirical existence and projects and animates memories onto the visitors."<sup>238</sup> One of the characteristics of popular music shows is that the audience brings their own knowledge to the exhibition. Each person has their *memoryscape*, which is enriched by communicating to others. When exhibition practices appeal to memory, the visitors are encouraged. According to curator Rianneke van der Houwen: "Gospel touched many memories, and visitors to the exhibition expressed it. People could relate to the old gospel songs, speak of the tradition, and find a point of contact. This is an example of something you cannot predict."

One of the most attractive aspects of Toby Butler's project was using tracks to present oral history to go beyond the limitations of written sources. Butler presented memories coherently in a spatial context, using techniques borrowed from sound art practice, that encouraged people to encounter parts of the river —and its culture— that they may not have considered exploring before."<sup>239</sup> The gospel exhibition was a listening exercise paired with the multi-media design that aimed to give the visitors an experience. Thus, it was a manifestation of music, its embodiment, and how to learn and remember through it. Further, the visitors could make sense of their memories related to gospel or other popular music genres and songs, drawing attention to their interests.

To understand the presentation of *memoryscapes* in the exhibition, I interviewed Wiegert Ambagts from Namelok. Ambagts expressed "that the starting point for the

---

<sup>237</sup> Toby Butler, "Memoryscape: an interview with Toby Butler," History Workshop, accessed May 11, 2023, <https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/public-history/memoryscape/>

<sup>238</sup> Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandy and Raphaël Nowak, "The sound of music heritage: curating popular music in music museums and exhibitions," *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22, vol. 1 (2016), 77.

<sup>239</sup> Butler, "Memoryscape: an interview with Toby Butler."

narrative was focusing on the historical meaning of the rooms; the design choices inform the visitors of the particular moments in gospel's broad story." When looking thematically at the exhibition, following the chronology, the contexts were connected smoothly, almost blurring the limits. While there was a need to distinguish each room and emphasize different aspects, Ambagts mentioned that "it was essential, during the design process, to recognize which themes spoke of collective or individual experiences."<sup>240</sup> This referred to creating a map to identify the contact points along the exhibition. The songs, as cultural artifacts, chosen for each theme facilitated this process.

The mapping of these memories, the *memoryscaping*, gave the visitors spaces for a collective experience, while other rooms focused on one-on-one participation. Thus, the articulation of the musical journey through songs implicated being part of a community and having moments for intimate connection to reflect on cultural values and belief systems. These two aspects connected the public with Christian transcendence. Whether the visitors believed in the faith or not, they left transformed, as Duncan mentioned in her book *Civilizing Rituals*. This suggests that after the gospel exhibition, the audience acquired new knowledge and complemented their familiarity with the subject.

In Butler's project, the *memoryscape* allowed the place to transform with memories, giving the experience of the past. I noticed something similar in *Gospel. Muzikale reis*, which was never static. While Butler targeted the river, the exhibition at the Catharijneconvent focused on songs as a powerhouse for faith. *Gospel. Muzikale reis* articulated a cultural landscape with songs being the guiding elements.

Just as Butler focused on spoken memories, so did the gospel exhibition through two strategies I identified as musicians' cubicles and oral history components. These systems were a way of reconsidering heritage as an activity that demands an active re-creation and re-telling. Therefore, the audience reflected on their memories and participated through their sonic knowledge. In conversation with Ambagts, he mentioned that very early in the design process, they knew the success of presenting a music narrative was to allow the visitors to experience first via the audio and multi-media content so they could learn through actions. In this case, learn by listening. The gospel experience is an emotional one because it connects to the soul: "The way of teaching and informing people was through an action, either reading or listening to music."<sup>241</sup>

The musician's cubicles presented an icon. These spaces allowed entering an aural world via videos of a live performance with or without an audience, televised or private music-making moments; interviews; photographs, generally artistic portraits; records that iconographically complimented the visual content and stood as sonic materials.

---

<sup>240</sup> Ambagts, interview by author.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.



Alongside, the wall text presented a brief biography and a section for the musician's facts. This last aspect reflected on the musician's representation, a question regarding popular music exhibitions and identity. It made visitors question how these icons and their stories integrate into society and culture. The cubicles allowed sound to be the center of the narrative instead of an add-on element. Each musician's cubicle presented a song that played an important role within a context.

The second spaces were the oral history components. A different set of screens presented interviews with musicians, professors, pastors, church members, and performers. These agents explained aspects of gospel music, such as songs and their impact on their personal lives, through personal memories, creating multiple intertwined narratives. The oral stories connected emotions and testimonies. The audience could point at the label to activate the audio guide. The testimony implemented songs and live reactions to gospel footage. This strategy engaged with gospel heritage in a dialogical and participative way. Further, it was a transmission of knowledge from a person's embodied experience with music, considering sound, specifically songs, from a social, meaningful perspective, to the visitor, the embodied listener. Ambagts mentioned that this strategy was a new concept for delivering information. The focus was a theatrical setting. Presenting the visitor in the experiencing position, looking at one video portrait of an interview, with another resolution and ratio, seeing what emotions came up, and then guiding them to the CRT monitor with historical footage. Besides, the oral history components were placed in front of a window with a colorful background, which Ambagts described "as a guiding soul that created a feeling."<sup>242</sup>

This last aspect is important to discuss as communication through music is sometimes perceived as a one-way system, "running from composers to individual listener through the medium of the performer."<sup>243</sup> Christopher Small, who coined the term *musicking*, explained that the listener's task is to contemplate the work, but that he or she has nothing to contribute to its meaning.<sup>244</sup> Through *musicking*, the gerund of "music," Small proposed that:

"To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing."<sup>245</sup>

I argue the success of the gospel exhibition was the use of songs to explain cultural values and traditions inserted within the Christian faith. The nature of music considers three elements: the sound and its meanings (why), the sense behind the setting and context of occurrence (where? Why here?), and the participants (who). For Small,

---

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening (Music/Culture)* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 6.

<sup>244</sup> Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing*, 6.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid, 9.

everything happens in action. The act of *musicking* establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies.”<sup>246</sup> The gospel exhibition, as an event, with the oral history components and musicians’ cubicles, provided a walking setting for people to engage in musicking, stepping out of the one-way system, which brought an audience to question, imagine, and experience the complex language of gospel via songs. Gospel is about human relationships and their *memoryscapes*. If gospel is a journey, it is an action. As Small stated, music is a verb. In the end, *Gospel. Muzikale reis* was a musicking exhibition about the music people do, how they feel, and how they remember. A way to renew the musealization of the aural dimension of Evangelism through cultural artefacts such as songs.

---

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 13.

## Conclusions

Throughout this chapter, I theorized about the gospel exhibition at the Catharijneconvent. I identified the strategies the museum used to present, for the first time, a music narrative to articulate a relevant chapter of Christianity, gospel music. The results from my analysis concluded the exhibition's use of sound as an artefact—in this case, gospel as a musical artefact of Christianity—successfully innovated the presentation of Christian heritage. *Gospel. Muzikale reis* proved that sonic experiences are successful events where people embody the music and immerse themselves. The collaboration with different agents, such as Shirma Rouse and Willem Driebergen, Namelok Studio, and the testimonies of performers, musicians, professors, and pastors enriched the content and created a sense of proximity to the visitors.

The exhibition took place in six rooms that explained the beginnings of Black gospel to its presence in today's Dutch society. The music told its story and connected emotionally and in a multi-sensorial way to the audience. Gospel worked as a *memoryscape* that allowed revisiting and articulating identities and histories related to different contexts. The exhibition design and sound encouraged people to embody the music. The nature of popular music exhibitions considers the audience a central part. Their interactions and knowledge enrich the experience. Appealing to a sense of nostalgia is a device that provides closeness and togetherness. By drawing on the term *musicking* by Christopher Small, I argued that the gospel exhibition was not only a journey, as stated in the title, but an action of people “taking part in music” to celebrate history and and memory.

The five-category and analytical tools developed by Alcina Cortez, *sound as a lecturing mode; sound as an artefact; sound as “ambiance”/soundtrack; sound as art, and sound as a mode for crowd-curation*, helped me understand how sound has a communicative purpose within an exhibition space. Cortez's framework of *the performatively driven* helped me acknowledge how the exhibition communicated the information by doing rather than showing. The four performatively driven strategies, exhibiting sound and music; dramatic strategies; enveloping strategies; and sound epistemologies, were present in the gospel exhibition, as described in my analysis.

The gospel exhibition presented music-knowledge; it was a space of *musicking*, for enjoyment and discovery. The agenda of events opened the communication channels to the audience, conveying a dialogue. The exhibition was a site for exploring the Christian heritage, popular music, emotions, and the senses, integrating the audience into the gospel performance through listening practices.

## CLOSING REMARKS

With this thesis, I wanted to highlight how a non-musical museum welcomed a music narrative, taking as my casestudy the temporary exhibition *Gospel. Muzikale reis van kracht en hoop* (Gospel. Musical journey of strength and hope) held by the Catharijneconvent in Utrecht.

I developed the structure of this project with two objectives. First, I wanted to trace how sound and music made it to museums. Second, I examined how an exhibition about gospel renewed the Christian heritage, innovating the art historical discourse. Popular music exhibitions have become more frequent. It has changed museums' approach to their audiences. Visiting a music exhibition is an embodied learning experience. My methodology included perspectives from art history, musicology, popular music studies, and curatorial studies. Equally, I interviewed curators, museum professionals, and designers involved in making the exhibition to understand the planning, execution, motivations, and expectations of *Gospel. Muzikale reis*.

Before discussing what it means to curate a music exhibition, I addressed the sensorial conception of sound. I summed up historical moments where artists and musicians questioned societal listening practices. I argued that with the secularization of society, the church stopped being the center of the arts. Therefore, concert halls and museums started defining the cultivation of the ears and the eyes. The separation between hearing and sight fostered the entrance of sound to museums as sound sculptures, installations, and curatorial themes. I drew particular attention to exhibitions from the 1960s until the 1980s that reflected on the importance and transformations of sound, thus proposing new layers of meaning.

The Catharijneconvent was a former convent, and museums became places of silent contemplation. I believe that the gospel exhibition re-introduced the inseparable aural aspect of Evangelism into the museum that watches over the Christian heritage of the Netherlands. Music, an intangible heritage, broadens the spectrum of knowledge and can address complex and critical issues. For example, the exhibition demonstrated that gospel goes hand in hand with resistance and the embodiment of individual and collective hope.

*Gospel. Muzikale reis* challenged the traditional object display and invited the audience to engage in a listening and pedagogical experience that, at the same time, became a personal musical journey. This type of museology focuses on new communication and styles of expression and reconsiders the position of museums in conservation, the epistemological status of artefacts on display, and the nature and purpose of museum

scholarship.<sup>247</sup> The book *Curating Pop: exhibiting popular music in the museums* in 2019 by Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandy, and Raphaël Nowak testifies to the importance of this institutional practice. *Curating Pop* focused on drawing information from twenty museums worldwide that presented popular music exhibitions, comparing the different curatorial approaches. Beyond establishing a typology, the authors demonstrated that popular music had arguably found its place within heritage institutions.<sup>248</sup> Evaluating the curation of popular music is an area of study yet to be developed.

This exhibition relied on an audio guide. The goal was to inform the visitors about gospel's diverse presence in the Netherlands. *Gospel. Muzikale reis* allowed each person to experience the galleries at their own pace, addressing issues such as heritage, identity, politics, history, and personal music enjoyment. The objects displayed –gowns, vinyl, books, sculptures, and musical instruments– had an emotional connection to the oral testimonies and videos included in the exhibition. *Gospel. Muzikale reis* was immersive and triggered the visitors' memories in relationship to gospel music, focally and globally, and the popular music genres gospel influenced over the years.

By quoting specific events in different Dutch cities, the message took a new dimension, the recognition, and reactivation of collective and personal memories, which stimulated curiosity. Scholars such as Sarah Baker, Andy Bennet, Kevin Edge, Judith Dehal, Mario Schultze, Charles Fairchild, and particularly Marion Leonard and Alcina Cortez have worked to develop a framework regarding the potentiality of popular music exhibitions, addressing the role of memorabilia, nostalgia, audience participation, and the trigger of emotional responses through musical objects. There is no doubt that the recognition of popular music as heritage and the awareness of its narratives enables new museum practices where inclusive themes, multi-modal practices, and interactivity take a stand.

Taking this into mind, I theorized the exhibition through the framework established by Alcina Cortez in her master's and Ph.D. theses. Cortez analyzed sixty-nine sound-based multimodal museum exhibitions staged in Europe and the United States, providing a five-user framework categorizing sound-based multimodal museum practices into *sound as a "lecturing" mode, sound as an artefact, sound as "ambiance"/soundtrack, sound as art, and sound as a mode for crowd curation*.<sup>249</sup> Cortez's work strengthened the information on visual and auditory practices in museums, providing researchers with a clear point of departure to analyze popular music and sound-based exhibitions.

---

<sup>247</sup> V. McCall and C. Gray, "Museums and the 'New Museology:' Theory, Practice and Organizational Change," *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 29, 1, (2014), in Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandy, Raphaël Nowak, *Curating Pop*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 4.

<sup>248</sup> Baker, Istvandy, Nowak, *Curating Pop*, 155.

<sup>249</sup> Cortez, "Communicating Through Sound in Museum Exhibitions," V.

*Gospel. Muzikale reis* worked as a *memoryscape*. The chronology of historical events allowed the audience to connect, individually and collectively, to emotions through aural objects like vinyl, tapes, and performance footage. The audio guide, narrated by the Dutch performer and co-curator Shirma Rouse, created a sense of proximity. In further research, I want to perform an audience study. Will the data reshape the theorization of a popular music exhibition? I believe there is a lot to learn from music lovers and fans. Popular music exhibitions provide a unique opportunity for participation and the safekeeping and renewal of oral histories. Can the concept of "an aural *memoryscape*" in the planning stages of a popular music exhibition significantly impact the curatorial and design decisions?

Can I recognize more versions of "oral history components" and "musician's cubicles" in other popular music exhibitions and create a categorization? As demonstrated by the music exhibitions held at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, immersion is crucial. It takes elements from live performances and stage props. Will non-musical museums adopt these practices for future music exhibitions and to enhance other curatorial themes?

*Gospel. Muzikale reis* was an exhibition that cared for the impact and meaning of music. Besides the marching, the dancing, and the chanting, there was a cathartic component. The comprehension of gospel music does not start or end in the church, as music, as narrative, is a continuous pilgrimage. Popular music permeates every aspect of life. The Catharijneconvent reconciled the inseparable musical practice within Evangelism and a person's social and inner world. Even though there is an ongoing debate about whether music and sound should be allowed in museum spaces, the possibilities of venturing into these music exhibitions have a great deal to offer to non-musical museums. Perhaps it is time to become aware that sound is not necessarily an interruption but a carefully curated and enriching expression of heritage.

## Bibliography

### *Personal/Unpublished interviews by the author*

The quotations of Riannake van der Houwen, Willem Driebergen, Namelok, and Sara Lenzi come from these interviews:

- Ambagts, Wiegert from Namelok. Interview by María Luisa Guevara Tirado, Utrecht, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.
- - Boyd-Pates, Tyler. Interview by María Luisa Guevara Tirado, Utrecht (email), May 22, 2023.
- Driebergen, Willem. Interview by María Luisa Guevara Tirado, Utrecht, April 10, 2023.
- Sara Lenzi. Interview by the author, Utrecht, April 20, 2023.
- Van der Houwen, Rianneke. Interview by María Luisa Guevara Tirado. Utrecht, March 28, 2023.

Allen-Hermanson, Sean, and Jennifer Matey. "Synesthesia." April 5, 2023.  
<https://iep.utm.edu/synesthe/>

Arnold, J., and Caroline Goodson. "Resounding Community: The History and Meaning of Medieval Church Bells." *Viator* 43 (2012): 99-130.

Ashton, Dore. "Sensoria." In Suzanne Delehanty, *Soundings* exhibition catalogue. Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum/State University of New York at Purchase, 1981, 15-19.

Bailey, Kate, Victoria Broackes, and Eric de Visscher. "The longer we heard, the more we looked. Music at the Victoria and Albert Museum." *Curator The Museum Journal* vol. 62, no. 3 (2019): 327-341.

Baker, Sarah, Lauren Istvandy and Raphaël Nowak. "The sound of music heritage: curating popular music in music museums and exhibitions." *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22, vol. 1 (2016): 70-81.

Baker, Sarah, Lauren Istvandy, and Raphaël Nowak. *Curating Pop*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019.

Baker, Sarah, Lauren Istvandity and Raphaël Nowak. "Curatorial practice in popular music museums: An emerging typology of structuring component." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* vol. 23, no. 3 (2020): 434-453.

Bakhtin, M., and P. Medvedev. "The Formal Method in European Art Scholarship." In *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*. Translated by A. Wehrle. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Baldassare, Antonio. "Music Iconography: What is it all about? Some remarks and considerations with a selected bibliography". *Ictus: Periódico do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Música*, no. 09/2 (2008), 69-114.

Baldassarre, Antonio. "Quo vadis music iconography? the répertoire international d'iconographie musicale as a case study." *Fontes Artis Musicae* 54, no. 4 (2007): 440-52. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23511886>.

Baldassarre, Antonio. "The Jester of Musicology, or The Place and Function of Music Iconography in Institutions of Higher Education." *Music in Art* 35, no. 1/2 (2010): 9-35. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41818604>.

Brandellero, Amanda and Susanne Janssen. "Popular music as cultural heritage: scoping out the field of practice." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 20 n. 3 (2013): 1-24.

Baudelaire, Charles. *Salón of 1846*. Paris: Michel Lévy, 1846. Reprinted by David Zwirner Books, 2021.

Baudelaire, Charles. "Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris," in *Oeuvres complètes III L'Art Romantique* (Édition définitive). Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, Éditeurs, 1869.

Baudelaire, Charles. *Fleurs du Mal*. Alençon: Auguste Poulet-Malassis, 1857. Translated by William Aggeler, *The Flowers of Evil*. Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild, 1954.

Baudelaire, Charles. *Œuvres complètes*. Edited by Claude Pichois. Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1975-6.

Belaën, Florence. "L'immersion dans les musées de science: médiation ou seduction?" *Culture et Musées* no. 5 (2005): 91-110.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936). Translated by Andy Bluden. Edited by Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken/Random House, 2005.



- Bennett, Andy. *Popular Music Heritage*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.
- Berry, Mark, and Nicholas Vazsonyi. "Introduction." In *The Cambridge Companion to Wagner's Der Ring Des Nibelungen*. Edited by Mark Berry and Nicholas Vazsonyi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, 1-56.
- Bijsterveld, Karin. "Beyond Echoic Memory: Introduction to the Special Issue on Auditory History." *The Public Historian* 37, no. 4 (2015): 7-13.  
<https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2015.37.4.7>.
- Blazeković, Zdravko. "Music Iconography." In *The Sage International Encyclopedia of Music and Culture*. Edited by Jannet Lynn Sturman. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 2019: 1170-1190.
- Bonevacia, Gershwin. "Biografie van Gershwin Bonevacia." May 12, 2023.  
<https://www.gershwinbonevacia.nl/biografie-gershwin-bonevacia>
- Born, Georgina. "On musical mediation: Ontology, technology and creativity," *Twentieth-Century Music* 2 (1) (2005): 7-36.
- Broclain, Elsa, Benoît Haug, and Pénélope Patix. "Introduction. Music: Intangible Heritage?" *Transposition, musique et sciences sociales. Musique: patrimoine immatériel?* 8 (2019): <https://journals.openedition.org/transposition/4121>
- Butler, Toby. "Memoryscape: an interview with Toby Butler," History Workshop. May 11, 2023, <https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/public-history/memoryscape/>
- Bruynèl, Ton, Dick Raaijmakers and Peter Struycken. *Geluid «=>» Kijken: drie audio-visuele projecten* exhibition catalogue. Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1971.
- Buckley, Ann. "Music Iconography and the Semiotics of Visual Representation." *Music in Art* 23, no. 1/2 (1998): 5-10. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41561898>.
- Cage, John. "Julliard Lecture," in Id., *A Year from Monday*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1967.
- Calame, Claude. *Masques d'autorité. Fiction et pragmatique dans la poésie grecque antique*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2005.
- Cambridge Dictionary Online. "Sound." April 5, 2023.  
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sound>
- Cardullo, R. J. "Gesamtkunstwerk, Synesthesia, and the Avant-Garde: Wassily Kandinsky's *The Yellow Sound* as a Work of Art." *Hermeneia* no. 18 (2017): 5-21.

Caseau, Béatrice. "The Senses in Religion: Liturgy, Devotion, and Deprivation." In *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*. Edited by Richard Newhauser. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019, 88-110.

Celant, Germano. "Artsound." In Suzanne Delehanty, *Soundings* exhibition catalogue. Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum/State University of New York at Purchase, 1981, 20-23.

Celant, Germano. "Record as Artwork 1959-73," in *Sound Art, Sound as a Medium of Art.*" Edited by Peter Weibel. Cambridge: The MIT Press: 2019, 148-160.

Chadwick, Catherine Mary. "Wassily Kandinsky and The Gesamtkunstwerk Tradition: The Role of South German Baroque Architecture in Kandinsky's Move to Abstraction." Master's Diss. Montreal: McGill University, 1986.

Chessa, Luciano. "A Metaphysical Orchestra: Researching and Reconstructing the Intonarumori." In *Art or Sound* exhibition catalogue. Edited by Germano Celant. Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2014.

Ciesielska, Malgorzata, Katarzyna W. Boström and Magnus Öhlander. "Observation Methods." In M. Ciesielska and Dariusz Jemielniak , eds. *Qualitative Methodologies in Organization Studies Volume II: Methods and Possibilities*. London: Palgrave MacMillan 2018.

Clayton, Martin, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton. *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*. Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2011.

Cluett, Seth Allen. "Loud Speaker: Towards a Component Theory of Media Sound." Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 2013.

Cluett, Seth Allen. "Ephemeral, Immersive, Invasive: Sound as Curatorial Theme 1966-2013. In Nina Levent Alvaro Pascual-Leone and Simon Lacey, eds. *The Multisensory Museum: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Touch Sound Smell Memory and Space*. Lanham Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014, 109-118.

Coe, Ralph T. *Sound Light Silence: Art that Performs*. Kansas City: Nelson Gallery, 1966.

Cortez, Alcina. "Performatively Driven: A Genre for Signifying in Popular Music Exhibitions," *Curator The Museum Journal* 62, N. 3 (2019): 351-366.

Cortez, Alcina. "Communicating Through Sound in Museum Exhibitions: Unravelling a Field of Practice." Ph.D. diss., NOVA FCSH, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2021.

Cox, Christoph. "Seeing is Not Hearing: Synaesthesia, Anesthesia and the Audio-Visual." In *Art or Sound* exhibition catalogue. Edited by Germano Celant. Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2014.

Cusic, Don. "The Development of Gospel Music." In *The Cambridge Companion to Blues and Gospel Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 44-60.

Dabrowski, Magdalena. *Kandinsky Compositions* exhibition catalogue. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995.

Dehail, Judith. "Musealising Change or Changing the Museum: the Case of the Musical Instrument Museum from the Visitors' Perspective." *Museological Review*, no. 18 (2014): 53-60.

Delehanty, Suzanne. *Soundings* exhibition catalogue. Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum/State University of New York at Purchase, 1981.

Duncan, Carol. *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. (Routledge, 1995).

Edge, Kevin. "Music in Museums: Some problems in Collecting & Interpreting the Technologies of Pop." *Popular Musicology Online*, issue 3 (2000). May 11, 2023, <http://www.popular-musicology-online.com/issues/03/edge.html>

Fei, Jia Jia. "Art in the Age of Instagram," 2016. Ted Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DLNFDQt8Pc>

Fischer, Jennifer. "Speeches of Display, Museum Audio Guides by Artists." In *Aural Cultures*. Ed. Jim Drobnick. Toronto & Banff: YYZ Books & Walter Phillips Gallery Editions, 48-61.

Fischer, Lucy. "Sound Waves." In Suzanne Delehanty, *Soundings* exhibition catalogue. Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum/State University of New York at Purchase, 1981, 24-30.

Frank, Peter. "Soundings at SUNY." *Art Journal* vol. 12, no. 1 (Spring, 1982): 58-62.

Fondazione Prada. *Art or Sound*. Edited by Germano Celant. Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2014.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. London: Tavistock, 1970.

Gasparotti, Valeria. "Beyond the Audio Tour: Challenges for Mobile Experiences in Museums: The case of "Scapes:" when an artist experiments with one of the most

universal interpretation tools.” Master’s diss. Reinwardt Academie, Amsterdam University of the Arts, 2014.

Grand-Clément, Adeline. “Sensorium, Sensescapes, Synaesthesia, Multisensoriality: A New Way of Approaching Religious Experience in Antiquity?” In *SENSORIVM: The Senses in Roman Polytheism*. Edited by Antón Alvar Nuño, Jaime Alvar Ezquerro and Greg Woolf. Brill, 2021, 141-159.

Goddard, Donald. “Sound/Art: Living Presences.” In *Sound/Art* exhibition catalogue. New York: The SoundArt Foundation, 1983.

Hadlock, Philip. “Baudelaire and the Unstaging of “Tannhäuser.” *South Atlantic Review*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 26-46.

Halsall, Francis. “One Sense Is Never Enough.” *Journal of Visual Practice* Vol. 3, No. 2 (2004): 103-122.

Hass, Birgit. “Staging Colours: Edward Gordon Craig and Wassily Kandinsky.” In *Textual Intersections: Literature, History and the Arts in Nineteenth Century Europe*. Edited by Rachael Langford. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009, 41-51.

Herr, Christopher R., and Gary W. Siebein. “An Acoustical History of Theaters and Concert Halls: An Investigation of Parallel Developments in Music, Performance Spaces, and the Orchestra.” 86<sup>th</sup> ACSA Annual Meeting proceedings, *Constructing Identity*. Edited by Craig Barton (1988): 146-152.

Higgins, Hannah B. “Art and the Senses: The Avant-Garde Challenge to the Visual Arts.” In *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Modern Age*. Edited by David Howes. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016, 195-218.

Howes, David, and Constance Classen. *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013.

Howes, David. “Introduction to Sensory Museology.” *The Senses and Society* 9, no. 3 (2014): 259–67. <https://doi.org/10.2752/174589314X14023847039917>.

Ierodiakonou, Katerina. “In Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias on the Individuation and Hierarchy of the Senses.” In *Forms of Representation in the Aristotelian Tradition*. Edited by Juhana Toivanen. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2022, 40-65.

Imhoof, David, Menninger, Margaret Eleanor and Steinhoff, Anthony J. *The Total Work of Art: Foundations, Articulations, Inspirations*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1515/9781785331855>

Indiana University Bloomington. "Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology: Portia K. Maulsby." May 15, 2023, <https://folklore.indiana.edu/about/emeriti-faculty/maulsby-portia.html>

Ione, Amy, and Christopher Tyler. "Was Kandinsky a Synesthete." *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences* vol. 13, no. 2 (2003): 223-226.

Jay, Martin. "Scopic Regimes of Modernity." *The Handbook of Visual Culture*. Edited by Ian Heywood and Barry Sandywell et al. London: Berg, 2012, 102-114.

Johnson, Birgitta. "Gospel Music," *Oxford Bibliographies*. Last modified 23 August 2017. <https://www-oxfordbibliographies-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/display/document/obo-9780190280024/obo-9780190280024-0052.xml>

Jones, Dafydd. "L'amiral Cherche Une Maison à Louer." In *Dada 1960 in Theory Practices of Critical Resistance*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014, 152-174.

Junod, Philippe. *Counterpoints: Dialogues Between Music and the Visual Arts*. London: Reaktion Books, 2018.

Kambaskovic, Danijela, and Charles T. Wolfe. "The Senses in Philosophy and Science: From the Nobility of Sight to the Materialism of Touch." *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance Vol. 3*. Edited by Herman Roodenburg. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014, 107-125.

W. Kandinsky, *On the Spiritual in Art* (First complete English translation). Edited by Hilla Rebay. New York, Guggenheim 1946.

Kandinsky, W. "Reminiscences." In *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*. Edited by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo. New York: Da Capo Press, 1994, 355-382.

Kennedy, Tammie M. "Mapping 'Memoryscapes': Reconfiguring the Theoretical Terrain of Rhetoric and Memory." *JAC*, vol. 33, no. ¾ (2013): 763-81.

Knapp, Bettina L. "Baudelaire and Wagner's Archetypal Operas." *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1-2. (Fall-Winter 1988-1989): 58-69.

Collin-Lachaud, Colin and Juliette Passebois. "Do Immersive Technologies Add Value to the Museumgoing Experience? An Explanatory Study Conducted at France's Paléosite." *International Journal of Arts Management*, vol. 11, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 60-71.

Lauwrens, Jenni. "Welcome to the revolution: The sensory turn and art history." *Journal of Art Historiography* 7 (December 2012): 1-17.

Lax, Thomas Jean. "A Rehearsal for Communion: On A Jafa's akingdonmethas." MoMA. May 12, 2023, <https://www.moma.org/magazine/articles/329>

Leonard, Marion. "Representing Popular Music Histories and Heritage in Museums." *The Routledge Companion to Popular Music History and Heritage*. Edited by Sarah Baker, Catherine Strong, Lauren Istvandity, and Zelmarie Cantillon. Routledge, 2018.

Levent, Nina, Alvaro Pascual-Leone and Simon Lacey, eds. *The Multisensory Museum: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Touch Sound Smell Memory and Space*. Lanham Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

Licht, Alan. "Sound Art: Origins, development and ambiguities." *Organised Sound* vol. 14 (April 2009): 3-10.

Licht, Alan. *Sound Art Revisited*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

Long, Paul. "What is Popular Music Heritage?." In *The Routledge Companion to Popular Music History and Heritage*. Edited by Sarah Baker. Bookshelf, Taylor & Francis, 2018, 121-134.

Lunsqui, Alexandre. "Music and Globalization: Diversity, Banalization and Culturalization." *Filigrane Musique et globalization* no. 5 (May 2007): <https://revues.mshparisnord.fr/filigrane/index.php?id=161#ftn11>

Marck, Jan van der. Quoted in the exhibition catalogue/LP of *Art by Telephone* (1969). In *Art by Telephone*. Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1969. Specific Object David Platzker. 15 April 2023. [https://specificobject.com/projects/art\\_by\\_telephone/#.ZFSfXuxByWA](https://specificobject.com/projects/art_by_telephone/#.ZFSfXuxByWA)

MCA Chicago: Exhibitions. "Art by Telephone." April 14, 2023. <https://mcachicago.org/Exhibitions/1969/Art-By-Telephone>

McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962.

McLuhan, Marshall. "The Medium in the Message." In Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964, 1-18.

Mein, Margare. "Baudelaire and Symbolism." *L'Esprit Créateur*, vol. 13, no. 2, (1973): 154-162.

Museum Catharijneconvent. "Missie en visie." April 5, 2023. <https://www.catharijneconvent.nl/de-organisatie/missie-en-visie/>

- Namelok. "Project, Gospel." May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, <https://namelok.eu/projects/gospel/>
- Nelson, Wayne A. "Edgar Varèse and the electronic medium." Master's thesis, Missoula, University of Montana, 1979.
- Newhauser, Richard. "Introduction: The Sensual Middle Ages." In *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*. Edited by Richard Newhauser. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019, 1-22.
- Newhauser, Richard, ed. *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*. The Cultural Histories Ser. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.
- Novalis. *Philosophical Writings*. Translated and edited by Margaret Mahony Stoljar. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- O'Leary, Majella, and Robert Chia. "Epistemes and Structures of Sense-Making in Organizational Life." *Journal of Management Inquiry* Vol. 16, Issue 4 (2007): 1-29.
- O'Meara, John. *The Way of Novalis. An Exposition on the Process of His Achievement*. Ottawa: Heart's Core Publications: 2014.
- Ong, W. J. *The Presence of the Word*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.
- Palombini, Carlos. "Machine Songs V: Pierre Schaeffer: From Research into Noises to Experimental Music." *Computer Music Journal*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Autumn, 1993): 14-19.
- Phillips, Kendall R., and G. Mitchel Reyes, eds. *Global Memoryscapes: Contesting Remembrance in a Transnational Age*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.
- Proctor, Nancy, and Chris Tellis. "The State of the Art in Museum Handhelds in 2003." *Museums and the Web 2003*. Accessed 2 July 2023, <https://www.archimuse.com/mw2003/papers/proctor/proctor.html>
- Pomian, Krzysztof. "Entre l'invisible et le visible: la collection." In K. Pomian *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux. Paris, Venise XVIe – XVIIIe siècle*. Paris: Gallimard, 1987, 7-59.
- Randall, Dave. *Sound System: The Political Power of Music*. Pluto Press, 2017.
- Reydellet, Jean de. "Pierre Schaeffer, 1910-1995: The Founder of "Musique Concrète." *Computer Music Journal*, vol. 20, no. 2 (Summer, 1996): 10-11.

Rognoni, Gabriele Rossi. "Preserving Functionality: Keeping Artefacts 'Alive' in Museums." *Curator The Museum Journal* 62, N. 3 (2019): 403-413.

Ruccius, Alexis. "The History of Musical Iconography and the Influence of Art History: Pictures as Sources and Interpreters of Musical History." In *The Making of the Humanities: Volume III: The Modern Humanities*, edited by Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn. Amsterdam University Press, 2014, 403-12.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt12877vs.29>.

Rucsanda, Madalina Dana. "Aspects of the relationship between music and painting and their influence on Schoenberg and Kandinsky." *Bulletin of the Transylvania University of Brasov*, vol. 12 (61) no. 2 (2019): 91-100.

Russolo, Luigi. *L'arte dei rumori* (1913). Trans. Barclay Brown (1986). New York: Pendragon Press, 1986.

Schaeffer, Pierre. *À la recherche d'une musique concrète*. Paris: Seuil, 1966.

Schafer, R. Murray. "Foreword." In *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds* (1995). Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2005, ix, xvi.

Schelling, Friedrich. *Philosophie der Kunst* (1802-3). Darmstadt, 1990. *The Philosophy of Art*, translated by Douglas W. Stott. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Schönberg, Arnold. *Theory of Harmony* (1911). Trans. Roy Carter. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983.

Schulze, Mario. "Things are Changing: Museums and the Material Turn." *Museological Review* 18 (2014): 43-52.

Small, Christopher. *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening (Music/Culture)*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998.

Smith, Mark M. *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

*Sound Art: Sound as a Medium of Art*. Edited by Peter Weibel. Cambridge: The MIT Press: 2019.

Stein, Barry, and M. Alex Meredith. *The Merging of the Senses*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993.

Steinhoff, Anthony J. "Richard Wagner, Parsifal, and the Pursuit of *Gesamtkunstwerk*." In *The Total Work of Art. Foundations, Articulations, Inspirations*.



Edited by David Imhoof, Margaret E. Menninger, and Anthony J. Steinhoff. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016, 56-78.

Sterne, Jonathan. "Soundscape, Landscape, Escape". In *Soundscapes of the Urban Past: Staged Sound As Mediated Cultural Heritage. Sound Studies*, 5. Edited by Karin Bijsterveld, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2014, 181-193.

Stogner, Maggie Brunette. "Communication Culture in the 21st Century: The Power of Media-Enhanced Immersive Storytelling." *The Journal of Museum Education* vol. 36 no. 2 (Summer 2011): 189-198.

Tallon, Loic. "On the Rise of Mobile Technology for Museums." Virtueel Platform. Accessed 2 July 2023. <http://archieef.virtueelplatform.nl/kennis/loic-tallon-over-de-opkomst-van-mobiele-technologie-voor-museu-bij-smart-erfgoed-conferentie/>

*The Fluxus Performance Workbook* (Trondheim, El Djarida, 1990). Edited by Ken Friedman, Owen Smith, and Lauren Sawchyn. Performance Research e-publication, 2002. This is a digital supplement to *Performance Research* vol. 7, no. 3 (2002).

Varèse, Edgard, and Chou Wen-chung. "The Liberation of Sound," *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Autumn – Winter, 1966): 11-19.

Vergo Peter. *That Divine Order: Music and the Visual Arts from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*. London: Phaidon, 2005.

Visscher, Eric de. "Silence as A Musical Sculpture. John Cage and the Instruments in 4'33." In *Art or Sound* exhibition catalogue. Edited by Germano Celant. Milan: Fondazione Prada, 2014, 195-200.

Visscher, Eric de. "Music in Museums - A Model for the Future?" *Folkwang Studien: Musikaustellungen : Intention, Realisierung, Interpretation* 19 (2018): 13–22.

Vondeling, Eveline J. "Multisensoriality as Medium. An Analysis of Curatorial Practice." Master's diss. Utrecht University, 2019.

Wagner, Richard. *Wagner on Music and Drama. A compendium of Richard Wagner's prose works*. Translated by H. Ashton Ellis. New York: Dutton, 1964.

Weibel, Peter. "Sound as a Medium of Art." In *Sound Art, Sound as a Medium of Art*. Edited by Peter Weibel. Cambridge: The MIT Press: 2019.

Weiner, Lawrence. Quoted in Grundmann, Heidi, Sabine Breitweiser and Reinhard Braun. *RE-PLAY – The Beginnings of International Media-Art in Austria* (May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2000 – 6<sup>th</sup> August 2000 at The Generali Foundation, Vienna). (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2000). April 5, 2023, <http://www.kunstradio.at/REPLAY/index.html>

Wiens, Kathleen. "Popular Music as an Interpretative Device for Creating Meaningful Visitor Experience in Music Museums." *Ethnologies*, 37 (1) (2015): 133-151.

Wijnia, Lieke. "Making Senses through Music: Perceptions of the Sacred at Festival Musica Sacra Maastricht." Ph.D. diss. Tilburg University, 2016.

Williams-Jones, Pearl. "Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic." *Ethnomusicology* vol. 19 no. 3 (Sept. 1975): 373-385.

Zeit, Anne. "Akustische Räume, Für Augen und Ohren, Musique en conteneur, Der befreite Klang. Retracing the Heard and Unheard Curatorial Practice of René Block from the 1960s to the 1980s." *Kunsttexte.de e-journal for art and visual history* 1 (2020): 1-18.