



## • Aural Drift • Budhadiya Chattopadhyay

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The acoustic architecture of a city is a flux of sonic textures, signals, functional and navigational sounds, language, and sonified human-machine assemblages, subject to constant change over time. In the form of an auto-ethnographic field research, the artist Budhaditya Chattopadhyay examines the transformative auditory situations of Offenbach. His poetic archeology gives a hearing to unheard of nooks and crannies in public space and exposes historical and social layers as acoustic material. The result is Aural Drift that manifests in the form of a mobile exhibition of listening traces, retrievable and audible through QR codes placed at specific locations in the city. The work can be experienced in sounds, and in parallel augmented reading of the sites in texts written on location through a process of self-attunement to these urban spaces. The use of headphones is highly recommended.

## A Hafen (Hafenplatz/Ufer)

Under the corrupt water, your lightened face is lying empty. The half-eaten smile is floating with the water ripples. The shadows of the worn-out city are jumping in the water for a spring bath. Bubbles full of spoken promises come out on the surface and breaks away into wayward ripples. The air smells of these primordial fizzes, unstuck from their underwater exile. The shallow aquatic world they left behind is survived by forgotten objects, thrown away coins, disposed bottles, cans, perhaps also a wedding ring, a locket or an earring, somewhere in-between the pebbles at the bottom. Sunlight falls on the water only to reflect back in vapor of the day. There are people occupying the sounding space with ebullient laughter, shouts, phone-calls, and social music. The ancient silence of the place is only merely touched by these itinerant interventions.

[→ Audio](#)[→ Location](#)

## B Wilhelmsplatz

A gathering dissolve into chaos. The chaos is replaced by the euphoria of discovering the success of a bargain. Enthusiastic hands pick up produces that are ready to be devoured in the familial settings. All of these waiting local supplies, from vegetables to cooked and canned foodstuff, will be traveling from a social and public place to a domestic comfort ready for serving the appetite and health of the citizen. As the sounding space opens up for bargaining, I slip into the crowd as a historical mole. The crowd then fragments into moving faces. The seller, the buyer and the consumer meet at the excuse of the objects being handed over. Their friendship awaits the validation of a transaction. Each face carries a desire for survival, and sustains a way of living closer to what the society demands of them.

[→ Audio](#)[→ Location](#)

## c Offenbacher Hauptbahnhof

All words fly away in the air of the hollow waiting hall – reverberation makes them unintelligible to read. The frenzy of the station dies down as the train leaves, and a monotone survives. In the unintended moment of waiting the vibrations of the surfaces accumulate and merge into an immersive narrative of sporadic departures and arrivals. Faces and objects blur in this impermanence. The train leaves the platform gurgling a desire to move and accelerate against the day's natural rhythm. The platform and the waiting hall absorb this movement for eternity, and wait for emancipation.

[→ Audio](#)[→ Location](#)

## D Elisabeth-Selbert-Steg (Offenbacher Hafen)

Two sides of a historically fractured city are joined by communal curiosity. The social and the architectural coalesce in the context of the human activity. People cross the bridge leaving a permanent mark on its historical trajectory. The city inclines towards contemplating its own limits, as the overpass remains unattended in the spring rain. The melancholic raindrops erase some of the footsteps – some lingers through their energetic presence. The sky and the river wryly overlook these public tendencies of connecting and urban navigation as the sun disappears behind the clouds.

[→ Audio](#)[→ Location](#)

**E Mainufer** (Between “Waggon am Kulturgleis” and the former landing dock for cargo ships)

The layers of activities mix in a tranquil rhythm. A cry of a human child is not so distinct from the call of a baby duck. The nature-culture binary falls apart at the riverside of the city. Here humans can keep their egocentric guards down to affectively engage with the environment and the non-human others who inhabit the city. The splashes of water touch the manmade landscape. Did the sound of the splashing change over the years? Was it the same as a few thousands years ago? One may search for the answers listening to sounds below the surface of water. As the concrete stairs disappear into the darker sonic layers, the unknown depths of the river resonate with a cryptic message for the city.

[→ Audio](#)[→ Location](#)

**F** Hochschule für Gestaltung (Schloßstraße 31)

Here I stop hearing and seeing. Here I would like to keep my senses empty, tabula rasa, and uncontaminated by experience. Here I aim to start from all preconceived notions around artifacts, aesthetics, and human perception, around city limits and the tension between urban center and its peripheries. Here I want to indulge in the moment of emergence, a rupture through which thoughts and poetry enters, a crack in space and historical times through which sense-making suspends itself.

[→ Audio](#)[→ Location](#)



## G Mainstraße 127

The birds, which flew over the construction site of a new building in the city, may overhear the conversation between the disappearing and constantly emerging relics in the urban landscape. There was a small window here with an old man, and classical music playing indoors during a summer afternoon, now demolished and replaced by hammers, metal rods, and sound of drilling machines. A new building structure is made, but migratory workers feel unsure about their act of demolition. What remains? - this question hangs heavy in the air. Does the sound of the earth-boring machine swallow an archaic song? Only the bird, which passes by the site with an unemotional ear, can tell.

[→ Audio](#)[→ Location](#)

- Budhaditya Chattopadhyay

Budhaditya Chattopadhyay is a media artist, researcher, and writer. Chattopadhyay produces works for large-scale installation and live performance addressing contemporary issues of climate crisis, human intervention in the environment and ecology, urbanity, migration, race and decoloniality. He has received numerous fellowships, residencies and international awards, and his works have been widely exhibited, performed or presented across the globe. Chattopadhyay holds a PhD in artistic research and sound studies from the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts, Leiden University, and an MA in New Media from the Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University. → [budhaditya.org](http://budhaditya.org)

- Tonfunktion – Festival für Gebrauchsmusik (04. – 14.06.2021)

“Aural Drift” by Budhaditya Chattopadhyay is created in the frame of “Tonfunktion – Festival für Gebrauchsmusik”. In a nonchalant appropriation of the historical term Gebrauchsmusik (“utility music”), Tonfunktion explores the potential effectiveness of sound in extra-musical contexts. The festival revolves around five commissions, which were awarded to international artists from the fields of experimental electronic music and performance, with an invitation to place their practices in the service of a function or task. The results are in a wide variety of formats designed for public spaces in the cities of Offenbach and Frankfurt. The accompanying radio program, which will be broadcast on June 9th, 10th and 13th 2021 in cooperation with the Frankfurt community radio station EOS, will include one-hour contributions by DJs, musicians and theorists on the topic of Gebrauchsmusik and functional sound.

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