

SPA-199

Sounding Our Lives: Examining the Impetus of Sound Works by Singapore Contemporary Artists

Chee-Hoo Lum

National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Abstract

If we give time and space to listen to the sounds and observe the images and objects around us, our lived and living cultures will unravel before us in their multitude of possibilities and perspectives. This paper takes on the psychophysiological foundations of soundscapes, of keynote sounds, sound signals and soundmarks, as a key theoretical thread to examine the works of Singapore contemporary artists that utilizes sound as a significant medium threading through their creative process.

The larger research study with which this paper stems from, is a funded two-year qualitative case study exploring how emerging Singapore contemporary artists articulate their personal identities in relation to dominant notions, and their own conceptions, of the relationship between self and society, between the individual artist and national discourses about the arts and the role of the artist within the nation state of Singapore. Extensive recorded interviews and site visits were conducted where possible to capture the creative processes and body of works of artists, including material artefacts and resources gathered from the web. The gathered data were then openly coded to surface particular themes linked with self and society intentions.

In this paper, works of five artists who have journeyed into the sound worlds of daily living to create reflective and collaborative works, utilising the arts in social-emotional and communicative ways, as well as the articulation of identity politics and environmental concerns, were extracted as points of departure towards a critical dialogue in the implications of deep listening, the use of technology and creation of soundscapes, while also suggesting strategies within the general music classroom to uncover and recognize students' sense of space and place in their lived environment. This safe space created through the arts has the potential of allowing students to reflect upon their musical well-being while also encouraging empathy towards self and society.