

## AuralPluralities Network



**AuralPluralities** is a research network led by academics and creative practitioners dedicated to addressing, and extending upon, the 'auraldiverse turn' in the Arts and Humanities research.

Throughout 2024 we will run a series of events at each of the partner locations: Goldsmiths, University of Kent and University of Sussex.

**Mailing List:** [auralpluralities@protonmail.com](mailto:auralpluralities@protonmail.com)

# Ecological Listening: from sound art to action

**When:** Friday 22 March 2024, noon - 5:15pm.

**Where:** Sussex Digital Humanities Lab, Silverstone Building SB211, University of Sussex, Falmer. East Sussex, BN1 9RG [Directions with campus map.](#)

**Who:** CHASE doctoral students from 7th February 2024; CHASE member staff and students from 21st February 2024; those with a professional interest, and the public may attend where spaces remain after 6th March 2024.

**How:** [Eventbrite registration.](#) Free to attend. Booking is mandatory.

In our inaugural network event, The AuralPluralities Network presents a series of talks and a workshop centred around **Ecological Listening**, asking what is the role of ecological sound art in cultural transformation and socioecological justice?

## Guests:

Alice Eldridge | Introduction by the event curator and chair

Jono Gilmurray | *Ecological Sound Art in Theory and Practice*

Ben Kelly/ About Face | *The Nature-Culture--Climate Continuum and Ecosocial Justice*

Bethan Prosser | *The Ecomusicology Project*

Ann Light | *Creative Evaluation Methods for Artistic Practice and Cultural Transformation*  
(with lessons learned from [CreaTures](#))

## Schedule

12:00 - 12:15	Welcome	Alice Eldridge
12:15 - 13:00	Talk	Jono Gilmurray
13:00 - 13:45	Lunch	(Please bring your own)
13:45 - 14:30	Talk	Ben Kelly/About Face
14:30 - 15:00	Talk	Bethan Prosser
15:00 - 15:15	Tea break	(Included)
15:15 - 17:00	Workshop	Ann Light
17:00 - 17:15	Close	

## Session Summaries

### Jono Gilmurray

#### ***Ecological Sound Art in Theory and Practice***

Over the last few decades, the growing global concern around multiple ecological crises has been reflected by an explosion in engagement with them across every area of our arts and culture; and sound art is no exception, with an increasing number of artists using sound and listening as a medium for engagement with contemporary ecological issues, forming a growing contemporary movement of 'ecological sound art'.

This talk will provide a comprehensive introduction to this important new field of artistic practice, with the central aim of highlighting the ways in which sound and listening represent a particularly powerful medium through which we might explore our perceptions of, relationships with, and responses to, contemporary ecological crises.

To help guide this exploration, key aspects of sound studies will be combined with the analytical tools of ecocriticism to conduct some ecocritical 'listensings' to examples of contemporary ecological sound art, with the aim of uncovering some of the core philosophies, techniques and methodologies involved. Through this, a fundamental accord will be revealed between some of the core principles of contemporary ecological theory, and the ways in which we experience and relate to sound art; demonstrating that ecological sound art represents not only an important new area of sound arts practice, but a uniquely powerful modern ecological art form.

### Ben Kelly/About Face

#### ***The Nature-Culture-Climate-Continuum and Ecosocial Justice.***

Ben will be speaking about *The Nature-Culture-Climate-Continuum* – his performance-as-research methodology that explores the evocative representation of the dialogical human and non-human mechanisms attributed to our

climate crisis. This method is used to design and perform sonos-centric transdisciplinary projects that challenge ecosocial justice through inclusive co-creation, and to cultivate eco-reflexivity in audiences through an *ecomusic interstice* - a unique space-time event such as music performance, installation or exhibition, to evocatively present the interactive elements of our global ecology: nature, culture and the climate. These are offered as intervening spaces for audience self-reflection on indigenous rights, consumerist deforestation and habitual choices that contribute to destruction of the climate.

During this talk Ben will aim to facilitate a new *ecomusic interstice* through 'spectacular representations' of his previous work alongside explaining how Bourriard's relational aesthetics (2002) underpins this experimental approach.

### **Bethan Prosser**

#### ***The Ecomusicology Project***

The Ecomusicology Project is a newly formed partnership comprising sound artists, musicians, community practitioners, horticulturists and makers, based at Stanmer Organics in Brighton. The collective is made up of Lost Property, The Rose Hill, Sound Art Brighton, At the Coach House and Brighton & Hove Music for Connection. We aim to create an open inclusive space for ecomusical experimentation, education and interaction. Ecomusicology is the convergence of music, culture and the environment at the intersection of nonhuman and human sound worlds, and our project is based around creating a flexible, multi-use environment for workshops, exhibitions, performances and installations on a short and long term basis.

### **Ann Light**

#### ***Creative Evaluation Methods for Artistic Practice and Cultural Transformation (with lessons learned from [CreaTures](#))***

Evaluation is often undertaken with a heavy heart. Is this because the purpose is usually to meet others' agendas? This workshop explores the role of evaluation when it is not just performed to report back to funders.

As part of the workshop, I will ask:

- How can evaluation be made to serve creative interests?
- How can it be incorporated into creative work?
- And how can it be designed to respond to the special qualities that creative practice brings?

I will give examples from my years doing community-based creative research before offering the new CreaTures Framework as a tool for reflection and the basis for thinking about our needs with regard to assessment.

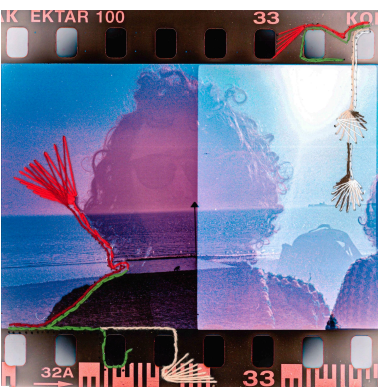
### **Digital Humanities Lab Facilities**

- The nearest toilet facilities are situated on the same floor.
- The nearest cafés are located in the IDS building, and in Dhaba square directly opposite.
- The Digital Humanities Lab provides accessible entry for disabled users via lifts in the Silverstone Building.
- The nearest disabled toilet is accessible on the ground floor
- Guide dogs on leads are permitted in the Digital Humanities Lab.
- Drinks with lids are permitted in the Lab.

### **Biographies**

**Dr. Jono Gilmurray** is the Course Leader of the Electronic Music Production and Music & Sound Production degree courses at BIMM University Bristol. He is a sound artist, writer and researcher, whose work focuses upon how sound and listening can help us to explore, understand and relate to ecological issues. Recent activities include taking a group of students to the COP28 UN Climate Conference in Dubai to showcase works of climate-themed music and sound art, and the co-creation with local young people of a multichannel sound art installation on themes of slavery, migrancy and climate change for the National Trust at Tyntesfield. He holds a PhD in Ecological Sound Art from the University of the Arts London, and is currently writing a book on the subject.

<https://arts-london.academia.edu/JonoGilmurray>



Artistically known as *Aboutface*, **Ben Kelly** is a transdisciplinary artist, multi-instrumentalist and workshop facilitator specialising in intercultural collaboration with vulnerable groups, performing, exhibiting sonos-centric projects dedicated to the unveiling of the ecosocial mechanisms attributed to our accelerating, climate crisis.

Ben has previously developed conceptualised creative works alongside charities, NGO's and activist groups such as: Help Migrants UK, One Resilient Earth; Zan Zendegi Azadi - an anonymous Iranian collective; In Place of War; The Alfred Wegener Institute – a centre for polar and marine research; London Wildlife Trust; Forest Peoples Programme, Size of Wales and Extinction Rebellion, to produce multi-disciplinary works that combine field-recording, improvised multi-instrumentation, fine-art and bio-interactivity to create immersive sound-worlds that challenge matters of ecojustice. Ben has published music with worldwide recognition on innovative labels such as AD 93, Dark Matters and his own Coordinates imprint, airing on such shows as Radio 1 Essential Mix, Elizabeth Alker (BBC radio 2), Tom Ravenscroft (6 music) and Gilles Peterson (BBC & WWFM).

Ben has a BA in Sound Arts and Design at UAL and a MMuS in Sonic Art at Goldsmiths, and is currently preparing for a PhD which investigates how collaborative research with indigenous forest communities can mitigate anthropogenic ecocide.

[www.aboutfacemusik.co.uk](http://www.aboutfacemusik.co.uk)

<https://soundcloud.com/aboutfacemusik>

<https://aboutface.bandcamp.com/>

**Ann Light** is Professor of Design and Creative Technology at the [University of Sussex](http://www.unsussex.ac.uk), UK, and Professor of Interaction Design, Social Change and Sustainability at [Malmö University](http://www.malmohigher.se), Sweden.

Her work addresses themes of social and ecological justice; the co-making of futures and the politics of design, with a focus on grassroots activism. She brings a background in arts, humanities, AI, and human-computer interaction to bear on innovation in social process, culture, and wellbeing. She is currently investigating how creative practices can promote transformations to sustainability.

<http://lightstuff.co.uk/ann-light/>



**Bethan Prosser** is a listening practitioner and researcher who is part of The Ecomusicology Project collective. Through an ESRC postdoctoral research fellowship at Brighton University, Bethan is extending her PhD methodology: participatory listening research. Participatory listening research is a way of listening with others to the environment to generate new knowledge and discoveries, whilst embracing different listening experiences, practices and positionalities. Bethan's research predominantly focuses on urban settings – using listening to explore resident's experiences of seaside gentrification on the South Coast. Through working with Brighton & Hove Music for Connection and The Ecomusicology Project, she has been applying these methods to green spaces. She will introduce The Ecomusicology Project and share reflections from delivering Interactive Listening Walks and participatory soundmapping workshops on the plot.

<https://ecomusicology.org.uk/>

<https://research.brighton.ac.uk/en/persons/bethan-prosser-2>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-bethan-prosser-50642b145/>

Twitter/X: @bethanmathiasp

### **AuralPluralities Network**

AuralPluralities is a research network led by academics and creative practitioners dedicated to addressing, and extending upon, the 'auraldiverse turn' in the Arts and Humanities research: theory and praxis (as referenced by: Drever (2015); Farmer (2020), Hugill (2019), Renel (2018), Thompson (2020)), problematising the onto-epistemological hierarchies associated with sound and audition.

The network is a hybrid space acting as: a social hub and a professional forum; a focus for professional practice and debate, both online and in-person; an archive of past research activity; and a website with social media platform. It is structured around a theoretical framework and methodology critiquing normative and hegemonic structures within our contemporary (Western) milieu alongside its associated crises.

The network's ethos has been established within a critical context inaugurated by Prof. John Levack Drever's novel research into AuralDiversity, and expanded to include: the theoretical and practical transdisciplinary soundscape work of Prof. Alice Eldridge, which sits at the intersections of arts, ecology, computing and action research; the richness of immersive and multisensory environments, necessary within Dr Aki Pasoulas' research; and, the sensory decolonisation, theories of entanglement and communal acts present within Helen Frosi's praxis. The original aims have been further explored, challenged and diversified via three (CHASE CDF funded) year-long programmes of presentations, screenings, listening sessions, specialist workshops, concerts and soundwalks curated by the four co-researchers.

By critiquing accepted norms in audio technology, sound culture and Western epistemologies and questioning the extent of human perception, relations in and through the vibratory world (and whether hearing and listening is ever an individual act), the network aims to foster an expanded conception of aurality, developing within its associates direct experience of the many modes of knowing that sound affords. In working through such research questions, we aim to collectively create (expanded) sonic research methodologies and counter structures to audio and cultural standardisation.

AuralPluralities is a gathering space dedicated to support and facilitate academics, researchers and students - across the CHASE network, as well as associated scholars and practitioners (e.g. invited speakers/presenters and workshop leaders.) and independent scholars - throughout their research careers, via a multitudinous series of activities. These include in-person networking events, specialist workshops/training sessions, online presentations and discussions, and field trips. In future years, we hope to establish concerts, collaborative projects, exhibition opportunities, publications, plenaries and colloquia.

Information and ,mailing list: [auralpluralities@protonmail.com](mailto:auralpluralities@protonmail.com)

The **AuralPluralities Network** is a collaboration between:

[John Drever](#) (Goldsmith, University of London).

[Alice Eldridge](#) (University of Sussex).

[Helen Frosi](#) (Independent/SoundFjord).

[Aki Pasoulas](#) (University of Kent).

We are grateful to:

Those facilitating, leading, and chairing sessions.

University of Sussex Digital Humanities Lab, and

The School of Media Arts and Humanities.

Goldsmiths, University of London, Department of Music, and

Sound Practice Research (SPR) Research Group.

University of Kent, School of Arts (Music and Audio Technology).

SoundFjord.

Photo credit: A Company of Enthusiasts.

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