

[space]

Lina Lapelytė *Here Hear Hare Hair*

Multichannel sound installation
81 speakers, graphite walls, dimensions variable

EXHIBITION

28 May — 30 September 2022

Wednesday 11am—5pm

Saturday 11am—3pm

and by appointment

FREE CREATIVE WORKSHOP

Sat 18 June, 11am – 3pm

SPACE Ilford

Turn your drawings into music

Join artist Kristina Pulejkova for a drop-in workshop exploring animal calls and making sounds from your own drawings.

For upcoming events please ask a member of staff or check the website www.spacestudios.org.uk



"We walked in Ilford with people who were local and not so local. We tried to listen and to see. We attempted to create songs together. Later, we gathered to impersonate animals and different living beings. The soundscape of an imagined nature." – Lina Lapelytė

Moving Towards Mimicry

Reader, read the title of Lina Lapelytė's exhibition out loud – speak it:

Here Hear Hare Hair.

Reader, this time less self-conscious, raise your voice – call it:

Hear Here Hair Hare.

Commit it to memory. Turn away from the page and proclaim it:

Here Hare Hair Hear.

These words that mean different things but which have similar pronunciations are homophones. When vocalised, the different meanings, sequenced into a narrative – however compressed or abstract – give way to the sameness of sounds. Words on the page, with their singular and combined cognitive associations, become sensuous auditory images. Between things, names and sounds, this is an issue of identity and imitation.

Notice how their sound is different with each utterance – spoken, called or proclaimed. Notice how the words in sequence modulate one another. The shift of the vowel opening and closing. Repeat the sequence and the words become strange and stranger still, until vocalising feels little more than a physical gesture. What if so-called standard English – or indeed Estuary English – is not your 'tongue'?

The sameness of homophones alerts us to the potential ambiguity of communication – to mishearing and misunderstanding that is part of language and speech. Yet, the closer we attend to homophones the more improbable this sameness of pronunciation seems. We cannot consider the spoken without considering the speaker. The speaker without the body. The body without a position. Speaking supposes a language and a voice. Listening opens onto relation and environment.

Reader, how many animals were you able to name in the multi-species composition of Lapelyté's sound installation *Here Hear Hare Hair*? Did you get the donkey's bray? Was that a peewit? The cuckoo belongs to the first cuckoo of spring. The 'bow-wow' of a dog, or maybe a fox? Was that a pussy cat's 'purr' (or is it a dove's 'coo')? Singular sounds from discrete loudspeakers layer into a cacophonous polyrhythmic plurality of voices.

To write the animals' voices above I use onomatopoeia – words with phonetic forms that are perceived as imitating the sound of what it denotes. In field guides naturalists often use phonetics to transcribe birdsong. These transcriptions fascinate artists like Catherine Clover who valorises not the inadequacy of human language to capture sounds but what is, through the process of transcription, *found* in translation.¹

Cuckoo is the name of a bird and also a transcription of its call. Things, sounds and names align. Written, cats 'purr' and doves 'coo', but vocalised together, part of a larger composition in the space of installation, identities merge. And yet why is it that vocal imitations of a sound often convey a thing altogether more accurately than a verbal description?² Some distinguish between the 'tame' verbal imitations of written words and the 'wild' vocalised imitations of things.³ Poets and composers,

1 Catherine Clover, 'Listening in the City', *Antennae*, Issue 27, Winter 2013, p.23. Another great work that employs a choir and the transformation of sound technology to attribute birdsong to humans is Marcus Coates' *Dawn Chorus* (2007). Birdsong is explored in the Irish artist Suzanne Walsh's recent performance *BirdBecomeBird* (2019), commissioned as part of the 'Post-Opera' exhibition at TENT, Rotterdam curated by Kris Dittel.

2 Composer David Jaffe switches this, beginning with sounds of 'impossible animals' that invite the listener to imagine: <https://www.davidjaffe.com/music/impossible-animals>.

3 See Richard Rhodes, 'Aural Images' in Hinton L, Nichols J, Ohala J, editors. *Sound Symbolism*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p276–291.



from Henri Chopin to Meredith Monk, have celebrated the affecting exactitude of the voice, even when no discernible human language is uttered. While birdsong might be the most familiar form of animal song, even ‘voices’ of machinery can be powerfully evoked by the voice – see, for example Mikhail Karikis and Uriel Orlow’s video *Sounds from Beneath* (2011–12) in which a choir of ex-miners sing the sounds of subterranean machinery at the mine head.

In Lapelytė’s installation *Here Hear Hare Hair* we do not see the sources of sounds. While non-human animal vocalisation is emitted by the body and is experienced by the human animal body, its identity is not ontologically linked to a specific species’ body. Sound, as a sonic sensibility and concept, writes Salomé Voegelin, ‘pre-empts and cancels’ Western society’s emphasis on the visual and apprehension of bodies:

by remaining unseen and offering the real another truth: not that of ‘the “right” links in the totality of the intelligible order’, what is in and what is out of its visual regime, but of the in-between of listening not to ‘this’ or ‘that’ but to what they do together. It produces the truth of the mobile and inaudible simultaneity of interbeing that cannot be observed from a distance but has to be generated in the encounter... Sound performs this inarticulate encounter from which the thing’s own language might be heard.⁴

Reader, did you detect the species of these voices in the composition?

The composition consists of voices of human animals who participated in workshops throughout the past months to walk, listen, improvise and create songs with Lapelytė. ‘Later,’ Lapelytė explains, ‘we gathered to impersonate animals and different living beings.’ It was commissioned as part of a broader project

⁴ Salomé Voegelin, *The Political Possibility of Sound*, Bloomsbury, 2018, p.158. This dis-location of sound is what gives it a propensity to haunt us, but it is also why, perhaps, following the artist Sergei Tcherepnin, sound is queer: <https://rhizome.org/editorial/2014/sep/17/queer-listening-interview-sergei-tcherepnin/>.

titled ‘Who Cares?’, a platform consisting of five art organisations to ‘share experiences, enabling meaningful interactions and collective imagination, focusing on care of each other and our neighbours’.⁵

Attention can be a form of care. The profound attention to the sonic environment that the composer Pauline Oliveros calls ‘deep listening’ is a therapeutic practice to promote care and healing. Listening to the environment creates a connection to the world and others – directing our attention to the interconnectedness of living systems.⁶ Bernie Krause, noting a tendency among sound recordists to single out voices abstracted from habitats, directed acoustic ecology towards noticing complex intra-species soundscapes. Listening – albeit a specialist kind of listening – to sounds in context could help to determine the health of marine and terrestrial habitats.

Reader, what three sounds surround you right now? What words would you use to write them down? Are you able to imitate them?

Lapelytė is a collaborator. Her participatory musical performances, sound installations and video works often employ other professional and non-professional performers. Lapelytė sometimes performs solo or with an ensemble, as in *Candy Shop* (2013) or invites others, such as the four women harp players in *Ladies* (2016). The installation *Sun and Sea (Marina)*, at the Lithuanian Pavilion for the 2019 Venice Biennale, presented an opera on a beach consisting of a seaside soundscape and chorric songs of everyday occurrences. Sounds of the supermarket are a vehicle for the voices of cashiers in Lapelytė’s collaborative opera *Have a good day!* (2013) made with Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė and Vaiva Grainytė. Mimicry and recomposition of pop songs is a feature of the early work *Candy Shop* and the live performance *Yes, Really!* (2017).

⁵ Who Cares?, led by Centro Huarte, Navarra, Spain is part of the European Cooperation Projects 2020: <https://who-cares.eu/about>.

⁶ Caterina De Re, ‘Deep Listening Retreat’ in Pauline Oliveros, *Deep Listening: A Composer’s Sound Practice*, iuniverse, 2005, p.73.

In what ways, reader, can the performers in *Here Hear Hare Hair* be said to collaborate with the animals they imitate?

Human animal and non-human animal imitation has a long and inglorious history in Europe. Devices for auditory mimicry – duck calls, antler rattles and fox flutes – have been used for millennia to lure and trap.⁷ Despite the celebrated primacy of birdsong, songbirds have been trained to perform in settings from the parlor to the stage.⁸ It's impossible to disentangle the anthropogenic development of birdsong. Lapelytē's installation makes no pretence to presenting a song. Song domesticates. Anyway, in what sense does a donkey sing?

Voices heard and performed in the collective space of the workshop are recorded singularly and recomposed in *Here Hear Hare Hair*. The plural-singular of a collective voicing is made through the mediation of sound reproduction encountered in a physical space.⁹ If the soundscape in the work is fictioned then it serves a greater purpose as emblematic of a careful way of being human in the world with other species.

Voice is closely associated with the individual human subject. The basis for artist and philosopher Eva Meijer's book *When Animals Speak: Towards an Interspecies Democracy* is that despite animal rights theorists insistence, since the 1970s, on the sentience of non-human animals, it is only recently that questions about non-human animal political participation, interspecies communication and political voice have received wider attention.

7 See Angus Carlyle and Sam Forsythe, *Phantom Lure / Every Day Catastrophes*, Urbanomic K-Pulp Switch, 2022.

8 Olga Petri and Philip Howell, From the Dawn Chorus to the Canary Choir: Notes on the Unnatural History of Birdsong, *Humanimalia* 11, 2, Spring, 2020.

9 See Steven Connor, 'Choralities', a lecture given at 'Voices and Noises', Audiovisualities Lab of the Franklin Humanities Institute, Duke University, 27 March 2015: <http://stevenconnor.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/choralities.pdf>.



As Meijer writes:

Investigating how language and concepts tied to human language use such as grammar, which are thought to be solely human, can also apply to the interactions and expressions of other animals, and can, in a similar way, bring to light elements in species-specific as well as interspecies interactions that have been obscured by denying language to other animals. It offers us a new framework for thinking about them, and presents us with new tools for thinking about and building relationships, which can enable us to gain a richer understanding of the concept used.¹⁰

Language plays an important role in creating better relations with other non-human animals. To understand them better is the basis for building new relations with them, despite the demonstrable history of our failed attempt to coexist. Lapelyte's installation *Hear Here Hare Hair*, produced with human animal collaborators and many other non-human animal collaborators, invites us, reader, to develop our listening attention to sounds around us in order to find our place in the singular-plural of the chorus.

Jonathan P Watts

Lina Lapelytė's (b.1984, works in Vilnius and London) performance-based practice is rooted in music and flirts with pop culture, gender stereotypes and nostalgia. Her work engages trained and untrained performers often in an act of singing which takes the form of a collective and affective event, questioning vulnerability and silence.

Her previous works have been exhibited at 13th Kaunas Biennale; Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussels; Tai Kwun, HK; Riga Biennial – RIBOCA2; and 58th Venice Biennale, amongst others.

For her commission at SPACE, Lapelytė worked with members of the Ilford community and participants across London. Her commission is part of the broader engagement by SPACE for the Borough of Redbridge and across London.

Jonathan P Watts is a writer based in Norwich, where he helps run the contemporary art gallery Josey (www.josey.co). He produces music and DJs as helterhelter.

Commissioned and curated by Premlata Mistry (SPACE)

Architecture by Mantas Petraitis (Implant Architecture)

Sound recording: Ashley O'Garro (Riddim Life), Miguel de Faria (Riddim Life)

Sound editing: Sarah Birchall, Romuald Chaloin Galiauskas, Lina Lapelytė

Production assistance: Jo Chalmers, Hiu Tung Lau, Daniel Picone, Kayden Anselm, Barbara Lehtna, Bryan Reedy.

Installation build: Pjeter Lleshi, Jimi Jaku, Albert Ndoj

Voices by Andrew Brown, Ann-Marie LeQuesne, Caroline Wendling, Daniel Picone, Forhad Rahman, Jane Perrott, Krishen Kanadia, Lieve Carchon, Robert Cervera, Susannah Modeste.

Workshop participants: Ajay Pamneja, Alisa Oleva, Andrew Brown, Andrew Stuck, Ann-Marie LeQuesne, Bobby King, Caroline Wendling, Christopher Wyatt, Claire Medder, Daniel Picone, David King, Debbie Kent, Fang-Jui Chang, Forhad Rahman, Jackie Flynn, Jane Perrott, Janet Currier, Jo Longhurst, Jon Pushkin, Kathy Taylor, Kéani Star Modeste, Krishen Kanadia, Lieve Carchon, Louis Vele, Lydia Julien, Melly Sutton, Nisha Plaha Jabbal, Prisca Umbo, Rachel Brown, Rita Vora, Robert Cervera, Rosamond Martin, Sadna Puholy, Sarah Duffy, Shaina Bauman, Susannah Modeste, Valentina Orrù and Wambui Koigi.

Created as part of Who Cares?, a platform to share experiences, enabling meaningful interactions and collective imagination, focusing on care of each other and our neighbours.

Supported by Creative Europe, London Borough of Redbridge, Mayor of London.

With thanks to Lithuanian Culture Institute, Riddim Life, Biennale Gherdëina, Baltic Art Center and Neringa Forest Architecture.

10 Eva Meijer, *When Animals Speak: Towards an Interspecies Democracy*, New York: New York University Press, 2019, pp.34–35.



SPACE Ilford
10 Oakfield Road, Ilford IG1 1ZJ
020 8525 4330
spacestudios.org.uk
mail@spacestudios.org.uk
[@space_studios_london](https://www.instagram.com/@space_studios_london)