

SOUND SCULPTURE PROJECT BY VICKI CALLAHAN

Rhythm Science Sound Sculpture *The project (mp3 file) and final reflection should be posted on your wiki page with proper citations (listed under **Works Cited**)*

We begin this unit on sound with a listening exercise as follows:

Listen to the following audio clip. It is the opening scene to the film, *The Conversation*, with a rather extraordinary soundscape by Walter Murch. Please listen to the clip while using a modified variant of Michel Chion's "acousmatic and reduced listening" exercise as your guide. In other words, detach the sound from the usual cues of social context and visual referents. What do you hear? Please try to identify audio elements as well as you can with attention to rhythm, tone, pitch, and when possible source (in other words, what do you think certain sounds are). Try to give as much detail to the texture and emotion of the sonic elements and overall soundscape you experience.

Now, the project:

DJ Spooky notes that "rhythm science begins as a forensic investigation of sound as a vector of coded language" or rather an exploration of ideas and identities along a coherent line and direction, but with open possibilities. In this assignment, you will develop an archive of sound samples, found and as desired/needed, created. From these materials you will create a remixed "sound sculpture" that offers a new narrative (or understanding) regarding some known entity. You can use a well-known song with text (spoken word, lyrics) but you should use other sonic materials to transform the idea or identity behind the song into a "parallel soundscape" which reveals another meaning. You might find it helpful to remember Paul Miller's notion that the "best DJs are griots" or storytellers, so keep in mind the idea and narrative through line that shapes your sculpture. Finally, your guiding motto should be DJ Spooky/Miller's commentary, *"It's the 21st century. Things should be really wild. Anything else is boring."*

Sound: Your sound sculpture should be built from an archive that includes *at least 5* separate tracks of:

- 1) speech/voice (spoken word, lyric, or musical voice), you may record your own or use found material
- 2) at least one sound effect or ambient sound
- 3) two separate musical/instrumental tracks

4) one other track however you define

The length of your sound project is approximately 2 minutes: remember in that time you want to be able to relay an idea, story line so use wisely.

Export or convert your file to MP3 file and upload or embed your sound sculpture in your individual wiki page

Words: Beyond any words used in your sound sculpture, you will also write a final reflection on your work. The final reflection will be 500 words discussing your work process, strategies employed, and what particular concept or concepts influenced your project and final reflection. Your final reflection will include APA citation (links/tips on wiki). You will post your reflection and citation materials with your sound sculpture on your student page of the class wiki. List your citations as: Works Cited.

Tools: This project can be done using assorted sound editing tools, from Audacity to Garageband (or other editing programs you may know).

Citation: It is incumbent upon us as scholars to cite our sources in order to establish our claim of Fair Use. Your sources will be cited in the written portion and should use the APA 6th edition standard.

Grading: This project will be graded on a 100 point scale. *You earn 60 points by completing the basic requirements of the assignment (the sound sculpture and reflection) and the other 40 points are split by the following 4 areas:*

1. **Concept:** How well does your sound sculpture relate an idea and re-narrativize a well-known "script"?
2. **Technique:** Basic technical proficiency with tools employed such as sound editing program (Audacity, Garageband, etc).
3. **Complexity:** Complexity can occur at sonic level (variety and mixing of tracks) and/or the level of idea.
4. **Textual explanation/reflection and citation** of sources. The final reflection will be 500 words discussing your work process, strategies employed, and what particular concept or concepts influenced your project and final reflection. You make discuss technique, but be sure you talk about the bigger ideas behind your project. You may find it useful to refer directly to the readings. Be sure you spell-check and have correct format for citations.