

The Forgotten 1979 MoMA Sound Art Exhibition

ABSTRACT Over the past 40 years “sound art” has been hailed as a new artistic category in numerous writings, yet one of its first significant exhibitions is mentioned only in passing, if at all. The first instance of the hybrid term *sound art* used as the title of an exhibition at a major museum was *Sound Art* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), shown from 25 June to 5 August 1979. Although this was not marketed as a feminist exhibition, curator Barbara London selected three women to exemplify the new form. Maggi Payne created multi-speaker works that utilized space in a sculptural fashion; Connie Beckley combined language and sounding sculptural objects, showing sound in both a conceptual and physical manifestation; and Julia Heyward’s work used aspects of feminist performance art including music, narrative, and the voice in order to buck abstract aesthetics of the time. This paper uses archival research, interviews, and analysis of work presented to reconstruct the exhibition and describe the obstacles both the artists and the curator encountered. The paper further provides context in the lives of the artists and the curator as well as the surrounding artistic scene, and ultimately exposes the discriminatory reasons this important exhibition has been marginalized in the current discourse. **KEYWORDS** MoMA Sound Art exhibition 1979, Barbara London, Connie Beckley, Maggi Payne, Julia Heyward

When did the “sound art” movement start? Numerous theorists and historians have addressed this question through the years, creating histories and definitions, or carefully avoiding both while at the same time positing various examples of the form. But if we simply look at the use of the term itself (as used to define a type of artwork of the 20th century), it was not, as several writers have stated, invented by Canadian Dan Landers in the 1980s, nor did it begin with William Hellerman’s *Sound/Art* exhibition at New York’s Sculpture Center in 1983, as has been stated on Wikipedia for a few years.^{1,2} In reference to the Landers claim, Christof Migone has said “naming does not necessarily coincide with the incipience of the activity being named.”³ Maybe not always, but in the case of “sound art,” the timeline of the name corresponds to the solidification of this broad category, as long as you find the real beginning.

According to common lore the term *sound art* began to be used loosely in the avant-garde scene in the 1970s to describe sound-based work that wasn’t typical music. At that time, the term *sound art* was used interchangeably with other terms such as *sonic art*, *audio art*, *sound poetry*, *sound sculpture*, and *experimental music* (to name a few).⁴

In 1974, Something Else Press, which had been publishing texts and artworks by Fluxus-related artists throughout the 1960s, issued one of their final editions called *Something Else Yearbook 1974*. It contains a vast number of texts and artworks by numerous artists from various realms of experimental arts ranging from obscure to more

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well-known names (either then or later), such as Charles Bukowski, William Burroughs, John Giorno, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, and Wolf Vostell. It includes sound poet Bernhard Heidsieck's *THE WEEK (passe-partout) No. 5* (1971) (created from a transcription of short tape recordings of people reading the time on the radio), Fluxus artist Eric Andersen's *SINE NOMINE* (1961/63) audience participation work that incorporates musical terms and a metronome, and the text scores of groundbreaking works *I am sitting in a room* (1969) by Alvin Lucier and *Sonic Meditations* (1971) by Pauline Oliveros. The front cover of the book gives a list of terms describing the contents, such as "poetry," "prose," and "notations" in addition to more fanciful ideas including "things seen," "unspeakables," and "laughter." At the very top of the list a new category is described in one of the earliest published instances of the term: "sound art."^{5,6}

One of the first artists who is documented as having used the term *sound art* to describe his genre was Max Neuhaus, most well known for his 1977 piece *Times Square* in which a sound drones and resonates 24/7 underneath a grate in Times Square.⁷ In a 1979 draft document in the Neuhaus archives at Columbia University he uses the term *sound art* as an umbrella term under which he uses *sound installation* as a subcategory.⁸ In an interview by Lynne Cooke in 1977 concerning his piece *Times Square*, Neuhaus categorizes himself as a sound artist when he states, "I am an artist and I deal with sound. Traditionally sound artists have been called composers, but that has a tremendous amount of restrictions around it, not only in the kinds of sound materials, but (also in) the sequence of sounds. It's a very limited term because music is really very much involved with its past."⁹ But evidence of his use of the term goes back even earlier. In a 9 December 1973 interview with reporter Ernest Leogrande in the *New York Sunday News* (later to become absorbed by the *New York Daily News*) in reference to Neuhaus's piece *Walk Through*, Leogrande says Neuhaus is using the term *sound sculpture* and refers to him saying he has other "sound-art sitting in one place" when he talks about *Drive-In Music*. Leogrande also calls Neuhaus a "sound artist" in the captions underneath photos of Neuhaus installing *Walk Through*. It is highly unlikely that Ernest Leogrande, a generic arts reporter covering everything from movies to disco clubs for a tabloid paper, would have been so enlightened to have been familiar with esoteric terms used in avant-garde circles such as *sound sculpture* or *sound art*; instead it seems obvious Leogrande was transcribing terms used by Neuhaus.¹⁰ By 2000 Neuhaus had disavowed the term *sound art*, but throughout the 1970s he seemed quite comfortable with it.¹¹

The first instance of the hybrid term *sound art* used as the title of an exhibition at a major museum was 1979's *Sound Art* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA). The young curator, Barbara London (b. 1946), made a point of providing a concise definition of the new form in the press release for the exhibition:

"Sound art" pieces are more closely allied to art than to music, and are usually presented in the museum, gallery, or alternative space.¹²

Her definition thus narrows the scope of what can be called "sound art" based on the situation of the work both physically and categorically.

In early 1970s London was curator in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books at MoMA, and she “became absorbed in how artists stretched and manipulated time.”¹³ She was an advocate of video art at the museum, leading to its first acquisition of artists’ videos in 1975.¹⁴ Notably, the artists she cites as early influences such as Nam June Paik and Steina Vasulka saw video art as an outgrowth and holistic form of music rather than coming from film.¹⁵ In March 1978, after she had become a curator in the Department of Film, London started a series of talks that featured even more video artists with connections to the reexamination of sound in a visual arts context, including Vito Acconci, Bill Viola, and Robert Ashley.¹⁶

In late 1978, London curated an exhibition of Laurie Anderson’s *Handphone Table* (1978) installation.¹⁷ In this piece, the visitor sits at a simple wooden table with their elbows on the table to support their head (as one would do when tired). A transducer is vibrating the table with sound, and when the elbows are rested on the table the sound vibrates the human arm bones and travels to the visitor’s ears.¹⁸ London notes in her essay “From Video to Intermedia: A Personal History” that in the 1970s she saw the new affordability of technology as a vehicle that allowed women to circumvent the system. She saw this breakdown of traditional art practice (including reception and circulation) as an opportunity for the rise of female artists.¹⁹ Thus she saw sound in a gallery context, such as with Anderson’s *Handphone Table*, as expanding the minds of audiences while also challenging the limits of institutions.²⁰ In this context she curated her *Sound Art* exhibition in August and September of 1979.²¹

The exhibition was held in a small gallery (the Auditorium Gallery, thus named because it was adjacent to the auditorium) in the basement of MoMA.^{22,23} As it would not work to show three sound works concurrently, each piece was featured for two weeks of the six-week run of the exhibition.²⁴ While the exhibition was never promoted as featuring “women artists,” London chose only women artists for the show. Considering that for decades it had been common to exhibit only male artists, one could see this curatorial decision as a feminist statement in itself. The three artists chosen to be featured were Maggi Payne, Connie Beckley, and Julia Heyward. All were under 35 years old at the time.²⁵ Following is some background of each artist up to the point of the 1979 exhibition, and descriptions of the works they presented.

MAGGI PAYNE

As an adolescent, Maggi Payne (b. 1945) was a precocious flautist with an interest in sound technology, inspired by an expensive Webcor reel-to-reel tape recorder purchased for her when she was 11 by her technology hobbyist father.^{26,27} As a college undergraduate in music at Northwestern University, her talent as a flautist landed her session gigs at professional recording studios in nearby Chicago. After the recording sessions the audio engineers generously answered her many questions concerning the equipment.^{28,29} She attended graduate school at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she began her formal studies of electronic music. After this she pursued a second master’s in the newly established Electronic Music and Recording Media program at Mills College in Oakland, California.³⁰

Payne had been fascinated with sound and space since growing up in the High Plains of Texas.³¹ She had always felt limited by mono and stereo recordings and thought they lacked “the richness of the acoustical complexity that the natural world presents.”³² She became aware of spatial composition and multispeaker work while an undergraduate at Northwestern University.³³ Spatialized electronic music was still a relatively new form at the time, the most well-known academic pieces up to that point being Karlheinz Stockhausen’s quadraphonic version of *Kontakte* from 1958 and Edgard Varese’s 400-speaker *Poeme Electronique* from the 1959 World’s Fair.

Soon after Payne arrived at Mills College in 1970, the electronic music studio was updated to feature a four-channel tape machine and four speakers, which allowed her to begin working with spatialized sound. By 1973 she premiered her first quadraphonic compositions at Mills.³⁴ After graduation she remained at Mills as their studio engineer for several years,³⁵ and it was during this period that she was invited to participate in the MoMA *Sound Art* exhibition, via her teacher and colleague Robert Ashley’s associations with Barbara London at MoMA.³⁶ Maggi Payne proposed two quadraphonic works to be presented at MoMA, an 8-minute piece called *Lunar Dusk* (1979) and a nearly 13-minute piece called *Lunar Earthrise* (1978). They were created and presented in concert at Mills College prior to London’s request, thus not specifically created for MoMA.^{37,38}

Payne used Moog and Aries synthesizers for the source material, which allowed careful control of every nuance of the sound. She carefully recorded one track at a time (with the tracks later translated to channel/speaker), eventually building up as many as 20 tracks in some sections. She utilized pitch matching, pitch bending, and phase shifting between the tracks to enhance the feeling of sound movement. She employed complex variation in sound spectrum over time to highlight movement of sound through space.³⁹ In reference to her quadraphonic work Payne said (in an interview by composer Emma Lou Deimer):

... many of my ideas are visually oriented. I visualized the sound as coming from, say, a point source below where one is standing and might try to make it swirl out and up into an ever-expanding spiral until it disappears over the listener’s head...⁴⁰

Despite Barbara London’s requesting four speakers for the installation, the museum purchased a Technics cassette deck for the exhibition that could only play stereo recordings.^{41,42} Payne thinks one reason for the change to stereo was because the Technics cassette deck had the ability to automatically rewind the tape upon completion, allowing a “looping” of the recordings (and thus not requiring manual monitoring of the exhibition by staff).⁴³ Luckily, Payne already had made both quadraphonic and stereo versions of the piece when she created it (as quadraphonic setups are unusual), and thus she was able to immediately provide the stereo version.^{44,45}

Both *Lunar Dusk* and *Lunar Earthrise* had a visual component. In concert performances of *Lunar Dusk* Payne presented slides of oscilloscope images that she had created, and for *Lunar Earthrise* she presented abstract slides.⁴⁶ Payne says:



FIGURE 1. Maggi Payne with sound and video equipment, 1981. Photo was taken when Payne was editing her work *Circular Motions* (1981) which was created using Ed Tannenbaum's self-designed and -built digital video processor and his Fairlight CVI (computer video instrument), a further development of her ideas first used in *Lunar Dusk* (1979) and *Lunar Earthrise* (1978). Photo credit: Nick Bertoni (1981).

Using my Minolta SRT 102 camera I took 35mm slides of the Tektronix 502A dual trace oscilloscope that displayed images that I created using the Moog IIP. The images that were displayed were, however, not directly related to the sounds I created for *Lunar Dusk* since the images required very stable audio signals rather than the constantly changing audio signals needed for the sounds. I also shot abstract images for *Lunar Earthrise* using my Minolta SRT 102 35mm camera. I placed different colored gels on the face of the oscilloscope to change the color from its green cast to a variety of different colors.⁴⁷

However, these visual components were not included in the MoMA exhibition. Payne says she never proposed the visual components to Barbara London because London had asked only for audio, and she speculates that the fact that slides would have required



FIGURE 2. Connie Beckley, *Balancing Scale* (1978), exhibited at PSI, Brooklyn, NY, February 1978. Copyright Connie Beckley, 1978.

additional oversight may have deterred her from mentioning them.⁴⁸ It is worth noting that these works did indeed have a secondary visual component that could have supported the sound material, literally a visual image of the sound itself.

CONNIE BECKLEY

Connie Beckley's (b. 1951) work also had an interest in spatialization of sound, but it was more related to physical materials. Beckley had equal interest in both music and art from a young age.⁴⁹ She received a bachelor of science in music education with a major in voice from West Chester University in Pennsylvania in 1973.⁵⁰ She moved to New York City later that same year.⁵¹ Her older brother, conceptual artist Bill Beckley, had come to New York City three years earlier and was one of the founding artists (along with Gordon Matta-Clark, Dennis Oppenheim, and others) of SoHo's 112 Greene Street.⁵² Beckley says at the time she was somewhat influenced by this scene but more significantly by the work of the experimental painter Lucio Pozzi. She was a singer in the Philip Glass Ensemble, and she appeared in the 1976 production of Glass and Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach*, which she says had the biggest impact on her artistically.⁵³

By the late seventies Beckley was gaining notoriety for her own work, but writers and reviewers struggled to categorize it. She presented sound supported by visual media in a gallery context, sometimes as installation, other times as performance that examined sonic concepts, and often with the two in tandem. By June of 1979, in a *New York*

Times review of her sound installation *The Pendulum* shown jointly with her performance *Walking Through*, John Rockwell called her “one of our finest sound artists.”⁵⁴

Her sound installation works of that period were concerned with spatialization of sound and other acoustics concepts as part of an expression of visual space.^{55,56} Beckley’s sound installation *Triad Triangle*, presented at PSI in 1977, was a two-channel work created with sound and light, utilizing the shadows of the speakers themselves as part of the work, with different material coming out of the two speakers set widely apart.^{57,58} In her work *Balancing Scale*, shown at PSI in 1978, she hung two electric organs from the ceiling with G major and G minor chords on the respective organs permanently depressed, hooking them up to a circuit breaker that switched every 5 seconds so only one would play at a time, constantly modulating from major to minor and at the same time shifting sound location.⁵⁹ *The Note*, the piece she presented at London’s *Sound Art* exhibition, was part of that same series of works.⁶⁰ *The Note* was the only one of the three pieces presented at the *Sound Art* exhibition that had a visual component.⁶¹

On a plinth on one side of a dimly lit room, a large translucent glass bottle with a wide body and small opening was turned on its side. An oblong audio driver—that is, a speaker without its housing—was inside the bottle. The driver was far larger than the opening of the bottle, so it’s mysterious how it could have been placed inside. A wire attached to the driver came out of the opening of the bottle to attach to the playback device, which was discreetly hidden. There was sand both inside the bottle beneath the driver and covering the top of the plinth underneath the bottle.⁶²

A single conventional speaker was mounted on the other side of the room. There were two different tracks of sound material, panned hard right and hard left. First one would hear a woman reading a letter in the room speaker, while the driver inside the bottle played a recording of the song “Ebb Tide.” To hear “Ebb Tide” in this circumstance one must put one’s ear to the opening of the bottle. When the woman finishes reading the letter, the song, now at its lyrical climax, slowly transitions over to only the wall-mounted speaker to complete the song. In the meantime, the woman reads the same letter again, but now only projected through the driver inside the bottle. When the song finishes, one only hears the very quiet muffled sound of the woman reading the letter inside the bottle. When she completes the letter there is a short pause, and then the process begins again, with the woman reading in the wall-mounted speaker and the music in the bottle. This continues through six cycles, each with a different letter and a different version of the song “Ebb Tide” garnered from various vocal and instrumental releases of the tune from the 1950s and ’60s.^{63,64} Music is a material in this artwork rather than the artwork itself, a notable characteristic of works designated as “sound art” even to this day.

All the letters are read by the same impassive monotone female voice; however, the nature of the text doesn’t indicate the gender of either the reader or the supposed recipient. Though it is evident the letter writer has had some previous encounter with the person being written to, the letters all indicate that whomever is being written to is unresponsive. In the sequence they appear on the recording, as the letter writer continues to receive no response, the letters get more and more desperate, beginning to border on the obsessively frightening in the fifth letter when the letter writer says:



FIGURE 3. Connie Beckley, *The Note* (1979) (side view), Museum of Modern Art *Sound Art* exhibition, July/August 1979. Photo credit: Shigeo Anzai (1979).



FIGURE 4. Connie Beckley, *The Note* (1979) (front view), Museum of Modern Art *Sound Art* exhibition, July/August 1979. Photo credit: Shigeo Anzai (1979).

Sometimes, I must admit, I have doubts that you are receiving my letters and then I become anguished, for how could you know how much you still mean to me? Perhaps you are even wondering why you aren't hearing from me and you doubt about my love for you. Oh that is the most painful thought of all, for I would rather destroy myself

than bring an ounce of hurt to you. I suppose that is why I must insist to myself that it will only be a matter of days or perhaps hours until I will receive word from you that you love me, that you're on your way home, and that I should prepare to be together with you for a long time.⁶⁵

The letter is read twice, once projected from the wall speaker and once played inside the bottle.⁶⁶ In between the duplicate readings, the song "Ebb Tide" climaxes out of the wall speaker into the room with the lovers connecting and the lyrics:

At last we're face to face
And as we kiss through an embrace
I can tell, I can feel
You are love, you are real.⁶⁷

In the final letter, the letter writer speculates about giving up hope that the recipient will respond, but convinces her- or himself to go on hoping.⁶⁸ At that point the tape would rewind and the piece would begin again.⁶⁹

Connie Beckley explains the symbolism in her installation notes to Barbara London for the piece. The speaker in the bottle represents a message in a bottle. The message is being sent, but not received. Also, a message in a bottle is thrown into the sea and taken out with the tide, which connects to the song "Ebb Tide" as well as the sand on the plinth. The oblong driver is ship-like, resembling a ship in a bottle.⁷⁰

Sound is the cornerstone of this work, both physically and conceptually, with the visual image merely providing a supporting role. The naked driver literally exposes the disembodied sound, which parallels many aspects of the text, including that the players are literally disembodied in that we only hear the letters read, presumably by a second party, and we have no response from the other. We don't even know the gender of the players.

JULIA HEYWARD

Sound becomes physical in the work of Julia Heyward (b. 1949).⁷¹ She was born in North Carolina, the child of a Protestant minister.^{72,73} She graduated with a BFA in painting from Washington University in St. Louis in 1972. The following year she moved to New York City to attend the Whitney Independent Study Program and became involved in the blossoming downtown performance art scene.⁷⁴ Simultaneous with her performance career in New York City she was pursuing an MFA in electronic arts at Rennselaer Polytechnic, a degree she finished in 1979, the same year as the *Sound Art* exhibition.⁷⁵

Heyward's performance work from the seventies migrates freely between spoken word, music, and theater, later melding this work into video art, almost always revolving around deeper examinations of sound and music. However, her work from this period has a highly mystical and emblematic quality, and so while texts are used, literal meanings are difficult or even impossible to untangle.



FIGURE 5. Julia Heyward, *Franklin Furnace*, April 26, 1977. Jay Sanders describes her use of the drum as follows: “The primary prop was a white “north drum,” a curved plastic marching drum, that, depending on Heyward’s engagement with it, became a periscope for an unseen submarine, male and/or female genitals, or simply a percussion instrument.”⁷⁶ Photo credit: From a performance by Julia Heyward and Paula Longendyke, (*Small Eyes, Frogman Story*) at Franklin Furnace on April 26, 1977. Photo by Franklin Furnace; courtesy of Franklin Furnace.

It is unclear exactly what Julia Heyward presented at the *Sound Art* exhibition. The program lists a piece called *Organ Grinder*, but audio documentation of the exhibition in the MoMA archives contains four other works.^{77,78} Heyward says she has no recollection of what was exhibited.^{79,80} Barbara London believes *Organ Grinder* was played.⁸¹ A music video of a piece entitled *Organ Grinder* was part of Heyward’s 360 “video album” from 1981 in which she performs a monologue about a car crash, calling it a “human organ grinder,” interspersed with video and audio of a male musician dressed in classic organ grinder attire and playing a barrel organ. But London’s description of *Organ Grinder* in the program for *Sound Art* in 1979 doesn’t mention a barrel organ or the content of the text: “In *Organ Grinder*, Julia Heyward combines a monologue with notes from a toy

music box to create an eerie environment.”⁸² (This author does not hear the sound of a music box in the *Organ Grinder* section of the 360 video.) Nor does London’s description of *Organ Grinder* in the program match any of the material in the MoMA archive. Further confusing matters, Heyward’s titles were often repurposed in various iterations of a work, or even applied later to seemingly disparate material. In the program for the exhibition, the length of *Organ Grinder* is listed at 12 minutes, which interestingly is the same length of the combined four pieces in the MoMA archive. There exists the possibility that Heyward could have referred to the four pieces as *Organ Grinder* in that context, although they still don’t match the description in the program and press release.^{83,84}

What is absolutely clear is that the recording was played into the empty gallery room at MoMA via stereo speakers with no visual material.⁸⁵

The first recording on the MoMA documentation is extracted from a live event during which Heyward performed her piece *Keep Moving Buddy*, in which she uses a harmonizer to process her voice during an unaccompanied monologue.^{86,87,88} (A harmonizer is a type of pitch shifter that combines the “shifted” pitch with the original pitch. It was intended to create harmonies, but any interval could be chosen, and intervals could be varied and manipulated in real time.)

In *Keep Moving Buddy* Heyward uses the harmonizer to give her voice a high-pitched, childlike quality; she tells a story about an imaginary future where there are no animals, and various groups ally themselves with extinct animal species and fight each other. In addition to her sound processing, references to sound include vocally elaborating on homonyms with the words *coup* (as in seizure of government power) and *coo* (as in the sound of a dove), demonstrating a type of futuristic birdcall and talking about a rabbit-affiliated group that possesses a skill she mysteriously calls “aggressive hearing.”⁸⁹

Keep Moving Buddy is approximately six minutes long. This is followed by three other pieces that segue into each other, in which Heyward both speaks and sings, accompanied by percussion and instruments. These pieces also involve some extended vocalizing and onomatopoeia. These last three pieces altogether comprise another six minutes of material.⁹⁰

In the program for the *Sound Art* exhibition Barbara London states:

While aural and visual elements are combined in videotapes, performances, and installations, the present exhibition is representative of works in which recorded sound is the major component.⁹¹

However, particularly with Julia Heyward’s work, the visual image is typically a necessary means for the examination of sound. Heyward’s *God Talks* from 1976 demonstrates this perfectly, using ventriloquism as both a critique of religious mandates and our own inner voices. With an audio-only recording you would not see Heyward’s frozen face as she throws her voice.^{92,93}

Heyward’s 360 from 1981 (containing the only existing recording of a work of hers entitled *Organ Grinder*) was a 46 minute video featuring ten songs/performance works



FIGURE 6. Video still from the *Keep Moving Buddy* segment of Julia Heyard's 360 (1981) "video album." Used courtesy of Experimental Arts Intermix.

created in collaboration with well-known rock musicians, including Jody Harris of The Contortions and Don Christensen of Bush Tetras. It features Heyward throughout, singing and monologuing, melded with surreal imagery, electronic processing, and word play characteristic of her performance work. The intent was that the "album" would be distributed exclusively on the new video disc format that ostensibly was going to replace audio-only formats. As the medium was a failure, the album was never released.⁹⁴ However, this situation again underlines Heyward's need to have a visual component to her sound-focused creations in order to fully convey her artistic ideas.

In the *Sound Art* exhibition, Barbara London stakes out three main tributaries of the large and murky flow of what was then and has since then been called "sound art": (1) sound sculpture/installation via the visual art tradition, often with music used only as a component in a larger examination of sound, (2) multispeaker sound installation via the academic music tradition, as a way to create an immersive sound experience outside the concert hall, (3) performance presented in a visual arts context with a focus on sound, such as sound poetry, sound performance, and various multimedia forms. While London pops these into a little gallery space in the basement of one of the most influential museums in the world, it's apparent that the theory reaches beyond merely "sound in a gallery." Even the exhibition itself chafed at the limitations, i.e. MoMA's failure to provide four speakers for Maggi Payne's piece and London's choice not to show video or

performance by Julia Heyward, perhaps to avoid its being misunderstood as something other than “sound art” by viewers and/or colleagues.⁹⁵

London says that she was interested in featuring female artists at the exhibition, but both Beckley and Payne say they have no recollection of the exhibition being pitched as “women’s art” or any kind of feminist exhibition, and there is nothing written in the promotional materials framing this as “art by women.”^{96,97,98} London saw a form in which women were finally finding equal representation. There was no need to marginalize the exhibition by advertising it as representative of gender. These were simply three strong young artists spearheading a new direction in art. London states this most eloquently herself when reflecting on the 1979 *Sound Art* exhibition in 2013:

The impetus for the exhibition came from the artists, who, with their countercultural convictions, were committed to working in a medium that went against the grain. Sonic work then had a candor, a do-it-yourself sense of experimentation. It broke new ground, pushing the capabilities of institutions willing to exhibit it and the sensory thresholds and understanding of audiences who were curious to experience it.⁹⁹

In the past 20 years, numerous books have been published about the background and development of the “sound art” movement and in some cases, what is and is not “sound art.” In 2013 Barbara London curated the large *Soundings* exhibition at MoMA, touted as “MoMA’s first major exhibition of sound art” featuring “work by 16 of the most innovative contemporary artists working with sound”.¹⁰⁰ London notes the connection between the exhibition discussed in this paper and the *Soundings* exhibition when she says *Soundings* is “. . . the realization of a longstanding commitment to bring sound works by artists into the Museum. It began in 1979 with *Sound Art*. . . .”¹⁰¹ (Afterward she goes on to briefly describe the *Sound Art* exhibition.) But to date, with the exception of Barbara London’s catalogue, all published books discussing the history and background of “sound art” either don’t mention the *Sound Art* exhibition at MoMA in 1979 or mention it only in passing.¹⁰² Why?

It can’t be because the artists faded to obscurity. All of the artists remained active, exhibiting, performing, and winning awards for decades that followed. Both Beckley and Heyward won Guggenheim Fellowships in the 1990s. Maggi Payne figures prominently in most feminist literature on electronic music. Julia Heyward is a fixture in the history of performance art and was part of the *Rituals of Rented Island* retrospective at the Whitney in 2013. Connie Beckley was featured in most major exhibitions of the form we now call “sound art” from the late 1970s through the 1980s, and she has continued to be exhibited internationally ever since. Through the years all have continued to examine sound concepts in their work in much the same way they did in 1979’s *Sound Art* exhibition.

In the catalog for *Soundings* in 2013, an essay by Anne Hilde Neset ruminates over the historical events leading up to the “sound art” movement and briefly brings up Michael Nyman’s 1975 book *Experimental Music*, a definitive text for discussion of composers such as John Cage, Cornelius Cardew, Christian Wolff, Steve Reich, Alvin Lucier, LaMonte Young, and even Fluxus artists such as George Brecht. Neset notes that the

book does not discuss a single woman composer.¹⁰³ She then states, “Histories of sound art and the theories that are developing from them are helping to spread awareness . . . of pioneering women artists and composers who have been written out of music histories.”¹⁰⁴ But if that is so, where are Connie Beckley, Julia Heyward, and Maggi Payne?

Many books published from the early 2000s to the present about “sound art” in the 1960s and 1970s draw a line from the “experimental music” composers in Nyman’s book, as well as minimalist and conceptualist visual artists, to the new “sound art” form.¹⁰⁵ Robert Morris’s *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961), a plain wooden box with a recording of the box being made playing back inside, has been mentioned in some books as a harbinger of the sound art form. Minimalist composer Alvin Lucier’s *I am sitting in a room* (1969), oft cited as the beginning of the sound art movement, starts with a recording of a seemingly innocuous text describing the technical sound process that is going to take place over time in the recording (made only slightly personal by a vague allusion at the end to Lucier’s speech irregularity). But with continuous repetitions, the speech is slowly abstracted into a mass of undulating tones, obliterating all connections to the personal. The aforementioned Max Neuhaus piece *Times Square* (1977), frequently discussed as a pioneering work of sound art, is simply a drone played underneath a grate in Times Square. Bernhard Leitner, usually credited as a founder of the parallel Klangkunst movement in Germany, throughout the seventies created works in which basic sounds and tones are used only as a method of making vibrations to affect bodily sensations of the participant. For example, Leitner’s *Sound Chair* (1975) uses a low tone panning between two speakers to make a stationary chair transmit the feeling of rocking. One of the few women brought up as representative of sound art in the 1970s, Maryanne Amacher used abstracted electronic sound or environmental sound to define spaces in various innovative ways. An example is her *City-Links #6 (Hearing the Space Day by Day “Live”)* (1974) in which she broadcast the sound of Boston Harbor into MIT’s Hayden Gallery.¹⁰⁶ In all these works, there is detachment from personal narrative, no relationship to emotional material, and an avoidance of anything that could be construed as typical “music.”¹⁰⁷

In 1979’s *Sound Art* exhibition at MoMA, Connie Beckley used the romantic song “Ebb Tide” in her installation, Julia Heyward’s collaborations with Don Christensen used bass and drums (or, if you go with the program and press release version, a music box), and Maggi Payne’s works grew directly out of the academic electronic music tradition. In the case of Beckley and Heyward, they used emotions, personal intimate narratives, and the body, all important aspects of feminist performance in the 1970s. Women had been acceptable as vocal performers in Western art music since the rise of opera at the end of the 1600s. Likewise, women were allowed careers as dancers and actors. Performance, the voice, and music were ways women had subtly overcome their oppressors for centuries, so why are they being marginalized for utilizing it in their “sound art”?¹⁰⁸ Composer and theorist George E. Lewis says that John Cage’s idea that sound is an art form unto itself, detached from all meaning, is a method of stripping away history and context:

In his important 1961 manifesto, *Silence*, composer John Cage, intending to distance our experience of sound from “taste” and “psychology,” described sound—all sound—



FIGURE 7. Julia Heyward (as Duka Delight) (broom, center), Don Christensen (video camera, left) and Jody Harris (guitar, right) in 1978. Photo credit: Julia Heyward.

as having four attributes: loudness, duration, pitch, and timbre. However useful this view of sound might have been at the time as a way of orienting composers towards new vistas, it appears to founder on the shoals of our complex everyday experience. For those who maintain that sounds can exist autonomously, “in themselves,” lacking relationships to culture, history or memory, everyday life routinely provides powerful evidence to the contrary. Certainly in any major U.S. city, even very young children are obliged to learn a particular kind of acoustic ecology, one related to the survival value of parsing sonic utterance. In the words of one parishioner in a church in one of Chicago’s poorest communities, “You could even hear the gunfire while we were singing.”¹⁰⁹

Based on the old minimalist/conceptualist trajectory, Susan Philipsz’s Turner Prize-winning *Lowlands* (2010), widely touted as an example of “sound art,” is *not* sound art because it contains (1) music and (2) emotion. Indeed, Susan Philipsz seemed to understand this when in an interview immediately following receipt of the Turner Prize she said that she does not consider herself a sound artist.¹¹⁰ However, she has appeared in multitudes of “sound art” exhibitions and articles since, still doing the same types of work. While it seems the discourse has opened up for current work, it’s not applied to historical works. I would contend that *Lowlands* reflects elements of each one of the *Sound Art* exhibition pieces from 1979: (1) it exploits spatialized sound for a time-based experience with a start and end, as with Maggi Payne’s piece, (2) it borrows a popular tune with romantic meaning, as with Connie Beckley’s piece, (3) it features the artist singing, and in

its later presentation at Tate Britain in October 2010, it was presented only as playback of a song in a white box space with no visual material save two speakers, as with Julia Heyward's piece. Philipsz made a strong feminist statement concerning the current canon of sound art, even if she may have done so unintentionally. And she won the Turner Prize for it. Sometimes all you need is a gut reaction to hit the nail on the head.

Media theorist Peter Weibel has called Laurie Anderson's early performances "an extension of her sound sculpture and sound spaces into the theatrical."¹¹¹ But one could instead look at her performances as another mode of sound art. Brandon LaBelle has said, "Sound art as a practice harnesses, describes, analyzes, performs and interrogates the condition of sound and the processes by which it operates."¹¹² That perfectly describes Anderson's entire body of work from the 1970s, though she never appears in LaBelle's book. Alan Licht categorizes Laurie Anderson as a "crossover signifier" and Yoko Ono as "the prototypical crossover pop artist," excluding them both from the sound art category.¹¹³ Is it possible that Anderson's and Ono's hijacking of the mainstream system was a type of sound art defined by a situationist intervention with a feminist bent? Women of the 1960s and '70s had nothing to lose by innovating beyond the systems that had historically rejected them.

While there are many historic reasons for John Cage's artistic decisions, as well as those of visual artists creating abstract work in the 20th century, it is harmful to continue to enforce this dusty canon into the 21st century. In the future, scholars studying sound art might consider questions such as: Does the evolution of the genre itself contain exclusionary behavior? How did opportunities denied to women and practitioners of diversity affect the trajectory of the form? How did interpretations of work that seemed "outside the aesthetic" define the histories? Would broadening the definition of the form allow for a more accurate picture of the history? Hopefully, the new information presented in this paper will encourage more research into the wider group of artists from the 1970s that initiated a movement they sometimes called "sound art." ■

NOTES

1. "Alan Licht, *Sound Art: Beyond Music, Between Categories* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007), 11. Rahma Khazam's "A Brief History of Sound Art," *Volume—What You See Is What You Hear* 1 (2010): 6–9 also points to a mid-1980s Lander moment of origin. In Douglas Kahn's "Sound Art, Art, Music" (from 2005 but recently reprinted in *Tacet* 3 (2014) (328–47), he traces his own disinclination with the term *sound art* in connection with his friendship with Dan Lander in the period leading up to his 2001 *Noise Water Meat* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press)" excerpted from Christof Migone, *Sound Art: Sound as a Medium of Art*, edited by Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM/Center for Art and Media; Cambridge, MA; London, UK: The MIT Press, 2019), 689.
2. Sound art, Wikipedia, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sound_art. accessed 1 August 2019.
3. Christof Migone, *Sound Art: Sound as a Medium of Art*, edited by Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM/Center for Art and Media; Cambridge, MA; London, UK: MIT Press, 2019), 688.
4. Email messages to author from writers Jan Herman (12 September 2019) and Peter Frank (25 August 2019), and artists Connie Beckley (19 August 2019), Walter Wright (21 August

- 2019), Charles Morrow (11 June 2019), and William Hellerman (25 March 2013). All lived in New York City in the 1970s and all stated that they recalled the term being used in that decade, but report it applied to various types of work.
5. Peter Frank, *Something Else Press: An Annotated Bibliography* (New Paltz, NY: McPherson, 1983), 62.
 6. Jan Herman, ed., *Something Else Yearbook 1974* (Barton, VT: Something Else Press, 1974).
 7. Max Neuhaus, interviewed by Lynne Cook in 1977, *Max Neuhaus—Times Square*, dir. Rory Logsdail (Firefly Pictures production for Rai Sat Art, 2002), short film.
 8. Max Neuhaus, Essay on the development of his work, Max Neuhaus Archives, Columbia University, box 7, folder 5, 1979.
 9. Max Neuhaus, interviewed by Lynne Cook in 1977, *Max Neuhaus—Times Square*.
 10. Ernest Leogrande, “Walk Through Sounds of Pleasure in City of Noise,” *Sunday News*, New York, 9 December 1973.
 11. Max Neuhaus, “Sound Art?” in *Volume: Bed of Sound* (New York: PSI Contemporary Art Center, July 2000).
 12. Barbara London quoted in Museum of Modern Art, Museum exhibition features works incorporating sound, press release no. 42 for *Sound Art* exhibition 25 June–5 August 1979, MoMA Archives Exh. 1266.
 13. Barbara London, “From Video to Intermedia: A Personal History,” in *Modern Women: Women Artists at the Museum of Modern Art*, ed. Cornelia Butler and Alexandra Schwartz (New York: Museum of Modern Art, Distributed Art Publishers, 2010), 353.
 14. *Ibid.*, 356.
 15. Barbara London, “Practice Out on the Cutting Edge” (keynote speech, *Exhibiting Sound* symposium, Art Gallery of Alberta, Alberta, Canada, 31 October 2015), video documentation published on YouTube by the Centre for Sound Communities, 10 February 2016, accessed 20 August 2019, <https://youtu.be/12UyN5DeN2I> (starts at 8:48 on video).
 16. Sound recordings in the Museum of Modern Art (New York: Museum of Modern Art Museum Archives, 2008), accessed on 20 August 2019, <https://www.moma.org/research-and-learning/archives/finding-aids/SoundRecordingsf>.
 17. This original version of *Handphone Table* was made in collaboration with Bob Bielecki. Source: Denise Markonish, “Laurie Anderson: Language of the Future,” published in gallery guide for exhibition *Laurie Anderson* (North Adams, MA: MASS MoCA, 2017) back cover.
 18. Barbara London, “From Video to Intermedia: A Personal History,” in *Modern Women: Women Artists at the Museum of Modern Art*, 363.
 19. *Ibid.*, 353.
 20. Barbara London, *Soundings: A Contemporary Score* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 8.
 21. Barbara London (presumed author), Museum of Modern Art, program for *Sound Art* exhibition, 25 June 1979, MoMA Archives Exh. 1266.2.
 22. Museum of Modern Art, Museum exhibition features works incorporating sound, press release no. 42 for *Sound Art* exhibition 25 June–5 August 1979, MoMA Archives Exh. 1266.
 23. Museum of Modern Art, *Guide to Building and Exhibitions* (architectural description of Museum of Modern Art building at 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY, including location of Auditorium gallery adjacent to the auditorium in basement), Museum of Modern Art Archives, 6 October 1958, 5.
 24. Barbara London, *Soundings: A Contemporary Score*, 10.
 25. Barbara London (presumed author), program for *Sound Art* exhibition.
 26. Tara Rodgers, *Pink Noises: Women on Electronic Music and Sound* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 64–65.
 27. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner, *Women Composers and Music Technology in the United States: Crossing the Line* (Aldershot, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 85.

28. Ibid., 87.
29. Tara Rodgers, *Pink Noises: Women on Electronic Music and Sound*, 64–65.
30. Ibid., 65.
31. Ibid., 66.
32. Maggi Payne, email message to author, 23 May 2019.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Maggi Payne, email message to author, 21 August 2019.
36. Barbara London, email message to author, 30 May 2019.
37. Maggi Payne, email message to author, 21 August 2019.
38. Maggi Payne, *Lunar Dusk* (1979) and *Lunar Earthrise* (1978), cassette, Museum of Modern Art Archives, 25 June–8 July 1979, Exh.1266. Identified in archival listing as “Sound from Maggi Payne’s installation *Lunar Dusk* and *Lunar Earthrise*.”
39. Maggi Payne, program notes for concert versions of *Lunar Dusk* and *Lunar Earthrise*, 1979.
40. Maggi Payne, unpublished interview by Emma Lou Deimer, approximately 1983–84 in response to questions regarding a later work entitled *Crystal*. Payne says the technique was the same as used for *Lunar Earthrise* and *Lunar Dusk*.
41. Barbara London, Museum of Modern Art Archives, “Carpentry Request,” with following information: Installation PO# 9191: 7514–2329: Hang 4 speakers; Electrical PO# 9165: 7513:: Connect 4 speakers; Exhibition: *Sound Art*; Location: Video Gallery (Auditorium); Opening date: June 25, 1979; Closing date: July 5, 1979; Director: Barbara London; Date stamp: June 19, 1979. MoMA Exh. 1266.2.
42. Barbara London to Maggi Payne, 22 June 1979, letter: “The Museum purchased a Technics cassette deck, which I had modified to automatically rewind and repeat the tapes.” Note that cassettes are stereo recordings, not capable of quadraphonic (4-track) playback.
43. Maggi Payne, email message to author, 23 May 2019.
44. Maggi Payne, email message to author, 19 August 2019.
45. Maggi Payne, *Lunar Earthrise*, notes given to author 12 December 2018: “Note that the stereo mixes are not fold-downs of the four channel mixes, but are mixed from scratch.”
46. Maggi Payne, email message to author, 21 November 2018.
47. Maggi Payne, email message to author, 19 August 2019.
48. Maggi Payne, email message to author, 23 May 2019.
49. Connie Beckley, *The Aquarium*, liner notes (New York: Composers Recordings, Inc., 1997), CRI CD 756.
50. Connie Beckley, email message to author, 29 May 2019.
51. Connie Beckley, *The Aquarium*, liner notes.
52. Albertz Benda Gallery, Bill Beckley biography, <http://www.albertzbenda.com/artists/bill-beckley>, accessed 8 September 2019.
53. Connie Beckley, email message to author, 12 September 2019.
54. John Rockwell, “Music: Forms with Sound, Light Modes,” *New York Times*, 9 June 1979.
55. Ibid.
56. Connie Beckley, email message to author, 28 May 2019.
57. Connie Beckley, email message to author, 3 June 2019.
58. The audio from *Triad Triangle* was later released on the LP *AIRWAVES: Two Record Anthology of Artists’ Aural Work & Music* (New York: One Ten Records, 1977), which also featured works by Julia Heyward, Laurie Anderson, Meredith Monk, and many others.
59. Connie Beckley, email message to author, 3 June 2019.
60. Connie Beckley, email message to author, 3 June 2019: “These three pieces (*The Note*, *Triad Triangle*, *The Balancing Scale*) were influenced by my reading of Hermann Helmholtz’s book ‘On the Sensations of Tone’ and . . . all these works (*The Note*, *Triad Triangle*, *The Balancing*

- Scale*) have sound and image and they are interdependent in getting the idea across. And they only really make sense as a whole when all elements are present. So when my work would be published only as sound, it is simply incomplete.”
61. Barbara London, email message to author, 30 May 2019: Author: As I understand it from speaking to the artists, only Connie Beckley’s piece had a visual element (speaker in a glass bottle). Is this correct? BL: Correct.
 62. Connie Beckley, email message to author, 25 November 2018. Photograph provided by Connie Beckley.
 63. Ibid.
 64. Connie Beckley: *The Note*, cassette, Museum of Modern Art Archives, 23 July 23–5 August 1979, Exhibition: *Sound Art*, MoMA Exh. 1266. Identified in archival listing as “Connie Beckley’s audio performance of ‘The Note.’”
 65. Ibid.
 66. Connie Beckley, email message to author, 25 November 2018.
 67. Connie Beckley: *The Note*, cassette, Museum of Modern Art Archives.
 68. Ibid.
 69. Connie Beckley, email message to author, 25 November 2018.
 70. Connie Beckley, *The Note*, installation instructions submitted to Barbara London at Museum of Modern Art, June 1979, courtesy of Connie Beckley personal archives.
 71. RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art Since 1960* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 219.
 72. Ibid.
 73. Julia Heyward, interview by Linda Montano from *Performance Artists Talking in the Eighties: Sex, Food, Money/Fame, Ritual/Death*, compiled by Linda M. Montano (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 276.
 74. RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art Since 1960*, 219.
 75. Ibid.
 76. Jay Sanders, “Love Is an Object,” in *Rituals of Rented Island: Object Theater, Loft Performance, and the New Psychodrama: Manhattan, 1970–1980* (New Haven: Whitney Museum of American Art; Distributed by Yale University Press, 2013), 35.
 77. Barbara London (presumed author), Museum of Modern Art, program for *Sound Art* exhibition.
 78. Julia Heyward, *Nova Convention* and Julia Heyward and D. Christensen, *It’s Raining Blood, Bury Me in 2001 and Apocalypse*, cassette, Museum of Modern Art Archives, Exhibition: *Sound Art*, 9–22 July 1979, MoMA Exh. 1266. Identified in archival listing as “Soundtrack to their installation.”
 79. Julia Heyward, email message to author, 23 May 2019.
 80. Don Christensen, who collaborated with Heyward on three of the four pieces in the MoMA archive, says he does not remember the MoMA exhibition. Don Christensen, email message to author, 27 May 2019.
 81. Barbara London, email message to author, 22 May 2019.
 82. Barbara London (presumed author), Museum of Modern Art, program for *Sound Art*.
 83. Ibid.
 84. Julia Heyward, 360 (New York: Electronic Arts Intermix, 1981), video.
 85. Barbara London, email message to author, 30 May 2019.
 86. Julia Heyward. email message to author, 22 May 2019: “‘Keep Moving Buddy’ is from the Nova Convention of which Laurie Anderson and I were the MC’s.”
 87. Laurie Anderson and Julia Heyward, *Song from America on the Move (Track 14): The Nova Convention* (New York: Giorgio Poetry Systems, 1979), GPS 014-015. The first half of this track is *America on the Move* by Laurie Anderson, the second half is *Keep Moving Buddy* by Julia Heyward.

88. Jay Sanders, "Love Is an Object," in *Rituals of Rented Island: Object Theater, Loft Performance, and the New Psychodrama: Manhattan, 1970–1980* (New Haven: Whitney Museum of American Art; Distributed by Yale University Press, 2013), 37.
89. Julia Heyward, *Nova Convention (Keep Moving Buddy)*, cassette, Museum of Modern Art Archives.
90. Julia Heyward and D. Christensen, *It's Raining Blood, Bury Me in 2001 and Apocalypse*, cassette, Museum of Modern Art Archives.
91. Barbara London (presumed author), Museum of Modern Art, program for *Sound Art*.
92. Whitney Museum of American Art, "Rituals of Rented Island: Julia Heyward," YouTube video, 2:36 (0:43 on video), published 5 November 2013, accessed 21 August 2019, <https://youtu.be/IEEMPgCd4ek>.
93. Jack Castle, *Aesthetica Magazine*, discussing video of Heyward's performance *God Heads* at the Whitney in 1976 review of exhibit *Rituals of Rented Island* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, accessed 2 June 2019, <https://www.aestheticamagazine.com/rituals-of-rented-island/>.
94. Electronic Arts Intermix, Julia Heyward, 360, <https://www.eai.org/titles/360>, accessed 25 August 2019.
95. Barbara London, "Practice Out on the Cutting Edge." London states at appx. 11:95 on video: "After [*the MoMA exhibition of Laurie Anderson's Handphone Table*] I hoped to organize a large sound exhibition. However, I had two strikes against the idea. Sound can be a curse. Unchecked it flows like water and annoyingly invades everything around it. Furthermore, more traditionalist colleagues believed that MoMA's role was to offer visual experiences to visitors. Audiences go to concert hall or the jazz club, to listen to organized sound, i.e. music. But I still continued to organize shows. I did a little sound show that I called "Sound Art" in 1979 with Julia Heyward, Maggi Payne and Connie Beckley."
96. Barbara London, email message to author, 30 May 2019.
97. Connie Beckley, email message to author, 29 May 2019.
98. Maggi Payne, email message to author, 24 May 2019.
99. Barbara London, *Soundings: A Contemporary Score*, 8.
100. MoMA calendar, *Soundings: A Contemporary Score*, 10 August–3 November 2013 (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013), <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1351>, accessed 5 September 2019.
101. Barbara London, *Soundings: A Contemporary Score*, 9.
102. To the best of this author's knowledge at the time of this writing.
103. Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK / New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
104. Anne Hilde Neset, "Expressway to Yr Cochlea," in *Soundings: A Contemporary Score* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 17.
105. Following is a sampling of titles relating to this statement:
 - (1) Bernd Schulz, ed., *Resonances: Aspects of Sound Art* (Heidelberg: Kehrer, 2002). Schulz's introduction says that the art form has developed over the two decades prior to 2002, negating a discussion of the 1970s. But Bernhard Leitner notes in his interview that he began developing and showing sound installations and sculptures in New York City in the 1970s (he moved there in 1968). With the exception of Leitner, the artworks in the book are all post-1970s and most are from the early 2000s. In his essay "Musique concrete and its importance to the visual arts," Robin Minard affirms a definition of sound art that includes a detached aesthetic when he says, "In many of the works referred to in this book, sound, light and colour are all equal contributors to abstract environments—on some levels metaphorical but never literal or narrative" (p. 48).

- (2) Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (New York: Continuum International, 2006). LaBelle starts with a discussion of John Cage and musique concrete and then moves to Fluxus, minimalism in art and music, and the conceptualist minimalist Michael Ascher. While it's to LaBelle's credit that he includes the 1970s work of Vito Acconci and Iannis Xenakis, he mostly sticks to the standard experimental music trajectory concerning the 1970s, discussing Alvin Lucier, Max Neuhaus, Maryanne Amacher, Bernhard Leitner, Bill Fontana, and Yasunao Tone.
- (3) Alan Licht, *Sound Art: Beyond Music, Between Categories* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2007). Licht states that "Sound art, like its godfather experimental music, is indeed between categories, perhaps because of its effect on the listener is between categories. It's not emotional nor is it necessarily intellectual" (p. 218). He lists Annea Lockwood, Bill Fontana, La Monte Young, Maryanne Amacher, Bernhard Leitner, and Max Neuhaus as "the first generation of sound artists" (p. 124). (He doesn't pursue that Annea Lockwood's 1970s installations involving the destruction of pianos had deep feminist connotations, but Licht instead focuses on her 1980s environmental recordings.) Later in the book he offers a chapter of selected artists' biographies that he says "provides another view of sound art's generational evolution," but this also focuses primarily on persons coming out of the conceptualist and minimalist traditions (p. 253). Licht never mentions the 1979 MoMA *Sound Art* show; however, he does dismiss Connie Beckley as not a sound artist but a "vocalist who gives semitheatrical performances surrounded by sculpture or other visual props" (p. 217). (Author's note: I have not been able to obtain a copy of Licht's new 2019 book *Sound Art Revisited* prior to completion of this paper.)
- (4) Seth Kim-Cohen, *In the Blink of an Ear: Toward a Non-cochlear Sonic Art* (New York: Continuum, 2009). Kim-Cohen dismisses sound art of the 1970s altogether by saying, "Sound art, as a discrete category of artistic production, did not come into being until the 1980s" (p. xix in introduction). While his sections about Muddy Waters and Bob Dylan are thought provoking, they seem to be diversions from the main theme, again outlined by minimalists and conceptualists growing out of the ideas of John Cage and Pierre Schaffer (for example, Robert Morris, LaMonte Young, George Brecht, Alvin Lucier, and a performance of Steve Reich's "Pendulum Music" framed as sculpture). He further underlines this by connecting sound art to Clement Greenberg's ideas concerning abstract expressionism. He states that *Für Augen und Ohren* at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin in 1980 "is widely held to be the first dedicated sound art exhibition" (p. 100) and never mentions the 1979 MoMA *Sound Art* exhibition in this book. (Notably, Connie Beckley was included in *Für Augen und Ohren*.)
- (5) Caleb Kelly, *Gallery Sound* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017). The first chapter of Kelly's book is about the minimalist installations of Michael Ascher, Bruce Naumann, LaMonte Young, and Alvin Lucier. He talks about musicians performing in a gallery context in the 1970s era, but focuses on performances by Steve Reich and Phillip Glass at the Whitney's *Anti-Illusion* exhibition in 1969. Kelly only briefly mentions Barbara London's 1979 *Sound Art* exhibition toward the end of the book on page 144, saying it was "an extremely progressive exhibition for its time," though he doesn't tell us why.
- (6) Peter Weibel, ed., *Sound Art: Sound as a Medium of Art* (Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM/Center for Art and Media; Cambridge, MA; London, UK: MIT Press, 2019). This massive 744-page publication contains an exhaustive number of essays, photographs, and histories concerning the "sound art" movement. However, there is no mention of Barbara London, Connie Beckley, or Maggi Payne in the entire book, and Julia Heyward only appears in a list of performers on a 1982 cassette compilation. Concerning sound

art of the 1970s, the book follows the same well-trodden historical path. Most significant is Christoph Cox's essay "Sound Art in America: Cage and Beyond" from the section "Historical Cartography of Sound Art." Cox discusses, in this order: John Cage, Max Neuhaus, LaMonte Young, minimalist sculptor Michael Brewster, Alvin Lucier, and Maryanne Amacher, followed by discussion of some post-1970s figures. Linnea Semmerling's "Shhh . . . ! In search of the White Cube's soundtrack" says that Robert Morris's minimalist conceptualist sculpture *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1969) is "one of the earliest and most canonic sound sculptures" (p. 506).

106. Ludlow 38, *Maryanne Amacher: City-Links* (New York: Ludlow 38, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Goethe-Institut New York and Amacher Archive, 2010).
107. To be fair, Robert Morris created other sound-focused works that used narrative and emotion such as 1972's *Hearing*, in which visitors listened to a frightening legal cross-examination (John Perrault, "A Sculpted Play on Words," *Village Voice*, 4 May 1972, 30.)
108. Barbara London seems to reflect on this curatorially in 2013's *Soundings* exhibition at MoMA. Susan Phillipsz uses music in the gallery context, and nothing else, to set a mood and a context. Camille Norment frequently includes musical performance and singing as part of her presentations at museums and galleries (though she didn't at *Soundings*).
109. George E. Lewis, "The Virtual Discourse of Pamela Z," *Journal for the Society of American Music* 1, no. 1, February 2007 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 72.
110. Susan Philipsz wins the 2010 Turner Prize, Channel 4 News, 6 December 2010, YouTube, <https://youtu.be/BMsXrKUAoBQ>, accessed 15 September 2019, 3:59.
111. Peter Weibel, "Sound as a Medium of Art," in *Sound Art: Sound as a Medium of Art*, edited by Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM/Center for Art and Media; Cambridge, MA; London, UK: MIT Press, 2019), 146.
112. Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (New York: Continuum International, 2006), ix.
113. Alan Licht, *Sound Art: Beyond Music, Between Categories* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2007), 153 (Anderson) and 197 (Ono).