

Breath as Event

Sound as Event Booklets — No.1

Xiaojun Yin (Evan Bei)

Goldisle Publishing
London, United Kingdom

ISBN 978-1-918147-00-1

Digital Original Edition v1.0

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Published by Goldisle Publishing, London.

Canonical page: <https://goldisle.org/publications/breath-as-event/>

This digital original edition may evolve through future revisions.

Version history is maintained at the canonical publication page.

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Part I — Orientation

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(Cover)

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Publisher Catalogue

Author: Xiaojun Yin (Evan Bei) Title: Breath as Event Year: 2026 Publisher: Goldisle Publishing Place of Publication: London, United Kingdom Approx. Length: 7000 words Context Note: A conceptual research booklet exploring sound as event through breath, temporal threshold, and embodied research conditions within contemporary practice.

Part I — Orientation

This booklet begins from a simple observation: sound rarely arrives as a finished object. In lived experience it emerges, hesitates, withdraws, and returns. What we encounter is not merely a sonic form but an occurrence shaped by time, decision, and context.

Many historical frameworks attempt to stabilise sound within notation or measurement. Such efforts have generated extraordinary knowledge. Yet stability is only one dimension of practice. In rehearsal rooms, small studios, or improvised environments, sound behaves less like a fixed entity and more like an event whose conditions must be negotiated moment by moment.

The present work does not oppose established scholarship. In-

stead, it shifts the perspective slightly sideways. Rather than asking what sound is, the text asks when and how sound happens.

Differences in interpretation often arise from distinct disciplinary traditions. What appears self-evident in one field may seem obscure in another. This booklet treats these differences as translations between frameworks rather than disagreements over authority. The reader is invited to enter the text as a participant in that translation.

The research conditions behind this work are modest compared to large institutional settings. Tools are limited. Spaces are temporary. Documentation is sometimes improvised. Yet these circumstances reveal aspects of sound that remain invisible within perfectly controlled laboratories. Imperfection here is not an obstacle but a form of evidence.

Gentle irony appears throughout the text, directed not at individuals but at habits of thought that attempt to reduce complex experience to singular explanations. Such irony is offered with respect toward the long traditions that made this research possible.

This booklet is the first movement within a broader sequence. It introduces breath as a threshold condition — a moment before sound becomes audible. Later volumes will explore pulse and voice as complementary structures.

Readers encountering this edition may notice its provisional character. That provisional quality is intentional. The work acknowledges that research continues beyond publication. Versioning is not a weakness but a sign of living inquiry.

To begin with breath is to begin with readiness — the quiet preparation that precedes action. Breath is neither silence nor sound. It is the hinge between them.

Part II — Breath as Threshold

Part II — Breath as Threshold

Breath appears before sound yet is rarely granted equal attention. Traditional acoustic discourse often begins with vibration, signal, or resonance. In lived practice, however, sound frequently begins earlier — within the preparation to act. Breath marks that earlier point. It is a threshold rather than a conclusion.

A threshold is not a boundary that separates two stable territories. It is a zone of transformation. When breath gathers, the body aligns itself toward possibility. Muscles adjust. Attention narrows. Time seems to slow. None of these processes are audible in a conventional sense, yet they shape what will soon be heard.

To describe breath as an event does not mean that breath replaces sound. Instead, it suggests that sound cannot be understood without acknowledging its preconditions. Breath is the moment in which intention encounters embodiment. It is fragile, reversible, and never entirely predictable.

In many musical traditions breath is reduced to technique: inhale, exhale, control. Such technical frameworks are valuable, yet they sometimes obscure the experiential dimension of initiation. Breath is not merely a function; it is an orientation toward action.

Consider the hesitation before speaking. That pause is not empty. It contains anticipation, uncertainty, and decision. Even when no sound follows, the breath has already transformed the situation. An event has begun.

This perspective invites a rethinking of silence. Silence is often imagined as the absence of sound, but within the logic of threshold, silence becomes the surface upon which breath prepares movement. Silence is not passive; it is structured by readiness.

Gentle irony may be directed toward narratives that celebrate

absolute control over sound. In practice, breath constantly resists total regulation. Each initiation carries variation. The body adjusts to environment, mood, and context. What emerges is not a perfect repetition but a living difference.

Breath therefore reveals the limits of authorship. A performer may intend a particular gesture, yet the conditions of breath reshape that intention. This is not a failure but a reminder that sound belongs to an ecology larger than any single actor.

From a research perspective, breath introduces methodological questions. How can a threshold be documented when it often leaves no visible trace? Notation captures results more easily than beginnings. Recording devices privilege the audible over the preparatory. The present work responds by treating description itself as a form of evidence.

Rather than seeking a universal model, the text accumulates small observations drawn from practice: the rhythm of walking before recording, the adjustment of posture before speaking, the subtle shift in attention before a microphone is activated. These moments constitute a field of micro-events through which sound gradually takes shape.

Breath also exposes vulnerability. To breathe is to admit dependence on environment — air, space, and time. In this sense, breath resists the fantasy of isolated creativity. It situates sound within shared conditions.

This threshold perspective prepares the ground for later volumes. If breath asks whether sound may occur, pulse will ask when, and voice will ask through whom or what. The trilogy unfolds as a sequence of questions rather than a closed system.

For now, breath remains an opening gesture. It does not define the whole of sound; it reveals the moment in which sound becomes possible.

Part III — Embodiment & Research Conditions

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Every research project carries the imprint of its conditions. Some inquiries unfold within laboratories supported by extensive funding, institutional networks, and dedicated technical teams. Others emerge from smaller environments shaped by improvisation, limited tools, and shifting spaces. The present work belongs to the latter category.

Acknowledging these circumstances is not an apology but a form of clarity. Embodiment is not only a philosophical position; it is a material fact. The researcher moves between locations, adapts to available resources, and negotiates time alongside other responsibilities. These constraints influence how sound is perceived, documented, and understood.

In highly controlled contexts, repetition becomes a primary method. Conditions are stabilised to ensure consistent outcomes. Such approaches have generated invaluable knowledge. Yet they sometimes conceal the dynamic variability present in everyday practice. Outside the laboratory, sound unfolds amid uncertainty. Wind interferes with microphones. Rooms resonate unpredictably. Moments of insight arise between ordinary tasks.

Embodied research therefore accepts irregularity as part of its method. Instead of eliminating contingency, it observes how contingency shapes the emergence of sound. The body becomes both instrument and archive, recording subtle adjustments that rarely enter formal notation.

Readers accustomed to polished academic prose may notice a different rhythm here. Descriptions occasionally shift between analytic reflection and personal observation. This movement is intentional. It mirrors the oscillation between thinking and doing

that defines practice-based inquiry.

A gentle request may be extended to colleagues within more established academic structures: if certain passages appear rough around the edges, consider them traces of conditions rather than shortcomings of intention. Research does not always arrive through perfect pathways. Sometimes it emerges through persistence in less-than-ideal environments.

Embodiment also complicates authorship. Sound events are rarely produced by a single actor. They involve rooms, technologies, listeners, and histories that exceed individual control. To write about sound is therefore to write about a network of relations rather than a solitary achievement.

This perspective resonates with broader shifts in contemporary artistic practice, where collaboration and context replace the myth of isolated genius. The present booklet participates in that movement without claiming to define it.

An important consequence follows: research becomes continuous rather than episodic. Instead of waiting decades to declare a final theory, the work evolves through iterative releases. Publication marks a moment of sharing rather than an endpoint.

The modest scale of this booklet should not be mistaken for a lack of ambition. Small formats often carry concentrated intensity. They allow ideas to circulate quickly, inviting response and revision. In this sense, embodiment aligns with the logic of versioning: each edition reflects a specific moment in an ongoing process.

By situating breath within embodied conditions, the text prepares a bridge toward historical reflection. Before pulse can be examined as temporal structure, it is necessary to reconsider how silence has been interpreted across different eras. The next section turns toward that question.

Part IV — Silence & Historical Misreading

Part IV — Silence & Historical Misreading

Silence occupies a paradoxical position within modern sound discourse. It is frequently invoked yet rarely examined beyond symbolic narratives. Some traditions describe silence as purity, others as resistance, and still others as a philosophical void. While these perspectives have shaped important artistic movements, they can also obscure the dynamic role silence plays within lived practice.

From the viewpoint of event-based thinking, silence is not the opposite of sound. It is a temporal field in which potential gathers. Breath moves across that field, preparing the conditions through which sound may arise. When silence is understood only as absence, the complexity of this preparation disappears.

Historical misreading often begins with simplification. Influential figures become condensed into single gestures, and nuanced practices are remembered through isolated anecdotes. Gentle irony may be found here: certain “silent” works celebrated in cultural memory were never truly silent in their original environments. Rooms contained noise, listeners shifted in their seats, and breath continued to circulate. What endured was not silence itself but the story told about it.

This observation does not seek to diminish historical achievements. Rather, it invites a reconsideration of how narratives are constructed. Mythology can illuminate certain truths while concealing others. Recognising this duality allows contemporary practice to inherit history without being confined by it.

Silence also carries social dimensions. In everyday contexts, silence can signal respect, hesitation, or exclusion. Within performance, it may function as a structural interval that reshapes attention. Listeners often perceive silence not as emptiness but as

heightened presence — a space in which expectation intensifies.

The research conditions described earlier influence how silence is encountered. In small studios or improvised environments, silence is rarely absolute. Background sounds persist: distant traffic, mechanical hum, the subtle movement of air. These elements remind us that silence is relational rather than isolated.

Technological mediation further complicates the picture. Recording devices introduce thresholds of sensitivity that redefine what counts as silence. Noise reduction algorithms attempt to erase irregularities, yet in doing so they sometimes remove the very textures that reveal context. The pursuit of perfect quiet can become a form of historical amnesia.

By reframing silence as a temporal surface, the text proposes a shift away from binary thinking. Sound and silence are not opposing states but phases within an unfolding event. Breath navigates this continuum, marking transitions that resist simple categorisation.

Readers may recognise echoes of familiar debates within philosophy, musicology, and sound art. The intention here is not to resolve those debates but to reposition them. Instead of asking whether silence exists in an absolute sense, the work asks how silence participates in the formation of events.

This repositioning prepares the ground for the next step in the series. If breath establishes the threshold and silence shapes the field, pulse introduces measurable structure. The transition toward pulse does not abandon the insights of breath; it extends them into questions of timing, repetition, and decision.

Thus the apparent quietness of this section leads forward rather than backward. Silence becomes the hinge through which the inquiry turns toward temporality itself.

Part V — Toward Pulse

Part V — Toward Pulse

Breath opens the threshold; silence shapes the field. Pulse introduces structure. Where breath asks whether sound may occur, pulse begins to ask when. The transition from breath to pulse does not represent a shift from intuition to calculation but a deepening of temporal awareness.

Pulse is often associated with rhythm, measurement, or mechanical regularity. In practice, however, pulse emerges through negotiation. It arises from the interaction between intention and circumstance. Even the most precise metronome cannot erase the subtle variations introduced by embodiment. Each repetition carries a difference, however small.

This booklet does not attempt to construct a comprehensive theory of pulse. Instead, it prepares the conceptual ground for the next volume in the series. The aim is to allow readers to sense the direction of movement without closing it prematurely. Pulse appears here as a shadow — an anticipation felt within breath rather than a system fully defined.

Consider the moment after inhalation but before action. Time seems to hover. That suspension contains the earliest trace of pulse. The body measures duration not through numbers but through sensation. Attention stretches across intervals that may later become rhythm.

Within contemporary artistic practice, pulse often carries cultural associations. It may evoke collective movement, technological tempo, or historical memory. These associations remind us that pulse is never neutral. It reflects the conditions of its environment as much as the intentions of its creator.

The transition toward pulse also raises questions about decision.

At what point does preparation become action? When does repetition establish expectation? Pulse transforms breath's openness into a framework that listeners can recognise and anticipate.

Gentle irony may again appear here. Some narratives portray pulse as a return to certainty — a way of restoring order after experimental uncertainty. Yet pulse itself is unstable. It accelerates, fragments, and dissolves. Rather than resolving ambiguity, it reveals a deeper layer of temporal complexity.

As the first booklet in the trilogy draws to a close, it leaves the reader at the edge of this transition. Breath has shown how sound begins; pulse will examine how sound continues. Voice, the final volume, will ask who or what carries sound forward into presence.

The present text therefore ends not with closure but with orientation. It invites readers to carry the awareness of threshold into the next stage of inquiry. The event has begun; its rhythm is yet to unfold.

Appendix A — Key Terms

Appendix A — Key Terms

Event: An occurrence shaped by temporal decision, embodiment, and contextual conditions. An event is not merely a result but a process unfolding through time.

Threshold: The transitional moment preceding audible action. A threshold marks readiness rather than completion.

Embodiment: The involvement of physical presence, perception, and environment within sound practice.

Silence: A temporal interval within which potential gathers. Silence is not an absolute absence but a relational surface.

Pulse: An emergent structure of timing that follows from breath. Pulse organises expectation without eliminating variation.

Appendix B — Contextual Reading

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The ideas presented in this booklet resonate with a wide field of philosophy, sound studies, performance research, and contemporary artistic practice. Rather than citing sources directly within the main text, this appendix invites readers to explore parallel traditions through independent inquiry.

Readers may encounter familiar themes across different domains: the phenomenology of listening, the materiality of sound objects, the role of silence in experimental composition, and the emergence of time-based practice within contemporary art. These strands do not form a single lineage. They intersect, diverge, and occasionally misunderstand one another.

The present work does not claim to summarise these traditions. Instead, it positions itself alongside them — a modest contribution to an ongoing conversation. Those interested in historical or theoretical background are encouraged to consult the contextual bibliography that follows.

Appendix C — UKCS Note

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Research manuscripts related to this booklet are registered with the UK Copyright Service (UKCS).

Registration Reference: 284760782-015

This archival registration documents authorship and developmental history. It does not restrict academic dialogue, interpretation, or critical engagement. The publication of this digital original edition reflects an ongoing research process that may evolve through future

revisions.

Version history and updates are maintained at the canonical publication page:

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Appendix D — Contextual Bibliography

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The following ISBN publications are listed as contextual reading resources. They represent established works within philosophy, sound studies, and contemporary practice that may offer historical or theoretical background relevant to this booklet.

Cage, John. *Silence: Lectures and Writings*. Wesleyan University Press, 1961. ISBN 978-0819576026. Approx. length: 160 pages. Context note: Early experimental reflections on listening, time, and compositional thought.

Schaeffer, Pierre. *Treatise on Musical Objects*. University of California Press (English edition), 2017. ISBN 978-0520290450. Approx. length: 700 pages. Context note: Foundational exploration of sound objects and listening practice.

Ihde, Don. *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*. SUNY Press, 2007. ISBN 978-0791472576. Approx. length: 320 pages. Context note: Philosophical investigation into auditory experience and embodiment.

LaBelle, Brandon. *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art*. Continuum, 2006. ISBN 978-0826418449. Approx. length: 320 pages. Context note: Historical overview of sound art practices and cultural contexts.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Listening*. Fordham University Press, 2007. ISBN 978-0823227723. Approx. length: 120 pages. Context note: Philosophical reflections on resonance and meaning.

Cox, Christoph. *Sonic Flux: Sound, Art, and Metaphysics*. University of Chicago Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0226543178. Approx. length: 400 pages. Context note: Contemporary theoretical approaches to sound and materialism.

Readers are encouraged to consult official catalogues for full bibliographic metadata and availability.

Appendix E — Audio Companion

Appendix E — Audio Companion (Limited Edition)

Included with the first digital release of this booklet:

“Breath as Event — Audio Companion”

This short sonic work accompanies the text as a reflective artifact. It is not intended as an illustration of theory but as a parallel gesture — a reminder that sound remains irreducible to description.

The audio companion marks the transitional space between the first and second volumes of the Sound as Event Booklets series. Early readers of the digital original edition encounter this piece as a commemorative element of the initial release.

Future editions may include additional sonic materials as the research evolves.

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