

## **This is not an archive**

This is not an archive, but a series of encounters, affirmations, and doubts about listening as a way of being.

Many moments have arisen in the work of soundpocket, that have called our attention to the ways to represent sound in its materiality and in its relation to words of different languages, bodies, spaces, places, temporalities... All these constitute a complex configuration of styles of thinking and ways of life that we have only begun, partly by fortune, partly by commitment and work, to disentangle with The Library by soundpocket.

In many ways, The Library is an artist-led initiative. In the past four or five decades, artists have been inspired by legacies of soundscape and field recording studies to probe into the art of sound and listening. At this juncture of time, here in Hong Kong, we see ourselves as engaging with such studies, while also posing questions about them. For instance, does the idea of soundscape adequately articulate the complexity of urban experience – and in particular, its speed and density in Hong Kong? Does the “field” as a privileged term from anthropological studies of culture pose the challenge of over-identifying with a certain ethnographic other, so much so that its transience (impermanence) may be overlooked and listened past? How is the “field” to be conceived as a form of making the art of sound? For us, these remain open questions. But in order to regard them as not barriers but the pertinent qualities of what we are working with, we have begun and are to maintain The Library as activities of collecting – not only sounds, but stories, narratives, pictures, drawings, ideas etc. about them. To collect sounds for The Library is not to fixate sounds into any particular form, but to regard the questions of how to do so and testing them out as an end in itself.

As for the received idea of collecting as a kind of heritage preservation, The Library is inspired by scholar Laurajane Smith’s idea that “all heritage is intangible”. The past can be brought back to life in material forms, which, at the same time, cannot be exhausted by them. Therefore, we see heritage as lived and always already in-the-making. It is our active engagement with the past as present that The Library is interested in.

The Library is a certain phonography that is flickering as data in its “robust materialities”, to borrow Mark Hansen’s term (*Embodying Technesis: Technology*

Beyond Writing, 2000). The Library is also a utopia – a non-place that Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges embraces. At the age of 37, Borges lost his sight entirely. At the age of 56, he was appointed head of the National Library of Argentina. To be sure, Borges is the muse of Italo Calvino, who wrote *Invisible Cities*.

Yeung Yang

March 31, 2013

## 之於偶遇，迎如聽在

這不是一個檔案庫，而是一連串的偶遇、肯定，以及對聆聽作為自處方式的懷疑。

聲音掏腰包的工作，很多時候喚醒了我們對表現聲音的物質性的關注，以及聲音與不同語言、身體、空間、地方及時間等…關係。以上種種，構成了一個結構複雜的思維風格及生活方式，因著各種契機、承諾，通過聲音圖書館來厘清。而這項工作才剛剛的開始。

從多方面看來，聲音圖書館是一個藝術家主導的計畫。過去四、五十年，藝術家們受聲境及田野錄音的啟發，對聲音與聆聽藝術進行探索。此刻此刻，在香港，我們亦以此作為研究方向，同時提出疑問。例如聲境這概念，特別針對香港的生活節奏及城市密度，可以確實反映整個複雜的城市經驗嗎？而「田野」作為人類學的常用語，會否在尋找田野中的他者的過程，忽略了其短暫及無常性？同時如何使「田野」變成聲音藝術的一種形式？對我們來說，這些問題仍是未有答案。但為了讓它們不成為負擔，而是與我們工作直接相關的條件，聲音圖書館開始並將持續採集聲音，採集的物件不僅是聲音，還有與聲音相關的故事、記述、圖像、繪畫及想像等等……我們採集聲音不是要為聲音定下任何特定的模式，而是用採集聲音的實際行動去反思採集聲音本身的問題。

至於把採集聲音作為文物保育的構思，聲音圖書館乃受學者史密斯博(Laurajane Smith)「所有文物均是無形」所啟發。過去可以透過物質的方式重生，卻不受物質所限制。因此，我們認為文物是活生生，而且長久處於醞釀中，這是我們對過去作為現在的積極介入。

借用韓森(Mark Hansen)於《Embodying Technesis: Technology Beyond Writing》(2000)的說法，聲音圖書館是某種留聲術在其「充滿能量的實體」中忽隱忽現。它同時是一個烏托邦—阿根廷作家博爾赫斯(Jorges Luis Borges)信奉的一個虛構之境。博爾赫斯 37 歲時失明； 56 歲時受任命擔任阿根廷國家圖書館的館長。當然，他也是卡爾維諾(Italo Calvino) -- 《看不見的城市》之作者的靈感之神。

楊陽

二零一三年三月三十一日