



# MAST: Journal of Media Art Study and Theory

## CFP: Special Issue Sound, Colonialism, and Power

Guest editor

**Dr. Lauren Rosati** (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Deadline for submissions: **30 June 2021** (for publication in November 2021).

To what extent has media history, and sound studies in particular, been shaped by Western ideals of empiricism and knowing? In what ways do sonic practices and methods of recording participate in colonial systems of oppression and domination? How should artists and scholars grapple with what scholar Gustavus Stadler described as the unbearable whiteness of sound studies? What sounds have been left out of media history? This special issue of MAST will focus on **art-based research**, and seeks to answer and further explore these questions through submissions from artists, practitioner-researchers, scholars, and curators.

Consider R. Murray Schafer, the composer and theorist of acoustic ecology typically celebrated as a father of the discipline. In a 1961 essay on Canadian music, he identified “a marked similarity between an Eskimo singing and Sir Winston Churchill clearing his throat.” In likening the vocalizations of Inuit peoples to amusical noise, Schafer demonstrated an adherence to conceptions of musicality inherited from Western systems of composition and notation. More urgently, however, he revealed his complicity within settler colonialist histories of power and control. Indeed the comical nature of Schafer’s analogy cannot obscure its racist intent: to remind the reader that purported markers of cultural and racial difference can be acoustically encoded.

This special issue acknowledges the imbrication of sound, colonialism, and power. It will explore listening as both a form of witness to sonic cultures and as a method of their appropriation, what Indigenous scholar Dylan Robinson has recently called “hungry listening,” and will examine the tools and products of artistic practice that make this possible. Taking a step towards the decolonization of sound as both an artistic practice and field of study, using the work

of Robinson, Stadler, and other scholars as a guide, this issue aims to confront the legacies of white supremacy and settler colonialism within the histories and theories of sonic cultures.

Submitted essays should respond to the issue's theme and might consider, but are not restricted to, the following topics:

- Field recordings and soundscapes as vectors of colonial power
- Storage media (cassettes, records, etc.) as colonial documents
- The role of technology in perpetuating and reproducing colonial power relations
- “Dislocated” sound
- The (subjective) recording as an index of the (objective) real
- Sound and indigeneity, including Indigenous self-representation
- Sound mapping and cartography
- Acoustic ecology
- Sensory ethnography
- Dubbing as a form of silencing
- Ethnographic films or recordings
- Decolonizing media history and sound studies

**Art-based research** submissions should include a short essay (1,000-2,000 words) composed around at least one historical or contemporary media artwork that relates to the issue's theme. Media artworks for submission may include (but are not limited to) sound art, field recordings, video, virtual/augmented/mixed reality projects, hypermedia, digital art, and web-based projects, among others.

Essays will be assessed based on originality and relevance, and how well they connect to the issue's theme. Authors are encouraged to include 3-4 still images or recorded clips of the artwork in their essay as well as a link to the work in its entirety. Essays must be previously unpublished to be considered, and all copyrights for published images and artworks must be cleared by the publication date. All aspects of the submission (essay, images, link(s) to the artwork, bio, contact info) should be included in one Word document file.

For formatting, style, and full submission guidelines, please visit: <https://mast-journal.org/submission-guideline>.

Please send your submissions (and questions) to [editors@mast-nemla.org](mailto:editors@mast-nemla.org) with the subject heading SOUND, COLONIALISM, AND POWER.

**NOTE:** Submitters will receive a confirmation email from MAST for their submissions. Notification of acceptance/rejection will be sent in late-July.

**Guest editor's bio:**

**Dr. Lauren Rosati** is Assistant Curator in the Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art and the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Recent projects include the co-curated exhibitions *Oliver Beer: Vessel Orchestra* at The Met Breuer (2019) and *Open Plan: Cecil Taylor* at the Whitney Museum (2016), as well as large-scale programs devoted to John Giorno's Dial-a-Poem (Red Bull Arts, 2017), Albert Savinio's 1914 noise opera *Les chants de la mi-mort* (Issue Project Room, 2018), and the 50th anniversary of Experiments in Art and Technology (Issue Project Room, 2016). She has published articles in books, exhibition catalogues, and online on the relation of modern and contemporary art to sound, performance, media, science, and technology. She is also co-editor of *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces, 1960-2010* with Mary Anne Staniszewski (The MIT Press, 2012). Rosati has lectured, organized conferences, and taught internationally on art, media, curatorial practice, and performance. She holds a Ph.D. in Art History from the City University of New York, Graduate Center, where she completed a dissertation on sound technologies and the interwar avant-garde.

**About the journal:**

**MAST** is an online, open-access, and double-blind peer-reviewed journal featuring interdisciplinary scholarship in the domain of media studies. MAST stands for "Media Art Study and Theory" and is sponsored by NeMLA at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York. [mast-journal.org](http://mast-journal.org)