

EMBODIED SOUND

This exercise was devised by Dayna McLeod. It was commissioned by 'Embodying the Video Essay' workshop hosted at Bowdoin College, July 2023, a collaboration between The University of British Columbia, Bowdoin College, University of Leeds, University of Rochester, and the University of St. Andrews, which was funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Connection grant.

Prompt

The un-voiceover: using audio recording equipment of your choice (contact mic, smart phone, Zoom recorder, etc.) record original sound made with a body (yours or a willing subject) to replace or augment an excerpt from your media object. Further, map this sound to a specific object, character, environment, etc. within the frame in relation to the scene. Work in groups of 2-3 to record and help each other.

Consider

Where will you place the microphone? On the body? Near the body?
Will you use your body or someone else's?
How/does your body generate sound with or in relation to an object or environment?
How does your recording change/enhance/alter your scene?
Who or what is this un-voiceover speaking to or for?
How will you make it clear where in the frame sound is coming from? Does this matter?
Do you refuse the body as source for sound and instead focus on how the body listens and receives sound? How will you make this clear?

Restrictions

30 seconds to 1-minute.
No visual cuts: work with a continuous section of your media excerpt.
No visual effects: do not add visual effects including but not limited to onscreen text.
No temporal effects: do not manipulate the speed of the excerpt.
Edit and add effects to sound in any way you see fit.
Include (or not) original sound from your media object (may or may not have legible dialogue).
Do not add legible spoken words.
If your work involves more than one media object, work with one for this prompt.

Contact mic examples

Kristen Roos, [exploring sound with contact microphones](#) (2010)
Christof Migone, [Poker](#) (2001)
Sarah Kinsley (2022) [contact mic, voice, and piano](#)
Robert Dudzic, [Creepy sound design](#) [contact mic with machinery], (2022)
Aaron Dilloway of Wolf Eyes [performing a noise set, wearing a contact microphone in their mouth](#), (2023)