

Elle Laforge

Positions through contextualising, Written response

I. Annotated bibliography

Part A - Foundational references emerging through Positions Through Iterating

These references established the project's initial focus on sound perception, notation, and the relationship between line and embodied spatial experience.

Ingold, T. (2007) *Lines: A Brief History*. London: Routledge, pp. 120–151.

"We draw lines as well as write them, and in each case the line is the trace of a manual gesture." (p. 120)

Ingold's description of the line as "the trace of a manual gesture" helped me understand my drawings not as not just illustrations of sound, but as records of listening enacted through the hand. For this project, I initially paid particular attention to the sounds of specific things, people or places, and translated them into drawn lines, allowing each sound to take shape according to how it feels, both physically and emotionally. Harsher or more discombobulating sounds become sharper and more angular, while softer sounds become rounder and smoother. The line therefore operates as a bodily response to sound, rather than a neutral visual sign.

This is further relevant to my tracing-paper booklets from the second week, where individual sound-lines are layered to build a visual language of a designated place. Ingold's discussion of drawing and writing also helped me think through the role of onomatopoeic text in the work: both word and line become traces of gesture, sitting between notation, and perception. Although Ingold is not writing specifically about sound, his argument supports my use of line as an embodied form of translation, through which the sonic atmosphere of a place can be made visible without solely using descriptive text.

Perec, G. (1997) *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. London: Penguin Books, pp. 46–56.

"Force yourself to write down what is of no interest, what is most obvious, most common, most colourless." (p. 50)

Perec's attention to the ordinary helped me situate my project as an attempt to notice what is usually backgrounded within everyday spaces. In *The Street*, he does not

describe place through spectacle or fixed visual landmarks, but through repeated observation, small details, habits, movements, and systems that often disappear into familiarity. This directly relates to my project, which explores how a specific place can be communicated through its sonic identity rather than through visual observation alone, from the perspective of someone with auditory-visual synesthesia.

By recording the sounds of places over short periods of time and separating them into individual layers, I am also trying to attend to what might otherwise be dismissed as insignificant; faint laughters, keyboard typing, or construction sounds. My tracing-paper booklets do not aim to document a place objectively, but to translate how it feels to occupy it through listening. Percec helped me think about position as both a place and a feeling, a physical location, but also a subjective experience shaped by attention, atmosphere, and perception in a given place. In this sense, space is therefore understood through fragments and personal attention rather than through a single fixed view.

Schafer, R.M. (1994) *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books.

"A soundscape consists of events heard not objects seen." (p. 8)

Schafer's understanding of the soundscape helps me frame place as something that can be read through listening rather than only through visual observation. His distinction between keynote sounds, signals, and soundmarks is particularly useful to my project, as it suggests that sounds play different roles within an environment: some form a continuous background atmosphere, some interrupt or demand attention, and others become closely associated with a specific place or community.

This directly relates to my tracing-paper booklets, where I record short moments of everyday environments and separate the soundscape into individual auditory events. Each sound is translated into its own visual layer using line, shape, and onomatopoeic text, with the scale of the line reflecting its perceived auditory presence within the place. While Schafer provides a vocabulary for analysing acoustic environments, my project uses graphic communication design to translate those environments visually. His work also supports my understanding of position as something shaped by sound: not only where I am physically located, but how a place is felt through atmosphere, interruption, rhythm, and attention.

Cage, J. and Knowles, A. (1969) *Notations*. New York: Something Else Press.



LOUIS ANDRIESEN, *A Flower Song II*

Detail: A page from *Notations* showing sound represented through non-traditional graphic marks by Louis Andriessen.

Notations is a collection of experimental graphic scores that explore different ways of visually representing sound, rhythm, duration, and performance. Rather than relying on traditional musical notation, these works use line, shape, spacing, and composition to communicate how sound is experienced. This is highly relevant to my project, as I am also developing an individual system of graphic notation to translate the sonic identity of a place into visual form.

By recording specific environments and deconstructing their soundscapes into individual sound events, I use line and onomatopoeic text to create a visual language based on how sounds feel rather than how they are objectively measured, similar to the composer's embodied experience of music. In my system, sharper sounds become angular forms, softer sounds become rounder, and more immersive sounds expand into broader shapes. Cage and Knowles help me position these drawings as a form of notation rather than illustration, where the publication becomes a score for listening to place and "position".

Christine Sun Kim's practice



Above; Kim, C.S. (2016) *The Sound of Obsessing*. Installation view.

Christine Sun Kim's work helps me position my project critically by challenging the assumption that sound is only auditory. In *The Sound of Obsessing*, a repeated phonetic mark becomes spatial and architectural, filling the wall like a sound that cannot be ignored. The work suggests that sound is not neutral: it can occupy space, insist on attention, and affect the body even when translated visually.

This relates to my project because I am also exploring how sound can be communicated through line, scale, repetition, and visual rhythm. However, Kim's work pushes this further by showing that the visualisation of sound is not only a formal exercise, but a way of questioning who gets to define, access, or control sonic experience. As previously mentioned, my tracing-paper booklets translate each sound from a place onto its own layer, with the scale of the line reflecting its auditory presence. Kim helps me think critically about this process and question where to take it further. From her work, it is clear that sound is not simply something to be recorded, it has much more breadth and shapes one's position, attention, and embodied experience within space.

Hodgson, J. (1997) *Feeling My Way*. Animated documentary short film.



Detail: *Feeling My Way* combines live-action point-of-view footage with hand-drawn animation, using drawn marks and movement to represent perception, and Hodgson's emotional experience of moving through urban space.

Hodgson's film, although rooted in animation, helped me think about place as something felt as well as something which can be observed. Instead of documenting the city objectively, *Feeling My Way* presents movement through space as subjective and embodied, shaped by the author's memory, experience, rhythm, as well as attention. This strongly relates to my project, which explores how a place can be communicated through its sonic identity rather than through visual description alone, though inherently biased.

By recording the sounds of specific places and translating them into layered lines and onomatopoeic text, I am also trying to represent how a place feels to occupy rather than how it simply looks. Recording one's position, in the dual meaning of a place and a feeling. Position reflects a physical location, but also an atmosphere shaped by sound, perception, and one's personal experience. Although my final outcome for this brief at the end of week 2 became a printed publication rather than animation, Hodgson's work remains important as a reference for how graphic communication can move beyond documentation and into sensory, emotional representation.

Part B - References emerging through Positions Through Contextualising

These references expanded the project by introducing spatial movement and sound-led drifting as methods for mapping, indexing, and archiving sonic experience through graphic communication.

Debord, G. (1958) 'Theory of the Dérive', *Internationale Situationniste*, 2, pp. 50-54.

"In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations... and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there."
(p.50)

Debord's theory of the *dérive* became the central reference that shifted my project from visualising sound toward using sound to structure movement through space. In the earlier stages of the project, I was primarily focused on translating individual sounds into graphic forms through line, and notation. Debord introduced the variable of movement, proposing drifting as a method of navigating space through environmental and sensory conditions rather than fixed routes or functional intention. This encouraged me to reconsider sound not simply as something to represent visually, but as something capable of actively generating direction, behaviour, and spatial experience.

In this sense, I translated Debord's predominantly visual and psychogeographic model of drifting into a sonic system for experiencing place. During the early stages of the project, this took the form of a set of sound-led drifting rules, where movement was determined by the most dominant or interruptive sounds within the environment. As the project developed further, this system evolved into a method for mapping and archiving the soundscape itself through notation, indexing, and GPS tracing. Debord therefore became the key reference that transformed the project from a collection of sonic representation into an investigation of soundscapes through mapping, walking and graphic notations.

Biserna, E. (ed.) (2022) Going Out: Walking, Listening, Soundmaking. Dijon: Les Presses du Réel.

Detail: *Going Out: Walking, Listening, Soundmaking* brings together artistic practices that use walking, listening, field recording, scores, and soundmaking as methods for engaging with environments.

Biserna's anthology helped me understand walking and listening as situated artistic methods, rather than as neutral acts of observation. In this sense, the reference contextualised my project by positioning walking and listening as situated practices through which an environment is actively interpreted, rather than passively observed. In my sonic drifting, movement through space similarly determines what is heard, selected, and subsequently translated into the map.

By recording the sounds encountered during each drift and translating them into a visual notation index, I am treating listening as a generative method within graphic communication design. The map therefore becomes less a record of a route and more an archive of auditory attention at a particular moment in time. Biserna helps situate this approach within broader practices of walking, listening, and soundmaking, while distinguishing my work from conventional mapping or field recording alone.

Blauvelt, A., Maurer, L., Paulus, E., Puckey, J. and Wouters, R. (2013) *Conditional Design Workbook*. Amsterdam: Valiz.

“Use rules as constraints. Constraints sharpen the perspective on the process and stimulate play within the limitations.” (p. 2)

The *Conditional Design Workbook* explores how systems, rules, and constraints can generate unpredictable visual outcomes through process-based design. In this sense, the reference helped me understand rules not as restrictions, but as generative structures through which unpredictable outcomes can emerge. This became important to my project as I developed a sonic drifting drifting system, where movement is shaped by a set of conditions, following the most dominant sound, responding to interruptions, and avoiding retracing steps. Rather than treating the map as a designed object planned in advance, the route is produced through the interaction between rule, soundscape, and walking in an environment.

This reference supports the procedural aspect of my work. The drift is not random, but neither is it fully controlled; it operates through constraints that make soundscapes accessible. The Conditional Design therefore helps me position the project as a system for producing maps, rather than a single finished map. It reinforces the idea that graphic communication can exist as a set of instructions, behaviours, and conditions through which form and meaning are generated.

Mosconi, C. (2023) *Between the Lines: Paralingual Index*.

<https://clamosconi.com/Paralingual-Index>

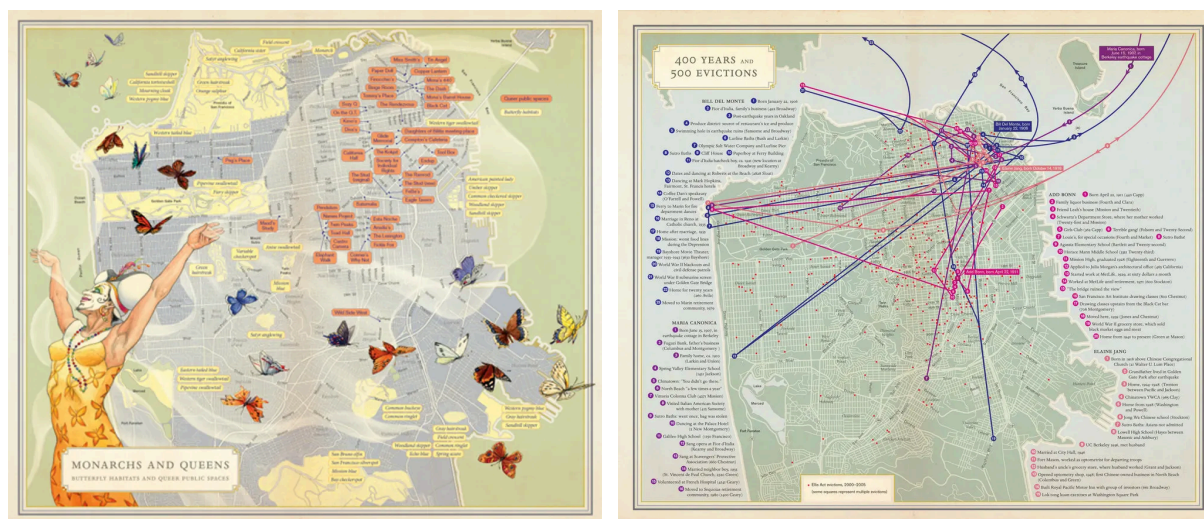
↖	speaking on an inhalation	↘	vibrating inhalation		
↙	speaking on an exhalation	↗	vibrating inhalation long	↘	↗
⋮	utterance, vocal, vowel prolonged	↘	vibrating exhalation	↘	•
ξ	'ch'	↘	vibrating exhalation long		
ξ	'ch' prolonged	↖	sharp inhalation		
Ⓜ	'm'	↘	sharp exhalation		
Ⓜ	'm' prolonged	↘	soft, or broken inhalation		
Ⓜ	laugh	↘	soft, or broken inhalation long		
Ⓜ	sneeze	^	stutter, repetition		
Ⓜ	cough	^^	stutter, repetition prolonged		
Ⓜ	smacking of the lips	↘	inhalation	ξ	•
Ⓜ	audible swallowing	↘	inhalation long	•	•
•	pause	↘	exhalation	•	•
•	long pause	↘	exhalation long	•	•
(())	audible body gestures	↘	inhalation followed by a puff	•	•
∨	cut in sentence or word	↘	a puff followed by an exhalation	•	•

Mosconi's work, *Paralingual Index*, translates non-verbal forms of communication such as rhythm, hesitation, and interruption, into systems of notation. This reference became

important to my project as it approaches an aspect of communication which is unstable, embodied, and difficult to fully translate into fixed language. Rather than documenting speech literally, her notation systems attempt to index the behaviours and atmospheres surrounding communication. This strongly relates to my own investigation into how sound can be noted, mapped and archived through graphic communication without reducing it to objective measurement.

By recording environmental sounds during each sonic drift and translating them into symbols, and notations, I am similarly attempting to construct a visual index of a given soundscape. As a result, the maps function as subjective records of accumulation, rhythm, and movement through space. Mosconi's work therefore helped me rethink notation as a form of indexing of an "unstable" experience, rather than simply representing "static" information.

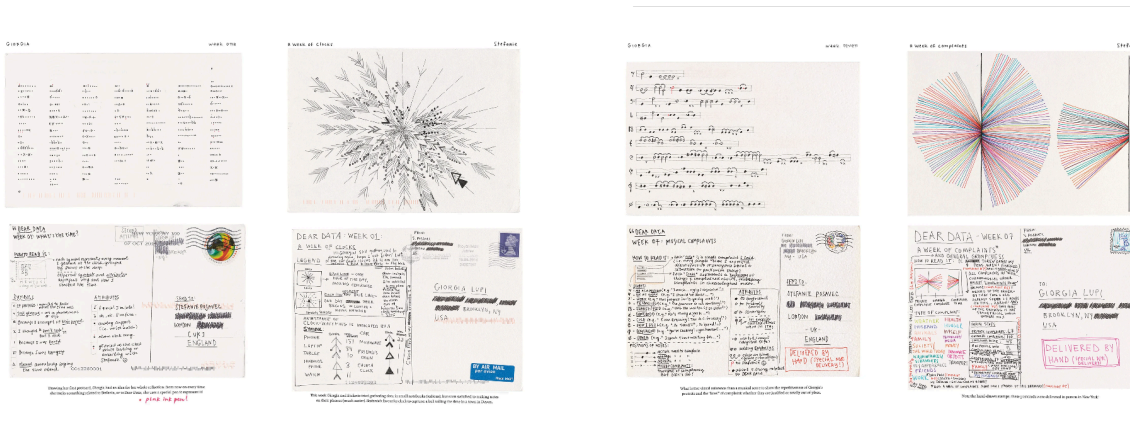
Solnit, R. and Snedeker, R. (2010) *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas*. Berkeley: University of California Press.



Solnit's *Infinite City* uses a series of thematic maps to represent San Francisco through layered cultural, political, ecological, and personal narratives rather than through conventional geographic accuracy alone. The reference helped me think about mapping as a way of constructing meaning, rather than a geographical tool. Her atlas demonstrates that maps can hold multiple forms of knowledge at once, which can be true to one or more people (e.g., memory, politics, movement, lived experience etc.). This became particularly important in situating my own work within a form of mapping whose primary function is not orientation, but the visualisation and archiving of knowledge or experience.

By dividing my walk into three separate drifting instances and translating the sounds encountered into a notation index, I am also using mapping to layer different forms of spatial information. The GPS trace provides a geographic structure, but the sound symbols interrupt and complicate it, shifting attention away from route and toward atmosphere. Solnit helps me understand the map as a critical and poetic form, capable of representing hidden or overlooked dimensions of place.

Lupi, G. and Posavec, S. (2015–16) *Dear Data*. Available at: [Dear Data Project](#)



The *Dear Data* Project documents personal observations and daily experiences through hand-drawn systems of notation, transforming subjective information into visual correspondence exchanged through postcards. Lupi and Posavec's project became important to my work in its demonstration of how subjective experiences can be translated into graphic systems whilst conserving their interpretive qualities. Rather than presenting data as objective or neutral, the project embraces inconsistency, and notation as part of the communication itself. This relates strongly to my own approach to recording soundscapes, where, due to their nature, my maps function as archives of soundscape perception.

By recording sounds encountered throughout each drift and translating them into a notation index, I am similarly constructing a visual language based on observation, selection, and embodied experience. Additionally, the project also helped me think about archiving as an accumulative process, where repeated systems of recording gradually reveal patterns, and identities of place over time.

II. Critical Analyses

Debord, G. (1958) 'Theory of the Dérive', *Internationale Situationniste*, 2, pp. 50–54.

La dérive, meaning "to drift" in English, originally refers to the nautical movement of a boat drifting without control. In the 1950s, the Situationists developed drifting into a cultural and theoretical practice intended to challenge the consumerist logic and spectacle of modern urban life. In *Theory of the Dérive*, Guy Debord proposes drifting as a way of moving through the city according to atmosphere, attraction, and environmental experience rather than fixed routes or practical destinations. He describes the *dérive* as "a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances" (p. 50), in which participants "let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there" (p. 50). Rather than understanding the city through efficiency or orientation, Debord positions movement as something shaped by psychological and sensory conditions. The *dérive* therefore challenges conventional navigation by prioritising perception and encounter over functional movement.

Formally, *Theory of the Dérive* operates between critical essay, manifesto, and instruction manual. Although Debord develops a theoretical argument around psychogeography and urban experience, the text repeatedly shifts into procedural language, outlining methods, durations, and behavioural conditions through which the *dérive* can be practised. This operational structure reinforces drifting as an active and performative process rather than an abstract theory alone. The rhetoric of the text is similarly direct and instructional. Debord frequently defines, categorises, and proposes systems for navigating urban space, giving the *dérive* a methodological quality despite its emphasis on unpredictability and chance. The text therefore mirrors the logic of the *dérive* itself, oscillating between structure and improvisation, control and spontaneity. Rather than presenting the city as fixed or objectively knowable, the writing frames urban space as unstable, experiential, and psychologically shaped.

Debord's text challenged my understanding of graphic communication design by positioning movement and spatial experience as potential design outcomes, rather than treating communication solely as the production of static visual artefacts. The *dérive* suggests that systems, instructions, and modes of navigation can themselves function as forms of communication, expanding graphic design beyond representation and toward the organisation of experience. This was particularly significant in relation to my earlier understanding of mapping, which I had primarily approached as a visual or informational practice. Through Debord, the map instead becomes a behavioural trace shaped by perception and encounter. The text also enters into dialogue with the *Conditional Design Workbook*, particularly through its use of procedural structures and constraints. Although the *dérive* emphasises spontaneity and chance, Debord simultaneously constructs a framework of behavioural conditions through which drifting can occur. This tension between system and unpredictability relates closely to the *Conditional Design Workbook's*

understanding of rules as generative rather than restrictive. Together, these references reposition graphic communication as something capable of producing open-ended processes and spatial experiences rather than fixed graphical outcomes alone.

Debord's theory fundamentally shifted the direction of my project by introducing movement as a central variable within the process of recording and understanding sound. Earlier iterations focused on translating individual sounds into graphic forms through line, layering, and notation. Although these experiments explored sonic perception visually, they remained relatively static. Debord encouraged me to reconsider sound not simply as something to represent, but as something capable of structuring navigation and attention. This led to the development of a sound-led drifting system in which each walk became guided by dominant, interruptive, or shifting sounds encountered in real time. As the project developed further, this process evolved from a method of navigation into a method of mapping and archiving. The outcome became a series of maps combining GPS traces with a notation index of recorded sounds, producing an archive of auditory perception across different drifting instances. More broadly, Debord's work has opened up a wider interest in psychogeography and mapping beyond this specific project. I am interested in how graphic communication can record subjective and sensory relationships to place, rather than only functional or geographic information. This is a direction I am keen to continue developing throughout later stages of the course, particularly through mapping systems that question how we move through and perceive space.

Mosconi, C. (2023) *Between the Lines: Paralingual Index*.

<https://clamosconi.com/Paralingual-Index>

Laugh, sneeze, pause. Clara Mosconi's *Between the Lines: Paralingual Index* investigates the communicative space that exists beyond semantic language. Her work focuses on paralinguistic sounds; involuntary vocal phenomena such as breaths, hesitations, or mutters produced while communicating. Mosconi describes the project as a system of symbols marking "the uncontrolled language for which we have no rules and systems," treating these sounds not as incidental noise, but as traces of embodiment, identity, and relation. The work proposes that communication cannot be fully contained by words alone; the voice also conveys emotional state, presence, and linguistic position. This is closely connected to Mosconi's experience of multilingualism and the instability of a second language, where communication begins to rely on everything surrounding speech, as much as speech itself. In this sense, *Paralingual Index* approaches language as unstable and contextual.

With regards to form, the project develops these ideas through indexing and fragmented graphic marks which resist fixed interpretation. Mosconi constructs a visual vocabulary of symbols, diagrams, and typographic interruptions to record behaviours which would

otherwise disappear after speech. The work therefore operates somewhere between an archive and a transcription system. Its ambiguity is central to how it functions; the symbols cannot be read immediately or universally, but require interpretation through repetition, association, and context. This reflects the uncertain nature of paralinguistic communication itself, where meaning is often carried through rhythm, hesitation, or breath rather than semantic clarity. Reading therefore becomes slower and more interpretive, repositioning graphic communication as a means of registering sensory and embodied experience as much as transmitting information.

Mosconi's work challenged my understanding of graphic communication design by expanding what actually can be considered "communicable". *Paralingual Index* demonstrates that graphic systems do not necessarily need to clarify or stabilise meaning; they can also hold ambiguity and uncertainty. This connects closely to Christine Sun Kim's practice, which similarly questions the assumption that sound belongs exclusively to the auditory. Both Kim and Mosconi use notation and graphic systems to make non-verbal experience accessible through visual form. However, where Kim foregrounds the politics of sound, access, and deaf experience, Mosconi focuses more specifically on the unstable edges of speech and language. Together, they reposition graphic communication as a field capable of indexing what lies between the lines of language.

Mosconi's work directly influenced the development of my project by shaping the way I think about notation and the visual translation of senses. Earlier iterations focused more heavily on representing individual sounds through expressive lines and shapes. *Paralingual Index* encouraged me to move away from purely illustrative forms and toward constructing a more systematic visual language capable of archiving auditory perception across space and time. This became particularly important in the development of my sound notation index. I became less concerned with accurately transcribing the soundscape, and more interested in recording and explaining the qualities surrounding said soundscape, such as rhythm, intensity, or atmosphere. Like Mosconi's symbols, my notation system functions as an interpretive index shaped by subjective listening and spatial movement. This has allowed the maps to operate less as objective documents and more as sonic drift archives of a place at a given moment in time. On a larger scale, Mosconi's work has reinforced my interest in graphic notation systems which exist between established forms of language, mapping, and visual communication. Moving forward, I am interested in continuing to develop visual systems of notation capable of recording unstable or ephemeral experiences without fully reducing them into fixed information.