

Elle Laforge
Positions through essaying, video essay script

Listening Log

Undertaken on Elgin Av, London, on 30 May, 2026 at 18:43. For the duration of the video essay, environmental sounds were documented from a fixed position using the project's notation system. In contrast to the sonic drifts presented within the project, this log remains static, mirroring the reflective nature of the essay itself. The resulting notation records the accumulation of sounds within a single place over time. The listening log reads itself like a normal piece of text.

The script starts on the next page. A copy of the index can be found on the second to last page.

(click)

As many of you know, I have ADHD. Blah, blah, blah, yes, let's skip the boring stuff. If you've spent more than five minutes with me, you'll know my earplugs are attached to my keys and my noise-cancelling headphones are permanently on my head because sounds are a nightmare.

Sounds are omnipresent in our environment, especially in London. Where I grew up, donkeys were my neighbours... Let's just say I became increasingly aware of my noise sensitivity after moving here.

(the kettle clicks)

Izzy, the kettle is done.

Thank you!

This is where this investigation starts.

I started by trying to draw sound. I thought: sound exists, therefore sound has shape and materiality. Sharp sounds became angular. Softer sounds became rounded. Repetition became pattern. My question at the time was pretty simple; how do you visualise sound?

At first, the sounds I was drawing were isolated. A kettle. A laugh. The pub on a Thursday when English isn't your first language. Each drawing tried to translate a specific sonic object or event into texture or form. But the problem was that my drawings remained isolated. Sound had texture. Those pages didn't.

Ingold writes about the line as "the trace of a manual gesture". His work helped me think of my work as not illustrations of sound, but as records of listening enacted through the hand. But sounds are rarely isolated, they come in layers. In this case, right now, I would be layer one, the bird outside my window would be layer two, the wind and cars driving past would be three and four.

This is where the term Soundscape comes in. Schafer describes the soundscape as an acoustic environment: something spatial, atmospheric, and constantly shifting.

So in the second stage of the project, I stopped recording isolated sounds and started documenting specific places at specific times.

Using tracing paper allowed multiple sounds to exist simultaneously within the same space. The drawings became layered and dense, behaving more like environments than illustrations.

This is where I started thinking about position.

Not only position as a physical location, but position as a condition. A perspective. A way of experiencing space.

Then I found Guy Debord.

Debord proposed drifting through the city according to atmosphere and encounter rather than destination. So I translated his dérive into a sonic system. Sonic Drifting.

Follow dominant sound.

Turn on interruption.

Do not retrace your steps.

The walk became less about where I was going and more about what was demanding my attention.

At first, I thought the GPS line was the work. But after a while I realised the line itself wasn't actually the interesting part. The real information was everything surrounding it.

The interruptions.

The repetitions.

The atmosphere of a place at a specific moment in time.

All of those bits which were missing from just my lines. So the project shifted again.

Not:

How do you visualise sound?

But:

How can mapping, diagramming and walking be used to visualise the sonic identity of a place?

The final work became a set of three maps made from separate sonic drifts stitched together into one continuous line. Together, they form an archive of one sonic drift.

So it helped me understand that maps do not only describe geography. They can also hold memory, movement, and subjective experience.

Mosconi also acted as a turning point in my research. She creates symbols for the unstable sounds around language: breaths, pauses, hesitations. Her practice made me realise notation does not need to be universally fixed to communicate acquired knowledge.

So instead of trying to accurately transcribe the soundscape, I began indexing it.

Some sounds interrupt.

Some hover.

Some accumulate.

I'm interested in graphic communication not only as a tool for representation, but as a way of organising attention and recording sensory relationships to place.

The purpose of this work is not to create an accurate sonic map of London, that would be impossible, and timebound. It is to slow listening down long enough for people to notice the soundscape they are already inside, at all times.

Because sound shapes behaviour, movement, and atmosphere.

I hope people engage with my work the same way I engaged with the city itself: slowly, through interpretation, letting themselves drift.

(long pause)

Follow the most dominant sound.





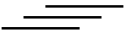














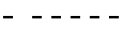












Turn on interruption.

Do not retrace your steps..

Maybe this project was never just about mapping sound. Maybe it was about learning how to notice the hidden information already embedded within a place.

I wonder what form this will take in the future.

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	people laughing		
	cyclist		
	street sweepers		
	milk frothing		
	lighter flicking (smokers)		
	door slam		

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