



MARTINA MOON ZELENIKA

Melody of the Invisible: The Sound of the Earth

FROM THE
SOUND-OBJECT CYCLE

GALLERY MKC /
YOUTH CENTRE

Ulica slobode 28, Split
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Opening on Thursday, September 4th
at 8 pm

A significant part of the natural processes studied by science cannot be accessed by direct natural observation or with the assistance of simple optical equipment. The only way of their verification and analysis is through finely calibrated devices or instruments that literally translate a certain pattern or oscillation in the frequency of light or movements the human eye can see. Such devices are, for example, seismographs, thermometers, barometers, and spectrometers, but also various devices employed in medical diagnostics, such as electroencephalographs and oximeters, which translate movements, temperature, pressure, colour frequencies or level of oxygen in the body. In order for them to operate well, there must be continuity between the measured phenomenon and us.

The machine functions as a translator of one system of patterns or dynamics into another. Today, in the era of digital language models, which clearly translate one system into another, machines can be both digital and medialized systems, guided by artificial intelligence (AI). Such systems, when online, can also work exclusively as autonomous translators, without direct measurements in the field, using another available database. However, even though they translate it, intelligent systems actually have difficulty understanding the phenomenon. For comparison, let's use Searle's Chinese Room paradigm.¹ In the discussion of whether artificial intelligence knows and understands, Searle compares AI to a room in which a man who does not understand Chinese but has many manuals is imprisoned. As a result, it seems to outsiders that the room knows Chinese, while in fact no active segment of this process knows it; neither the room nor the human as a processor. Similarly, the machines, too, do not understand the events they measure or translate. For interpretation, a human is needed.

One such interpretation is the work ChORUS2 by interdisciplinary artist Martina Moon Zelenika, which she is presenting for the first time at her solo exhibition *Melody of the Invisible: The Sound of the Earth*. ChORUS2 converts satellite signals (ACE Satellite) from a magnetometer, tracking the geomagnetic field and the relationships between the Earth's magnetic field, the so-called solar wind caused by solar eruptions, into an audiovisual pattern. The data, which is refreshed every minute, travels in two directions, from the Earth and back, and is translated twice: from the physical measurement of the magnetometer to digital data, having an online output, after which they are transformed into audio and video in space. Namely, while the first part of the process is carried out by the satellite equipment, the second part is conducted by the artist using the computer program ChORUS2 (Max MSP), and the accompanying audio-reactive animations made in the program TouchDesigner. Therefore, the final results of this double translation are: sound and video. The sound consists of multiple frequencies, dominated by high and low tones, while the related animation shows a fluid form with particles, resembling the Aurora borealis. Along with them, three hand-made drawings of human size are exhibited, which interpret the visual observation of solar phenomena in an intermediate way.

Since the results obtained by the author are very harmonious and prove very Platonic correlations of vibrations and mathematical-musical harmonies that bypass visible matter, we can put forward two theses. The first, that this harmony is natural, that is, that there is a frequency of life according to which and in which we live, and the second, that this harmony is imposed, that is, i.e., we as the authors of the devices have actually calibrated the devices that prove what we want to hear – that we ourselves live in harmony with the biosystem. Regardless of which idea is closer to the audience; the one that emphasizes the New Age philosophy of immersion in the Earth or grounding, or the sceptical one that speaks of the limitations of anthropogenic science, that is, regardless of whether we believe that Searle's little man in the Chinese room eventually learned Chinese or ended up as an alienated and isolated individual on a factory assembly line, the sounds we hear and the images we see are physically close to us. The audience can meditate on the phenomena that surround us, but also lament how and why we are distant from these phenomena so they are, paradoxically, translated by massive systems of surveillance, digital data processing, routing and filtration, and a series of complex decisions that can be interrupted and disrupted even without us knowing it. However, in a time of increased data processing and pattern recognition capacities, this is one of the most crucial questions. Do we study nature to calm ourselves or to understand, predict and control it, and what role does technology play in this? In other words; is it not enough to be in nature to be with nature or do we have to bring our own devices and machines into nature in order to know what nature is, so that we can eventually be with it or in it?

Precisely because of that, this exhibition and the works of the author Martina Moon offer such an open approach; in which science challenges nature, or rather brings its data, but nature also challenges science, emphasizing that every interpretation is filtered in the very structure of science as a human creation; this work is a great challenge. It is entertaining, meditative, but potentially also highly critical, depending on the perspective from which we approach it.

Ana Peraica

¹ Searle, John (1980), "Minds, Brains and Programs", Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 3 (3): 417–457, doi:10.1017/S0140525X00005756

Martina Moon Zelenika (b. 1978) is a prominent Croatian interdisciplinary artist, renowned for her innovative approaches in creating artworks. She is interested in the essence of being and freedom within the framework of posthumanism. The artist skillfully combine traditional drawing techniques with cutting-edge digital technologies. Martina Moon employs data sonification methods and various artistic media, including augmented reality, interactive installations, and audiovisual works. Zelenika has exhibited individually and in group international exhibitions and festivals in Croatia and abroad. She has participated in numerous multimedia and science conferences, including the RE:SOUND-8 conference at Aalborg University in Denmark in 2019 and the POSTSENSORIUM-RIXC festival in Riga, Latvia, in 2021. She graduated from the Department of Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in 2001 and subsequently received her master's degree in Video - New Media at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana, in 2006. She currently works as an Assistant professor at the Department of Digital Arts at Algebra Bernays University in Zagreb, where she resides.

Text: **Ana Peraica**
Translation: **Goranka Tomčić**
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Head of visual arts exhibition programme: **Jasna Gluić**
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Gallery opening hours from 9 to 12 am, and from 6 to 9 pm, every day except Sundays and holidays

