

Preserving the ephemeral:
Creative principles to archive multichannel sound-installations

Abstract

Through my work within the format of multichannel sound-installations, I always felt the need to preserve ephemeral works in a recorded form for archiving purposes and to showcase my work to curators, art institutions, and the general public. The attempt to preserve ephemeral sonic work raises two questions: How do I translate a multichannel audio-work into a recorded form without losing the spatial properties? And how do I make such audio-work accessible without immense technical equipment? This paper will examine different spatial audio recording and reproduction techniques to obtain a sufficient method that can preserve and playback ephemeral work with a spatial component. The conversion of multichannel sound-installations into a recorded form also raised questions related to sound and media art theory, i.e. how does the recorded version relate to the original version – is it still the same piece of work? Preceded by a case study on archiving ephemeral sonic work, I explore in the last segment of this thesis three creative principles of preserving ephemeral work based on my eight channel sound-installation *Candid III*. These three different methods will be examined and evaluated with regard to their abilities to accurately capture the spatial properties of *Candid III*. My research in experimenting with binaural formats aims toward making sonically immersive work more easily and authentically accessible. Further, it could also be of use in the context of cultural institutions that are confronted with similar problems when dealing with ephemeral sonic works containing spatial components.