

PORTFOLIO

- AURALLANDSCAPE -

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INSTALLATIONS

VIBRANT MATTER

2016

Vibrant Matter is an audio based kinetic sculpture, in which a paper membrane is slowly manipulated by magnets and its sound amplified through the use of embedded metals.

A trip to Iceland forms the origin of this project and research into the relation between, sound, matter and landscape. The extremely contrasting environments all had one thing in common: it seemed like all these places had been frozen in time, as if coagulated in the middle of a metamorphosis. Looking into processes hidden below the surface, Vibrant Matter explores the relationship between the unfolding landscape and its observer like a time lapse. While the visible environment appears static to the eye; below the surface are continuous and ongoing processes, tensions and movements that can be measured, recorded and articulated through sound.

Credits:

Els Viaene: concept, realisation
Jan Wante: electronics, programming
Carsten Stabenow, Johan Vandermaelen: sound advice

This artwork is a production by Werktank.
With the support of the Flemish authorities and CultuurCulture

Exhibitions :

2018

(AU) Québec – *Mois Multi*

2017

(FR) Parijs – *Anis Gras*

(DE) Augsburg – *Lab30*

(BE) Warande – *Storm op komst*

2016

(BE) Namen – *KIKK festival*

(BE) Imal – *The State Of Things*

Lecture:

2017

(NL) Fiber Festival – *Prima Materia: exploring the reemergence of alchemy within art, design and music.*

Video documentation: <https://vimeo.com/194069878>

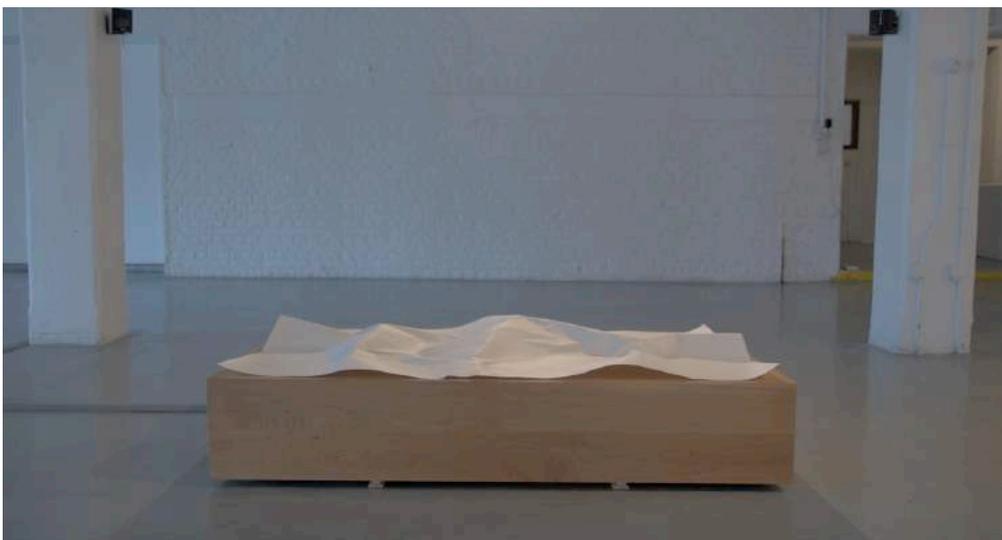


Fig: Vibrant Matter shown at Imal

02 Bewegende landschappen met Vibrant Matter

Vibrant Matter is een pure, poëtische installatie. Een groot wit blad papier ligt op een houten platform. Langzaam treedt er een vervorming op, waarbij je het papier hoort kraken, scheuren en ritselen. Dat gebeurt door een ingenieus mechanisme met magneten en versterkers, mooi en onzichtbaar weggestopt aan de onderzijde. Kunstenaar Els Viaene liet zich voor dit werk inspireren na een reis naar IJsland, waar ze onder de indruk was van de verstilde landschappen. De rotsen van mos en lava leken gestold tijdens een proces van transformatie, terwijl de activiteit ondergronds soms nog te horen was.

04



- 01 Circusvoorstelling 'Pakman' probeert het jachtige leven te vangen.
- 02 Uit de bol gaan met choreograaf Alfredo Zinola en Maxwell McCa
- 03 In 'Microphone Disasters' wordt microfoon een personage op zi
- 04 In 'Vibrant Matter' ontstaat pure poëzie met een vel wit papier.



Fig: Vibrant Matter at KIKK festival

TIMEKABINET

2015

Timekabinet is a sound installation that evokes other worlds, ancient times, the vast sea and journeys of exploration by means of a paper map and a spherical magnet.

Through the use of copper spirals at the back of the paper, the map becomes a sounding membrane in contact with the magnet.

There is a time ball on the lighthouse in Nowy Port, Gdańsk. The first device of that kind in the district dates back to 1876. Before the introduction of radio communication, time balls were an important optical signal for the sailors. They could calibrate their on-board chronometers and position their ships along the lines of longitude at sea. It is an ingenious system that works by the means of electromagnets and time signals. A long history precedes the arrival of the time ball.

This sound installation was created for the exhibition "*Meanwhile ... The City*" organized by Laznia (PL) and Nucleo (BE).



Fig. Paper map, copper spirals and magnet

Video documentation: <https://vimeo.com/125047300>

THE MAMORI EXPEDITION

2013

This wooden installation translates an expedition through the Brazilian Amazon forest in 2009. A travel in which my ears became my eyes. The sculpture, filled with water, replicates my path that was registered with a GPS recorder, here scaled to the size of a space, 1:6995.

Through the use of a specific tool, a hydrophone (read: underwater microphone), the visitor explores the forest and its sounds in a very tactile way.



Fig: set-up final wood sculpture Werktank

Credits:

Els Viaene: concept, audio registration, technical realisation

Jeroen Verschuren: wooden model

Johan Vandermaelen: microphone

Coproduction Netwerk Aalst

With the support of the flemisch authorities, Q-O2 and Werktank

Exhibitions:

2015

(PT) Lisbon – *Plunc Festival*

2014

(BR) Sao Paulo – *File Festival*

2013

(BE) Beursschouwburg – *Private Investigations*

(BE) Warande – *Storm op Komst*

Honorary Mentions:

2015

(JP) Jury Selection - **18th Japan Media Arts Festival**

Video documentation : <https://vimeo.com/68771239>



Fig: Mamori installation, underwater microphone, mobile listening set

E X P O

[HET BESTE WERK]

THE MAMORI EXPEDITION

ELS VIAENE

TE ZIEN OP PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS, BEURSSCHOUWBURG, BRUSSEL, TOT 22/2

Schoonheid en betekenis vind je niet zelden op onverwachte plaatsen, dat bewijzen een handvol kunstenaars op *Private Investigations*.

En paar jaar geleden ging radiomaakster en geluidskunstenaar Els Viaene op expeditie door het Braziliaanse regenwoud. Ze nam apparatuur mee om geluiden te registreren en een gps waarmee ze het traject vastlegde. Het resultaat is *The Mamori Expedition*, een houten installatie in de vorm van de reisroute. Die geeft het vertakte en kronkelige pad weer op schaal 1/3799. De drie houten armen van het beeldhouwwerk zijn gevuld met water. Een headset en een hamerachtig stokje laten je toe het water te 'horen'. Zodra je dat stokje, de zogenaamde hydrofoon, in het water steekt en ermee langs de kronkels gaat, worden de opgenomen geluiden gereproduceerd.

The Mamori Expedition krast, piept en tjirpt alsof je midden in het oerwoud staat, en het contact met het water – ook al verloopt het via een stokje – zorgt voor een beginnend avonturiersgevoel. Geluidskunst is visueel soms minder overtuigend, maar voor *The Mamori Expedition* is het tegendeel waar. Horen en zien gaan hier netjes hand in hand en de visuele kant – de grillige sculptuur – laat nauwelijks te wensen over. De bijdrage van Els Viaene maakt deel uit van *Private Investigations Installations*, een niet zo grote tentoonstelling met

Beauty and meaning are not seldom to be found in unexpected places, as proven by a handfull of artists in *Private Investigations*.

Some years ago sound artist Els Viaene went on an expedition through the Brazilian Amazon forest. With her she took a device to record sounds and a gps to register her journey. The result is *The Mamori Expedition*, a wooden installation in the shape of the route she followed. It depicts the branched and slithering path on a scale of 1 : 6 995. The three wooden arms of the sculpture are filled with water. A headset and a hammer-shaped stick allow you to 'hear' the water. As soon as you put this stick, the so called hydrophone, into the water and travel along the installation's curve, the recorded sounds are reproduced. *The Mamori Expedition* squeaks, peeps and twitters as if you are in the middle of the jungle, and the contact with the water - even though it happens through a stick - evokes a novice adventurer feeling. Sound art is visually sometimes less convincing, but when it comes to *The Mamori Expedition* the opposite is true. Hearing and seeing go properly hand in hand and the visual component - the quirky sculpture - leaves little to be desired.

(Focus Knack _ February 2013)

SOFT BOUNDARY

2013

Sound installation with mini-print and magnifier, in assignment of Pieter Van Bogaert for the exhibition "Blijven Kijken / Ce Qui Nous Regarde / Dropouts", M-Museum



Dit werk heeft veel, zoniet alles, te maken met vertellen en vertalen. Het zet de ene realiteit om in een andere. Het doet dat door te vertellen met woorden, door te vertalen naar beelden, door om te zetten in geluid. En zoals bij elke vertelling, bij elke vertaling, worden sommige dingen uitvergroot en verschijnen andere in miniatuur. Diep in dit boek, in deze doos, zit een kleiner boekje. Ik heb er het loepje bij nodig om het te bekijken. Ik zet de koptelefoon op, neem het boekje in de hand en druk play. Ik hoor verloren geluiden, omgevingsgeluid: brandend hout, stromend water, ruisende bomen. Elk van die geluiden maakt een overgang, het toont een grens. Grenzen van het hoorbare, grenzen van het zichtbare. De loep maakt het tastbaar. Veldopnames, dat is het sonoor

equivalent van de snapshot. De beelden in het boekje zijn het equivalent van veldopnames. Veldbeelden. Verloren beelden, omgevingsbeelden. De loep toont het raster van het gedrukte beeld. Het klinkt als de ruis in het geluid. De loep toont details in de opgenomen realiteit, maar meteen ook de techniek van de weergave. Die weergave dat is een vertaling. Het spel tussen beeld en geluid is dat ook. De twee versterken elkaar, ze verduidelijken elkaar. Ik hoor details in de ruis van het geluid, terwijl ik zoek naar details in het raster van het beeld. Als het boekje uit is en het geluid doorloopt, sluit ik de ogen om beter te zien.



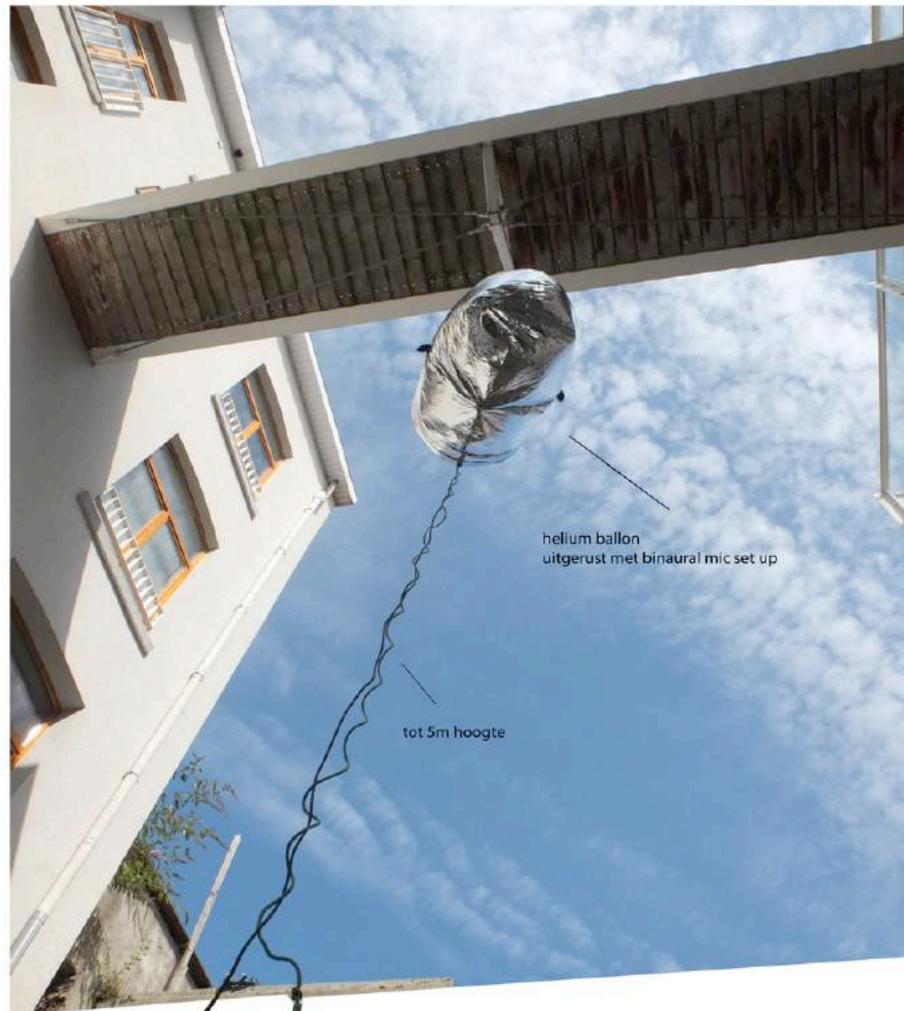
SKYWALKER

2011

Sound installation with zeppelin, helium and binaural mic.

The *Skywalker* listens to the sounds floating high above us. He is a little blimp filled with helium, equipped with two ears with whom you can go for a walk and experience a vertical sonic landscape. As you walk with the *Skywalker* you can hear the ground ambience from a higher perspective. It simultaneously creates an alienated feeling as well as a richer sensory experience.

With the support of Timelab, Summercamp 2011



SKYWALKER



mobiel audiotestel met hoofdtelefoon
-> live versterking + opname route



Fig: Skywalker in action

APPLIED PROJECTS

LISTENING DUNE
– **CHRIS WATSON & ELS VIAENE**

2016

The Listening Dune is a permanent sound installation in the renewed Zwin park at the Belgian coast. The site-specific installation places the listener within the extraordinary life of birds. Using full-sphere surround sound techniques, an acoustical map traces the geographical patterns of birds and their movements through a variety of habitats.

The installation is a unique collaboration between the international renowned wildlife recordist Chris Watson (UK) and the Belgian sound artist Els Viaene, with spatial audio engineer Tony Myatt (UK).



Fig: Chris Watson & Els Viaene



Fig: Listening Dune

EXPERIENCE ROOM - ENGELENBURCHT TILDONK

2014

As a production house for musea and exhibitions, Madoc designed the content for a permanent exhibition on the groundfloor of the Engelenburcht in Tildonk, a former monastery which was occupied during WOII. An important room in the tour was the 'Experiencing Room', a room that would give the audience an impression, feeling of life during occupation at WOII.

The project was presented in the form of a lecture: "Sound as an immersive experience" at the Bonn University during a conference on "Musik ausstellen: Re/Präsentationen von Musik und Sound in musealen Kontexten."



Fig: Experience Room



Fig: still from the documentation video



Fig: still from the documentation video

Credtis :

Els Viaene: concept and realisation
Johan Vandermaelen: technical assistance
Ruth Becquart: voice and text

Video documentation: <https://vimeo.com/112686775>

LIVE PERFORMANCES

(selected works)

LE TEMPS IMMOBILE

2012

A landscape in sound is drawn in the space. Only one loudspeaker is visible. Each sound comes from somewhere and nowhere, they drift in space just like the spectator. Each step he makes, creates a different perception of the space. Sounds pile up. As time evolves, one big soundbody is generated. The listener is not in the same space anymore.

In assignment of Arts Centre Network.



Fig: set-up Network

AIRSTREAM

2011

Airstream is an open-air sound performance that creates an aural layer to the visual components of its surroundings. The sounds produced are a combination of on location recordings and digital processed sounds, mixed in real time. A live soundtrack is created without imitating nor purely opposing to the scenery – a symbiosis of the amplified and the natural sounds.

The performance took place for the first time in the urban wastelands of Tallinn. A quadrophonic set-up was installed next to the sea and close to the old prison Patarei. The aural landscape of this place was marked by the horns of the cruiseships leaving once up to twice a day, constant deep drones of boat engines, seagulls in the distance, water washing ashore and an almost every day presence of the wind.

People took place in the inner circle of the soundfield, immersed by the amplified and natural sounds in combination with a very present and strong visual scenery.

This concept was developed for Tuned City 2011, Sonic Landmarks, part of the official program European Cultural Capital Tallinn 2011.



Fig: Live performance, Wastelands Tallinn

FOLLOW ME INSIDE OUT

2011

The piece *Follow me inside out* constructs its musical language out of one instrument, the cello. I recorded the building process of a cello and used these sounds to create a composition that combines the music of the cello with the wood sounds that were made in creating the cello. Using both the 'inner' and 'outer' sounds of a cello and in dialogue with the cello player Claire Goldfarb we created friction and a merging of both musical languages into a piece that turns the body of a cello inside out.

In assignment of Spor Festival (DK).



Fig : Spor Festival (DK), Els Viaene and Claire Goldfarb

COLLABORATIONS

RETROTERRA
– Anna Rispoli

2012

A piece directed by Anna Rispoli, created for the Kunstfestival des arts in which the evolution of the urban landscape is questioned by the young tower 'Elishout'.

Creation, recording, editing of the audiowalk.



Fig : still from the documentation video



Fig : still from the documentation video

THE SWAMP THAT WAS ...
– Kaffe Matthews

2012

'The swamp that was ...' is a multi-layered opera for sonic bicycles, directed by Kaffe Matthews. For this project we collaborated to interview different people in Ghent and to create different sonic landscapes. The piece is performed by the visitors as they cycle the streets of Ghent on a satellite linked sonic bicycle.

Presented at *Electrified III the responsive city*, a collaboration between Vooruit and SMAK.



Fig: recording of the Ledebirds



Fig: sonic bike

THE INVENTION OF THE ELEVATOR

– ANNA RISPOLI

2011

A piece directed by Anna Rispoli, for the Theaterformen Festival in Hannover. The piece took place in the remains of the Dutch Pavilion that was built in 2001, as an example of a symbiosis between nature and technology. Ten years later the place is abandoned but has defied weather and time.

Creation, recording, editing of the soundwalk.



Fig: Dutch pavilion



Fig: audiowalk

LIVE-IN-ROOM

– Lilia Mestre & Els Viaene

2009 / 2010 / 2011

Live-In Room is a pre-recorded soundscape, mixed and composed in real time by sound artist Els Viaene and Lilia Mestre. All the performances are original and unique since they are composed live, reacting to the presence of the audience in a re-created living room.

The installation / performance can be perceived both in the performance space and on the radio waves.

The piece was performed the first time during the Working Title festival in Brussels in 2009 and received a residency in Salzburg from The Prix Jardin d'Europe.

This work was shown at:

Working Title Festival (BE, 2009), Singel (BE, 2009), Szene Salzburg (AT, 2010), Ganz Novi Festival Zagreb (HR, 2011)



Fig: performance set-up Singel



Fig: performance at Ganz Novi Festival, Zagreb

INTO THE LIGHT OF THE NIGHT – PLAN B & ELS VIAENE

2010

Plan b are Sophia New and Dan Belasco Rogers. For some years now they have been creating GPS-guided audiowalks in different cities. This time they were invited on the Buda-island in Kortrijk for the creation of a new audiowalk in collaboration with sound artist Els Viaene. *Into The Light Of The Night* leads you round the island at night and let you experience a day in your life and your life in a day. Everything is recorded in binaural so people can experience the walk in a 3D sound environment.

Presented at the Happy New Festival, permanently available at the Buda Arts Centre.

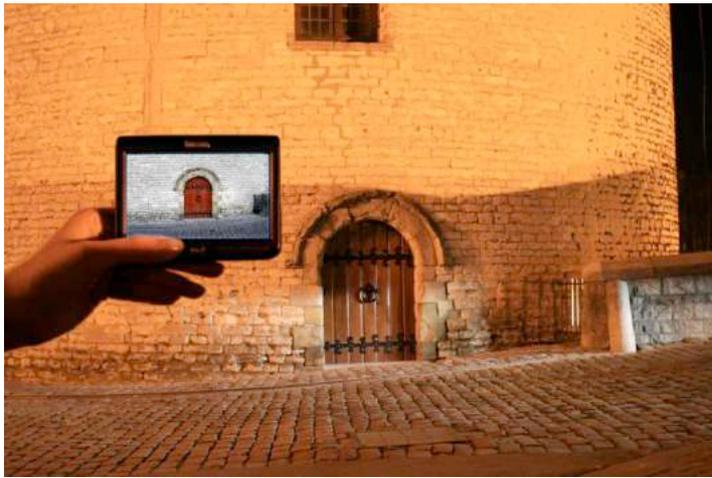


Fig: one of the points along the walk



Fig: 'fictional' map of the island