

Tales of Musicoplantophilia: A plant guided journey through the meaning of experimental

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Today's popularity of plants within arts practice is certainly influenced by an awareness of our interconnectedness and dependence on nature, made more vivid by the climate crisis.

The artistic practice of four different persons / collectives within and related to nature, particularly to plants, is the seed of this Collective Session: over the recent years, each of these persons / collectives has developed experimental practices frequently exploring sonic and visual environments using elements such as our own body, soundscape sounds, computers, sound sculptures, physical computing, sound installations, and music performances. These have emerged from creative, transdisciplinary, and collaborative practices that are site-specific and deeply influenced by a sense of connection with nature and plants, somewhat led by the biophilia theory as suggested by Edward Wilson. This theory asserts the existence of a fundamental and genetically based human need and propensity to affiliate with life and lifelike processes. Becoming more aware and truly feeling the plants as living entities made us realize that, besides the possibility to use them as sources of information, data, or transducers in technologic assisted artistic experiments, we needed to include them as “companions” to help us in discovering the world, ourselves, and new ways to develop experimental artistic practices. This brings up the question of how to best approach and connect to plants to devise experimental artistic practices?

Our aim, thus, is to identify and grasp holistic ways which makes nature and plants active parts of the creative process which leads to experimental artistic scenarios, rather than elements that output biologic and physiologic data *per se*. To discuss this question during the Session, we will put our endeavours and research outcomes in a large historical and technological perspective, looking at what makes nowadays nature and plants important and appealing for artists all over the world, especially how it relates to the numerous voices expressing a state of “detunement” between humans, other living beings, and our planet. Afterwards, we will continue by presenting the artistic work of each person / collective and discuss the artistic and creative implications that form the basis of each artistic practice. Finally, to wrap up the panel, we will prepare an experimental

improvisation setup comprising online and in person elements, as well as videotaped and live performative events in the best possible way to represent our concerns, research, and experimental artistic practices. Some of the features comprising the performance include in-person performers playing a setup composed of digital musical instruments, human voice, robotic plants and conventional instruments, in addition to online human performers playing soundscapes, sonic objects and fixed materials such as audio-visual videos.

We believe that such endeavours could give rise to innovative artistic questions and artistic experiences that could be beneficial not only for the arts community but also for public awareness.

Keywords: Music performance; Biophilia; Human voice

