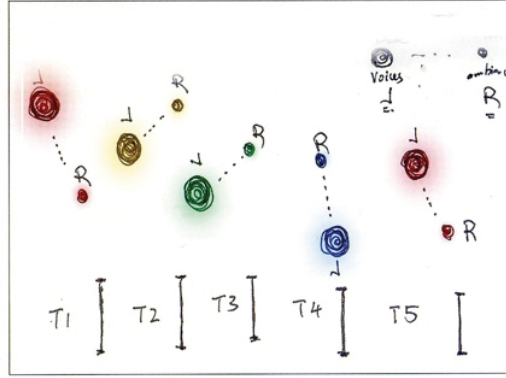
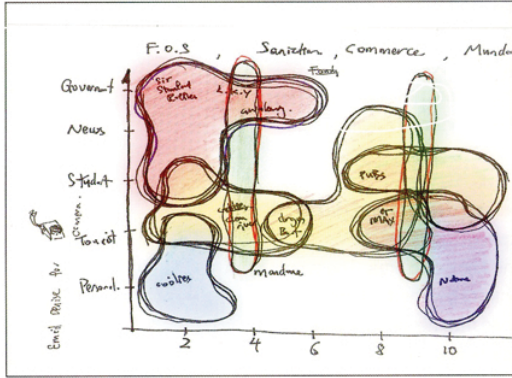


Architecture + USP students' work showcased in SITE SITUATION SPECTATOR magazine 2009

SOUND OF MY RIVER



Sam Cho Chung Man

Sound is a medium with the potential of linking spaces, objects and events. Experiential and spatial in nature, the continuous sensation of sounds exists as a three dimensional expansion of an object into space, filling up the space with content and at the same time, giving a context back onto the object. In terms of meaning, sound is a 'flexible' medium, as the process of listening requires a constant reinterpretation of the actual meaning or representation, rendering the content subjective in nature in comparison to the media of texts, sculptures or paintings. This continuous process of listening and reinterpretation renders sound as personal and specific to the listener, building a more intimate experience.

Using the Museum as site, the sound installation, *Sound of My River*, is a reconstruction of the memory and history of the Singapore River presented through the medium of sound. The intention of the sound installation is to illustrate and present a diverse, multi-layered perspective of the Singapore River across different walks of life. Conceptually, the installation exists as an 'antidote' to formal or official history, which is often presented as a single, linear, unbiased and even logical view of the River, offering a multi-perspective and individualistic view. Returning the power and authority of reinterpretation of history back to the audience, the collection of sounds from online videos, live site recordings, re-enactment of situation and audio archive captures a diverse and wide variety of viewpoints, experience and narrations of the River. This 'bottom-up' approach to sound allows the story of the Singapore River to be retold according to the experiences of the individual, portraying a more holistic narration of the River. Although some of the sounds may not be obvious or meaningful to everyone, it may provoke and impact particular individuals who share a similar experience of the River. As the sound is played and transmitted through the gallery space, the sharing of experience from one individual to another creates a temporal intimate relationship between the audiences, the sound and the River.

Sound of My River has five 'voices', each a category of sounds with a different perspective. The five 'voices' narrate their perspective and relationship with the River. The five 'voices' - government, news, student, tourist and personal - offers a range of formal to informal history, some descriptive while others are less structured in nature. In the duration of the piece, a

certain issue would emerge as the 'topic of discussion' between the five 'voices'; these issues are general concepts, progressions or ideas of the Singapore River, termed 'movements' in the duration of the piece. These movements range from commercialisation, sanitisation, founding of Singapore, etc, offering a guideline for the 'voices' to relate. At the same time, each movement's focus is brought out through the playing of ambient sound and arranged music. Within the movement, the 'voices' are arranged in a way to create dialogue or references which link people, events and places in a rather unusual and interesting manner. Partly because of the nature of sound and its potential to link completely random events and make it believable, the sound arrangement attempts to create moments of 'disbelief' and 'shock' so as to bring out unusual connection between objects, events or places- for instance linking coolies and pubs which both shares the same places in different times.

In conclusion, the sound installation, *Sound of My River*, offers an unorthodox presentation of the Singapore River, linking events, places, people and histories through arrangement and editing of categorised sound. It is an attempt to reject the singularity of history and embody the diversified identities of the river, and at the same time, giving individuals space to 'voice' out their points of view through reinterpretations offered through the medium of sound.

LEFT:
Working Sketch 1:
Graphical Composition of Sound
Sam Cho Chung Man

Conceptual Diagram

RIGHT:
Working Sketch 2:
Location of Speakers and Sound Track
Sam Cho Chung Man

Conceptual Diagram