

# Context and questions

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In my project I see **voice as a medium for collective practice and resistance**. By that I mean that speech acts, demonstrations, assemblies or any daily vocal expression in public are performative actions that make space, through sound and presence, and form collective or individuals identities. They can be more inclusive participation in a dialogue than writing based communication. **But I also see voice being defined by social binary structures and oppositions**. For example the terms used to describe voice are separated in; male/female, public/private, expert/amateur, rational/ irrational, ordered/wild and other.

These binaries have structured Western thinking **since antiquity and favor the 'civilized white male' subjects in public**. Nevertheless the nature of voice and **its capabilities overpass these oppositions** of gender, nationality, culture, space and technology.

My research seeks to unravel **these possibilities of voices that break these binaries**, with the intention to explore democratic ways of communication that embraces excluded forms of address that are female, trans, non binary and any other that deviates from the dominant voice.

My thesis deals with a voice that transcends these dichotomies. It refers to the female and collective voices, and their mediation. The collective voices are marginalized under the realm of the patriarchal individualistic society. The female voices are part of it. **Technology expands the possibilities** of those voices, for example by helping to their mediation and access to other places and audiences. Their engagement with media happens with an agonistic attitude, that resembles. In our democracy there is a fear of 'ugly' modes of address which are connected to the female body- blood, birth, death, mourning- and other dark aspects and passions that are perceived as threatening to society. These forms of vocalization are excluded from a public discourse which since antiquity have centered on **'self-control' and 'reason'**. Such things are seen to create noise and disorder and "have to be **kept" silent** according to the patriarchal norms. But alternative mediums and forms of communication have been developed against this.

**Mainstream media and public space in cities serves the amplification of the voice of the powerful** that dominates over others.

This is based on strong power relations. These exclusions are expressed in those binaries (private/public,...). Bodies restricted to express, voice is an important part of this expression. But has also gone beyond the primary orality. How to explore this second orality?

I borrow practices from the examples I explore, that also follow my methods. Site-specificity, listening, participation, less medium, temporality,

## What to show (strategy)

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DIAGRAM!! UNDERNEATH SOUNDS

**My main focus is on the presence and amplification of female voices in public spaces.**

My approach is based on **feedback and process-based actions** unraveled throughout a short period around the area of Leeszaal. **“What kinds of collective practices do voices – especially women speaking aloud – make possible? Possibilities of amplification** (through distortions, creating spaces, listening, streaming, amplifying? practices explored in my thesis)

In my project my approach is to create a space for that **exploration to happen with others through performative actions, meetings and sound walks**. I focus on one specific area (around **Leeszaal in Rotterdam West**) because this space is like a meeting point, open for anyone to come. The population of that area as well consists mostly from immigrants from around the world and their perception on these binaries and voice are diverse. My past similar projects showed me that the site-specificity and involvement of people in the process can actually break these binaries in situ.

I made this website that collects the outcomes of my process.

So I first started exploring the area by walking, listening and recording the sounds that reveal who occupies public space and how, what sounds describe the absence of excluded voices? **What voices are amplified and how? What mediation allows them to be amplified** I use the produced material (screenshots of soundwaves and sounds) to interact with people from the area and then come back to the same process with a new feedback. These are my first approaches. Then I focused on the sound files. I asked people visiting leeszaal- most of them are inhabitants from that area- to listen with headphones to a selection of sounds I have recorded and describe them. From that process I want to create an archive of annotated sounds that reveal the different interpretations of these sounds, that depend on the perspective of each person, that is formed by culture, gender, social status. In my second attempt the sounds are online sounds related to past public moments of that area. I want to subvert or replace the general imagination of the area with other layers/narratives, that open the discussion and reveal the topic in indirect ways even.

At the same time I approach people, from Leeszaal, and arrange short meetings with them where we talk about exclusion or silencing of women in public spaces and explore forms of speech acts through small workshops. These workshops are about reading extracts related to the topic, warm-up vocal exercises, transcribing, listening and collective speaking. Until now I introduce the topic to some of them and talk to each other through vowels because vowels in all languages are inviting for dialogue (public language, vibration, loudness). I want to create a safe common space of interaction in Leeszaal, where we can explore our public voices in situ, and trying out vocal performances. I am doing that together with Christina Karagianni, who is also from Greece and with whom I share similar experiences of silencing. We combine our practices and do these meetings in moments of Leeszaal (language course, cafe nl, wereld vrouwen).

Structure of the meetings: reading extracts in random order, discuss personal associations, warm up, say a personal sentence in any language, transcribe only the vowels, read back the vowels, sing all together the score of vowels (Like utterances, choirs for mourning and climactic events of

the city).

Extracts: these two texts refer to the nakedness of female voice. Men would consider a woman speaking in public as being naked in public. The same idea was expressed in 2015 by an extremist group when referring to female radio producers.

First page: an utterance of these explorations, **open composition. I see this interface as the construction of a media event.** Public/private (people speak in private and then listen to the sounds that refer to the topic)

## Future

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I gradually **build up a connection** with people participating in the process. I will keep realizing **meetings trying different things and see what elements work best.** I am planning, for example, to **introduce gradually even more the concept of mediation, through technology**, of the voice and its abilities to amplify one's presence in different platforms and spaces.

more precise sounds

Engaging more with the people through listening the surroundings,... Maybe **inviting them in soundwalks? try the exercises in public?** reading together?.

## why (Intention)

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Personal experience