

Written Response : Method of Investigating

By Dain Kim

This investigation was initiated due to the disruptive noises I encountered near my office, which were attributed to the ongoing construction of a water pump renovation project on York Way. The purpose of this study is to delve into the nature of these sounds and explore the ways in which I interpret them.

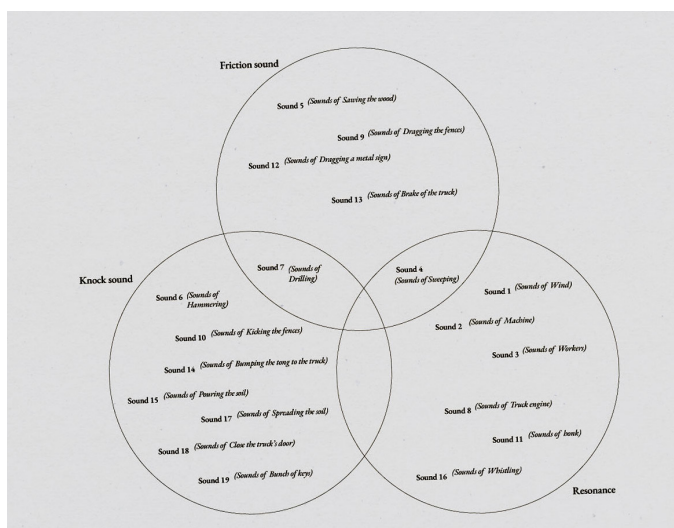
To help me in this investigation, I employed the method of note-taking, drawing inspiration from Georges Perec's work "Species of Spaces" (1974). Note-taking, as presented by Perec, is a valuable tool for enabling an impartial assessment of the situation at hand and, subsequently, arriving at objective conclusions. Georges Perec mentioned that :

Observe the street, from time to time, with some concern for system perhaps. Apply yourself, take your time. (...) Note down what you see. Anything worthy of note going on. (...) You must set about it more slowly, almost stupidly. Force yourself to write down what is of no interest, what is most obvious, most common, most colourless. (...) Don't say, Don't write 'etc'. Make an effort to exhaust the subject. (Perec, 1974, p. 50)

Following Perec's guidance to record without omitting details, I meticulously recorded for approximately 3 to 4 hours. I then created a structured system and a set of rules for a profound site understanding. This system involved categorizing the recorded sounds into three groups:

- Resonance
- Knock Sound
- Friction Sound

represented visually in a Venn diagram (Fig.1) offering a clear way to understand the auditory landscape.



(Fig 1. Venn Diagram)

Subsequently, I translated these organized sounds into visual representations. Visuals convey information through the sense of sight. I assumed situations where it cannot be heard or read. This involved considering how sound could be effectively expressed through visuals, a process I found particularly intriguing.

My approach was influenced by the ideas of Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour in "Learning from Las Vegas" (1972). Their work emphasized the significance of symbols and signs in unifying and identifying spaces.

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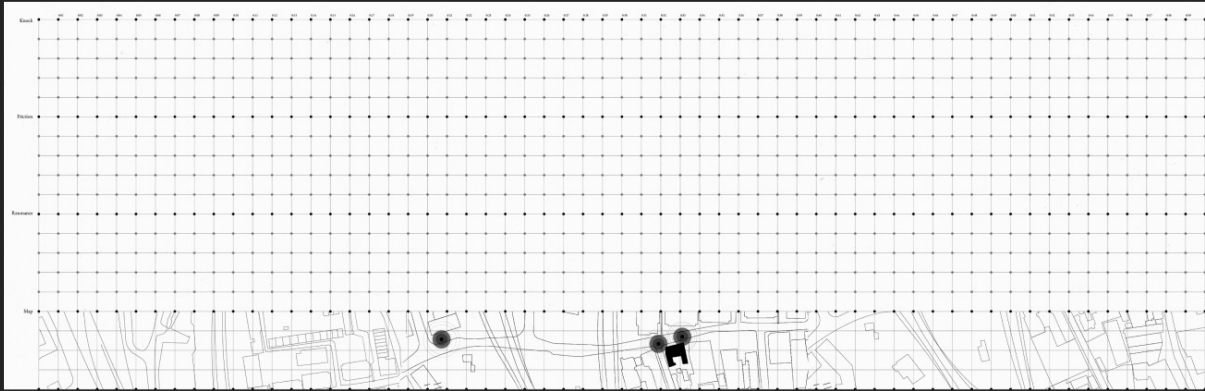
(...) But it is the highway signs, through their sculptural forms or pictorial silhouettes, their particular positions in space, their inflected shapes, and their graphic meanings, that identify and unify the mega texture. They make verbal and symbolic connections through space, communicating a complexity of meanings through hundreds of associations in a few seconds from far away. Symbol dominates space. (Venturi, 1972, p. 13)

Inspired by his ideas, I decided to organize the sounds I encountered by creating a system. I developed something I call a "site notation" to classify and represent these sounds. It's different from regular music notation because it's designed specifically for site-specific sounds.

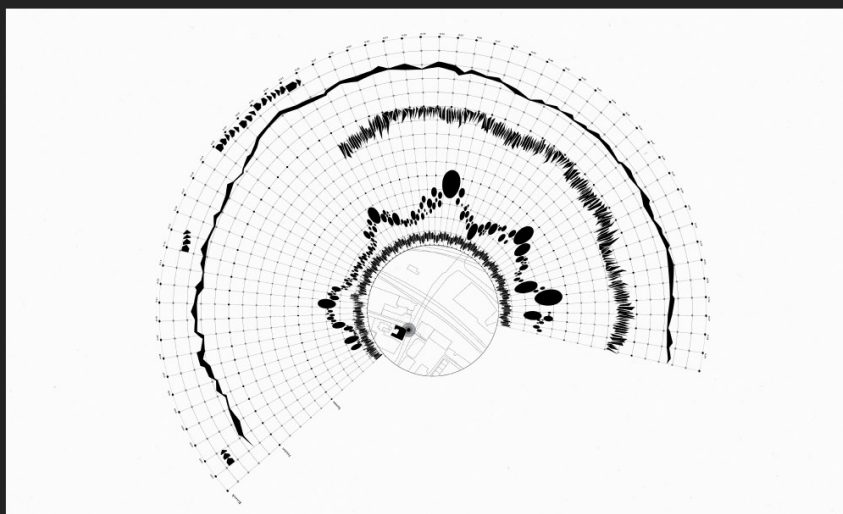
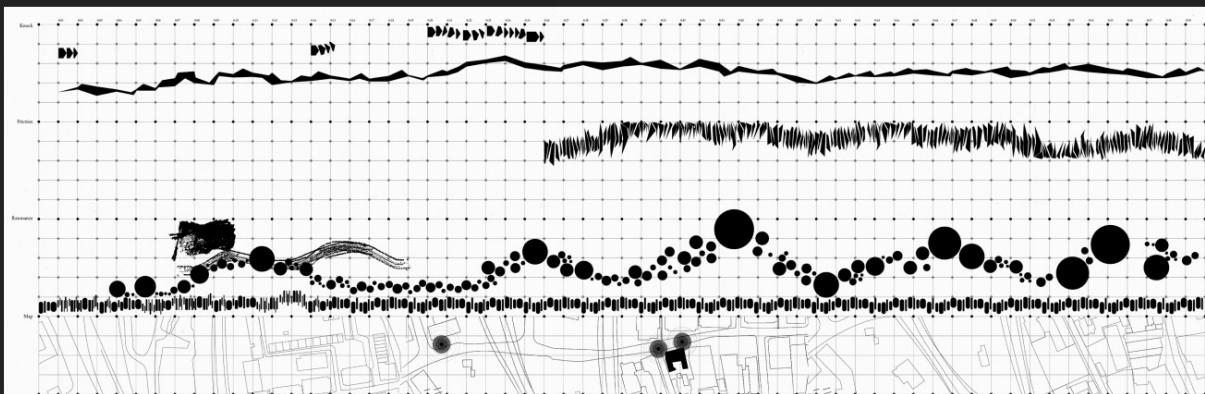
In the "site notation" time is represented on the horizontal line, and pitch on the vertical line. I organized it like musical staff lines, with each sound type having its own area. (Fig.2)

To make it simple, the way I show sounds is systematic. For example, resonance sounds use shapes without corners (vertexes), knock sounds are shapes with less than three vertexes, and friction sounds are shapes with many vertexes. I decided on these rules based on how sharp each sound category is. (Fig.3)

In summary, this investigation encourages us to explore beyond conventional design and sensory understanding. By embracing a multisensory approach, it unveils innovative design insights and connections between different mediums. It teaches us to look beyond what might seem seems grotesque, pointless, or stupid (Perec, 1974), and explore our surroundings through all our senses, uncovering a world of creative potential.



(Fig 2. Blank Notation)



(Fig 3. Notation)

1. Perec, G. (1999) 'Species of Spaces', in *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, 2nd edition, London: Penguin
2. Venturi, R., and Brown, D S., and Izenour, S. (1972) 'A Significance for A&P Parking Lots or Learning from Las Vegas', in *Learning from Las Vegas*, 1st edition, Cambridge: MIT Press