Hypernatural Sounds #1

ON SAMPLING/
RE-SAMPLING/
UN-SAMPLING

texts by
**Sumbu Dunia,
Lukatoyboy
& Samuel Hertz**

curated by
**Desiree Förster
& Pedro Lopes**

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Foreword

Nothing is original. ~~Steal~~ Sample from anywhere that resonates ~~with inspiration or fuels your imagination~~. Devour old films, new films, music, books, paintings, photographs, poems, dreams, random conversations, architecture, bridges, street signs, trees, clouds, bodies of water, light and shadows.
—~~Jim Jarmusch~~

Part I

Prologue

Re-arranging of musical tracks, cuts, loops or manipulating of existing sound recordings —all of these are subsumed under the term "sampling". Coming from the experimental, the musique concrète and electroacoustic scenes, sampling influenced virtually all musical genres. Given the highly differentiated musical scene today, including its complex regulations and unsettlements in regards to copyright, the artists' sovereignty and the right to culture, it's worthwhile to look into sampling, follow its traces from early beginnings to today's subversive practices.

This book is a collection of reflections by three musicians that performed at Hypernatural Sounds #1: on sampling/re-sampling/un-sampling in 2015 at ACUD Macht Neu in Berlin. The series Hypernatural Sounds was created by Pedro Lopes and Desiree Förster to address the overflow of musical events in Berlin which do not reflect upon themselves. In order to bridge the gap in understanding the recent developments and linking them to concrete artistically practices, the series applies itself to investigations of techniques, phenomena and questions, in performances and discussions. Being more than "yet another event", Hypernatural Sounds revolves around the philosophy of sounds, of contemporary music practices and addresses a precise exploration of a singular topic in every happening. The first was dedicated to the topic of sampling in some of its angles: political as in a breaking force of copyright law, social as in the reflections by the three musicians span across some of these angles:

Samuel Hertz opens this book of reflections by exposing the idiosyncrasies of sampling as a practice. It unveils some of its powers such as the dissociation of content and context by time-traveling to some degree or its ability to transfigure identities.

Next, we dive in a tech-philosophical layer as **Lukatoyboy** reflects on the nature of samples saved in a permanent storage device. These become alive when the reading-device is turned on and they are again played out and transformed. It reflects on the sampler both as a zombie-machine, one without a mind of its own, and as the phoenix that brings dead sounds to life, again and again.

Finally, **Sumbu Dunia** reflects upon the politics of copyright with a provoking "list of samples I would have used if they weren't illegal" that links directly to Dunia's own performance at Hypernatural Sounds, which might or not have used exactly all those samples. Sumbu Dunia's reflection is a segue into the last chapter, in which we provide actionable ideas on how to sample this book. In doing so, we freed this text from the constrains of the copyright machine by publishing it under a copyleft license. Thus, you, the reader, are free to sample this text in whichever way you see fit.

—Desiree Förster & Pedro Lopes, 2016

Part II

REFLECTIONS ON SAMPLING

*Chapter **1***

Itinerant Presents and Fussy Futures [Sam Hertz]

Margarette asks Joseph Blue, "Were you ever a woman?" "It's hard to say," he says. He was born so many times, he explains, in so many places that a vision of the birth canal – a wormhole, uncoiling in brilliant colors, with the widening darkness of space like a door at the exit – appears to him several times a day, vivid, it is not like a dream whenever he dozes off. He wonders if, as a woman, he could have given birth to himself.

—Janet Kauffman, The Body in Four Parts (p. 56) [1]

To this effect, the entities arising from these four domains [Machinic Phyla; Consciential Universes; Territories of virtual real; Economy of Flows] will not have any fixed identity. They will only be able to sustain their own configurations through the relations that they entertain with each other; they will be required to change state and status as a function of their overall Assemblage.

—Félix Guattari, Schizoanalytic Cartographies (p. 27) [2]

If the present has a nomadic disposition, the future is its fussy child:

Possessing the possibility to divorce content from context through temporal transposition, sampling represents a minor form of time travel. However, this temporal flux also permits multiple presents whose identities are not fixed temporally or contextually. This aspect of sampling – the degree to which it dislodges fixed points – enables an investigation into present tenses that refuse to hold still. The act of sampling, then, is not so much preservation as it is a centrifugal force blending together multiple instances of the recent present.

[1] *Kauffman, Janet. The Body in Four Parts. Minneapolis, MN: Greywolf Press, 1993.*

[2] *Guattari, Félix. Schizophrenic Cartographies (Trans. Andrew Goffey). London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2013.*

Fussy futures are the outcomes of these itinerant tendencies, and are expressed through the polyphonic buzz and flow of immediate pasts and presents – each future maintains a distinct relationship with the past, but soon becomes blurred into bonds of necessity. That any given sound may have given birth to itself is representative of the basic temporal fluidity that is assumed within the act of sampling. Simultaneously, this reflects the extent to which past, present, and future should be seen as correspondingly flexible. In reality, none prefer to hold still for very long.

In the meantime, Time plays its own melody. The spectral lilt of Time's Song– the rocky oscillations between fussy futures and itinerant presents – voice the refrain of no fixed points: That I have already been a woman [and everything else] and so will you. That data, and therefore samples, are temperamental and contradictory. The sample is the convergence of multiple bodies in a single moment in time – soon to disperse, but just for a moment, a rippling and wavering impression.

—Samuel Hertz, 2016

Samples are dead, but my sampler is still alive [Lukatoyboy]

Thoughts on dead audio, its new life and afterlife

Compared to synthesized sound, which is usually alive in its form, sampled audio is dead. Therefore, one can see samplers as necrophilic instruments, always dealing with dead sounds. While operating a sampler, the dead sounds come to a new life, as they are being sequenced, filtered, looped, and so forth. This way, samples (in a sampler) have a zombie-like behavior, becoming an army of files[1] which are employed and manipulated by a producer or a performer. From this interaction, a new life form appears - a take, call it a sequence, an improvisation or a composition.

I had a hard time with samplers.

One of the first professional music tools I bought featured a sampler in it, and already then I became aware how dead the sampled sounds were. On the other hand, some of the samples in some cheaper samplers had a life-span tied to the power button - the moment you turn off the machine, the sample dies, and it can never be brought back to life as it was.

In my second year of equipment buying, I bought a sampler, which was an older cousin of a sampler I used at the Hypernatural Sounds.

Let's say that you have direct access to 16 samples at once, and you do so by touching one of 16 rubber pads, each triggers a sample . Now by using four "banks"

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[1] *File as in: "durable in the sense that it remains available for other programs to use after the program that created it has finished executing." —Wikipedia, January 2016*

of 16 pad-assigned samples, the variations of a musical take become endless, not even considering further transformations such as effects, other instruments, the meaning of lyrics, and so forth.

For the Hypernatural Series, I used 18 samples in 30 minutes, i.e., twice I used only one sample per an improvised/pre-sequenced take, and another time I used 16 samples. Those were the dead files I stumbled upon after quite some time, at least 8 months, since I used the sampler. These samples differ very much in origin: (1) a sound of a Game Boy which I sampled in Garajau, Madeira; (2) a sample from a record released on 4AD Records in 2012; and (3) those 16 were text-to-speech samples of NATO alphabet, which I used for a friend's fashion show soundtrack. By turning on, selecting and adjusting a bit, those dead (and preserved) files, those samples were loaded and presented live in their new life form.

Since then, I turned the sampler once, just to check if I can recreate one of these forms.
I could, and I did.

Lastly, in this link there's a sampled word from the text above:

—Lukatoyboy, 2016

Chapter 3

Un-sampling [Sumbu Dunia]

Here's a list of samples I would have used if it wasn't illegal:

Tara Brach Opening to Life's flow

YouTube clip of RAF Lightning Jet fighter promo 60s

Hollow remix of Micromelancolié Mora/Low Cakes

Vince and Lou Who do you love?

Youtube clip of Yoko Ono's cut piece

Hollow

Youtube clip of Gagaku: The court music of Japan documentary

Hollow

Julizya Band Tai Yaka

Hollow

Elias Hulk Been around too long

Pantera This Love

Haddaway What is Love

The Beatles What you need is Love

Hollow

Youtube clip of Tenor Saw at Jamaica's PNP Rally, 1986

Morka Winter's here

Recording of street musicians, Leiden, April 2015

Recording of a party at Pedro Lopes' house, Berlin, April 2015

Cicih Cangkurileung, Rasih Suwarsih & Ujang Be'I Kembang kaheman

Chiarosi Hunting Birds

Scatman John Scatman

Massimo Urbani & Luigi Bonafede Locomotiva

John Coltrane Jupiter Variation

Hollow

Recording of a ferry between Calais and Dover, February 2012

No intentions of any kind of namedropping. It's all connected. Since we build personalities by sampling cultures and social groups behaviors, I'm trying out diversity and test identities, with the hope that it's not socially illegal.

—Sumbu Dunia, 2016

Part III

Biographies

Samuel Hertz, composer and performer, received his MFA at Mills College, where he studied composition and electronic music with Pauline Oliveros, Fred Frith, and Zeena Parkins. He has worked with numerous dance companies throughout the United States, and his work has been seen/heard at ACUD MACHT NEU (Berlin, Germany), Nebulullaby (London, UK), ACRE Gallery/ACRE-TV (Chicago, IL), ARTX (Long Beach, CA), Jack Straw New Media Gallery (Seattle, WA), Harvestworks (New York, NY), The Uncreativity Festival (Minneapolis, MN), and WBEZ Radio (Chicago, IL) among others. Samuel has worked as lead technical assistant to, and performed with, Morton Subotnick, Alvin Curran, and John Driscoll. Currently, he composes music for a number of San Francisco Bay-area choreographers, in addition to working on an electro-acoustic composition commission by the OpusCentrum Ensemble (Bourges, France). Recently, he was an artist-in-residence at Bains::Connective in Brussels, Belgium.

Lukatoyboy aka Luka Ivanović is a musician, sound artist and educator from Belgrade, currently based in Berlin. His main activities in music and sound include performing electroacoustic improvisation (based on realtime sampling of various objects, toys, voices, and field recordings) using feedback, analogue synthesizers, electromagnetic coils, radio transmitters, etc. His current practice is based on participatory performances dealing with networks, sound and narrative, using walkie talkies and site specific topics. Focused on the relation of chances and structures, he creates participatory works with suggested rules, questioning exclusivity and authority of an artist.

Sumbu Dunia aka Rui Nogueiro is a personal research on the collision of contexts, identities and the associated perspectives, shuffling the familiar and the unfamiliar towards different levels of entropy. His music can be often found both online or in beautiful tapes from at Noumenal Loom, Rotifer and Exo Tapes.

Desiree Förster is a Berlin based curator and researcher collaborates within various disciplines such as (synthetic) biology, computer science, philosophy and humanities, and is interested in creating space for assemblies that cross assumed and naturalized relations. While organizing workshops, talks and concerts, she is writing her Ph.D. and works at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin. She gave presentations about her research on interspecies relationships, human-machine entanglements and new artistic practices at conferences such as the Annual Meeting of the Social Studies of Science Copenhagen 2012 and Denver 2015, gave workshops on Foucault's "heteropia" at the Utopia School Copenhagen 2015 and is strongly engaged with the local artist and project space scene Berlin.

Pedro Lopes is a turntablist metamorphosed into a percussionist by night and a Human Computer Interaction researcher by day. When playing live he deconstructs his instrument, the turntables, into a vehicle of a rapid, post-scratch and post-jazz, musical dialog of analog intonation and acoustic overtones. In Pedro's music the needles do not merely amplify the vibrations stored in the grooves of the vinyl records. For him, the needles are microscopes that enable us to hear otherwise unheard micro-realities, such as the sound of a fingernail scratching a membrane, a coin revolving as it falls, a brush dragged across a plastic surface. Pedro has been collaborating with artists such as Reinhold Friedl, DJ Sniff, Imre Thormann, amongst many others, in a life entangled deeply with his research on interfaces and performance arts. This extra-musical investigations have led him to produce pieces for Transmediale, a Fundação de Serralves, Fylkingen, Ausland, and Goethe Institut.

Hypernatural Sounds is a series curated by Pedro Lopes and Desiree Förster. This series brings together musicians and theorists for sharing with the audience the philosophy behind sound art and music.

Afterword

Nothing is original. Sample from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination. Devour old films, new films, music, books, paintings, photographs, poems, dreams, random conversations, architecture, bridges, street signs, trees, clouds, bodies of water, light and shadows.
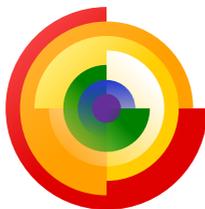—Jim Jarmusch

Part IV

SAMPLE THIS WORK

This is a Free Cultural Work, so your have the freedom to, for instance:

sample this

copy this

print this

distribute this in your street

write all over this

show it at an art gallery

be inspired by this

and share this with others.

Obtain a copy of this work by taking a picture of this code or **visit us**.