

## **THE SOUND OF ART: THE CONSERVATION OF AUDIO IN TIME-BASED ARTS.**

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This contribution focuses on the under-researched subject of sound and acoustics in time-based arts based on artist and conservator interviews. What should conservators consider when conserving time-based works of art?

Sound is an important, yet often overlooked aspect of time-based installation artworks. In many installations, sound plays a central role and is thus crucial for the artwork's identity. However, the properties and criteria of audible features for the conservation of time-based artworks have been little researched. In most registration and documentation guidelines for installation artworks the aural aspect is either mentioned shortly or not referred to at all. A significant contribution to improve this is "A Documentation Framework for Sound in Time-based Media Installation Art" by Amy Brost, who recognizes the need to "be conversant with sound physics, acoustics, audio engineering and sound design," to enable a better communication with artists and sound professionals. While Brost's article focuses mostly on the documentation of sound, this research focuses on the practical implications when installing and preserving such artworks. For this purpose, interviews with young artists with different technological backgrounds have been conducted, as well as with prominent time-based media conservators:

- Reinhard Bek, Bek & Frohnert LLC, New York
- Amy Brost, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- Patricia Falco, Tate, London
- Flaminia Fortunato, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

From these interviews a better understanding of the issues at stake with aural characteristics of multimedia artworks has been gained. Having documented the knowledge possessed by more informed professionals following oral history methods, the final aim of this research is to use this insight to devise a practical tool that will support conservators when working with time-based arts, and enable them to recognize the various features of aural elements to better approach the challenges they pose in conservation. This guide will comprise of the various issues that can be encountered when approaching sound elements in time-based artworks and should be considered in preservation strategies. Ideally, this would lead to better communication between art professionals, giving the aural elements the same attention as the video elements in the conservation of contemporary art.

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