

# SOUND-FRAMEWORKS: FROM PRACTICE TO RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

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## Sound-Frameworks - Rapid Survey 1

In order to gain a better understanding of the professional networks, collaborations and partnerships that support working with sound in the design of the public realm, Sound-Frameworks is initiating a short online survey at the Urban Sound Symposium 2023 in Barcelona. This online survey takes less than five minutes to complete, and can be done anonymously. Please access the survey by scanning the QR code below.



## Abstract

Sound-Frameworks: Collaborative Frameworks for Integrating Sound Within Urban Design and Planning Processes is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Individual Fellowship that explores how to assert critical considerations of sonic experience within the design of the public realm. The project addresses limitations with current modes of knowledge exchange between stakeholders involved in working with sound in the context of the built environment. Sound-Frameworks accelerates an action-led research agenda through the development of three interrelated resources. Through the development of these resources, the project integrates opinions from diverse professionals, from architects to acousticians, from planners to artists and from activists to developers, inviting the perspectives of students and younger professionals alongside established practitioners.

By foregrounding opportunities for practitioners to reflect on their own definitions of 'the public realm' and 'working with sound', the project steers away from homogenised conceptualisations of this domain of design. To support this, the project leverages practical resources - such as the The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Plan of Work - to explore how different modes of working with sound in the context of the public realm occur across different stages of project development. This poster outlines the project's structure, objectives, core partnerships and initial research findings and explores how they will inform the production of the Sound-Frameworks design tool, foregrounding an agile momentum from practice to research and back to practice again.

## Overview

Sound-Frameworks is an action-led research project that explores the role of sound in urban design and city planning. Central to the project is a focus on urban sonic experience as a driver for design in the public realm. The public realm constitutes the integral connective tissue that defines the contemporary cityscape, within which different individuals, communities and institutions engage with each other through cooperation and conflict. As the densification of urban territories accelerates, the role of sonic experience as an essential factor to be addressed by urban designers must be reassessed. In order to do this, Sound-Frameworks addresses the question: What tools do interdisciplinary design teams require in order to integrate considerations of sound within the design of the public realm?

## Host and Partners

Sound-Frameworks is hosted by Theatrum Mundi, a centre for research and experimentation in the public culture of cities. Theatrum Mundi expands the crafts of city-making through collaboration with the arts in order to develop imaginative responses to shared questions about the staging of urban public life. The organisation was founded in 2012 by the sociologist Richard Sennett and has offices in London and Paris.

Sound-Frameworks is further supported by partnerships with Arup (UK), UrbanIdentity (CH), Struer Kommune (DK), the University of Oxford Faculty of Music (UK) and the Sound Studies Lab at the University of Copenhagen (DK). By bringing together a non-academic host alongside partners from the academic, private and public sectors, Sound-Frameworks prioritises the inclusion of perspectives of a diverse range of practitioners.

## Funding

Sound-Frameworks has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 101032632. It was funded within the last stage of the MSCA IF Society and Enterprise (SE) panel, which allowed projects to be hosted by non-academic beneficiaries. This panel was discontinued in Horizon Europe.

## Structure

Sound-Frameworks explores new methodologies for integrating sound in urban design through the production of three interrelated, open-access resources:

- » A sound in practice survey
- » A publication on best practice guidelines in this field
- » An online tool to guide the integration of sound in the design of the public realm

## Sound in Practice Survey

The Sound-Frameworks survey is being conducted with participants from a range of backgrounds and disciplines, including both those who work explicitly with sound and those who work with other dimensions of city-making practice. The structure of the survey is included below.

### 1. General Information

- » What organisation are you currently working for?
- » What is the title of your current position or role?
- » In what department or division of your organisation is your current role?
- » How long have you worked in this role?
- » Are there any previous positions or roles that you would like to mention in the context of this survey?
- » Do you have any training or educational experiences that you would like to mention in the context of this survey?

### 2. Current Role

- » In your current role, do you work mostly independently or in collaboration with others?
- » What other departments or divisions within your own organisation do you most frequently collaborate with?
- » What other organisations or partners do you most frequently collaborate with?
- » Does your role involve direct contact with members of the public?
- » Does your role involve collaboration with artists?
- » Do you consider your work in this role to be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary or grounded within a specific discipline?

### 3. Defining the Public Realm

- » How would you define 'the public realm'?
- » Does your role directly involve working with the public realm?
- » If yes - how?
- » What do you find the most interesting about working in this territory?
- » What are some of the challenges that you associate with working in this territory?

## 4. Different Methods of Working With Sound

- » How would you define 'working with sound' in the context of the public realm?
- » Does your role directly involve working with sound in this context?
- » If yes - how?
- » What do you find the most interesting about working in this way?
- » What are some of the challenges that you associate with working in this way?

## 5. Free Word Associations

I'm going to select two words or phrases from a list. I want you to think about each word for a moment, and then tell me what comes to mind. Sample list: Quiet area, noise control, sound installation, sonic warfare, listening together, sonic urbanism, sound design, listening alone, soundscape, acoustic atmosphere, silence, sound art, echo, listening, archaeoacoustics, acoustic planning, resonate, scream, whisper, reverberate, tranquillity, listening to non-human life, noise, dampen, the political voice, acoustic territories (the full list includes more terms).

- » Can you suggest one or more new terms to include in this list for future participants?

## 6. Project Selection

At this point I want to ask you to select a project that you have worked on in the public realm. This could be something that you have worked on in the past, that you are working on now, or that you are planning to work on in the near future. We will use this public realm project as the main focus for our conversation. If there is time, we might consider a second project

## 7. Main Sound in Practice Survey

- » What is the project title?
- » What type of project is this?
- » What is the project budget?
- » What was the planned project duration?
- » What was the actual project duration?
- » What was the project start date?
- » Where did the project take place (country, city, region)?
- » Who is involved in developing the project?
- » Who are the end users or audience of the project?
- » Can you describe the project?
- » What were the main objectives of the project?
- » Why did you choose this project for the survey, as a space through which to talk about sound in relation to the public realm?
- » How is this project related to the public realm?
- » What were the main objectives of the project in relation to the public realm?
- » How is this project related to working with sound?
- » What were the main objectives of the project in terms of the role of sound?
- » Where did this instinct, perspective and expertise concerning sound come from?
- » If we consider different stages of work according to the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Plan of Work 2020, at what stage would you indicate that this work involving sound took place?

0. Strategic Definition
1. Preparation and Briefing
2. Concept Design
3. Spatial Coordination
4. Technical Design
5. Manufacturing and Construction
6. Handover
7. Use

- » How was this focus on sound introduced, and by whom?
- » What were the strengths of this way of working?
- » What were the challenges of working this way?
- » Were there any other stages of project development in which you feel that a consideration of sound could have been introduced?
- » How could that have influenced the project?

## 8. Topic Association

Based on how you've described this project, I'm going to choose a cluster of tags from a list of topics I have generated for this survey. I want to see if my choices of these topics correspond to what you feel is relevant in this project in the context of the public realm. The list of topics includes: Connectivity, territoriality, parties and celebration, nonhuman life, infrastructure, theatre, music, housing and residential spaces, bridge, planting, crime, safety, transitional spaces, landscaping, nature, parks, water, social equity, streets, atmosphere, violence, bridges, citizen engagement, ICTs, sidewalks, mobility, maritime, relaxation, sports, roads, health, justice, voices, critical spatial practice, waste, democracy, visual arts, mixed use spaces, public lighting, homelessness, pollution, traffic, socially engaged practice, gentrification, waterfront, shopping and commercial spaces, activity, neighbourhood development, architecture, railway, wayfinding, density, participatory art, smart cities, war, displacement, animals, entertainment, social space, mobile technologies, protest, community engagement, sustainability, airports, smart buildings, platform urbanism, arts and culture, poverty, markets, tunnel, and public art.

## 9. Additional Projects to Consider

- » Are there any other specific projects that you have worked on that you would have also liked to discuss if we had more time?
- » If so, what are they?
- » Are there any types of project that you would like to work on involving sound or sonic experience in the design of the public realm?

## 10. Conclusion

- » Do you have anything else you want to add concerning why a consideration of sound or sonic experience is of benefit in the design of the public realm?
- » Do you have any thoughts you would like to share about some of the obstacles experienced working this way?
- » Do you have any comments concerning our conversation today in relation to this subject?

## Preliminary Findings to Key Questions

The survey is currently in process and will be completed by summer 2023. Early reviews of the conversations and data collected demonstrate the following:

- » Definitions of 'the public realm' are widely varied, and indicate possibilities for connecting different methodologies for working with sound on different levels of design, and at different stages of larger design processes.
- » There are mixed reactions to the notion that considerations of sound are not introduced early enough within larger design processes.
- » Outside of a very focused community, there is little to no awareness of the recent development of the ISO Sounscape Standard.
- » There is an almost unilateral concern regarding the difficulty of communicating the value of work involving sound in the public realm and thereby securing a foundation to move beyond the baseline imperatives set in place by legislative requirements.

## Towards the Sound-Frameworks Design Tool

The results of the survey are being compiled and analysed to support a preliminary version of an online design tool that can be used to support the integration of sonic considerations in the design of public realm projects. This tool will support diverse users working on a range of scales, and will maintain a heterogenous methodology that suggests creative extension and adaptation to reflect the expertise, knowledge and experience of its users. In this way, the design tool reflects a rapid cycle from practice through research and back to practice, as it distils knowledge from a range of practitioners engaged in active projects to quickly draft a preliminary design tool within a 24-month cycle between 2021 and 2023.

## Getting Involved

If you or your organisation would like to get involved in Sound-Frameworks or receive updates on the project's progress, please send an email to:

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