

—*Call for Papers*—
International Conference, Paris, 15-16 January 2026

Situated Listening Technology, Aesthetics and Politics of Sound Recording

The emergence of autonomous magnetic tape sound recorders in the 1950s has accompanied a deep transformation in arts and media. The possibility to record speech in public or private space, to preserve musical or sound forms heretofore inaccessible *in situ*, to testify through sound of the evolution of places and environments, has offered to film, radio, ethnology, musicology and musical practices new possibilities. It has also, in return, converged and materialized major reconsiderations of the hierarchies inscribed within Western culture: primacy of vision upon hearing, association between realism and perspectival space, conception and history of landscapes, distinction between music and noise, etc.

This international conference, conceived through the framework of the SNF project *Nagra, Film History and Sound Media Archaeology in Switzerland*, means to participate in rethinking the place of the autonomous recorder and of mobile sound recording devices within the transformations of the modes of sound production and of the modes of listening. Particularly, we would like to question the connections between conceptions of sound and conceptions of space. The autonomous recorder has made it possible to dispose microphones out of the studios, in sites whose sound representation was before impossible. The Nagra, the Perfectone and the other competing machines, up to the apps integrated within our smartphones, have allowed to reinscribe sounds in their place of production, but also to give back to the place its sonic integrity. Sound studies have thus from the start given a foundational role to the concept of “soundscape” to construct a “sound ecology” (Schafer 1977) which would establish through sound the radical entanglement of all living beings within a circumscribed and localised terrestrial space (see for instance Steven Feld’s acoustemology and anthropology of or in sound). It is also through thinking sound as inscribed in and as inscription of a place that a decolonization of the dispositif of sound recording can be constructed. These questions are today crucial, and they play a nodal role for culture as well as for the understanding of political and environmental evolutions.

We would like, through this conference, to further these discussions, to show both their contemporary importance and the diversity of the modes of methodological, theoretical and

historical perspectives that they mobilize. We would be interested by contributions about, among other subjects:

- The history and technology of sound recording machines
- Microphones, headphones, recorders
- Direct listening, mediated listening, technicized listening
- Analyses of film, radio, or music works integrating a reflexion about the inscription of sound within place
- Concepts of landscape or perspective, as reformulated by sound recording
- Ecological perspectives on localised sound
- Colonial, postcolonial and decolonial histories of sound recording
- The relations between noise and music as reframed through field recording as practice and form
- Hearing devices, impairment and Deaf culture
- The contemporary reconfigurations of hearing and listening

This list is open and non-exhaustive. Contributions can take the form of an academic paper or of a performance.

Proposals (about one page) should be sent with a short biography to Benoît Turquety (benoit.turquety@univ-paris8.fr) before April 10, 2025.



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