

## **SONIC MIND**

Listening sessions facilitated by Julius Holtz

- On-site: In a separate room or, if available, in a garden
- Requirements: Sound system - either offered by the host or I can rent one
- Daily rate (8h): 1600,- € net

SONIC MIND is a site-specific, embodied sound experience. The deeper we listen to our surroundings, the more we merge with the sounds of the garden and create a fantastic soundscape.

The experience invites the spectators to immerse themselves in an interactive composition, made of the environment's-soundscape.

E.g. in a garden, the soundscape reflects all the living organisms of the place. The plant species determine which insects and birds settle in the garden. Within the composition, the insects and animals form the sound sources of the foreground. This foreground is embedded in the immersive sounds of the speakers placed in the garden or any other environment.

SONIC MIND invites you to listen to this electronically altered soundscape. It is utilizing technology in order to help the spectators to reach deeper states of listening. When listening becomes deeper, it affects our autonomic nervous system. This is measured by a small wireless EEG sensor, worn by the listeners around their heads. Depending on the depth of listening, the data from the sensor creates and changes the electronic soundscape of SONIC MIND in real-time. The electronics recede further and further until eventually they completely release the ambient sounds of the environment. In this way, our attention is drawn further and further to the environment's ambient sounds. In real-time, the multisensory composition adapts to the different modes of our perception.

We become one with the environment, and ourselves. Through the perceptible reflection of our self within the soundscape, we experience the artwork as a completely new kind of self-awareness.

## **STRUCTURE**

The listening sessions can ideally be paired with other group activities running parallel. After an introduction in a group setting, in the morning, I facilitate the workshop as guided one on one sessions.

The listening sessions can supplement a day of activities held by other workshop facilitators. Or complement corporate events that allow the participants to dive into 20 minutes of relaxation and mindful listening.

### **Morning: Group activity, 45 minutes**

In the morning I give a short introduction to the group. I talk about how we can cultivate awareness through listening, the neuroscience behind my sessions and describe my process of ideation. The presentation is followed by an Q&A.

## **During the day: One on one sessions on site, 20 minutes each**

I facilitate the listening sessions. Each session is held one on one because the listening sessions need time and space to unfold. Participants can book 20 minutes slots.

## **GOALS**

- Increase self awareness
- Develop skills of listening and communication
- Self regulation of the autonomous nervous system
- Learn about neuroscience and the connection between body and mind

**LINK: [juliusholtz.de/ig](http://juliusholtz.de/ig)**



## **CONTEXT: LISTENING**

When listening, there is only now. In Buddhist practice, a bell is rung as part of the ritual. The sound instantly pulls the participant into the present moment. It's a small reminder to wake up. While the eyes and the mouth can be sealed, an ear has no lid, nothing to close. It takes in what surrounds it. It receives but can't transmit. The ear is simply present to the world.

When we hear, sounds enter the ear autonomously.

Often, we're not aware of all the individual sounds and their full range. Listening is paying attention to those sounds, being present with them, being in communion with them. Though to say that we listen with the ears, or the mind, might be a misconception. We listen with the whole body, our wholeself.

The vibrations filling the space around us, the act of sound waves hitting the body, the spatial perceptions they indicate, the internal physical reactions they stimulate-this is all part of listening. Certain bass sounds can be felt only in the body, they can't be perceived by the ears. The difference can be noticed when listening to music through headphones instead of speakers. Headphones create an illusion, tricking your senses into believing you are hearing everything the music is offering. Many artists refuse to use Headphones in the studio as it is a poor replica of the real-world listening experience. With speakers, we are closer to the sound of instruments in the room-immersed physically in a full sonic spectrum of vibration. Many of us experience life as if we're taking it in through a pair of headphones. We strip away the full register. We hear information, but don't detect the subtler vibrations of feeling in the body.

When you practice listening with the whole self, you expand the scope of your consciousness to include vast amounts of information otherwise missed, and discover more material. If it's music you're listening to, consider closing your eyes. You may find yourself getting lost in the experience. When the piece ends, you might be surprised by where you find yourself. You've been transported to another place. The place where the music lives.

Communication moves in two directions, even when one person speaks and another listens silently. When the listener is totally present, the speaker often communicates differently. Most people aren't used to being fully heard, and it can be jarring for them. Sometimes we block the flow of information being offered and compromise true listening. Our critical mind may kick in, taking note of what we agree with and what we don't, or what we like and dislike. We may look for reasons to distrust the speaker or make them wrong.

Formulating an opinion is not listening. Neither is preparing a response, or defending our position or attacking another's. To listen impatiently is to hear nothing at all. Listening is suspending disbelief. We are openly receiving. Paying attention with no preconceived ideas. The only goal is to fully and clearly understand what is being transmitted, remaining totally present with what's being expressed and allowing it to be what it is. Anything less is not only a disservice to the speaker, but also to yourself. While creating and defending a story in your own head, you miss information that might alter or evolve your current thoughts. If we can go beyond our reflexive response, we may find there is something more beneath that resonates with us or helps our understanding. The new information might reinforce an idea, slightly alter it, or completely reverse it.

Listening without prejudice is how we grow and learn as people. More often than not, there are no right answers, just different perspectives.

The more perspectives we can learn to see, the greater our understanding becomes. Our filter can begin to more accurately approach what truly is, rather than a narrow sliver interpreted through our bias.

Regardless of the type of work you're doing, listening opens possibilities. It allows you to see a bigger world. Many of our beliefs were learned before we had a choice in what we were taught. Some of them might go back generations and may no longer apply. Some may never have applied. Listening, then, is not just awareness. It's freedom from accepted limitations.

- Rick Rubin

# Curriculum Vitae

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## PERSONAL DATA

**Julius Holtz** (1982)

Father of one son (2014)

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## SKILLS AND ABILITIES

### Soft Skills

- Production of artistic projects
- Artistic direction of groups with up to 15 employees
- Supervision of students and interns

### DAWs and Audio Apps

- Ableton Live (expert knowledge)
- ProTools (advanced knowledge)
- Reaper (expert knowledge)
- FMOD (intermediate knowledge)

### Editing Suites and Game Engines

- Avid (intermediate knowledge)
- Final Cut (advanced knowledge)
- Unity (intermediate knowledge)

### Programming

- Max Msp / Max for Live (expert knowledge)
- Touch Designer (basic knowledge)
- Wordpress CMS (advanced knowledge)

### Languages

- German (native)
  - English (fluent)
  - Spanish (intermediate)
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# CAREER AND EDUCATION

**2015–present: Freelance composer, sound designer, lecturer, and consultant**

**2011–2015: Master of Arts in Sound Studies, Berlin University of the Arts**

Artistic work *Corpus Sonus* focused on the effects of sound on the autonomic nervous system

**2010: Sabbatical in Latin America**

**2006–2009: Freelance audio producer and video journalist at Radio Bremen**

Produced radio trailers for Radio Bremen 4. Created segments for Radio Bremen's youth TV magazine *Bremen 4U* as a video journalist

**2004–2007: Training as a media designer for image and sound**

E-Motion Factory Bremen and Radio Bremen

**2003: Civilian service with mentally disabled children** Pastor Braune Haus, Berlin

**2002: Abitur (secondary school diploma)** Gymnasium Sulingen

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# SELECTED WORKS AND ACTIVITIES

## EXPERIENCE AS LECTURER, WORKSHOP FACILITATOR, AND MUSIC TEACHER

**2025: Workshop Facilitator SONIC MIND, Charité Berlin**

Presentation and discussion of my artistic work *Introspective Garden*, followed by a hands on workshop involving the sonification of EEG data from participants. Part of a two-day alumni event by the Bernstein Center for Computational Neuroscience at Charité Berlin

**2023: Guest Lecturer NEURO DESIGN LECTURE: Fostering Human-Nature Empathy through Digital Innovation**

A collaboration between the Hasso Plattner Institute, Potsdam, and the MIT Tangible Media Group. Delivered two 90-minute lectures presenting *Introspective Garden*, covering artistic research, concept development, prototyping, and insights into the algorithm.

**2021: Guest Lecturer SONIC ENVIRONING at Matters of Activity Cluster of Excellence, Humboldt University Berlin**

Lecture addressed theories of acoustic ecology and their relation to my artistic work and research

**2021–2024: Lecturer SONIC THINKING, Hasso Plattner Institute in Potsdam**

Part of the Design Thinking curriculum, combining artistic-experimental methods with user-centered, interactive work to give Digital Engineering students new perspectives on sound as a medium of acoustic communication

**2018: Guest Lecturer, AUDIOVISUAL INTERFACE DESIGN WITH ABLETON LIVE & MAX MSP, Beuth University of Applied Sciences, Berlin**

Practical workshop demonstrating the control of light and sound through protocols such as MIDI and Open Sound Control in Ableton and Max Msp environments.

**2015–2017: Camera operator and media educator at MEDIENABENTEUEERCAMP, District of Dithmarschen**

Produced films with young people during youth camps. Project awarded the Team Award at the 25th German Generations Film Award.

**2016–2018: Teacher for electronic music & sound design at Ohrphee Music School**

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## **EXPERIENCE AS CONSULTANT**

**2025: Business Development Lead, Sonic Minds**

The role involves demonstrating to corporate decision-makers the importance of acoustic communication across UX design and sonic branding, including the use of coherent music and sound design as part of a corporate audio identity.

**2025: Consultant for the audiovisual installation EIN SONNTAGSKIND in the permanent exhibition ZUKUNFT EINER GEDENKKULTUR AN DIE SHOAH at the Jewish Orphanage Berlin**

Advised curator Pascal Johannsen on dramaturgy, visual language, and audiovisual counterpoint. Pre-selected visual artists and handled sound design and music composition.

**2018: Spatial Sound Consultant for IMMERSION – THE NEW INFINITY, Berliner Festspiele**

Curated and produced SONIC SCULPTUR as a prototype for a mobile dome developed with Airstructures. Advised on 3D audio system development and supervised its implementation by Taucher Sound. Worked as a sound scenographer with the artists during production. The project attracted over 10,000 visitors per month.

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## **PROJECT FUNDING AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

**2026: CHRYSALIS Solo exhibition of interactive sound art** Produced by Art Laboratory Berlin, funded by the Lotto Foundation

**2023: INTROSPECTIVE GARDEN** Funded by Bauhaus Bavaria Residency, Bavarian Association of Visual Artists, Musikfonds, and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media Exhibition of interactive sound art

**2023: MESH II** Work grant by Musikfonds for the audiovisual performance duo with Jemma Woolmore

**2023: NOCTURNE IN Z-MINOR** Composition grant by Musikfonds.  
Audio piece based on the poetry of Christian Hawkey, with vocals by Audrey Chen

## **2021: GEMA COMPOSITION GRANT**

**2021: MESH** Work grant by Musikfonds for the audiovisual performance duo with Jemma Woolmore

**2020: INTROSPECTIVE GARDEN** Composition grant by Musikfonds

**2020: ARTISTIC RESEARCH** Spatial sound composition and performance at CCRMA, Stanford University. Funded by the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe

**2017: REMIX LETTERS** Contemporary music for piano and electronics. Funded by the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe, and the Goethe-Institut Lisbon

**2016: REMIX** Contemporary music for piano and electronics. Funded by Initiative Neue Musik Berlin

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## **PROJECTS AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

**2024: ENTRE LES LIGNES** Performances in Toulouse and Berlin, curated in collaboration with Emilie Beffara and Gaia Bartolini. Included participation as an artist. Funded by Impuls Neue Musik, Goethe-Institut Toulouse, GMRE France, Musikfonds, and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.

**2021: MESH: STRANGE LOOP – Iteration I** Funded by Musikfonds  
Audiovisual concert installation for visuals and ensemble as part of the Audiovisionen concert series.

**2018: MESH: STRANGE LOOP** Audiovisual concert installation for visuals and ensemble, Kleiner Wasserspeicher Berlin. Funded by Musikfonds, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and INM Berlin.

**2017: SONIC SCULPTURE** Sound installation for Higher Order Ambisonics at Gropius Bau & Spektrum Berlin. Funded by Initiative Neue Musik Berlin and KEF Hifi

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## **MUSIC AND SOUND DESIGN FOR VIRTUAL REALITY**

**2024: DIE TÜRME DES FEBRUAR** Sound design for experimental VR game by Philipp Wenning. Funded by Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung

**2021: VALEN'S REEF DIVING TEAM** Sound design for a virtual dive into a coral reef protected by Conservation International. Produced by Vision3 for Conservation International and The Tiffany & Co Foundation

**2020: CRITICAL DISTANCE** Sound design for a virtual dive exploring habitat destruction caused by noise pollution in the Salish Sea. Produced by Vision3, Vulcan Productions, Microsoft, and Unity Technologies. Presented at Tribeca Film Festival (New York) and the Smithsonian Institution (Washington D.C.)

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## SOUND ART – GROUP EXHIBITIONS

**2024: INTROSPECTIVE GARDEN** Interactive sound art utilizing data sonification of brainwaves, CTM Festival, Berlin

**2017: MORIBA ILLUMINE** Sound art/music performance with C. Tolan and M. Hoffmann, National Gallery at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin

**2014: RE** Sound art/music performance at Academia de San Carlos, Facultad de Artes y Diseño, Mexico City

**2010: SPACE IS THE PLACE** Sound art exhibition at HBC Berlin

**2009: TRANSFORMATIONEN** Sound art piece as part of the 20th anniversary celebrations of Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

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## FILM MUSIC

**2025: WIM WENDERS – DER EWIG SUCHENDE** Portrait for Wim Wenders' 80th birthday. Produced by Bundeskunsthalle Bonn, ZDF, and ARTE.

**2025: FROZEN SCORE** Production music for Warner Chappell catalog

**2024: DARK DRIVE** Production music for 22D Music Group catalog, multiple uses in ZDF

**2018: HERRENJAHRE** Short film – Cannes Film Festival

**2016: THE HITLER CHRONICLES** 13-part series, international cinema and TV broadcast

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## PERFORMANCES OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC

**2019: BLIND SIGNAL** Free improvised music – funded by Goethe-Institut Hanoi, Musikfonds, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and Institut Français

**2017: VIRIA AITEIYA** Composition by M. Jimenez, performed with Ensemble Mosaik – Heroines of Sound Festival, Berlin

**2016: AUTO FICTO REFLEXO** Music for contemporary dance by Adam Linder – Serralves Foundation, Porto

**2016: YUARIYA VALCARI** Composition by M. Jimenez – Ultima Festival, Oslo

**2013: ON ORIENTATIONS** Music for contemporary dance by Ian Kaler – Performing New Europe, Salzburg

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## FILM AUTHORSHIP

**2010: JAY (short film)** Tells the coming-out story of a young female-to-male trans person. Jay (1986) grew up at a time when transsexuality found little acceptance, even within gay and lesbian circles. Screened at film festivals in Europe, the USA, and Canada