Sound Objects in Flux:
Knowledge, Science, Heritage

Sound objects—harp, organ, tuning forks, noise level meters, echoes, inner voices, or the harmonies of the spheres—have a long history that is deeply entangled with the cultural and sociopolitical configuration of these objects, the knowledge of professional and lay users, and scientific expertise.

*Sound Objects in Flux* brings these enmeshments to light, tracing the ways in which sound objects oscillate between concrete sound, instrumental objectification, and theoretical concept. Initiated in 2016, the Working Group asks when and how research objects became concrete objects, and what agency these objects have accrued in the domains of knowledge, science, and cultural heritage. By focusing on the global, long-term, and large-scale reconfiguration of sound objects and their manifold relationships with cultural and scientific practices, the Authors’ Workshop will explore and reframe the assumptions made in more general studies on the formation of scientific objects. Dealing with the ephemerality of sound allows us to explore overlaps between material objects, immaterial objects, and knowledge about those objects. Objects are in flux; they never “act” or stand alone. It is through sociopolitical or scientific negotiation, translation, and transmission that objects cross boundaries of nations, social units, or disciplines.

Max Planck Institute for the History of Science
Harnackstraße 5
14195 Berlin
Seminar Room (ground floor)

To register, please contact:
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ORGANIZERS:
Viktoria Tkaczyk
(MPIWG / Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)
Rebecca Wolf
(Deutsches Museum, Munich)
Leendert van der Miesen
(MPIWG / Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)
Friday, September 14

09:15–10:00 Welcome & Introduction

10:00–11:30 The Objects of a Changing Discipline
Patrizio Barbieri (Independent Scholar, Rome)
The Aeolian Harp: Giovanni Dall’Armi’s Acoustical Investigations
Leendert van der Miesen (MPIWG, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)
An Object and Its Discipline: The Echo in Early Acoustics

11:30–11:45 Coffee

11:45–13:15 Objects and Transnational Dynamics
Carmel Raz (Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics)
How the Sheng Became a Harp
Fanny Gribenski (MPIWG)
Tuning to History: Musical Pitch as Cultural Heritage

13:15–14:15 Lunch

14:15–15:45 Materialities in the Making
Leon Chisholm (Deutsches Museum, Munich)
Wooden Organs
Rebecca Wolf (Deutsches Museum, Munich)
Music of Metallurgy: Bell Metal for Musical Instruments

15:45–16:00 Coffee

16:00–17:30 Orphic Objects
Jacomien Prins (Utrecht University, Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel)
The Orphic Lyre: From Magic Instrument to Museum Piece
Anne Eusterschulte (Freie Universität Berlin)
Pierre Henry’s Le Voile d’Orphée and the Orphic Nature of Sound Objects

18:15 Dinner

Saturday, September 15

09:30–11:00 Social Objects on the Move
Flora Dennis (University of Sussex)
Cooking Pots, Tableware, and the Changing Sounds of Sociability in Italy, 1300–1800
Tiago de Oliveira Pinto (University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar, Friedrich Schiller University Jena)
Singing Birds and Competing Knowledge

11:00–11:15 Coffee

11:15–12:45 Immaterial Sounds in Transition
Matteo Valleriani (MPIWG, Technische Universität Berlin)
Musica mundana: Cosmic Harmony between Universities and Publishers
Viktoria Tkaczyk (MPIWG, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)
Soliloquies and Their Media: A Long History

12:45–13:45 Lunch

13:45–15:15 Spaces as Multifold Objects
Darryl Cressman (Maastricht University)
Concert Halls as Boundary Objects, 1888–2005
John Durham Peters (Yale University)
The Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City as an Object of Belief and Knowledge

15:15–15:30 Coffee

15:30–17:30 Panel Discussion