

### **3 minutes of white noise on a white ground**

White noise is a democratic sound image in the sense that all frequencies are represented and in equal proportions.

White noise can be defined by the dual concepts of figure – ground, which originate from the Gestalt psychology. The concepts deal with overlapping of sounds, where some sounds hide other sounds, so called masking effect. The figure is the sound that catches our attention, while the remaining sounds are in the ground. This does not concern white noise, either are all sounds in the forefront or in the background, it is a matter of listening perspective.

Metabolic effect, defined at the Cresson institute in Grenoble, is a concept that describes sound images similar to white noise. The definition of metabolic effect is as follows: « a sound image apprehended as a whole, in which its singular sound objects can not be discerned over time ». In other words, the concept deals with a sound image that is stable over time, but where the singular sound objects are ephemeral; at the same time we catch a sound it disappears in the background.

There are environments in Stockholm that are favorable to metabolic effect. The effect appears in Vasagatan, outside the Central Station, during rush-hour traffic. One can also listen to the effect at the metro station T-centralen, at the entrance to Sergels torg.

The composers Iannis Xenakis and David Tudor shaped metabolic effect in *Concret Ph* (1958), respectively in *Rain Forest* (1968, version I).

Back to white noise. The strength of the sound image is that it acts as an interface – as a medium – for parallel worlds of experience. If one listen carefully, by trying to catch individual sound objects, it is possible to hear almost anything since all frequencies are included. The whole sound palette is obtainable. The spaces of sound you hear are there; figures, objects, sound shadows, perhaps sometimes as illusions.

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