

Representation, complexity and control

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Modern sonic art is heavily influenced by digital technology, and we have seen major changes in composition, construction, performance and mediation of audio art since the digital watershed started in the mid-1990s. One can arguably say that sonic art depends on digital technology.

When attempting to understand these changes, one must consider the materiality of the works, the tools used to create them, the technological affordances that make their creation possible, and the changes in the social contexts that facilitate public acceptance and reception.

Technology is a social construct, not only a tool, but also an attitude, an adeptness and a craft for making meaning for artists and art users alike. The deep inclusion of digital technologies in nearly all aspects of modern western society has changed our self-understanding and behavior in everyday and art contexts, and a rich undergrowth of alternative distribution outside of the conventional hierarchies of good taste has developed over the last 25 years or so.

The talk will attempt to describe some of the nuts and bolts of the digital technology that is at the base of this development, revolving around the keywords representation, complexity, control, new material, large and small data conversion, soundscape and ecological perspectives, and conceptualism.